University of Southampton

Faculty of Humanities, School of History

Between Public and Private: Women's Social Action in France from 1934 to 1944

Michelle A. Perkins

Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

May 2008

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON
ABSTRACT
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
SCHOOL OF HISTORY
Doctor of Philosophy
BETWEEN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE: WOMEN'S SOCIAL ACTION IN FRANCE FROM 1934 TO 1944
Michelle A. Perkins

This thesis explores the complex interplay of ethnic, religious and gender identity for Catholic, Communist and Jewish women who participated in social welfare activities in France in the 1930s and whose experiences informed their later socio-political activities under the Nazi Occupation of 1940 to 1944. In doing so, it will address the often distinct histories of feminism, social action, ethnicity and gender together, while highlighting the specificity of the Jewish experience in the latter period. By taking a cross-'denominational' approach, both the nature and experience of French women's activities can be highlighted, thereby deepening our understanding of their motivations and expectations regarding social 'duties' and social 'action'. The language with which women expressed their interest in the social reflected their personal conception of French identity and citizenship, ethnicity, political and religious beliefs, as well as their determination to be considered as rational, professional activists. Memoirs, private correspondence and associational papers demonstrate this personal questioning alongside public experience. These sources illustrate the forging of personal and professional contacts that were to be of inestimable significance during Occupation.

The thesis addresses sites of ideological conflict and practical consensus between women participating in social action using a wide range of source material, including police reports, organisation archives, as well as the women's pages and Catholic, Communist and Jewish press. Despite disparate ideological views, a broad consensus existed on the natural aptitude of women for social welfare and the importance of their social duties, namely maternity. This idea of social motherhood was also consciously used to advance women's professional responsibilities. Polarised debates within France over the Spanish civil war, the fascist threat and engagement in the Republican cause forced women to question their beliefs about both the limitations and possibilities of social activism appropriate to their sex. Anti-fascism became a significant facet of welfare action and heightened nascent political consciousness in a younger generation of French women. The pressing need for welfare under Occupation engaged many women in work that they had no training for, or experience in, in both the sanctioned public and clandestine spheres. Instead of focusing on the Resistance per se, this thesis offers an understanding of social action as a site through which individual and communal identity was negotiated, thereby pointing to continuity - rather than rupture - between the interwar and Vichy periods.

Contents

Acknowledgements

Firstly, I would like to thank my supervisor Joan for your energy, support and kindness, both professionally and personally, over the last three and a half years. I would also like to thank my adviser Tony for your humour, counsel and continued faith in both this project and in me.

For fear of not being able to do each thank you justice, I offer one enormous, heartfelt thanks to all my friends for your incredible support, love and generosity.

I am blessed to have a supportive family that gives me love, perspective and always honesty - I wouldn't know where or how to start to say thank you.

Lastly, this is dedicated to my sister and brother, my comfort and inspiration.

London, May 2008

Abbreviations

ACJF Action Catholique des Jeunesses Françaises

ADF Association des Dames de France

ADIR Association des Anciennes Déportées et Internées de la Résistance

ADP Auxiliaires de la Défense Passive

ADN Assistantes du Devoir National

AF L'Assistance Française

AIU Alliance Israélite Universelle

AM Aide aux Mères

AN Archives Nationales

ANAPF Alliance Nationale pour l'Accroissement de la Population Française

ANAS Association Nationale des Assistantes de Service Social

ANASD Association Nationale des Assistantes Sociales Diplômées

APP Archives de la Préfecture de Police

ASF Action Sociale de la Femme

ASU Association des Surintendantes de France

ATS Association de Travailleuses Sociales

BDIC Bibliothèque de Documentation Internationale Contemporaine

BMD Bibliothèque Marguerite Durand

BN Bibliothèque Nationale de France

CAR Comité d'Assistance aux Refugiés

CBI(P) Comité de Bienfaisance Israélite (de Paris)

CCOBJ Comité de Coordination des Œuvres de Bienfaisance Juives de Paris

CCOJA Comité de Coordination des Œuvres Juives d'Assistance

CCRP Caisse de Compensation de la Région Parisienne

CDJC Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine

CEMEA Centre d'Entraînement aux Méthodes d'Education Actives

CFTC Confédération Française des Travailleurs Chrétiens

CGT Confédération Générale du Travail

CGQJ Commissariat Général aux Questions Juives

CIARE Comité International pour l'Aide aux Refugiés Espagnols

CICIAER Comité International de Coordination et d'Information pour l'Aide à l'Espagne Républicaine

CIMADE Comité Inter-mouvement auprès des Evacués

COSOR Comité des Œuvres Sociales des Organisations de Résistance

CMFGF Comité Mondial des Femmes contre la Guerre et le Fascisme

CNFF Conseil National des Femmes Françaises

CNFS Conseil National des Femmes Socialistes

CNSS Caisse Nationale de Sécurité Sociale

CNT Confederación Nacional del Trabajo (National Confederation of Labour)

CPF Comités Populaires Féminins

CRIF Conseil Représentatif des Israélites de France

CSI Centrale Sanitaire Internationale

CVIA Comité de Vigilance des Intellectuels Antifascistes

EF Entr'aide Française

EIF Eclaireurs Israélites de France

ENS Ecole Normale Sociale

EPSS Ecole Pratique de Service Social

FAI Federación Anarquista Ibéricas (Iberian Anarchist Federation)

FDIF Fédération Démocratique Internationale des Femmes (WIDF, Women's International Democratic Federation)

FFI Forces Françaises de l'Intérieur

FFL Forces Françaises Libres

FNAFN Fédération Nationale des Associations de Familles Nombreuses

FNF Fédération Nationale des Femmes

FR Fédération Républicaine

FSJF Fédération des Sociétés Juives de France

FSJU Fonds Social Juif Unifié

FSN Les Françaises au Service de la Nation

FTP Francs-Tireurs et Partisans

GTE Groupements de Travailleurs Etrangers

HICEM International Jewish Migration Agency

ICJW International Council of Jewish Women

ICR Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees

IEQJ Institut d'Etudes des Questions Juives

IHTP Institut d'Histoire du Temps Présent

JC Jeunesses Communistes

JOC/F Jeunesse Ouvrière Chrétienne/Féminine

JSU Jeunesses Socialistes Unifiée/Juventus Socialista Unificada

LFACF Ligue Féminine d'Action Catholique Française

LIFPL Ligue Internationale des Femmes pour la Paix et la Liberté (WILPF; Women's International League for Peace and Freedom)

LPFF Ligue Patriotique des Femmes Françaises

MJS Mouvement de Jeunesse Sioniste

MPF Mouvement Populaire des Familles

MOI Main d'Œuvre Immigrée

MRP Mouvement Républicain Populaire

MUR Mouvements Unis de la Résistance

OCM Organisation Civile et Militaire

OIE Office International pour l'Enfance

POUM Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista (Worker's Party of Marxist Unification)

ORT Organisation Reconstruction et Travail

OSE Œuvre de Secours aux Enfants

PCF Parti Communiste Français

PPF Parti Populaire Français

PSF Parti Social Français (Progrès Social Français from 1940; previously Croix de Feu)

RM Rassemblement Moral

RUP Rassemblement Universel pour la Paix

SCDI Service Central des Déportés Israélites

SDN Société des Nations

SFIO Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière

SGFS Secrétariat-Général de la Famille et de la Santé

SIA Secours International Anarchiste

SN Secours National

SSBM Société de Secours aux Blessés Militaires

SSAE Service Social d'Aide aux Emigrants

SSJ Service Social des Jeunes (also known as Amicale or La Sixième)

STO Service du Travail Obligatoire

UCSS Union Catholique du Personnel des Services de Santé

UFCS Union Féminine Civique et Sociale

UFF Union des Femmes Françaises

UFJ Union des Femmes Juives

UFJP Union des Femmes Juives pour la Palestine

UFPSN Union Féminine pour la Paix et la Société des Nations

UFSF Union Française pour le Suffrage des Femmes

UGIF Union Générale des Israélites de France

UI L'Univers Israélite

UNIOPSS Union Nationale Interfédérale des Œuvres Privées Sanitaires et Sociales

UJFF Union des Jeunes Filles de France

UJRE Union des Juifs pour la Résistance et l'Entr'aide

UNVF Union Nationale pour le Vote des Femmes

USC Unitarian Service Committee

WIZO Women's International Zionist Organisation

Introduction: Between public and private: French women's lives and identities

> 'Peu à peu, le dynamisme apostolique était utilisé pour pénétrer dans la vie même du travail ...tandis que l'intention primitive d'une évangélisation apostolique se transformait en une simple présence chrétienne qui, pour certains d'entre nous, paru être la meilleure des missions.'[1]

> 'Militer, avoir une vie active, m'a fait papillon.'[2]

> 'I was marked by ... the difficulty of reconciling a longing for peace with solidarity with the victims of Fascism.'[3]

This thesis traces the motivations and experience of Catholic, Communist and Jewish women engaged in social action within the different political frameworks of the Third Republic and the Vichy regime. In doing so, it explores the actions and networks through which women became politicised and professionalised. In the above quotations, women from markedly different sociopolitical, religious and cultural backgrounds discuss this action, employing rhetoric that consciously reflects both their personal and political motivations for engaging in it. The language of mission, political engagement and the achievement of selfhood, reflected in these quotations, correspond to the key themes developed within the thesis.

By the 1930s, women had forged a public role in social provisioning that was widely deemed legitimate. During the decade, economic difficulties and sociopolitical tensions intensified, generating an ever pressing need for social assistance and support to the oppressed. The terrain of social welfare thus also became key to group politicisation and mobilisation. However, with notable exceptions, women are largely absent from historical accounts of the interwar years. The political and diplomatic machinations that led to the Second World War have taken centre stage in the historical record and French women, supposedly disenfranchised by a lack of voting power, have not been

---

[1] Madeleine Delbrêl, *Ville Marxiste. Terre de Mission* (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1957), p.89.
[2] Cécile Romagon-Ouzoulias, *J'étais agent de liaison des FTPF* (Paris: Editions Messidor, 1988), p.41.
[3] Vivette Samuel, *Rescuing the Children. A Holocaust Memoir* (Wisconsin and London: University of Wisconsin Press, 2002), p.12.

considered political players.[4] This thesis pushes for a more fluid conception of 'the political' and, in addressing women's exclusion from political power, it will demonstrate the politicised nature of the social.

Throughout, the thesis concentrates on the language used by French women to publicise, discuss and recount their social activism. Women, by virtue of their sex, had to navigate between personal, religious, political and ethnic considerations of femininity and agency. Claire Duchen points to the profound ambiguity provided by tensions contained within competing notions of a woman's place, role and destiny.[5] This thesis will elaborate on the relationship between women's discourse about their own gender, their experience of it within the social sphere, and the extent to which women used prevalent discourses about 'essentialised' femininity - notions of sexual difference and appropriate behaviour - to justify and indeed expand their responsibilities and actions.[6] By the 1930s, attitudes about women's 'appropriate' behaviour and capabilities were pervasive, and indeed integral, to widely held concepts about the successful functioning of society itself. The cultural construction of gender has become better understood as a tool by which male, political elites have sustained their privileged social positioning thanks to the pioneering work of historians such as Joan Wallach Scott and Michelle Perrot.[7] Gender history initially examined the ways in which such a gendered vision of society continued to underpin the position of male elites to the detriment and exclusion of women. This then provoked related questions about women's agency and the extent to which women have themselves used, challenged and reshaped gendered discourses. Scott emphasises the power of the discourse of universalisation, the way in which women have tried to exploit its paradoxes - arguing for universal rights on the grounds of their sexual difference - and been caught within them.[8] Karen Offen, however, has cautioned against concentrating too heavily on

---

[4] Siân Reynolds, *France Between the Wars. Gender and Politics* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), p.6.
[5] Claire Duchen, *Women's Rights and Women's Lives in France 1944-1968* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), p.5.
[6] Katrin Schultheiss, *Bodies and Souls. Politics and the Professionalisation of Nursing in France, 1880-1922* (Cambridge, Mass., and London: Harvard University Press, 2001), p.7, explores the irony of a situation in which nurses used the stereotypical view of women as nurturers and carers to argue for better training provision.
[7] See, for example, Joan W. Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988) and Michelle Perrot, *Une histoire des femmes, est-elle possible?* (Marseilles: Rivages, 1984).
[8] Joan Wallach Scott, *Only Paradoxes to Offer: French Feminists and the Rights of Man* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996).

discourse and language - through which women are described and prescribed, as passive objects - at the expense of emphasising experience and agency.[9] This thesis argues for a middle ground between two approaches that have commonly been set in distinction against one another, according significance and attention to language and self-representation while demonstrating how women's use of the language of mission and motherhood furthered their agency, in expanding their social, public, and arguably, political roles.

In exploring the ways in which French women negotiated and utilised gendered discourses about their aptitude, abilities and roles to enlarge their areas of responsibility, we must also remain mindful of the different meanings in English and French for *feminine/féminine* and ongoing debates over what constituted *women's* and *feminist* action. Historical scholarship on French feminism has greatly expanded since the 1970s, with Steven Hause's work on the campaign for suffrage and Laurence Klejman and Florence Rochefort's research on Third Republican feminism complemented by Christine Bard's magisterial work, *Les Filles de Marianne.*[10] The 1930s have been viewed somewhat erroneously as a 'failed' decade for the feminist cause in France and as a lost opportunity. Notable successes were secured in welfare campaigning, which was key to the social Catholic agenda - to be discussed in detail shortly. Suffrage, though, remained elusive and women were not mobilised *en masse* into the feminist movement, as represented by long established associations such as the Conseil National des Femmes Françaises (CNFF, 1900) and Union Française pour le Suffrage des Femmes (UFSF, 1909). Membership rates did, however, increase during the interwar period even if concrete gains plateaued.[11] Bard counsels that expectations that French feminists should have been

---

[9] Karen Offen, 'French Women's History: Retrospect (1789-1940) and Prospect', *French Historical Studies*, 26, 4 (2003), pp. 727-767 (p.731).

[10] Christine Bard, *Les Filles de Marianne. Histoire des féminismes 1914-1940* (Paris: Fayard, 1995); Steven C. Hause, *Women's Suffrage and Social Politics in the French Third Republic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984); Laurence Klejman and Florence Rochefort, *L'égalité en marche. Le féminisme sous la Troisième République* (Paris: Presses de la FNSP,1989). See also James McMillan, *Housewife or Harlot: The Place of French Women in French Society, 1870-1940* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1981); Paul Smith, *Feminism and the Third Republic. Women's Political and Civil Rights in France, 1918-1945* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).

[11] Reform to the Civil Code in February 1938 removed the civil incapacity of married women and constituted a (the) major feminist victory of the period. See Florence Roquefort, 'Laicisation des moeurs et équilibres de genre. Le débat sur la capacité civile de la femme mariée (1918-1938)', *Vingtième Siècle*, 87, 3 (2005), pp.129-141.

pioneers are unfair.[12] These women - whether we in hindsight consider them to be feminists in the contemporary sense of the word (seeking equal social, political rights in every sphere with men) or female activists (seeing better opportunities for women in work and society) - should instead be judged as thinking and acting in ways representative of their time.

Chapter One, in highlighting the diversity and validity of women's social experiences to the feminist movement, illustrates that French women in the interwar period were not entirely disenfranchised, despite their lack of suffrage. Evelyne Diebolt's work on associations reminds us of the significance of associational activity for a body of people that continued to be excluded from the formal political process and of their success in operating in those spaces which existing public and religious institutions had not filled:

> 'Les associations tissent du lien social avec la société civile, elles sont partenaires de l'Etat, des collectivités locales et des Eglises. Elles forment la trame d'une démocratie de proximité.'[13]

To accept only political, judicial or legislative action as indicative of feminist success is to further reinforce the notion of distinct spheres of male, public-political action on the one hand and female, private-social inaction on the other, something challenged by gender historians of the interwar period such as Siân Reynolds and Linda Clark in their demonstration of women's public responsibilities and activism.[14] This thesis continues in this vein in challenging the validity of such a public-private, political-social dichotomy.

In addition to exploring the gendered perspective, the thesis takes the following two approaches to exploring the identity-consciousness of women engaged in social action from across political, religious and ethnic backgrounds. A comparative approach, which takes Catholic, Communist and Jewish women as its central subjects, enables us to investigate how broadly certain experiences were shared among divergent denominations and parties - groups that have more commonly been studied in isolation. A more strict comparative study may have been to research Catholic, Protestant or freemason women; to examine Jewish women involved in Bundist, Zionist or Israélite social action; or

---

[12] Bard, *Les Filles de Marianne*, p.453.
[13] Evelyne Diebolt and Christiane Douyere-Demeulenaere (eds.), *Un siècle de vie associative: quelles opportunités pour les femmes?* (Paris: Femmes et Associations, 2001), p.9.
[14] Siân Reynolds, *Alternative Politics: Women and Public Life in France between the Wars* (Stirling: Stirling French Publications, 1993); Linda L. Clark, *The Rise of Professional Women in France. Gender and Public Administration Since 1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

even to study immigrants within France at this time, for example, Jewish, Italian and Polish women. Despite the historical concentration on Jewish immigration into France, Italians and Poles were in fact the two largest immigrant groups in France during the interwar years, providing much needed industrial labour following the substantial loss of manpower during World War One.[15] However, this comparative study enables me to explore the interrelationship of religious, class, ethnic and political identities rather than focusing on one aspect in particular. In choosing these three groups, I will explore the language with which Catholic, Communist and Jewish women expressed their interest in the social in terms of their conception of both Frenchness and ethnicity. Colin Nettelbeck has written about the 'systematic conflation of Christianity and Frenchness' in which religious belief and patriotism were melded into one.[16] Catholic patriotism was thereby not subject to questioning, unlike the suspicions continually raised over both Communist and Jewish allegiances.[17] Communists, however French, were deemed by conservatives and Republicans in general to be nationally suspect in their allegiance to a worldwide workers' revolution directed by the Comintern, thus their internationalist outlook was publicly and politically questioned during a period of heightened diplomatic tension. Native French Jews meanwhile had negotiated the pressures of citizenship and assimilation, as formalised by their emancipation in 1791, but were faced during this period with an influx of immigrant co-religionists of varying nationalities who brought more traditional, and henceforth visible and public, forms of Jewish observance.[18] Incorporating

---

[15] France lost 1.3 million men during World War One, which constituted more men of working age than the other belligerent nations. Such heavy manpower losses fuelled depopulation anxieties, as well as concerns about economic weakness; see Julian Jackson, *France. The Dark Years, 1940-1944* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p.31. For information on immigrants in France during the interwar period, see Marianne Amar and Pierre Milza, *L'immigration en France au XXe siècle* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1990).

[16] Colin Nettelbeck, 'The Eldest Daughter and the *trente glorieuses*: Catholicism and national identity in postwar France', *Modern and Contemporary France*, 6, 4 (1998), pp.445-462 (p.450).

[17] See James F.McMillan's review of Joseph F. Byrnes, *Catholic and French forever: Religion and National Identity in Modern France* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005) on H-France. *H-France* Review, 8, 32 (March 2008). Available online at http://www.h-france.net/vol8reviews/vol8no32mcmillan.pdf. Accessed 21 March 2008.

[18] Lucy S. Dawidowicz, *What is the Use of Jewish History? Essays by Lucy S. Dawidowicz* (New York: Schocken Books, 1992), p.18. Dawidowicz writes that when the political state replaced religion as the prime historical mover for diaspora Jews in the West, then emancipation, which was predicated on assimilation, became the Western Jews' religion.

Jewish women into the comparative project therefore elicits some questioning of the minority culture's relationship with the majority and notions of inclusion, exclusion and belonging, which were to have additional poignancy for both Jews and Communists under Occupation.

Following an overview of key developments in the 1930s, I have chosen to examine the individual and collective experiences of Catholic (Chapter Three), Communist, anti-fascist (Chapter Four) and Jewish (Chapter Five) women under Occupation in separate chapters, highlighting the specificity of the Jewish case. Communists and, in particular, Jews were marginalised and oppressed, a situation from which Catholics were spared as representatives of the authentic Frenchness that Vichy's National Revolution sought to reinvigorate. Taking each group separately therefore entails being conscious of the dangers of a comparative study that does not contextualise and interrelate between the groups, something Nancy Green has termed a convergent comparison between different groups in the same environment.[19] By regarding Jewish, Communist and Catholic women's memories as distinct entities, we can tease out variations from the standardised public, national memory of interwar and Occupied France, highlighting areas of both consensus and conflict.

This points to the third distinctive aspect of the approach taken throughout the thesis, that of chronology. Social, cultural and political histories of the interwar years commonly end with the outbreak of war (1939) or a nation in defeat (1940), with 1940 naturally taken as the starting point for any study of the Vichy period. However, while the chapters progress from 1934 through to 1944, the intention here is to frame the research across a timeframe that is more usually split into two separate entities. This enables a more comprehensive picture to be built of the social action channels in place prior to war, and to explore continuities and ruptures. Choosing the decade 1934 to 1944 allows an investigation into the range of ideas that informed the milieu in which these women operated, an understanding of how the circumstances of war altered established discourses about, and experience of, 'appropriate' femininity and agency, and the social frameworks within which these were played out.

The additional insight found in taking a more unusual chronological

---

[19] Nancy L. Green, 'The Comparative Method and Post-Structural Structuralism: New Perspectives for Migration Studies', *Journal of American Ethnic History*, 13 (1994), p.6, cited in Gemma Romain, *Connecting Histories: A Comparative Exploration of African-Caribbean and Jewish History and Memory in Modern Britain* (London: Kegan Paul, 2006), p.5. I would like to thank Dr. Gemma Romain for sharing her research into autobiography and memoir with me.

approach can be seen when considering some of the source materials used. In some women's memoirs, the 1930s forms a mere prelude to the 'real' business of living through the war - defined overwhelmingly by the experience of the Holocaust or the Resistance (alongside fewer works on the antithesis, collaboration) - and is either glossed over or treated with only superficial attention. The implications of the Spanish civil war as a formative experience are sometimes therefore lost in accounts predicated upon explaining wartime convictions and actions; here, this impact is brought to prominence. In other works, the decade is discussed in greater depth as formative to an individual's social and political development. Robert Gildea reminds us of the importance of private memoirs to historical research. Although shaped by dominant narratives, they diverge at privileged moments to reveal alternative interpretations that have been marginalised or suppressed and thereby contribute to a more nuanced understanding of both actions and thoughts.[20] Chapter Two reminds us of the immediacy of a fascist threat for those involved in resistance activities and in the development and sustaining of networks prior to the outbreak of war, thus contextualising 1940-4 through the experience of the interwar years and avoiding the period being viewed as an aberration or parenthesis in the normal course of French history. In *Les femmes dans l'action sanitaire, sociale et culturelle*, Evelyne Diebolt excluded 1940-4 from her study, commenting that the Second World War would warrant a separate study in itself.[21] Choosing a time period that has more commonly been divided into two - interwar and wartime - again enables a series of themes relating to interiority and agency to be addressed as continuous and evolving, rather than distinct and separate, histories. Memoirs, in particular, personalise the history and chronology.

Research questions, methodology and sources

The primary aim of the thesis is to produce an account of 1934 to 1944 that highlights both experience and interiority through women's personal narratives of social action. It questions the language and terms used to frame debates about women's action and agency during the period, notably drawing out the widespread use of maternalism to both encourage and describe

[20] Robert Gildea, *Marianne in Chains. In Search of the German Occupation* (Basingstoke and Oxford: Macmillan, 2002), p.379.
[21] Diebolt classified developments in the following way: pioneers from 1900 to 1920; the consolidation and extension of women's efforts from 1920 to 1939; and from 1945 onwards, the welfare state. Diebolt, *Les femmes dans l'action*, p.30.

women's commitment from across the associational (feminist, religious, anti-fascist) landscape. In so doing, it enlarges perceptions of social action beyond the informal and communal, contesting the nature of the political as a sphere from which women were excluded and, as such, uneducated. It asks what the relationship between discourses about womanhood and women's actual experience was, and whether these discourses hindered or inspired social action. It investigates the dynamics of 'a woman's movement' of social agency and political change - often segmented by religion, politics and ethnicity, often united by pacifist, anti-fascist, humanitarian and feminist beliefs - and the networks that were generated. It asks in what ways this engagement was framed and how such social activism spurred professional identification - the pursuit of social welfare training, status and livelihood, pushing the boundaries beyond commonly held notions of women's 'suitability' - and political awareness - broadening women's participation in political discussion and rendering actions commonly held to be social and therein apolitical as political in tone and interest. Finally, it explores how experiences prompted women's reconsideration of their personal identity and affiliations.

This thesis uses written sources to investigate women's motivations for, and understand their personal identification with, social action during the period, ranging from memoirs, correspondence, meeting notes, associational pamphlets, police records, to the national press, women's journals and party political publications. A variety of narrative forms have been used by women to commit their thoughts and experiences for posterity, whether in autobiographical, memoir or diary form, or even in fictionalised genres such as novels or plays, each consciously chosen to structure and reflect the experience being narrated and in part the motivation itself behind that narration. Estelle Jelinek considers diaries, journals and notebooks to be a more analogous structure for women's lives than the chronological, linear autobiography in reflecting what she terms the multidimensionality of women's socially conditioned roles.[22] This thesis, however, primarily uses published memoir material, which prompts the need to remain conscious throughout of the bias inherent within such testimony and mindful of how memories are shaped for publication. Acknowledging the interpretative difficulties associated with using personal narrative as a document from which to derive objective, historical fact does not undermine its importance. Instead, this layer of critical questioning

[22] Estelle C. Jelinek, *Women's Autobiography. Essays in Criticism* (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1980), p.19, p.17.

adds significant depths to a project that seeks to reveal the complexities and contradictions of women's engagement in social activism and avoids the dangers of a reductionist approach that considers identity to be stable and static.

Two examples can illustrate this point. In her memoir *La Vie en Rouge*, one of the Parti Communiste Français' (PCF) leading proponents, Jeanette Vermeersch, created a political testament fashioned within a personal history and offered her testimony as both a witness to, and participant in, events.[23] Texts have to be considered with a critical awareness of their subjectivity, acknowledging that perspective may change over time - something Lucy Dawidowicz calls 'the past filtered through present consciousness'. Identities are fluid, not fixed, and memoirs can display both fact and fiction in the writer's need to give coherence to a procession of events and individuals within their lifetime that often possessed no easy chronological or textual explanation.[24] The written form can prove constrictive or indeed elitist, particularly when one considers the preponderance of the political, masculine autobiographical canon, something termed the 'Great Men' tradition.[25] Within Vermeersch's memoirs, however, the personal angle is at times lost to the overriding primacy of Party politics and could be said to represent an 'elitist' account from someone close to party affairs. It cannot be taken as representative of rank and file actions or thoughts. In contrast to the party political tone of Vermeersch's memoir and her construction of self as Party *épouse-mère*, Edith Thomas' *Le Témoin Compromis* reveals a more intimate, somehow more subjective and disillusioned portrait of a(n-ex) Communist, single women, journalist and historian.[26] It is no less powerful in its political commentary, according a different interpretation of women's roles and lives during the period from the perspective of 'an outsider'.

A recent reviewer of Celia Bertin's biography of the feminist Louise Weiss commented upon Weiss' construction of her autobiography against type, avoiding the overly personal in order to emphasise the authority of her voice. In so doing, Angela Kershaw regards Weiss' autobiography as symptomatic of the problematic history of women's relationship to politics in presenting her personal

---

[23] Jeanette Thorez-Vermeersch, *La Vie en Rouge. Mémoires* (Paris: Belfond, 1998).
[24] Liz Stanley, *The auto/biographical I. The theory and practice of feminist auto/biography* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1992), p.11, p.15. Dawidowicz, *Jewish History*, p.26, suggests that 'the process of selection is inextricably linked with the search for coherence and meaning'.
[25] Laura Marcus, *Auto/biographical Discourses. Criticism, Theory, Practice* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1994), p.1.
[26] Edith Thomas, *Le Témoin Compromis* (Paris: Viviane Hamy, 1995).

experiences in terms of public events.[27] Other memoirs studied, such as those from Weiss' feminist contemporaries Marcelle Kraemer-Bach and Cécile de Corlieu, enable us to explore the self-perception of religious women active in the feminist movement and comment on their relationships to the male hierarchy.[28] In this way, the thesis builds a picture of relationships and networks across party political, religious, ethnic and generational lines. For example, the youthful idealism of young women such as Françoise Seligmann and Vivette Samuel, both Jewish with only a marginal affiliation to their ethnic and cultural heritage, deepens our understanding of the impact of maturity on women's personal trajectories in social and political activism.

In taking a comparative approach across party, associational, religious and ethnic lines, this thesis has had, by necessity, to select the women at its centre. The selection process was refined by certain considerations, primarily the quality and volume of material available. Often this was dictated by the prominence of the women themselves, those who held sufficient public 'interest', who chose to record their experiences for posterity and had the means or connections to do so: women such as Vermeersch and Kraemer-Bach, who were close to party politics, for example. The focus, however, is broadened to highlight the experiences of women whose voices have been less well documented, such as Jewish social worker Ruth Lambert, whose unpublished testimony is held in the archives of the Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine (CDJC). Throughout, the focus on personal narrative is complemented by in-depth archival and press research to contextualise the memoirs within a political and associational framework. For example, Gabrielle Duchêne's archives at the Bibliothèque de Documentation Internationale Contemporaine (BDIC) at Nanterre and the numerous dossiers and clippings at the Bibliothèque Marguerite Durand provide additional layers to the interpersonal networks and associational responsibilities in place, thereby creating a 'bigger picture' of women's social activism in the period under study.

The women included in this thesis testify to a broad range of personal experiences and reflections that notably highlight the impact of war on social activism, identity construction and professional development. As a thesis about women's social action in time of war, it was imperative to choose material that

[27] Angela Kershaw, 'Louise Weiss: Politics and Autobiography', *Modern and Contemporary France*, 9, 1 (February 2007), pp.90-92 (p.92).
[28] Marcelle Kraemer-Bach, *La Longue Route* (Paris: La Pensée Universelle, 1988) (the Radical Party) and Cécile de Corlieu, *Carnets d'une Chrétienne Moderniste de 1889 à nos jours* (Paris: Privat, 1970) (Jesuits, Catholic Church).

comments upon both the interwar and wartime experience. Focusing on women's social and political activism in the interwar period inevitably raises questions about the influence and effects of the 1914-1918 war. While a wealth of historical scholarship has taken the First World War as the point from which to study French feminism, gender relations in the labour movement and particularly whether the war years constituted a 'turning point' for women or not, decidedly less literature exists to explain how the Great War experience spurred the development of a gendered and public pacifist movement.[29] As Gabrielle Duchêne's aforementioned archives illustrate, pacifist and anti-fascist social action were important areas of women's activism and associationalism during the interwar years, highlighting both a national and international dimension. In fact, historical commentary has noted the propensity, and energetic activity, of French women to sit on international councils and attend international conferences - for example, as delegates to the League of Nations in Geneva - directly relating this to their exclusion from domestic political affairs.[30] Similarly, Chapter Two's focus on the Spanish Civil War also problematises the line between social and political in demonstrating the blurred nature of humanitarian and anti-war engagement. In focusing on social action related to war - for example, refugee care and camp welfare, and the anti-fascist, pacifist and humanitarian impetuses to such action - rather than more obvious expressions of social welfare activism during the period, such as factory welfare or housing, my research contributes to a field that is underexplored in the existing literature and further complicates the presumed division between social and political action.

This necessary selectivity cannot create a picture of all French women during the period and cannot pay adequate testimony to the diversity of women's social status, political and religious beliefs. Instead, it concentrates upon individuals from three clearly defined groups – Catholic, Communist and Jewish – to highlight complexities, commonalities and differences. My decision to focus on particular individuals and sources was also shaped by a desire to complement and add to the existing literature and debates on Catholic,

---

[29] See Margaret Darrow's review of the historical debates surrounding World War One as a turning point in French women's rights and opportunities in Margaret H. Darrow, *French Women and the First World War: War Stories of the Home Front* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2000), pp.4-5.

[30] See Normal Ingram, *The Politics of Dissent: Pacifism in France, 1919-1939* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991) for a criticism of the paucity of research on the French pacifist movement, pp.1-2.

Communist and Jewish women during the period. It is important to situate the three groups by means of a brief introduction to their interwar positioning in relation to feminism and the social sector. The Catholic women's organisations were the largest numerically and predominantly limited their considerations of women's action to duties rather than rights. Conscious of the Republican secularisation of society after the separation of Church and State (1905) and mindful of declining birthrates, Catholic associationalism took a religious, moral and maternalist tone. Anne Cova highlights how studies of interwar France have historically overlooked Catholic women and she reconnects their action in the social sphere to their relationship with the political elite.[31] Catholic women's groups took different policy positions that were articulated in their journals and conferences: for example, the Union Nationale pour le Vote des Femmes (UNVF) supported women's integral suffrage while the Union Féminine Civique et Sociale (UFCS) supported the family vote. Looking at archival papers and memoirs adds a personal dimension to the existing records of group activities and policies. Chapter One therefore examines the thoughts and experiences of leading Catholic activists such as Cécile de Corlieu (UFCS) and Edmée de la Rochfoucauld (UNVF) to demonstrate their connection to both the Church and political hierarchy and their perception of women's activism and politicisation. Considering the strength of these associations in terms of membership numbers and influence in political circles - through relationships with party figures, lobbying power, for example - and the stances taken, problematises the received relationship of Catholicism to French feminism. This approach complements the current trend towards researching the laity rather than Church hierarchy, to understand more fully how Catholicism operates for both sexes.[32]

Within each political party or collective existed a dominant discourse on the role of women in society. The stance taken towards 'the woman question' in the PCF also problematises definitions of feminism and feminist action. In the 1920s the PCF supported radical feminist issues such as the right to abortion and contraception alongside women's suffrage. By the later 1930s, considerations of gender equality had been modified towards an emphasis on the maternal and the familial - enunciated in the Communist press, and by women members in memoirs and speeches - without disputing the right of

---

[31] Anne Cova, *Au service de l'église, de la patrie et de la famille. Femmes Catholiques et maternité sous la IIIe République* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2000).
[32] Thomas Kselman, 'Catholicism, Christianity and Vichy', *French Historical Studies*, 23, 3 (2000), pp.513-530 (p.514).

women to vote and to work. Hostility to organised feminism, as a bourgeois distraction from the primacy of class struggle, was commonplace. There was no gender-specific organisation for adult women Communists during the period. Young Communist women, competing for space with their Catholic counterparts, were organised effectively into mixed syndicates and associations, and then from 1936 into the Union des Jeunes Filles de France (UJFF), which included women to their mid-20s.[33] Activities included selling newspapers in the streets, running soup kitchens in deprived areas and militating for strike action, thereby women were used specifically as agents of politicisation in local communities, action that would prove significant under the circumstances of Occupation and relayed in numerous memoirs from UJFF activists, such as Cécile Romagon-Ouzoulias.

Against the backdrop of an energetic Communist and Catholic women's press and organisational activities, existing research on French Jewish women's associational life is muted, suggesting that their activities were limited in contrast to the plentiful scholarship available on Anglo-Jewish or American-Jewish welfare, for example.[34] Nancy Green has pointed to the concentration of historical research on philosophical, theoretical and theological questions, commenting that social histories of Jews in Western and Eastern Europe continue to lag behind studies in the United States.[35] Police reports on associational activities, memoirs and the general Jewish press point to the notable Jewish women's presence in non-Jewish associations, in particular those related to female suffrage and white slavery. Leading figures such as

---

[33] The following two publications, taken from speeches given in 1936 by UJFF leaders, encapsulate the objectives of the movement and its activities: Danièle Casanova, *Jeunes Filles de Notre Pays. Rapport présenté au VIIIe Congrès de la Fédération des Jeunesses Communistes de France. Marseilles, 8-12 Mars 1936* (Paris: Imprimerie de Le Baudrier, 1936) and Danièle Casanova et al, *L'Union des Jeunes Filles de France. Pour le bien-être, la paix et l'entr'aide sociale. Rapports présentés au Ier Congrès de l'Union des Jeunes Filles de France, 26-27 Decembre 1936* (Paris: ICC, 1936).

[34] See, for example, Riv-Ellen Prell, *Fighting to Become Americans. Jews, Gender, and the Anxiety of Assimilation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1999); Deborah S.Bernstein (ed.), *Pioneers and Homemakers. Jewish Women in Pre-State Israel* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992); Tony Kushner, 'Sex and Semitism: Jewish Women in Britain in War and Peace' in Panikos Panayi (ed.), *Minorities in Wartime. National and Racial Groupings in Europe, North America and Australia during the Two World Wars* (Oxford and Providence: Berg, 1993), pp.118-149.

[35] Nancy L. Green, 'Gender and Jobs in the Jewish Community: Europe at the Turn of the Twentieth Century', *Jewish Social Studies*, 8, 2/3 (Winter/Spring 2002), pp.39-60.

Yvonne Netter and Marcelle Legrand-Falco were well-known in French social and academic circles.[36] Within the French-Jewish community, Nelly Las has commented upon the weakness of the French section of the International Jewish Council for Women and little has been written in detail about the French branch of the Women's International Zionist Organisation (WIZO).[37] The comparative lack of scholarly attention and contemporary identification with a Jewish feminism reflects two distinctive features of Jewish life: the diversity of Jewishness and what Paula Hyman has termed 'the paradox of assimilation'.[38] Dominique Schnapper believes there is a need for a typology that respects the plurality of Judaisms and their personal meanings and significance, whether religious, cultural or ethnic.[39] Memoirs are therefore a crucial means of understanding personal attachment to Jewishness, as well as notions of femininity, during this period. The process of assimilation was bound to concepts of French citizenship and national identity whereby Jews were expected to be French in public and only exhibit their Jewishness - expressed in cultural or religious practices and beliefs - in private. Jewish women's activism could therefore be said to be doubly subject to the prevailing dichotomies of public-male, private-female.

An overview of the thesis

Chapter One will set the scene with regards to the nature and scale of women's social action in France during the 1930s, drawing out areas of consensus and tension between the different stakeholders in the burgeoning welfare sector and in the evolving relationship between state regulation and private initiative in which female participation was key. It will explore three central themes. Firstly, it points to the interrelatedness of feminism and women's

---

[36] For further information on Yvonne Netter, see BMD, Fonds Yvonne Netter; for Marcelle Legrand-Falco, see CEDIAS-Musée Social, Fonds de Legrand Falco and the numerous papers, clippings and documents within BHVP, Fonds Marie-Louise Bouglé. Paula Hyman, 'The Jewish Body Politic: Gendered Politics in the Early Twentieth Century', *Nashim*, 2 (Spring 1999), pp.37-51 (p.38) comments on the new visibility achieved by Jewish women in the white slavery movement, which significantly raised their awareness and experience of political activism.

[37] Nelly Las, *Femmes Juives dans le Siècle. Histoire du Conseil International des Femmes Juives de 1899 à nos Jours* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1996).

[38] Paula E. Hyman, *Gender and Assimilation in Modern Jewish History. The Roles and Representation of Women* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1995), p.11.

[39] Dominique Schnapper, *Jewish Identities in France. An Analysis of Contemporary Jewry* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1983), xxxvii.

associationalism through both personnel and policy positions, and to the related public debates surrounding femininity and agency, which primarily focused on motherhood. Secondly, the chapter investigates how social action reflected an individual's relationship to her ethnic, religious or political group and how it functioned as an expression of acceptance of, or dissension from, the majority. Thirdly, Chapter One introduces the salience of professionalisation to women involved in social welfare and their increased interest in being perceived as rational, modern professionals through the demonstration of their ability and aptitude.

A glance at Gabriele Duchêne's archives reveals the constellation of associations within which women participated during the interwar years and the cross-fertilisation of personnel and ideas across this civil society. The breadth of women's associational life across interrelated social, cultural, economic, legal and political issues reflected the strength of women's activism despite the failure to achieve suffrage.[40] The UFSF's newspaper, *La Française*, is but one example of the fusion of feminist, *féminine* and social, demonstrating women's wide interests across the sectors and personified in UFSF President Cécile Brunschwicg, whose activities ranged from child welfare and education, factory superintendancy to suffrage. The inter-party and associational debates conducted over the parameters of women's social action, as examined in Chapter One, demonstrate how the term 'feminist' was itself a contested one. For example, socialists and Communists denounced feminism as an ineffectual, bourgeois tactic for class-preservation, seeing social welfare as a means for the conservative and religious middle-classes to extend control, and thereby power and class privilege, over the working class. Catholics meanwhile debated whether feminism was an acceptable or damaging expression of individualism against the primacy of the home and family. Thus the question of feminism and women's activism draws out the central themes of this thesis: the nature and scale of social action; areas of consensus and tension between the different groups; and the role of women and professionalisation in the relationship between state regulation and private initiative.

Sylvie Fayet-Scribe reminds us that historians have been slow to

---

[40] *Vie Sociale. Mouvements de femmes (1919-1940) Guide des sources documentaires*, 11-12 (November-December 1984), Françoise Blum, Colette Chambelland, Michel Dreyfus (eds.) demonstrates the sheer volume of women's associations operating during the period. See also the website of the historical research group Femmes et Associations, at: http://www.femmesetassociations.org. Accessed 12 March 2008.

research the French social welfare sector, a view seconded in a recent edition of *Vie Sociale*. Instead, original works in the field were written by sociologists.[41] Research primarily offered a comparative European or international perspective on the origins of the welfare state, with Susan Pedersen's study of Britain and France complemented by that of Alisa Klaus and Jane Jenson on France and the United States, amongst others.[42] Linda Gordon suggests that the more radical social welfare perspective in Great Britain has meant that more feminist scholarship has been produced on the subject in this country.[43] However, this balance has started to be redressed with studies that take a France-only and gendered approach, for example, Evelyne Diebolt's research into women's associational activism and its impact on the social and cultural development of the welfare state.[44] Despite the diversity of these research approaches, reflecting the contrasting political, financial and institutional objectives at work, social welfare reform across the continent was endowed with a common concern for child and maternal protection, hygiene, professionalisation, familial

---

[41] Sylvie Fayet-Scribe, *Associations Féminines et Catholicisme. De la charité à l'action sociale, XIXe-XXe siècle* (Paris: Les Editions Ouvrières, 1990); Brigitte Bouquet and Jean-Yves Barreyre, 'Introduction', *Vie Sociale*, 4, 2 (2004), http://www.cedias.org/revue/dossiers.php?id_dossier=24&idparent=23. Accessed 21 March 2008. Commenting on a series of collaborative works entitled 'Le social aux prises avec l'histoire', the Introduction to the journal edition presents the history of the social sector as remaining a field of non-historian professionals, despite a few initiatives.

[42] See Susan Pedersen, *Family, Dependence and the Origins of the Welfare State. Britain and France, 1914-1945* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993) and Alisa Klaus, *Every Child a Lion. The Origins of Maternal and Infant Health Policy in the United States and France, 1890-1920* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1993), for example.

[43] Linda Gordon, 'The New Feminist Scholarship on the Welfare State' in Linda Gordon (ed.), *Women, the State, and Welfare* (Wisconsin and London: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990), pp.9-35 (p.30).

[44] Evelyne Diebolt, *Les femmes dans l'action sanitaire, sociale et culturelle, 1901-2001. Les associations face aux institutions* (Paris: Femmes et Associations, 2001). See, for example, Paul Dutton, *Origins of the French Welfare State. The Struggle for Social Reform in France, 1914-1947* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); R.-H. Guerrand and M.-A. Rupp, *Brève Histoire du Service Social en France, 1896-1976* (Toulouse: Privat, 1978); Gisela Bock and Pat Thane (eds.), *Maternity and Gender Policies. Women and the Rise of the European Welfare States, 1880s-1950s* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991); Annie Fourcaut, *Femmes à l'usine. Ouvrières et surintendantes dans les enterprises Françaises de l'entre-deux-guerres* (Paris: François Maspero, 1982); Elinor A. Accampo, Rachel G.Fuchs and Mary Lynn Stewart (eds.), *Gender and the Politics of Social Reform in France, 1970-1914* (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1995).

action, assistance and the so-called need to modernise.[45] Such varied concerns raise several key, interrelated themes that will now be addressed in turn: the interaction of state and private; rationalisation and modernisation; and professionalisation.

The beginning of the century witnessed an evolution in both the terminology and practice of social works, from philanthropy (with its distinct class and religious connotations) to assistance, and from private charitable works to government-regulated public welfare. Using women's own publications and testimony enables us to understand the significance of language in evolving attitudes towards the sector, its regulation and professionalisation. Janet Horne's work on the extra-parliamentary, private think-tank, the Musée Social, expounds the role of social reformers in this rhetorical and practical shift from private charity to state intervention.[46] Increasingly conscious of its contractual right to provide social welfare to its citzenry, government initiatives ventured to shore up and regulate practices operating on the ground, whether private, semi-public, religious, political or municipal in character. Pederson's work, however, comments perceptively on the irony of a situation in which reform of the system was spurred not by progressive parties, but by pronatalists, Catholic women and industrialists.[47]

While unemployment in the Depression era was of grave concern both politically and socially, the greatest impetus to social action remained the question of maternal and, above all, child welfare. Political discourses addressing the falling French birthrate were popular and influential, operating at the highest parliamentary level. In 1935 there was a higher number of deaths than births for the first time since the 1890s, which further heightened contemporary anxieties about French demographic strength in the face of Nazi Germany's overtly militarist displays.[48] French demographic concerns were considered paramount to national health, both militarily and physically. The pro-natalist movement, institutionalised in the Alliance Nationale pour

---

[45] See *Vie Sociale*, 2 (2000), edition entitled 'Histoire de la formation au travail social en Europe', which has articles on Italy, Great Britain, Germany and Belgium.

[46] Janet R. Horne, *A Social Laboratory for Modern France. The Musée Social and the Rise of the Welfare State* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2002).

[47] Pedersen, *Family, Dependence*, p.131.

[48] France was the first Western power to experience a declining birth-rate. For a discussion of '*Denatalité*: The Disappearance of France', see Jackson, *The Dark Years*, pp.30-33.

l'Accroissement de la Population Française (ANAPF), campaigned to raise the birthrate by securing legislative and economic advantages to strengthen the family and thereby France's future as a great, military nation.[49] Promoting population policy was not just a conservative programme, but a means of achieving consensus politics, such was its cultural and social appeal. Proponents of familialism, under its main association the Fédération Nationale des Associations de Familles Nombreuses (FNAFN), took a more religious and moralising approach, articulated through family associations rather than the legislature. The family was to be the cornerstone of society and its moral guarantor.[50] Miranda Pollard's work on the Vichy period demonstrates the consensus already achieved by 1940 over protection of the family and therein the nation.[51] Government, political parties, labour associations, workers, employers, moral, social and religious groupings could all be said to articulate a stake in their vision of the country and its regeneration.

Mary Louise Roberts reminds us that representations of gender were central to the discourse of cultural pessimism. A growing body of work acknowledges that notions of masculinity and paternity were crucial to anxieties concerning natality and demography and that men were accorded some responsibility for depopulation, even though the 1920 legislation regarding contraception and abortion had firmly inscribed responsibility for raising the birthrate firmly in a woman's body.[52] Concentrating upon femininity within gendered discourses should not mask the fact that masculinity, too, was a

---

[49] Originally named Alliance Nouvelle contre la Dépopulation, the ANAPF was set up in 1896. It promoted programmes to increase financial assistance to mothers to offset the cost of childbirth and postnatal care, to offer maternity and childcare programmes and institutions, to provide financial incentives to young married couples with children and to secure the family vote. Ibid., pp.31-32.

[50] Founded in 1921, the Federation looked to unite the numerous family rights' associations that had sprung up after the First World War. For further details, see Antoine Prost, 'Catholic Conservatives, Population, and the Family in Twentieth Century France', *Population and Development Review*, 14, Supplement: Population and Resources in Western Intellectual Traditions (1998), pp.147-164 (p.153).

[51] See Miranda Pollard, *Reign of Virtue. Mobilizing Gender in Vichy France* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

[52] See Mary Louise Roberts, *Civilization Without Sexes. Reconstructing Gender in Postwar France, 1917-1927* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1994); Cheryl A. Koos, 'Fascism, Fatherhood, and the Family in Interwar France: The Case of Anthoine Rédier and the Légion', *Journal of Family History*, 24, 3 (July 1999), pp.317-329; Angus McClaren, *The Trials of Masculinity: Policing Sexual Boundaries, 1870-1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997); Kristen Stromberg Childers, 'Paternity and the Politics of Citizenship in Interwar France', *Journal of Family History*, 26, 1 (January 2001), pp.90-111.

salient issue. Judith Surkis' recent research, for example, demonstrates how marriage was presented to French men as a solution to the problems of modernity, social and technological change: it would stabilise the family through traditional values and therein the birthrate, economic power and military strength.[53] The history of maternity, too, is being written, by historians and social scientists such as Françoise Thébaud, Catherine Fouquet, Yvonne Knibiehler and others.[54] Anne Cova has questioned the real and symbolic mobilisation of maternity and regards its protection as integral to the social and political debates of the period. It was not until the 'second wave' feminism of the 1970s that women argued maternity was a mediating factor against their emancipation.[55] In 1936, 36.4% of the working population was female.[56] In 1938, the birthrate stood at 14.6% per 1,000.[57] These two statistics were commonly perceived to be interrelated in the minds of a socially conservative lobby that considered a woman's place to be in the home, the *mère-épouse-ménagère*. Chapter One thus contributes further to our understanding of the construction of the *mère-épouse-ménagère* as the only legitimate and appropriate identity for women, which had particular resonance within social Catholic circles.

Social Catholics were major stakeholders in debates over social welfare reform, articulating what Pedersen terms 'ideologies of social renewal' in which capitalism could be Christianised by a strong, healthy relationship between employer and worker.[58] Since the Papal encyclical of Rerum Novarum (1891), reaffirmed in Quadragesimo Anno (1931), social welfare had become a key 'calling' for Catholic women, who were central to securing legislative successes regarding family allowances. Chapter One will illustrate the involvement of Catholic social workers in ongoing debates about the regulation and

---

[53] Judith Surkis, *Sexing the Citizen. Morality and Masculinity in France, 1870-1920* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2006).
[54] Françoise Thébaud, *Quand nos grand-mères donnaient la vie. La maternité en France dans l'entre-deux-guerres* (Lyon: Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 1986); Yvonne Knibiehler and Catherine Fouquet, *L'Histoire des Mères du Moyen-âge à nos jours* (Paris: Editions Montalba, 1980); Anne Cova, *Maternité et Droits des Femmes en France (XIXe-XXe siècles)* (Paris: Anthropos, 1997). See also the special edition on maternity in *Clio*, 21 (2005), available online at http://clio.revues.org/sommaire1427.html. Accessed 21 March 2008. Cova, ibid., p.325, points out that all the major political journals had regular columns on motherhood.
[55] Anne Cova, 'Où en est l'histoire de la maternité?' *Clio*, 21 (2005), http://clio.revues.org/document1465.html. Accessed 11 March 2008.
[56] Colin Dyer, *Population and Society in Twentieth-Century France* (London and Sydney: Hodder & Stoughton, 1978), p.67.
[57] Fourcaut, *Ouvrières et surintendantes*, p.171.
[58] Pedersen, *Family, Dependence*, p.227.

professionalisation of the sector, highlighting the implicit tensions in such public pronouncements of women's agency. In adopting a supposedly neutral, non-sectarian position, Catholic women emphasised their professionalism and their consciousness of the need for apolitical, progressive and modern social welfare untainted by the class or confessional prejudice of the past. At a meeting of the Comité Français de Service Social, the Catholic social worker Madeleine Hardouin dated the beginning of the term 'social action' to the point at which Paul Strauss had taken over at the Ministry of Hygiene, Welfare Work and Social Security Provision.[59] Action, with its attendant inference of positive engagement and agency, was in vogue, a 'buzzword', as its continued use throughout the sources will demonstrate. Taken from the aforementioned Service Social meeting, the following excerpt stresses that, personal motivations aside, the role of any professional social worker was to serve. Duty and responsibility to those in need were paramount:

> 'Il est impossible de ramener une seule conception du Service social l'ensemble de tous ces problèmes. Enfin, ce qui importe, c'est la valeur individuelle, morale et sociale des travailleuses sociales appelées à "servir".'[60]

This use of the language of service is a theme that will recur throughout the thesis. Written from a Catholic perspective, *servir* could carry additional religious connotations, of social action as a Christian duty. Katrin Schultheiss' work underlines the extent to which there was a 'ubiquitous association of women and public service with religious vocation' and a shared language of devotion, duty and sacrifice, despite the increasing secularisation of the nursing profession.[61] This thesis explores how language - of service and notably of maternal and familial duty - operated across the 'denominations' to emphasise each group's sense of purpose and to stigmatise the confessional or political inflection of others. Linked to maternalist discourse was the ubiquitous use of 'mission'. Ostensibly religious in nature, the language of mission functioned across the groups as a convenient referential framework in depicting women's social

---

[59] BDIC, Dossier F Delta 1160, 'Services Sociaux en France (1937-1978)', *Comité Français de Service Social, Journées Nationales de Service Social*, 23-24 Octobre 1937 (Paris: Editions Masson & Co, 1937), p.47. Mlle Hardouin was the superintendent for the social insurance funds, Caisse de Compensation de la Région Parisienne (CCRP) and was instrumental in the creation of Service Social, which was to become an important model for other welfare organisations.

[60] Ibid., p.59.

[61] Schultheiss, *Bodies and Souls*, p.3.

activism as innately tied to concepts of women's duty and responsibility.

Social action provided women with self-fulfilment, not just in carrying out their 'pre-destined' or biologically pre-determined 'mission' as carer and nurturer, but as a career in its own right. Women's individual ability was as important to social welfare campaigners as their supposed aptitude, and gave weight to their legitimisation as trained, scientific and modern practitioners rather than voluntary, charitable helpers. Class-consciousness remained prevalent in the 1930s and can be taken as a distinguishing element of the comparative study, particularly with reference to the social works of native (predominantly middle-class) and immigrant (working-class) Jews, and Communist activities. Chapter One notes how Christian syndicalism and social Catholicism, as evidenced in the social sphere, prompted greater attention to working-class issues and needs. Cova has aptly demonstrated the 'feminist' successes of social Catholic women in setting the agenda for welfare reform.[62]

Industrialists, alongside social Catholics and pronatalists, were the other key operatives in the development of a family allowance system, the administration of which they sought to control. This provoked anger and criticism from the Left, who viewed it as a tool of pacification in granting limited economic benefits to the working class in lieu of raising their wages whilst operating as a break on strike activity. Industrialists could thereby extend their influence into the working-class home, managing lives, ensuring loyalty and subsequent productivity.[63] The state in effect sanctioned, regulated and extended initiatives already under way, conscious of the prestige attached to welfare initatives in terms of electoral support from industrialists, reformers and from workers benefitting from a structured system of allowances. Governments had to be seen to be acting on the 'social question' and its attendant concerns - natality, alcoholism, prostitution, social hygiene, for example - hence it was imperative to regain a tighter grip on the social landscape. Popular sensitivities were particularly heightened when the health and welfare of children were brought into question. For example, in a July 1936 speech at the PCF national conference, Jacques Duclos claimed that 186,000 Parisians lived in lodgings

---

[62] Cova, *Au service de l'église*.

[63] S. Trist, 'Le Patronat face à la question des loisirs ouvriers: avant 1936 et après', *Mouvement Social*, 150 (1990), pp.45-57, discusses the interest that the patronat took in managing the leisure time, as well as working hours, of its employees. See also M. F. Charrier and E. Feller (eds.), *Aux origines de l'action sociale: l'invention des services sociaux aux chemins de fer* (Paris: Erès, 2001) for the implicit link between patronat actions and industrial development.

considered dangerous by the hygiene services and that in seven Parisian arrondissements the number of undernourished children at public schools had risen from 20% to 50%.[64] There was much political capital to be gained by those who called attention to the 'social question' and highlighted the government's failure to address serious issues. Government activity began to increase: following on from the success of mutual aid societies, set up as charitable or industrial endeavours, legislation was passed in 1930 requiring workers to possess social insurance against disability, illness and death, for example. In 1932, government legislation forced all companies to have family allowance funds in place. Paul Dutton has pointed out that the dual system of social insurance and family allowances were both class and gender-biased therefore women were affected in two ways.[65] In 1933 the Ministry of Labour took over formal supervision of the system in which all adult workers, irrespective of their gender, received benefits according to the number of dependant children.[66]

Allied to efforts to create a more systematic, national approach to social policy was the convergence under the later Third Republic of professionals in new fields, such as engineering and architecture, whose rationalisation and planning techniques complemented the growing interest in housing, garden city and social hygiene initiatives being implemented at municipal and national level. It is important to discuss briefly the significance of municipalities to debates surrounding professionalisation of the 'social question'. The localities were also key to cross-party collaboration and competititon, demonstrated in Chapter One with particular reference to Communist-Catholic rapprochement in the Parisian suburb of Ivry-sur-Seine and hostility from the radical Right. Residents in the municipalities were politicised through a network of clubs, groups and committees that organised women's groups, *colonies de vacances*, dispensaries, public gardens and bathing facilities, for example. For the Communists and socialists, in particular, animating local life was vital to the political project, as Katherine Burlen's work on Henri Sellier's experiments on the model of a British garden city demonstrated.[67] As the Socialist mayor of Suresnes and Popular Front Minister of Health, Sellier in particular oversaw a

---

[64] Jacques Duclos, *Pour l'Union des Femmes de France* (Paris: Editions du Comité Populaire de Propagande, 1936), p.12.
[65] Dutton, *Origins*, p.4.
[66] Pedersen, *Family, Dependence*, p.258.
[67] See Katherine Burlen (ed.), *La Banlieue Oasis. Henri Sellier et les cités-jardins 1900-1940* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de Vincennes, 1987). See, also, Annie Fourcaut, *Bobigny, Banlieue Rouge* (Paris: Les Editions Ouvrières et Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, 1986).

large increase in female social welfare professionals entering government service in his expansion of social services in the municipalities. In August 1936, for example, he created a Commission de Coordination Sanitaire et Sociale in each department in order to regulate and co-ordinate social welfare activities.[68]

Within public debates about social reform, widely used to legitimate party-political lines, women's voices could therefore be heard through their position in syndicates, associations, welfare training schools and in the municipalites. The development of specific professions, such as factory superintendant - through which women occupied a political and social space between employer and employee - were engendered by the dislocation imposed by modern industrial life. Such positions also reflected heightened interest in, and perceptions of, the need to address the social questions of the day, especially those related to better health, hygiene and living conditions. Chapter One will demonstrate the centrality of women to political projects to provide better welfare provision, as campaigners and practitioners. The sheer involvement of such varied women is testament to their experience in this field and to their increased confidence in the articulation of a public stance on issues of social welfare and the profession itself. The hierarchy and legislative remained masculine, however, and relationships were not without gendered, and political, tensions.[69]

Social workers were a complementary force to the other 'appropriate' careers for single women already in existence at that time, such as the nursing and teaching professions in which feminised public service was a form of substitute mothering and social housekeeping.[70] A comparative perspective enables us to highlight the prevalence of maternalist discourse across the different groups. The presentation of social welfare as social motherhood, as a strategy to elicit popular support and enlarge women's activism, again highlights the paradoxical nature of using a position of 'difference' to achieve gender equality (through greater responsibilities and professionalism). Broad agreement over women's 'natural' aptitude in areas of health, hygyiene and childcare meant that 'essentialist' rationales were in fact used by the women themselves to secure access to better training and qualifications. Linda Clark, Katrin Schultheiss, Judith Wishnia, Jo Margadant Burr and others have focused on the

---

[68] Guerrand and Rupp, *Brève Histoire*, pp.75-6.
[69] Françoise Blum, 'Regards sur les mutations du travail social au XXe siècle', *Le Mouvement Social*, 199, 2 (2002), pp.83-94 (p.85).
[70] Clark, *Gender and Public Administration*, p.143.

professionalisation of women in certain, particularly the service and tertiary, sectors during the later Third Republic.[71] Margadant argues that women's acknowledgement of sexual difference and the cultural ideals of motherhood conveyed legitimacy on their professional status.[72] The unparalleled number of women present in the teaching and nursing professions was not matched by a similar presence in administrative positions within the Health or Education Ministries, however.[73] Margaret Darrow has shown how, during World War One, the common cultural perception was that femininity, not training, made one a nurse.[74] This thesis describes the ways in which women secured consensus during the period that both femininity and training were crucial to social welfare.

As the decade progressed there was significantly less agitation seen for women's political and civil rights, but diverse political associations were nonetheless articulating and manifesting a specifically female-focused agenda. Before the critical years of 1934-8, hopes had not faded that suffrage and amendments to the Civil Code would be approved. Generational factors, however, were also at work. Younger women felt distanced from the old campaigns for suffrage - witness Louise Weiss' attempts in 1935 to reinvigorate the feminist cause through La Femme Nouvelle - and were attracted by newer campaigns, such as unionisation, anti-fascism and pacifism. Helmut Gruber comments that 'caught between pacifism and patriotism, women acknowledged

---

[71] See Clark, *Gender and Public Administration;* Schultheiss, *Bodies and Souls*; Jo Burr Margadant, *Madame le Professeur. Women Educators in the Third Republic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990); Mona Siegel, *The Moral Disarmament of France. Education, Pacifism, and Patriotism, 1914-1940* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Judith Wishnia, *The Proletarianizing of the Fonctionnaires. Civil Service Workers and the Labor Movement Under the Third Republic* (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1990).

[72] Margadant, ibid., p.7, points out that previous scholarly attention had been paid to working women, by Louise Tilly - see, for example, Louise A. Tilly and Joan Wallach Scott, *Women, Work and Family* (New York and London: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1978) - and bourgeois women's 'employment', by Bonnie G. Smith, *Ladies of the Leisure Class. The Bourgeoises of Northern France in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981). However, she believes that this new attention on women's careers was something different in articulating middle-class values and the discourse of a bureaucratic state, and not just the traditional acknowledgement of familialism and sexual difference.

[73] Clark, *Gender and Public Administration*, p.240.

[74] Margaret H. Darrow, 'French Volunteer Nursing and the Myth of War Experience in World War I,' *American Historical Review*, 101, 1 (February 1996), pp.80-106 (p.92).

in the late 1930s that their own agenda would have to wait.'[75] I would argue that the anti-fascist struggle was considered part of their agenda, not separate from it. In Chapter Two, I show how this was articulated in the social sphere and manifested by political engagement, with particular reference to the Spanish Civil War.

It was the Popular Front government of 1936-7, under the leadership of the Jewish, Socialist Prime Minister, Léon Blum, that appeared to offer women their greatest hope of securing legislative equality. Historical research on the interwar years in France has tackled the Popular Front from many angles, concentrating on its cultural programme and the array of social and labour legislation that it promulgated, sparked by the June 1936 industrial strikes.[76] Blum was to appoint three women to undersecretarial positions: the eminent scientist Irène Joliot-Curie to the post of Scientific Research, the retired primary schoolteacher and socialist Suzanne Lacore to the Protection of Childhood within Henri Sellier's Health Ministry and the Radical, Jewish feminist Cécile Brunschwicg to Education under Jean Zay.[77] The state, exemplified by these three appointments, was legitimating women's stake in social policy - in effect sanctioning participation for decades - and reconfirming those areas in which women's abilities were proven. The prestigious ministries remained bastions of male power - women had only been appointed, rather than elected, to undersecretarial positions. Nonetheless historians such as Siân Reynolds highlight the significance of women being sanctioned as political players, albeit in socially accepted areas. This thesis fits well with Reynolds' concept of 'alternative politics' in assessing the strategies for politicisation developed by the different constellations of women through social action and professionalisation in the sector.[78] 'Alternative politics' has particular resonance to women's varied

---

[75] Helmut Gruber and Pamela Graves, 'Introduction' in Helmut Gruber and Pamela Graves (eds.), *Women and Socialism/Socialism and Women. Europe Between the Two World Wars* (New York and Oxford: Bergahn Books, 1998), pp.1-24 (p.6).

[76] See, for example, Pascal Ory, *La Belle Illusion: Culture et politique sous le signe du Front populaire* (Paris: Plon, 1994); Julian Jackson, *The Popular Front in France, Defending Democracy 1934-38* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); Martin S. Alexander and Helen Graham (eds.), *The French and Spanish Popular Fronts. Comparative Perpectives* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

[77] See Siân Reynolds, 'Women and the Popular Front in France: The Case of the Three Women Ministers', *French History*, 8, 2 (1994), pp.196-224. When the Popular Front government fell in June 1937, these women lost their political positions; Joliot-Curie had in fact resigned shortly after her appointment.

[78] Ibid. and Siân Reynolds, *Alternative Politics*.

social activism in refugee care, unemployment initiatives and anti-fascism, for example, in the 1936-9 period, which was marked by the Popular Front government, the outbreak of civil war in neighbouring Spain and appeasement.

Personal testimonies from French women involved in providing support to the beleaguered Spanish Republic during the civil war of 1936-9 form the primary source base for Chapter Two. The Spanish civil war has been studied from a number of angles - political, cultural, literary and gendered - with work by Danièle Bussy Genevois, Yannick Ripa, Mary Nash and others detailing both the experiences of Spanish women and the discourses constructed around their gender during the period.[79] My own analysis takes a novel perspective, addressing French women's involvement and the extent to which the Spanish civil war presented these women with new opportunities to articulate themselves as political beings as well as enforcing prevailing limitations on their public activism. Firstly, it examines the issue of women's mobilisation and politicisation in a cause, which raised contemporary controversy over notions of women's 'appropriate' involvement and the boundaries within which such agency should operate. Secondly, the extent to which Spain functioned as a means for women to express their thoughts about France itself is explored through autobiographical materials, the critical use of which as a source base have been problematised briefly in this introduction. Thirdly, relating back to historical debate over the 1930s as a 'failed opportunity' for French feminism, the chapter finishes with a commentary on the significance of age and adulthood as an element within anti-fascist support for the Spanish Republic, noting the pertinence of social activism to a generation reaching its maturity in the later 1930s. The discussion then points to anti-fascism as a medium for women's politicisation, which is a salient factor in the following three chapters' exploration of politicisation under Occupation, contributing to one of the thesis' central arguments that 1940 did not represent a break in women's social activism or political involvement.

Chapter Three opens with a discussion of French women engaged 'in the

---

[79] Danièle Bussy Genevois, 'The Women of Spain from the Republic to France', in Françoise Thébaud (ed.), *A History of Women in the West, V: Toward a Cultural Identity in the Twentieth-Century*, (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1994), pp.177-193; Yannick Ripa, 'Féminin/Masculin: les enjeux du genre dans l'Espagne de la Seconde République au Franquisme', *Le Mouvement Social*, 198, 1 (January-March 2002), pp.111-127; Mary Nash, 'Women's Role in the Spanish Civil War' in Christine Fauré (ed.), *Political and Historical Encyclopedia of Women* (New York and London: Routledge, 2003) pp.347-356.

service of the nation' in social works to assist national defence and then, following defeat and Occupation, providing social welfare to those in need. Civic defence posed the question of women's mobilisation and raised parallels to the First World War experience in women's demonstration of their patriotism, concern to be 'doing something' and in adjusting to the results of diplomatic and political machinations from which they were formally excluded. In relating women's action and experiences in 1939 back to that of 1914, my understanding owes much to Margaret Darrow's research into voluntary and professional nursing, and histories of 'first wave' feminism's response to the *Union Sacrée*.[80] Chapter Three then concentrates on the Occupation experience, exploring the social actions of those women deemed authentic representatives of the nation and thereby essentialised and harnessed in the service of Vichy's National Revolution. Research on wartime French Catholicism has documented the responses of the Church hierarchy to anti-Semitic persecution and the unfolding of the Final Solution, as well as Church youth and education policies as expressions of a resurgent political and spiritual Catholicism.[81] Vesna Drapac has taken a different approach, examining how spirituality and faith functioned in the parish under Occupation, and has criticised earlier histories for their lack of attention to gender.[82] Certainly sparse historical attention has been paid to the specific experiences of Catholic women under Occupation. In fact, Catholic women have generally been presumed to be Pétainist *femmes au foyer*, obediently following the dictates of the Vichy regime and its conservative programme, the *Révolution Nationale*. Using publications from the sanctioned women's press, particularly the UFCS, as well as memoirs by committed Catholics such as Cécile de Corlieu and Madeleine F. du Fresnes, women's social action reveals a more complicated picture than the idealised portrait of docile, subservient femininity painted by Vichy. Historians such as Miranda Pollard and Francine Muel-Dreyfus have investigated the ways in which gender was fundamental to Vichy's project to re-order society, concentrating on

---

[80] Darrow, *Home Front*; also, see Hause, *Women's Suffrage.*
[81] Gerard Cholvy, *Histoire des organisations et mouvements chrétiens de jeunesse en France (XIXe-XXe siècles)* (Paris: Cerf, 1999); W.D. Halls, *The Youth of Vichy France* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981); W.D. Halls, *Politics, Society, and Christianity in Vichy France* (Oxford and Providence: Berg Publishers, 1995); Renée Bedarida, *Les Catholiques dans la guerre, 1939-1945: Entre Vichy et la Résistance* (Paris: Hachette Littératures, 1998).
[82] Vesna Drapac, *War and Religion. Catholics in the Churches of Occupied Paris* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1998), p.168, footnote 38.

gendered discourse and legislation.[83] There is now a mature body of work looking at the everyday experiences of women in Vichy France, at how an authoritarian government attempted to regulate women's lives through gender policies that entrenched a bifurcated view of femininity, and the effects of war on the relationship between the sexes.[84] Recent research on masculinity by Luc Capdevila, Limore Yagil and others - complementing research into masculinity during the interwar era - has highlighted that the construction of masculinity, too, was a salient feature of Vichy political practice.[85]

Vichy essentialised women as mothers, intrinsically tied to their biological capabilities. Susan Grayzel has reflected upon motherhood as a means of talking to the nation in a universal way, irrespective of class, gender or religion.[86] Maternalism could thus function as consensus politics, to authenticate Vichy's quest for political legitimacy. Vichy, however, operated to dispel those deigned unwomanly from its reform programme as unrepresentative of French womanhood. Chapter Three will explore the ways in which some Catholic women deviated from this essentialisation, articulating a public femininity in certain areas, notably in municipal administration. Women had sat on municipal councils since 1926 when the PCF had begun the practice of co-opting women onto councils in their municipalities, working in the fields of education and social services.[87] Relating back to discussions in Chapter One over the use of 'natural, feminine' attributes to further public responsibility, women's activism in the municipality also demonstrated continuity in the depiction of the family as the key cell of society, represented as the commune, then the nation write large.

---

[83] Pollard, *Reign of Virtue*; Francine Muel-Dreyfus, *Vichy and the Eternal Feminine. A Contribution to a Political Sociology of Gender* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2001).

[84] See, for example, Hanna Diamond, *Women and the Second World War in France, 1939-48: Choices and Constraints* (Harlow: Longman, 1999); Luc Capdevila et al. (eds.), *Hommes et femmes dans la France en guerre 1914-1945* (Paris: Payot & Rivages, 2003).

[85] Luc Capdevila, 'The Quest for Masculinity in a Defeated France, 1940-1945', *Contemporary European History*, 10, 3 (2001), pp.423-445; Limore Yagil, *L'homme nouveau et la Révolution Nationale de Vichy* (Paris: Septentrion, 1997).

[86] Susan R.Grayzel, *Women's Identities at War. Gender, Motherhood, and Politics in Britain and France during the First World War* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), p.2.

[87] From spring 1925, Ivry-sur-Seine's municipal council was Communist-led and a woman, Madeleine Rigault, was appointed. The PCF ran female candidates for election to municipal office throughout the Paris region. See Laura Lee Downs, 'Municipal Communism and the Politics of Childhood in Ivry-sur-Seine, 1925-1960', *Past and Present*, 166, 1 (February 2000), pp.205-241 (p.205).

Women's natural place within the domestic sphere therefore placed them at the forefront of municipal activism.

The positioning of women *au foyer* situated them not only as intrinsically tied to home and family, but in the private, domestic sphere. Margaret Higonnet has commented that whereas men imagine the domestic as a retreat from politics, women experience the profoundly political nature of domestic life and this was especially true in wartime.[88] The politicised nature of the domestic will be explored in the following chapters with particular reference to housewives' demonstrations as a resolutely political challenge to the administration and its abject failures to provide for the population. The very title of Dominique Veillon's 1995 work *Vivre et Survivre en France* suggests that to survive was a feat during the period, necessitating resourcefulness and adaptation in feeding, clothing and running the household.[89] Similarly Hanna Diamond speaks of women being forced into questioning and confronting the government and its legality by the everyday survival processes of food, clothing and leisure time.[90] Women shouldered the responsibilities of the household while subject to severe financial constraints, such as lack of the male breadwinner's wages, discriminating Vichy labour legislation, excessive German requisitioning, currency difficulties, lack of available fresh produce and black market profiteering. My research shows how women's involvement in local community and municipal life implicated them in such issues, which were both social and political, strengthening the continuities between interwar and wartime social action and associationalism, predominantly in the sphere of child care, health and hygiene.

The memoirs of the social worker Madeleine Delbrêl exemplify the continuity of her social action as both community welfare and spiritual provision across the demarcation line of 1940. Vichy sanctioned women's social welfare, albeit in a limited fashion as Sarah Fishman has demonstrated with regards to

---

[88] Margaret R. Higonnet cited in Helen Cooper, Adrienne Munich and Susan Squier, 'Introduction' in Helen M. Cooper et al (eds.), *Arms and the Woman: War, Gender and Literary Representation* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), xvii.

[89] Dominique Veillon, *Vivre et Survivre en France 1939-1947* (Paris: Editions Payot & Rivages, 1995). Veillon points to the importance of studying the 38 million French men and women who were not engaged by Vichy or the Resistance but in the difficulties of day-to-day living, p.7.

[90] Diamond, *Choices and Constraints*, p.70.

prisoner of war (POW) wives.[91] This sanction corresponded closely to the regime's espousal of separate spheres, with welfare placed in the private, female sphere. The regime's Secours National worked alongside a plethora of related private and international institutions. Professionalism remained an important facet irrespective of the increased pressure placed on systems to cope with the burgeoning number of those in need. Solidarity and aid to the repressed, despite Vichy promulgations over 'inclusion' and 'exclusion', intended to 'naturally' draw Catholic women into an exclusionary project, reminds us that women cannot be 'reduced' to their communal identity. In this way, memoirs of the Vichy years can provide a valuable alternative perspective to the fixed discourse of the state, illustrating how women constructed their own actions.

Chapter Four concentrates on a group of women marginalised and vilified by Vichy, the Communists. In fact, Communist women were placed in a strictly defined role vis-à-vis the government from September 1939 when the party was dissolved by Prime Minister Edouard Daladier. Thus Communist women could draw upon a distinct set of pre-war experiences, in the political fight against anti-fascism, for example, in being forced to continue political agitation clandestinely. Drawing upon memoirs and the clandestine press, this chapter examines the PCF's use of pre-war housewives and anti-fascist committees to generate a movement of popular anger at Vichy and the occupiers. Political networks, familial and personal ties bonded group solidarity, based on ideological conviction, further. This chapter owes much to Paula Schwartz's pioneering work on gender, Communism and social-political activism. The predominant historical scholarship relating to Communist women in wartime has been that of their Resistance activities: Margaret Rossiter and Margaret Collins Weitz, among others, have detailed the haphazard and often temporary nature of women's involvement with resistance activities and their inherent self-effacement in seeking recognition for this after the war had ended.[92] The publication of the Union des Femmes Françaises' (UFF) colloquium - held in November 1975 to highlight the agency, dedication and initiative of women in the Resistance - joined a growing body of edited collections of oral testimony and memoirs that publicised women's stories and

---

[91] Sarah Fishman, *We Will Wait. Wives of French Prisoners of War, 1940-1945* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1991).
[92] Margaret L. Rossiter, *Women in the Resistance* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1986); Margaret Collins Weitz, *Sisters in the Resistance. How Women Fought to Free France, 1940-1945* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1995).

brought them from anonymity, heralding the extent to which Communist women shared in the liberation of France from Nazism and state collaboration.[93] The PCF was adept at involving and thereby politicising young and adult women in the Resistance cause, for example, through the distribution of clandestine tracts. The young Jewish student Annie Kreigel noted that the Communists would accept her, aged only 16, and through it she felt she could transcend religious, racial and national boundaries.[94] Women's Communist-led committees - which were to become united under the UFF in 1944 - notably gave women the opportunity and structure with which to express themselves. Karen Offen has pointed out the significance of the choice of name: the original UFF was formed at the time of the Paris Commune to insist that women's rights be politically represented and heard. In making a historical link between the Commune and the Resistance, Communist women were aware of the power of symbolism and historical tradition, as well as their right to participate as citizens.[95]

Joan Scott's articulation of the paradox of 'equality through difference' is instrumental to Chapter Four's exploration of the PCF's campaign to mobilise and therein politicise women through maternalist rhetoric and their domestic role. Communist women were forced to reconcile their ideological viewpoints and their gender with an explicitly political challenge to the regime. One of the notable bones of contention came with martial femininity and the demilitarisation of female combatants, seen also in Chapter Two with the Spanish militias. Helen Cooper's edited collection emphasises the cultural endorsement of gender roles as male-warlike, female-passive and explores the 'paradigmatic narrative of 'men's wars'' building upon the Western literary tradition of 'arms and the man'.[96] Female military leadership was indeed rare and women did not move into these positions as the war progressed.[97] In fact, men increasingly imposed their control once the Resistance was institutionalised (1942 onwards) and

---

[93] *Les Femmes dans La Résistance* (à l'initiative de l'Union des Femmes Françaises) (Paris: Editions du Rocher, 1975). See, also, Simone Bertrand (ed.), *Mille Visages. Un Seul Combat. Les femmes dans la Résistance* (Paris: Les Editeurs Français Reunis, 1965); Marianne Monestier, *Elles étaient cent et mille. Femmes dans la Résistance* (Paris: Fayard, 1972) and Ania Francos, *Il était des femmes dans la Résistance* (Paris: Stock, 1978), amongst others.
[94] Annie Kriegel, *Ce que j'ai cru comprendre* (Paris: Laffont, 1991), p.770.
[95] Karen Offen, *European Feminisms, 1700-1950. A Political History* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), p.146. See, also, H. R. Kedward, *In Search of the Maquis. Rural Resistance in Southern France, 1942-1944* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), p.91.
[96] Cooper, 'Introduction' in Cooper et al., *Arms and the Woman*, xiii.
[97] Paula Schwartz, *Partisanes and Gender Politics in Vichy France*, French Historical Studies, 16, 1 (Spring 1989), pp.126-151.

particularly with the intensification of Maquis-Milice hostilities. The chapter contributes to a reconceptualisation of the non-military, social sphere as politicised and highlights the continued pertinency of questions surrounding women's professionalism and training.

Finally, Chapter Five opens with a brief consideration of Jewish women's participation in civil defence initiatives in the approach to war, exploring the extent to which this social action revealed a dual identity - demonstrating patriotism in passive defence works while providing ongoing community solidarity to Jews in need. Predominantly, the chapter explores the question of identity construction as expressed through personal testimony. The public nature of social segregation, impoverishment and internment forced Jews into a very personal reflection on what it meant to be Jewish. Fascism, mass immigration and the expulsions from the Reich in the latter part of the decade had prompted Jewish women within France to reconfigure their perception of ethnicity and to identify more specifically with this shared cultural and/or religious tradition. As many women later testified, the experience of persecution made them Jewish.

The experience of the Holocaust has dominated Jewish historiography following the Second World War and published research reflects this, with a large number of testimonies and works available on both the mechanics and experience of the 'Final Solution to the Jewish Question'.[98] This is complemented by a growing body of research on internment, concentration and extermination camps set up throughout Nazi-occupied Europe. In France, focus has been placed on the southern camps, which at the outbreak of war housed the Spanish Republican refugees and the overspill from population expulsions, prior to the joint Vichy-Nazi assault against the Jews resident in France.[99] Alongside the wealth of materials available on the Jewish community and the Final Solution in France, research has moved from Jewish leaders and institutions towards complicating the picture with the everyday. More recent

---

[98] The following works provide an example of the volume of testimony now available from Jewish women who were children, teenagers and adults at that time: Jacqueline Mesnil-Amar, *Ceux qui ne dormaient pas. 1944-1946 (Fragments de journal)* (Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1957); Odette Meyers, *Doors to Madame Marie* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1997); Odette Abadi, *Terre de Détresse. Birkenau-Bergen-Belsen* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1995).

[99] See Monique-Lise Cohen and Eric Malo (eds.), *Les camps de sud-ouest de la France, 1939-1944: exclusion, internement et déportation* (Toulouse: Editions Privat, 1993), for example.

publications highlight Jewish individual, as well as group, reactions to racial legislation or take a local focus, again mirroring the trends of a wider French historiography looking at the everyday under Vichy.[100] Poznanski and others point out how both the Jewish and French communities' perception of Vichy evolved alongside one another, determining the direction of activity or restraint, and how the plurality of the Jewish counter-society - defined racially, excluded from public office, the professions and cultural institutions, and at risk of internment and deportation - matched that of the community at large. There has been a tendency to concentrate on the leadership of institutions, particularly Jewish ones such as the officially sanctioned Union Générale des Israélites de France (UGIF), but there appears little research that accords women's activities a primary place in such agencies, which were to become invaluable as centres of community in the face of repression, persecution and deportation. Jewish women operated in both spheres, the official and the clandestine, the sanctioned UGIF and the quasi-private social welfare initiatives of rue Amelot, amongst others. Primacy was accorded by all relief agencies to children and women played a primary role in caring for refugee children, placing them in homes, protecting their identities for the future, providing food and shelter. Poznanski spoke of the Jewish aid agencies as the bridge between the French and immigrant Jewish communities.[101] Another trend in recent historiography has been to study points of contact not departure, referring to the traditional depiction of the two communities - assimilated and acculturated - as co-existing uneasily in a climate of mutual suspicion, if not outright antipathy. Thus the social terrain explored in this thesis is key to a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between the two.

Allied to this focus on identity negotiation and construction, Chapter Five points to the continued salience of professionalism: welfare training was provided 'on the job' for many young women without experience, although pre-war associational activities and contacts - in scouting particularly - regularly

---

[100] The following is a selection from the numerous secondary literature available on the subject: Jacques Adler, *The Jews of Paris and the Final Solution: Communal Response and Internal Conflicts, 1940-1944* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987); Richard I. Cohen, *The Burden of Conscience. French Jewish Leadership During the Holocaust*, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1987); Donna F. Ryan, *The Holocaust and the Jews of Marseille: the enforcement of anti-Semitic policies in Vichy France* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996); Renée Poznanski, *Jews in France During World War II* (Hanover and London: Brandeis University Press, University Press of New England, 2001).

[101] Poznanski, *Jews in France*, p.17.

provided them with a degree of practical knowledge and awareness. The chapter traces the personal and professional renegotiation of identity experienced by many Jewish women during the Occupation, using archival documentation and personal testimonies from young women engaged in official and clandestine activities on behalf of the Œuvres de Secours aux Enfants (OSE) in particular. Therefore there are two significant aspects to choosing Jewish women as a focus, enabling me to draw out questions of identity and to explore the relationship of Jewishness to their actions in the social sphere, and in examining Jewish women's associational and public life in the 1930s as fundamental to their Occupation experience. Agency, self-expression and identity consciousness are to be highlighted, rather than framing all Jewish experience by the Holocaust and thereby occluding its diversity, or continuing a tendancy to consider the male, immigrant experience - in public and in the workplace - as paradigmic of this period.[102]

Pierre Vidal-Naquet has perceptively commented on the need in testimony for both experience and reflection, which in many cases needed time to develop at a distance to the events unfolding.[103] The testimonies written by women who endured the social, economic and political upheavals of the decade between 1934 and 1944 share the imperative to record their memories in asserting 'I' and often 'we', thereby underlining the significance of both personal and shared experience - of autophylography, the self as collective, as much as autoautobiography, the self as individual.[104] This thesis finds a commonality of experience based upon their identity as women, exploring whether Catholic, Communist and Jewish social activists in the interwar and war years had a shared sense of mission - in its secular and spiritual sense - and understanding how these social works were key acts of self- and collective fulfilment. While suggesting areas of consensus, the chapters will explore the tensions existing

---

[102] Jane Freedman and Carrie Tarr, 'Preface' in Jane Freedman and Carrie Tarr (eds.), *Women, Immigration and Identities in France* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2000), vii. Jewish men interacted with the host society in the workplace, civic, public and business arenas. Women's socialisation, however, occurred differently through the family and the domestic, for example, as a consumer.

[103] Pierre Vidal-Naquet, *The Jews. History, Memory and the Present* (New York: Colombia University Press, 1996), p.180. Vidal-Naquet discusses the importance of the timing of testimonies and the need for a critical evaluation of the ways in which these texts interact as immediate sources (1945) or influenced by hindsight (1970s on).

[104] James Olney, 'The Value of Autobiography for Comparative Studies: African vs Western Autobiography' in William L. Andrews (ed.), *African American Autobiography, A Collection of Critical Essays* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1993) cited in Romain, *Connecting Histories*, p.21.

between the different groups over femininity, ethnicity, confessionalism, politicisation and professionalisation, their competing visions for the social sphere and dissension over the direction and channelling of agency therein. The thesis will then conclude with commentary on the immediate post-war period, pointing to the nature of ongoing disputes over political authenticity and the 'appropriation' of legitimacy through activism in the social sphere. Professionalisation remained a key facet in the subsequent institutionalisation of the modern welfare state, which was achieved as this thesis demonstrates in no small measure by the public activism of committed women whose individual and communal actions revealed the complexity of their private identity.

Chapter One: Negotiating a professional space: political, ethnic and confessional identity in women's social action in the 1930s.

> 'Cet enregistrement d'expériences personnelles resterait coupablement fragmentaire si je n'y faisais allusion au service social qui constitua, pour moi, un complément d'éducation ainsi qu'une planche de salut.'[1]

The progressive Catholic feminist Cécile de Corlieu dedicated her memoirs to the social workers of Paris with whom she worked.[2] Social welfare was de Corlieu's anchor and mainstay, the forum through which she expressed her professional, political and confessional identity.[3] The importance of her professional career to the writing of her life neatly frames the thematic focus of this chapter, namely the advancement of social welfare as a qualified occupation for women; the negotiation of an individual's relationship with feminism and with their political, religious or ethnic affinity through social action; and personal experience.

Chapter One will examine the voices of women who articulated their ideas on the development of the social welfare sector within women's associations, wider party affiliations and, in practice, at local, municipal and public levels thus addressing some of the research questions at the centre of the thesis: the fluidity of political-social activism; the dynamics and engagement of the women's movement; and the networks therein generated. The 1930s was a period of increased state regulation: differing opinions over state involvement reflected ongoing tensions over secular welfare, confessional influence, modernity and rationalisation, technical training and 'who best' should organise and staff the sector. This chapter will concentrate on three main themes: firstly, it explores how a need was expressed for trained, regulated professional social workers and the type of woman who would fit the ideal. Whereas Linda Gordon has commented on the greater ethnic consciousness of American historical attention to social welfare, this chapter

---

[1] Cécile de Corlieu, *Carnets d'une Chrétienne Moderniste de 1898 à nos jours* (Paris: Privat, 1970), Avant-Propos, II.

[2] De Corlieu wrote regularly for the Christian democratic Parisian daily *L'Aube* and the Left-Catholic review *Esprit*; she was also a member of the UFCS and CNFF; working on the latter's Commission for Labour (1925-35; Secretary from 1932-5) with Cécile Brunschwicg.

[3] The additional meaning of 'planche de salut' as a 'last hope' could also be expanded upon with reference to de Corlieu's personal life; she separated from her husband in 1929.

demonstrates that existing French scholarship has focused on issues of class and sexuality, on the interests of contemporaries in defining 'the right kind' of female social activist.[4] The success of ecumenical training schools, for example, points to the paramount importance for many women to be seen as operating in a sphere 'above' the potentially divisive concerns of politics, religion or class. Paradox is a salient feature of debates in which women argued for greater professional responsibility, demonstrating their aptitude using traditional notions of femininity. Such efforts to construct a discourse of rationality and progressivism for women's social actions were therefore limited by the prescriptions commonly attached to their sex.

The language with which women articulated their ideas about social action and their role within it enables us to discern the points of consensus and tension that constituted an individual's, and a group's, distinct identity. Women from the confessional Catholic Union Catholique du Personnel des Services de Santé (UCSS) and the ecumenical Association de Travailleuses Sociale (ATS) or Association des Surintendantes d'Usine (ASU) debated the boundaries and responsibilities of the welfare sector, as well as the attributes needed by its practitioners. However, the retention of separate Catholic training schools and Jewish questioning why their community was without something similar, is indicative of the implicit acknowledgement of 'group' difference. While the UCSS articulated a specific vision of welfare that was Catholic and French, Zionist projects in contrast embodied a dual identity, that of Frenchness and Jewishness. The chapter will point to the pertinence of ethnicity to Catholic, Communist and Jewish groups throughout the 1930s in public-group, as well as private-personal, expressions of identity.

Secondly, following on from a discussion of the professionalisation of social welfare and the acceptable 'identity' of its practitioners, Chapter One then considers the ways in which social action could function as 'consensus politics' through the primacy of familialist and maternalist thinking – seen in the PCF's adoption of familialist rhetoric as political expediency with an eye on improving the party's social

[4] Linda Gordon, 'Introduction' in Linda Gordon (ed.), *Women, the State, and Welfare* (Wisconsin and London: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990), pp.3-8 (p.3); see also Kathleen D. McCarthy (ed.), *Lady Bountiful Revisited: Women, Philanthropy, and Power* (New Brunswick and London: Rutgers University Press, 1990) and her research into black women's use of welfare organisations to bolster their racial self-esteem, mitigate discrimination and forge networks for essential

respectability or social Catholic influence over the family allowance system. The Jewish community, too, used the language of family and maternity in welfare provision, extending support to its immigrant, coreligionist 'brothers and sisters' in need. Familialism was not simply a rhetorical tool to promote the professionalism of welfare as suitable and appropriate, but a fundamental tenet among welfare practitioners and the wider population in the interwar period, in which economic decline, low birthrates and diplomatic unease could be redressed by the political and cultural restoration of family strength. Throughout the thesis women's voices and experiences will be used to gauge the extent to which familialism functioned as both a rhetorical strategy and a deeply held principle.

Thirdly, Chapter One explores the tensions existing between individual and communal responses to questions of femininity, feminism and politicisation - despite the wide currency of familialist thinking and class reconciliation - expressed in hostile language, denigrating others' activism. For example, the PCF clashed with social Catholics' provision of family allowances, calling it a capitalist tool to stifle working-class operability. They stigmatised confessional welfare as a mask for proselytising and as an outdated philanthropic gesture tied to class-elite feminism.[5] Meanwhile, the PCF promoted itself as a progressive party governed by an egalitarian ideology. Social welfare could clearly be used for sectarian purposes and the chapter will conclude with a brief look at the *colonies de vacances* movement as a tool in (re)Christianisation, Communisation and (re)Judaisation projects. The 'holiday camps' - a subject tackled by Laura Lee Downs in *Children in the Promised Land* - had a dual political-social focus, offering working-class children a healthier summer in the countryside, away from the pollution and corruption of the cities, meanwhile providing a political, ethnic or religious platform for the nascent affiliation of youth.[6] Women in their roles as *monitrice*, *assistante sociale*, *mère-éducatrice* and *mère-conseillère* were the primary agents of this welfare provision and its politicisation.

---

reform.

[5] Susan Pedersen, *Family, Dependence and the Origins of the Welfare State. Britain and France, 1914-1945* (Cambridge, New York and Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p.277, for a discussion of PCF policy with regards to family allowances.

[6] Laura Lee Downs, *Children in the Promised Land: Working-Class Movements and the Colonies de Vacances in France*, 1880-1960 (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002).

It is important to elaborate briefly upon the influence of women's networking and associationalism across related social, cultural and political fields in the interwar period and highlight how this was a factor in the public prominence, and respect for, women's social services schools and welfare associations. One of the most striking features of women's associational life in the 1930s was the overlapping of personnel, whether in the promotion of civic and political rights, the protection of women's social status as mothers, combating prostitution, as well as wider political currents, for example.[7] The associational activity of one woman, the nurse, feminist, Catholic and pacifist Germaine Malaterre-Sellier, illustrates the complex personal networks that were forged across related issues and interests, albeit by an individual who had the financial means and time with which to participate so fully.[8] Malaterre-Sellier was an *infirmière-major* with the Association des Dames de France, she became Vice-President of the Union Féminine pour la Société des Nations and the Ligue Internationale du Desarmament Moral par les Femmes, she headed the Peace section of the CNFF and was asked to take over the Presidency of the UFSF in June 1936 after Cécile Brunschwicg resigned to take public office. Malaterre-Sellier also worked for the Rassemblement Universel pour la Paix and was on the executive body of *L'Information Féminine*. Malaterre-Sellier's personal connection to pacifism, feminism and Catholicism, amongst other issues, was replicated in her associational activities and interconnected networks of friendship, information exchange and practical action across related social, political, diplomatic and professional fields. Thus women's networks provided support and experience in developing fields of interest within a parapolitical sphere. Paul Smith reminds us that, even without the vote, women could be political insiders, close to

---

[7] Christine Bard suggests that the muting of anti-clericalism at this time was a factor in easing a sense of rapprochement between the Catholic and feminist groups. See Christine Bard, *Les Filles de Marianne. Histoire des féminismes 1914-1940* (Paris: Fayard, 1995), p.281.

[8] Germaine Malaterre-Sellier (1889-1967) was an *infirmière-major* with the Association des Dames de France, she became Vice-President of the Union Féminine pour la Société des Nations and the Ligue Internationale du Desarmament Moral par les Femmes, she headed the Peace section of the CNFF and was asked to take over the Presidency of the UFSF in June 1936 after Cécile Brunschwicg resigned to take public office. Malaterre-Sellier also worked for the Rassemblement Universel pour la Paix and was on the executive body of L'Information Féminine; she also worked to improve the civil rights of Muslim Algerian women.

the workings of power.[9] Women enjoyed profile and position within academic and literary circles, they confidently lobbied the Chamber of Deputies, for example. Indeed, the significance of women's networking to their political agency and professional responsibility, is central to exploring the research questions at the heart of the thesis.

Debating professionalism and modernising social welfare

The question of the professionalisation of social action during this period is a complicated one, necessitating comment on the interpersonal networks in place across the wider associational sector and the partisan and ecumenical debates between such groups on questions such as aptitude and training. These developments then filtered into the parallel state regulation of the sector. The extent to which the state sanctioned and then imitated private practice can be seen in several cases: that of the Caisse de Compensation de la Région Parisienne (CCRP); Mayor of Suresnes Henri Sellier's projects in his municipality; and the *colonies des vacances* movements. UFCS member Madeleine Hardouin headed the CCRP, which created the successful and influential Service Social, a home visiting service that provided maternal and infant care, and home economics teaching. In 1933, the service had 115 social workers, making 200,000 visits a year.[10] The CRRP brought moral and practical welfare intervention into the home, a system that was to influence the later modern welfare state. As Pedersen emphasises, the state was happy for the CRRP in effect to function as a public health service without the need for government funding.[11] In 1930 the state instituted social insurance legislation for sickness, disability, death and maternity. This was followed in 1932 by legislation that made it mandatory for employers to join a *caisse*. A decree dated 12 January 1932 made a diploma an official

---

[9] Paul Smith, *Feminism and the Third Republic. Women's Political and Civil Rights in France, 1918-1945* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), p.9, gives the examples of Edmée de la Rochefoucauld and the Alliance Démocratique, Pauline Archambault and Parti Démocratique Populaire. The list could also include Suzanne Schreiber-Crémieux, who worked in Minister of Health Marc Rucard's 1938 cabinet on questions of maternal and infant protection and Marcelle Kraemer-Bach, who was Secretary of the Radical-Socialist Party from 1930.

[10] Pedersen, *Family, Dependence*, p.275. By 1939, CCRP's social services were running 450 home economics classes per year for some 6,000 students.

[11] Ibid., pp.280-283.

requirement for state social welfare work.[12] Following Henri Sellier's lead in Suresnes, where he promoted the expansion of feminised, trained, municipal social services provision, by 1939 each department had a coordinating committee, with both confessional and secular representatives, presided by the Préfet, to regulate social welfare activities. The major health and hygiene organisations were represented, alongside the public services, in departmental social commissions.[13] Laura Lee Downs' research into the *colonies de vacances* movement also demonstrates the 'trickle up' development of welfare, in the state's adoption of private and local initiatives.[14] With 420,000 children in 1936, it had become a veritable national social service by 1947, when 700,000 children attended such camps.[15] The movement also suggests a parallel to the welfare sector's adoption of professionalisation as a marker of rationalisation. CEMEA (Centre d'Entraînement aux Méthodes d'Education Actives) was created under the patronage of the Popular Front government and represented the first organisational attempt to educate and train the staff involved.[16]

Certain women's organisations asserted their non-partisanship in order to emphasise their professional interest in the regulation of the sector. For example, the 1917 creation of ASU illustrates the diversity of women working together to secure a professional relationship between state regulation and private initiative. Among the Association's founders were the Jewish, Radical Party supporter and

---

[12] The committee that decided upon this was created from several social welfare training schools therefore ensuring that differing ideological and political viewpoints were represented: it included Surintendantes d'Usine (ASU), Ecole d'Application du Service Social (EASS) and Ecole Normale Sociale (ENS).

[13] A condition of employment at the Ministry of Public Health (which was Sellier's Ministry during the Popular Front government of 1936 to 1937) was that women must have professional qualifications. See AIU, Fonds Moscou, Moscou pas AIU, /315, *International Alliance of Women for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship. Conference on Postwar Reconstruction, Geneva 1940*, questionnaires sent by Commission de Questions Sociales de la Société des Nations.

[14] Laura Lee Downs, *Children in the Promised Land: Working-Class Movements and the Colonies de Vacances in France, 1880-1960* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), xiv. See also Laura Lee Downs, 'A very British revolution?' L'évacuation des enfants citadins vers les campagnes anglaises, 1939-1945', *Vingtième Siècle*, 89, 1 (2006), pp.47-60, which demonstrates how the nascent British welfare state, too, constructed its programme around questions of child health, but which were made controversial because of questions of class and urban-rural divisions.

[15] Downs, *Promised Land*, p.292.

[16] Ibid., p.225 and p.232.

feminist Cécile Brunschwicg, the Catholic Madeleine Hardouin, Protestant Juliette Delagrange, who was later Superintendent at the Ministry of Hygiene and Public Health and ATS founder, and Andrée Butillard, a Catholic syndicalist, founder of the Ecole Normale Sociale (ENS) training school and later the Union Féminin Civique et Sociale (UFCS).[17] The ASU took social action directly into the workplace, a direction that fitted in with pronatalist, industrialist, social Catholic and political parties' attentions to the working-class. These groups had vested interests in being seen to tackle the 'social question' - and its attendant concerns, such as natality, alcoholism, prostitution - and the effects of economic dislocation and industrialisation. Superintendents had to be aged between 24 and 40 years and have had nursing training to be admitted to the school. Their duties included attending to factory health and productivity issues, and instilling moral discipline.[18] In *Service Social Féminin*, Suzanne Cordelier noted that between 1924 and 1934, the number of *infirmières-hospitalières* had risen from 65 women to 1,143 and the number of *infirmières visiteuses d'hygiene sociale de l'enfance* from 32 to 248 within the numerous training schools available.[19] Set up in 1922, the ATS campaigned for better regulation and raised status of social welfare; by 1938 it had one million members. In 1936 Madeleine Hardouin was appointed Secretary, emphasising ATS' cross-denominational dimension and wish for the entire profession to be viewed in a similarly non-sectarian fashion and not as merely representative of one or other religious persuasion.[20] The ATS - like the ASU - was another example of a private, ecumenical front looking to secure cross-party consensus, and government recognition, for the professionalisation of social welfare. Service Social, too, positioned itself neutrally, providing welfare for all

---

[17] BDIC, F Delta 1166, 'Association des Surintendantes de France', *Bulletin 1923.* See also Laura Lee Downs, 'Les marraines élues de la paix sociale? Les superintendantes d'usine et la rationalisation du travail en France, 1917-1935', *Le Mouvement Social*, 165 (October-December 1993), pp.53-76.

[18] Ibid. Exceptions were made, however. For example, the Resistance heroine Berty Albrecht had to receive special dispensation to join the school as the age limit was set at 40 years and she was 43 years old; Albrecht trained as a factory superintendent between 1936 and 1938. Annie Fourcaut, *Femmes à l'usine. Ouvrières et surintendantes dans les enterprises françaises de l'entre-deux-guerres* (Paris: François Maspero, 1982), p.213.

[19] Suzanne F. Cordelier, *Service Social Féminin* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1938), p.33.

[20] R.H-Guerrand and M.-A. Rupp, *Brève Histoire du Service Social en France, 1896-1976* (Toulouse: Privat, 1978), pp.101-102. By 1939 the ATS was the link between different branches of social welfare such as hygiene, TB, for example.

irrespective of class, ethnicity or religion.

Political or religious neutrality was not a universal aim in social welfare provision, however. The social worker MPA recalled how the Protestant milieu and youth movements of her hometown - in which nursing friends spoke with enthusiasm of Anna Hamilton's Protestant training schools in Bordeaux - influenced her decision.[21] In 1933 a specifically Catholic organisation was created, UCSS, which grouped together Catholic nurses and social welfare workers. The impetus behind its establishment was the lack of invitation extended to Catholic welfare committees by the International Red Cross at their 1928 conference.[22] Caroline Ford, in her research on gender and religion, suggests that reChristianisation should be viewed as a positive demonstration of volition rather than subjugation.[23] Therefore, instead of viewing Catholic women's actions through the established, anti-clerical Republican perspective - in which they were passive subjects to male authority and influence - it is important to recognise their initiative, pragmatism and agency in pushing for welfare provision directed by religious belief.

Such Catholic sensitivity to professed neutrality in welfare provision and the legitimacy of offering a religious alternative that met individual choice can be seen in UCSS President Mlle d'Arioles' speech below:

> 'Lorsqu'une famille vient, elle veut se sentir en confiance. Si l'on va chez des Religieuses ou à la Caisse familiale d'Assurances sociales, c'est qu'on désire satisfaire des besoins religieux. La visiteuse de service central sera neutre; elle pourra être protestante, peut être même communiste. Cela s'est déjà réalisé dans un nombre de secteurs. Il n'y aura compensation, il y aura absence de véritable travail social, car le service social ne sera plus rien qu'une distribution de secours contrôlés. Il sera impersonnel, il ne sera plus humaine. S'il est légitime qu'il y ait des œuvres neutres pour les indifférents, il serait infiniment regrettable que nos œuvres catholiques n'aient plus, pour

---

[21] Yvonne Knibiehler (ed.), *Cornettes et blouses blanches. Les infirmières dans la societé française (1880-1980)* (Paris: Hachette, 1984), p.217. The interviewees maintained their anonymity through the use of initials.
[22] Evelyne Diebolt, *Les femmes dans l'action sanitaire, sociale et culturelle, 1901-2001. Les associations face aux institutions* (Paris: Femmes et Associations, 2001), p.46. See, also, Armelle Mabon-Fall, *Les assistantes sociales au temps de Vichy. Du silence à l'oubli* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1995), p.19.
[23] Caroline Ford, *Divided Houses. Religion and Gender in Modern France* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2005), p.16.

prolonger leur action, qu'une service social neutre.'[24]

Here, the UCSS was asserting the legitimacy of its welfare provision in the defence of a specific, Catholic, identity through the use of humanitarian language rather than bureaucratic intervention. It was also implicitly contesting the neutrality of a social service that was run by women whose political or confessional identity remained hidden, but was pervasive nonetheless.

The polarisation of secular versus confessional can be seen in socialist Andrée Marty-Capgras' denigration of organisations like the UCSS for their supposed monopolisation of welfare training and the corruptive influence of confessionalism on the working-class – in part, dating back to prejudices against the community welfare activism of *dames patronnesses*:

> 'Rien ne surprenant à ce que les organisations confessionnelles les plus diverses aient essayé de monopoliser la préparation des femmes aux carrières sociales. ... Il est indispensable que nous ne laissions pas sans réagir les œuvres privées s'infiltrer dans la famille ouvrière. Il faut qu'une propagande méthodique dénonce la charité privée comme la grande corruptrice.'[25]

This language - of exploitation and infiltration - was matched by a Communist publication that also intended to hit a raw nerve, that of Catholic sensitivity to antiquated labels of charity, proselytism and class elitism:

> 'Quand la misère pénètre au foyer, alors tous les bienfaiteurs bourgeois se prennent à s'apitoyer sur la misère du peuple et "les dames visiteuses", dames patronnesses, sœurs et autres punaises de sacristie, pénètrent également dans les foyers ouvriers pour faire leur besogne d'achat des consciences!'[26]

Social action thus gave Catholic women the opportunity to demonstrate the opposite - their progressive, professional views on welfare. Within the social sphere,

---

[24] Madame de Arioles was an LPDF militant and voluntary nurse during World War I, which prompted her welfare interests. See Knibiehler, *Cornettes*, pp.123-4.
[25] *La Tribune des Femmes Socialistes*, 2 (February 1936), p.2.
[26] Jeanne Buland, *Femme, defends toi!* (Paris: Publication du Parti Communiste (SFIC), Bureau d'Editions, 1932), p.17. Alisa Klaus, 'Depopulation and Race Suicide: Maternalism and Pronatalist Ideologies in France and the US', in Seth Koven and Sonya Michel (eds.), *Mothers of a New World. Maternalist Politics and the Origins of Welfare States* (New York: Routledge, 1993), pp.188-212 (p.197),

each group's articulation of its 'modern' nature - against the actions of its opponents, allegedly stuck in the last century - was matched by developments in the profession itself. The perceived need to modernise social processes - and their staffing - fitted in with wider technocratic and professional developments in rationalisation that marked the interwar period. Jackie Clarke points to the role of experts and technicians in designing new forms of social and economic organisation linked to the factory, domestic science and population planning in which class and gender remained critical.[27] Social workers and social scientists worked to better understand the social sphere through the use of new research methods, such as local surveys.[28] The Catholic publication *Semaines Sociales de France* aimed to 'decouvrir les solutions des problèmes sociaux, mais aussi d'instruire et de convaincre les hommes qui sauront les appliquer,' reflecting the increasing tendency in the interwar years to apply rational, scientific and intellectual methods to the study of social problems.[29]

Semaines Sociales de France was published in Lyon, where Schultheiss' discussion points to coordination and cooperation between religious and lay personnel in the development and professionalisation of the nursing sector.[30] The earlier discussion of Paris schools, such as ASU, ENS and UCSS is not to suggest that social welfare training was concentrated solely in the capital. In fact, an article entitled 'L'Assistante Sociale' in *Le Petit Marseillais* highlighted the need for

---

comments that every organisation serving women and children would have had a *Dames Patronesses* committee.

[27] For a detailed discussion of the interwar rationalisation movement, see Jackie Clarke, 'Imagined Productive Communities: Industrial Rationalisation and Cultural Crisis in 1930s France', *Modern and Contemporary France* 8, 3, (2000) and, also, Jackie Clarke, 'Homecomings: Paulette Bernège, Scientific Management and the Return to the Land in Vichy France' in Hanna Diamond and Simon Kitson (eds.), *Vichy, Resistance, Liberation: New Perspectives on Wartime France* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2005).

[28] The Catholic engineer, economist and sociologist Frederic Le Play (1806-1882) was very influential in these developments. He believed that any improvement in working-class conditions needed first to be based on scientific rationale and empirical data. See Sylvie Fayet-Scribe, *Associations Féminines et Catholicisme. De la charité à l'action sociale, XIXe-XXe siècle* (Paris: Les Editions Ouvrières, 1990), p.88.

[29] Semaines Sociales de la France, *Origines-Méthode-Développements. La Science pour l'Action*, (Lyon: Chronique Sociales de France, 1936), p.57.

[30] Katrin Schultheiss, *Bodies and Souls. Politics and the Professionalisation of Nursing in France, 1880-1922* (Cambridge, Mass., and London: Harvard University Press, 2001), pp.51-2.

sensitivity in the location of such schools to enable local needs to be met. Nice was described as 'une région où la misère côtoie le luxe,' where institutionalised welfare would be put to great effect.[31] The article then pointed out that rural communities were being unfairly bypassed by political preoccupation with urban production:

> 'On ne saurait trop insister sur la nécessité - si l'on veut retenir les paysans à la terre - de les faire participer aux mêmes avantages que les ouvriers des villes ou des centres usines.'[32]

The quotation suggests other sites of tension, sectarianism and exclusion within social welfare, here seen in both class and regional factors. Alongside Schultheiss, Diebolt and Sylvie Fayet-Scribe have also drawn out the significance of geography and regionalism in the development of nursing training, in particular, and ideas of identity being rooted in geographical location, as well as religious belief and/or class inflection.[33] Existing research by the aforementioned historians has concentrated on the confessional dynamics of Protestant and Catholic women's social welfare initiatives. However, this chapter alters that balance by adding Jewish women's welfare to the picture and by including commentary on Communist activities as another element in social welfare activism.

At this time, there was no Jewish or Communist social welfare training school in existence. *Univers Israélite* commented on a conference held in London (UK) to discuss Jewish social services, highlighting that no French report had been submitted. The article went on to question the reasons behind this, surmising that:

> 'Est-ce parce que cette activité n'est pas centralisée ou parce que nous préférons l'action à la propagande, ou n'est ce pas plutôt parce qu'effectivement nos communautés, tout en continuant à pratiquer la philanthropie traditionnelle, ne se sont pas élevées aux méthodes modernes du Service Social?' [34]

The Jewish community was conscious of the need to provide a trained, professionalised and centralised social services body in which traditional concepts of charitable duty were modernised. In response to these questions, the rabbinical

---

[31] *Le Petit Marseillais*, 5 January 1938.
[32] Ibid.
[33] For example, Schultheiss's research concentrates on Paris, Lyons and Bordeaux as models for the development of the nursing profession; Schultheiss, *Bodies and Souls*.
[34] *L'Univers Israélite*, 9 April 1937.

school was to organise a series of conferences over the following few weeks on Parisian social services and/in the Jewish community.[35] This recognition of Jewish training needs prompts the question, which the thesis will address in the later sections on the Occupation and Liberation periods, of a distinct Jewish path in social welfare, from assimilation towards Jewish-only organisations after 1944, a trajectory reversed in the Catholic case.

Discussions over the perceived need for a reinvigoration of social welfare provision in the Jewish press prompts the question of whether the governing principle of assimilationism affected women's own considerations of professionalism, and how Zionist social action, which added a unique ethno-political dimension to Jewish social works, provided many Jewish women with an outlet for public activism with its promotion of social welfare and reform, as well as political rights.[36] Contemporaries did not necessarily see French support for Zionism as problematic, Jews having traditionally been welcomed into French society under conditions of dual identity - publicly French, but privately Jewish in religious matters - and this was extended to welfare and relief considerations. Traditionally associated with the private sphere, women's involvement in social action based upon religious and cultural affiliation was therefore still in keeping with the idea that Jewish practice was part of a private identity. In this way, Jewish women's support for an ostensibly political movement did not necessarily challenge the principles of assimilation because they were not considered political players but social activists.

Contemporary commentary on women's Zionist activity suggests, however, that the lines between political and social activism were indeed blurred. In March 1937, *L'Univers Israélite* reported that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had recently thanked the Jewish women of France for 'accomplissaient ainsi non seulement leur devoir des Juives, mais aussi leur devoir de Françaises, contribuant utilement à la

---

[35] Ibid. The listed speakers included Mlle Alaphandery, committee member of Dames Inspectrices des Ecole, Mlle Bernheim, director of Centres Sociaux de la Jeunesse Juive and Mme Halff, treasurer of Comité des Femmes en Couches.
[36] A number of associations were devoted to specifically Jewish social works, including the Fonds National Juif de France (Keren Hayessod and Keren Kayemeth) for Palestine. See Nelly Las, 'Les Juifs de France et le sionisme. Un bilan: Les années 1927-1930' in Doris Bensimon and Benjamin Pinkus (eds.), *Les Juifs de France, Le Sionisme et L'Etat d'Israël: Actes du Colloque International*, Volume I (Paris: Publications Langues'O, 1987), pp.133-141 (p.136 and p.139) on calls for donations to KH and KK as being both political and charitable in intent.

propagande française dans le Proche-Orient.'[37] This points to the government's recognition of a dual French-Jewish identity and public acknowledgement of Zionist women's activism as contributing to the political prestige of the nation. The feminist lawyer Yvonne Netter, for example, belonged to numerous professional and political associations in the interwar years that related to her interests in the political emancipation of women through suffrage and the eventual liberation of the Jewish people in Palestine. A journalist wrote of Netter's political activism in 1935: 'Après une enfance indifférente, le sionisme fit d'elle une juive militante.'[38] In fact it was fashionable for Jewish social elites to be Zionist, although not all were so. *La Tribune Juive* reported on Cécile Brunschwicg's visit to Strasbourg's Ecole du Formation Sociale in March 1937 in her ministerial capacity as Under-Secretary for National Education, where she was met by cries of 'Allez à Jerusalem' - implying that Brunschwicg would do well to appreciate and acknowledge the educational and social developments accomplished in Palestine. The article reminded Brunschwicg of her need to show 'plus de compréhension et douceur', after her editorial criticisms in *La Française* highlighted her personal primacy of feminist and political convictions, before ethnic ones.[39]

French Zionist women were members of WIZO, the oldest and most important Jewish women's organisation in France, which operated exclusively on behalf of social action in Palestine, not the diaspora.[40] Although without its own training school, the Jewish press was conscious of the process of professionalisation in the social sphere in both France and Palestine, here offering a Zionist critique of the limitations within French, 'old' society:

---

[37] *L'Univers Israélite*, 26 March-2 April 1937, p.456.
[38] *Le Journal Juif*, 1 November 1935. Netter's associational activity in both feminist and Jewish circles was diverse and points to the interpersonal networks in place across activist women in the interwar period. A selection included: Cœur Israélite, WIZO, Œuvre Asile, Pour Nos Enfants, Organisation Reconstruction et Travail (ORT), Cercle-Amicale Féminine Pro-Palestinienne, Université Populaire Jeune, Société de Secours Mutuels des Dames Israélites de Paris, Union des Femmes Juives pour la Palestine (affiliated to WIZO), Union des Dames Israélites de France and Foyer-Guide Féminin.
[39] *La Tribune Juive*, 5 March 1937, editorial entitled 'Le 15ième anniversaire de l'école de formation sociale à Strasbourg ou les progrès de la propagande anti-juive en Alsace', p.146.
[40] *Le Journal Juif*, 24 May 1935. A detailed article reporting on the conference Socialisme en Action, pointed to the pivotal role played by women in the colonisation process, whereby both feminine qualities and sheer physical labour

'Jeune fille de famille bourgeoise souvent, elle a quitté les bancs de l'école ou ceux de l'université pour aller travailler à ses mains, au prix des pires sacrifices quelquefois, à la reconstruction de la vieille patrie... La Palestine actuelle lui doit énormément: l'assainissement des conditions d'existence, la réduction à un chiffre minime de la mortalité infantile, la joie de vivre et la confiance dans l'avenir.'[41]

The quotation is highly illustrative of contemporary preoccupations: pessimism over the possibility of another European, if not world, war; a wide range of societal ills as reflected by high infant mortality rates and low birth rates, for example; alongside general economic downturn and malaise.

Palestine, in contrast, offered the Jews a spiritual home in which gender equality, social justice and citizenship would bring an end to the difficulties of a diaspora existence. Zionism was therefore both political strategy and utopian thinking. The most projected female figure was that of the pioneer: 'La Chalutza ...une figure presque légendaire'.[42] The qualities she possessed were those of physical strength, political determination and social vision. A similar mythologisation was expressed by Communists with regards to the woman worker and citizen of Soviet Russia and both states represented a modern utopia to which their activists in France aspired. The practical reality was, of course, more complicated. Zionists heralded universal suffrage, too, and through this could offer an implicit feminist critique of the French political system. However, Deborah Bernstein's commentary on the Women Workers' Movement in Palestine emphasises that women were increasingly categorised in an essentialised way and the movement evolved over time into a social welfare service, losing its original fight for greater autonomy and equality.[43]

The failure to secure gender equality in Palestine highlights the paradoxical pressures to which women, irrespective of ethnicity, religious or political affiliation, were subject in France. Joan Wallach Scott's *Only Paradoxes to Offer* examines the limitations of women arguing for political responsibility and public agency from a

---

were forging *l'idéal social.*

[41] *Samedi*, 13 February 1937, 'La Femme Juive'.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Deborah S.Bernstein, 'Part II. Women of the Labour Movement' in Deborah S. Bernstein (ed.), *Pioneers and Homemakers. Jewish Women in Pre-State Israel* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), pp.89-93 (p.92).

position of difference.[44] The ASU, ATS, UCSS and CRRP suggest the extent to which women were in positions of responsibility as key stakeholders in policy directives. Political players by virtue of their associational experience and lobbying power, women were forced to assuage any fears of 'unfemininity' this might raise. They publicly pronounced their apoliticism, even though the political convictions of Brunschwicg or Butillard, for example, were apparent. The paradoxical nature of articulating a public, political discourse on feminism, but a neutral one on welfare is evident.

Gender clearly added an additional 'problematic' to discussions over professionalism, the presumption being that women would have to prove their competence in the public sphere. Women chose to become professionally trained social workers - whether through aptitude, financial necessity or in striving for a career and independent means. Juliette Delagrange emphasised that social work was a career involving methodical organisation and professional training, questions of promotion and hierarchy, paid holidays and sick pay, as would be expected of other professional roles.[45] Of primary importance, she stressed, however, was '[c]et impérieux besoin de servir les autres'.[46] Duty and nurture were widely deemed a female preserve in this area. Grounded in the training opportunities available to young women, practitioners consciously linked their professional status to notions of 'appropriate femininity'. Women used the language of *servir* and *devoir* to highlight their aptitude and it was universally accepted that welfare was a natural expression of 'dévouement féminin'.[47]

While it would be tempting to expect women to make use of their new-found visibility in these professions without recourse to rationalising and justifying their presence, women remained cautious to emphasise the moderation and traditional nature of their activities as an overt female presence in key areas of political manoeuvring could be considered threatening. This was highlighted in a 1925 book by Louise Mauvezin in which the profession was described as one linked to unmarried - with the implication of celibate, therefore culturally and sexually

---

[44] See Joan Wallach Scott, *Only Paradoxes to Offer: French Feminists and the Rights of Man* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996).
[45] BMD, DOS 360 ASS, 'Les Carrières Sociales', pp.1-3. No publication details were given. Signed J. Delagrange and dated 1930, it was possibly the transcript of a speech or an article in a welfare association journal.
[46] Ibid., p.3.

'unthreatening' - women.[48] The book was published during the mid-1920s, hence its reflection of contemporary anxieties over '*la garçonne*' and its representation of a social worker as the opposite of the sexually liberated 'New Woman'.[49] The implied 'natural' association of women with celibacy and nurturing professions is examined in Schultheiss' work on nursing. A corollary can also be drawn to the experiences of young women who undertook teacher training and became a new generation of public women, articulating Republican ideals through the classroom, a development expounded in Linda Clark's work on women and Republican schooling and in public administration.[50]As she recounts in her memoirs, Emilie Carles, after a year in Paris as a study hall monitor at a private school, trained as a teacher and entered the public system on her return to her native countryside. Here she represented communal authority and was trusted by the peasants, imparting her knowledge and advice: 'I had become the "good sister" in both meanings of the word - sibling and nun.'[51] For social worker LJ: 'Bien sur mon entourage, mes amis de classe n'ont pas compris, on a pensé que je voulais me faire religieuse.'[52] Social welfare was a hard life that necessitated long hours, with little spare time.[53] LJ felt that it was not compatible with having a relationship and children. Her comments therein reinforce how social work was viewed by some as the secular equivalent of becoming a nun, and how many outside of the profession viewed it as such, as a self-imposed choice.[54] The professions of nurse, teacher, social worker and even nun were thereby linked in a shared public expectation of social motherhood - young women

---

[47] Ibid., p.1.
[48] Guerrand and Rupp, *Brève Histoire*, p.64; Mauvezin's book was 400 pages long, detailing the social services training available for young, unmarried women.
[49] See Mary Louise Roberts, *Civilization Without Sexes. Reconstructing Gender in Postwar France, 1917-1927* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1994) for a commentary on the cultural construction of femininity according to three stereotypes - modern woman, mother or single female.
[50] Schultheiss, *Bodies and Souls*; Linda L. Clark, *The Rise of Professional Women in France. Gender and Public Administration Since 1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).
[51] Emilie Carles, *A Life of her Own. A Countrywoman in Twentieth-Century France* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1991), p.148.
[52] Yvonne Knibiehler, *Nous, les assistantes sociales. Naissance d'une profession (Trente ans de souvenirs d'assistantes sociales Françaises, 1930-1960)* (Paris: Editions Aubier Montaigne, 1980), p.30.
[53] The social worker Yvonne Bougé made 1,594 visits in eleven months in 1938. Ibid., p.157.
[54] For LRE, interviewed by Knibiehler, social welfare was a 'quasi-religious

dedicated to their profession and those in need but who, significantly, were not mothers themselves.

The implicit association of female professionalism with an appropriate public femininity - celibacy - was renewed by some women, but rejected by others. Consensus was increasingly forged through an essentialist, maternalist logic, which will be discussed shortly, and in an implicit understanding of feminine morality. Unsurprisingly, social Catholics heavily promoted the idea of a single woman's *mission maternelle* - through social welfare or teaching - as an appropriate and henceforth socially acceptable, respectable profession. This was the public extension of the private *mère-éducatrice*, which was gaining in prominence as a 'woman's role'. Françoise Thébaud reminds us that interwar women's groups did not fight against the *mère-épouse-ménagère* image, but participated in its consensus.[55] These two acknowledged social identities - the professional, celibate and the married, *femme au foyer* - together encompassed a moralising force that could be extended into the public sphere through education and social action. As the Catholic social worker Eve Baudoin wrote:

> 'Pour y parvenir, il ne suffit point d'exercer une action directe dans ce sens, soit par des améliorations sociales, soit par l'éducation: il est nécessaire d'encadrer largement la femme et de comprendre sa vie même de mère de famille, *en harmonie avec les mœurs du temps.*'[56]

Writing in the extreme right publication *Emancipation Nationale*, Jeanne Vaillant also presented women's nature as possessing a civilising, moralising force that would rescue the working class from the dirt and horror of the slums.[57] This suggestion resonated with the image of the celibate social worker representing purity and morality amidst social degradation - a romanticised vision of class conciliation embodied in the factory superintendent, for example.

That women negotiated sociopolitical space, as well as prevailing cultural discourses about acceptable femininity and identity, highlights astuteness and

---

engagement' heightened by the wearing of uniforms, for example. Ibid., p.236.

[55] Françoise Thébaud, *Quand nos grand-mères donnaient la vie. La maternité en France dans l'entre-deux-guerres* (Lyon: Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 1986), p.96.

[56] Eve Baudoin, *Le mère au travail et le retour au foyer* (Paris: Librarie Bloud et Gay, 1931), pp.174-5

[57] *Emancipation Nationale*, 18 July 1936. *Emancipation Nationale* was the paper of the Parti Populaire Française (PPF), led by ex-Communist Jacques Doriot.

expediency in appearing moderate proponents of social stability at a time of heightened social anxieties. It is important, where possible however, to assess the extent to which this appeal to the natural, nurturing role of women was a strategy deliberately designed to placate social anxieties about women's greater public visibility, or whether it articulated genuine beliefs in women's civic and social duty. As Karen Offen has discussed with reference to the familial strategies of *fin-de-siècle* feminists, in order to be effective women had to moderate their public visibility and demands to gain public acceptance, in what was a 'foot in the door' approach.[58] Women were not averse to articulating somewhat conflicting strategies to demonstrate the need for professional recognition of social action. In invoking the rationale of the *mère-éducatrice*, women accepted that this inevitably imposed constraints upon, as well as opportunities for, their room to manoeuvre.

This opening section has pointed to the areas in which women recognised that they needed to appear professional, above factionalism, which would detract from the advancement of their career and status. Women were only too aware of potential stumbling blocks to career advancement represented by political infighting between Left and Right, paternalism and outdated concepts of charitable 'good works'. Women social workers instead promoted themselves as agents of morality and class conciliation. Juliette Delagrange addressed a speech on social welfare as a career, 'à toutes celles qui sont de précieux agents de paix collective, des éducatrices, des réconciliatrices...'[59] This essentialist connection of femininity with social peace and national harmony (rather than its opposite, social discord and violence) will be discussed in particular depth in the following chapter, with regards to social action during the Spanish Civil War.

Social action as an instrument of class reconciliation can be studied with specific reference to the diversity of the Jewish community, in which nationality, religious and political affiliation as well as socioeconomic considerations differed between the wealthy, French assimilated Israélites and the working-class immigrant Juifs. One can question whether welfare and relief works represented class conciliation and ethnic solidarity, or whether paternalist philanthropy remained pertinent. Tony Kushner has commented that the influx of Eastern European

---

[58] Karen Offen, 'Depopulation, Nationalism, and Feminism in Fin-de-Siècle France', *American Historical Review*, 89, 3 (June 1984), pp.648-676.
[59] Delagrange, 'Les Carrières Sociales', p.9.

immigrants into Western assimilated communities complicated the embourgeoisement process for the established elites.[60] Social welfare provision, while genuine, could also point to social concerns for respectability, in making immigrants more 'presentable' and thus desirable to the nation.

Cross-community interaction established a working relationship between Israélites and Juifs, largely through various welfare and relief organisations. While Vicki Caron has focused on the administration of more high-profile institutions like CAR, commented upon in Chapter Three, this discussion provides additional perspective on the numerous smaller scale initiatives. Staffed primarily by women, the nature of these associations' engagement in community care points to the diversity of Jewish women's activism. Police reports at the Paris Prefecture detail the sheer volume of Jewish relief and aid associations set up in the interwar years specifically to aid the immigrant population. For example, in 1935, Asile Israélite had provided 248,864 hot meals, 63,145 hospital days and also ran a crèche with 20 available places.[61] Financed by donations from the Jewish population of Paris, Schema Israel was run by assimilated, wealthy Jews, epitomised by Suzanne Zadoc Kahn or the Rothschild wives. It provided religious education, conferences and social assistance programmes.[62] Parallels could be drawn here to the British experience of middle-class women outside the labour market and excluded from the formal powerbases of their organised religion.[63] Through influence in the social sphere, voluntary work, often concentrating on refugee care, and in Zionism, women could demonstrate an ethnic and political consciousness.

The language of charity remained commonplace, however, with the Jewish press noting that 'l'activité philanthropique et sociale dans la communauté de Paris est considérable'.[64] The primary organisation devoted to social welfare work in the

---

[60] Tony Kushner, 'Sex and Semitism: Jewish Women in Britain in War and Peace' in Panikos Panayi (ed.), *Minorities in Wartime. National and Racial Groupings in Europe, North America and Australia during the Two World Wars* (Oxford and Providence: Berg, 1993), pp.118-149 (p.121).
[61] APP, BA 1811, Communauté Juive, 8.470. The organisation's full name was l'Association Philanthropique de l'Asile de Nuit, de l'Asile de Jour et de la Crèche Israélite de Paris.
[62] APP, BA 2314, Communauté Juive, 408.691. Zadoc Kahn was President of Comité d'Assistance à l'Enfant, of l'Assistance Israélite pour la Protection de la Jeune Fille (UPJF) and served on the administrative council of Toit Familiale.
[63] Kushner, *Minorities in Wartime*, p.131.
[64] *Samedi*, 5 February 1938, 'Le Cœur Israélite'.

capital - where two-thirds of the country's 300,000 Jews lived - remained the assimilated, wealthy Comité de Bienfaisance Israélite de Paris (CBI).[65] The Comité retained *bienfaisance* while many other organisations would have used the more modern, 'scientific' *assistance*. The language thus emphasised its traditional approach to social welfare provisioning and a lack of sensitivity or concern for employing terminology that was viewed prejudicially by many, linked as it was to religious concepts. That this view of social assistance was not shared by everyone can be seen in the previous discussion of the London conference on Jewish social services. The Jewish social worker and novelist Juliette Pary also rejected the implicit paternalism of community welfare provision: 'Pour réussir dans ce domaine, il est essentiel de ne pas nous cantonner dans le cadre de la bienfaisance, mais de faire œuvre de solidarité, saine et constructive.'[66] She reflected a growing number of social workers who were conscious of the need to modernise and regulate the profession, voices that came from within the Jewish community as well as wider afield.

The Catholic social worker Madeleine Delbrêl wrote that improved communication between interested parties in the social welfare sector would lead to better inter-organisational relations and that Service Social should co-ordinate actions outside of state intervention more efficiently.[67] Her comments suggest not only that Service Social and other private initiatives were content to operate without overt state control, but also that inter-group consensus was vital to the functioning of the sector. A later article entitled 'Faut-il étatiser les travailleuses sociales?' even questioned the prudence of state institutionalisation of social workers by arguing that this could potentially threaten democracy if welfare provision was only directed by the administration in power.[68]

---

[65] See Richard I. Cohen, *The Burden of Conscience. French Jewish Leadership During the Holocaust* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1987), p.11, and Michael R. Marrus and Robert O. Paxton, *Vichy France and the Jews* (New York: Basic Books, 1981), p.356, for figures on the Jewish community in France.

[66] *L'Univers Israélite*, 14 October 1938, p.48. Vivette Samuel noted her interest in Pary's novel, *Mes 126* Gosses, which detailed her experiences with the children of Belleville and the Marais. See Vivette Samuel, *Rescuing the Children. A Holocaust Memoir* (Wisconsin and London, University of Wisconsin Press, 2002), p.10.

[67] Madeleine Delbrêl, *Ampleur et dépendance du Service social* (Paris: Librairie Bloud et Gay, undated), p.22.

[68] *La Française*, 11 February 1939.

This opening section has introduced the pertinence of contemporary ideas and anxieties about class, sexuality, morality, responsibility, professionalism, sectarianism and neutrality. It has also pointed to the acceptance among many women that practical co-operation between different workers and institutions was necessary in order to professionalise the sector. The following section will move from the practical to the ideological, examining how the influential discourse of familialism was used by interested parties to bolster support for social activism and to reconcile notions of femininity with female agency.

Feminism and familialism

Firstly, this section addresses a key research question – the relationship between discourses about womanhood, the feminist movement and the experiences, here, of Catholic women involved in associational activity. The largest promoter of Catholic womanhood's values and duties, in terms of membership, was the Ligue Patriotique des Femmes Françaises (LPFF), which was set up in 1902 and which women had to be Catholic and French to join. With an estimated 1.5 million members in 1932, the League was strong in the Catholic and conservative West, industrial north-east and Paris.[69] Catholic doctrine and morality were disseminated through newspapers, charity events, balls and committees, for example. Women were therefore essential agents of a wider re-Christianisation drive in French society, sanctioned by the male Church hierarchy from which women were obviously excluded. Rather than masking women's initiative, this feature of Catholic social action - the dichotomy between theoretical (male) and practical (female) engagement - emphasises the extent to which Catholic women internalised wider ideological directives and publicised them, through social activism. The promotion of social duties through familialism enabled Catholic women to find a public voice.

Set up by Andrée Butillard in 1925, the UFCS articulated its social programme around the importance of the *mère au foyer*, family and improved

[69] See Anne Cova, *Au service de l'église, de la patrie et de la famille. Femmes Catholiques et maternité sous la IIIe République* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2000). In 1933 Rome forced the union of the LPFF and Ligue des Femmes Françaises (LFF) into the Ligue Féminine d'Action Catholique Française (LFACF), which by 1939 had secured over 2.2 million members and represented the largest women's organisation in the country; p.152.

working conditions, building in part upon her experiences in the Christian syndicalist movement. In the 1940s, the UFCS extended its ideas on women's civil education and their appointment in municipal administration – pointing to the greater acceptability of women in municipal politics as being closer to the domestic sphere and the locality, than the political one. Social action on behalf of the family offered a political minority - and by extension a silent political majority (Catholic women) - room for political manoeuvre and expression: 'Toutefois, son rôle primordial, qui lui a été dévolu par la nature, et qui la situe d'une manière définitive dans le cadre social, c'est son rôle familial.'[70] In 1934 the UFCS created the Ligue de la Mère au Foyer, which received funding from ANAPF and FNAFN. Considering the pervasiveness of the natalist and familialist lobbies and its support for suffrage and the family vote, the UFCS was clearly articulating a political programme despite its official status as 'apolitical'. The UCFS believed that women were entitled to vote but first needed civic instruction in order to vote 'correctly', while safeguarding their 'mission d'épouse et de mère qui est honneur de la femme.'[71]

The Catholic suffrage organisation Union Nationale pour le Vote des Femmes (UNVF) also demonstrated women's political and personal reconfiguration of their roles. For example, it argued for women to be eligible for appointment as judges because their innate maternalism meant they were better suited to judicial roles where the health and wellbeing of children was being decided.[72] Recent research by Sara Kimble has shown how women used essentialist assumptions about femininity to argue for a public role in the juvenile justice system, further evidence of the strategic potential of both rhetoric and principle.[73] Maternalist logic was used to authenticate and legitimate demands for women's rights in the political and public sphere, while confirming support to prevailing, gendered discourses. In an advert placed in *Action Sociale de la Femme*, the UNVF asked women if they realised that they already exercised certain public, professional and social actions in

---

[70] Union Féminine Civique et Sociale, *La Femme dans la Société Actuelle. Guide d'Action Sociale* (Paris: Editions Spes, 1928), p.13.
[71] Ibid., p.97.
[72] Union Nationale pour le Vote des Femmes (UNVF), *Problèmes Nationaux Vus par des Françaises* (Paris: Editions du Sagittaire, 1934), p.19.
[73] See Sara L. Kimble, '"For the Family, France and Humanity": Authority and Maternity in the *Tribunaux des Enfants*', *Proceedings for the Western Society for French History*, 31 (2003), pp.212-229. Also, see Julie Fette, 'Pride and Prejudice in the Professions: Women Doctors and Lawyers in Third Republic France', *Journal of*

municipal commissions on hygiene, schools, public health, and were electors in the Chamber of Agriculture.[74] In fact, in 1936 some 100 municipal councillors had co-opted women into positions notably related to maternity and child welfare. Siân Reynolds also points out that women had reached the middle ranks of the civil service and had been appointed to several politicians' private offices. For example, in 1932 the feminist Marcelle Kraemer-Bach worked for Edouard Herriot and the Radical party.[75] Catholic aristocrat Edmée de la Rochefoucauld, a leading UNVF figure, had grown up in a privileged environment in which her mother and grandmother undertook social 'good works'.[76] De la Rochefoucauld believed in the importance of women understanding politics before they could exercise their right to vote and went on public speaking tours to explain municipal and national issues to women, articulating a similar stance to the UFCS. As a mother of three children, speaking tours would have taken de la Rochefoucauld away from the home, hence her personal actions embodied the inherent contradictions within a maternalist promotion of women's social activism.

Research from historians such as Cova and Ford has challenged the persistence of contemporary anti-clerical prejudice in historical accounts of the relationship between the women's movement and Catholicism. Conscious of Catholic hostility towards secular feminism, Cécile de Corlieu and others recognised that social action could make certain aspects of women's rights more palatable. In fact, she legitimated social action as a terrain for women's politics that did not only concentrate on the electoral plane:

> 'Je ne vois point, pour ma part, et en ceci je suis d'accord avec toutes les féministes, que le plan électoral soit ni le seul, ni le plus décisif sur lequel doive se jouer notre chance... Je veux également signaler comme un motif d'espérance le développement accordé de toute part au service social et la place prépondérante qui est offerte à la femme dans cette forme d'activité.'[77]

Women's History, 19, 3 (2007), pp.60-86.

[74] *Action Sociale de la Femme*, 1 (January-February 1938), p.9.

[75] Siân Reynolds, 'Women and the Popular Front in France: The Case of the Three Women Ministers', *French History*, 8, 2 (1994), pp.196-224 (p.204, footnote 31). Kraemer-Bach was the head of the Radical Party's women's section until the 1950s; see Karen Offen, *European Feminisms, 1700-1950. A Political History* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), p.385.

[76] Edmée de la Rochefoucauld, *Flashes* (Paris: Bernard Grasset, 1982), p.37.

[77] *L'Aube*, 30 April 1936, 'Devoir civique et service social'.

Equally, de Corlieu believed that the Church, too, needed to modernise its thinking. In seeking to unify feminism and Catholicism through her group l'Union Spirituelle des Femmes (USF), thereby modernising Catholicism to render it more popular and in tune with modern life, Cécile de Corlieu wrote, 'je saisisse l'entière signification d'un modernisme chrétien branché sur la femme.'[78] With her friend Pauline Archambault (née Le Cormier, with whom she set up USF), she wrote a woman's column for Republican Catholic daily, *L'Aube*. Using the language of familialism to assert women's political action, she wrote:

> 'La politique, pourtant, c'est l'aménagement de la société où vivront demain les enfants que nous berçons aujourd'hui sur nos genoux. C'est le regard sur l'école, la rue, la caserne, l'hôpital, l'usine et l'atelier... La politique c'est un devoir.'[79]

Catholic women therefore recognised the politicised nature of their social activism that women had both need and right to articulate a public presence therein.

Through her social work, de Corlieu felt she had viewed two complementary realities in Paris - the working-class struggle and a lack of spirituality. These two points were central to the influential 1891 Papal encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, which had spurred the development of social Catholicism. Social action was therefore the medium through which de Corlieu strove to negotiate her personal, confessional and professional identity, believing as she did that her gender should not be a limiting factor in either her spiritual or her working life. De Corlieu acknowledged the influence of her Jesuit adviser, emphasising the progressive rather than paternalist nature of this relationship in her memoirs and maintaining that spirituality alone was key to her actions.[80]

The negotiation of a women's relationship to the masculine hierarchy was one in which Communist women, too, were implicitly involved. Familialism was not only the preserve of confessional groups, with feminism and femininity pertinent questions within PCF associational activity and Party directives too. Throughout the course of the 1930s, prompted by the new line taken by Stalin and the Comintern from 1934, the PCF moved further away from the 'liberationary' discourse of the

---

[78] De Corlieu, *Carnets*, p.73. The USF was a non-conformist group, supported by her Jesuit adviser Père Desbuqouis. For further details, see Bard, *Les Filles de Marianne*, pp.277-279.
[79] *L'Aube*, 3 March 1932, 'Le vote des femmes'.
[80] De Corlieu, *Mémoires*, p.37.

previous decade - neoMalthusianism, egalitarianism, a woman's right to control their own bodies - towards a more traditional and conciliatory view of motherhood as a woman's social duty, a process known as *Kulturnost*. It was also a recognition of the political capital to be gained by decreasing any overt, and henceforth threatening, challenges to the established gender order at a time in which strict, sexual divisions were considered integral to the harmonious functioning of society. The social sphere thus became the perfect forum for Party activists to promote stability and conventionality through reconfigured gender roles that would downplay contemporary prejudices about subversive, revolutionary ideology and perceived foreignness.

Henceforth Party discourse about femininity and womanhood shifted away from praise for the radical *vierge rouge* or *femme rouge* of the 1920s. In its place was substituted *l'épouse-mère*, as represented by the new generation of Communist women leaders, most of whom were wives and companions of the exclusively male leadership.[81] The promulgation of maternalism as women's most natural function was demonstrated by the pedagogical nature of the Union des Jeunes Filles de France's (UJFF) formation of young ladies as politically astute, moral and charming.[82] While denigrating the household as conforming to class-predicated standards of acceptable behaviour, in fact the PCF was itself increasingly articulating a gendered discourse that placed women back in their homes, as mothers and as wives. Party journalist Cilly Vassart spoke of the need for the division of duties within party cells so that woman could develop their political action alongside their duty to the household and family.[83] Appropriate models of Communist femininity were henceforth more conservative, with little to distinguish the *épouse-mère* and her duty to the nation from the Catholic milieu in

---

[81] For example, Jeannette Vermeersch was the partner of Party Secretary-General Maurice Thorez. Marie-Claude Vaillant-Couturier - with whom Vermeersch, Danièle Casanova and Claudine Chomat set up the UJFF - was married to Paul Vaillant-Couturier, the party's spokesman on cultural affairs, until his death in 1937. In 1949, she married Pierre Villon, head of *Front National* and subsequently a Communist deputy; see Claude Pennetier (ed.), *Dictionnaire Biographique du Mouvement Ouvrier Français. 1789-1939. Tome 44. Biographies Nouvelles* (Paris: Editions Ouvriers, 1990), pp.394-5.

[82] Susan B. Whitney, 'Embracing the Status Quo: French Communists, Young Women and the Popular Front', *Journal of Social History*, 30, 1 (1996), pp.29-53 (pp.35-40).

[83] Cilly Vassart, 'Il nous faut gagner les femmes', *Cahiers du Bolshevisme*, II (1936),

which the *femme/mère au foyer* was paramount to social cohesion.

Adopting the consensus politics of familialism enabled the PCF to articulate its own concern for the protection of the French family, which contributed to the ubiquity of popular sentiment about the birth rate as well as representing a political response to familialist right-wing rhetoric.[84] The PCF in fact held a conference in 1937 entitled 'Sauver la Famille', highlighting party attention to the 'social question' in its numerous forms, and the critical electoral importance of being seen to have a heightened social consciousness. However, Communist women remained subject to the pressure of multiple identities - worker, wife, mother - which exposed the inherent tensions within this gendered project. Instead of depicting working-class life, the Communist press increasingly portrayed women as fashion-conscious mothers - a distinct contrast to the standard image of a working-class woman without the means or time with which to address such issues.[85] Vassart counselled: 'N'oublions pas que les femmes communistes sont des femmes, comme toutes les autres femmes, avec le charme et la faiblesse de leur sexe.'[86] This quotation points to the inherent tension between the Party's construction of a political activist as worker and citizen, against its portrayal of women as the weaker, fairer sex. 'Playing the game' to ensure social respectability and electoral popularity therein meant using conventional language and approaches with little apparent recognition of the paradox.

In recognition of the need to articulate a party policy towards the 'woman question' and garner greater female support, on 11 July 1936 Jacques Duclos presented a report entitled 'Pour l'union des femmes de France' at the PCF's National Congress in which he emphasised the political constituency of women and the need for Catholics, war veterans, Radicals and others to work together against

---

pp.1103-1114 (p.1114).

[84] Whitney, 'Embracing the Status Quo', p.4, discusses how the UJFF made the PCF's proposal to grant interest free loans of 5,000 French Francs to young married couples one of its principal political activities.

[85] François Delpla, 'Les communistes français et la sexualité (1932-1938)', *Le Mouvement Social*, 91 (April-June 1975), pp.121-152 (p.138 and pp.145-6) for a discussion of fashion, beauty and femininity in the women's pages of the Communist press.

[86] Cécile Vassart, 'Les femmes dans le Parti communiste', *Cahiers du Bolshevisme*, I (January 1937), pp.118-121 (p.118).

economic and social dislocation.[87] Quoting from *Journal de la Femme*, he spoke of: 'des préoccupations matérielles, maternelles, ménagères, sentimentales et psychologiques de la femme.'[88] The gender bias of the quotation is clear, placing women as domestic, maternal, sentimental with the opposite suggestion of men as public, authoritative and rational. This 'nouvel Evangile communiste' met with heavy sarcasm in the socialist women's monthly press, *La Tribune des Femmes Socialistes*.[89] Both the tone and language employed were revealing: the religious connotations of 'evangelist' making a direct and ironic reference to the PCF's 'main tendue' extended to the Catholics and the new climate of cooperation to be discussed shortly. The journalist in question, Marthe Louis-Lévy, also used language to belittle Communist-feminist efforts as superficial and consumerist, deriding Communist positioning on women as providing horoscopes and sentimental stories rather than political content. Duclos' speech was used to emphasise the SFIO's stronger credentials as representative of left-wing women.

Traditionally, the Left dismissed the 'woman question' as a diversionary bourgeois tactic taking attention away from the primacy of the class struggle. The PCF and the Socialists accorded class issues priority over gender ones. Charles Sowerwine's work on women and the Socialist party (SFIO) has emphasised the gendered hierarchy of the SFIO. The women's group, from 1931 reconstituted as the Comité National des Femmes Socialistes, reported - and indeed deferred - to the masculine executive. Party misogyny 'forced women leaders into a straightjacket of male behaviour in order to function at all.'[90]

---

[87] Jacques Duclos, *Pour l'Union des Femmes de France* (Paris: Editions du Comité Populaire de Propagande, 1936).

[88] Ibid., p.18. Raymonde Machard was a well-known romance novelist, who had helped Louise Weiss set up the Femme Nouvelle campaign and who published a woman's journal entitled *Journal de la Femme*.

[89] Marthe Louis-Lévy, 'Pour faire plaisir à Jacques Duclos', *La Tribune des Femmes Socialistes*, 9 (October 1936), p.3.

[90] Helmut Gruber, 'French Women in the Crossfire of Class, Sex, Maternity, and Citizenship' in Helmut Gruber and Pamela Graves (eds.), *Women and Socialism/Socialism and Women. Europe Between the Two World Wars* (New York and Oxford: Bergahn Books, 1998), pp.279-310 (p.283). Frederic Cépède and Gilles Morin comment that the French socialist women's movement has only had one pre-eminent researcher, Charles Sowerwine and deserves more attention; see Frederic Cépède and Gilles Morin, 'L'apport des nouvelles archives à la vision des femmes socialistes dans l'entre-deux-guerres' in Evelyne Diebolt and Christiane Douyere-Demeulenaere (eds.), *Un siècle de vie associative: quelles opportunités pour les femmes?* (Paris: Femmes et Associations, 2001), pp.203-214 (p.204) and

The evidence for a socialist 'feminism' is certainly conflicting. Suzanne Lacore discussed feminists in a pejorative fashion, denigrating their 'égoïsme organique de privilégies'.[91] However, the very language that Louis-Lévy was criticising the PCF and established feminism for was employed in Lacore's later discussion of '[l]a nature [qui a] investie la femme d'une mission de vie, d'une mission d'amour.' [92] The relationship between feminism and socialism was complicated further by her consideration that '[l]a mentalité féminine n'est ni inférieure ni supérieure à celle de l'homme. Elle est autre ... Un apport précieux de sensibilité, d'idéalisme, de vaillance et de foi.'[93] Thus she juxtaposed an essentialised, subjective view of femininity with a rational and objective approach towards women's activism:

> 'Le mot action est loin d'être synonyme d'agitation ... il signifie réalisation concrète, ténacité dans la tâche, ordre et méthode dans l'esprit, souci du détail utile, durée...'[94]

The conflicting language seen in these quotations points to difficulties experienced in reconciling the feminine to the feminist and the extent to which socialist women viewed contemporary gender issues through the mindset of class primacy. In prioritising the class struggle in a way that precluded an acknowledgement of gendered considerations, socialist women failed to incorporate the political potential of feminism.[95] In fact, the following passage points to wider left-wing unease in its veiled criticism of women's social welfare as an instrument of class control:

> '... la fonction de l'assistante sociale et de la surintendante d'usine se présente comme une sorte d'apostolat pour la reconstruction de la famille ébranlés et pour le maintien de l'ordre social.'[96]

Here, apostolate was being used to suggest social conservatism and class elitism.

Charles Sowerwine, *Sisters or Citizens? Women and Socialism in France since 1876* (Cambridge, London and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

[91] Suzanne Lacore, *Femmes Socialistes* (Paris: Librairie Populaire du Parti Socialiste, 1932), p.32.

[92] Ibid., p.24.

[93] Ibid., pp.17-18.

[94] Ibid., p.16.

[95] See Sowerwine, *Sisters or Citizens*, pp.1-2, in which he highlights that although considered 'citizens', socialist women had no political voice with which to articulate their citizenship, thereby in rejecting a 'feminist' voice, they also lacked a gendered articulation.

[96] *La Tribune des Femmes Socialistes*, 2 (February 1936), p.2.

This thesis, however, will demonstrate the broader currency of *apostolat* and *mission* in the language of social activists who were not social or religious conservatives.

While feminism was largely stigmatised by the SFIO and PCF as outdated, consumerist and elitist, CGT stalwart Jeanne Bouvier commented that she was increasingly attracted to feminist circles in admiration of their hard work and devotion to effective social action, in particular on behalf of working-class children: 'Nul ne sera surpris que je préfère travailler avec les féministes, là où il y a des possibilités d'étude et de réalisations sociales'.[97] She criticised the syndicalist groups for their lack of precise study methods and reports, in which

> 'encore des discours, toujours des discours, rien que des discours. Le résultat de ce verbiage, c'est qu'aucune œuvre sociale n'a été organisée par la Confédération Générale du Travail; les enfants des adhérents sont-ils malades, ils doivent avoir recours à l'Assistance Publique.'[98]

Jewish women also reconfigured their attitudes towards feminism and femininity through social action, which prompts three related discussions. Firstly, it points to a specifically Jewish version of the *mère-éducatrice* in which the home was the spiritual site of Judaism, in recognition that it was a matrilineal religion. Secondly, social action was a means of providing Jewish women with public visibility and responsibility not necessarily replicated within their own community. The earlier discussion of women's social activism within the Catholic Church points to theory and practice being similarly gendered in this way. Thirdly, the discussion suggests that organised feminism gave Jewish women such as the journalist Louise Weiss and Cécile Brunschwicg public prominence within French rather than Jewish organisations.

Harnessing domesticity and familialism were successful strategies in ensuring Jewish support for women's action. As Nelly Las points out in her study of the International Council of Jewish Women (ICJW), public engagement in itself was a contradiction to the very notion of the 'interiority' of Jewish women.[99] Extending

---

[97] Jeanne Bouvier, *Mes Mémoires (ou 59 annees d'activités industrielle, sociale et intellectuelle d'une ouvrière). Une Syndicaliste Féministe, 1876-1935* (Paris: La Découverte/Maspero, 1983), p.251.
[98] Ibid., p.251.
[99] Nelly Las, *Femmes Juives dans le Siècle. Histoire du Conseil International des Femmes Juives de 1899 à nos Jours* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1996), p.9.

private, domestic responsibilities into the social and therefore public sphere enabled Jewish women to play a more prominent role in both the Jewish and wider community's affairs. An article in the women's page of the Jewish journal *Samedi* considered the evolving role of the Jewish woman in modern society: women in Roman times were presented as an important exception to traditional female positioning in that they held public office, enjoyed a certain independence and exerted an important influence on social affairs, suggesting a critique of the current status quo in France.[100] The article also spoke of the economic necessity of some Jewish women leaving the house and home to take 'une part active à la vie sociale et politique'.[101] Maternalist rhetoric, however, then came to the fore in the reminder:

> 'Chez nous, Juifs, la femme fut de tous temps, honorée comme mère et comme épouse... C'est la maison où elle élève ses enfants, dans le sens de Dieu, qui est le temple qu'elle doit sanctifier.'[102]

The spiritual tone of the article stressed the natural affinity of home and temple as sanctuary, addressing Jewish women as the priestesses of their faith. Invoking the *femme au foyer* as transmitter and guardian of Jewish religiosity and culture served to reinforce prevalent stereotypes about the masculine-feminine, public-private dichotomy. It also closely identified Israélite culture with that of the French middle-class in a display of the degree to which Israélites had fulfilled the conditions of emancipation through assimilation. Anti-Semitism offered a unique challenge to Jews and their relationship to state and society: in a climate of increasing hostility, social action was one means through which Jewish women could demonstrate their commitment and affiliation to the nation alongside an expression of their ethnic particularism. An article in the women's page of *La Tribune Juive* testified to Jewish participation in the contemporary consensus surrounding female activism as social motherhood and pointed to the specificity of a Jewish woman's duty in the protection of the next generation: 'Tout le monde est reconnaissant au mouvement féminin, qui a complètement réalisé son devoir historique, comme protectrice de l'enfant juif'.[103]

---

[100] *Samedi*, 13 February 1937, 'La Femme Juive'. In March 1936, *Le Journal Juif* had changed its name to *Samedi*.
[101] Ibid.
[102] Ibid.
[103] *La Tribune Juive*, 16 July 1936, 'Le travail social de la femme en Palestine', p.413.

Through women's associations and the feminist movement, Jewish women were able to carve out a public space for themselves that was not necessarily replicated within their patriarchal community. Many of the prominent feminists of the day were Jewish, often of Alsatian background such as Weiss or Brunschwicg. Assimilated Jewish women were more likely to be members of a non-confessional feminist organisation such as the UFSF than a Jewish one, whereas immigrant Jewish women were likely to affiliate to socialist, Zionist or Communist groups who offered them specific socioeconomic advantages.[104] The political convictions that drove Jewish women to participate were diverse, reflecting their participation in socialist, Radical, Communist and other parties, for whom membership was not predicated on an exclusive, ethnic identity, but a political one.[105] The interwar period therefore marked a very personal negotiation of political, spiritual and ethnic identity for Jewish women. Juliette Stern - WIZO Secretary-General and social worker - was prompted to learn more about Zionism after her encounter with German-Jewish refugees in Paris and, after a visit to Palestine, she wrote 'I am at peace.'[106] Others, however, reacted differently. Jewish social worker Vivette Samuel recounted how her Zionist parents took the family on holiday to Palestine when she was 14 years old. She noticed the numbers of Jewish immigrants fleeing there from Europe: 'Resolutely French, I insisted on being secure in my identity. France was viscerally my country, nothing could separate me from it. Nothing.'[107] On their return, Vivette stopped learning Hebrew. Although, as detailed in Chapter Five and the Conclusion, Samuel's identification with Jewish refugees strengthened and she found herself providing welfare to those interned within French camps, at this stage

---

[104] Paula E. Hyman, *From Dreyfus to Vichy. The Remaking of French Jewry, 1906-1939* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), p.148, comments that Zionist criticism was directed at Jewish women involved in the humanitarian, universalist causes of the day for not concentrating upon their own people.

[105] See Renée Poznanski, *Jews in France During World War II*, (Hanover and London: Brandeis University Press, University Press of New England, 2001), pp.3-4, for a discussion of the political preferences of Israélites in interwar France and pp.10-11 for those of immigrant Jews. David H.Weinberg, *A Community on Trial. The Jews of Paris in the 1930s* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1977), p.134, points out that the PCF had a Jewish section (disbanded in March 1937) and the CGTU had a Yiddish section. Although the SFIO did not have a specific section for Jews, it had close contacts with Paole-Sion and the Bundists, xiii.

[106] Juliette Stern article in *La Terre Retrouvée*, 25 June 1935, quoted in Weinberg, *A Community on Trial,* p.65.

her cultural attachment to Frenchness and class consciousness reflected her assimilationist beliefs.

Women's social action: cross-party rapprochement or inter-party hostility?

Theoretical consensus around women's role in welfare provisioning vis-à-vis femininity and feminism was matched by practical collaboration in certain areas, despite the intransigence and hostility of ideological viewpoints. This section will comment upon Communist-Catholic rapprochement in the municipalities over unemployment initiatives despite ongoing tensions. Then, the discussion will draw to a conclusion with a brief commentary on the role of women in the politicisation of childhood, which as Pedersen points out remained of primary importance for any social welfare initiative during the period.[108] Whereas unemployment measures could generate some practical collaboration, the *colonies de vacances* movement was a prime site of social and political tension in which familialist rhetoric was used to legitimate political positioning. The Jewish movement provides an example of the specificity of ethnic 'education' and solidarity in the instability of the interwar period.

On 17 April 1936, just prior to the election of the left-wing Popular Front government, Maurice Thorez called for an anti-fascist alliance of Communists, Catholics and the war veterans of the Croix de Feu. The street violence of 6 February 1934 had in part prompted such a move, with the PCF wanting to appear moderate and respectable. Forging a better working relationship with Catholics would detract from the party's at times street-fighting image and this 'new direction' was approved by the Comintern in the latter stages of 1935.[109] Party Secretary Jacques Duclos was keen to reiterate that being a Catholic was not synonymous with being a reactionary in order to distance Catholicism from the resurgent radical right.[110] Cécile Vassart made specific reference to the Catholic pacifist campaigner Germaine Malaterre-Sellier, calling upon Communist women to unite with their

---

[107] Samuel, *Rescuing the Children*, pp.6-7.
[108] Pedersen, *Family, Dependence*, p.290.
[109] After 1932, James Steel comments that a resurgence of anti-capitalism among some branches of Catholics, particularly youth movements, made the move more appealing for a certain section of Catholic society, alongside ongoing social Catholic movements. See James Steele, "La main tendue', the French Communist Party and the Catholic Church, 1935-7' in Martin S. Alexander and Helen Graham (eds.), *The French and Spanish Popular Fronts. Comparative Perpectives* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp.93-103 (p.99).

Catholic counterparts: 'nous pouvons marcher à côté d'elles'.[111] While this rapprochement has been discussed from a political (male) perspective, room exists to study the actual relationship on the ground, in which both Catholic and Communist women were the primary agents of local collaboration, predicated through welfare and relief works such as soup kitchens for the unemployed.

Cross-faction collaboration in the social sphere was developed between the PCF and Catholics on a municipal basis, concentrating on social works for the impoverished and unemployed, health and housing concerns. Whereas in Britain the nascent welfare state concentrated on assistance to, and insurance for, the unemployed, Pedersen points out that in France this was left to the localities.[112] Concern for the unemployed - and the attendant issues of housing or nutrition - was a major preoccupation in the predominantly working-class districts, such as Ivry, where Florimond Bonte noted that local Catholics were collaborating 'avec les communistes au Comité d'entr'aide, pour porter un secours immédiat aux chômeurs.'[113] Madeleine Delbrêl sat on the aid committee for the unemployed, organised by Communist mayor Georges Marrane. She was also President of the Syndicat Professionnel des Assistantes de Service Social, which adhered to the Christian syndicate, the Confédération Française des Travailleurs Chrétiens (CFTC). Delbrêl commented that her intentions were purely religious and not political, knowing very little about the community and its politics when she arrived there as a 29-year-old in 1933. Being insulted in the street more than once made Delbrêl realise the extent to which the locality faced religion only twice in their lives, at marriages and funerals.[114] Tyler Stovall argues that these decades were critical to the development of an identity in which one was not made a Communist in the suburbs, one was simply born one.[115]

Delbrêl wrote, 'Au contact de chaque incroyant, je deviens comme une

---

[110] Duclos, *Pour l'union*, p.24.
[111] Vassart, 'Il nous faut gagner les Femmes', p.1110.
[112] Pedersen, *Family, Dependence*, p.290.
[113] Florimond Bonte, 'Communistes, Croix de Feu et Catholiques', *Cahiers du Bolshevisme*, 10-11 (June 1936), pp.648-666 (p.659).
[114] Madeleine Delbrêl, *Ville Marxiste. Terre de Mission* (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1957), p.26.
[115] Tyler Stovall, 'From Red Belt to Black Belt. Race, Class and Urban Marginality in Twentieth Century Paris' in Sue Peabody and Tyler Stovall (eds.), *The Color of Liberty. Histories of Race in France* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003), pp.351-369 (p.354).

frontière de l'Eglise; j'essaye de discerner les souplesses et les solidarités apostoliques aptes à cette vie frontalière.'[116] She likened social action in the suburbs to a frontier life, with the attendant challenges and difficulties that the term suggests. The term could also relay a sense of 'colonising', or in this sense missionary work, and of the perception of difference (religious, cultural and/or ethnic) between the social worker (herself), the project she represented (Catholicism) and the wider community (working-class, Communist, poor). The Red suburbs - and their relationship with the local Catholic Church - have become a renewed focus of historical research, as represented by Annie Fourcaut's discussion of the Bobigny priesthood's patriotism or Laura Lee Downs' work on the politics of childhood in the Communist municipality of Ivry-sur-Seine.[117] The Communists remained distrustful of Catholic proselytising manifesting itself as purely social action, yet in their own way Communist social action - particularly expressed in *les banlieues rouges* of the 1930s - harboured a similar motivating force in 'converting' the working-class to their secular ideals of revolutionary class struggle.

Cardinal Verdier's 1937 Christmas message concentrated on the relationship between Catholicism and Communism in which he juxtaposed the themes of spirituality and materialism. He called for respect and understanding despite these ideological differences, thereby supporting initiatives already in practice in the localities. However,

> 'dans la mesure où une collaboration engagerait directement la doctrine, serait un renoncement implicite aux principes chrétiens, cette action, en vertu des règles générales et constantes de la morale, reste inadmissible.'[118]

Practical interaction for the wellbeing of French society was one thing - of which women were the agents - but doctrine (masculine) was still accorded primacy and theoretical considerations were absolute. The Papal encyclical *Divini Redemptoris*, published in March 1937, reminded Catholics of the oppositional nature of the two, but endorsed Communist-Catholic co-operation as a charitable endeavour 'on an

---

[116] Delbrêl, *Ville Marxiste*, p.13.
[117] See Annie Fourcaut, *Bobigny, Banlieue Rouge* (Paris: Les Editions Ouvrières et Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, 1986), pp.189-190 and Laura Lee Downs, 'Municipal Communism and the Politics of Childhood: Ivry-sur-Seine 1925-1960', *Past and Present*, 166, 1 (February 2000), pp.205-241 (p.213).
[118] *Dossiers de l'Action Populaire*, 10 January 1938.

individual basis according to need'.[119] That this was given greater attention than the following encyclical opposing Nazi racism has been seen by Thomas Kselman as indicative of contemporary fears about Bolshevisation being higher than those regarding fascism, a factor that will be discussed in the following chapter with regards to the Spanish civil war.[120]

Anti-Communism remained a stalwart of Papal doctrine. If, as the Church suggested, social teaching was to offer the population an alternative to Communism in alleviating the 'social question', then women's social action offered a challenge to the absolute primacy of doctrine over reality and was of crucial importance to this project. This challenge was demonstrated in the personalisation of feminine faith that de Corlieu was interested by, the UNVF's moderation of a middle ground between public and private positioning, or by inter-denominational partnerships in the community, for example. The LFAC's journal in fact became less hostile towards Communism in terms of the party and its people, but continued to concentrate criticism upon its ideology.[121] Communist and Catholic ideology was antithetical and adversarial, however, local welfare initiatives to alleviate social issues, such as employment, again complicates the received idea of hostility, pointing to the differences between theoretical and practical engagement. Catholic hostility to Communist influence in the localities was expressed in two main ways: reminding women of their social duties and calling upon youth to join Catholic action groups. In serving the Church and its doctrines in municipalities such as Ivry, Delbrêl and others were consciously maintaining a specific social vision and instilling certain social values. The fact that Communist social action in the localities strove to counteract or work alongside this is testament to contemporaries' perception of the 'battleground' of the working class.[122] The language Delbrêl

---

[119] John Hellman, 'Vichy Background: Political Alternatives for French Catholics in the Nineteen-Thirties', *Journal of Modern History*, 49, 1, On Demand Supplement, (March 1977), pp.D1111-1144 (p.1136).
[120] Thomas Kselman, 'Catholicism, Christianity and Vichy', *French Historical Studies*, 23, 3 (2000), pp.513-530 (p.517). The Papal encyclical *Mit brennender Sorge*, regarding Nazism, followed *Divini Redemptoris.*
[121] Corinne Bonafoux-Verrax, 'Femmes dans les mouvements d'action Catholique générale de l'entre-deux-guerres' in Diebolt and Douyere-Demeulenaere (eds.), *Femmes et Associations*, pp.37-52 (p.49-50).
[122] Laura Lee Downs has termed the municipal politics of the 'Red Belt' in which social assistance and collective action were inextricably linked as 'parish-pump politics'. See Downs, 'Municipal Communism', p.209.

herself employed was redolent of 'politicised' Catholicism - apostolat, mission, vocation, for example:

> 'Peu à peu, le dynamisme apostolique était utilisé pour pénétrer dans la vie même du travail - tout au moins dans les régions urbaines - tandis que l'intention primitive d'une Evangélisation apostolique se transformait en une simple présence chrétienne qui, pour certains d'entre nous, parut être la meilleure des missions.'[123]

While Madeleine Delbrêl was not hostile to the Communism she faced on a daily basis, the journal *Action Sociale de la Femme* was particularly anti-Communist in tone, reminding its readership to be alert: 'contre le marxisme, le communisme et l'athéisme, partout où elles peuvent exercer une influence, dans leurs œuvres, dans la famille, la profession et la cité.'[124] ASF's programme tried to circumvent possible Communist influence in the social sphere by working with like-minded groups 'pour la réalisation des progrès sociaux' and to raise women's awareness of 'son devoir social'.[125] This is an interesting use of language in linking duty (Catholic, familialist, traditional) with progress, suggestive again of the way in which women were conscious of the need to be recognised as rational, professional agents in social action that had as its cornerstone the home and family. ASF's use of *la cité*, to emphasise its Republican virtues, reminded women of their civic and personal duty to combat potentially harmful influences in their familial, professional and political action.[126] Other publications struck a similar tone, the LFACF speaking of 'celles qui servent la cité - les Mamans'.[127] The social sphere was thus an area of both consensus and tension over discourse and action. The ASF continued to position Communism as anti-family and thus anti-France:

> 'La mère est là, par son instinct, elle discerne mieux que l'homme les embûches qui menacent le foyer et, par lui, la patrie. C'est elle qui crée l'ambiance familiale qui est la grande correctrice.' ... 'Il n'y a pas de vraie

---

[123] Delbrêl, *Ville Marxiste*, p.89.
[124] *Action Sociale de la Femme*, 6-7 (July-August 1937), p.112.
[125] *Action Sociale de la Femme*, 1 (January 1936).
[126] Christine Bard has commented on the use of the terms *cité de Dieu* and *cité politique*, in which the former, women's relationship to religion, was never questioned but the latter elicited questioning; see Bard, *Les Filles de Marianne*, p.280.
[127] Ligue Féminine d'Action Catholique Française, *Almanach 1936. Edition spéciale de l'Almanach Encyclopédique de la Famille Française* (Paris: LFACF, 1936), p.33.

action sociale qui ne soit d'inspiration catholique, car seule l'Eglise peut écarter de nous l'influence des faux docteurs qui doivent pulluler dans les derniers temps. Ne leur ouvrons pas la voie.'[128]

Mothers were of utmost importance to the moral and physical safeguarding of the family and therein the nation. Women articulated a familialist and maternalist vision of social activism that placated contemporary anxieties regarding the possible limitations of their gender and one that strengthened the identity they espoused - whether Catholic, Communist, Jewish or other.

Social action was an accepted and convenient medium through which each group could articulate its vision of France and women were its agents. For Catholics, religious social action would restore the country to a proper understanding of its Christian heritage while demonstrating the progressive nature of the Catholic Church. For the Communists, social action would contribute to the vitality of the working class and its political ascendancy. Meanwhile Zionists saw in Palestine an egalitarian ideal and Israélites viewed welfare as an agent of assimilation. The chapter has demonstrated how familialist rhetoric was used to engender support for each of these social visions, as well as its strategic use by women to justify and extend their responsibilities and activism in welfare. This concluding section will briefly point to the *colonies de vacances* movement as a further site for inter-group hostility in which women practised educational and social welfare initiatives designed to engender youth affiliation to a wider political or confessional agenda. It will also demonstrate the continued salience of professionalism as a factor in women's social activism and to the retention of social motherhood as an appropriate means through which to acknowledge public activism. Women's involvement in *colonies de vacances* thus encapsulates the thematic questions of the chapter: questioning the relationship of language and discourse to lived experience; the negotiation of personal identity and affiliation through social activism; the areas of practical consensus and ideological tensions between interested parties; the development of women's networks; the resonance of social motherhood and familialist rhetoric as both principle and strategy.

The *colonies de vacances movement* was one that caught the popular and political imagination during the period, blending cultural, religious and political principles regarding welfare, education and childcare. In the Jewish case, the

[128] *Action Sociale de la Femme*, 6 (July-August 1937), pp.123-4.

specificity of generating an awareness of ethnicity and solidarity was notable. The Jewish community recognised the impoverished, unsanitary conditions in which many children were forced to live. For example, Parisian Yiddish newspaper *Naie Press* reported on 30 April 1935 that 7% of the Pletzl's inhabitants were tubercular.[129] Colonie Scolaire and Pour Nos Enfants sent children from 21 days to one month a year to benefit from fresh air, hygiene and good food. Efforts were concentrated in the 11th, 19th and 20th arrondissements where housing was poorest and most unsanitary.[130] In the summer of 1933, Pour Nos Enfants was responsible for sending some 800 poor Jewish children to the countryside and mountains.[131] Holiday camps went some way towards alleviating questions of ill-health and poor hygiene. They also offered a cultural- and ethnic-specific education through the speaking of Yiddish, religious instruction of Jewish food and traditions, for example. While sociomedical attention focused on the restorative effects of the countryside on urban childhood, several Jewish organisations focused on orphaned and refugee children, an indication of the intensified socioeconomic difficulties and anti-Semitism facing the Jewish community across Europe.[132] Beiss-Yessoimim (Orphelinat) was opened on 4 October 1936 by Suzanne Lacore in her ministerial capacity. The institution cared for Jewish children abandoned to Assistance Publique from 8 days old to their majority, providing a Jewish cultural and academic education.[133] Œuvres Israélites des Sejours à la Campagne owned a children's home in the Marly forest and Bois de Louveciennes where they provided religious instruction, Jewish familial life and a bimonthly medical visit.[134] The Jewish *colonies de vacances* movement thereby reflected the plurality of Jewishness, offering ethnic solidarity and particularism through cultural traditions and education, as well as reflecting the

---

[129] *Naie Press*, 30 April 1935, cited in Weinberg, *A Community on Trial*, p.4, footnote 9.
[130] *Archives Israélites de France*, 30 August 1934, 'Dans les sociétés juives', p.128.
[131] *Archives Israélites de France*, 29 March 1934, 'Dans les sociétés juives', p.40.
[132] The Union pour la Protection des Israélites Emigrés (constituted in February 1934), for example, changed its name in December 1936 to Foyer des Israélites Refugiés, stating itself as apolitical in nature and highlighting the plight of refugee status as opposed to the idea of planned émigrés. The Foyer provided aid and assistance to refugees and their children through the creation and maintenance of hostels, clubs, crèches and cantines - the gamut of social welfare provisioning. By 1939, the Foyer's activities had been reduced to only the running of cantines and providing free aid to elderly Jews. See APP, BA 2314 Communauté Juive, 66.083.
[133] *L'Univers Israélite*, 12 March 1937, p.431.
[134] *L'Univers Israélite*, 7 March 1937, p.521.

primacy of childcare initiatives to community welfare.

The Catholic movement stemmed from urban parish initiatives in the 1890s and by the early 1900s already had some 200 organisations and 26,000 children.[135] Downs' research acknowledges the influence of the Catholic pedagogical example on subsequent Communist versions. In fact, she points to 'the social politics of childhood anchoring the Communist council's support.'[136] In Fourcaut's study of Bobigny, the congruence between the two is emphasised in the PCF's recognition of the potential for political 'education' through holiday camp initiatives:

> 'Les colonies de vacances manifestent une volonté d'embrigadement des enfants, à qui sont données, avec le béret rouge, les premiers éléments d'un catéchisme communiste.'[137]

Social initiatives could therefore mask a deeper political purpose to generate loyalty to the municipality and therein the Party. Fourcaut's use of catechism here is suggestive of the way in which Communism operated 'as a religion'. At her partner Thorez's suggestion, Jeannette Vermeersch had worked at a camp on the Ile de Ré for several months in 1930, where some 60 children of striking workers were being cared for: 'Je me transformai en coiffeuse et en épouilleuse puis en mère de famille,' she later commented.[138] Vermeersch was not only recognising the maternalism of her role but implicitly pointing to the ubiquitous association of welfare with social motherhood.

While Vermeersch commented on the personal, social aspects of her role on the Ile de Ré, the next generation was in fact an obvious site for political targeting and one in which women, by their very nature, were suited to. The role of the *mère-éducatrice* was inherently a politicised one. Childhood, like the municipality, became a site for political confrontation, linked to each group's determination to foment their own ideology and identity in childhood. The radical right, too, instigated their own *colonies de vacances* movement to engender political principles. Social worker for the Parti Social Français (PSF, previously known as Croix de Feu) Jeanne Garrigoux noted that 15,000 children were sent by the PSF to holiday camps in

---

[135] Downs, 'Municipal Communism', p.213.
[136] Ibid., p.211.
[137] Fourcaut, *Bobigny*, p.191.
[138] Jeanette Thorez-Vermeersch, *La Vie en Rouge. Mémoires* (Paris: Belfond, 1998), p.43.

1937.[139] The PSF was keen to emphasise that its social action responded 'à un besoin et n'est pas simplement une mode', to legitimise women's - and the PSF's - public activism as sustained and professional.[140] Throughout this chapter, the voices of women from the radical Right to the Communist Left have highlighted this consciousness of professionalism, its pertinence to women's social action and the importance of women being viewed by contemporaries as modern, qualified, serious-minded practitioners rather than impromptu 'do-gooders'.

This chapter has focused on French women's advancement of the professionalisation of the social welfare sector during a period of increased state attention to welfare provision and regulation. Women's articulation of their motivations and experiences during the interwar period complicates and challenges the antithetical nature of theoretical and ideological differences in operation. The debates over professionalism - in which women were both participants and objects - revealed ongoing tensions with the perceived meanings of feminism, with sectarian and confessional identity, what it meant to be French, as well as hostility to, and retention of, class prejudice. Social action was therefore the means through which each group could articulate its own political - and therein competing - vision of society.

Despite the inherent tensions between different ideological viewpoints, however, there was a great degree of consensus forged over the common ground. Professionalisation incorporated related arguments about the suitability and aptitude of women to the task. The prevalence of a maternalist logic and acceptance of professional roles as a form of social motherhood added to a cross-party consensus on familialism. This chapter has demonstrated how a maternalist consensus came to exist amongst social reformers motivated by quite different political and religious inflection, which stressed the essential duties of motherhood in providing a political-religious education for the next generation, to ensure its continuity and that of the wider group or community. The conscious use of

---

[139] Jeanne Garrigoux, *Le Parti Social Français et l'Action Sociale: rapport présenté au IIe Congrès National du Parti Social Français (Lyon, Novembre 1937)* (Paris: Imprimerie du PSF, 1937), p.7. She noted that the PSF had 523 social action sections and 1,350 *auxiliaires sociales* engaged in a wide spectrum of activities in both the town and countryside.

[140] *Le Flambeau*, 23 May 1936, 'L'Assistante Sociale', p.1.

familialism and wide cultural acknowledgment of the role of the *mère-éducatrice* enabled women to extend and justify their public presence without raising male anxieties that the 'natural' was being subverted. The continued essentialisation of womanhood was used by women to engender social acceptance and reach their stated aims. However, women also implicitly acknowledged their gender difference and the importance of maternalism to their social and political roles. That is not to say, however, that the social sphere was one operating along consensual lines. Very real divisions between individuals and groups existed over feminism and the limitations of women's activism and public duty, exposing the inherently political nature of social activism as relating to party, confessional or ethnic identity.

The following chapter explores the contemporary debates around a woman's ability, aptitude and essential qualities further by taking the Spanish civil war as a test case of women's social action, extending ideas about 'appropriate femininity' in the context of war. It pays particular attention to testimony from women who visited Spain to understand how an increasingly professionalised and politicised body of women, with limited operability in the political sphere, used the social sphere to further the parameters of women's religious, ethnic and political action. It also examines how the threat of a fascist victory in Spain spurred French women to articulate more forcefully their political views about their own country using their own experiences in social action.

Chapter Two: French anti-fascist women and social action on behalf of the Spanish Republic, 1936-1939.

Chapter One set the scene with regards to French women's positioning within the social welfare sector, the debates surrounding their professional status and the ubiquity of religious language within such discussions surrounding a women's motivation to participate. The chapters that follow explore social action as an expression of one's political activism, feminism and/or personal identification with those in need (whether a spiritual, nationalistic, ethnic or politicised one). This chapter concentrates on the specific period of the Spanish civil war and primarily uses personal narrative to explore the integral link between experience and identity for French women who engaged in anti-fascist social action. The testimony comes notably from the French Left: the novelist and journalist Edith Thomas, who visited Spain in 1936 and again in 1938, writing for *Ce Soir* and *Regards*; the Jewish student Vivette Samuel, who chose to remain unaffiliated to any one party, although she described herself as 'of the Left'; and others.[1] Memoirs sit alongside police reports, the national and women's press - notably *Les Femmes dans l'Action Mondiale*, the journal of the Comité Mondial des Femmes contre la guerre et le fascisme (CMF) - as the primary source base for French women's anti-fascist involvement in Spain. Commentary from the non-interventionist side will be used for comparative purposes.

The historical literature has concentrated on the diplomatic machinations of non-intervention in the Popular Front era and on the contribution of the International Brigades, two examples of the weighted focus placed on political and military, henceforth primarily, masculine experiences of this period. Historians such as Helen Graham, Mary Nash and Siân Reynolds have written about French women's experiences. However, the literature focuses more heavily on American and British women and, naturally, on Spanish women, in the Mujeres Libres movement, for example.[2] This chapter offers an important counterbalance to more

---

[1] Vivette Samuel, *Rescuing the Children. A Holocaust Memoir* (Wisconsin and London: University of Wisconsin Press, 2002), p.10.

[2] A wide range of historical research has focused on the Spanish Republic and its fall. See, for example: Gabriel Jackson, *A Concise History of the Spanish Civil War* (London: Thames and Hudson,1980); Chris Earlham and Michael Richards (eds.), *The Splintering of Spain: Cultural History and the Spanish Civil War* (Cambridge:

traditional histories in highlighting the significance of the non-military, social sphere as a political - and female - force. Focusing on the language used by French women to reflect upon their engagement with the civil war enables us to personalise these experiences, and therein demonstrate how the Spanish situation enabled women to articulate and express their beliefs about France itself.

This chapter considers three themes. Firstly, the Spanish civil war enabled many women to comment forcefully on their position within France at that time, using language that would best elicit popular support. This language was notably religious in tone, no matter how secular the cause to defend an anti-clerical Republic. The chapter therefore picks up threads from the previous discussion of the wide contemporary currency of religious language to generate a sense of duty and purpose. It is striking the extent to which mission and apostolate were used to reinforce women's consciousness of their professional ability and duties within the welfare sector as a whole.

Secondly, the chapter examines the idea of engaging with the Spanish Republican cause in a socially respectable and appropriate manner. The Spanish civil war provided many French women with the opportunity to demonstrate their political commitment through social action, using their status as women and their consciousness of the gendered presumptions and 'natural' restrictions that that entailed. Women employed certain rationalisations and strategies to ensure that society viewed their behaviour as respectable, notably in the harnessing of maternalism. Exploring both the consensus and tension existing between female social activists over the parameters of their duties and responsibilities clarifies where women's actions diverged from common essentialist notions of 'appropriate

---

Cambridge University Press, 2005); Martin S. Alexander and Helen Graham (eds.), *The French and Spanish Popular Fronts. Comparative Perpectives* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989). For research on women and the Spanish civil war, see Jim Fyrth and Sally Alexander (eds.), *Women's Voices from the Spanish Civil War* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1991), Danièle Bussy Genevois, 'The Women of Spain from the Republic to France', in Françoise Thébaud (ed.), *A History of Women in the West. V: Toward a Cultural Identity in the Twentieth-Century*, (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1994), pp.177-193 and Mary Nash, *Defying Male Civilisation: Women in the Spanish Civil War* (Denver: Arden Press, 1995). Mary Nash, 'Women's Role in the Spanish Civil War' in Christine Fauré (ed.), *Political and Historical Encyclopedia of Women* (New York and London: Routledge, 2003) pp.347-356 highlights how the civil war period witnessed an unprecedented mobilisation of women in new public services and positions.

femininity'. In fact, women consciously used maternalist logic to extend their responsibility and action. Most difficult to justify was the idea of martial femininity. Unlike the women of the Catholic or radical right, the Communists had to reconcile their newly pronounced discourses of maternalism and familialism with their traditional support to women's militariness - as had been seen in the armed Soviet 'new woman' or the mythologising of Louise Michel manning the barricades. Personal testimonies enable us to elaborate on the relationship between women's discourse about their own gender, their experience of it within the social sphere, and the extent to which women used prevalent discourses about 'essentialised' femininity to reconfigure and validate their participation in a political project. The PCF in particular sought social reassurance and respectability: it was conscious of the hostility with which 'polite' society viewed mixed organisations and was cautious to limit such social anxiety in a period where political tensions spilled onto the streets. Each party and association therefore had its own notion of the acceptable limits of women's social and political action with regards to Spain. Women's innate maternalism projected domestic and moral peace and stability, was thus reassuring at a time of conflict and widely used to legitimate the presence of French women who travelled to the war zone and participated in auxiliary activities - nursing, accompanying deliveries, reporting, for example. For the radical right, however, maternalism was marshalled to reconfirm the policy of complete non-intervention - a woman's duty in wartime was to care, console and provide moral sustenance.

Thirdly, anti-fascism, too, was often to provide a younger generation of women with the nascent political education that their elders had found in the feminist campaign for suffrage and in associationalist lobbying. The 27 year old novelist and journalist Edith Thomas wrote passionately:

> 'Il ne s'agissait plus d'être anarchiste, ni syndicaliste, ni socialiste, ni communiste... il ne s'agissait plus d'orthodoxie, d'exclusivité, de billet de confession, il s'agissait de barrer la route du fascisme. Tout semblait clair en brûlant au soleil du juillet.'[3]

Spain clearly represented a life stage for certain young women at a crossroads in their personal and professional commitments, and offered a grounding for their actions and involvement in networks under Occupation in which the personal and

[3] Edith Thomas, *Le Témoin Compromis* (Paris: Viviane Hamy, 1995), p.58.

professional were interlinked and indispensable.

By means of a brief introduction, it is important to situate French anti-fascism within the political and social context of neighbouring Spain. Mirroring political developments within France at this time between Left and Right, compounded by economic dislocation and the rise of fascism, Spain too was subject to a widening political divide, which affected both the political and social spheres: left liberals, socialists, Communists and anarcho-syndicalists on the one hand and Catholics, monarchists, landowners, reactionary right-wing parties on the other. The Spanish Second Republic had been established in April 1931 following the abdication of King Alfonso XIII after a majority vote for Republican candidates in local and municipal elections. In its first, and few, years of existence, the Republic legislated in a number of key social, cultural, economic and political areas: divorce was legalised, women were granted the vote, Church and state were separated, improvements were made to the health, welfare and education system, and agrarian reform was instigated, for example. Such wide social and political transformation met with varying degrees of acceptance amongst the different sectors of society. Social unrest intensified; strikes, violence and instability became commonplace. The questions of Basque and Catalan nationalism were particularly divisive. Following socialist-anarchist uprisings in Asturias and Catalonia on 6 October 1934, the country became increasingly more divided along ideological, political and class lines.[4] In February 1936 a left-wing Popular Front was victorious at elections, but in July 1936 civil war broke out as General Franco attempted a *coup d'état* to end parliamentary Republicanism and moved to reinstate an authoritarian style of government, ostensibly using a 'planned' Communist insurrection as the military's reason to act. Franco and the Nationalists were foremost anti-Communists and anti-liberals, perceiving the Second Republic to be weakened by revolutionary doctrines, liberalism and atheism. Broadly speaking, the conventional divisions of Left and Right corresponded to support for the Republic and support to Franco's insurgents respectively. The ideological divisions of the Spanish civil war prefigured those of France under Vichy. There were more than a few corollaries between the two countries, with political parties

[4] Revolts - prompted by the entrance of three right-wing Confederación Española de Derechas Autónomas (CEDA) ministers into a new centrist-right government and calls for a general strike - were brutally suppressed by General Francisco Franco. See Jackson, *A Concise History*, p.23.

and associations in both eager to remake society in their own mould, whether authoritarian, conservative, Catholic, or laic, democratic, socialist, utopian.

Raising women's political consciousness through the social

The French national press was inundated by coverage, with passionate political rhetoric, photographic evidence of the destruction and damage inflicted on bombed-out cities, stirring reportage from journalists across the border, and analytical surveys of the civil war's impact on the European and international political playing-field. Simone de Beauvoir remarked that she was 'at once engulfed by the drama that for the next two and a half years was to dominate our lives. The Spanish civil war.'[5] The schoolteacher Emilie Carles 'dreamed of a libertarian Europe, free of bosses, army and Church', the latter three symbolising - through the prism of the raging civil war - the primary obstacles she believed to social liberty and equality.[6] For Edith Thomas, 'c'était une belle époque, dans le style de 1848'.[7] She drew parallels between the Spanish overthrow of monarchy and the institution of the Second Republic with France's own historical experience. The revolutionary tone of the period was witnessed in political fervour to refashion society and in the Comité Mondial des Femmes' call, 'c'est 1789 qui se joue en Espagne'.[8] While most political commentators would have referred to the mid-1930s as anything but a *belle époque*, instead one characterised by hostilities and anxieties, for Thomas the energy and optimism of the period were paramount, reflected in a later discussion of young women's enthusiastic uptake of the cause.[9]

Reactions in France to the outbreak of civil war in neighbouring Spain were thus immediate and impassioned, reflecting the gravity of the situation for the wider European population and the political situation within France itself. While sympathy for the Republicans' plight was widespread internationally, fear that the Spanish civil war could engulf the continent in a wider conflict between fascism and

---

[5] Simone de Beauvoir, *The Prime of Life* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1965), p.275.
[6] Emilie Carles, *A Life of her Own. A Countrywoman in Twentieth-Century France* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1991), p.180. Carles credited her political transformation to meeting her husband and henceforth moving in anarchist and syndicalist circles.
[7] Thomas, *Le Témoin Compromis*, p.58.
[8] *Les Femmes dans l'Action Mondiale*, 26 (6-20 September 1936), pp.8-9.
[9] Thomas, *Le Témoin Compromis*, p.58.

Communism and/or fascism and Western liberal democracy prevailed in political decisions made to limit the fighting geographically. De Beauvoir commented bitterly that fear of the revolutionary fervour of the masses, not love of fascism, lay behind such decision making.[10] The French border was closed on 8 August 1936, although arms and volunteers unofficially continued to cross after that date. The non-intervention agreement of February 1937 was commonly perceived as a rational solution to avoid war. The supply of arms and military equipment or personnel to either side was prohibited, but the agreement did not apply to medical and food supplies. However, Germany and Italy directly subverted the agreement, sending military support, machinery and personnel to bolster Franco's army, support that was to prove decisive in the Nationalists' victory in April 1939. Gabriel Jackson has commented that the practical force of the European powers' non-intervention was to turn a blind eye to overt fascist aid to Franco whilst pointing an accusing finger at Stalinist Russia.[11] The Soviet Union, alone of the European powers, sent military support to the Republican side. Fearing the spread of Communism across Europe, diplomatic opinions varied when it came to overt support for the Republicans, aside from the general professions of sympathy expressed.[12] Centre-right concerns that the civil war would engender greater support for Communism within France were reflected in the conservative women's press. 'Une malheureuse jeunesse trompée, le sang de France coulant pour une cause qui n'est pas la sienne, voilà les résultats de cette propagande insensée', wrote Hélène Foroul in *Le Devoir des Femmes.*[13] Meanwhile for others non-intervention heightened French sensitivities to fascism gaining ground 'through the back-door', as highlighted by a March 1938 poster published by the Comité de Vigilance des Intellectuels Antifascistes (CVIA), which called for 'Pas de fascisme

---

[10] de Beauvoir, *Prime of Life*, p.277.
[11] Jackson, *A Concise History*, p.63.
[12] Mexico supported the Spanish Republic. *Action Sociale de la Femme* subsequently wrote about both the Spanish and Mexican governments as being Bolshevik agents of the Soviet Union, again highlighting the extent to which conservative opinion feared Bolshevism more than fascism. See *Action Sociale de la Femme*, 6-7 (March-April 1937), pp.122-3.
[13] *Le Devoir des Femmes*, 1 (January 1937). The monthly journal from the women's section of the Fédération Républicaine clearly offered a political commentary despite the presumed 'apolitical' nature of French women in conservative thought.

sous prétexte de défense nationale'.[14] French journalist Geneviève Tabouis, who wrote a regular column in a British newspaper at this time, published *Blackmail or War* in 1938, the title directly alluded to Nazi Germany's success in blackmailing the Western democracies into non-intervention in Spain and thereby securing itself vital resources for inevitable future European conflict.[15]

French women widely remarked on domestic diplomacy in publications, therein offering a commentary on the masculine political process. Without the vote, the women's press and the social sphere itself became instruments through which French women articulated their political engagement. In her multivolume memoirs, Radical and feminist Louise Weiss dismissed reports that Blum allegedly often cried at the situation: 'Quand on governe, on ne pleure pas. On décide. Seul l'oeil sec voit clair', a sentiment echoed in a similar commentary on a hesitant speech made by Blum in August 1936 in which he 'pretended to dry his eyes'.[16] In October 1936, Weiss had attended the Radical Party's conference in Biarritz. She noted refugees sheltering in the entrance halls of the hotel and the sheer volume of people fleeing Spain. At the border she was surprised to find French people holidaying there.[17] Disgusted by what she perceived as the commercial exploitation of war and frustrated by Blum's policy of non-intervention, she felt that the French people in general were blind to how the Spanish civil war was affecting their own security, much as with the Nazi reoccupation of the Rhineland. Communist Party stalwart, one of the UJFF's leaders and partner of Party Secretary and *de facto* leader Maurice Thorez, Jeannette Vermeersch felt that the Left was increasingly divided after 1936 because of the French Popular Front's 'missed' opportunity for

---

[14] BDIC, F Delta Rés 266/1-7, France. Antifascisme, 1934-9, 266/1/3, undated poster.

[15] Geneviève Tabouis, *Blackmail or War* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1938). Vivette Samuel commented that on spending the summer of 1938 in Oxford with an English family, she was made more aware of the imminence of war; see Samuel, *Rescuing the Children*, p.10.

[16] Louise Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne. (Tome III) Combats pour les Femmes* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1980), pp.147-148. Spanish Communist La Pasionaria visited France in August 1936 as part of a committee to solicit French aid and support. She dismissed Blum's speech at the Vel d'Hiv; see Dolores Ibarruri, *They Shall Not Pass. The Autobiography of La Pasionaria* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1966), pp.227-229.

[17] Weiss, *Combats pour les Femmes*, p.147.

socialist revolution and the outbreak of civil war in Spain.[18] The two were conjoined in the high expectations held for the installation of socialist, egalitarian societies under the two Popular Front governments and the disappointments and failings of the French Popular Front under Blum to recognise that fascist victory in Spain would herald the advent of general war.

Leading the popular movement in support of the beleaguered Spanish Republican cause, the PCF viewed the conflict as primarily one of anti-fascism and the class-struggle writ large. Communist support was expressed on several, largely gendered, fronts: military resources via the International Brigades and France Navigation, and humanitarian aid through Secours Populaire and local, associational aid initiatives.[19] In addition to sending trained personnel and equipment, the Comintern directed the setting up of volunteer fighting units, called the International Brigades. Headquartered in Paris, the units comprised battalions from various foreign countries. Some 35,000 men and women from over 50 countries volunteered for active service and the French contingent was the largest national representative.[20] The PCF also created France Navigation through which ships transported arms and materials more or less clandestinely to Spain. Jeannette Vermeersch noted in her memoirs that by 1938, some 21 vessels had taken arms and materials to Spain, thereby contravening the official non-intervention policy.[21] The Communist journalist Simone Téry spent 11 months in Spain during the civil war, enduring bombardments and evacuations, meeting military personnel, Brigade volunteers and the civilian population. Her account was

---

[18] Jeanette Thorez-Vermeersch, *La Vie en Rouge. Mémoires* (Paris: Belfond, 1998), pp.83-88.

[19] In 1929 the PCF had created Secours Rouge Internationale, which was renamed Secours Populaire de France in November 1936. See Axelle Brodiez, 'Le Secours Populaire Français dans la Guerre d'Algérie', *Vingtième Siècle*, 90, 2 (2006), pp.47-59 for an examination of the PCF's use of Secours Populaire as a political tool through humanitarian engagement.

[20] The figures vary widely in sources. Antony Beevor states that the International Brigades numbered some 32-35,000 men from 53 different countries. 8,962 of these were French, which constituted double that of the next largest national contingent. See Beevor, *The Battle for Spain*, p.176. French women were also the largest, national section of women within the International Brigades. See Fyrth, *Women's Voices*, p.24.

[21] Thorez-Vermeersch, *La Vie en Rouge*, p.79. The subjective nature of Vermeersch's account should be taken into consideration when using the figures she gives.

dedicated to the International Brigades, who had 'saved the honour of France'.[22] Téry's reflection on heroism was therefore predicated on military, hence masculine, engagement and she questioned why little was being written in 1938 about this heroism. Vermeersch, too, had both a personal and political connection, with two of her brothers and her brother-in-law fighting for the Brigades in Spain.[23] Communist women's memoirs during this period make regular reference to sons, husbands and brothers on active duty with the Brigades. Male influence was often a catalyst to a woman's greater political awareness, an approach explored by Paula Schwartz with reference to *partisanes* in the Resistance.[24] Men undeniably had greater exposure to political theorising and practice through their professional and public lives, yet women were increasingly recognised as a political constituency in the interwar period and demonstrated their muscle in a number of related ways. The following section discusses women's lobbying in the pacifist movement and how the Spanish civil war catalysed anti-fascist associational action.

Norman Ingram believes that the active, but splintered nature of the pacifist movement has hindered the development of historical research.[25] Fascism forced the pacifist movement to re-evaluate and confront its stated aims, and the fascist threat, as encapsulated by the Spanish civil war, challenged established ideals. Militant pacifism was itself at odds with the PCF's latent support for martial femininity. Ironically, pacifism could therefore be a rationale for engagement with

---

[22] Simone Téry, *Front de la Liberté. Espagne 1937-1938* (Paris: Editions Sociales Internationales,1938), p.197. La Pasionaria's memoirs were also written in gratitude to the International Brigades; see Ibarruri, *They Shall not Pass.*

[23] Vermeersch's brother-in-law died during the battle of Ebro, which took place from July-November 1938; this loss is not mentioned in her memoirs. As discussed in the previous chapter, Vermeersch framed her memoirs as a political rather than personal account. Similarly, Vermeersch was in charge of Education for the UJFF (see Chapter One) but the UJFF is barely mentioned in her memoirs. She does, however, discuss taking a UJFF milk convoy to Barcelona, which was commandeered by Trotskysists. Here again, though, she detracts from the personal in order to make a political (Stalinist) statement; ibid., p.80.

[24] Paula Schwartz makes similar claims about the influence of male relatives on Communist women in the Resistance, see Paula Schwartz, 'Partisanes and Gender Politics in Vichy France', *French Historical Studies*, 16, 1 (Spring 1989), pp.126-151.

[25] Norman Ingram, *The Politics of Dissent. Pacifism in France 1919-1939* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), p.2. See Sandi Cooper's work on pacifism, for example, 'Women in War and Peace, 1914-1945' in Renate Bridenthal et al. (eds.), *Becoming Visible: Women in European History* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1998), pp.439-460.

the Republican cause as well as used to support non-intervention - a paradoxical situation in which women again found themselves when arguing for political interaction in what could be constituted as a resolutely feminine way. For the Catholic social worker and campaigner Cécile de Corlieu, pacifism was not a political question but something individual and instinctual. She believed that peace was a tangible reality and that resigning oneself to fate, rather than actively working for peace, was inadmissible when one was a mother.[26] De Corlieu noted that she attended a meeting at which the Secretary General of the Spanish Republic, George Hoog, invited the women present to come to Spain and aid the cause of liberty and peace. That medicines and supplies were being sent to Barcelona, she affirms 'd'accord, mille fois d'accord!', but noted her unease that alongside these supplies went warships and canons, the machinery of destruction. For de Corlieu, 'c'était, là, matière à réticence si, du moins, la question était d'arrêter la guerre, et pour commencer de ne pas la généraliser.'[27] There is no sense in de Corlieu's memoirs that she supported Franco's actions in Spain, but equally she felt strongly that non-intervention (in other words, peaceable rather than military support to those in need) would prevent civil war exploding into a pan-European one. Other women strikingly equated Spain's fall to that of France itself, with Téry writing:

> 'L'Espagne est le dernier rempart...qui nous protège encore de la guerre et du fascisme. Et si, par notre faute, ce rempart tombe, c'est nous qui connaitrons les bombes, la faim, la mort. Et je dis que nous l'aurons mérité.'[28]

---

[26] Cécile de Corlieu, *Carnets d'une Chrètienne Moderniste de 1989 à nos jours* (Paris: Privat, 1970), p.71. Also see BMD, Fonds Cécile De Corlieu, Correspondance de 1932 à 1973, *Déclaration de Mme Cécile de Corlieu Compeyrot, déléguée Française au Congrès Mondial des Mères* (Lausanne: July 1955), pp.1-3 (pp.1-2). Mona Siegel points to Louise Weiss as one of the few women who did not explicitly accept the essentialist equation of women with peace but comments that Weiss was willing to use it to promote the movement and garner support. See Mona Siegel, '"To the Unknown Mother of the Unknown Soldier": Pacifism, Feminism, and the Politics of Sexual Difference Among French Institutrices Between the Wars', *French Historical Studies*, 22, 3 (Summer 1999), pp.421-451 (p.443).

[27] De Corlieu commented that many of the leading feminists and pacifists of the day, such as Andrée Lehmann and Gabrielle Duchêne, were present at this meeting. See de Corlieu, *Carnets*, p.71.

[28] Téry, *Front de la Liberté*, III.

De Corlieu reflected a vein of liberal Catholic opinion - represented by the paper for which she wrote a women's column, *L'Aube* - that criticised official Church support for Franco, again complicating the picture of Catholic support for the Nationalists. Pacifism itself was a splintered question, prompting divisions over questions of collective security and military renewal. At the Ligue Internationale des Femmes pour la Paix et la Liberté's (LIFPL) conference on 27-28 June 1936, members debated *pacifisme réaliste* and *pacifisme intégrale* (total opposition to war), which prompted the latter's exclusion and the reconciliation of pacifist women to the inevitability of war as protector of French national security.[29] Mona Siegel's research has elucidated the feminised teaching profession's sense of personal and ideological struggle 'to find the appropriate terms to characterise the frightening events engulfing them.'[30] As Francine Escaide commented at the Union des Femmes Française's (UFF) colloquium held in November 1975 on women in the Resistance, the anti-fascist movement of the 1930s was critical to women's political formation prior to the Nazi occupation and education played its part in this critical thinking:

> 'Je n'avais jamais eu le désir, ni l'occasion d'ailleurs de prendre un quelconque engagement politique, j'étais antifasciste profondément parce que l'éducation que j'avais reçue faisait qu'il ne pouvait guère, à cette époque, en être autrement.'[31]

Schoolteachers in the south-west were most particularly affected, experiencing the civil war at closer hand through their geographical proximity to the fighting, as well as in the reception of Spanish refugees and the care and education of their children.

May Picqeray's engagement in Spain was predicated on her pacifist beliefs. Having become involved with the anarchist-syndicalist groups of the eighth and fifth arrondissements in Paris, 'à partir de ce moment, je consacrai l'essentiel de

---

[29] Bard, *Les Filles de Marianne*, p.299.
[30] Mona Siegel, *The Moral Disarmament of France. Education, Pacifism, and Patriotism, 1914-1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p.202. Studying how language evolved in the Syndicat National des Instituteurs' *L'Ecole Liberatrice* throughout the course of the war, Siegel has demonstrated how the events there forced many to 'denounce fascism, rather than war, as the foremost enemy of democracy and civilisation'; p.205.
[31] *Les Femmes dans La Résistance* (à l'initiative de l'Union des Femmes Françaises) (Paris: Editions du Rocher, 1975), p.23.

mon temps à faire la guerre à la guerre.'[32] Picqueray became involved in the effort to support the Spanish Republicans through her friend Emma Goldman, who set up an aid agency for Spanish refugees in France called the Secours International Anarchiste (SIA).[33] Working in the Comité d'Aide aux Enfants Espagnols, Picqueray and other women tracked down lost and injured children, separated from their families or orphaned by war and arranged their care and re-housing. Eliane Brault, a committee member of the Conseil National pour les Enfants, highlighted the suffering of Spanish and Chinese children and the imperative for children to be the first recipients of care in the event of war.[34]

The press, in calling attention to the plight of women and children across the border with articles and notably photographs, invoked popular reaction and support, as well as a political criticism of the government's inaction. The discourse of biological determinism strengthened the existing cultural consensus regarding women as the foremost protector of children. Maternalist logic, traditionally articulated as opposition to war, was thereby increasingly used in the service of a women's movement of anti-fascist solidarity, which moved away from absolute pacifism into acceptance that war was likely. This shift was strengthened through interpersonal networks and clearly demonstrated in the person of Gabrielle Duchêne, President of the French section of the LIPFL for many years and of the CMF's national branch. The CMF was rooted in, and built upon, the work of existing feminist and pacifist associations through its key aims: the mobilisation of women against fascism; the promotion of peace; and support to female suffrage. It declared fascism the enemy of women in its promotion and glorification of war and in its enslavement of women.[35] Although directly linked to the Comintern and

---

[32] May Picqueray, *May la réfractaire. 85 ans d'anarchie* (Paris: Editions Traffic, 1992), p.55.

[33] Renowned anarchist Goldman was also the CNT-FAI's official delegate in London, where she contributed to the anarchist paper *Spain and the World*. CNT-FAI was the grouping of the anarchist-syndicalist union, Confederación Nacional del Trabajo, with the anarchist Federación Anarquista Ibéricas. For biographical details on Emma Goldman, see Harold Josephson (ed.), *Biographical Dictionary of Modern Peace Leaders* (Westport and London: Greenwood Press, 1985), pp.340-342.

[34] Brault was interviewed in *Les Femmes dans l'Action Mondiale*, 53 (May-June 1938) in an article entitled 'Protéger l'enfance', p.5.

[35] The Comité Mondial des Femmes was formed from the Amsterdam-Pleyel movement (1933), which was committed to the fight against fascism, imperialism and war. As Emmanuelle Carle emphasises, the history of Amsterdam-Pleyel has

heavily represented by Communist women, the CMF did in fact represent women from all political and social milieu, as the numerous meeting notes and related correspondence demonstrate. Appealing as wives and mothers, these women were making a claim to political action with reference to their familial relationships rather than as individuals. This was a strategy designed to elicit political support as well as resonate widely with the female population at large, demonstrated by its public reaction to the Italian invasion of Abyssinia in October 1935. A letter from the local (Vichy) section to the Député de l'Allier used maternalism to articulate the CMF's political positioning:

> 'Nous, Femmes du Comité Mondial, animées d'une ardente volonté de paix en tant qu'épouses et que mères, vous demandons instamment ... d'obliger le gouvernement à l'application des sanctions, et en particulier l'embargo sur le pétrole indispensable à la guerre aérienne.'[36]

The CMF flexed its political muscle, campaigning for an end to the attacks in a resolutely political and specifically gendered way.

The CMF was directly linked - politically by virtue of its pacifist engagement and personally through its individual members - with the Comité International de Coordination et d'Information pour l'Aide à l'Espagne Republicaine (CICIAER), which grouped together several national committees dedicated to aiding the Spanish Republic following a conference held in August 1936. The Comité undertook a diverse number of activities and campaigns in its support for the Republic, political and humanitarian in tone, and operated at the level of high politics, mobilising support in the Chamber of Deputies, as well as on the ground, in the social sphere.[37] Madeleine Braun was the organisation's Secretary General from 1936 to 1939, at which point, following the Republic's defeat, it became

---

been predominantly a masculine one despite the influence and activity of numerous women within it; see Emmanuelle Carle, 'Women, Anti-Fascism and Peace in Interwar France: Gabrielle Duchêne's Itinerary', *French History*, 18, 3 (2004), pp.291-314. See also the research undertaken by Siân Reynolds in a biographical article on a sampling of French anti-fascist women; Siân Reynolds, 'The Lost Generation of French Feminists? Anti-Fascist Women in the 1930s', *Women's Studies International Forum*, 23, 6 (2000), pp.79-88.

[36] BDIC, F Delta Rés 317, CMFCGF Section Française (1932-8), /18.

[37] In January 1937, CICIAER created the Centrale Sanitaire Internationale (CSI) and in November 1937, the Office International pour l'Enfance (OIE). See Comité International de Coordination et d'Information pour l'Aide à l'Espagne Républicaine, *Rapport d'activité presenté au Congrès de Solidarité de Madrid, 1 November 1938* (Paris: CICIAER, 1938), p.2.

known as the Comité International pour l'Aide aux Refugiés Espagnoles (CIARE) and focused its activities on finding Spanish refugees' work placements as the best possible means of aid. The interrelated nature of personnel across such associations was seen in the Spanish committees. For example, Braun was also a member of the Comité Français de Coordination pour l'Aide aux Populations Civiles de l'Espagne Républicaine alongside Eliane Brault (Radical, freemason), Suzanne Lacore (Socialist, Undersecretary of State), Louise Weiss (Radical, feminist) and Germaine Malaterre-Sellier (feminist, Société des Nations (SDN) delegate, Catholic).[38]

This networking between informed individuals, across class and party divisions in which political and professional affiliations became personal ones, was seen across the border too. In the summer of 1933 CMF representatives had visited Spain to discuss setting up a 'popular' women's front against war and fascism involving women from different socioeconomic and political backgrounds. This was achieved, noted the Spanish Communist politician Dolores Ibarruri, who was known as La Pasionaria, despite the animosity of politicians to female participation in an organisation stigmatised as Communist. She stressed how individual women rejected this 'paternalism', instead forging a personal network across both party and class lines in anti-fascist solidarity. For example, through a Republican female colleague, Ibarruri secured a safe conduct pass in the name of the Committee to Aid Workers' Children. With this she was able to visit Asturias, under a state of emergency, to secure the transfer of 150 children to safety in Madrid (and again in January 1936, taking 200 children).[39] The CMF had created a fund to financially support the widows and children of Spanish anti-fascists and assist their right to asylum following the military suppression of anarchist uprisings in Asturias and Catalonia in October 1934.[40] A follow-up article in January 1935

[38] APP, BA 2160, Espagne. Comité d'Aide aux République Espagnols, 100.279.216, report commenting on the Comité Français de Coordination pour l'Aide aux Populations Civiles de l'Espagne Républicaine's national conference, 10-11 June 1938.
[39] Ibarruri, *They Shall not Pass*, pp.134-137. Pro Infancia Obrera was created by La Pasionaria, the anti-fascist lawyer Victoria Kent and the feminist Clara Campoamor; see Genevois, 'The Women of Spain', p.186, for further details.
[40] *Les Femmes dans l'Action Mondiale*, 3 (November 1934), p.6.

spoke of 'les martyrisées, il faut les aider'.[41] Stamps were sold in aid of these funds, with a pictoral representation of two women and a child, in mourning, before a field of crosses. This pacifist imagery, in which women were the carers and protectors of children, reminded the population of the suffering caused by the Great War and would have resonated with many. Care of the children was thus to be the most prominent call to elicit popular support for the beleaguered Republic, which consciously evoked women's natural responses as mothers and wives, bearers and educators of the next generation - the potent symbol of the *mère-éducatrice*. Popular appeals, often in poster form, were commonly addressed to *femmes françaises* and *mères françaises*. The language highlighted established and 'appropriate' discourses of femininity as maternal and henceforth patriotic. It was as much a strategy to engender and then normalise women's involvement, as it was the established form of address in such propaganda. For example, as discussed in the previous chapter, the PCF consciously used conservative notions of femininity to elicit popular support and assuage contemporary concerns about untoward, aggressive femininity in the service of a political cause. This idea of 'appropriate femininity' is a central thematic issue throughout the chapter.

Engaging with the cause in an 'appropriate' manner

While the sparse research available on French women during the Spanish civil war concentrates on the auxiliary nature and political character of their involvement, this section highlights the interrelated nature of Spanish and French women's perceptions of their actions, their recognition of the need to negotiate cultural suppositions about their gender and therein activism, and the language with which they described their experiences. La Pasionaria's actions in Asturias highlight her personal recognition of the political use to which notions of appropriate femininity and maternalism could be placed. She was also conscious of the potential of women's mobilisation, setting up the Women's Aid Committee for the Ministry of Defence to get women to agitate for increased employment on behalf of their men at the front. Such ideas surrounding women's responsibility and agency in wartime were mirrored in France in 1938-1939 and will be discussed in the following chapter.

---

[41] *Les Femmes dans l'Action Mondiale*, 5 (January 1935), p.12. The article noted that 7,000 had been killed in Asturias and thousands imprisoned.

In May 1935, *Les Femmes dans l'Action Mondiale* published an article by La Pasionaria's socialist compatriot and fellow deputy Marguerite Nelken, entitled 'Une combattante, des Asturies' in which action was justified and rationalised with recourse to a woman's envisioned role as a mother. According to Nelken, direct action did not distort or negate femininity, but was an integral part of it:

> 'Une femme "hommasse"? Rien de cela. Simplement une femme qui a compris le devoir que l'heure imposait à tous, sans distinction de sexe. Une femme qui est profondément, exquisément femme et mère ... '[42]

France and Spain were again drawn together in the following article on 'Les femmes de la Commune' and the 19 May commemoration parade, explicitly linking action in Spain with the defence of Republican values and liberties in France. Nelken's conscious use of essentialist notions of womanhood and duty to further the parameters of agency and engagement reflects the paradoxical nature of feminist action examined in Joan Wallach Scott's *Only Paradoxes to Offer.* The limitations imposed by this strategising, however, can be seen in Suzanne Lacore's preface to a Red Cross pamphlet, published in 1938:

> 'C'est également Barcelone qui prit l'initiative de mobiliser les femmes du peuple et montra au pays tout entier les ressources quasi illimitées d'énergie et de dévouement que représentait la population féminine du pays. Les femmes qui, dès le début de la guerre avaient montré un courage et un esprit de militarisme qui n'avaient rien à envier à ceux des hommes, ne demandaient qu'a être utilisées pour les travaux auxquels elles étaient prédestinées par leur nature même.'[43]

The language of nature, devotion and destiny, widely deemed appropriate to women's activism, here is juxtaposed with that of courage, militarism and initiative to celebrate and encourage the participation of all women in the defence of the country. Celebrated French pacifist Romain Rolland in fact urged the specific action of French mothers using language redolent with blood, sacrifice and passion:

> 'Si les femmes ne luttent pas avec la dernière énergie contre le fléau qui s'approche, que le sang de leurs fils retombe sur leurs têtes! Elles auront

---

[42] *Les Femmes dans L'Action Mondiale*, 9 (May-June 1935), p.11.
[43] Suzanne Lacore, Preface, *Au Service de la paix et de l'humanité! La Croix Rouge et la Démocratie Espagnole* (Paris: Editions Universelles, 1938), p.28.

été complices du meurtre qu'elles n'auront pas eu l'énergie d'empêcher.'[44]

Harnessing maternalist logic to further women's agency was necessarily dependant upon the image of woman as mother. Such logic prompts the related question of the involvement of single women in the Spanish Republican cause and questions of social motherhood reflected in interwar considerations of activist women in the professional and public sphere. Predominantly, it was single or childless women who travelled to Spain as volunteer nurses, secretaries, professional journalists like Edith Thomas or the photographer Marie-Claude Vaillant-Couturier and highlighted by the fact that the Communist Lise London (née Ricol), was removed from her Spanish post once pregnant. London lived in Spain from 1936-8, working first as André Marty's secretary and interpreter before transferring to Madrid to work for her brother-in-law, Raymond Guyot and then as a bilingual secretary for the Service de Securité Militaire (SIM, which replaced the Ministry of War).[45] When she had to return to France to give birth, in November 1938, she later recalled:

> 'Là-bas, j'avais le sentiment de faire corps avec l'histoire. Maintenant, je me sens vidée de ma substance. Je suis en pleine dépression, mais, a l'époque, je ne connaissais pas l'existence de ce mot. Je ne pense qu'à l'Espagne.'[46]

Taken from the midst of action because of her pregnancy, London was depressed by the immediate inactivity. However, one month after the birth she was back working: for Comité de Documentation et de Propagande de la République Espagnole, a news and information service; *La Voz de Madrid*, a Spanish journal for refugees; and visiting camps where ex-soldiers, refugees and young ex-Juventus Socialista Unificada (JSU) women were being held.[47] London's Spanish

---

[44] Romain Rolland cited in *Les Femmes dans l'Action Mondiale*, 25 (August 1936), p.1.

[45] André Marty was head of the French section of the International Brigades. Raymond Guyot was secretary of the Internationale Communiste des Jeunes (ICJ). See Lise London, *L'Echeveau du Temps. Le Printemps des Camarades* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1996), p.246 and p.257.

[46] Ibid., p.315. It was not considered appropriate for London to have her child in Spain, hence she felt forced to return to France against her wishes.

[47] The JSU included over 29,000 young women by July 1937 and was formed by the merger of the socialist and Communist youth parties. London points out that the JSU was one of the focal points of a spontaneous women's movement, alongside the anarcho-feminist Mujeres Libres. See Lise London, *L'Echeveau du*

experiences demonstrate the fusion of her social and political thinking. Neither the geographical borders of the Pyrenees nor the civil war's official end in April 1939 represented an end to political and personal engagement.

For the twenty year old Jewish student Vivette Samuel (née Hermann), Barcelona also became a vivid reminder of her gender. Alongside other Sorbonne students, Samuel joined an organisation that was collecting money and milk for the children and was subsequently elected to join a delegation to Barcelona late in the war, in January 1939. She maintained that it was 'humanitarianism' that prompted her involvement, yet admitted she was hesitant about leaving for Spain. The pride her parents took in her commitment was an additional factor in her departure. Conditions were appalling, food scarce, the bombing raids terrifying.[48] Samuel's trip was supposed to last one week. In fact the eight students of the delegation were in Spain for six weeks after the borders were sealed. They were transported to Valencia, then Madrid, before their eventual return to Paris. Samuel recounted 'more than the eventual bombings, I undoubtedly feared the eagerness of some soldiers to approach the very young woman that I was.'[49] She could have left earlier, in Valencia, as the girls were being sent home first, but refused, rejecting gendered assumptions about women as 'the weaker sex', foremost in need of protection. Samuel experienced the war in a particularly gendered way as a young female, vulnerable to attack, but not - at this stage - in an ethnic way. The circumstances of Occupation were to generate a distinct consciousness of her ethnicity, which she came to embrace through voluntary internment as a social worker at the camp of Rivesaltes. The Spanish civil war therefore prompted within Samuel a greater consciousness of her gender, a nascent sense of affiliation with the oppressed and recognition of group solidarity in fighting fascism. This chapter highlights the contributory nature of these factors to many young women's social activism in defence of the Spanish Republic.

Simone Téry wrote that living in Barcelona during March 1938 was the worst experience she endured throughout the course of her eleven months in Spain, in view of the huge loss of life there. While Samuel and London commented on their experiences through the prism of their gender most particularly, Téry's

---

Temps. La Mégère de la Rue Daguerre. Souvenirs de Résistance (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1995), p.13.

[48] Samuel, *Rescuing the Children*, pp.10-11.

[49] Ibid., p.11.

account was one in which her anti-fascist social action was predicated upon notions of patriotism, as well as humanitarianism and duty, and prompted a specific reflection on her gender, professional and personal identities, examples of which will be given throughout the chapter. 'J'ai pris parti pour l'Espagne, car j'ai pris parti pour la France', she wrote.[50] The two were inextricably linked. Téry attempted to alleviate her own sense of shame at French impotency through social activism and professional engagement. She helped out at a central refuge in Madrid in February 1937, from where thousands of people were evacuated. Trucks were welcomed from across the border, as much for the goods they carried as for the demonstration of solidarity they represented, she recalled.[51] Despite the ravages and hardships, Téry was struck by the liveliness of Madrid that month. An incident in which Republican soldiers marched past her calling out 'Viva Rusia!' jolted her as if her face had been slapped, prompting a fleeting but painful rejection of her nationality:

> 'c'est ton nom qu'ils auraient dû acclamer d'abord, avant celui de la lointaine Russie, ces héros de la liberté, ces sans-culottes de l'Espagne! Mais non, ils ne parlaient pas de la France. Ils criaient: "Viva Rusia!".'[52]

Although Communist, Téry believed the revolutionary socialist ideals of the French Revolution and Commune should be foremost in Spain.

While Téry's account particularly concentrated on political, military and personal questions of national honour and indecision, certain women articulated a particularly gendered conception of women's utility in Spain, suggestive of the ongoing discussion of appropriate femininity, militarism and political intent. The philosopher, teacher and mystic Simone Weil was to reconcile the traditional idea of women as providers of care with having a frontline role through the ineligibility of mothers, a plan which followed from her brief experiences with an anarchist trade-unionist militia (CNT) in the summer of 1936.

> 'There is no reason to regard the life of a woman, especially if she has passed her first youth without marrying or having children, as more valuable

[50] Téry, *Front de la Liberté,* II.
[51] Ibid., p.28. Téry commented that within three months, the Ministry of Public Instruction had received some 20,000 children under twelve months old in their nurseries in Madrid. When Malaga was bombed that same month, she spoke of some 500,000 refugees taking to the road as Franco and his troops entered the city; p.76.
[52] Ibid., p.194.

than a man's life; and all the less so if she has accepted the risk of death. It would be simple to make mothers, wives, and girls below a certain age ineligible.'[53]

Margaret Darrow's research into the promotion of front-line nursing during the First World War has demonstrated antecedents to Weil's thought: the renowned feminists Madeleine Pelletier and Marguerite Durand had petitioned the Ministry of War for a female national service in 1914, alongside continued Red Cross lobbying for the parameters of wartime nursing to be extended.[54]

The threat of nationalist victory in Spain had forced Weil to adjust her commitments to integral pacifism and she fully intended to fight (although both ill-health and her gender prevented that). Weil was invalided back to France by the end of the year after an accident with boiling oil whilst cooking for soldiers at the front; she had not participated in active military duty.[55] Weil believed that the presence of women (not mothers) on the front line would have both a material and psychological effect, saving soldiers' lives through timely medical intervention and maintaining morale. Public consensus over the protection of fertile womanhood raises the attendant question of single womanhood and whether such women would naturally be more willing to make sacrifices. Weil strongly believed in a woman's right to direct political, even military, action, with her experiences during the Spanish civil war profoundly affecting her philosophical and political writings on women's social utility.

The experience of the Communist Juliette Ténine is illustrative of the personal bonds formed in the nursing services and the resonance of maternalist questions. In April 1937, she went to work in the health services of the XIV Brigade. Having recuperated from typhoid for several weeks in Madrid, Ténine was then attached to the XI Brigade and aided the mobile surgical units that attended the seriously wounded at the front, which were comprised of foreign medical

---

[53] Simone Weil, *Seventy Letters* (Oxford and London: Oxford University Press, 1965), p.147. A committed pacifist, fascism forced Weil to adjust this stance and she fully intended to fight for the Republican cause, believing that writing should only accompany experience. She was in Catalonia with the anarchist Durutti column from August to October 1936.

[54] Margaret H. Darrow, 'French Volunteer Nursing and the Myth of War Experience in World War I,' *American Historical Review*, 101, 1 (February 1996), pp.80-106 (p.85).

[55] de Beauvoir, *Prime of Life*, p.290 commented upon Weil's accident.

professional volunteers and Spanish Republican volunteers. In May 1941, when one of these Spanish colleagues died in Paris, Ténine adopted and brought up her child. Ténine's involvement in the International Brigades was therefore one predicated not only on political conviction, but on social contacts, emphasising the interrelation between personal and political ties in social action.[56]

Women such as Téry, London and Weil were distinct by virtue of their very presence in Spain, the way in which they recorded their experiences and the personal contacts they had forged through political and professional networking in the interwar period. Conscious of the limitations placed on their actions by gender, these women nonetheless demonstrated initiative, agency and commitment. Siân Reynolds has written about the later 1930s as the 'lost generation' of feminism in which political experience did not translate into equality. Although these women defined themselves as anti-fascists, not feminists per se, the Spanish civil war provided a catalyst for women, should they choose, to engage in overt political activity that tested the boundaries of equality. This activism was predicated along social and political lines, taking a number of forms: sending clothing and supplies, organising meetings and collections, war reportage, for example, and on professional, even spiritual lines, reflecting personal fulfilment as much as support for the cause. Edith Thomas had wanted to go to the front, but felt incapable of being a war reporter because of the physical demands of the role and her poor health. Instead she reported on the refugees' plight in the Pyrenees: 'là, du moins, je rétrouverais la justification de mon métier.'[57] Thomas was conscious of the limitations placed on her actions by her gender and ill-health. She questioned: 'Si j'avais été un homme, je me serais engagée dans les rangs des républicains espagnols. Mais j'étais une femme, et boiteuse, comment être utile?'[58] Her professional capacity enabled her to feel that she could make a difference and complement masculine physicality with feminine social agency. It should be

---

[56] For biographical information on Juliette Ténine, see the webpage on volunteer combatants for the Spanish Republic, at: http://biosoc.univ-paris1.fr/ahmo/bio/Combattants/teninej.htm. Accessed 17 March 2008.

[57] Thomas, *Le Témoin Compromis*, p.66. The Ministry of the Interior stated that 2,500 Spanish refugees were entering France each day by August 1939, with the total at some 230,000. See Geneviève Dreyfus-Armand and Emile Temime, *Les Camps sur la plage: un exil espagnol* (Paris: Editions Autrement, 1995), Annexe I, citing G. Bonnet, Ministry of the Interior, *AMAE, Europe, 1918-1940, Espagne*, Vol.189, p.142.

[58] Thomas, *Le Témoin Compromis*, p.58.

remembered that war reportage was a dangerous job. The socialist journalist Renée Laffont, for example, died after having been wounded in an ambush and captured by nationalist forces.[59]

The majority of French women who were committed to social works to save the Spanish Republic did so from within France, never travelling across the border: these voices are fairly silent in the historiography of the period. There was a multiplicity of appeals, campaigns, conferences, speeches and fundraisers from numerous organisations, operating on local, regional and national levels, animated by political, humanitarian and spiritual convictions to coordinate the relief and aid effort.[60] Workers contributed one hour's wage a fortnight, organisations held a day of solidarity and commissions to better understand Spanish needs and how to meet them were set up. Women were present on these commissions, women workers donated money from their salaries and women attended demonstrations of solidarity for the Republic. Aid to the Republic was very much a common cause, not just an elitist, masculine endeavour. Naturalised Hungarian-Jewish émigré Hélène Elek was galvanised into action: 'Sur le moment, je ne m'intéressais qu'à une chose: collecter, aider, aider ... c'était mon seul but. Je collectais de l'argent, je faisais tout ce qu'on me disait de faire.'[61] The restlessness and energy of the passage encapsulated her frenetic activities, reflecting the areas in which Elek felt she could best and most immediately make a difference. By virtue of her personal beliefs in Communism, these actions were political in nature, but we can also gain a sense that ideological commitment was not the sole or necessarily primary factor.

Women needed to engage on a practical as well as theoretical level with anti-fascism, and social welfare provided them with the ideal avenue. Simone de Beauvoir recounted her frustration with political convictions that appeared to carry no palpable weight:

'For the first time in our lives, because the fall of Spain concerned us

---

[59] *La Tribune des Femmes Socialistes*, 9 (October 1936), p.3.
[60] The following list represents a selection of the organisations set up to support the Spanish Republic: Comité pour l'Espagne Libre; Solidarité Internationale Antifasciste; Comité de Défense de la Revolution Espagnoles Antifasciste; Groups Féminin de la Solidarité; La Commission de Solidarité pour l'Achat de Matériel Sanitaire, Vivres et Envoi de Médecins et Chirurgiens en Espagne, for example. See Tracts politiques d'organisations diverses faisant appel à la solidarité avec l'Espagne républicaine et à l'aide aux refugiés éspagnols, 1936-1938, undated dossier, BN.
[61] Hélène Elek, *La Memoire d'Hélène* (Paris: François Maspero, 1977), p.160.

> deeply, indignation *per se* was no longer a sufficient outlet for us: our political incompetence, far from furnishing us with an alibi, left us feeling hopeless and desperate.'[62]

The official political sphere, as represented by the masculine elite and tarnished in many eyes by non-intervention, was powerless. In the gendered, social sphere of welfare, refugee care and material support, women could channel their activities productively and attempt to find some sense of self-fulfilment in keeping busy and focused. This is aptly demonstrated by a report filed in the Paris police archives, which details the correspondence sent by a Madame E. Dooms, dated 16 September 1936 and addressed to Suzanne Lacore, in her capacity as Undersecretary of State for the Protection of Childhood, asking for free transport facilities to send the linen and clothing she had collected for Spanish refugees to the Gare de l'Est, from where the commercial service operated.[63] Having been denied permission by her local train station to send the items she had collected free of charge, this lady was directly asking Lacore for her assistance in the free and safe passage of these goods to their onward destination. Unfortunately, there is no reply in the file and one can only conjecture what, if any, that reply may have been. That Mme Dooms was appealing specifically to a high-profile socialist, one of only three women in government office, and a woman, in the expectation that Lacore would be sympathetic to her plight, was a significant expression of an individual's solidarity with the Spanish Republican cause.

The socialist feminist Marianne Rauze, who was of mixed French-Spanish heritage, demonstrated women's solidarity in a different way, directing the journal *Les Cahiers des Femmes Catalanes*, which provided practical advice for women, housewives and mothers on domestic and political issues, such as food pricing, housekeeping, municipal councillorship and suffrage. Rauze also organised a library in Perpignan and a women's circle for female writers in French, Catalan and Spanish. The language was maternalist in tone, Rauze extending 'une main maternelle' to those in need, and focused on the children: 'nos bras maternels sont ouverts pour les accueillir, de quelque parti qu'ils nous viennent, Amis ou ennemis,

---

[62] de Beauvoir, *Prime of Life*, p.290.
[63] APP, BA 2160, Espagne, 88.996.

protégeons les petits.'[64] The language used in this and other women's journals bought into established gendered discourses of femininity as maternal and henceforth patriotic, symbolised by the prevalent interwar figure of the *mère-éducatrice.* The most regular column in the socialist women's press, *La Tribune des Femmes Socialistes*, dedicated to Spain was entitled 'Pour les enfants d'Espagne' and listed the funds and collections of goods received by members. Lists of donations were commonplace in *Les Femmes dans l'Action Mondiale* too, with donations listed by individual or by group, emphasising grass roots support to boost the campaign. For example, in the December 1936 edition, the column noted that 'une camarade catholique d'Issy sur Moulineaux' had donated 10 Francs and 'Juif Bremaud, 100 Francs': this perceived need for labelling was striking, saying as much about identification in contemporary French society as the Spanish situation itself.[65]

While individual and local relief efforts continued apace, the largest coordinated body was that of Secours Populaire, for which the CMF reported in September 1937 that 7,000 women had volunteered.[66] A few figures demonstrate its immense work: at its National Congress in June 1938, Secours Populaire had some 25,000 individual members and some 1,000 member organisations, testament to the widespread interaction of both sexes in its political and humanitarian efforts. Between December 1937 and April 1938, it had sent six lorries to Spain, valued at 5.4 million French Francs, which amongst their load included 1,040 tonnes of potatoes, 73 tonnes of milk, 2,600 pairs of shoes, 24 tonnes of soap and 27 tonnes of paper.[67] Women were widely represented in its work, in local appeals for aid and fund-raisers, in the collection, distribution and sorting of goods received, for example. These actions constituted a very real social, community participation in a political cause from people who often had little themselves. The terminology was revealing: in renaming Secours Rouge

---

[64] *Les Cahiers des femmes Catalanes*, 8 (July-August 1936), p.1. For additional materials on this publication and Rauze's creation, in 1935, of Comité féminines catalan de protection de l'enfance en danger moral et physique, see BHVP, Fonds Marianne Rauze.

[65] *Les Femmes dans l'Action Mondiale*, 30 (6-20 December 1936), p.4. The CMF had various committees according to locality. Within Paris, there was a Jewish CMF section and a specific committee for immigrant Jewish women.

[66] *Les Femmes dans l'Action Mondiale*, 26 (6-20 September 1936), p.3.

[67] BDIC, F Delta 1166, Questions Sociales, Assistance, Secours Populaire de France, Congrès National, 23-26 June 1938, p.11.

Internationale, Secours Populaire in November 1936, the PCF was acknowledging the stigma attached to being perceived as 'Red' and that fears of Bolshevisation were in many circles greater than that posed by the fascist threat - without doubt, an implicit part of the non-intervention policy. The Party was also emphasising Secours Populaire's credentials as a patriotic and mass, rather than partisan, relief effort. Vivette Samuel knew that precisely because she was considered 'apolitical' she had been chosen to go to Barcelona, as the Communists were keen to broaden their support.[68] Redolent with the language of the Popular Front, the organisation's guiding principle remained fighting anti-fascism in the social sphere through the provision of aid:

> 'pour les victimes de toutes conditions sociales, sans distinction, d'opinions, de races, où de religions, dont le mérite est d'avoir lutté pour le bien-être du Peuple et réalisé sa volonté de paix, de justice et de liberté.'[69]

Therefore while it marshalled military support through the International Brigades, the PCF coordinated humanitarian relief through Secours Populaire, the CMF and UJFF.

Bertrand Taithe reminds us that humanitarianism functions politically as surrogate diplomacy.[70] It is important to consider these organisations and the involvement of municipal and local aid committees as part of the PCF's wider 'consensus' strategy, which was demonstrated in the social sector in the previous chapter's discussion of welfare initiatives in the localities. Like the Catholic-Communist actions underway in Ivry to provide unemployment relief, articles commented upon priests joining in requests for Republican aid to further emphasise the Party's appeal to create (and lead) a genuinely cross-denominational and -party movement for social solidarity. Annie Fourcaut has talked of the Spanish civil war as the apogee of associational function and mobilisation in the Communist stronghold of Bobigny.[71] Efforts at interfaith mobilisation were seen, too, in the creation of specifically Jewish CMF sections, such as the Comité des Femmes Immigrés Juives. To influence the largest number

---

[68] Samuel, *Rescuing the Children*, p.10.
[69] Secours Populaire de France, tracts 1936-1938, undated dossier, BN.
[70] Bertrand Taithe, *Defeated Flesh. Welfare, Warfare and the Making of Modern France* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), p.116.
[71] Annie Fourcaut, *Bobigny, Banlieue Rouge* (Paris: Les Editions Ouvrières et Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, 1986), p.188.

possible of Jewish women, brochures and cards were written in Yiddish. A Comité article spoke of 'le travail le plus important qu'il nous reste à faire, c'est d'approcher et de faire fraterniser les femmes juives avec leurs sœurs françaises.'[72] In general, the Jewish press' attention to Spain was dwarfed by subsequent events in the Reich and Hitler's increasingly aggressive repression against, and expulsion of, Central European Jewry. In particular, the Jewish press commented upon the situation of Jews in Spanish North Africa where the greatest concentration lived: the community of Melila in Spanish Morocco were held in concentration camps; in Tangers, the Jewish community of Tétouan was forced to contribute some £12,000 to the rebels; and the military authorities of Ceutra fined the community 900,000 French Francs and took Jewish persons as hostages until the fine was paid.[73] The Jewish press also made reference to Nationalist radio announcements that held international Jewry responsible for sustaining the Republican government.

An 18 March 1938 report in *L'Univers Israélite* noted that HICEM had sent some 100 Jewish children from Spain into the care of Jewish families in France, Switzerland and Belgium.[74] Reflected in the general press too, care of the children was the most prominent and emotive appeal for aid. The use of maternalist logic and assumptions about the supposedly natural expression of femininity were seen in efforts at Communist-socialist rapprochement during this period too - notably, in the 'main tendue' initiative directed at French Catholics and at efforts towards youth unification. In August 1937, G. Cogniot encouraged Communist and socialist women to unite against the danger presented by a fascist Spain: 'Qu'attendent elles pour s'unir en vue de l'assassinassions aux enfants et aux malheureuses mères d'Espagne?' the article questioned.[75] The imperative behind such consensus politics lay in creating a truly 'united' front against fascism within which women were perceived as the natural agents of conciliation.

Socialist-Communist rapprochement had been seen in Spain with the unification of two youth movements into JSU, a group with whom Lise London

---

[72] *Les Femmes dans l'Action Mondiale*, 3 (November 1934), p.12.
[73] *L'Univers Israélite*, 48-49 (21-28 August 1936), 'Espagne. La guerre civile et les Juifs', p.752. Jewish press coverage of the civil war concentrated on the Jewish communities within Spanish Morocco as there were few Jewish communities on the mainland.
[74] *L'Univers Israélite*, 29 (18 March 1938), p.458.
[75] G Cogniot, 'Comment développer encore le mouvement féminin', *Cahiers du Bolchevisme*, 8 (August 1937), pp.704-710 (p.708).

worked closely. This sense of collective action was seen in UJFF calls for socialist young women to join with their organisation, and London took the idea of the UJFF to Spanish youth organisation Dona Jore de Catalunya (les Jeunes Filles de Catalogne), in Barcelona in August 1936, who were then integrated into the UJFF delegation in November.[76] London had noted on her return from Moscow the changes underway in the PCF's youth politics in the conscious reconfiguration of anti-fascism to broaden support and of single-sex groupings for reasons of social conventionality:

> 'Les cellules, rebaptisées cercles, marient l'action politique, l'éducation et les distractions. Les groupes de jeunes filles, de paysans, d'étudiants sont devenus des organisations sœurs mais indépendantes.'[77]

This shift in the PCF's cultural politics - researched by historians such as Christine Bard and Susan Whitney - saw models of femininity and public activism being reconfigured in this period of attempted rapprochement across political groups.[78] This discussion builds upon such research by incorporating personal reconfigurations and understandings of gender, social and political activism through the Spanish civil war experience, significantly the years in which many young women reached maturity.

Maternalism and respectability were paramount in the setting up of the UJFF and in its promotion of solidarity and friendship. It was affiliated to the neighbourhood thereby rooting women in the social and domestic, rather than the professional-public workplace (upon which the image of 1920s Party women was predicated).[79] Its publication, *Journal des Jeunes Filles*, covered a diverse number

---

[76] London, *Le Printemps des Camarades*, p.290.
[77] Ibid., p.284.
[78] See, for example, Christine Bard and Jean-Louis Robert, 'The French Communist Party and Women, 1920-1939: From 'feminism' to 'familialism' in Helmut Gruber and Pamela Graves (eds.), *Women and Socialism, Socialism and Women. Europe between the Two World Wars* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 1998), pp.321-347 and Susan Whitney, 'Embracing the Status Quo: French Communists, Young Women and the Popular Front', *Journal of Social History*, 30, 1 (1996), pp.29-53.
[79] In fact, Jacques Duclos called on adult women to affiliate to the Comité Mondial des Femmes and local *amicales de ménagères* concurrently. See Jacques Duclos, *Pour l'Union des Femmes de France* (Paris: Editions du Comité Populaire de Propagande, 1936), p.22. See, also, Cogniot, 'Comment développer encore le mouvement féminin', p.708, for a discussion of the fascist threat in Spain as a specific reason for women to unite rather than operate in exclusive associations.

of subjects, from beauty, fashion and cookery to conference issues and Spain. The UJFF leadership called on young women to provide moral and material support to the Spanish victims and to their brothers in the International Brigades. It also decided that milk - evidently symbolic within the context of familialist and maternalist discourse - would be the most effective aid and the campaign slogan ran: 'Du lait pour les enfants d'Espagne'. Cécile Ouzoulias-Romagon created a local UJFF section with some friends and remembered the numerous meetings and demonstrations in which 'sa direction nationale décida que nous mènerions une grande campagne de solidarité en faveur des femmes et des enfants.'[80] Her social action concentrated on organising money, milk and accommodation for refugee children in the locality. Prior to, and alongside this commitment, Ouzoulias-Romagon concentrated on the issue of women in the workplace, particularly factory workers, on easing poverty (knitting jumpers to hand to the poor, for example) and on distributing Communist and UJFF literature. Rose Blanc, a member of the UJFF in Pyrénées-Orientales and a Catholic, accompanied a milk convoy to Madrid. Subsequently, she devoted her attention to caring for Spanish refugees housed in camps in the French Pyrenees.[81] The UJFF had political intentions too, as witnessed by Josette Cotiaz's speech at a Comité d'Organisation des Journées de Sacrifice in which:

> 'Elle retrace ensuite le rôle héroïque joué par les jeunes filles espagnoles et affirme que les jeunes filles de France feront tout pour aider à l'Espagne à vaincre et malgré la carence des démocraties française et anglaise.'[82]

This was a transitory period for many young women, from childhood to adulthood, signified by Romagon-Ouzoulias' use of the butterfly analogy to

---

[80] Cécile Ouzaoulias-Romagon, *J'étais agent de liaison des FTPF* (Paris: Editions Messidor, 1988), p.47.

[81] Simone Bertrand (ed.), *Mille Visages. Un Seul Combat. Les femmes dans la Résistance* (Paris: Les Editeurs Français Reunis, 1965), p.78.

[82] APP, BA 2160, Espagne, 200.486, report on 22 March 1938 meeting of the Comité de Sacrifice de la Jeunesse pour l'Espagne Républicaine at which a film made by the SSI, entitled *Coeur d'Espagne*, was shown. The report listed the speaker as one Josette Cotiaz (Josette Cothias-Dumeix), who was an active figure in the UJFF and subsequently in the Resistance. The chosen title of the committee, that of sacrifice, with its attendant religious connotations, is suggestive of the extent to which passionate rhetoric was used to generate young people's support for the cause.

represent how she moved from 'spectatrice into actrice', young girl into woman.[83] The Spanish civil war was clearly 'the coming of age of the Jeunesses Communistes generation', the crystallisation of a specific set of political, social and economic beliefs for young people of Communist persuasion.[84] I would expand this comment to include young women and men of other ideological and religious inclinations. No-one could remain indifferent to the plight of the Spanish Republic or be immune to the ideological and political divisions being played out across the border. Therefore 'the Spanish civil war awakened an understanding of fascism and appeasement that brought politics to the level of actions at which anyone could take part.'[85] Inter-denominational, communal or individual interaction with anti-fascism is borne out by the memoirs considered here, although Communist actions appeared to dominate. The emphasis on Communist social and political engagement is a measure of the extent to which Communist Resistance histories - in which the Spanish civil war was clearly a formative experience - dominated the post-war commemorative landscape.

Such questions of commemoration, articulated at the time, took a specifically gendered slant noting the selfless heroism of men lost in the International Brigades, as memorialised by Téry. The linkage of women's activism and motherhood was perpetuated in commemorative practice, seen by the January 1939 opening of a children's home, entitled Maison Agnés Dumay, in memory of a CMF member who was killed in the bombing of Barcelona.[86] Cilly Vassart praised the women of the 12th arrondissement for collecting funds to send the children of a comrade killed in Spain on *colonies de vacances*.[87] Female political activists were commemorated with reference to their maternal, familial ties and in the manner thought best suited to their engagement. In her memoirs, Jeanette Vermeersch chose to encapsulate her civil war experience through a film she later saw, entitled *Ana No*. In this film war is personified through the journey of an elderly woman who has already lost two of her children and her husband fighting against the Nationalists. The film recounts her arduous journey across the war-torn country to

---

[83] Ouzoulias-Romagon, *FTPF*, p.42.
[84] Whitney, 'Embracing the Status Quo', p.42.
[85] Fyrth, *Women's Voices*, p.21.
[86] *Les Femmes dans l'Action Mondiale*, 61 (December 1938), pp.12-13 and *Les Femmes dans l'Action Mondiale*, 63 (January 1939), p.9.
[87] Cilly Vassart, 'Il nous faut gagner les femmes', *Cahiers du Bolshevisme*, II (1936), pp.1103-1114 (p.1106).

reach her third son, who has been taken prisoner. When she eventually reaches the place where he has been kept prisoner, the mother is informed that he is already dead. The ending is bleak, desolate. For Vermeersch: 'C'est cela la douleur des mères et des peuples. C'est cela la douleur des gens dans la guerre, toujours, partout, la terrible souffrance des familles.'[88] That Vermeersch chose to summarise her feelings in this way was indicative of the extent to which the civil war was experienced in a gendered way - as a woman, a wife and a mother. This quotation directly links Vermeersch's personal identification with war, as a woman, to that of her Party's newly articulated, conventional gender politics. In fact, by the 1950s, Vermeersch had been firmly established as the 'ideal' PCF woman, *épouse-mère* and party activist.[89] Vermeersch did travel to Spain in her capacity as a UJFF leader, accompanying a convoy of trucks taking milk to Barcelona, which had been organised through a UJFF Journée pour l'Espagne Républicaine.[90] Vermeersch's active involvement was limited to what her detractors could have termed humanitarian rather than political actions because they were predicated in the social - essentially feminine - sphere. However, this thesis argues throughout for the need to reconceptualise what exactly constitutes political action and personal identity, to broaden limited, gendered definitions with the inclusion of humanitarian or social work as being politicised in nature.

The Spanish civil war also presented women with the reconfiguration of atypical, public femininity as Marguerite Nelken's earlier quote reminds us. The imagery of military heroism and sacrifice was predicated most forcefully around masculinity. The PCF traditionally supported women's military engagement, reinforcing a party line dating back to the female Soviet partisan, worker and citizen of the revolutionary 1920s and was more comfortable with images of militant womanhood, symbolised by Clara Zetkin or Alexandra Kollontai, for example. However, as the previous chapter demonstrated, gender was an important political tool for social respectability and therein popular support. The Communists, more

---

[88] Thorez-Vermeersch, *La Vie en Rouge*, p.82.
[89] For further research into how Vermeersch came to represent an idealised figure of Communist femininity, see Hilary Footitt, 'Women and (Cold) War: The Cold War creating of the myth of 'La Française résistante'', *French Cultural Studies*, 8, 2 (February 1997), pp.41-51 and Renée Rousseau, *Les Femmes Rouges. Chronique des Années Vermeersch* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1983), pp.35-64, chapter entitled 'Jeanette s'installe'.
[90] Thorez-Vermeersch, *La Vie en Rouge*, p.80.

than other political groupings, therefore needed to reconfigure their attitudes towards martial femininity. Female militia units experienced some first-hand fighting and a women's battalion operated during the battle to defend Madrid in November 1936, for example. However, mirroring developments within the French Resistance a few years later, women *miliciennes* were phased out during the first year of fighting, from November. The Republican government sought to regularise the militias, even though this development was resisted by some, for example, the Iron Curtain and Durruti Columns.[91]

Female individuals who remained in military roles were therefore exceptional and, in the eyes of a hostile conservative press, prominent. In striving to reconcile ideas of public activism with maternalism, appropriate feminine behaviour with regards to Spain thus became a further opportunity for the Right to attack the PCF, and the Left in general. Women writing for the extreme right-wing journals of the Parti Social Français (PSF) and the Parti Populaire Français (PPF), amongst others, used the civil war as further opportunity to vent their anti-Communist rhetoric. Thus Spain became another battleground in the social, gendered polemics of Left vs Right. Jeanne Vaillant's article 'Femme ou soldat?' in the extreme right newspaper *Emancipation Nationale* pitied women taking up arms to defend the Republic as victims of Moscow's warmongering:

> 'nous, nous ne pouvons les admirer, au contraire, ce n'est qu'avec une légère répulsion que nous voyons toutes ces femmes partir d'un cœur léger, pourtant dans leurs bras, non pas d'enfants, mais des engins de mort.'[92]

Fighting women were perceived as going against the 'natural' order, the use of repulsion emphasising the disgust with which the sight of women marching militarily was viewed. In contrast, women's ideal attribute was presented as: 'le courage de soigner et consoler les blessés et celui de soutenir moralement les soldats. C'est une tâche aussi dure, mais infinitiment plus digne et plus belles.'[93] The radical right was keen to politicise women and thereby strengthen its

---

[91] Beevor, *The Battle for Spain*, p.120, suggests that 1,000 women were on the front line, at most. Several thousand were armed in rear areas and a women's battalion contributed to the defence of Madrid. However, this sense of 'equality' was short lived.
[92] *Emancipation Nationale*, 22 August 1936.
[93] *Emancipation Nationale*, ibid.

constituency, but only in so far as acceptable limits of femininity were not breached. Armed women presented a stark rejection of the 'natural' order, suggestive of aggression and agency. Grieving womanhood presented a more conventional image of passivity, representative of the social chaos of war and in their figures as mothers and wives to the central, active (male) figures. The radical right shared maternalist discourse with the Catholic women's press and recognised that the Left, too, was increasingly articulating motherhood as a woman's duty. The radical right criticised what it considered the hypocrisy of the Left's stance, with Vaillant's article of 12 September 1936 condemned La Pasionaria for using her words to unleash passion and violence, where instead she could have calmed them: 'Madame, vous n'êtes pour nous une 'femme'.'[94]

Significantly, as Mary Nash has commented, the myth of militant motherhood was forged during this period in Spain - the heroine on the home front with whom all women could identify.[95] In a military situation, social conservatives and the radical right expected women to participate in auxiliary roles related to nursing and welfare, demonstrated by the Nationalists' own gender politics in which women were removed from the streets and reinstated in the home.[96] It was this image that the French right-wing press found comfortable and within accepted and acceptable gendered boundaries. Susan Grayzel has commented upon the way in which motherhood functioned irrespective of class, political position or ethnicity as a rhetorical tool to stabilise gender.[97] The cover of *Femmes dans l'Action Mondiale*, too, illustrates this point: from 1938 onwards there were no pictorial representations of war on the cover. Instead, each issue had a colour photograph

---

[94] *Emancipation Nationale,* 12 September 1936.
[95] Nash, 'Women's Role', p.351.
[96] Auxilio Social was the basis for institutionalised social services work for women between 17 and 35 years old in the nationalist zones. In October 1937 it was incorporated into the women's section of the Falange. Married women, widows with children, those needed at the front for medical duties and the disabled were exempt. Women worked for six months in administrative, technical and sanitary roles and the scheme was intended to instigate a professionally-trained social welfare and administrative corps, as well as 'authentic' women. See Yannick Ripa, 'Féminin/Masculin: les enjeux du genre dans l'Espagne de la Seconde République au Franquisme', *Le Mouvement Social*, 198, 1 (January-March 2002), pp.111-127 (p.126) and his discussion of the discourse of male-female behaviour, p.111. See, also, Genevois, 'The Women of Spain', p.190.
[97] Susan R. Grayzel, *Women's Identities at War. Gender, Motherhood, and Politics in Britain and France during the First World War* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), p.2.

or drawing of women and children in a domestic setting, which is suggestive of the extent to which familial imagery was used to refocus attention back onto reassuring, familiar and domestic issues as a pan-European war became more likely.

To a certain extent both Left and Right therefore made recourse to essentialist thinking regarding womanhood in order to rationalise their political positioning. This use of female icons in contemporary political debate to shore up female support as a convenient and emotional shorthand was seen forcefully in the mythologisation and demonisation of La Pasionaria. The CMF eulogised her as: 'Une femme, la Pasionaria, en est l'âme et l'héroïne sublime.'[98] For some, La Pasionaria was a powerful representation of womanhood, publicly recognised and politically astute. For others, she was unfeminine and immoral, a transgressive figure engaged in the masculine world of politics, reviled by the Right as unfeminine. War correspondent Simone Téry was disappointed not to have the opportunity to meet La Pasionaria in person because her commitments meant journalistic contact was limited: 'Mon plus grand désir eût été de parler longuement de Pasionaria qui est, depuis Jeanne d'Arc, la femme la plus grande, la plus symbolique de l'histoire.'[99] Thereby Téry was emphasising the extent to which La Pasionaria had become a political and cultural icon, personifying both the politico-religious struggles of the period and the strength and determination of womanhood to win through. Bussy Genèvois has commented upon the essentialisation of Spanish women in a similar manner to the process underway in France.[100] The political power of cultural representations of womanhood - as 'modern woman', mother and celibate single - has been illustrated by Mary-Louise Roberts and in James McMillan's study of 'housewife or harlot'.[101] Joan of Arc was an ambiguous and contentious figure in cultural politics. In a 1936 publication, the pacifist and feminist Suzanne Bouillet idealised Joan of Arc as a figure of peace and justice:

> 'Jeanne d'Arc, l'inspirée du Ciel, accepte sa mission. Elle apparait alors, non pas en guerrière, mais en justicière qui veut refouler l'envahisseur. Elle

---

[98] *Les Femmes dans l'Action Mondiale*, 26 (6-20 September 1936), pp.6-7.
[99] Téry, *Front de la Liberté*, p.99.
[100] Genevois, 'The Women of Spain', p.178.
[101] See Mary Louise Roberts, *Civilization Without Sexes. Reconstructing Gender in Postwar France, 1917-1927* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1994) and James McMillan, *Housewife or Harlot: The Place of French Women in French Society, 1870-1940* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1981).

symbolise la première victime de cette guerre qu'elle abhorre. La postérité l'a compris qui l'appelle Jeanne la Pacificatrice.'[102]

This quotation again emphasises the contemporary identification of women with pacifism and the extent to which women's agency in war time was being rationalised with reference to 'appropriate' rather than threatening behaviour. However, one should question whether the propensity of the women's press - seen particularly in Catholic eulogising of Joan of Arc, or Communist mythologising of the Commune and Louise Michel - to essentialise certain historical or contemporary figures was in fact lending an entirely positive slant to women's search for greater political agency. Idealising exceptional figures for their initiative and devotion to a particular cause was empowering, suggesting to women the opportunities available in what might appear to be a restrictive environment for carving out greater action and expression. On the other hand, these 'ideal' women limited women's room for manoeuvre in that they were confined to the past, no longer active but inert representations. Téry's reference to Joan of Arc was symbolic, placing La Pasionaria into popular, contemporary attention by using a historical figure with immediate resonance. This need to have contemporary icons, which will be drawn out further in later analysis, was particularly true of the Communist press as a means to elicit popular support and reached its apogee after the war in the mythologisation of the Resistance martyr Danièle Casanova.

In the battleground over appropriate femininity and models of behaviour, social action was clearly a means of forging solidarity across political and confessional dividing lines, articulating a forceful maternalist logic that enabled everyone to take part, irrespective of whether they had children. The practising of consensus politics was also seen in the very language used to elicit such support, with the prioritisation accorded to children and maternalism noted throughout the chapter. Religion was of paramount importance: a secular, anti-clerical Republic against the forces of the army, Church and property stirred deep-rooted tensions and anxieties within France itself. But the ubiquity and universality of religious language at this time is itself striking. Religious terminology was consciously employed to engender popular, laic support and to universalise the experience of suffering. The socialist women's press regularly called on its readership to care for

[102] Suzanne Bouillet, *Comment réaliser la paix* (Paris: Imprimerie des Presses Universitaires de France, 1936), p.326.

'les petits martyres de fascisme'.[103] At a CICIAER plenary session in November 1937, the Spanish ambassador S E Osorio Y Gallardo called upon the masses to save themselves, to find salvation in 'la croisade rédemptrice'.[104] This religious language was perhaps surprising considering the speaker and the cause he represented, but was used to emphasise the righteousness of the Republicans. The idea of crusade was pertinent for the Nationalists too. The first *conquista* evoked Ferdinand and Isabella's 1492 entry into Granada and the suppression of war against the Moors. The word was then adopted by Franco's side in 1936 as a second *reconquista* against the Reds, liberals and atheists. Although the destruction of Guernica prompted a number of Catholic intellectuals to disassociate themselves from Franco's attempts to create a crusade myth for nationalist forces, overall John Hellman believes that the Spanish civil war decreased hopes for a lasting Communist-Catholic union despite attempts at rapprochement during the period.[105] Certainly, many Catholic publications retained their hostility to Communism, with the LFACF's *Le Petit Echo* denouncing Republican atrocities as 'la barbarie qui resurgit immanquablement là où l'on a supprimé la loi de Dieu.'[106]

Political idealism, professional integrity and personal maturity

Complementing this brief discussion on the ubiquity of religious language, the final section of the chapter uses Edith Thomas' testimony, in particular, to examine young women's engagement with the Spanish civil war personally and professionally. It will point to the questioning of truth and objectivity in the creation of a personal testimony, as well as the sense of adventure and impending

---

[103] *La Tribune des Femmes Socialistes*, 21 (November 1937), p.4. In May 1937 children from Bilbao were welcomed to France by the CNFS committee. See *La Tribune des Femmes Socialistes*, 16 (May 1937), p.1.

[104] Comité International de Coordination et d'Information pour l'Aide à l'Espagne Républicaine, *L'Espagne et la Paix. Discours prononcé à la seance pleinere de la Conference Internationale d'Aide a l'Espagne Républicaine, 21 November 1937* (Paris: CICAER, 1937), p.32.

[105] John Hellman, 'Vichy Background: Political Alternatives for French Catholics in the Nineteen-Thirties', *Journal of Modern History*, 49, 1, On Demand Supplement, (March 1977), pp. D1111-1144 (p.D1135).

[106] *Le Petit Echo de LFACF,* September 1936, cited in Corinne Bonafoux-Verrax, 'Femmes dans les mouvements d'action catholique générale de l'entre-deux-guerres: figures du masculin et du féminin' in Evelyne Diebolt and Christiane Douyere-Demeulenaere (eds.), *Un siècle de vie associative: quelles opportunités pour les femmes?* (Paris: Femmes et Associations, 2001), pp.37-52 (p.49).

adulthood which the civil war prompted, before concluding with commentary on Spanish civil war as representative of a life stage. Thomas recounted the passion with which she wanted to accompany a truck taking French writers to Spain:

> 'Il me semblait que je laissais définitivement derrière moi mon ancienne peau, que dans ma valise je n'emportais plus rien de moi-même. Ce que je souhaitais, c'était d'échapper enfin à celle que j'avais été jusque-là, de me fondre dans une cause qui me dépassant d'atteindre enfin à une transcendance, seule qui restait à ceux qui ne croient plus en Dieu.'[107]

This was a visual language: in shedding her old skin and embracing a new life, Thomas was consciously using religious terminology. *Transcendence* highlights her spiritual affinity with the Republican cause in which journalism came to represent her personal mission and salvation. The way in which her testimony was infused with religious language directly related to her personal conception of Communism as a faith, which although it rejected the existence of God,

> '... offrait aux hommes de conquérir durement leur destin sur la terre. Je ne pouvais rester insensible à l'aspect messianique qu'elle comportait. Ce fut le point de départ d'une aventure qui dure pour moi depuis vingt ans. C'est aussi l'aventure de toute notre époque, quand on le veuille ou non.'[108]

Spain, and Communism, offered young women like Thomas opportunities for adventure, to develop a political consciousness and maturity. Thomas was also keen to match her personal convictions with professional commitments to journalistic integrity. Despite being written in 1952-3 following her bitter break from the PCF, Thomas' memoirs do not seek to downplay the energy and enthusiasm with which she absorbed Communist ideology at that time, but her concern with the issue of memory and its distortion can be seen throughout, as the memoir's title, *Le Témoin Compromis,* itself suggests.[109]

The language with which women recounted their experiences revealed both a professional and personal motivation and raised the question of honesty and

---

[107] Thomas, *Le Témoin Compromis*, p.60. Thomas had to secure permission from her employees at the Bibliothèque Nationale to visit Spain on condition that she not tell her department where she was going or what she had seen. She referred to this as a 'typical bourgeois response' and agreed, announcing that she was going to see a sick relative.

[108] Ibid., p.44.

[109] Thomas did not join the PCF until September 1942, later remarking upon this as the 'greatest error of her life'. Ibid., p.71.

accuracy within their testimony. Simone Téry used the imperative 'il faut' repeatedly and rejected the notion of impartiality, writing: 'Ceci n'est qu'un témoignage. Je ne vous dirai ce que j'ai vu, entendu, senti. Je veux vous prendre par la main et que vous fassiez le voyage avec moi.'[110] She envisaged her writing not as a personal testimony but as a window into Spain, for readers to see, hear and feel experiences for themselves. For Thomas, producing an honest, personal testimony inevitably involved compromise with the objective demands of her profession, as well as the imperative of remaining faithful to (ex-)Party directives. Thomas experienced profound disillusionment with political interference in her journalism, which she came to doubt as her 'apostolat'.[111] However, once sacked by *Ce Soir*, Thomas felt restored to a sense of journalistic integrity in her work for the Spanish Republican press agency L'Agence Espagne: 'Une fois la caravane remise aux mains des Espagnols, je me considérais comme tout à fait indépendante et chargée seulement de mon propre témoignage', she wrote.[112] Vivette Samuel also felt that truthfulness and accuracy were fundamental in the recounting of her experiences in Barcelona. When asked to speak at a university meeting by Communists, Vivette was encouraged to say that Franco was bombing churches in order to manipulate the crowd's response. However, she refused to obfuscate the point that these churches were being used as ammunition stores: 'I can speak ... only if I am precise on this matter.'[113]

Thomas and others' use of religious terminology highlights the shared sense of duty with which French women endowed their anti-fascist engagement. The religious language and imagery of martyrdom and mission was a referential framework for social action, as was that of maternalism. The following three chapters will continue the discussion of these themes, which remained pertinent in women's testimony under Occupation, pointing not only to the continuity of pre-war and wartime experience, but also the language with which this experience was subsequently documented. Later reflection upon an individual's involvement in defence of the Spanish Republic was often a means of further emphasising their credentials under Vichy, as a reaffirmation of their ideological convictions and of action after the shame of defeat and Occupation. As a war against fascism - writ

[110] Téry, *Front de la Liberté*, III.
[111] Thomas, *Le Témoin Compromis*, p.66.
[112] Ibid., p.71.
[113] Samuel, *Rescuing the Children*, p.12.

large some three years after its localised outbreak in Spain - women who continued their anti-fascist actions under Nazism were more likely to discuss the Spanish civil war as a formative experience in the crystallisation of their social and political engagement. Madeleine Braun recalled:

> 'Mais en 1930 que savais-je? Que j'étais jeune mariée, que la guerre menaçait à la fois mon pays et mon foyer. Et c'est Hitler, c'est la guerre d'Espagne qui se sont chargés de faire mon éducation; c'est la Résistance ensuite.'[114]

1939 did not mark a break for Braun, with Resistance evolving naturally from her experiences with anti-fascism and Spain, in particular. Lise London's memoirs detailing the interwar period were entitled *Le Printemps des Camarades*. In hindsight, the civil war was the springtime of her ideological commitment and social action and the period in which interpersonal networks were developed that were to be of utmost importance under Occupation. These women all wrote or spoke about the period at a distance of decades, considering their anti-fascism, their relationship with Communism and the centrality of Spain to their subsequent political engagement under Vichy. The PCF itself instigated a review of the women's anti-fascist movement and its relationship to Occupation immediately after the war. The principal women's anti-fascist organisation, the Comité Mondial des Femmes was disbanded in 1939 and its documents largely destroyed; it was not reconstituted after the war. Renée Rousseau comments perceptively that the 'effacement' of the work of the Comité within the wider Party's women's movement (the UFF came to be the official representative body of French Communist women after 1944) resulted from the experiences of Vichy and Occupation and subsequent importance of stressing national political legitimacy: 'surtout du désir de faire apparaître le mouvement féminin du Parti comme directement et uniquement issue de la Résistance, et non lié à l'IC comme le Comité Mondial.'[115] Institutionally, therefore, following the Occupation, the PCF strove to disassociate the CMF as the prime mover behind women's anti-fascism in France in order to bolster the credentials of the UFF and its women's resistance.

---

[114] *Les Femmes dans La Résistance*, p.34.
[115] Rousseau, *Les Femmes Rouges*, p.20. Personal rivalries were clearly also a factor.

This chapter has discussed the breadth of French women's social action on behalf of the Spanish Republic, the strength of the women's anti-fascist movement in political lobbying and its rationales for action, and the heightened political consciousness of women who recognised that events in Spain were of the utmost significance to France. Women were conscious of engaging with the cause in an 'appropriate' way so as to limit potentially threatening behaviour at a time of heightened social anxiety. Pacifism became a rationale for engagement as much as a rationale for non-intervention. Maternalist logic, traditionally articulated as opposition to war, was channelled into a women's anti-fascist movement that moved from the outright rejection of war towards an acceptance and understanding of its likelihood. This process of negotiation and strategising reflected the ways in which the Spanish civil war prompted women's reconfiguration of what constituted femininity, feminism and the accepted boundaries of political or social activism. The younger generation, conscious of their mothers' suffragist lobbying, saw in anti-fascism the means to articulate their own political, gendered and adult self. In catching the imagination of a generation on the cusp of adulthood, the Spanish civil war presented the young women discussed here with a political education. The chapter therefore offers a counterbalance to the more traditional understanding of French involvement in Spain, predicated upon military, diplomatic endeavours. Women's remembrance of both their feelings and experiences thereby personalises and complicates the picture. In committing themselves to a range of activities in support of the Republic, whether within France or more exceptionally in Spain itself, women were able to articulate forcefully their feelings about their own country, its political system and their place within it as political and social agents. In many ways it became the test-bed for ideological divisions and action in wartime: personal, ideological and humanitarian convictions prompted individual responses, supported by nascent networks and contacts in place across class, religion and party lines that were to have their most potent effect in the social sector under Occupation, as the following three chapters will demonstrate.

Chapter Three: Les Françaises au Service de la Nation. French women's negotiation of defeat and Occupation in the social sphere.

The previous chapter used the Spanish civil war as a site through which to explore the consensual and conflicting experiences of French women who marshalled their political engagement through social action in defence of the Spanish Republic or upheld the government's non-intervention policy. This chapter will highlight the experience and self-perception of women involved in action at the grass roots level to complement a historiography that until twenty years ago remained largely focused on male-implemented policies at government and organisational level. Instead of defeat in 1940 representing a definitive break in women's engagement, the chapter will trace the activities of individuals and groups engaged in social welfare activities 'in the service of the nation', a concept that did not necessarily translate to blind obedience to the dictates of the ruling regime. In fact, a discussion of municipal councils as a site of extensive social action during the period demonstrates the extent to which women were a key and public part of state activity, despite gendered prohibitions on their operability.

Initially the chapter will take a multi-denominational approach, balancing personal testimonies and high-profile memoirs with excerpts from the women's press to reveal the responses of French women to war and defeat, pointing to conscious attempts to develop a *Union Sacrée* spirit that would erase potentially divisive factors such as class or religion. As explored in the Introduction, the terms feminine-feminist are problematic labels: tackling seemingly disparate groups and individuals enables a more nuanced understanding of the implications of the two during this period. The chapter will then focus on those women harnessed to, and instrumentalised by, Vichy's National Revolution, in particular using Pétainist social welfare publications and Catholic women's journals. The experiences of women deemed by Vichy to be nationally and spiritually authentic, and thus authorised, will be used as a basis upon which to develop a comparative perspective with regards to the Communist and Jewish experiences that follow in Chapters Four and Five. The chapter will explore the use of maternalist logic to further public employment and 'resistance' to anti-Semitism as examples of the ways in which women's actions diverged from the rhetorical mobilisation of their support. Studying the language with which women expressed their feelings towards, and experiences

of, civil, passive and national defence, volunteerism and professionalism, feminism, femininity, politicisation and religiosity, enables a more nuanced understanding of the effects that war and Occupation had upon individual social action.

The parameters of women's social action in the late 1930s, and the practical significance placed on unity and solidarity, were set against a backdrop of mounting European diplomatic instability. Internal political tensions ran high. With the spectre of a nationalist victory in Spain looming large on the horizon, the Nazis marched aggressively onwards with their territorial ambitions for *Lebensraum* in Central and Eastern Europe. The ensuing diplomatic crisis over the Sudetenland prompted the major European powers to turn their attention from the doomed Spanish Republic to belligerent Nazi Germany and, to a lesser extent, Mussolini's Italy. Julian Jackson reminds us that the domestic fault-line between Left and Right affected foreign policy considerations. Conservative thinking, as represented by the Fédération Républicaine, for example, exposed PCF support to the Spanish Republicans as 'warmongering' and furthering the interests of the Comintern, rather than France. On 29 September 1938 four European powers signed the Munich Pact, agreeing to the cession of the Sudetenland. Despite its overwhelming acceptance in the Chamber of Deputies, the Pact was not universally well received: popular opinion varied widely from relief at the prevention of war to shame at having given in to Hitler's demands. A public opinion survey registered 57% support. However, 70% of those polled were against acquiescing to further German demands.[1] Simone de Beauvoir was prompted to comment after the reoccupation of the Rhineland that 'Peace... should not be an endless process of retreat.'[2] The survey's findings thus highlighted simmering tensions behind the appearance of national unity throughout the period 1938-1940. De Beauvoir recalled that the slightest dispute in those days became a kind of 'national argument' and that those who settled it were held to 'embody some sacred idea of unity'.[3] The period appeared reminiscent for many of 1914: French women, without the vote to express an electoral voice,

---

[1] C. Peyrefitte, 'Les Premiers Sondages d'opinion' in R. Rémond and J. Bourdin (eds.), *Édouard Daladier: Chef de gouvernement avril 1938-septembre 1939* (1977), pp. 264-274, cited in Julian Jackson, *France. The Dark Years 1940-1944* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p.93.
[2] Simone de Beauvoir, *The Prime of Life* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1965), p.264.
[3] Ibid., pp.389-390.

thus channelled their energies and articulated their feelings through their press and associations, and the parties to which they belonged.

International events moved swiftly. When the German army occupied Prague in March 1939, France and Great Britain offered Poland a security guarantee, which in the face of Hitler's relentless military aggression made war nigh on inevitable.[4] 1 April 1939 marked the official end of the Spanish civil war. De Beauvoir looked back on that spring as both a personal and political watershed in which reticence and inertia - a personal corollary to the political policy of appeasement - were no longer acceptable: 'History took hold of me, and never let me go thereafter.'[5] Spaniards fleeing Franco and Central Europeans - forced from the Reich by population expulsions and anti-Semitism - continued to stream across the French borders. The influx prompted ever greater need for social welfare initiatives to provide sanitation, housing and assistance. Social action was thus both a forced response to, and inevitable outgrowth of, the politics of the period, illustrated in research by historians such as Geneviève Dreyfus-Armand and Vicki Caron on immigration and exodus.[6] With world war edging closer, the cumulative effect of military occupation on population movements forced the international community to - at least appear to - make the plight of European refugees a political priority. In July 1938 delegates from the international community met at Evian to discuss the refugee crisis. While many expressed their sympathy at the refugees' plight, very few offered concrete assistance. The feminist and Radical-Socialist Louise Weiss became Secretary-General of the Comité d'Assistance aux Refugiés, which was placed under the patronage of Foreign Minister Georges Bonnet. The Comité worked to provide material aid, clothing and food, to secure housing and legalise the administrative position of the predominantly Jewish refugees fleeing Hitler's regime. Weiss' high-profile position in this area was singular. While the personnel that met to discuss and implement policy at governmental

---

[4] Simone de Beauvoir noted in her memoirs that at this point Britain introduced conscription. Within France, Prime Minister Edouard Daladier was voted emergency powers, gas masks were distributed and the forty-hour week was 'sacrificed to national defence'. Ibid., p.357.

[5] Ibid., p.359.

[6] See Vicki Caron, *France and the Jewish Refugee Crisis, 1933-1942* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), Geneviève Dreyfus-Armand, *L'exil des républicains espagnols en France* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1999) and Pierre Milza, *Exils et migration: Italiens et Espagnols en France, 1938-1945* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1994).

or organisational level were male, workers at the administrative and grass-roots level were predominantly female.

A new 'Union Sacrée'? Mobilising French womanhood for war

If refugee assistance was 'naturally' considered to be a woman's role by virtue of cultural stereotyping that assigned concepts of nurture and welfare to femininity, then other, more nationalised, public issues were similarly gendered. Gender was a key political and structural factor, prior to June 1940 in mobilisation plans for wartime and after the defeat, regarding the very nation itself. Impending war inevitably prompted the question of mobilisation - both masculine and feminine. For French men aged between 20 to 40 years, in good health and with fewer than four children, mobilisation meant active service in the armed forces alongside the established units of the French military. However, for French women, the term mobilisation represented a number of things: traditionally, women's service related to the home front - replacing absent men in industry, agriculture and, where necessary, in administration - and in nursing. From 1938 momentum was building for women to engage in voluntary service that could be constituted as civil or passive defence, whether in the army, factory or hospital, and the feminist press was vocal in its support to both voluntary and professional training despite the inherent tensions existing between the two, as explored in Chapter One. The French Red Cross published a list of the training available in Paris on 1 October 1938, entitled Les Françaises au Service de la Nation. Courses for nurses in possession of a diploma, specialisation lessons for existing auxiliaries and tailored training for those of *bonne volonté* wishing to become passive defence auxiliaries were offered.[7] Lessons were to be held at divisional headquarters, with additional training provided by the Union Féminine Civique et Sociale (UFCS) and the Ecole Normale Sociale (ENS). The middle-class women's press noted the hundreds of Parisiennes duly offering their services, remarking on the emotional and practical strength of womanhood: 'un magnifique élan de cœur ... élan magnifique de solidarité'.[8]

The term mobilisation was thus an explicitly gender-specific one in France. Anna Krylova's article on the gender neutrality of Russia's defence

---

[7] *La Française*, 1 October 1938. The concept 'passive defence' was heavily promoted by the middle-class, Radical feminist paper of *La Française* and the UFSF throughout this period.
[8] *Minerva*, 29 September 1938.

effort during this period - pointing to the technical (including weapons) training received - illustrates how salient a factor gender was in ordained roles within French society at this time.[9] Passive was the commonly used term to signify women's mobilisation, predicated on notions of innate female passivity and in keeping with such 'peaceful' womanly pursuits as nursing and maternity. Women were being directly targeted by patriotic propaganda that encouraged and reinforced their 'natural' abilities as nurses, carers and nurturers, with numerous articles in the women's press testifying to the extent to which women themselves identified in this way. However, the women's press generated debate about the roles available and articulated a more nuanced understanding of rhetoric and practicality. An article in the feminist journal *Minerva* used a medical analogy to highlight the natural pacifism of women and their role in preventing war through passive defence:

> 'Beaucoup d'assistants se doublent d'infirmières éclairées, elles font confiances à la médicine préventative, et qu'est-ce donc, en somme, que "la défense passive" sinon le vaccine contre la guerre?'[10]

Embracing the term 'passive' therefore represented an identification with innate 'feminine' qualities as well as the recognition of an implicit connection between ideas about peace and passivity, through the experiences and ideas articulated by women in the inter-war pacifist movement. In the uncertain days of 1938 and 1939, the women's press articulated ideas about womanhood in crisis, which invariably responded to cultural endorsements of passivity and conciliation. Many women schooled in the pacifist movements of the interwar years believed that their contribution could prevent hostilities from breaking out. In June 1939 the Catholic Action Sociale de la Femme and the Fédération Jeanne d'Arc held their 25th Journée Sociale on the theme 'La mission de la femme dans les temps difficiles'. The UFSF's anti-clerical, Republican *La Française* publicised the conference thus: 'Être organisée, c'est d'ailleurs pour la France, un des moyens d'éviter l'abominable catastrophe que serait la guerre.'[11] Women were content to describe their actions as 'passive', retaining the traditional distinction from men's engagement in time of war as being naturally 'active'. The language

---

[9] Anna Krylova, 'Stalinist Identity from the Viewpoint of Gender. Rearing a Generation of Professionally Violent Women Fighters', *Gender and History*, 163 (November 2004), pp.626-653 (p.633).

[10] *Minerva*, 19 April 1938.

[11] *La Française*, 4 March 1939. The tract was issued in the name of the Comité d'Entente des Grandes Organisations Féminine Française, headquartered at 6 rue de Berri, Paris, which was the official headquarters of Françaises aux Service de la Nation, created in March 1938.

also essentialised womanhood, retaining the prevalent pacifist idea that women's inherently passive nature could prevent conflict 'pour la France'. Similarly with articles published in the feminist press, such as *La Française,* patriotism was a question of honouring one's duty as a woman to the nation, irrespective of political, economic or religious factors. Women expressed their patriotism by emphasising their nursing and social welfare competence in articles dedicated to passive defence. Hence, whether voluntary or professional in nature, 'devoir national' was in concrete ways an expression of French women's political engagement through the social sphere.

Patriotism itself was gendered: for men, national duty was experienced as providing territorial defence; for women, concepts of patriotic duty were predicated in the domestic and local sphere. Women asserted their competence and devotion to duty, certainly believing their social action to be an active and positive contribution to the political scene, demanding long hours, mastery of difficult conditions and situations, dedication and self-sacrifice. They also, however, accepted the gendered presumptions that classified this action as passive. The Left-Catholic paper *L'Aube* published a review of Céline Lhotte's study of *La Française au Service de la Défense Nationale,* which detailed the numerous ways in which French women were joining the war effort, hoping 'tant le sacrifice s'entoure d'une tranquille résolution'.[12] Taking women from their domestic environment into the workplace was recognised as being 'un problème terriblement complexe et délicat, celui du travail féminin, de la FSDN.'[13] Women were 'sacrificing' their domesticity in order to assist the war effort even though they recognised general social ambivalence towards female employment and the paradoxical position in which this placed them with regards to their familial versus patriotic duty.[14] In stressing the passivity of their actions, women placated potential cultural anxiety about 'unfeminine' behaviour in this uncertain climate. Pacifism was both a deliberate strategy and subconscious belief through which women could best demonstrate that their actions remained within social convention and were to the best possible advantage of the nation.

Lectures, elementary and advanced lessons were set up by the FSN and related women's bodies to form so-called Assistantes Z.[15] The feminist

---

[12] *L'Aube*, 24 February 1940.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Ibid.
[15] *Minerva*, 19 April 1938.

lawyer Marcelle-Kraemer Bach signed up for the four-month intensive training programme at the Assistantes du Devoir National (ADN) and worked as a nursing auxiliary, running an aid post based in the town hall of the 16th arrondissement.[16] Having trained and served as a nurse during the Great War, Kraemer-Bach was conscious of her need to volunteer and serve her country: 'Durant la guerre et, du reste, pendant toute notre vie, ma sœur et moi réussîmes à employer nos bonnes volontés et notre désir de servir.'[17] The training programme concentrated most notably on 'defence against gas' - understanding the chemical composition, detection, disinfection, emergency first aid against, individual protection from, formation of - and manning shelters and aid posts. Assistants learnt artificial respiration techniques, how to administer dressings, gas mask training and testing, for example. This concentration upon gas - predicated on the experiences of the First World War - was an inevitable preoccupation for women being trained to protect the home front in the event of attack. A written and oral examination completed the training, providing an ADN diploma:

> '... des blessés, des noyés, des asphyxiés? Leur salut dépendra peut-être de notre décision rapide et de notre compétence. Nous serons fières, alors, d'avoir appris à nous rendre utiles en temps de paix.'[18]

This language of utility and pride was used to generate a greater sense of solidarity and commonality amongst women from different socioeconomic backgrounds, thus expressing the idea of a united front that resonated with calls for a *Union Sacrée* during the last war.[19] The idea that women should abandon feminist (individualist) notions to form a common front and show national solidarity, papering over tensions existing between class, religion and politics, held sway again in the immediate pre-war period in France.

As identified in Chapter One, class elitism was outmoded in the burgeoning, and increasingly professionalised, social welfare sector. The

---

[16] Marcelle Kraemer-Bach signed articles in *La Française* as 'Infirmière Z'. See, for example, *La Française*, 9 October 1939. See, also, *Minerva*, 19 April 1938, article entitled 'Loire-Inférieure. Préparation au Devoir National: Les Assistantes Z'.

[17] Marcelle Kraemer-Bach, *La Longue Route* (Paris: La Pensee Universelle, 1988), p.61.

[18] *Minerva*, 19 April 1938.

[19] On the Union Sacrée and French feminists, see Steven C. Hause, *Women's Suffrage and Social Politics in the French Third Republic* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984) and Paul Smith, *Feminism and the Third Republic. Women's Political and Civil Rights in France, 1918-1945* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).

women's press - itself generated by educated women - was conscious of the divisive potential of class in the re-creation of women's solidarity on behalf of the war effort. Following July 1938 legislation that had officially sanctioned 'volontaires français des deux sexes', *Paris Soir* reported on 26 October 1938 that three women were to be heard by the Army Commission at the Palais Bourbon, for the first time.[20] Louise Weiss, Cécile Brunschwicg and Andrée Viollis, established names in French feminism - the former two Radicals and the latter a Communist, demonstrating cross-party support - had founded an organisation in February 1938 for women honoured by the French state for over 20 years' public service. They were keen to use their lobbying powers to bring the social utility of women to the government's attention.[21] In 1939, Suzanne Grinberg, Geneviève Tabouis and Weiss founded the Centre du Propagande Féminin, which concentrated on *rélèvement national* - recruitment and training for women in the civil defence movement - alongside issues surrounding marriage, the birth rate, child protection and familial responsibilities.[22] Weiss eventually secured a meeting with President Albert Lebrun in June 1939 to discuss placing their Service National/Civil Féminin at the disposition of both the civil and military authorities, but the suggestion fell on deaf ears.[23] In her memoirs, Weiss lamented the government's subsequent, late recognition of the opportunities offered by female service: a recruitment centre was opened in the fourth arrondissement and 28,000 women presented themselves within just a few days of its opening.[24] Weiss' plans for women's engagement in fact went beyond the traditional notions of female service:

---

[20] *Paris-Soir*, 26 October 1938. The article, entitled 'Pour la première fois au Palais-Bourbon trois femmes sont entendues par la Commission de l'Armée', stated that three delegates from the Centre du Propagande pour la Grandeur du Pays et l'Union Française de Légion d'Honneur - Mmes Batié, Grinberg and Guérin-Charvet - had addressed the Commission.

[21] See Christine Bard, *Les Filles de Marianne. Histoire des féminismes 1914-1940* (Paris: Fayard, 1995), p.311. At the outbreak of war, Cécile Brunschwicg also sat on the Conseil Supérieur de la Protection de l'Enfance, alongside the freemason Eliane Brault and the socialist Suzanne Lacore, and the Conseil Supérieur d'Hygiène Sociale. Andrée Viollis was a renowned journalist and co-editor of *Vendredi*.

[22] Ibid. Suzanne Grinberg was a noted lawyer and feminist, Geneviève Tabouis a renowned journalist.

[23] Louise Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne. La Résurrection du Chevalier. Juin 1940-Août 1944* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1974), p.222.

[24] Ibid., p.267. Siân Reynolds' discusses the unreliability of Weiss' memoirs, pointing in particular to her relationship with political power, something Christine Bard also comments upon. See Siân Reynolds, 'Women and the Popular Front

> 'Je voulais un service national et non pas seulement la reconnaissance administrative de quelques centaines de chauffeuses, infirmières ou secouristes ...
>
> Toutefois servir ne devait pas se présenter comme un privilège réservé à la fortune mais comme un but accessible à toutes celles qui en avaient le cœur.'[25]

This passage suggests two related themes: firstly, the desire to constitute a female national service that was not simply auxiliary in nature. The proponents of women's national service here - Weiss, Grinberg, for example - were elites by virtue of their professional and social status, with access to public representation, but they believed in the need for a unified women's mobilisation irrespective of potentially divisive factors such as class. Margaret Darrow's discussion of the criticism generated by elitist volunteer nursing during the First World War offers a clear parallel here: the Red Cross' promotion of women's selflessness in unpaid, patriotic duty had highlighted that only women of means could afford to do so and thereby detracted from the actions of lower-class women, who had traditionally carried out nursing work.[26] Therefore secondly, in rejecting the idea of elitism, conscious of the distinctly upper-middle class composition of the Red Cross societies in particular, and hostility towards 'society women', Weiss and others believed that women from all walks of life could contribute to national defence and in more structured positions than the traditional 'stand-in' roles in times of male absence allowed for.

A decree in the *Journel Officiel*, dated 7 January 1939, regarding voluntary civil engagement, noted the setting up of 'les Françaises au Service de la Nation' (FSN) committees - unqualified volunteers placed in the public services, attached to local prefectures and departmentally grouped, thereby reporting to the Ministry of the Interior. In August 1939, the FSN provided, for Paris alone, 553 people to care for children in nurseries and *colonies scolaires*, 6 pilots, 180 nursing auxiliaries, 60 trained nurses, 20 chemists, 225 administrators, 35 cyclists and 50 linen workers/maids. In addition, it was noted that 60 women had passed the training to drive heavy-goods vehicles in the eventuality that ambulance and lorry services were needed. The emphasis in

---

in France: The Case of the Three Women Ministers,' *French History*, 8, 2 (1994), pp.196-224 (p.197, p.206) and Bard, *Les Filles de Marianne*, p.392.

[25] Weiss, *La Résurrection du Chevalier*, p.225.

[26] Margaret H. Darrow, 'French Volunteer Nursing and the Myth of War Experience in World War I,' *American Historical Review*, 101, 1 (February 1996), pp.80-106 (pp.93-4).

this official record was placed on there being 'aucune distinction politique ou confessionelle'.[27] Women's social action, in the 'service of the nation', was deemed one's duty irrespective of denominational, political tensions. The period prior to the outbreak of war in September 1939 thus demonstrated the strength in unity of women across the socio-political spectrum. As discussed in the previous chapter, the 1930s had witnessed the cohesion of women's social actions in groups defined by political, confessional or class identity: in the face of war, the pluralism of these initiatives was striking. The social Catholic feminist Cécile de Corlieu remembered this period as one of female solidarity and patriotism against adversity, not a time for feminist or political or religious rivalries. Visiting the socialist Suzanne Buisson at party headquarters, as she had done several times during the feminist campaigns of the 1930s, de Corlieu summed up this solidarity in her use of language: 'j'etais venue l'entretenir de notre défense féminine.'[28]

On 1 September 1939, Hitler's Wehrmacht invaded Poland; on 3 September, Great Britain and France declared war on Nazi Germany. Until May 1940, the nation lived through the *drôle de guerre* in which more than five million mobilised men waited for the fighting to commence. The UNVF's Edmée de la Rochefoucauld made a radio appeal that highlighted the *Union Sacrée* spirit of duty to the nation, unity of purpose and social utility.[29] In December 1939 Minister of Public Health Marc Rucart broadcast a speech thanking the women of France - nuns, drivers, factory workers, social workers, nurses, and so on - for their many and varied activities for the nation at war, a list notable for the diversity of socioeconomic and religious backgrounds mentioned, again highlighting the cross-class nature of female patriotism.[30] That same month, the Ministry of Labour called for women to participate in industry for the war effort and the health services were modified to create additional women's sections attached to the military.[31] The extent to which women engaged in public 'civil' defence initiatives thus illustrated their subversion of cultural suppositions about

---

[27] *La Française,* undated. Newspaper clipping taken from BMD, Dossier 940.4, 'Les femmes pendant la guerre, 1939-1945'.
[28] Cécile de Corlieu, *Carnets d'une Chrètienne Moderniste de 1989 à nos jours* (Paris: Privat, 1970), p.88.
[29] Bard, *Les Filles de Marianne*, p.437.
[30] *La Française*, December 1939, reprinted Marc Rucart's speech, entitled 'Merci aux femmes de France'. Newspaper clipping taken from BMD, Dossier 940.4, 'Les femmes pendant la guerre, 1939-1945'.
[31] For example, Infirmières Pilotes et Secouristes de l'Air (IPSA), Service Automobile Féminin Français (SAFF) and Sections Auxiliaires de Transports Sanitaires (SATS). Ibid.

the inferiority of their sex, used traditionally to exclude them from participation. The romance novelist and feminist journalist Raymonde Machard commented that the modification of the Services de Santé was needed in the face of modern warfare.[32] The Service Automobile Féminin Français (SAFF) was an interesting case, created by upper-class women, it provided some 1,200 ambulance drivers at the outbreak of hostilities.[33] It should be noted that private religious initiatives were seen, too: for example, religious order Camion du Cardinal distributed clothing and blankets.[34]

Despite separate confessional and class identities, the *Union Sacrée* spirit predominated in the women's press and statistical evidence points to the sheer volume of women joining the civil defence movement out of duty and service to the nation. *La Française* more commonly used the term 'civil' rather than 'passive' at this time, identifying women's legitimate social action in the civic sphere and, now that war had officially broken out, reiterating agency rather than passivity. Civil defence meant galvanising the population into action, but also impacted on daily life in a number of ways - the issuance of gas masks, air raid warning sirens, the introduction of curfews, for example - everyday actions that prefigured experiences under Occupation. *La Française* commented that alongside this enormous mobilisation of female labour, other, more *ad hoc* services were being provided by French women, such as lawyers giving freely of their time to advise on questions of housing and workers' legislation, doctors providing free medical care, teachers offering French lessons to refugees from Alsace-Lorraine who could only speak in regional dialect, professional retraining centres that were being opened and manned. Calling it 'un sentiment d'entr'aide nationale et de solidarité sociale', the

---

[32] Raymonde Machard, *Les Françaises. Ce qu'elles valent... Ce qu'elles veulent...* (Paris: Flammarion, 1945), p.55.

[33] BMD, Dossier 940.4, 'Les femmes pendant la guerre, 1939-1945', printed note on Service Automobile Féminin Français. This typed, post-war report stated that at no time did the SAFF receive Secours National or any other organisation's funds during the Occupation or beforehand, which would suggest that it was an entirely privately-funded body and determined to assert a separate identity from those institutions potentially de-legitimised by their relationship to Vichy.

[34] Marc le Guillerme, *Françaises. Femmes de Devoir* (Paris: Fasquelles Editeurs, 1942), p.107.

language of fraternity and support was used to reinforce in readers' minds the ideals for which it claimed the French were once again fighting.[35]

While men's national duty in wartime was primarily a military one, women's mobilisation was therefore represented in the public sphere as one of national aid through social action and solidarity. The mobilisation of female resources during the *drôle de guerre* was categorised thus: national defence, social services and services for evacuees.[36] An article in *La Française* commented that each of the Parisian town halls had some 50 or so women assisting the municipal services with the arrival and placement of refugees and evacuees, highlighting the use of voluntary and trained staff.[37] The category social services therein generated much discussion, touching as it inevitably did upon contemporary sensitivities regarding training and professionalism at a time of heightened demand for personnel, with the attendant (and persistent) class and religious connotations attached to notions of social welfare to which its practitioners were sensitive. Armelle Mabon-Fall remarks that the Secrétariat-Général de la Famille et de la Santé (SGFS) was concerned about the employment of women in this sector without the official diploma.[38] The government instructed social welfare training schools, principally the Surintendantes d'Usine, Ecole Pratique de Service Social (EPSS) and ENS, to provide an intensive four-month training scheme that would enable women to practise as social workers and nursing auxiliaries without possessing the full state diploma. However, both the government and social welfare professionals were forced to recognise that necessity would make those of *bonne volonté* as vital to the war effort as qualified staff. In fact, government legislation authorised *auxiliaires sanitaires et sociales* on 2 September 1939 thereby implicitly

---

[35] *La Française*, undated, article entitled 'Les Françaises au Service de la Nation'. Newspaper clipping taken from BMD, Dossier 940.4, 'Les femmes pendant la guerre, 1939-1945'.

[36] *La Française*, 9 October 1939, 'Les principales associations féminines travaillant pour la défense national'. The three categories stated were as follows. National defence: Assistantes du Devoir National, drivers of heavy-goods vehicles, chemists, nurses with parachute training and the women's auxiliary aeronautical corp. Social services: social and sanitary auxiliaries and trained workers from the ASU, ENS and EPSS. Services for evacuees: Central National d'Information Service (CNIS), Union des Institutions Privées (UIP) and Office Central des Œuvres de Bienfaisance (OCOB).

[37] *La Française*, undated, article entitled 'Les Françaises au Service de la Nation'. Newspaper clipping taken from BMD, Dossier 940.4, 'Les femmes pendant la guerre, 1939-1945'.

[38] Armelle Mabon-Fall, *Les assistantes sociales au temps de Vichy. Du silence à l'oubli* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1995), p.30.

acknowledging the need for greater numbers.[39] Hence the tensions between voluntary and professional staffing of social services continued to exist but remained subject to the greater imperative of national unity and duty: 'De l'effort, de l'active bonne volonté de chacun dépend en partie la résistance physique et morale de la France.'[40]

The breadth of women's engagement in political activism did not just stop with the declaration of war and subsequent defeat. While many women threw themselves into the war effort and national defence - concentrating particularly on the plight of the soldiers and refugees/evacuees - this did not imply an end to their interest in the themes and causes that had become so prevalent and important during the preceding decade.[41] Germaine Malaterre-Sellier - who took over the direction of the UFSF when Cécile Brunschwicg was forced into exile in the southern zone by Vichy's anti-Semitic legislation - created Les Amis de la République. Using her expertise in international diplomacy at the Société des Nations with different nationalities working together, this group coordinated the activities of foreigners wishing to help the French civil war effort and she also stood as President of the Union Internationale de Secours aux Enfants, which provided aid to evacuated children.[42] In Geneva, in April 1940, Malaterre-Sellier attended the International Alliance of Women for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship's Conference on Post-War Reconstruction and spoke on Anglo-French relations in a post-war Europe. It was striking that in war-time the European feminist movement was dedicating time and attention to a post-war scenario, pointing to the importance with which women viewed their political voice and their inherent belief in that voice being articulated, heard and utilised after the war. The conference's commission on social questions in fact debated the findings of a survey sent out to member countries regarding the state of social services: it was noted that training schools were asking for good candidates to come forward in France because of the additional stress being placed on the system due to population

---

[39] R.-H. Guerrand and M.-A. Rupp, *Brève Histoire du Service Social en France, 1896-1976* (Toulouse: Privat, 1978), Annexes, p.163.
[40] *La Française*, 9 October 1939, article entited 'L'activité féminine pendant la guerre. Notes du mois', signed by Cécile Brunschwicg.
[41] *Le Mouvement Féministe* noted in September 1940 that feminists were working in the south and centre of the country in refugee aid and commented upon Brunschwicg running a centre for children in Marseilles. The article is cited in Bard, *Les Filles de Marianne*, p.440.
[42] Ibid., pp.441-447 for further details on the actions taken by leading feminists during the period of phoney war and then exodus.

evacuations.[43] Malaterre-Sellier spoke of the need for women-only organisations due to their special 'sympathetic' nature, warning of the dangers of mixed organisations in which women would be 'en danger d'être reléguées au second plan'.[44] In fact, 3 November 1939 legislation and a decree dated 7 February 1940 had made social workers obligatory in each department.[45]

Despite the proliferation of calls for support, solidarity and service to the population at large, however, tensions continued and the body politic had already expelled a major group. Following the Nazi-Soviet Pact of 23 August 1939, the Communists were increasingly marked as outlaws, traitors to their country and to peace, in the eyes of the French administration. Tensions inevitably existed underneath the fragile surface of a unified nation. On 26 September 1939 the PCF was dissolved and the government used new-found authority to suspend Communist municipalities.[46] The Catholic social worker Madeleine Delbrêl, working in the Communist bastion of Ivry-sur-Seine, noted in her memoirs how the Communists were removed from political power and replaced by prefectoral designates, the majority of whom were Christian politicians.[47] Latent anti-Communist criticism could be seen in certain Catholic publications at this time, continuing with themes that had been prominent throughout the decade:

> 'C'est un papa qui vient cherche sa fillette, un pauvre papa bien pâle qui relève d'une pneumonie; puis une maman avenante qui emmène deux

---

[43] AIU, Fonds Moscou, Moscou pas AIU, /285, *International Alliance of Women for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship. Conference on Postwar Reconstruction, Geneva 1940,* pp.1-4 (p.1). Germaine Malaterre-Sellier had renounced her Presidency of the Comité de la Paix at the outbreak of war because she was the national of a belligerent nation.

[44] Ibid., p.2. Through the reports of its Commission on Social Questions, the conference also commented on the different nature of the European social welfare systems in place, the need for social welfare training and formation, and the professional, impartial nature of the modern social worker. For example, the United Kingdom provided social welfare training at university level while in Germany, it was conducted in specialist schools.

[45] Ibid., /295, *Formation du Personnel Social, Réponse au Questionnaire* pp.1-4 (p.4). The decree set the acceptable ratio at one social welfare worker for every 10,000 inhabitants.

[46] Simone de Beauvoir commented on the paradoxical nature of a situation in which PCF militants were being arrested when they were the ones at the head of the anti-fascist fight. See de Beauvoir, *Prime of Life*, p.376.

[47] Madeleine Delbrêl, *Ville Marxiste. Terre de Mission* (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1957), p.28.

bambins: "C'est la plus communiste du pays" ne soufflé-t-on. Ah! La chaude atmosphère de charité, la belle œuvre de conquête!'[48]

For many Catholics, the war was 'cette nouvelle Croisade' against the anti-Christian enemy - Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia. In fact the Catholic women's organisation, Ligue Féminine d'Action Catholique Française (LFACF) held the two responsible for war:

'Les convoitises de l'Allemagne et de la Russie unis par leur haine commune contre Dieu ont déchaîné le fléau que la France croyait écarté et contre lequel ont échoué toutes les tentatives de paix les plus généreuses.'[49]

While the spirit of unity between women of different classes and religious beliefs was being publicly heralded, a closer look at women's social action therefore reveals a more complicated picture. Tensions existed beneath the surface between political groups who held rival ideas of what constituted the nation and therein national solidarity and duty. For example, the women's sections of the radical right, too, engaged in the war effort. A 6 April 1940 report on the Parti Social Français' (PSF) Information Day detailed the actions of its female members, including the activities of the Auxiliaires de la Défense Passive (ADP) and those in the Œuvres Sociales de la Guerre: women were setting up and manning aid posts, establishing additional soup kitchens, cloakrooms and sewing-rooms, gathering goods and sending them as packages to POWs.[50] The ADP distributed eight million items of clothing and supplies to refugees. It had set up 1,800 posts in Paris and the suburbs, two each per Federation, and had been particularly thanked by the Prefecture of the Seine for services rendered during the population evacuations of the autumn.[51] PSF stalwart Mme Verrier's speech at one of the party's Cours d'Information Hebdomadaire ended with a significant allusion to harvest: 'La guerre prendre fin un jour, mais ce que les ADP ont fait subsistera. Le grain est serré et c'est le

---

[48] LFACF, *Nos Enfants. Almanach de la LFACF* (Paris: LFACF,1940), p.154. The UFCS was to warn women of the 'false redemption' offered by Communism in a reiteration of Pope Pius XI's message. See Union Féminine Civique et Sociale, *UFCS Documents*, undated dossier, BN, 'Canevas de réunions de formation 1941-1942. Sujet: La France au service de la Société Chrétienne, du Monde', pp.1-12 (pp.9-12).

[49] LFACF, *Nos Enfants,* p.60. The 'crusade against bolshevism' was to reach its peak in the military actions of the Légion des Voluntaires Français (LVF) during Occupation.

[50] APP, BA 1952, Parti Social Français, 79.501-2726-3, 6 April 1940.

[51] Ibid.

PSF qui récoltera la moisson.'[52] This passage again points to women making sense of their experiences through the referential frame of the First World War, when the French government appealed to women as 'soldiers of the harvest' in the absence of the mobilised male peasants. The language celebrated the land, national renewal and fertility, reminding women that there was much to be done; the ADP would prepare the harvest for the PSF to reap. In choosing to engage in social action on behalf of the PSF, female members were conferring authenticity and legitimacy on a specific political, economic, social and religious vision of *le pays réel* as articulated by the Party. While the ADP's social welfare activities were no different to those of other women's groups during the period, the confessional and political significance with which they were imbued highlights the continuity of such competing visions of France during this period behind public pronouncements of national unity. Mme Verrier's impassioned speech was quoted at length in a police report:

> 'Ce n'est pas, a-t-elle dit, une drôle de guerre, c'est une Croisade. Il faut allumer partout l'étincelle de la foi dans la Patrie, cette étincelle qui empêchera les âmes de s'embourber et qui évitera les découragements si néfastes pendant la guerre.'[53]

The imagery of light, flame, fortitude and truth was a resonant one for the PSF. Social action during - and indeed outside of - wartime was undertaken in pursuit of acclaimed spiritual ideals and patriotic virtues.[54] However, not all Catholics could espouse such inflamed religious rhetoric. Cécile de Corlieu railed against the use of such religious terminology to describe war and she wrote to Pope Pius XII in a point-by-point repudiation of Cardinal Verdier's declaration that the war was a 'crusade'.[55] She rejected war as fundamentally opposed to her religious identity as a Christian, as well as her political identity as feminist and pacifist.

In the service of Vichy? 'Authentic' womanhood and social welfare

On 10 May 1940 the German armies finally invaded France, cutting through weak army lines in the Ardennes. By the second week of June, the Germans were approaching Paris. The southwards exodus that ensued -

---

[52] Ibid., 22 February 1940.
[53] Ibid.
[54] The PSF's journal (when it was the Croix de Feu) had been called *Le Flambeau*. The party continued its interwar aversion to associating overtly with religion, thereby articulating a Catholic spirituality rather than religiosity.
[55] de Corlieu, *Carnets*, p.84.

primarily an experience of women, the elderly and children - was chaotic, symbolising a nation thrown into despair and disorder by the unexpected speed of the German advance and looming defeat. Diamond points to the subsequent resentment of many who experienced this exodus at a government who had failed to put effective, advance measures and policies in place.[56] The scale and speed of events in May-June 1940 were bewildering.[57] Ninette Jucker, who having recently given birth decided to stay in Paris, commented that 'signs of official initiative had ceased', with the capital left in 'fearful silence' once thousands had departed.[58] With the German army advancing on Paris, the French government left the capital an open city on 10 June. Military defeat was both swift and humiliating.[59] Germany and France signed an armistice on 22 June 1940, the terms of which provided for the division of the country into two zones and imposed severe financial demands upon the occupied economy. The Third Republic was dissolved and a new État Français inaugurated at Vichy, in the southern, unoccupied zone. The elderly Maréchal Pétain had taken over the leadership of the disintegrating French government on 16 June. Discrediting the parliamentary regime - with its attendant conflicts and coalitions between socialists, Radicals and Communists, particularly the detested Popular Front - was fundamental to his project of creating a new form of government that was conservative, authoritarian and patriarchal. This programme of national revolution, signified in *la triptyque sacrée* of 'travaille, famille, patrie' was designed to unite the nation under an authoritarian regime, grounded in the soil of the countryside, and to cleanse and reorder the body politic after the

---

[56] Hanna Diamond, *Fleeing Hitler. France 1940* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), p.174.

[57] Diamond, *Fleeing Hitler*, gives the following figures: four million people left the Paris region and fled south (p.2); an estimated 100,000 civilians died (p.143); and between one-third and one-quarter of those on the road were children (p.5). A government report, dated 2 July 1940, stated that there were 8 million refugees in the country, 6.2 million of whom were French (of these, about 2 million were from Paris and 800,000 from Alsace) (p.150). See, also, Nicole Ann Dombrowski, 'Surviving the German Invasion of France. Women's Stories of the Exodus of 1940' in Nicole Ann Dombrowski, *Women and War in the Twentieth Century. Enlisted With or Without Consent* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1999), pp.116-134.

[58] Ninetta Jucker, *Curfew in Paris. A Record of the German Occupation* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1960), p.46.

[59] As Marc Bloch wrote, '[w]hatever form the final triumph may take, it will be many years before the stain of 1940 can be effaced.' Marc Bloch, *Strange Defeat* (London: Oxford Press, 1986), p.175.

alleged degeneracy of the weak Third Republic.[60] The new regime significantly included a mix of styles and ideologies - from conservatives and technocrats, to committed fascists - which were to compete for political expression and primacy over four years of Nazi occupation.

Taking as its starting point Vichy's attempts to impose a uniform discourse on women, the remainder of this chapter will look at women's social action and agency during the Occupation to generate a more nuanced understanding of the multiple facets of Catholic women's identity. From 1940, the Vichy government strove to define a women's place as quite literally *au foyer*, passing legislation, as part of the *Révolution Nationale* programme, which viewed the home, workplace and nation as 'naturally' gendered 'organisms'. Women's employment was restricted and their sexual autonomy repressed through the reinstatement of authoritarian, patriarchal government policies. Vichy promoted the cherished bourgeois ideal of separate spheres, whereby men inhabited the active, public world and women the private, familial one. Hélène Eck writes that motherhood was idealised as the reconciliation of personal happiness with social - and therein political and national - utility.[61] Women were expected to be mothers first and foremost - their duty (and therein, their sociopolitical validity) in the eyes of the nation accomplished through the 'blood tax' of childbirth. Excepting those serving the nation in sanctioned teaching, nursing and welfare roles, childless women were to be considered promiscuous, frivolous, indulgent individualists who threatened the strength and vitality of the nation state. Prevalent interwar conservative discourses on morality, the natural expression and limits of femininity and sexuality were extended under Vichy and control of women's bodies placed firmly in state hands. The regime's presentation of abortion as a national crime committed by working-class *saboteuses* highlights that women were considered reprehensible for their sex and their class, Miranda Pollard notes.[62] Marianne,

---

[60] Georgette Varenne, *La Femme dans la France Nouvelle* (Clermont-Ferrand: Imprimeries Mont-Louis, 1940), p.5.

[61] Hélène Eck, 'French Women under Vichy' in Françoise Thébaud (ed.), *A History of Women in the West. V: Toward a Cultural Identity in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, Mass., and London: Harvard University Press, 1994), pp.194-225 (p.198).

[62] Law 300, promulgated by Vichy in February 1942, defined abortion as a crime against the state. For further details, see Miranda Pollard, 'Vichy and Abortion: Policing the Body and the New Moral Order in Everyday Life' in Sarah Fishman et al. (eds.), *France at War. Vichy and the Historians* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2000), pp.191-204 (p.201) and Miranda Pollard, *Reign of Virtue. Mobilizing Gender in Vichy France* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago

long the patriotic symbol of the French Republic, was to be replaced and indeed effaced. Her morality and thereby that of Republican France itself was unacceptable.[63]

Vichyist assumptions about gender were shared and replicated in numerous publications targeting a female readership. One such Pétainist work, *La Femme dans la France Nouvelle,* written by Georgette Varenne, typifies the essentialist, moralist rhetoric employed in the service of Pétainism and the *Révolution Nationale*: 'la femme comme épouse, comme mère, dans la famille et dans la société, doit reprendre la place que la nature lui a assignée.'[64] This maternalist logic was, to a certain extent, willingly received, as demonstrated by the familialist consensus already in existence across class, religious and political lines. Varenne emphasised the 'natural' and 'predetermined' role of women in their 'sublime vocation maternelle'.[65]

The explicit linkage of selfish womanhood with *dénatalité* hence national defeat - and its attendant, reverse image, that of natural womanhood, national physical and spiritual renewal - was encapsulated in Pétain's 17 June broadcast to the nation, in which he had announced the government's decision to sue for peace: 'On a revendiqué plus qu'on a servi.'[66] Christine Clouet recalled Radio-Paris' 'Pétainist exhortations to repent our pre-war depravity and endure our just punishment.'[67] The language that Pétain employed in his public speeches, in which he offered himself as the 'father of the people' in his mission to renew and restore French greatness, was that of redemptive Catholicism. Vichy ostensibly undertook to restore France to the Catholic Church after Church-State separation and the anti-clericalism of the Third Republic, in what was a politically legitimating, rather than devotional, strategy. The idea of

---

Press, 1998). See, also, Cheryl A. Koos, 'Gender, Anti-Individualism, and Nationalism: The Alliance Nationale and the Pronatalist Backlash Against the Femme Moderne, 1933-1940', *French Historical Studies*, 19, 3 (Spring 1996), pp.699-723 and Cheryl A. Koos, "On les aura!": the gendered politics of abortion and the Alliance nationale contre la dépopulation, 1938-1944', *Modern and Contemporary France*, 7, 1 (February 1999), pp.21-33.

[63] See Jackson, *The Dark Years*, p.154, on Vichy's retention of certain Republican symbols that were viewed as patriotic. For example, 14 July remained a public holiday, the *tricoloure* was retained as the national flag and *La Marseillaise* as the national anthem.

[64] Varenne, *La Femme*, Avant-Propos.

[65] Varenne, *La Femme*, p.27.

[66] Pétain's 17 June 1940 speech to the nation was followed by that of Charles de Gaulle's from London on 18 June 1940. See Diamond, *Fleeing Hitler*, pp.101-2 and pp.104-5 respectively.

[67] Claire Chevrillon, *Code Name Christiane Clouet. A Woman in the French Resistance* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1995), p.24.

France as eldest daughter of the Church could be used to Vichy's advantage, functioning as a convenient shorthand to assert the regime's legitimacy as the authentic authority in France with the moral and spiritual backing of the Church.[68] Contrition and redemption were to become an integral part of the language with which certain Catholic women and publications described their social and civic activities under Occupation. Questions surrounding femininity, maternity and employment prompted long-held cultural assumptions regarding women's sacrifice and suffering. In *Holy Tears, Holy Blood*, D.E. Burton comments that the culture of suffering in fact reached its apogee under Vichy.[69] Chapter One made reference to the common characterisation of social workers as secular nuns, enduring personal sacrifice - of celibacy, arduous environments and long hours - for the greater good, for example. Religious imagery and language had commonly been used for secular purposes throughout the Third Republic, as aptly demonstrated by Elinor Accampo's biography of the radical feminist Nelly Roussel.[70] While Catholic and Republican visions of womanhood shared the notion of femininity as unchanging and self-sacrificing, Roussel challenged this essentialism in her rejection of the pain of maternity, war and disease. Although personally opposed to religion, Roussel specifically used religious imagery and metaphors to call attention to how deeply embedded the cultural assumptions of essentialised femininity, of women and pain/sacrifice were.[71]

Catholic women were therefore not the only ones to accept this essentialisation, despite Roussel's rebellion. Rather than challenging the

---

[68] See commentary on the explicit political linkage between France and Catholicism in Colin Nettelbeck, 'The Eldest Daughter and the *trente glorieuses*: Catholicism and national identity in postwar France', *Modern and Contemporary France*, 6, 4 (1998), pp. 445-462.

[69] Richard D.E. Burton, *Holy Tears, Holy Blood. France, Catholicism and the Culture of Suffering in France, 1840-1970* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2004). Burton also points to the paradoxical positioning of women during the Vichy period as both central and marginal to the politics of the administration.

[70] Elinor A. Accampo, *Blessed Motherhood, Bitter Fruit. Nelly Roussel and the Politics of Female Pain in Third Republican France* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), p.244. Roussel rejected the notion of *l'éternel féminin* in favour of that of *l'éternelle sacrificiée*, p.6.

[71] Accampo's commentary on Roussel's *apostolat* and *mission* fits neatly into the wider discussion in Chapter One about the use of religious language with regards to femininity and public action. It also highlights the ubiquity and durability of cultural expectations regarding womanhood and women's duties in wartime. Ibid., p.103.

embodiment of sacrifice, many women embraced it. For the women of the UFCS, the tasks at hand were clear:

> 'Notre espoir, notre confiance indéfectible est là: la mission spirituelle et chrétienne de la France demeure; tout est providentiellement orienté vers cette mission. Il nous fait rendre la France non seulement à son génie propre, mais à sa MISSION... C'EST UNE OEUVRE D'AMOUR surtout.'[72]

For Réarmament Moral member Madeleine F. du Fresnes, the defeat had only increased her passion to serve: 'dans le métro, dans la rue, dans les maisons, partout, nous continuons à prêcher la croisade du courage.'[73] Suffering and hardship were commonplace for women, but through their social and familial responsibilities and duties they could achieve redemption. For Madeleine Delbrêl, 'Le Service Social se présentait comme la marque infaliable de la cohésion sociale, garantie de nouvelle idéologie rédemptrice.'[74] Delbrêl offered a clear example of the ways in which rhetoric and reality could find common ground through social action. In 1941, she was influential in setting up the Catholic, interdiocesan organisation Mission de France, which trained priests to take Catholicism into non-Christian workplaces.[75] At the end of their training, priests were sent to work in the localities, earning wages alongside their fellow workers in the fields, or in the industrial suburbs. They celebrated mass in tenement buildings or the fields, or even just gave advice and support if and when asked for. The Mission de Paris was founded in 1943. Throughout the course of war, therefore, the Church continued to monitor religious practices

---

[72] *La Femme dans La Vie Sociale*, 139 (June 1941), p.3.
[73] Madeleine F. Du Fresnes, *De l'Enfer des Hommes à la Cité de Dieu* (Paris: Editions Spes, 1947), p.21.
[74] Delbrêl, *Ville Marxiste*, p. 44. She published work on social services through the Catholic publishing house Bloud et Gay, as did Céline Lhotte (whom *L'Aube* reviewed about *Les Françaises aux Service de la Nation* - see footnote 12). Mabon-Fall points out that while Lhotte produced these editions on social welfare, she was also engaged in providing social services for the resistance network, Liberation-Nord; see Mabon-Fall, *Du silence à l'oubli*, p.51.
[75] For a critical view of historians downplaying both the importance of the worker priest movement and the role of women within its development, see Jean Girard, *50 ans aux frontiers de l'Eglise. De la Mission de France aux Equipes d'Ivry* (Paris: Harmattan, 1995) cited in Etienne Fouilloux, 'Femmes et catholicisme dans la France contemporaine. Aperçu historiographique', *Clio*, 2 (1995), *Femmes et Religions*, http://clio.revues.org/document498html. Accessed 3 April 2008. See also John Hellman, 'Vichy Background: Political Alternatives for French Catholics in the Nineteen-Thirties,' *Journal of Modern History*, 49, 1, On Demand Supplement, (March 1977), pp.D1111-1144 (p.D1142).

and observance and actively sought, through such projects, to bring the masses back to Christianity. As Gildea commented on the Church during this period in *Marianne in Chains*, it should not be viewed as an anachronistic body and was not out of touch, using the latest technology, press, magazines and so on.[76] Although the field force was masculine, women were involved in its creation and its administration. Michèle Rault's research demonstrates the middle path forged between religious and laic life by a group of young Catholic women working in the chemical and food factories of Marseilles in 1943. They were not nuns but nonetheless provided 'un front pionnier apostolique'.[77] Delbrêl believed in the significance of both dialogue and interaction. In many ways, her actions as a social worker in the Communist stronghold of Ivry represented a secular equivalent of these priests, which she called her 'petite cellule de l'Église'.[78] By 1943, ten women were living at rue Raspail with Delbrêl, who was herself in charge of the district's social services from 1939 to 1946.[79]

The imperative of social welfare involved women from across socioeconomic classes to engage in actions that were not purely social, predicated as they were on political events and circumstances, legislation, the harsh realities of everyday life under occupation and economic difficulties. René Rémond has written that during the war 'Le service social est inséparable de l'histoire nationale.'[80] Secours National (SN), the official body that had coordinated private relief works for populations affected by war during 1914-18, was reconstituted in September 1939 and in October 1940 placed under the personal authority of Pétain. It worked to coordinate the multitude of relief works being undertaken by private bodies and to regulate these with state welfare and the public authorities. For example, a police report noted that each ADP delegate liaised with an SN delegate, highlighting the lines of communication

---

[76] Robert Gildea, *Marianne in Chains. In Search of the German Occupation* (Basingstoke and Oxford: Macmillan, 2002), p.210.
[77] Michèle Rault, 'En mission dans le monder ouvrier, dans les années 1940-70', *Clio*, 15 (2002), *Chrétiennes*, http://clio.revues.org/document65.html. Accessed 13 February 2008.
See, also, Guillaume Cuchet, 'Nouvelles perspectives historiographiques sur les prêtres-ouvriers (1943-1954)', *Vingtième Siècle*, 87, 3 (2005), pp.177-187.
[78] BMD, Dossier Madeleine Delbrêl, 'Spiritualité. Une figure', *La Croix* (20-21 April 2002).
[79] Ibid., 'Figure de Sainteté', *Vocations*, 152 (September 2004), p.21.
[80] René Rémond, 'Préface' in Yvonne Knibiehler, *Nous, les assistantes sociales. Naissance d'une profession (Trente ans de souvenirs d'assistantes sociales Françaises, 1930-1960)* (Paris: Editions Aubier Montaigne, 1980), p.7.

and action that existed between Vichy and private organisations, such as the PSF.[81] SN responded to the immediate needs of the population in providing food, shelter, medical care and clothing distribution. It also functioned, as Gildea reminds us, as a tool to placate the population and legitimate the regime providing such assistance.[82] It was the only body sanctioned to send out official appeals for aid to the French population and to receive state funds, and employed only professionally qualified women.[83] The first published work on the Secours National under Vichy, entitled *Les œuvres privées de l'Etat: une formule nouvelle*, concentrated on its role as both social and national relief agency, caring for the unfortunate (poor, elderly, refugees) alongside providing professional training to social workers in certain institutions.[84] An estimated 6,023 social welfare bodies were working for SN in April 1941 when the book was written and published.[85] Amongst the commissions it ran were those on maternity and childhood, youth, leisure time, work, professional and rural organisations, health, information and documentation. The existing historical literature concentrates particularly on the actions and administration of sanctioned social welfare through the SN and related bodies. This chapter offers perspective on the language with which women expressed their perception of, and the nature of their engagement with, such actions. Emphasis was placed in official materials on the encompassing nature of the organisation, to assist anyone in need, regardless of political or religious hue:

> 'Le rôle essentiel du Secours National dans l'aménagement futur du pays, sera de permettre à la solidarité de garder son aspect largement humain, s'adressant indistinctement à tous, il doit au-dessus des

---

[81] APP, BA 1952, Parti Social Français, 79.501-2726, 19 November 1940. After the fall of France, the PSF renamed itself Progrès Social Français (PSF), renounced its status as a political party, stated its loyalty to Pétain and declared that its activities were to be moral, social and civic, concentrating on the POWs, veterans and the unemployed.

[82] Gildea, *Marianne in Chains*, p.141, notes that Secours National had a divisive history concerning whether it was a propaganda tool for Vichy and in its ineffectual provisions to the poverty-stricken.

[83] Guerrand and Rupp, *Brève Histoire*, p.83. See, also, Mabon-Fall, *Du silence à l'oubli*, p.52.

[84] Jean de Kervénoaël, *Les oeuvres privées de l'Etat: Une formule nouvelle: Le Secours National* (Paris: Imprimerie C. Desfosses-Neogravure, 1941). Eck comments that this was the end of an era in that social services professionals were never again so apolitical, autonomous and exclusively female, nor so politically 'innocent'. See Eck, 'French Women under Vichy', p.205.

[85] Kervénoaël, *Les oeuvres privées*, p.206. R-H Guerrand, too, uses this figure (rounding down to 6,000) and states there were an estimated 9,000 welfare and relief organisations in total. See Guerrand, *Brève Histoire*, p.83.

groupes à caractère plus étroit, personnifier l'action sociale dans ce qu'elle a d'essentiel, donc d'universel, et redonner ainsi au mot charité la plénitude de son sens.'[86]

This is an interesting passage in its juxtaposition of *action sociale* alongside the more traditional language of philanthropy, reflecting in part the competing visions - Christian, technocratic, corporatist, authoritarian - at play under Vichy. Charity as a term had been considered redundant in the burgeoning, professionalising interwar welfare sector. Now, however, the term was more openly used, the UFCS believing that 'la charité crée une âme commune', for example.[87] The religious and class connotations that had applied to such a term under the secular Third Republic were no longer obstacles to its use and the language fitted well with Christian concepts of care to the suffering. Yvonne Knibiehler has commented on the relevance of the term charity, challenging that negative connotations related to charity should apply in the unique circumstances of war and occupation: 'Les expériences de la deuxième guerre mondiale ramène bien souvent les assistantes aux tâches traditionnelles de l'ancienne charité.'[88]

State social offices inevitably conformed to gendered policy directives concerning *la femme au foyer* and the sanctity of family and home:

'Alors qu'éclate le deuxième conflit mondial, de par leur rôle auprès des familles, les assistantes sociales deviendront les témoins privilégiés d'une doctrine d'Etat basée sur les vertus de la famille.'[89]

Thus the professional actions of a large body of employed women - set apart from the sanctified image of *la femme au foyer* - could be additionally legitimised through this relationship to the family and to domesticity. Social Catholics such as Andrée Butillard and Eve Baudouin, notably from the UFCS, were represented in the familial organisations that proliferated under Vichy such as the Sécrétariat-Général de la Famille and the Comité Consultatif de la Famille Française. Butillard had also worked for Regroupement Familial, which sought to minimise the familial suffering and disruption caused by the exodus and population movements.[90] In September 1941 Pétain inaugurated the Commissariat de la Famille Française, in which Catholics from the pre-war

---

[86] Kervénoaël, *Les oeuvres privées*, p.272.
[87] *La Femme dans la Vie Sociale*, 157 (March 1943), p.10.
[88] Knibiehler, *Nous, les assistantes sociales*, p.14.
[89] Mabon-Fall, *Du silence à l'oubli*, p.19.
[90] Henri Rollet, *Andrée Butillard et le Féminisme Chrétien* (Paris: Spes, 1960), p.133, p.165.

natalist and familialist movements were heavily represented. The Mouvement Populaire des Familles (MPF) was also set up in 1941 and sanctioned as an official, Vichy body.[91] A UFCS article detailed the activities of women delegates to the Centres de Coordination des Mouvements Familiaux, who worked in various study committees dedicated to material life, teaching and training, propaganda and young mothers, natality, legislation and institutions, hygiene, health, disease prevention, youth and family, professional and family life.[92] Vichy's social welfare policies were a continuation of the Republican system, however, along corporatist lines. Welfare was to be administered through worker and employer representatives constituted in social committees.[93] The protection of maternity and infancy remained paramount. The connection between family and nation, as one - in place since the promulgation of the Family Code prior to the war's outbreak - continued to be strengthened by the emphasis laid by Vichy on women's familial and maternal responsibilities. 'La femme sert le Pays en servant la famille', declared the UFCS.[94] The extent to which the family represented a microcosm of the nation was emphasised in the LFACF's 1944 tract entitled *Refaire la famille pour refaire la France. Sauvons nos foyers!* in which women continued to be perceived both as agents and objects of the nationalist project.[95]

However, the women involved were not unaware of the heightened significance of providing this assistance under the specific conditions of occupation. Vichy was a state that operated on exclusive rather than inclusive lines, with Jews, freemasons and Communists to be expelled as undesirables and henceforth not qualifying for state assistance. Did working for the official state social services, providing aid to the family and therefore the nation,

---

[91] For further details on the MPF, see Geneviève Dermenjian and Dominique Loiseau, 'La maternité sociale et le Mouvement Populaire des Familles durant les Trente Glorieuses', *Clio*, 21, 2005, *Maternités*, http://clio.revues.org/document1449.html. Accessed 13 February 2008.
[92] *La Femme dans la Vie Sociale*, 153 (November 1942), p.7.
[93] Paul Dutton, in a chapter entitled 'Retrenchment and Reform' that focuses on welfare between 1939 and 1947, suggests that Vichy's programme to reform welfare along corporatist lines, disband independent unions and reinforce employee-employer committees was influential in the instigation of the modern welfare state under the Fourth Republic. See Paul V. Dutton, *Origins of the French Welfare State. The Struggle for Social Reform in France, 1914-1947* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp.184-219.
[94] *La Femme dans la Vie Sociale*, 139 (June 1941), p.16.
[95] LFCAF, *Refaire la famille pour refaire la France. Sauvons nos foyers!* (Paris: LFACF, 1944).

therefore mean a refusal of aid to the excluded?[96] Mabon-Fall comments that resignations from Secours National increased from 1943 as the collaborationist nature of the regime became increasingly apparent.[97] Social workers were professional women operating at the juncture of state and private. Social action was made political by the specific circumstances of war and women were forced to reconcile their actions and beliefs. Looking back, the social worker Mlle Bobichon recognised the tensions prevailing within the distribution of welfare support, that certain groups were excluded because of their political, socioeconomic or racial identity. Conscious of this, she recounted: 'J'ai essayé d'être neutre, mon souci était d'aider les gens quelle que soit leur opinion.'[98] The following two chapters concentrate on social action undertaken directly for, and by, the two groups of women most excluded by Vichy - the Communists and the Jews. Chapter Five will particularly concentrate on the camp system and the multitude of relief agencies operating there in official and in clandestine capacities. Germaine Ribière commented that, susceptible to losing popularity, Vichy officials ensured that there were always social workers on hand when any of the camps were 'cleared'. She commented that often the women involved were from local families, to dampen the likelihood of popular unrest at the deportations.[99] One could question whether the women involved - like those of SN - were actively seeking to make Vichy policies more palatable and efficient, or whether they were simply doing their job, hoping to alleviate suffering where they could, irrespective of class, nationality or ethnicity.

Alongside the SN ran a number of officially legitimated services, continuing in the traditions of the interwar years, for example, the Surintendantes d'Usine and Service Social. Operating as a model for other welfare organisations throughout the country - organising children's holiday camps, sanatoriums, interventions in cases of parental illness, for example - the Service Social considered itself distinct in having an independent, rather than religious, background and in taking a preventative approach to the social

---

[96] See Knibiehler, *Nous, les assistantes sociales,* pp.225-230 for a more detailed discussion of SN as a potentially collaborationist organisation in making the Occupation 'more supportable'.
[97] Mabon-Fall, *Du silence à l'oubli,* p.68, commenting on the confidential surveys sent to the administration by SN workers that highlighted their increased disaffection with the regime and their role.
[98] Kervénoaël, *Les oeuvres privées,* p.54.
[99] Michael Phayer and Eva Fleischner, *Cries in the Night. Women Who Challenged the Holocaust* (Kansas City: Sheed and Ward, 1997), p.80.

situation, not just acting in the more traditional role of *visiteur-enquêteur.*[100] Significantly, the women involved in Service Social were prominent social Catholics, despite their adherence to independent rather than religious training. Women such as Madeleine Hardouin had been involved in the previous decade's discussions about qualifications and often represented their social training schools at the higher trade union bodies, such as the ATS and the UCSS. In 1943 these two bodies were to create a joint working committee that after Liberation was to authorise one unified and independent social welfare union.[101] Therefore in the relationship between state and private initiative, again the question of professionalisation was a pertinent one. Social welfare practitioners envisaged their role not only as a response to the harsh conditions of Occupation, but as a specialised career for young women:

> 'L'avenir du service social... non seulement réparateur mais constructif... non seulement des esprits sociaux avertis mais des connaissances techniques appropriées à ses diverses branches.'[102]

What was needed was a balance between formalised training and a career path (providing long-term development) and *ad hoc* social action (to meet immediate needs). *Vaillance* reported on the Service Civique Féminin under the auspices of which young women had three months of hands-on training with the Red Cross, Secours National and in soup kitchens and childcare, followed by a further three months spent at Aide Familiale and in learning household economy, hygiene and social services.[103] Agency was therefore directed within the local and home environment, while recognising the need for training and experience. That the radical right's ADP opened up its own social welfare training school is an implicit recognition of the significance of being - and of being viewed as - professional, and the political capital to be gained in so doing (despite the PSF's positioning as 'apolitical' and civic in nature).[104] The ADP noted that its centres were staffed by predominantly female personnel, mostly nurses or *visiteuses,* who made 2,500 visits a month, with some 2,000 of these

---

[100] Eve Baudouin, *Service Social ou Assistance?* (Paris: Librarie Bloud et Gay, 1942), p.101. This edition was part of a series entitled *Réalités du Travail Social*, which included publications from Madeleine Delbrêl and Madeleine Hardouin, among others.
[101] Guerrand, *Brève Histoire*, p.111.
[102] *La Femme dans la Vie Sociale*, 142 (November 1941), p.5.
[103] *Vaillance*, undated, 1943, taken from French Press and Information Service, Committee of National Liberation, *French Women in the War*, April 1944.
[104] APP, BA 1952, 79.501-2726-2, 3 July 1941.

to the home.[105] The PSF medical centre on Rue Clairault also provided free medical care to those in need, there was a soup kitchen in Neuilly and other drop-in centres and aid posts available to the public.[106] The ADP was conscious of its bounds of operability and apolitical activism was stressed in a report on its activities:

> 'Officiellement les ADP ne doivent pas faire de politique et il faut dire bien haut que cette association est entièrement indépendante du PSF. Elle garde toute son autonomie et sa liberté est à la disposition des Pouvoirs Publics.'[107]

Recent research by historians such as Kevin Passmore has pointed to the agency and activity of the extreme right's women's sections.[108] The ADP - whilst stressing its apolitical nature - was also stressing its autonomy from the PSF hierarchy, thereby articulating a paradoxical position with regards to women's agency through social activism within political bodies.

The practical impetus behind social action should not be lost, however. 'Ce fut une plasticité aux besoins du moment, souvent angoissante', remembered one social worker, thus suggesting that women participated regardless of the regime's ideological imperatives.[109] A number of women were recruited without qualifications to meet immediate welfare needs and despite the *ad hoc* and sometimes temporary nature of their actions, such women displayed initiative and responsibility in adapting to evolving circumstances. Compassion and willingness to aid the distressed were paramount for many women, above any confessional or political affiliation. For social workers such as Eve Baudouin, whose social action was predicated on religious and professional lines, the current situation was only temporary. In her publication on *Le Service Social*, she evoked social work as a mission that would cease once a certain 'vision' of society had been reached.[110] Indeed the language of mission resounded throughout the UFCS' publications in 1941-2. The

---

[105] Ibid.
[106] APP, DB 645, Parti Social Français, 'Le PSF dans la France en guerre'.
[107] Ibid.
[108] See, for example, Kevin Passmore (ed.), *Women, gender and fascism in Europe, 1919-45* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003) and Kevin Passmore, 'Femininity and the Right: from moral order to moral order', *Modern and Contemporary France*, 8, 1 (2000), pp.55-69.
[109] Knibiehler, *Nous, les assistantes sociales*, p.213. The social workers interviewed by Knibiehler were referred to only by their initials and date of birth, in order to protect their anonymity. This quotation comes from the testimony of AM, born in 1913.
[110] Baudouin, *Service Social ou Assistance?*, p.84.

preventative nature of social welfare work, not just immediate palliative care, was the means through which women could participate in the creation of an idealised society in which poverty and alcoholism, for example, would no longer exist. Social welfare was therefore an engagement on the practical level, to meet need, as well as an ideological imperative, serving God and nation: 'Leur tâche à la fois comme une mission et comme une conquête. Servir, c'est aussi s'accomplir!'[111]

Naturally, Catholics had much to approve in the regime's new emphasis on morality, hierarchy and devotion to the family. The gendered division of society meant renewed vigour and attention to the buzzwords of national health - family, morality, education. Women could conceive of themselves as guides and tutors. The pertinent symbol of the *mère-éducatrice* was being expressed in a different, but related way, linked to their innate social and civic responsibilities and abilities in welfare, education and health. For example, the women's 'leadership' school, Ecole Nationale des Cadres, gave women theoretical and practical training for employment in education and welfare.[112] 'La mère est économe et ménagère, veillant sur les santés, elle est avant tout conseillère et éducatrice.'[113] The predominant use of the *mère-éducatrice* in interwar publications had evolved into the idea of *mère-conseillère*, reflecting women's contemporary experiences in guiding others through such troubled times. Duty to the family was in effect duty to the nation. Catholic women carried out this responsibility privately, within the confines of the domestic sphere, and publicly, in municipal activities in the areas of childcare, education and welfare. The *mère-conseillère* image can therefore be applied to women's most public articulation of their social and civic responsibilities, that of municipal office, which will be discussed shortly.

Education was in fact a critical area for women to serve the regime and was considered to be a natural extension of their social abilities. As Pollard commented, education was redesigned 'to make men of the boys and mothers of girls'.[114] From March 1942 housekeeping lessons were made mandatory for girls (*enseignement ménager*), alongside *enseignement démographique*, clear examples of what Eck and others have highlighted as the gender-defined duties

---

[111] Knibiehler, *Nous, les assistantes sociales*, p.374.
[112] Eck, 'French Women under Vichy', pp.202-5.
[113] *La Femme dans la Vie Sociale*, 141 (September-October 1941), p.3.
[114] Pollard, *Mobilising Gender*, p. 97.

conferred upon women by citizenship.[115] In Cécile Jeglot's series of educational books on *La Jeune Fille,* the repetitive vocabulary of *devoir* reminded young girls of their duty towards their country:

> 'Devoir social ... respect des siens, présence, support, qui entraîne tous les autres devoirs, la jeune fille aide donc la famille ... elle est à sa place sociale.'[116]

Linda Clark has discussed the currency of *servir* within education during the interwar period to convey respectability and patriotic obligation, which under Vichy was used as meaning unequivocal obedience to Pétain and the government.[117] The sense given is one of hierarchy, of a young girl knowing her place and acting accordingly, particularly with regards to ensuring the continuity of the nation through maternity. Young women were also addressed as guides, with responsibility for forming souls - a duty that was clearly religious in character:

> 'Présence sociale et chrétienne de par sa ligne continue du devoir, tout au service de la race, de la patrie, de la société, de l'éternité pour lesquelles elle formera des hommes et des âmes.'[118]

Childbirth was presented to young girls as their national and racial duty, for the purity and sanctity of the nation. The language was infused with the presentation of a specifically French Catholic ethnicity, authentically and therein legitimately represented by the *passé lointain* (as represented by Vichy) rather than the *passé proche* of the tainted, secular Third Republic.[119]

Examining the salience of ethnicity as a marker of Catholic women's identity, as well as their religion, thereby further develops our understanding of women's social activism. Anthony Smith has written that the strength and solidarity of an ethnic culture is often bound to an exclusivity that rejects outside influence. Resentment of ethnic competition in social facilities or the economy can therefore generate a perceived need for programmes of 'cultural

---

[115] Eck, 'French Women under Vichy', p.204. See also Pollard, *Mobilising Gender*, p.80 and p.85.
[116] Cécile Jeglot, *La Jeune Fille et la Famille* (Paris: Editions Spes, 1942), p.26. Her series of *La Jeune Fille* books began publication in the interwar years.
[117] Linda L. Clark, *Schooling the Daughters of Marianne. Textbooks and the Socialisation of Girls in Modern French Primary Schools* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984), p.136.
[118] Jeglot, *La Jeune Fille*, p.34.
[119] Michèle Bordeaux, 'Femmes hors d'Etat Français, 1940-44. "La guerre est à l'homme ce que la maternité est à la femme?"', in Rita Thalmann (ed.), *Femmes et Fascismes* (Paris: Tierce, 1986), pp.135-155 (p.136).

purification and national regeneration'.[120] The traditional past to which Vichy appealed was one of common cultural (language, customs) and ethnic (racial, Catholic) descent, with Church, army and elites its legitimating authorities. It was an appeal to *les Français de souche* in which the indigenous population was linked through a shared heritage, as well as through its faith. In many ways, Vichy's promotion of ethnic identity drew upon the intellectual nationalism of the Action Française.[121] So, in effect, Vichy's imagined connection with the *pays réel* through ruralism and Catholicism was both politically expedient and a means of shoring up ethnic solidarity. For du Fresnes, her religion was 'un instrument de reconstruction', an inclusive force, illustrated too by the wide parameters of recipients assisted by Delbrêl, irrespective of cultural, political or religious differences. For other individuals, like the women of the ADP, Catholicism was exclusive and their actions operated to provide welfare only to those designated 'worthy' to receive it.[122] Vesna Drapac has highlighted that the parochial *ligeuses* of the LFACF offered information and aid through their Service d'Entraide to all, irrespective of membership: its four branches concentrated on knitting, hospital visits, home visits and youth.[123] In January 1942, LFACF had six Service d'Entraide delegates; a year later there were 84.[124] Hence Drapac argues for a pragmatic realism on behalf of such institutions although re-Christianisation was undeniably the pivotal factor in their action.[125]

Catholicism and ethnicity as binding forces for women's social action can therefore be open to interpretation, according to each individual's

---

[120] Anthony D. Smith, 'Culture, Community and Territory: The Politics of Ethnicity and Nationalism, *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-), Ethnicity and International Relations*, 72, 3 (July 1996), pp. 445-458 (pp.456-7).

[121] For further details on the Action Française, see Stephen Wilson, 'History and Traditionalism: Maurras and the Action Française', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 29, 3 (July-September 1968), pp. 365-380 and Eugen Weber, *Action Française: Royalism and Reaction in Twentieth-Century France* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1962).

[122] Du Fresnes, *De l'Enfer*, p.105.

[123] Vesna Drapac, *War and Religion. Catholics in the Churches of Occupied Paris* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1998), pp.172-3. The Service d'Entraide had an office hour, three days a week. LFACF also offered a Service d'Education Familiale and Service d'Information Religieuse et Liturgique. Drapac points to Action Catholique Indépendante Féminine (ACIF) also offering parish welfare.

[124] Ibid., p.172, January 1943 report on LFACF in Paris.

[125] Drapac argues against a 'culpable Pétainism or a disabling *mea culpa*'. Ibid., p.177.

conception of their own spirituality and sense of Christian duty. The repetition of 'notre' in Pétainist works such as the journal *Vaillance*, with its women's column 'Entre nous, femmes' and the publication *Françaises, que ferons-nous?* illustrates the importance that Vichy placed on womanhood displaying solidarity and fortitude, which in turn would regenerate moral and social order. Pétain was the authoritative figurehead of a gendered project that reminded women: 'Pour une France plus belle ... je serai... Solide - Joyeuse - Fidèle.'[126] Paradoxically, while Vichy considered women 'apolitical', its propaganda targeted them directly as a political constituency. Thus, as suggested by the sub-title in Pollard's work, mobilising gender was central to the success of a social, political and economic programme to reorder society after the chaos of 1939-40 and was therefore part and parcel of a wider project to shore up legitimacy for the new regime. The energies with which Vichy directed this maternalist campaign were such that Francine Muel-Dreyfus has commented in her study of *L'éternel féminin* that it was 'as if an electoral campaign'.[127] Cécile de Corlieu, however, was conscious of the 'use' to which maternity was put. In a subsequent conference speech about her wartime experiences, she stated that maternity should never be unleashed in defence or attack, but in the service of life.[128]

The mobilisation of women, alongside that of the peasantry, was key to Vichy's projection of an authentic, rooted Frenchness - through the family, home and land - that would secure its political legitimacy. Muel-Dreyfus has explored the connection between gender and the peasantry in the associations drawn between maternity and harvest in rhetoric that lauded the peasantry as the true embodiment of authentic France.[129] This sense of tradition and belonging was suggestive of an ethnic collectivity to which Catholic women were inherently bound. In fact, Vichyite publications further reinforced the idea that rootedness related to an exclusive, ethnic identity. The rural social worker Paule-Marie Weyd, who wrote a number of works on welfare in the countryside, considered: 'La Terre, la Famille et les Paysans, voilà les artisans de notre

---

[126] *Françaises, Que ferons-nous?* (Cher: St-Amand, 1943), p.37.
[127] Francine Muel-Dreyfus, *Vichy and the Eternal Feminine. A Contribution to a Political Sociology of Gender* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2001), p.107.
[128] BMD, Fonds Cécile De Corlieu, Correspondance de 1932 à 1973, *Déclaration de Mme Cécile de Corlieu Compeyrot, déléguée Française au Congrès Mondial des Mères* (Lausanne: July 1955), pp.1-3 (p.2).
[129] See Muel-Dreyfus, *Vichy and the Eternal Feminine*, 'Writers of the Defeat in Search of Unity'.

relèvement, de notre reconstruction nationale.'[130] Reconstruction was a keyword of the *Révolution Nationale* programme in which traditional values and morality were to regenerate France. The language of reconstruction, however, could also be used to articulate a sense of social progress. For example, the UFCS wrote that women could participate in the project, notably through their social function in the traditional roles of mother, teacher and social worker:

> 'Ce sont les courageuses de chaque heure - mères, éducatrices, travailleuses sociales - qui soutiennent et consolident de leurs bras de femmes, les murailles de l'édifice français en attendant les grandes reconstructions.'[131]

Here, the language used to emphasise women's conventional aptitude - compassionate, consoling - was linked with the language of reconstruction. Women were conscious, within this juxtaposition of tradition with modernity, to assert the progressive nature of their actions.

Pushing the political boundaries of social activism

The aforementioned balancing of the modern and traditional can also be seen in women's articulation of the political and social. The following section will comment briefly on the difficult conditions engendered on a domestic level by war and Occupation and the ways in which women offered a political commentary through social action. It will then move on from the domestic and social into an exploration of the controversial nature of women and work. Food and material shortages made daily life exceedingly hard, added to that curfews, blackouts, repressive legislation and reprisals, a pervasive atmosphere of suspicion and fear, alongside the absence of some 1.6 million men taken as POWs to the camps of the Reich and an additional 600-700,000 men forcibly requisitioned for labour.[132] French women found themselves at the forefront of a new Occupation phenomenon in which 'making do' was paramount. Système D, as it was known, represented another - principally female - network of exchange, outside the control of the authorities. Commonly a euphemism for black market dealings, which aroused the suspicion and hostility of the

---

[130] Paule-Marie Weyd, *La vie Paysanne Féminine* (Angers: Documentation Rurale et Artisanale, L'école superieure d'agriculture et de viticulture d'Angers, 1941), p.107.
[131] *La Femme dans la Vie Sociale*, 141 (September-October 1941), p.2.
[132] The forcible requisitioning of labour through the rélève scheme was followed by the Service du Travail Obligatoire (STO) in February 1943; see Jackson, *The Dark Years*, p.228.

conservative and radical right, the authorities' failure to provide for basic needs forced women to forge their own, community-based politics.

Practical information was therefore of inestimable worth during this period. Women needed to know what was happening at the grass-roots, as well as, official level, with press often concentrating on local issues to ensure the widest possible readership and politicisation. The women's press therefore functioned as one such form of social action in generating a network for support and advice.[133] Confessional and Pétainist, *La Femme dans la Vie Sociale* provided its readers with the practical information needed to get by. The page 'A l'Officiel' detailed all the current legislation and regulations affecting women, alongside articles on rationing, education and working conditions. Faith and spirituality would assist women in their daily struggle:

> 'N'y-a-t-il pas d'héroïsme dans l'acceptation des privations et des peines qui supportent chaque jour tant de femmes françaises pour nourrir les enfants, envoyer des colis à leurs prisonniers et préserver la dignité de leur foyer?'[134]

Operating from a different viewpoint, the feminist journalist and novelist Raymonde Machard's *Journal de la Femme* was closed down by the Vichy authorities in May 1941 as an 'obstacle to the National Revolution'. In defiance, she continued the publication from Auvergne, despite the official prohibition, calling her activities 'mon action d'Entr'aide féminine'.[135] Machard noted that the journal received thousands of letters from women, particularly mothers, seeking advice on social security and support; she also championed the cause of single mothers.[136]

While publications adhered in theory to apolitical principles, the political reality of the content often differed. For example, the article 'En face de quelques réalités' compared prices in Marseilles in October 1936 and October 1943. The table was followed by a more detailed analysis of costs for an average family, considering wages, bills, food, social services and so on.[137] A political commentary was implicit in the publication of the figures alone and

---

[133] For a bibliographical listing of the sanctioned press, see Donna Evleth, *The Authorized Press in Vichy and German-Occupied France, 1940-1944. A Bibliography* (Westport and London: Greenwood Press, 1999).
[134] *La Femme dans la Vie Sociale*, 141 (September-October 1941), p.2.
[135] Machard, *Les Françaises*, p.190.
[136] Ibid., p.197.
[137] *La Femme dans la Vie Sociale*, 165 (January 1944), p.7. To give but two examples: a kilo of butter had risen from 21,000 to 82,000 French francs, a kilo of soap from 2,10 to 27,90 French francs.

articulated through women's - supposedly apolitical - concerns centred on the home and family. The UFCS also published a number of articles on the importance of the family budget, widow's financial rights, involvement in local activities, committees to control prices.[138] Chapter Four will focus on the ways in which domestic, material concerns were specifically used by resistance groups to generate popular protest: Vichy's rhetorical positioning of women in the domestic sphere therefore did not achieve their de-politicisation.

Vichy's failure to secure basic, material provisions for its population exposed the rhetorical and practical weaknesses of its gender policy. Legislation regarding women in the workplace publicly exposed this gaping hole between ideological pronouncement and everyday reality. Dated 11 October 1940, the law suspended the right of married women to work in the public sector, but it was repealed on 12 September 1942 - an economy near-crippled by occupation costs had need of female labour and Vichy later sanctioned the employment of single women aged 21-35 years.[139] Eck notes that by June 1944, some 44,800 French women were working in the Reich.[140] The Catholic Church was active in seeking to ameliorate conditions for women workers and ensure a safe, moral environment; the Aumônier repatriated pregnant women, for example. A report dating from 1943 certified that three young Catholic women from the Aumônérie were engaged as workers alongside other women in German factories and workplaces, without being distinguished from them.[141] Despite the stigma attached to female employment in the Reich, the Church -

---

[138] Sarah Fishman's work on the POW wives' networks demonstrates the extent to which ideology failed to match reality for the everyday lives of women affected by war and Occupation. See Sarah Fishman, *We Will Wait. Wives of French Prisoners of War, 1940-1945* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1991).

[139] Hanna Diamond, *Women and the Second World War in France, 1939-48: Choices and Constraints* (Harlow: Longman, 1999), p.32. As demonstrated in Linda Clark's study of hiring and firings in the civil service, Vichy was forced to rescind ideological legislation on the basis of practicality, using the language 'suspended'. See Linda L. Clark, 'Higher-Ranking Women Civil Servants and the Vichy Regime: Firings, Hirings, Collaboration and Resistance,' *French History*, 13, 3 (1999), pp.332-359 (pp.348-9). Legislation stated that men aged 18-50 years and single women aged 21-35 years would legally be required to 'serve the nation' if asked.

[140] Eck, 'French Women under Vichy', p.211. See also Pieter Lagrou, *The Legacy of Nazi Occupation. Patriotic Memory and National Recovery in Western Europe, 1945-1965* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp.153-5 on French female labourers in the Reich and subsequent repatriation issues.

[141] AN, F9 3283, report by Aumônérie Catholique des Prisonniers de Guerre.

controversially - sought to provide care for French women in this way, to ease what it deemed as moral and physical suffering.

Vichy meanwhile attempted to paper over the moral and rhetorical dilemma in which it had placed itself over women's employment, resurrecting the jaded stereotypes of selfish womanhood rejecting maternity and stigmatising the emancipatory promise of feminism as false: '[ce] qui avait pu sembler à des esprits superficiels un triomphe de féminisme, est en realité un dur asservissement.'[142] The persistent identification of public femininity as overtly aggressive and somehow unfeminine was encapsulated in this comment by Marc le Guillerme:

> 'Elles se gardent à merveille du déplorable "féminisme" complètement démodé. Surtout, n'allez pas vous représenter mesdames les Conseillères Municipales avec les cheveux tondus ... une démarche de troupier. Elles sont trop fines pour sacrifier les avantages d'une coquetterie de bon aloi, ce charme des Françaises ... et je ne jurerais pas qu'elles renoncent à en user au Conseil pour obtenir l'acceptation de leurs projets.'[143]

Women in public service, le Guillerme maintained, could still be charming and would unfairly use their femininity to good advantage. The UFCS, in its campaign, therefore had to negotiate between condescension and prejudice towards the use of femininity and women's employment being stigmatised as the sacrifice of something innately feminine. It thereby attempted to forge a middle ground between the ideal *femme au foyer* and the practical, recognising that many women were forced to work out of financial necessity. This was to be achieved through the promotion of maternity and campaigns to restore *la mère au foyer*:

> 'Ce qui se rend si douloureuses c'est la situation des mères arrachées à leur foyer par l'insuffisance des ressources, c'est le sentiment d'une impuissance à remplir leur mission essentielle.'[144]

Such comments clearly present the question of women's employment as one of circumstance rather than choice in placing a mother as most naturally within the home. Childless women in the workforce were not subject to the same social concern and again, those professions considered female by nature - the *mère-*

---

[142] *Françaises, que ferons vous?*, p.27.
[143] Le Guillerme, *Femmes de Devoir*, p.158.
[144] *La Femme dans la Vie Sociale*, 160 (June 1943), pp.8-9. In addition, the article lists the comparative budgets of the *mère au foyer* and the *mère au travail*.

éducatrice and *mère-conseillère* of teaching and social welfare - were exalted, not questioned.

During the Occupation, the UFCS was a leading promoter of a development that took women - married, single and mothers - directly into the public workplace, that of the municipal council. Under Vichy, the commune was the smallest administrative unit of state. Presented as the family and therein nation writ large, who better than women, who knew the localities best, to officiate in the municipality.[145] Female town councillors fulfilled their national duty by serving on committees related to the 'feminine' pursuits of education, health, hygiene and welfare. As Chapter One discussed, the position had its roots in the interwar period, when certain women had been appointed, rather than elected, to municipal office, notably by the PCF. Again the UFCS was occupying a contradictory middle ground in which it articulated its belief in the inherent capability of women in new roles of responsibility and authority, pushing for the scope of women's public activism to be enlarged while reconfirming 'natural' boundaries. The UFCS adopted a reassuring tone in its campaign, hoping to assuage potential social anxiety over employment and mindful of the cultural backlash that occurred against women employed during the First World War in male positions.[146]

The prominence of so many UFCS members on municipal councils suggests that their journal's title, *La Femme dans la Vie Sociale*, was misleading: in 1942, 115 members were councillors.[147] Many of the women who had been active in interwar Catholic women's movements were nominated to municipal seats, including Marguerite Bernard of the LFACF in Cannes and the UFCS' Madeleine Hardouin in the 1st arrondissement in Paris. Both women were experienced in social welfare issues: Bernard had been an administrator of the local welfare office since 1929 and also served as Vice President and Treasurer of l'Œuvre Maternelle; Hardouin was the well-respected Service

---

[145] Judith Surkis, with reference to the pronatalist campaign for educational reform in which 'woman' functioned as shorthand for 'family', refers to this type of thinking as metonymic. See Judith Surkis, *Sexing the Citizen. Morality and Masculinity in France, 1870-1920* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2006), p.41.

[146] For a detailed discussion of the way in which women experienced such a backlash in the interwar period, see Mary Louise Roberts, *Civilization Without Sexes. Reconstructing Gender in Postwar France, 1917-1927* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1994) and Siân Reynolds, *France Between the Wars. Gender and Politics* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996).

[147] Muel-Dreyfus, *Vichy and the Eternal Feminine*, p.167.

Social and CCRP worker.[148] UFCS members Mlle de Miribel from the Centre d'œuvres de la Croix Saint-Simon in the 20th arrondissement and Jean Corpet from the Union des Patronages de Jeunes Filles, which specialised in providing sports opportunities, were also appointed to the Conseil Général de la Seine alongside Hardouin.[149] Confessional identity was not the only factor in local government, as social worker LJ commented, but it was an implicit part of the engagement. It was both LJ's experience as a Confédération Française des Travailleurs Chrétiens (CFTC) militant during the Popular Front period and her career that were responsible for her appointment to the local municipal council in February 1941.[150] Suggestions were raised that women who had been overtly political in their pre-war work, however, could not undertake this position successfully and the neutrality of the UFCS was heralded as a validation of its activity in this field.[151]

A UFCS pamphlet on municipal office reminded its readers that: 'La femme peut jouer dans la municipalité un rôle semblable à celui qu'elle joue à son foyer; elle peut apporter des suggestions du titre de remplaçantes du chef de famille absent ou décédé.'[152] The role stressed was a familial rather than political one, borne of necessity in the absence of the male head of family and the tone taken was reassuring. The traditional structure of the family was not being breached by women taking on new responsibilities - they were acting as wives and mothers, not as 'political' individuals, but as temporary replacements only. The task at hand was therefore downplayed as 'un programme non politique' but 'pratique...réaliste... délicatesse de conscience'.[153] Councillors also offered guidance on family matters, local customs, morality and practicalities such as clothing or rationing, for example, areas all perfectly suited to women's abilities:

> 'Leur présence apportera aussi quelque chose de plus accueillant "à la maison commune" dont leur bonne grâce féminine, inspirée d'une cordiale charité, parera à la obligatoire rigueur administrative.'[154]

---

[148] Bard, *Les Filles de Marianne*, p.445.
[149] *La Femme dans la Vie Sociale*, 145 (February 1942), p.1, referring to 18 December 1941 entry in *Journel Officiel* that announced the women's appointment.
[150] Knibiehler, *Nous, les assistantes sociales*, pp.28-30.
[151] Le Guillerme, *Femmes de Devoir*, p.188.
[152] UFCS, *La Vie Municipale Française et la Femme* (Paris: UFCS, 1945), p.9. This pamphlet was originally published by the UFCS in 1942.
[153] *La Femme dans la Vie Sociale*, 139 (June 1941), p.11.
[154] Ibid.

Women were placed in visible, public office in far greater numbers than ever before. The UFCS' dual-pronged strategy therefore minimised any potential negative publicity by emphasising the complementarity of male and female roles. The UFCS weaved a successful path between Vichy's rhetorical admonitions about *la femme au foyer* and the practical extent to which women were a key part of state activities and municipal politics. Women's 'choices and constraints' therefore epitomised the contradictory pressures of the period. Cécile de Corlieu later reflected:

> 'Nul doute que Madame Cécile Brunshwicg, ancienne sous-secrétaire d'Etat du Front Populaire, n'ait approuvé, en française et en féministe, l'engagement de Mlle Hardouin pour sauver ... le peu qu'elle pouvait.'[155]

De Corlieu believed that the role of municipal councillor reflected, for women, their consciousness of both national duty and feminist action. She also indicated the part played by the Church, noting that her Jesuit mentor Père Desbuqouis was influential in appointments made during the war.[156]

While Catholic women shared many of the cultural, spiritual and familialist approaches of Vichy, the terms of engagement remained complex. War-time experiences remained individual and personal, whether a woman ascribed to a particular religious or political opinion, therefore it is important to avoid a reductionist approach that ties women into one communal identity. Catholic women were not necessarily all placid conformists to Vichy and patriarchal authority and there are evident limits to the extent to which religiosity can define individual, political beliefs. A Catholic woman, from an estate in Languedoc, wrote to the French commentator at the BBC thus in September 1940, declaring that she was 'of the Right', a nationalist and even Royalist-leaning landowner, who had supported Franco in Spain:

> 'Perhaps we "deserved" defeat (between parenthesis, we are worn out with those perpetual *mea culpas* that confessors and benevolent censors keep beating on our breasts), but we did not deserve having men calling themselves Frenchmen ... deliver us over like this... I condemn without recourse and disown with horror the men of the right who surrendered and dishonoured us.'[157]

---

[155] De Corlieu, *Carnets*, p.125.
[156] Ibid., p.125.
[157] Eva Curie et al (eds.) *They Speak for a Nation. Letters from France* (New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1941), p.3.

In a militant letter to the editor of *Paris-Soir* warning of retribution at war's end, a group of Catholic women criticised the paper's anti-Semitic tone, which would unduly influence youth, identifying themselves as the true representatives of the country:

> 'Quelques femmes françaises catholiques, des vrais françaises non pas des traités comme vous, des françaises de la République et non de l'état français qui sont fières d'avoir les amis juifs...'[158]

Madeleine du Fresnes met with Xavier Vallat, head of the Commissariat Générale aux Questions Juives (CGQJ) to register her protest at the anti-Jewish statues. She wrote to Radiodiffusion Française, to M le Chateaubriant and to Vichy - to no avail.[159] Women could therefore be of the right and reject Pétainism and collaboration, just as others could consider themselves religious and social conservatives but reject anti-Semitism outright. The language used in these passages was evocative of the anger and frustration felt by some conservative, Catholic women that the authorities did not represent true France. Although considered by Vichy to be apolitical, *femmes au foyer*, the political intent and feeling of these letters demonstrate the politicised nature of conservative womanhood.

The concept of 'les françaises au service de la nation' was therefore dependant upon an individual's self-perception of national legitimacy. The emotive, bitter representation of the nature of occupation, with its polarised opposites of collaboration and resistance, suggests that within human behaviour there is only black and white. The reality was more complicated and identity too complexly structured to be so reduced. Cécile de Corlieu was frank in her admission that she had not provided Georges Bidault with a residence when he had asked her because he was the head of a Resistance movement, whereas she had offered support to other friends in need.[160] She felt no pressure, looking back on the war years, to have to legitimate her actions vis-à-vis the Resistance - in other words she openly rejected a resistance identity as the only valid and authentic, honourable past.

A recent H-France discussion in the light of the publication of T.R. Christofferson's work has highlighted that it is dangerous essentialism to equate

---

[158] CDJC, Fonds IEQJ, XID-232, letter to M.André Chaumet at *Paris-Soir*, dated 16 September 1941.
[159] Du Fresnes, *De l'Enfer*, pp.43-44.
[160] De Corlieu comments that a household of German women serving with the Wehrmacht were stationed in a neighbouring home, which complicated matters further; de Corlieu, *Carnets*, p.119.

Protestant with resistance and Catholic with conformity during these years. Christofferson, among others, believes that the historiography of the Catholic resistance has been misrepresented, in part due to the political influence of the Protestant Henri Frenay. He points to men such as Bidault and the circle around the journal *Esprit* as offering a significant Christian resistance that existing research has not adequately revealed, overshadowed by a predominantly Communist focus.[161] Ninette Jucker, commenting on the women who aided and abetted Allied agents in occupied France, referred to 'another sisterhood whose sympathy for the Allies could ... be relied on' - the religious orders of Paris, who were staunchly anti-German and actively sought to hide resisters and escapees when they could.[162] Her use of 'sisterhood' was suggestive of the network of women across denominational and ethnic groupings who were actively engaged in resistance works. Research by historians such as Renée Bedarida therefore offers a gendered approach that creates a more nuanced understanding, not only of Christian resistance but of popular spirituality and the experiences of the laity, not just the male hierarchy.[163] Du Fresnes refused to label her actions as resistance in the 'modern sense of the word' as she would not engage in anything that could cause bloodshed. Instead, she recalled - using the language of mission - that her action was one of protection and defence.[164] Arrested for helping Yvonne Netter to escape Pithiviers, she was tortured. Asked if she was ready to die for

---

[161] See the review of Thomas R. Christofferson with Michael S. Christofferson, *France during World War II: From Defeat to Liberation* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2006) by Nicole Dombrowski Risser, *H-France Review*, 74, 7 (June 2007), http://h-france.net/vol7reviews/risser3.html. Accessed 6 April 2008. For an article on Protestant women during the 1940s, see Patrick Cabanel, 'Les femmes protestantes dans la France des années 1940: à la recherche d'une spécificité', in Jacques Fijalkow (ed.), *Les femmes dans les années quarante. Juives et non-Juives, souffrances et résistance* (Paris: Les Editions de Paris, 2004), pp.137-156.

[162] Jucker, *Curfew in Paris*, p.89. For further information on religious resistance and collaboration, see Charles Molette, *Prêtres, religieux et religieuses dans la résistance au Nazism (1940-1945)* (Paris: Fayard, 1995) and Bertram Gordon, *Collaborationism in France during the Second World War* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1980).

[163] See Renée Bedarida, *Les Catholiques dans la guerre, 1939-1945: Entre Vichy et la Résistance* (Paris: Hachette Littératures, 1998), for example, for the importance of Catholic youth and labour movements to resistance. Also, Hellman, 'Vichy Background', pp.1137-8 points to the doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ, which was growing in influence from the latter 1930s, and Pius XII's papal encyclical *Mystici Corporos Christi* of June 1943 as forcing a difficult choice for many Catholics: Hitler's anti-Communism or the Protestant, Anglo-Saxon, Jewish and Communist Resistance.

[164] Du Fresnes, *De l'Enfer*, p.27.

an ideal, du Fresnes responded: 'pas pour un idéal, pour ma foi.'[165] She believed that her salvation lay in saving a Jew and in preventing Netter's deportation she believed 'ma mission était achevée.'[166] Du Fresnes' concept of duty remained paramount and was to that of her faith, not the pronouncements of the government.

For many women like du Fresnes, even if their spirituality did not lead them to such action, it was an increasingly important support at a time of such deprivation and hardship. The death of her only child on the battlefield in June 1940 prompted Marcelle Kraemer-Bach to question and re-evaluate her relationship to her Jewish ancestry, her place in the world and her religious convictions. She had converted to Catholicism in December 1939.[167] The number of conversions to Catholicism in the face of anti-Semitic persecution will be discussed in Chapter Five as evidence of a coping and survival mechanism in the face of possible arrest and deportation. The proliferation of fake baptism certificates, too, was a related response. However, the war contextualised for some women a very real and profound spiritual transformation. Confessional identity was directly responsible for numerous women's actions in the social sphere to alleviate the suffering caused by Vichy - and Nazi - repressive policies. For example, Marie-Rose Gineste worked in the diocesan office for social affairs alongside other Catholic organisations that worked to assist refugees (predominantly Jews) under Bishop Théas of Montauban, whose letter of protest against Vichy's anti-Semitic measures she helped to distribute in the locality on her bicycle. She continued these *ad hoc* acts of resistance by delivering *Témoignage Chrétien* journals to each Church in the diocese, alongside working in the office to provide Jews with false identification and ration papers.[168] Gineste's social welfare work was to continue after the war with her role as a social security administrator and municipal councillor. Personal spirituality was of utmost importance to many an individual's personal engagement during the war. As the tables turned irrevocably against Vichy, defeat and liberation appeared close at hand. The women of the UFCS

---

[165] Ibid., p.128. Du Fresnes wrote that she felt great love for the Communists who placed their ideals above even their own lives; see p.106.
[166] Ibid., p.74.
[167] Kraemer-Bach, *La Longue Route*, p.270.
[168] Phayer and Fleischner, *Cries in the Night*, pp.88-91. The Jesuit priest Pierre Chaillet founded the movement and its newspaper *Cahiers du Témoignage Chrétien.* He was also influential in the 1940 founding of Amitié Chrétienne, which was an ecumenical organisation providing underground assistance to the Jews.

continued to urge their members to fulfil their spiritual duty in what was an uncertain future. Sacrifice, justice and charity were key to women's responsibilities and actions:

> 'Notre responsabilité de femmes Catholiques est grande: elle s'accroit du fait des circonstances actuelles. Tout péché d'omission serait pour nous une désertion... à nous de faire croitre les semences de justice et de charité qui sont le fruit de son sacrifice... Travaillons à faire.'[169]

'Travaillons à faire' reflects the attitude of a vast array of French women engaged in the 'service of the nation', a concept that demonstrated their own, unique perceptions of national legitimacy, spiritual affiliation, humanitarianism, social justice and duty. Conscious of the divisive potential of political and religious beliefs, women sought to present a united front in the outbreak to war through an appeal to female solidarity. Women's mobilisation of social resources and training offered them the chance to participate, and be recognised, as devoted patriots. With defeat came the installation of a conservative, authoritarian regime that placed Catholic women at the forefront of its drive to position women *au foyer.* Vichy's ideological imperatives demanded that women remain dependant subjects, as wives, mothers and daughters to their family and hence to the nation: 'd'effacer toute marque d'autonomie des femmes et de les inscrire étroitement dans les liens de dépendance sociales, familiaux ou conjugaux.'[170] While social utility was predicated around familial, spousal and social commitments yet women achieved authoritative positions in their municipalities through the provision of welfare services and in administration.[171] Women's memoirs of the Vichy period therefore provide a more complicated, alternative perspective to the fixed discourse of the state, detailing the language with which women constructed their own experiences of social and political engagement, altered by the circumstances of war.

---

[169] *La Femme dans la Vie Sociale*, 171 (August-October 1944), p.2.
[170] Luc Capdevila and Fabrice Virgili, 'Guerre, femmes et nation en France (1939-1945), article inédit (2000), http://www.ihtp.cnrs.fr/spip.php?article511. Accessed 13 February 2008.
[171] See the commentary on women in local municipal administration in the Liberation period in Luc Capdevila, 'Les femmes en Bretagne au lendemain de l'occupation allemande: une libération inachevée,' *Mémoires de la Société d'Histoire et d'Archéologie de Bretagne*, LXXVII (1999), pp.363-383. Henri Rollet, *Andrée Butillard et le Féminisme Chrétien* (Paris: Spes, 1960), p.180, gives the figure that in 1947 there were 475,000 municipal councillors in total and 14,000 of these were women (a ratio of 1:32).

Marc le Guillerme wrote in praise of French women in 1942: 'La plupart des Femmes de Devoir, loin de rechercher les honneurs, réclament l'anonymat, chacune jugeant sa voisine plus méritante qu'elle-même.'[172] *Devoir* and *servir* were key concepts in the regime's articulation of a limited female agency in which the attributes of self-sacrifice and selflessness, hence anonymity, were implicit. This chapter demonstrates, however, that women's responses to 'serving the nation' were individual and manifold, predicated upon existing networks of friendship and family, political conviction and spiritual belief rather than government policy and prohibition. Women used the rhetoric of devotion and duty to take their responsibilities and activism from the private into the public sphere, throughout using maternalism as the basis of, and rationale for, their action. The following two chapters will continue this exploration of maternalist logic as a strategy to legitimate women's agency and examine how the Occupation affected Communist and Jewish women specifically, forcing their renegotiation of gender, political and ethnic identity, their self-perception as *femmes de devoir* and to whom, above all, that duty was owed.

[172] Le Guillerme, *Femmes de Devoir*, p.5.

Chapter Four: 'En agissant, elles ont pris conscience'. Anti-fascist and Communist women's clandestine social action during the Occupation.

Chapter Three explored how those women deemed to be 'in the service of the nation' negotiated their sense of ethnic, religious and gendered self through the specific context of defeat and Occupation. This chapter will address the dynamics of women's socio-political networks through an exploration of the motivations, actions and self-perception of women engaged in social action made clandestine by virtue of their exclusion from the national community as un-French - a process firmly underway before Vichy's demonisation of the JudeoBolshevik as its primary, most obdurate enemy.

Firstly, the chapter discusses the significance of women to a party forced underground and highlights the continuity of personnel between pre-war and wartime women's associations, primarily using memoirs written by members of the housewives' and anti-fascist committees of the underground PCF, as well as its clandestine women's press. Secondly, heightened by their experiences in providing aid to Spanish refugees and as welfare workers in the interwar period, numerous women participated in the creation of clandestine social services for the repressed, alongside those who found themselves involved circumstantially. The chapter explores how professionalism was an articulation of – and framework for – women's engagement in social activism. Despite evident limitations on operability, women were conscious of the need for volunteerism to be balanced by proper training. Thirdly, following on from previous discussions surrounding the mobilisation of women's support in the style of a *Union Sacrée*, the PCF consciously strove to forge women's solidarity along inclusive, rather than exclusive, socio-economic or political lines in which women were both the agents and objects. Actions often took the form of mobilising women around demonstrations against food supply and household issues. These housewives' demonstrations become a site through which to explore the pertinence of questions about femininity, political engagement and patriotism to social action, as well as signifying local frustration and dissatisfaction with the regime. Although not welfare per se, these actions were a means of heightening popular consciousness and social solidarity at the oppressive measures taken by an administration to the detriment of its people. Finally, the chapter will pay particular attention to the currency and application

of maternalist logic to rationalise and broaden the involvement of mothers and wives in an explicitly political resistance to the establishment. However, this rhetoric placed women in a paradoxical position in urging a very public, feminine politicisation according to gendered attributes tying women to the domestic. It was also one that highlighted the PCF's ambivalence to raising a distinct challenge to Vichy's gender politics. One could therefore question whether women activists were consciously defying the accepted norms of social behaviour and therein challenging Vichy gendered prescriptions, or whether maternalist ideals were so entrenched that the challenge was an unintentional one.

Tensions continued to exist beneath the surface of a politicised project to foment women's solidarity, notably Edith Thomas' caution over familialist rhetoric, contention surrounding a woman's 'appropriate' role in wartime and the rejection of feminism as a factor in anti-fascist action. The Occupation therefore forced anti-fascist and Communist women into a renegotiation of their political, social and gendered responsibilities and sensibilities, as predicated through the social sphere. Thus the chapter serves to challenge the *résistancialiste* assumptions and ambiguities of the immediate post-war period in which a unified memory of a nation in resistance was forged at the expense of separate, distinct chronologies and narratives. In so doing, the chapter uses Paula Schwartz's framework regarding the implicit significance of gender to women's political and social activism to underscore the distinctive nature of the female clandestine experience. The diversity of women's engagement in social action on behalf of the repressed is therefore reflected in an approach that looks at areas of consensus and tension within a collectivity.

Firstly it is important to consider the distinctive nature of the socio-political landscape for French Communists in 1940, the ways in which Party members and sympathisers came to be designated as implacable, internal enemies and how this generated additional responsibilities for women, in particular. Even before the inauguration of the new *Etat Français* at the spa town of Vichy in June that year, hardline, governmental anti-Bolshevism had been firmly established. *L'Humanité* and *Ce Soir* were closed down on 26 August 1939 following the signing of the Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact on 23 August, with Simone de Beauvoir noting the 'agonised anxiety' that

prevailed in Communist and sympathetic intellectual circles.[1] On 26 September 1939, Daladier's government dissolved the PCF thereby forcing party members immediately underground.[2] As Jeanette Vermeersch remarked with hostility in her memoirs: 'Daladier déclara la guerre à l'Allemagne fasciste en septembre, mais ce fut d'abord et avant tout une guerre contre... les communistes français.'[3] Regina Delacor has commented on the anti-Communist hysteria that prevailed in the autumn of 1939 and the pogrom atmosphere that this in part created, with violence particularly targeting the immigrant population, which as working class was therefore presumed to be Communist.[4] Robert Zaretsky, in his work on the Gard region, noted that a police report on PCF strength in the area - listed as some 25,000 Communists and 35,000 foreigners of all nationalities and tendencies - demonstrated how the process of 'othering' and the exclusion of Communists, alongside foreigners, freemasons and Jews, had already been adopted.[5] The Republican consensus of citizenship was proving one that fractured easily. Confusion and suspicion clouded notions of political and ethnic identity, with immigrants, Communists and freemasons considered particularly suspect. Fear, alongside hunger, was the single biggest collective phenomenon of the period, with propaganda and notions of espionage playing upon psychological reactions to the reality of modern warfare, particularly during the frustrating stagnancy of the phoney war.[6] Under Vichy, this idea of

---

[1] Simone de Beauvoir, *The Prime of Life* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1965), p.376.

[2] Jeanette Thorez-Vermeersch, *La Vie en Rouge. Mémoires* (Paris: Belfond, 1998), pp. 91-93; Vermeersch recorded that by mid-October 1939, 24 PCF deputies had been imprisoned and that over the following six months nearly 3,000 Communists were removed from their administrative positions, 1,500 judgements were pronounced and 620 syndicates dissolved.

[3] Ibid., p.93.

[4] Regina M. Delacor, 'From Potential Friends to Hostile Enemies: the Internment of 'Hostile Foreigners' in France at the Beginning of the Second World War', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 35, 3 (2000), pp.361-368 (p.361). Robert Gildea comments that the excesses of the purge in some areas revealed a Communist settling of scores, to exorcise the memory of 1939-41, see Robert Gildea, *France Since 1945* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), p.59.

[5] Robert Zaretsky, *Nimes at War. Religion, Politics, and Public Opinion in the Gard, 1938-1944* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania University State Press, 1995), p.41.

[6] Jean Marie Guillon, 'Talk which was not Idle: Rumours in Wartime France', Valerie Holman and Debra Kelly (eds.), *France At War in the Twentieth Century. Propaganda, Myth and Metaphor* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2000), pp.73-83 (p.79). See also Christian Delporte, 'The Image and Myth of the 'Fifth Column' during the Two World Wars' in the same edited collection, pp.50-64 (p.64).

'the enemy within' became a forceful tool in the hands of an administration desperate to unify the population behind the rhetoric of duty, service and nationhood. Jews, Communists and Freemasons were to be purged from the body politic and indeed from the national community as a whole. 13 August 1940 saw the dissolution of 'secret societies' and civil servants were forced to swear that they had not, and would not, belong to Masonic lodges. A further anti-Masonic law was promulgated on 20 August 1941 and lists of Freemasons were published.[7] Meanwhile the administrative machinery launched into a sustained campaign of expropriation, dislocation and persecution against the Jews. In this atmosphere of intensified repression and suspicion, John Sweets has remarked that Vichy's anti-Communism, 'the chief leitmotif of a desperate regime', forced many Communists into an underground struggle that they otherwise might not have espoused, or indeed not so quickly, commenting additionally that anti-Communism itself found more accomplices at a local level than was true of anti-Semitic measures.[8]

Communism, like anti-fascism, was an individual's ideological choice, one not decreed or imposed by birth or nationality, but one that was additionally reinforced and given renewed purpose by the very experience of repression and legislative measures designed to minimise and neutralise 'the Bolshevik menace'. As the non-Communist, anti-fascist resister Lucie Aubrac commented at the UFF-organised conference on women's resistance in 1975, 'L'engagement à des idées avant 1939 devint alors l'engagement des actes.'[9] This chapter will investigate the ways in which the unique circumstances of Occupation prompted women to social action that put into practice their pre-war political ideals and social convictions.

Sustaining Communist and anti-fascist action under Occupation

The dissolution of the PCF and subsequent move underground of its male adherents - those that had not already been mobilised or arrested - forced Communist women into a very specific, public position. They maintained

---

[7] Julian Jackson, *France. The Dark Years 1940-1944* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p.158.
[8] John F. Sweets, *Choices in Vichy France: The French under Nazi Occupation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp.109-110.
[9] *Les Femmes dans La Résistance* (à l'initiative de l'Union des Femmes Françaises) (Paris: Editions du Rocher, 1975), p.20. *Les Femmes dans la Résistance* was published under the auspices of the Union des Femmes Françaises (UFF) in 1975, in what was the United Nations' International Year of the Woman.

political contacts, moving information and materials between the cells, meanwhile keeping morale and the household running. The young Communist Cécile Romagon-Ouzoulias at first recorded public opinion and relayed it back to the underground Party leadership, in particular noting popular morale levels. She also took political propaganda to the army, posting clandestine copies of *L'Humanité* and the journal *Le Trait d'Union* with soldiers.[10] With men absent, the machinery of Communist social welfare did not simply stop turning. Women continued to run soup kitchens, provide refugee assistance, for example, particularly as repression intensified and numbers soared. In fact, this early resistance activity - resistance in the sense of keeping an underground movement running against the dictates of the authorities, not in the sense of an organised or armed resistance to remove the occupiers at this point - mirrors the way in which throughout the Occupation women from all political or economic shades engaged in actions that were linked to their home and household and to familial or personal relationships.[11] A recent study of popular protest in northern France has demonstrated the extent to which vertical networks between individuals, organisations and the authorities were destroyed during defeat and Occupation. However, horizontal networks were maintained and strengthened between families and friendships of like-minded individuals.[12] Social action - whether defined as Communist, anti-fascist, feminist or even opportunist in inspiration - was primarily predicated upon personal contacts. With the social fabric rupturing, it is unsurprising that such horizontal networks remained in place and, in effect, strengthened to protect the people at risk within – hence the thesis' central reconceptualisation of the political and broadening of the concept of social action.

---

[10] Cécile Ouzoulias-Romagon, *J'étais agent de liaison des FTPF* (Paris: Editions Messidor, 1988), p.55.

[11] Numerous historians of the Resistance point out that women took charge of nascent networks in the early period, for example, Marie-Madeleine Fourcade and the Alliance network. See Guylaine Guidez, *Femmes dans la Guerre, 1939-1945* (Paris: Collection Terres des Femmes, Perrin, 1989), p.169 and Marie-Madeline Fourcade, *Noah's Ark: the Secret Underground* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1974). However, as the Resistance became nationwide and institutionalised, women in leadership or military roles became exceptional; see Jackson's commentary, *The Dark Years*, pp.507-8.

[12] Lynne Taylor, *Between Resistance and Collaboration. Popular Protest in Northern France, 1940-45* (Basingstoke and London: Macmillan Press, 2000), pp.143-5. Hanna Diamond points out that everyday friendships and affiliations were often the catalyst for involvement in collaboration as well as resistance, see Hanna Diamond, *Women and the Second World War in France, 1939-48: Choices and Constraints* (Harlow: Longman, 1999), p.98.

The importance of women's networking and personal contacts to a largely masculine leadership and movement driven underground is evident, pointing to the continuity between pre-war and wartime existence, despite the sharp rupture in operating circumstances. At the outbreak of war, Communist women's groups were loosely divided into two main areas, excluding youth and the workplace: anti-fascism, as represented by the Comité Mondial des Femmes contre la Guerre et le Fascisme (CMF) and the neighbourhood groups of Amicales des Ménagères, which lobbied on community issues such as inflation and food prices. Urging women to adhere to both, Jacques Duclos and the Party leadership were conscious of the political capital to be made from PCF-led organisations that could group anti-fascists, refugees, socialists, Catholics (in other words, women of a diverse nature) together - a theme that runs throughout the chapter.[13] Forging a unified women's social movement against repression was thus to be achieved in two main ways: through anti-fascist solidarity and through the familialist-maternalist approach of the women's local committees.

Annie Fourcaut has referred to the PCF's need, after the 1935-6 electoral victories, for 'une politique d'aménagement de la région parisienne'.[14] Evidently the women's committees were a significant part of this process as the PCF moved into clandestinity. Dominique Loiseau has spoken of a *syndicalisme du quartier* in which politicised women strove to conciliate their familial and working lives, as working-class wives, housewives and mothers.[15] The Party thus welcomed and sanctioned the maternalist logic of sympathisers and activists. It was such groups, based in the localities and demonstrating solidarity across political, ethnic and religious lines that were to become the mainstay of clandestine Communist women's activism under Vichy through the Comités Populaires Féminins (CPF). These groupings can be considered a Communist version of the 1938-9 *Union Sacrée* movement, demonstrating women's commitment to the nation but rejecting Vichy as its legitimate representative. Notions of responsibility and duty were not derived from a

---

[13] See Jacques Duclos, *Pour l'union des Femmes de France* (Paris: Editions du Comité Populaire de Propagande, 1936) and Cilly Vassart, 'Il nous faut gagner les femmes', *Cahiers du Bolchevisme*, 2 (1936), pp.1103-1114.

[14] Annie Fourcaut, *Bobigny, Banlieue Rouge* (Paris: Les Editions Ouvrières et Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, 1986), p.196.

[15] Dominique Loiseau, 'Ménagères, organisées...autonomes?' http://palissy.humana.univ-nantes.fr/LABOS/FUN/TXT/menag.html. Accessed 11 March 2008. Paper given at Femmes de l'Université de Nantes workshop, 26 September 1997.

resolutely political standpoint, but instead from women's position in the localities.

While household and community issues were promoted within the CPFs - the subject of detailed discussion in the latter section of this chapter - political convictions remained foremost in the social actions of committed anti-fascists during Occupation predicated on behalf of the repressed and refugees, utilising pre-war contacts and experiences in the welfare field. The ideological convictions of female anti-fascists, as witnessed during the Spanish civil war of 1936-9, were tied to their social conscience in their awareness of injustice and repression which forged bonds between like-minded individuals across party lines. The intertwined nature of political and social injustice within women's anti-fascism was aptly demonstrated in the person of Berty Albrecht, the famed resistance heroine. Albrecht's resistance convictions sprang from her interwar anti-fascism, collecting funds to send ambulances to Negus during the Italian invasion of Abyssinia or for the newly arriving German and Spanish refugees, as well as being predicated on her professional status as a qualified social worker. Her son Frédéric paid testament to her *avant garde* interest in the social at the UFF conference in 1975 and questioned 'à quel point le social et la politique faisaient cause commune dans l'esprit de Berty Albrecht.'[16]

In her memoirs, Cécile Romagon-Ouzoulias paid testament to her mother, a non-Communist, dedicated anti-fascist and president of the local CMF committee in St. Julien. Romagon-Ouzoulias noted her mother's strength in continuing her political activism despite the arrest and subsequent execution of her husband.[17] The anti-fascist activities of the women's anti-fascist CMF continued unofficially, despite the committee's disbandment in August 1939. Other individuals remained active, like Albrecht, irrespective of associational membership. Remembering her anguish at the fall of Republican Spain, Hélène Elek wrote: 'Jusqu'à la dernière minute, j'avais espéré. C'est peut-être pour cela que je suis entrée presque immédiatement dans la résistance.'[18] She

---

[16] *Les Femmes dans la Résistance*, p.80. For further details on Albrecht, see Guidez, *Femmes dans la Guerre.*, p.109 and the biographical accounts written by her daughter: Mireille Albrecht, *Berty* (Paris: Laffont, 1986) and Mireille Albrecht, *Vivre au lieu d'existe* (Monaco: Editions du Rocher, 2001).
[17] Ouzoulias-Romagon, *FTPF*, p.112, p.57. At the war's end, her mother became president of the association Bol d'Air des Gamins de Paris, which sent the children of executed/imprisoned patriots on holiday after war's end; p.198.
[18] Hélène Elek, *La Mémoire d'Hélène* (Paris: François Maspero, 1977), p.161. Elek did not regard her Jewishness as a factor in her social and political commitments, although her resistance activities were made significantly more

considered her Occupation activities as merely a continuation of her pre-war, anti-fascist engagement in which gender and ethnicity - Elek was Jewish - were not salient factors.

Non- and Communist anti-fascists thus shared an imperative to provide social assistance to those persecuted by European fascism. Testimony from three committed anti-fascists during the early phase of Occupation - the anarchist May Picqueray, Communist-sympathiser Madeleine Braun and Communist Lise London - elucidates the nature, experience and motivation of refugee assistance in the refugee camps of the South, which housed Spanish Republicans and German-Jewish refugees.[19] May Picqueray's welfare activities on behalf of orphaned and separated Spanish children continued under Occupation. She headed a service to reunify families separated and dispersed throughout the country and, in the panic of the exodus, ensured that the Mexican Embassy took charge of the Spanish Republican children stranded in Marseilles. Once a week, May visited the camp of Nöe, situated between Toulouse and Muret, which housed 1,800 'undesirables', mostly Spaniards and Italians, and brought them food, clothing and medical equipment.[20] She subsequently extended these activities to the nearby camp of Vernet, which housed members of the International Brigade. Madeleine Braun, too, regularly visited Vernet. Her anti-fascism, by contrast, was directly tied to an organisation, the Comité International d'Aide aux Réfugiées Espagnols (CIARE), of which she was Secretary-General.[21] It was through the Jeunesses Socialistes Unifiée (JSU) that Lise London worked in Vernet and other southern camps. She was specifically tasked with recruiting doctors and nurses, finding medical provisions for the camps and placements in hospitals in the countryside that would care for the internees. She attributed much of her success in these endeavours to the contacts she had forged during her time in Spain, and that these activities served to restore and strengthen those that had by necessity

---

dangerous by her designation as a Jew from the spring of 1943 rather than a Hungarian national.

[19] Madeleine Braun, close to the PCF during the 1930s through her anti-fascist work, joined the PCF in 1942; see her testimony in Marianne Monestier, *Elles étaient cent et mille. Femmes dans la Résistance* (Paris: Fayard, 1972), p.7. Lise London had joined the Jeunesses Communistes at the beginning of the 1930s; see Lise London, *L'Echeveau du Temps. Le Printemps des Camarades* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1996), pp.77-79.

[20] May Picqueray, *May la réfractaire. 85 ans d'anarchie* (Paris: Editions Traffic, 1992), p.161.

[21] Monestier, *Elles étaient cent et mille*, p.6.

been broken in the immediate outbreak of war.[22] Leaving the southern zone, Picqueray returned to Paris where she worked for various resistance groupings, but chose to remain unaffiliated to any: 'Je voulais être libre, prendre mes décisions et mes responsabilités moi-même.'[23] The fusion of her political and social activism were implicit in Picqueray's choice of actions and the language with which she described them:

> 'Que faire à Paris en temps de guerre quand on est anarchiste? Propagande? Journaux interdits! Je décidais de faire ce que j'avais toujours fait: aider ceux qui se trouvaient dans le pétrin. Et il n'en manquait pas!... '[24]

Professionalism in clandestinity

Political conviction and personal compulsion motivated anti-fascists such as Picqueray, London and Braun to provide social assistance to the victims of fascism herded into the southern internment camps. Other committed women utilised their professional status within institutions. Historians such as Paula Schwartz and Margaret Collins Weitz have used women's resistance testimony to convey the extent to which femininity and sexuality were used as tools to disguise and deceive the Vichy and Nazi authorities. This thesis considers the extent to which notions of professionalism and professional status itself were strategies to enlarge women's responsibility and operability. For Berty Albrecht, professional status was the perfect cover to create, coordinate and extend clandestine activities for Combat, the resistance movement she founded alongside her partner Henri Frenay.[25] Albrecht organised an escape route for POWs to the south through the factory at which she was a superintendent and while procuring work - as an inspectress - for POW wives and other women at the Unemployment Bureau in Lyons, she disseminated

---

[22] London's husband, Arthur, represented Czech volunteers at Gurs and Vernet through CIARE; see Lise London, *L'Echeveau du Temps. La Mégère de la Rue Daguerre. Souvenirs de Résistance* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1995), pp.13-15.
[23] Picqueray, *May la réfractaire*, p.176. She fabricated false papers for STO evaders and Jews in hiding, aided a network of escaped French prisoners from Germany and she was also able to obtain additional ration cards for her family, whose home region had been heavily bombed.
[24] Ibid., p.174.
[25] For a history of the resistance movement Combat, see Marie Granet, *Combat: Histoire d'un Mouvement de Resistance de Juillet 1940 à Juillet 1943* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1957).

resistance propaganda, amongst other covert actions.[26] Jacqueline Bernard remembered how indignant Albrecht had been to see Pétainist journals in the office. Bernard was then asked to type up a political comment on the use of Joan of Arc in Vichy propaganda, emphasising Albrecht's feminist, socialist rejection of religious iconography to exhort women's sacrifice and duty.[27] Nadia Margolis has commented on the prescience of Edith Thomas' commentary on the political exploitability of Joan of Arc during this period too.[28] As a feminist, notably campaigning during the inter-war period for women's right to control their own bodies, it is significant that Albrecht's professional status enabled her to subvert Vichy's gendered *femme au foyer* politics from within a career that was considered 'feminine' and hence apolitical. This chapter, however, will demonstrate that conscious subversion of Vichy's gendered politics was atypical. Primacy was accorded to overthrowing the regime, an explicit challenge to Vichy's gender-presumptive politics was not consciously raised - although numerous women testified to their hostility towards it - and familialist logic remained pervasive.

Activities undertaken by the female-staffed and -run social services network for Combat, led by Albrecht, were diverse, including conveying hidden notes in laundry at prisons to relay information and maintain morale and delivering food parcels.[29] Procuring vital materials, such as false identity papers and ration cards, necessitated being in control of a large network of people who were willing to assist, a network that had in part been generated through decades of feminist activism and thus combined both social welfare professionals and volunteers. Albrecht's social action was therefore a reflection of her anti-fascist, feminist and professional convictions. In her numerous administrative roles within the official social welfare sector, Albrecht had the opportunity to liaise with women in several social welfare groups that were

---

[26] Albrecht appointed Yvette Baumann to help her develop clandestine social services using the Unemployment Office as a cover. Ania Francos notes that Baumann was sent to Albrecht in Lyon by Jeanne Sivadon, the director of the Ecole des Surintendants d'Usine; Ania Francos, *Il était des femmes dans la Résistance* (Paris: Stock, 1978), p.148. Baumann subsequently ran social services for the unified Mouvements Unis de la Résistance (MUR) network before her arrest and deportation as a resister, not as a Jew.

[27] Jacqueline Bernard, who assisted Albrecht and Baumann, took over responsibility for the Combat journal, until she too was arrested in 1944. Ibid., p.156.

[28] Nadia Margolis, 'The "Joan Phenomenon" and the French Right', in Bonnie Wheeler and Charles T. Wood (eds.), *Fresh Verdicts on Joan of Arc* (New York and London: Garland Publishing Inc., 1996), pp.265-287 (p.285).

[29] Rossiter, *Women in the Resistance*, p.157.

loosely affiliated to Vichy, such as Secours d'Hiver, Secours National, the French Red Cross, Soupes Populaires, Secours Catholiques and the Armée du Salut.[30] Both professional contacts and friendships were formed that could be put to inestimable, and clandestine, use. Lise London recognised that her friendship with Madeleine Braun afforded her access to an ambulance through the Centrale Sanitaire Internationale, which she used when touring the countryside to generate medical support for refugee care. Borrowing a blue cape from her father, she recalled: 'Ainsi vêtue, j'ai vraiment l'air d'une infirmière.'[31] London recognised that professional status - she was presumed to be a nurse - could be used as a strategy to elicit respect and authority, thus masking the political implications of her activity behind traditional expectations of woman as nurturer. Motivated individuals thereby made conscious use of gendered stereotyping for their own political and social advantage.

The impetus for professional training and status had been a growing force in social welfare throughout the 1930s and despite the *ad hoc* nature of needs forced upon those in charge of providing social assistance, professional questions persisted. Anti-fascist, Gaullist or Communist, whatever the political delineations of those orchestrating social services for the repressed, they were providing care in an inclusive manner as opposed to Vichy's exclusive definition of acceptable recipients. Their conscious need for professionalism and training, and the authority and respect with which this was viewed, can be seen in several developments: the creation and staffing of numerous social services units to resistance movements and the practical training of volunteer staff in the dangerous conditions of Maquis fighting or in the volunteer units of the FFI staff in London, for example. Albrecht was one of a number of women who created, staffed and ran social assistance programmes to care for resisters and victims of oppression: Madeleine Braun directed the social services of Front National, Nicole Brunschwig those of Libération-Sud and Marie-Hélène Lefaucheux, Organisation Civile et Militaire (OCM), for example.[32] The Radical feminist Eliane Brault chose a different path, escaping arrest for suspected resistance activity and as a known freemason, fleeing to London and joining the Forces Françaises Libre (FFL). There, she created a service providing welfare assistance to populations caught in the military zones of operation and Allied

[30] Guidez, *Femmes dans la Guerre*, p.114.
[31] London, *La Mégère de la Rue Daguerre*, p.15.
[32] Claire Andrieu, 'Les résistantes, perspectives de recherche' in Antoine Prost (ed.), *La Résistance, une histoire sociale* (Paris: Les Editions de l'Atelier, 1997), pp.69-94 (p.84).

territories, building upon her interwar administrative experience within the Ministry of Health and practical work to assist displaced persons.[33] Liaison-Secours attached volunteer women - as nurses, social workers and doctors - to military divisions, an idea that had resonance with Simone Weil's frontline nursing proposals following her experiences during the Spanish Civil War. On both a practical and emotional level, Brault recalled 'au moins avons-nous l'impression de server à quelque chose'.[34] Political conviction and social commitment were implicit in Brault's need to 'be doing something', with her wartime experience representing a continuation of her professional and political involvement in social action, as well as reflecting her feminist consciousness.

While such social services units were attached to specific movements, the PCF's own women's organisation - which came to be known as the Union des Femmes Françaises (UFF) - also consolidated its social assistance activities into a specific section in 1943, called Assistance Française (AF), which was affiliated to Front National.[35] AF worked clandestinely with contacts forged in sanctioned humanitarian organisations such as the Red Cross and Quakers to secure material and moral aid for families of the imprisoned and deported. For Nicole Martin de Barry, PCF and AF member, the work was 'tout aussi dangereux que l'action directe'.[36] De Barry recognised the implicit danger in such 'social' work yet conceived of this as being distinct from 'direct' - namely political or military, hence tagged as masculine - action. This idea, articulated by the women practitioners of social welfare of how best to commemorate and define social action during the Occupation period, runs throughout the latter

---

[33] Monestier, *Elles étaient cent et mille*, pp.225-6. For further details on Eliane Brault's wartime experiences, see Linda L. Clark, 'Higher-Ranking Women Civil Servants and the Vichy Regime: Firings, Hirings, Collaboration and Resistance,' *French History*, 13, 3 (1999), pp.332-359 For additional information on the experiences of French men and women exiled in London, see Nicholas Atkin, *The Forgotten French. Exiles in the British Isles, 1940-44* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2003).

[34] Monestier, *Elles étaient cent et mille*, p.242.

[35] The journal *La Parisienne Patriote* had first used the name UFF in late 1943 and it was subsequently used to signify the different women's groupings operating since the autumn of 1940. The northern Femmes Françaises and the southern Union des Femmes de France were officially fused on 1 October 1944. See Renée Rousseau, *Les Femmes Rouges. Chronique des années Vermeersch* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1983), p.21.

[36] Nicole Martin De Barry joined the PCF in 1934 after having witnessed the violence of the Action Française. However, she kept this affiliation from her parents, instead telling them that she was a pacifist, something she believed they would feel 'appropriate' for a young woman; *Les Femmes dans la Résistance*, p.23.

chapters and will form the basis of a discussion in the conclusion. AF social workers were called *visiteuses*, a term which resonated with a more traditional, charity-minded concept of social welfare. The PCF, amongst other groups, had deplored such terminology for its bourgeois and unprofessional status in the past. The contradictions in language and practice were evident. Perhaps using dated language was meant to reassure the recipient of the care being provided in times of exceptional need or to establish a link with tradition in order to stress Vichy's illegitimacy and moral bankruptcy. It was also a practical description for a network of women providing assistance in the homes of the impoverished and targeted.

Meanwhile the women of the PCF remained conscious of the need to provide as professional a standard of care as possible in the circumstances. The UFF also ran the Front National's Service Social Médicale (SSM), which counted 38 *secouristes* amongst its ranks. These women were divided into five groups of 7/8 people each who received theoretical training from a doctor and practical lessons from a nurse and were led by a professionally-trained nurse.[37] Within the clandestine social welfare sector too, women understood the importance of professional training and created on-the-spot training to ensure that the quality of care they provided was as effective as possible. In 1943 Marcelle Rumeau created the Association Toulousaines des Secouristes de la Résistance, which provided aid to wounded Maquis members and found families to care for the injured while they recuperated.[38] Marie Javet and Sabine Passet in the Haute-Vienne created a similar social services group providing rudimentary first aid training to care for injured Maquis in the region.[39] For many women involved in the various social services programmes run by the underground PCF, action was predicated on political belief and practical aptitude, but did not necessarily reflect professional qualifications. While such training initiatives point to the significance with which professionalism, even in circumstances of Occupation and resistance, was viewed, they also reflect a basic pragmatism at work in the coordination of welfare services.

The circumstances of clandestine social action also prompted women to renegotiate their perception of femininity and feminine roles, alongside their professional and practical capabilities. The women engaged in group activities - providing care to the Maquis, shoring morale in prisons or making home visits

[37] Ibid., p.101.
[38] Ibid., p.101.
[39] Ibid., p.143.

to POW families, for example - were bound together by their concern to fight fascism and repression. Their marital and familial status, age and class differed. When May Picqueray fell pregnant, she commented, 'C'était pour moi une sorte de protestation' in an affirmation of life, of political choice and of companionship.[40] Motherhood was not anathema to political action but for many women an intrinsic part of it. Maternalism therefore worked both as rhetoric, to encourage greater female support and agitation against the local authorities, which will be discussed in detail shortly, and as an implicit justification of welfare actions.

In contrast, for many other women, notably those engaged in liaison roles, their work kept them apart from human contact: 'Mes souvenirs de cette époque sont des souvenirs de grande solitude', recalled Denise Jacob.[41] Aged 19 in 1943, she lived in Lyon in an unheated single room. She was hungry, afraid and lonely, her liaison work for the Francs-Tireurs Partisans (FTP) involving criss-crossing the region on a bicycle delivering messages.[42] Similarly, after an opportune escape from arrest, Lisette Servier found herself utilising her nursing experience to provide support to a Maquis unit, moving location every few days or so. Writing her memoirs at a distance of decades, she recognised that life with the Maquis had been asexual, without recognition of her femininity, and personally isolating, with her experiences in hindsight having caused depression.[43] This notion of personal sacrifice in pursuit of a cause is resonant of the way in which the social worker LJ described her life as a social worker and single woman in Chapter One. Thus the language used by women such as Jacob and Servier to describe how they felt is reminiscent of comments made by certain women interviewed by Yvonne Knibiehler about their experiences of social work in the burgeoning state sector of the 1930s: celibate, lonely young women working long, difficult hours in testing environments with little emotional

---

[40] Picqueray, *May la réfractaire*, p.172.
[41] Guidez, *Femmes dans la Guerre*, p.220.
[42] Denise Jacob became involved in the resistance through her friendship with a scouting leader who was connected to the Vercors Maquis. Denise was arrested for resistance activities and deported to Auschwitz on 24 January 1943; her mother and sisters were deported from their home in Nice in April 1944 as Jews. See Rossiter, *Women in the Resistance*, p.154.
[43] Elisabeth Servier, *Lisette. The Story of a Teen Age Girl in the French Resistance* (Kansas: Sunflower University Press, 1997), p.86. Lisette had initially volunteered as a nurse for the French Red Cross following her return to Paris from boarding-school in June 1943, aged 16 years, but gravitated to the Maquis following her flight from Paris after arrest and escape, pp.51-8.

human contact beyond their duties, yet offering to those they assisted the reassurance of social motherhood.

Forging a movement of women's solidarity

Notions of appropriate and henceforth legitimate femininity remained socially significant in wartime and were to be used by the women's committees of the PCF to mobilise cross-faction support to heighten popular disaffection with the regime. This section will concentrate on how anti-fascist and Communist women achieved a movement of women's solidarity, positioning women as housewives and mothers, using the familial and maternal to reconceptualise the political and thus broaden their collective appeal. Known within the party as Comités Populaires Féminins - but also commonly grouped as *populaire* or *ménagère* - local, neighbourhood women's groups such as Femmes d'Ivry or Les femmes contre la vie chère were to become part of the PCF's wider women's movement, the UFF. While some women's groups evolved naturally in their local community, others were created through specific agitation in food queues, for example. Romagon-Ouzoulias also commented that committees arranged around families of the persecuted contributed to the development of the later UFF.[44] Several groups of two or three women per area would utilise their existing network of local contacts whether though pre-war activism in the UJFF or familial contacts with like-minded individuals.

In the latter 1930s the PCF had addressed the potential problematic of women's political activism through the UJFF, preparing young women to be anti-fascist and community-minded, citizen, worker and mother. Josette Dumieix commented that entering clandestinity at the outbreak of war represented, for UJFF members like herself, not only a reversal of public into private roles, but also an initiation into adulthood.[45] The UJFF had been promoted in preceding years as a refuge, offering friendship and support, not as a militant, activist cell.[46] Therefore it was natural for these young women to continue their actions and recruitment through the same domestic and familial networks, having experience in a community rather than workplace-based organisation.

---

[44] Ouzoulias-Romagon, *FTPF*, p.106
[45] *Les Femmes dans la Résistance*, pp.171-2.
[46] Susan B. Whitney, 'Embracing the Status Quo: French Communists, Young Women and the Popular Front', *Journal of Social History*, 30, 1 (1996), pp.29-53 (pp.35-6).

The significance of pre-war networks and friendships forged in anti-fascist and Communist action is clearly demonstrated by the structuring of women's committees in the northern and southern zones. The PCF, conscious of the political expediency of collective women's action, pushed to co-ordinate the regrouping of women into committees in Paris under the leadership of the UJFF's Danièle Casanova. As the networking expanded from Paris into other departments, one of Yvonne Dumont's roles was to travel to different locations and set up committees.[47] Lise London recounted a meeting with Ouzoulias-Romagon in which the changes being taken with the Paris direction of women's committees were explained. She had been encouraged to assist Casanova in unifying the different groups and was asked to co-ordinate women's committees in the south.[48] From April 1941, the Femmes Patriotes groupings in the southern zone were affiliated to the Front National.[49] Ouzoulias-Romagon had been recruited by Madeleine Vincent on a visit to her home town. She subsequently joined Casanova in Paris and became instrumental in establishing liaison roles for young women.[50] Elected to national responsibility for the Amies du Front - which collected clothes, money and materials for the partisan units - Ouzoulias-Romagon was eventually placed in charge of the Front National's network of liaison agents in 1944.[51] Through associational and personal contacts, these women sought out like-minded and sympathetic individuals to keep the committees growing in number and active. For example, Marcelle Rumeau was approached by the nascent UFF to constitute the first women's committee in the Toulouse area and she thus became involved in

---

[47] The committees were represented at department and then inter-departmental level and were formally integrated with Front National. Danièle Casanova, head of the northern Femmes Françaises, was replaced after her arrest by Josette Cothias-Dumieux, then Maria Rebaté and Claudine Chomat. In the southern, unoccupied zone, the Union des Comités des Femmes de France was headed by Yvonne Dumont, who was subsequently replaced by Simone Bertrand and Marcelle Barjonet. See Nicole Chatel (ed.), *Des Femmes dans la Résistance* (Paris: Julliard, 1972), pp.189-190 and Guidez, *Femmes dans la Guerre*, p.265.

[48] London, *La Mégère de la Rue Daguerre*, p.140.

[49] Ibid., p.106.

[50] Madeleine Vincent was responsible for Communist youth in the Nord and Pas de Calais departments. At Liberation, she became the Secretary of the UJFF; *Les Femmes dans la Résistance*, p.145. One of Ouzoulias-Romagon's tasks was to establish whether the young girls' personality and personal security would be good enough to cope with assuming such dangerous responsibilities, Ouzoulias-Romagon, *FTPF*, p.105.

[51] Ouzoulias-Romagon, *FTPF*, p.121. The FTP was constituted in April 1942, combining the Jeunesses Communistes, Organisation Spéciale (OS) and Main d'Œuvre Immigrée (MOI) battalions. Her testimony commemorates this link to the military resistance of the Francs-Tireurs et Partisans (FTP).

demonstrating for additional food rations, procuring food for Maquis units and POW families in need. It was not until 1943 that she joined the Party.[52] The network of committed anti-fascist and Communist activists, many of whom had familial ties to men in the Party hierarchy, worked clandestinely to coordinate the various departments into one overall organisation that at Liberation was the largest non-confessional grouping of French women in the country.[53]

The networks of the CMF were an implicit part of the movement to group together women in popular protest at the regime. In fact, the CMF recognised the historical precedent of women's committees, dating back to the societies and clubs of the revolutionary era, at the eve of war. Les Femmes et La Révolution Française, published in 1939, reminded women: 'Nous sommes les héritières des femmes de 1789'. [54] The dates given (1789-1939) implied that activism against tyranny (in this case anti-fascism, on the community level) was ongoing. Recalling slogans of 'pain et paix' used effectively in the women's *amicales* of the 1930s to generate a sense of immediacy and community, the pamphlet reminded its readership that when women protested about domestic issues such as food availability and high prices, they were making a potent political statement. In highlighting the historical traditions of local activism, women were conscious of precedents in their 'recruitment' to social action in protest at the perceived failures of the authorities and occupiers to provide for basic needs. The use of *amicales* itself further reinforced the image of women's activism as a non-threatening, reassuring movement of friendship and solidarity. Additionally, in emphasising revolutionary traditions and appealing to the French Republic, the Communists - through the CMF - consciously positioned themselves as true patriots, defending the Republic's interests against right-wing forces.

---

[52] *Les Femmes dans la Résistance*, pp.98-102. Rumeau was a mother, factory worker and secretary. Arrested (inaccurately) as a Communist, Rumeau's release prompted her to engage in resistance activities. Through her links with a Catholic friend, Thérèse-Marie Chanet-Dupuy, Rumeau's actions extended to assisting Jewish families in hiding through the network in operation around the Archbishop of Toulouse, Mgr Saliège, and the Religieuses Réparatrices sisters.
[53] Rousseau, *Les Femmes Rouges*, p.50, states that the UFF's figure of one million adherents by June 1945 should be used with caution. The UFF's leaders were predominantly married to, or partners of, PCF notables, for example, Danièle and Laurent Casanova, who was on the FTP's national committee, Marie-Claude Vaillant-Couturier and Pierre Villon, head of Front National.
[54] Yvonne Bruhat, *Les Femmes et la Révolution Française, 1789-1939* (Paris: Edition du Comité Mondial des Femmes, 1939), p.1.

Patriotism was thus defined as both the defence of home and nation: 'On ne pouvait défendre la sécurité du foyer sans défendre dans le même temps la liberté et l'indépendance nationale.'[55] As demonstrated in the previous chapter, patriotism - like mobilisation - was a gendered concept. Vichy conceived of women's patriotism as the 'blood tax' of motherhood. However, the mobilisation of popular protest ensured that alternative models of patriotic duty - here, to the home and family, which Vichy was failing - could be created. The implicit linkage of the politics of the nation with that of the household and family is demonstrated by the numerous clandestine tracts targeting women during the Occupation. A tract dated 1 May 1942, for example, called upon women, as workers, housewives and employees, to join in a general strike against 'Laval-la guerre' and 'Pétain-le pain noir'.[56] Often no more than a typed or handwritten sheet, each local women's group produced its own journal - the titles paying testament to the area and primary objectives from which it came (*Femmes d'Ivry* or *La Ménagère*, for example). The politics discussed were those of the household - rationing, queuing and the black market. Tracts were one effective means of publicising the issues at hand and mobilising popular protest to undermine the authorities' support base. Fuel - or lack thereof - became another expedient focus for dissatisfied housewives, particularly in the harsh winters of Occupation.

This dual approach - using grassroots, immediate issues to generate social and political consciousness beyond the domestic - was a powerful tool for the dedicated Communist and anti-fascist women's committees in the localities. As Lise London recalled: 'C'était le seul moyen de mobiliser les femmes contre Vichy et l'occupant à partir des problèmes réels de la vie quotidienne.'[57] Women could articulate their criticism of the political through their primary role in the social. David Garrioch's work on women's associationalism in the revolutionary period demonstrates the historical precedents of women's public action on issues perceived as being in the female domain. He comments on the notable success of women's direct action in enforcing legislative change regarding taxation and grain pricing and his work presents us with a model of continuing women's activism in the localities,

---

[55] Ibid., p.39. See Vassart, 'Il nous faut gagner les femmes', p.1114.
[56] *Les Femmes dans la Résistance*. This is one of a number of clandestine tracts and posters reproduced in the book, without page numbers.
[57] Francos, *Il était des femmes*, p.121.

something he has termed policing the 'moral economy'.[58] Women's community presence, as consumers and housewives, gave them moral authority and henceforth legitimated their right to 'police' the situation in a public manner.

Paula Schwartz's article on the politics of food in Occupied Paris points to the authorities' recognition of the need to police women's demonstrations and thereby the inherent politicisation of a site deemed domestic.[59] Surveillance reports from food queues, for example, point to an acknowledgement of women as political agents and as potential threats to public order, in need of monitoring.[60] Housewives signed petitions, demanded the distribution of foodstuffs and household materials and demonstrated outside shops and town halls. Authorities were particularly fearful of violence erupting in the marketplace, with the Ministry of Food Supply, Police Prefecture and local or departmental administrations coordinating the assignment of guardians of the peace where potential trouble was suspected.[61] An October 1942 police report noted the way in which mothers were targeted by Communist agitators to demonstrate on behalf of their children:

> '... les militants communistes ont décidé une nouvelle fois de recourir à l'élément féminin pour compléter l'agitation qu'ils se proposent de déclencher le 22 octobre. ... Ils inviteront tout spécialement les mères de famille à organiser des manifestations devant les mairies et les bureaux de Secours National, pour réclamer "du pain, du lait, des galoches, et des vêtements" pour leurs enfants.'[62]

Another, dated 14 May 1943, noted the particular success of Communist groups in consciously mobilising and politicising housewives through their domestic roles and concerns:

> 'Pour éviter de faire apparaitre cette démonstration comme spécifiquement d'inspiration communiste et pour ne pas limiter cette

---

[58] David Garrioch, 'The everyday lives of Parisian women and the October Days of 1789,' *Social History*, 24, 3 (October 1999), pp.231-249 (p.242).
[59] Paula Schwartz, 'The politics of food and gender in Occupied Paris', *Modern and Contemporary France*, 7, 1 (February 1999), pp.35-46.
[60] Danielle Tartowksy has highlighted the significance of food issues and their effect on health and crime rates. She counted 53 housewives' demonstrations between November 1940 and October 1941, and 96 between November 1941 and March 1942. Cited in François Rouquet, 'Women in Vichy France' in Christine Fauré (ed.), *Political and Historical Encyclopedia of Women* (New York and London: Routledge, 2003), pp.383-396 (p.391).
[61] Schwartz, 'The politics of food', p.37.
[62] APP, BA 2028, Parti Communiste Français, report dated 12 October 1942. The report noted that it was the anniversary of the Châteaubriant executions of 22 October 1941.

> action seulement aux femmes communistes, mais l'étendre à toutes les ménagères, les dirigeants ont décidé d'adresser au plus grande nombre possible de femmes une lettre, dans laquelle ils les inviteront à appliquer leurs mots d'ordre et directes et à manifester le 19 mai pour l'obtention des 500 grammes du pain.'[63]

These reports point to a recognition that the PCF was conscious of the potential to extend the parameters of activism beyond that of its members, to incorporate all women, irrespective of political, religious affiliation or class. Such strategising represented two things, which will be examined in turn: firstly, the PCF's determination to amass a genuinely popular movement of unrest, which would act as a forceful and expedient challenge to the regime at the local level; secondly, the Party's recognition that, in widening the potential base of activists, Vichy's denigration of these protests as unfeminine, subversive and somehow foreign would be exposed as untrue, therein enhancing the true patriotic intent of the PCF's resistance. The discussion will also provide further evidence of the paradoxical nature of rhetoric from both sanctioned and clandestine sources regarding women's social activism and explore how women themselves experienced and articulated their actions.

Through the local activism of the CPFs the politics of the household, family and community were inextricably linked, thus sustaining the pre-war familialist positioning of the PCF in which women were mothers, housewives and workers. CMF author Yvonne Bruhat had spoken of 'Un exemple de dévouement à leurs foyers et à leurs enfants ... d'intelligence politique ... de courage ... d'union'.[64] The statement explicitly linked the image of women as mother and housewife with that of a politically intelligent individual, prefiguring the ways in which women were to balance social convention with public activism to effect social, and therein political, change. Women's public positioning and identity as housewives sanctioned their presence on the street. As an interface between community and government, it was a political space. Simone Chataignon remembered that the distribution of gas masks to the population, except children, at the outbreak of war had prompted an early women's demonstration to demand that masks be distributed to all: 'partir groupées donnait du courage pour aller 'demander'.'[65] The support derived

---

[63] APP, BA 2088, Parti Communiste Français, 14 May 1943 report regarding the upcoming 'Journée du Pain'.
[64] Bruhat, *Révolution Française*, p.39.
[65] *Les Femmes dans la Résistance*, p.142.

from grouping together made women's voices more forceful and therefore more effective. In creating such a basis for collective, women's action, the PCF achieved the subtle politicisation of its constituents as agents in their own right: 'en agissant, elles ont pris conscience' recalled Yvonne Dumont.[66]

As the working class were the traditional mainstay of PCF support, the housewives' focus taken by the nascent UFF might at first glance appear to run contradictorily in targeting predominantly middle-class women as its audience. However, the PCF articulated a gendered concept of political participation and citizenship in which worker and housewife had common ideals and responsibilities. The factory was a class-specific focal point for action, but the home was now a classless and politicised site to which all women were intrinsically linked. Thus the housewives' collectives fitted neatly into the Party's wider actions in the localities to garner popular support. In their role as mothers and wives, Taylor has researched the presence of women in the strike action that developed around the mining region of the Pas de Calais in May-June 1941 in which 80% of miners went on strike, joined by textile workers.[67] The Nord had a tradition of worker stoppages, in which women supported the men on the picket lines and added their voices to the protest to mobilise popular support for the men's cause. Clearly, the Occupation provided a unique set of circumstances in which working-class women extended their experience of protest, raising consciousness of wage and pricing issues in particular.

In order to forge a genuine, grass-roots movement of popular women's protest, the CPFs needed to move beyond their existing constituency and encompass women from different cultural backgrounds, thus building upon the experience and success of the anti-fascist CMF prior to war. The community was thus of paramount importance to women's conscious soliciting of support across class, religious and generational divisions to emphasise everyday concerns and the commonality of women's experiences. Local welfare initiatives, public demonstrations and the distribution of tracts are testament to the ways in which Communist-led women's social activism elicited Catholic and POW wives' support, for example, which are commented upon shortly.

---

[66] Chatel, *Des Femmes dans la Résistance*, p.185.

[67] Ibid., p.75. For commentary on women's involvement in strike action in 1936, see Siân Reynolds 'Women, men and the 1936 strikes in France' in Martin S. Alexander and Helen Graham (eds.), *The French and Spanish Popular Fronts. Comparative Perspectives* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp.185-200.

Having explored the mobilisation of women along domestic and familial lines in the previous section - in what Lise London termed 'the battleground of food supply' - London categorised women's resistance activities in two further ways: fighting repression in its manifest forms and the initial targeting and support for POW wives. Sarah Fishman's research into POW wives' associations highlights the contradictory pressures of Vichy rhetoric and practice: despite exaltation from the administration, their plight became a 'social phenomenon'.[68] Party activists astutely recognised the mobilisation potential of POW wives, organising numerous public activities to draw attention to their difficulties, incorporate them into the community and thereby further criticise the authorities.[69] Journals and tracts discussed the plight of the POWs and their impoverished families within France. Demonstrations were held outside social welfare offices and town halls.[70] Testimonies point to the social support achieved through community action for POW wives. For example, London recalled CPF women visiting POW homes to speak about the difficulties of running a household alone, both financially and emotionally, activities also undertaken by AF *visiteuses*. London also collected petition signatures to pressurise the authorities into releasing addresses and permitting letters to be sent, as well as to secure additional ration tickets.[71]

Karen Adler notes that almost 90% of the clandestine press aimed at women was Communist-published, thus reaffirming their ability to mobilise cross-party female support; the remaining 10% came from other resistance

---

[68] Sarah Fishman, *We Will Wait. Wives of French Prisoners of War, 1940-1945* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1991), vii. 1.58 million men were held captive in Germany, equal to 4% of the population; in 1944 some 940,000 still remained POWs; xii.

[69] While lauded by the regime, in reality many POW wives suffered social ostracism and prejudice within their communities, which gave leverage to their own support networks. See Diamond, *Choices and Constraints*, pp.73-5.

[70] In 1941 the first POW wives demonstration was organised by the Paris CPF and demanded the return of POWs, better food allocation and rationing. See Paula Schwartz, 'La répression des femmes communistes (1940-1944)', *Les Cahiers du l'IHTP*, 31 (October 1995), Identités féminines et violences politiques (1936-1946), http://www.ihtp.cnrs.fr/spip.php?article245. Accessed 11 March 2008. Gildea has noted that fundraising and support activities for POW families was one of the greatest stimulants of sociability during the early period of Occupation. See Robert Gildea, *Marianne in Chains. In Search of the German Occupation* (Basingstoke and Oxford: Macmillan, 2002), p.94.

[71] London, *La Mégère de la Rue Daguerre*, p.83.

organisations, trade unions, POW wives, and so on.[72] Of the 1,000 or so Resistance papers, 76 were directed at women.[73] The imperative to unify women behind anti-fascist action was clearly seen in a number of UFF tracts directed specifically at Catholic women, which utilised language to provoke an indignant response, as well as reaffirm the religious duty of all Christians to act. Françoise Leclerc, a nurse and Catholic mother of four, was one of the women responsible for a tract that concentrated on Germany as the enemy of the country and Nazism as the enemy of faith.[74] The tone used was conspiratorial, that fellow Catholics - rather than explicitly stating Communists - were speaking out to their sisters, to reconfirm their faith, safeguard their homes and therein legitimise their right to speak out and take action.

The 1930s had witnessed practical rapprochement between Communists and Catholics in the localities. Clandestine publications targeting Catholic women thus became an additional means of forging cross-faction solidarity under Occupation, building upon the experience of emphasising communal interests rather than ideological differences or class hostility. This idea of a cross-class 'sisterhood' resounds with that of the earlier *Union Sacrée* movement to unify women behind concepts of national duty linked to the family, which had been of particular currency in the immediate pre-war mobilisation period. *Devoir* was a key word, a concrete expression of political and personal engagement with the nation, as well as one related to Christian concepts of aid. The repeated use of 'vous devez' reminded women that it was both their spiritual and patriotic duty to take action: to provide information on the enemy, act as a *marraine* to an FTP unit, care for the injured or refuse any day-to-day assistance to Germans, for example.[75] Whereas during the First World War the practice of 'godmothering' soldiers at the trenches or invalids in recuperation had provoked a backlash of anti-Catholic reproach at presumed proselytising, here the imperative to generate popular support for Maquis actions cut across any prejudicial or anti-religious sentiment.[76] The content was explicit in linking

---

[72] Karen Adler, 'No Words to Say It? Women and the Expectation of Liberation' in H.R. Kedward and Nancy Wood (eds.), *The Liberation of France. Image and Event* (Oxford and Washington D.C.: Berg Publishers, 1995), pp.78-86 (p.79).
[73] Jackson, *The Dark Years*, p.508.
[74] *Les Femmes dans la Résistance*, p.169.
[75] *Les Femmes dans la Résistance*, 'Aux Catholiques Françaises', undated, without page reference.
[76] The fostering of *marraines* was therefore another network of female care and support created to shore up morale and provide the necessary material aid. Margaret H. Darrow, *French Women and the First World War. War Stories of*

German actions to sexual crimes against morality and decency, for example, mentioning that in Alsace, pregnancy was being forced upon young women by the Hitler Youth and single mothers were obliged to give birth for reproductive rather than maternal purposes.[77] While domestic concerns were widely used under Occupation to popularise and legitimise women's social support for 'political' protest, these publications point to the salience of ideas about ethnicity, faith and morality within such efforts. These publications targeted notions of sexual propriety and modesty that were fundamental to Christianity, thereby re-emphasising one's duty to resist Nazism as it was anti-Christian. In asserting '[p]our nous, Catholiques, il n'est pas de races blanche ou noire, de races juive ou aryenne', the tract rejected ethnic, racial and religious division.[78]

As the CMF publication had insightfully commented, through the actions of the CPFs, women came from all walks of life to group together for the common cause:

> 'femmes du peuple et femmes de la petite bourgeoisie, ouvrières, *ménagères et intellectuelles luttèrent en commun dans les mêmes* organisations contre les mêmes adversaires, pour le même idéal.'[79]

In this respect, the UFF's 1975 colloquy, clearly influenced by the resurgent feminism of the period, was - in demonstrating the commitment of ordinary women to activism across the social and political - additionally an expedient political commentary on the PCF's ability to appeal across divisions of class and gender. The colloquy itself highlighted cohesion and breadth of action against what Paula Schwartz and others have criticised in resistance historiography as the gendered, 'top down' approach of an 'exceptional' few.

Building from this discussion of forging solidarity, the following section will take the well-documented housewives' protests at rue de Buci and rue Daguerre as its focus. Not, however, to explore the events themselves, but to comment upon Vichy's response to women's public activism and their conscious negotiation of a political and gendered self through their social

---

the Home Front (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2000), pp.79-81, discusses the *marraine* ('Godmothering') process adopted during the First World War, itself influenced by earlier Catholic women's charity work with prisoners. In addition, see Margaret H. Darrow, 'French Volunteer Nursing and the Myth of War Experience in World War I,' *American Historical Review*, 101, 1 (February 1996), pp.80-106.

[77] *Les Femmes dans la Résistance*, 'Aux Catholiques Françaises'.

[78] Ibid.

[79] Bruhat, *Révolution Française*, p.39.

action.[80] Identity was a pertinent feature of the demonstrations for both the PCF and Vichy, linked to notions of femininity, ethnicity and patriotism that were key to each one's mobilisation of popular support and legitimacy. Personal testimony and the police files held on the actions and 'identity' of those participating, demonstrate the extent to which the authorities were keen to denigrate public activism as unfeminine and subversive. Madeleine Marzin, the leader of the Buci demonstration, was labelled a Communist, which functioned for the authorities as a convenient shorthand for troublemaker. In reducing this activist to a preconceived and prescriptive identity, the authorities could conveniently package the incident as one that did not legitimately represent authentic women's concerns (*la femme au foyer* image), as its agents were aggressive, unfeminine fifth columnists. In fact, Marzin had been working with the Jeunesses Communistes and liaising with Spanish civil war veterans, her activism marked by anti-fascist convictions, but was not an actual PCF member.[81] The police interrogation file held on Buci listed the ages, occupation and political affiliations, if known, of all the women arrested, highlighting the broad, anti-fascist activism of the women's committee in the 15th arrondissement, in particular, which the police report noted was broken up following the Buci arrests. Members included the 29-year-old nurse Henriette Ouet, who had joined the PCF in January 1937 and Marguerite Bronner, née Bonnier (who was arrested having left her bag in the grocery shop), a committed syndicalist, CMF activist and PCF member since November 1938.[82]

Lise London was in fact responsible for giving the sign to start the rue Daguerre demonstration, where some 200 women had gathered. Her role - and the place of Buci and Daguerre in popular memory of the Occupation - is

---

[80] The rue de Buci and Daguerre demonstrations have been well researched in gender histories of the Occupation. See, for example, the commentary in Margaret Collins Weitz, *Sisters in the Resistance. How Women Fought to Free France, 1940-1945* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1995), p.60 and Paula Schwartz, 'La répression des femmes communistes (1940-1944)'.

[81] APP, BA 2128, Affaire Rue de Buci. This dossier lists biographical information about the women arrested and tried for their involvement in the demonstration. Marzin's death sentence was commuted to life imprisonment on Pétain's authority, see Schwartz, 'La répression des femmes communistes (1940-1944)'.

[82] APP, BA 2128, Affaire Rue de Buci. Denounced in February 1940 for her political views, Ouet was sentenced to four years' imprisonment and a 2,000 Franc fine. She escaped from an internment camp in September 1940 and spent a year or so unaffiliated to any political contacts or networks before taking responsibility for a PCF-inspired women's group in the 15th arrondissement in summer 1941.

reflected in the title given to her memoirs, *L'Echeveau du Temps. La Mégère de la Rue Daguerre. Souvenirs de Résistance*. The language chosen is indicative of the confusion of the time, her role in the protest and her identification of this social action as resistance.[83] A 2 June 1942 police report on rue Daguerre made particular reference to the ethnicity of some of the participants. For example, Françoise Serazin, née Bloch, was Jewish and a Communist activist. She was arrested alongside her sister Marianne Milhaud, an ex-lawyer at the Paris bar, PCF and CMF member.[84] Identity was crucial to the way in which the report listed these women. Excepting Nordmann, they were Jewish and committed anti-fascists, representing a community of those excluded by anti-Semitic and anti-Communist dictates, therein this public activism further confirmed their foreignness in the eyes of the authorities. Identity was of paramount importance in the policing of order and the excluded had no place in the national body. The only other 'category' of woman similarly excluded by Vichy was that of abortionists, for whom punishment was severe, with abortion being legally considered an act of treason, as sabotage. The cross-section of women presented in the Buci and Daguerre files were therefore ultimately designated as 'other' by virtue of their foreign ethnicity and/or political beliefs. This enabled the authorities to de-legitimise these, and other protests, as unrepresentative of genuine politicisation, thereby limiting any perceived public threat to its gender politics.

Lynne Taylor's research into popular protest in the Nord complicates the picture, however, by commenting on the immunity from prosecution offered to many housewives and in the more lenient treatment given to women who stole supplies than men.[85] The regime was conscious of the damage that heightened public awareness of activist femininity could do to sustaining Vichy's gendered pronouncements on civil obedience and moral order. One of the differentiating factors in the administration's policing of women's activism, linked to the significance of their identities, is that of violence. In effect, as Schwartz pointedly comments, the shooting of two guardians of the peace during the Buci

---

[83] Lise London's memoirs were published in reverse order, with *Le Printemps des Camarades*, her account of her early years until the outbreak of war (1996) following *La mégère de la Rue Daguerre. Souvenirs de Résistance* (1995); this is suggestive of the prioritisation of resistance memories over formative experiences.

[84] APP, BA 2ème, Activité Communiste pendant l'Occupation, Chemise 9, 'Rue Daguerre'. Also listed were Jewish librarian Jacqueline Weill, née Dreyfus, and Protestant chemical engineer Marie Nordmann.

[85] Taylor, *Between Resistance*, p.155 and p.113.

incident changed the situation from a fairly peaceful, female demonstration into a terrorist act - again, emphasised in the implicit 'othering' of those responsible within Vichy's detailed police lists.[86] Such demonstrations again point to the oppositional nature of Vichy and PCF-anti-fascist notions of patriotic legitimacy. Vichy de-legitimised the participants as violent, political subversives and therein unrepresentative of the true Frenchness that it served. The CPFs designed such manifestations to maximise the authentic, patriotic nature of the participants, through their role as mother and housewife, the *femme au foyer* within which any political, religious or ethnic specificities were of secondary importance. The PCF was conscious of using women's protest to make an explicitly political statement within the social, communal sphere, thereby avoiding the more extreme repression to which men would immediately be subject. However, the police's description of women demonstrators being 'on the front line' - like the violent bread riots of the revolutionary era - point to an implicit social recognition of maternal force within traditional concepts of community provision and welfare.[87]

Returning to the central question of women's agency and initiative in social action during wartime, this section will conclude with a brief commentary in the way in which public manifestations thus exposed the paradoxical positioning of women by Vichy and PCF gender politics. In taking Communist women from their positions of semi-invisibility, such demonstrations prompted the authorities to take greater notice of the potential, presence and capability of women's politicisation in clandestine action rather than just as disruptors of the public order. A police document on Communist activity during the Occupation in fact noted that the arrest of both men and women was detrimental to the PCF's effectiveness.[88] The report detailed the addresses, false identities, occupations, activities and arrests of numerous Communist women during the 'Affaire Cadras', including Mai Politzer and Marie-Claude Vaillant-Couturier, noting that the latter was particularly influential in the PCF's clandestine development and was a Solidarité operative, providing care to POW families.[89]

---

[86] Schwartz, 'La répression des femmes communistes (1940-1944)'.
[87] Schwartz, 'The politics of food', p.41 and Garrioch, 'The everyday lives of Parisian women', p.242. Schwartz's comments that the collaborationist press referred to these demonstrations as a 'second front', reiterating the view of publicly active women as subversives and terrorists, p.43.
[88] APP, BA 2ème, Activité Communiste pendant l'Occupation, 33 page report entitled 'Affaire Cadras'.
[89] One of Marie-Claude Vaillant Couturier's roles from the outbreak of war was to create and maintain contact between the underground PCF leadership and

'... les femmes Casanova, Emorine... ne semblent pas pouvoir être remplacées aisément. Leur rôle impliquait un idéal révolutionnaire, une maturité d'esprit et un sens de responsabilités tels qu'on peut dire que le Parti n'a pas les moyens de se permettre impunément de semblables pertes.'[90]

The authorities openly recognised the political aptitude, agency and indispensability of female Party members to the continued success and strength of the underground movement, highlighting the depth of their maturity, responsibilities and ideological convictions. This passage points to the contradictory nature of Vichy's gender politics: women were deemed apolitical therefore those who espoused political activism had transgressed their femininity. Yet, here, their political importance was being recognised in a manner that clearly paid tribute to their ability. The Communists, too, placed women in a paradoxical position: by rationalising their agency with recourse to supposedly feminine attributes and roles, they contextualised and politicised public activism on the basis of difference rather than equality - through the domestic, social and maternal, rather than the public, political and universal. Scott's articulation of paradox - in which women pushed to secure political equality and advantage using essentialist notions of womanhood - is therefore pertinent to the following discussion of the ways in which PCF women positioned their social action as maternalist and familialist, for political gain; it should be questioned, however, whether the implicit gender challenge raised to Vichy was an intentional one.

The potential and limitations of familialist and maternalist rhetoric

Both Vichy and the PCF explicitly identified women's activism by political and ethnic identity therein privileging the 'other' and the political over that of gender itself while maintaining maternalist, familialist discourses. The paradox can be articulated further, pointing to women's social action as providing a more circumstantial than explicit gender critique of the Occupation. This section discusses Communist and anti-fascist women's social action as a

---

other nascent resistance networks, assisting in the establishment of the Front National. She visited POW families, offered moral and material support through Solidarité and helped to distribute tracts, including those for Université Libre. See her testimony in *Les Femmes dans la Résistance,* pp.39-42 and the collection of tributes published in memoriam: FNDIRP, *Hommage à Marie-Claude Vaillant-Couturier* (Paris: Publications du FNDIRP, 1997).

[90] APP, BA 2ème, Activité Communiste pendant l'Occupation.

site for the negotiation of collective and personal identity, the pertinence of questions of feminism and femininity, and concepts of heroism and militariness.

Despite the evident political content which served to mobilise housewives and mothers around domestic issues, the language and tone of the women's clandestine press, referenced earlier, remained traditional in its representation of French women as *épouse-mère.* The PCF did not seek to challenge the prevailing gender order as presented by Vichy, but in its calls to women to recognise the reality of their everyday lives and fight to ensure the protection and well-being of the home and family, it was reaffirming the political constituency and agency of women as wives and mothers, thereby mobilising the widest possible participation to topple Vichy from below. Maternalist logic was therefore of instrumental importance to Communist emphases on patriotism and national legitimacy. Forging, sustaining and enlarging a specific women's movement, the UFF, also pays testament to the Party's recognition of women's political engagement, agency and activism. Structuring the women's movement around key Party activists was another feature in creating and maintaining cohesion of approach and programme, and the image reflected in London and Romagon's memoirs, for example, was one of affiliation, friendship and unity.

However, tensions existed below the surface and these make problematic the extent to which Communist exhortations of solidarity through the prism of *l'épouse-mère* matched reality. Known for her work in the 'intellectual' resistance, Edith Thomas found herself asked by Pierre Villon to write tracts for the UFF. Through this she became a regular contributor and then editor of the UFF's *Femmes Françaises.*[91] When asked why she had not been better known, her friend Dominique Aury replied that 'she was not the wife of Aragon'.[92] In other words, French literary women - and one could make the assertion here, Communist women - were often best known as one half of a couple. In her memoirs written after the war, Thomas considered the separate women's sections *inutile*, *périmé* and the 'perpetual petitioning of housewives',

---

[91] Thomas had become an instrumental part of the intellectual Resistance and the publication, *Lettres Francaises*, which was a weekly journal provided by Front National and the Comité des Ecrivains. Edith Thomas, *Le Témoin Compromis* (Paris: Viviane Hamy, 1995), pp.117-119.

[92] Dorothy Kaufmann, 'The Story of Two Women: Dominique Aury and Edith Thomas', *Signs*, 23, 4 (Summer 1998), pp.883-905 (p.886). Here, Aury was alluding to Simone de Beauvoir and Jean-Paul Sartre, Aragon and Elsa Triolet, for example.

on which the politics of Femmes Françaises were based, to be exasperating.[93] Thomas offered a dissenting voice, cautioning against the adoption of maternalism as an unconditional choice for French women. She was unwilling to go against protocol at this point despite not adhering to the gendered rhetoric within both the publication and the organisation as a whole, and recognised herself as an outsider from the Party hierarchy. Conscious of remaining useful, however, Thomas had agreed to a role from which she became increasingly estranged, struggling with the content on both an ideological and personal level:

> 'C'était pour moi une étape dépassée et je ne voyais pas comment je pourrais être utile à une organisation dont les préoccupations, en tant que femmes, précisément, m'étaient étrangères.'[94]

The work of the CPFs, predicated as it was upon motherhood and family, therefore risked alienating a sector of the female population that had little experience of domesticity. A response which encompassed motherhood and allowed for other forms of 'femininity' was needed to popularise the project most widely, hence the continued salience of social motherhood to the public activism of single women from the interwar into the wartime period - seen with the teaching and welfare professions in particular. Thomas' uneasiness points both to her sense of distance from the Party and its rhetoric, and to a personal disillusionment with remaining childless and single.

Thomas' troubled relationship with the UFF and PCF hierarchy points to certain women's need for a more nuanced understanding of women's political and social engagement with feminism itself. Thomas was rare in deviating from the broad rhetorical mobilisation of women along familialist lines and she reconciled her estrangement from such logic by the overriding imperative of agency and of duty:

> 'Si le Parti avait besoin de moi pour mener auprès des femmes l'action quotidienne du pot-au-feu, je devais l'accepter d'autant plus que cela m'était plus difficile et ne me donnait aucune satisfaction.'[95]

Other Party members conceptualised their involvement differently. Marcelle Barjonet-Huraux, who had been responsible for the beginnings of the Front National in Languedoc, ran the UFF in the southern zone from 1943 alongside

---

[93] Thomas, *Le Témoin Compromis*, p.118, p.173.
[94] Ibid., p.118. The UFF criticised her stance as 'bourgeois individualism' in order to denigrate her participation, following her diversion from Party policy.
[95] Thomas, *Le Témoin Compromis*, p.119.

Simone Bertrand. Rejecting feminism as a personal motivation for action, she highlighted the importance of women's everyday lives to their politicisation:

> 'Voilà ce qu'a signifié le 'travail parmi les femmes', voilà pourquoi il était nécessaire et n'était entaché d'aucun féminisme. Il prenait les femmes dans leur condition réelle et leur situation vécue pour les entraîner à l'action et à la lutte.'[96]

The CPFs did not articulate a specific feminist agenda - there were no calls for suffrage, for example. London wrote of the gradual process by which women were encouraged to react to the hardships of Occupation and therein contribute to popular protest initiatives: 'Ainsi, petit à petit, nous entraînons les femmes à ne plus subir passivement les conséquences de la défaite, de l'occupation, de la misère, nous balisons le chemin de la résistance active.'[97] London's use of language - passivity, suffering - points to an implicit acknowledgment that femininity and activism were not necessarily synonymous, suggesting that women's mobilisation was first and foremost to be achieved through the circumstances of their everyday lives and not through ideological directives.

Conventional approaches towards femininity and women's activism governed the PCF's responses. The cultural resonance of notions of appropriate feminine engagement were pertinent, and most particularly so when considering resistance activities. The clandestine press used language that in its appeal to all women therein conveyed social respectability and responsibility. However, notions of women's heroism and militancy beyond the domestic and familial, threatened to jeopardise the consensus forged by conventionality. *Femmes Françaises'* reminder to women of their maternal obligation to act reflects Chapter Two's discussion of the forging of a myth of militant motherhood during the Spanish civil war: 'Qu'elles sachent que pour sauvegarder la vie de leurs enfants elles doivent se battre et que la révolte est un devoir.'[98] The rhetorical mobilisation of women 'to fight' through appeals to militant motherhood was schooled in the pacifist and anti-fascist language of the later 1930s, the propaganda and experiences of the Spanish civil war. In sanctioning a militant femininity, the Party and certain individuals were forced to navigate between the imagery of female respectability and that of militancy, something to which it had traditionally been supportive. Egalitarianism had always been a driving force in Communist rhetoric, if not actual, practice. The

---

[96] *Les Femmes dans la Résistance*, p.153.
[97] London, *La Mégère de la Rue Daguerre*, p.107.
[98] *Femmes Françaises*, January 1944.

experiences of many women resisters in the Liberation period - detailed in the following section, during which women negotiated concepts of heroism, bravery and 'appropriate femininity' with regards to the armed and violent aspects of public activism - suggest the extent to which the Party had circumscribed these ideals.

The Communist-led women's committees increasingly concentrated on providing social services for the military branches of the FTP alongside the ongoing use of women as liaison agents, grouped nationally under Cécile Ouzoulias-Romagon's leadership.[99] One of the UFF's roles at this time was to assess what the medical needs for an insurrection in Paris would be and to procure the necessary materials and staff: UFF women liaised with doctors and nurses already in the resistance or willing to assist, they continued to exploit women's disaffection with the regime and encourage them to popular protest. These actions continued to be predicated on the social level - providing material, medical and moral support to an insurrection that would primarily be undertaken by men. With the Liberation approaching, the Communist leadership planned for women's legitimate participation in this armed struggle whilst keeping an eye on the demands of social conservatism as a bolster to popular - and future electoral - support. Tracts therefore utilised the language of combat to elicit women's support for auxiliary functions, such as the construction of barricades, feeding the combatants and manning the emergency aid posts. Each FTP unit had a medical committee attached, alongside which the *marraines* would work. A women's resistance tract heralded the solidarity of the resistance movement in which nursing, relief works and demonstrations were all vital stages in the liberation process:

> 'Qu'elles groupent les réfractaires et les entrainent à la lutte; qu'elles groupent les docteurs, pharmaciens, assistantes sociales, infirmières ... constituent des comités sanitaires; qu'elles apprennent à panser soigner, guérir malades et blessés. Qu'elles sachent que chaque lutte sur le lieu de travail, chaque manifestation de femmes pour le ravitaillement, chaque revendication ... soit-elle, est une étape dans le combat.'[100]

---

[99] Paula Schwartz, 'Partisanes and Gender Politics in Vichy France', *French Historical Studies*, 16, 1 (Spring 1989), pp.126-151 (p.146).
[100] FTP, *Les Mariannes*, 3, cited in Evelyne Sullerot, *La Presse Féminine* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1966), p.64.

Certain women's attempts to take on combat roles were sidelined, however. Josette Dumeix's appeal was rejected on the basis that she was needed within the women's committees.[101] A link can also be made to discussions in Chapter Two about martial femininity and the removal of willing combatants in the Spanish civil war to auxiliary, non-military positions. The direct mobilisation of women to military service in the Soviet Union stands out in this regard.[102] A tract entitled *Parisiennes, Aux Barricades* noted that some women had been involved in the military uprising: a woman from the 13th arrondissement's women's group had assaulted a German tank; a UFF activist in the 14th had killed a German soldier; another activist had been killed whilst sticking up a Front National poster. The Communists' appeal to 'women to arms' demonstrate the process by which from 1944 women were being called upon in the press 'to fight', as French mothers and wives, but that this fight was in effect one of channelling resources into social and support functions rather than outright military action - a rhetorical rather than practical mobilisation.[103]

The retention of familialist rhetoric, even by women who pushed the boundaries of prescribed gender roles, suggests its omnipresence as a contemporary discourse, its ability to reassure and to make sense of actions as a trusted referential framework in exceptional circumstances. Its wide currency is demonstrated in its use by women to describe actions undertaken outside of the accepted notions of feminine behaviour. A female FTP liaison agent thus commented:

> 'Yes, I fought in the war, but I only did what had to be done. What would you do if someone came into your house to steal your food and kill your

[101] Schwartz, 'Partisanes', p.145.

[102] Anna Krylova, 'Stalinist Identity from the Viewpoint of Gender. Rearing a Generation of Professionally Violent Women Fighters', *Gender and History*, 163 (November 2004), pp. 626-653 (p.629) notes that in October 1941 the Soviet army launched a vast programme of mobilisation to incorporate women into the field army in which some
800,000 women went to the front. A growing body of work on women's resistance in Europe during the Second World War illustrates that the circumstances of guerrilla warfare against an occupation force and a repressive government gave women some opportunity for military action, at first, at least. For example, Jane Slaughter, *Women and the Italian Resistance, 1943-45* (Denver: Arden Press, 1997) and Janet Hart, *New Voices in the Nation. Women in Greek Resistance 1941-1964* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1996).

[103] See Schwartz, 'Partisanes', pp.143-4 for the 'rhetorical' mobilisation of women to fight in the resistance press.

children? You'd fight back! Well, the house was France and the children were her people.'[104]

The agent normalised her actions as being natural responses even though cases of women in armed combat roles were rare and exceptional. This simultaneous process of recognition and occlusion of women and resistance is reminiscent of Margaret Higonnet's use of the double helix as an image representing both the opportunities and regression of women's roles in wartime: official notions of military valour, heroism and leadership did not match the historical reality of women's involvement in often unofficial, individual and *ad hoc* capacities.[105] Anne-Marie Bauer's Occupation activities involved distributing tracts for Libération-Sud, liaising between London and the movement in coding/decoding information for parachute drops and finding suitable sites. She was conscious of operating in the masculine environment of military and secret services. However,

> 'À mon retour de déportation, je découvris que mes différentes activités m'avaient fait donner le titre d' "assistante sociale", plus féminin, sans doute, que tout autre... titre admirable d'ailleurs, mais auquel je n'avais aucun droit.'[106]

There was no implied denigration of the social to the political in her commentary, but it highlighted the ways in which after the war the authorities struggled to commemorate women's activities in a way that was commensurate with an individual's experiences and self-identity. Similarly, where women were directly involved in heroic deeds, they felt compelled under the weight of social expectation or through personal need for modesty and anonymity to normalise their actions through a convenient and respected referential framework - often that of the family, as seen with Mlle Houet, the liaison agent cited previously.

Given the pervasiveness of familialist thinking, it is difficult to interpret the extent to which women consciously used such rhetoric in their testimony. It can also be hard to distinguish the imperative behind the language of heroism vis-à-vis the everyday. For example, one testimony might privilege the more

---

[104] See Schwartz's interview with Mlle Houet, an FTP liaison agent, who was later detailed to the FFI's General Staff in Paris; Schwartz, 'Partisanes', pp.147-8.

[105] Paula Schwartz, 'Redefining Resistance: Women's Activism in Wartime France' in Margaret Higonnet et al. (eds.), *Behind the Lines. Gender and the Two World Wars* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1987), pp.141-153. Margaret R. Higonnet and Patrice L.-R. Higonnet, 'The Double Helix' in ibid, pp.31-47.

[106] *Les Femmes dans la Résistance*, p.53.

exciting aspects of activism over those they considered mundane, whereas another might in fact rationalise the heroic as the everyday. Edith Thomas considered her journalism as intellectual and therein non-heroic. Others, however, disagreed.[107] Perceptions therefore varied as to whether heroism was predicated upon one's gender, one's actions or even as to whether the notion itself was valid. Lise London considered '[n]otre travail dangereux de combattantes de l'ombre n'altérait ni nos personnalités ni notre féminínité.'[108] Acting as she had did not make her a 'man' or 'masculine'. Her femininity and sense of self remained intact. For Thomas, her rejection of familialist rhetoric as personally - and politically - unsatisfactory created a troubled relationship with *Femmes Françaises* as it progressed into the immediate post-war period, and was a contributory factor in her quitting the publication. At a meeting with Jeanette Vermeersch she used ill-health as an excuse. However, her reasoning was in fact far more complex, related to her self-perception as a woman and an outsider:

> 'Je pensais qu'il s'agissait là d'une opération mal orientée au départ, que ces braves femmes et moi n'avions pas les mêmes préoccupations et que je n'avais pas de place parmi elles.'[109]

Thomas looked back upon the Occupation period as one in which she experienced a personal and political renegotiation of gender and activism; she felt distanced from the objectives of the Communist women's movement. The Conclusion points briefly to this reinstatement of Communist familialism in the post-war period and its personification in *de facto* Communist women's leader and *épouse-mère* Vermeersch.

This chapter has demonstrated how Communist and anti-fascist women articulated their political convictions, social awareness and gender consciousness through social action in clandestinity, with the focus placed on three main areas. Firstly, it pointed to the continuity of personnel and networks in which anti-fascism, rather than feminism, was the axis upon which pre-war associational networks developed into the Occupation. Secondly, it examined the pertinence of professionalism within clandestine social welfare activism. With regards to this sphere, the interest women showed in training volunteers in

---

[107] BMD, Dossier Edith Thomas, clipping from *La Croix*, 12-13 March 1995 citing Jean Guéhenno: 'Pour moi, la résistance courageuse, c'est Edith Thomas qui la répresente'.
[108] London, *La Mégère de la Rue Daguerre*, p.149.
[109] Thomas, *Le Témoin Compromis*, p.175.

the field, as well as the professionalised social services attached to the major resistance networks, highlight women's ongoing sensitivity to questions of qualification, training, the need to be professional and viewed as such. Excluded from fighting and other public displays of active resistance, professionalisation offered women another, and significant, means to frame their engagement and to gain respect, authority and legitimacy for their actions - questions that are of particular importance in the social, political and professional landscape of the post-war period. Thirdly, the PCF's movement for women's solidarity was predicated upon the domestic and familial in order to generate cross-faction popular support. In attempting to promote an inclusive vision of French womanhood as mother, housewife and worker since the mid-1930s - which the examples have proven did not fit all - maternalist and familialist language could continue to function under Occupation as a politically expedient tool - one made additionally pertinent by Vichy's own idealisation of *la femme/mère au foyer* - and one that collapsed the distinction between the social and political. Women were thus united in popular dissatisfaction with the regime by focusing on domestic issues that were problematic for all in wartime.

Vichy meanwhile, while recognising women's agency and initiative in sanctioned public areas, attempted to de-legitimise politicised social activism as subversive, foreign and 'other'. While such rhetoric prompted certain individuals to recognise the strategic uses to which femininity could be put, it is the solitary voices of women such as Edith Thomas who suggest that many women regardless appeared mostly ambivalent that their politicisation was being achieved through domestic and therein essentialist means. Although the voices of dissent were few and remained private while the war was ongoing, there was some questioning of this positioning, illustrated by Thomas' personal dissension from the Party line. Under Occupation, women accorded priority to the fight against fascism in its manifest forms and it is in memoirs published after the war that certain ideological tensions with the PCF's familialist stance and a re-evaluation of personal conceptions of femininity, feminism and what constituted social and/or political action become more apparent. Feminism particularly posed an ambivalent and problematic framework for the Party on the whole and remained so into the post-war era. The challenge raised by Communist women to Vichy's gender politics had not been a frontal attack on political and social equality, but rather one of women's mobilisation and politicisation. Before concentrating upon such questions in the conclusion, Chapter Five will consider the experiences of Jewish women under Occupation, the indispensable nature

of interwar associationalism to wartime activism and affiliation, and the ways in which Jewish women redefined their perception of femininity, political engagement and ethnicity through the parameters of social action.

Chapter Five: 'C'est plus par solidarité, parce que nous sentions épargnés que nous souhaitions être utiles aux autres.' Jewish women's social action under Occupation.

Chapter Four discussed the experiences of committed anti-fascist and Communist women in mobilising cross-faction opposition to the Vichy regime and in social welfare initiatives generated despite - and because of - their exclusion from the national body. Using the Jewish press, this chapter will first briefly consider the parameters of Jewish women's social action and civil defence during 1939-40. Defeat and Occupation placed the whole Jewish community, irrespective of class, religiosity or cultural affiliation, into a unique and precarious position. Secondly, balancing archival documents detailing the administrative machinery of repression with individual testimonies enables us to understand how anti-Semitic persecution forced many into a personal and professional renegotiation, renewed consciousness of, and commitment to, their identity as woman, Jew and 'other'. For many young women, a profound social transformation occurred as they were reaching maturity, prompting additional reflection on the nature of their relationship to their ethnicity and femininity. A discussion of Jewish housewives' protests using police reports and the clandestine press demonstrates the extent to which, like their Communist counterparts, adult Jewish women used maternalist logic to enhance the legitimacy of their grievances, therein circumventing Vichy's gendered prohibitions on women's agency but ironically also fulfilling them. The inclusion of a variety of Jewish women's activities under Occupation, from engagement in sanctioned and clandestine relief works to public protests, enlarges my focus on welfare to other forms of social activism in order to examine the points at which personal questioning and public experience met.

The chapter will most prominently focus on the Jewish women engaged in clandestine social assistance on behalf of the OSE, again balancing archival documentation from the organisation in question with the personal testimony of its operatives, who varied in age, marital and professional status. Despite the overwhelming scale and nature of the task at hand, Jewish women were not deterred from expressing concern for the professionalism of their actions. Increasingly this was a concept defined by committed service to the community and the efficiency with which women fulfilled their welfare duties, rather than one predicated upon notions of professional qualifications and experience.

Often circumstantial in nature, Jewish women's social action was commonly forged by personal, familial and communal interwar contacts in the interconnected networks of French feminism, social welfare and anti-fascism. The chapter will also testify to the significance of the scouting experience and ethic - with its attendant principles of duty, initiative and resourcefulness - to numerous young women engaged in dangerous resistance activities to provide social assistance to those evading arrest and deportation.

Jewish civil and communal 'defence'

The focus of this chapter rests on the Occupation period and Jewish women's engagement in the activities of the OSE and related assistance organisations. Firstly, however, it is important to consider the ways in which the Jewish community responded to the initial outbreak of war and the parameters of social welfare at that time. With European war looming, the Jewish press had called upon both French and immigrant Jewish men alike to do their duty and defend their country, in a display of patriotism that asserted their affiliation and loyalty to the nation in the face of sustained anti-Semitic prejudice.[1] Jewish women, too, were mobilised - in the social sphere - to participate in the civil defence effort in ecumenical groups, confirming their assimilation into national bodies in a *Union Sacrée* display of sisterhood, as well as in distinctly Jewish ones.

Contemporary reports within the Jewish and wider press highlighted the ways in which the phoney war period was being articulated and understood in relation to that of the 1914 conflict. On 29 September 1939, a women's voluntary society was founded to co-ordinate Jewish solidarity in wartime and to mobilise 'toutes les bonnes volontés et les concours bénévoles'.[2] The language, redolent with the imagery of women's engagement as benevolent volunteerism, reflected its wider contemporary use in the debates surrounding women's social welfare positioning, as well as explicitly linking the upcoming war to that of World War One. Jewish women's actions in 1939-40, like those of their Christian and Communist counterparts, were predicated on their actual - and inherited - experiences of war. Women were mobilised into auxiliary and support functions to provide social welfare and provisioning. Denise Baumann

[1] French Israélites were called up in national mobilisation plans whereas immigrant Jews could only volunteer for the French Army from April 1939, see David H. Weinberg, *A Community on Trial. The Jew of Paris in the 1930s* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1977), p.201.
[2] *L'Univers Israélite*, 29 September 1939, p.13.

remembered all girls of her age, at the outbreak of war, preparing drinks at stations receiving the Alsatian refugees/evacuees and distributing food and drinks to military convoys. Baumann learnt to drive and became an ambulance worker, recalling 'toute l'imagerie de la "Grande Guerre" me guidait, mais ce n' était que la "Drôle de Guerre" et nous ne le savons pas!'[3] At this stage, the French population had no means of understanding - nor the language with which to articulate - that this war was to be something entirely different.

A determination to demonstrate Jewish patriotism to the nation was one shared by Communists who, as Chapter Four highlighted, were being ostracised as 'enemies within'. Both groups could therefore be said to feel pressured to negotiate their patriotic duty with their ideological/ethnic affinity, as the authorities questioned the compatibility of the two. This sense of negotiating a dual identity was reflected most clearly in the work of the Zionist women's organisations of the period, which made prominent appeals for women's mobilisation into passive defence as well as specifically emigration-related activities. Such actions could be termed resolutely political and humanitarian.[4] Alice Jouenne, Secretary of the Cercle Amical Féminin Pro-Palestinien, was responsible for organising a *vestiaire* for the mobilised and the Cercle Amical arranged for volunteers to staff an orientation centre that provided both a moral and spiritual refuge for those without a family or home.[5] The sheer volume and proliferation of displaced, refugee and poverty-stricken Jews necessitated urgent, targeted action.

Social welfare in the phoney war period thus concentrated on two main areas: soldiers and refugees. The Cercle Amical expanded its activities to provide a foyer for Jewish soldiers on leave, with 'un accueil affectueux et toute la sollicitude maternelle dont ils pourraient avoir besoin'.[6] The language used here is indicative of the positioning of Jewish women in the community as nurturers and providers, appealing to their maternal instincts in caring for those in need. The rhetoric of essentialised femininity will be discussed in more detail shortly, with particular reference to Jewish housewives' protests under

---

[3] Denise Baumann, *Une famille commes les autres* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1973), p.210.
[4] *L'Univers Israélite,* 29 September 1939, 'Les femmes volontaires', p.13, noted that alongside offering medical assistance to immigrants and social services for women and children, based in rue Foucault, Paris (16th arrondissement), programmes were being developed for the creation of a farm to receive both French and immigrant Jewish children evacuated to Palestine.
[5] *L'Univers Israélite,* 8-15 December 1939, p.49.
[6] *L'Univers Israélite*, 29 December 1939-5 January 1940, p.61.

Occupation. Significantly, the environment provided by such organisations as the Cercle Amical represented much more than clothing or hot meals. The foyer or *vestiaire* became sites at which individuals could share and exchange news, information, advice and support, further reinforcing the essential, 'natural' attributes of women, who staffed these centres, as community carers and providers.

The plight of refugees was not exclusive to the Jewish community and an anti-fascist consensus existed that dedicated both volunteer and professional manpower to the problem, as highlighted in previous chapters. A magnitude of social welfare organisations operated in France at the time of the Nazi invasion, assisting refugees fleeing from Germany, Austria, Central and Eastern Europe, as well as the sizeable Jewish community of Alsace-Lorraine, which the Nazis declared *Judenrein* in October 1940. The leading positions within such organisations, whether Israélite or immigrant in composition, were occupied by men. However, the preponderance of women in social welfare provisioning demonstrates the extent to which they provided an alternative leadership in the local community and highlights their social agency, which was to have political ramifications under the specific conditions of Occupation. Louise Weiss was Secretary-General of the Comité d'Assistance aux Refugiés (CAR), which provided practical solutions to the issues at hand through social assistance, housing and vocational training. Vicki Caron's detailed look at the refugee agencies highlights the professional, practical nature of CAR in instigating modern social work procedures, such as waiting rooms, numbered appointments and trained staff, to ensure that the needy were seen promptly and efficiently.[7] Such was the respect with which CAR was viewed that within two months it had raised funds equivalent to the Comité National in three years.[8]

Other social action initiatives tended to be linked to the political inclination of the individual group, whether class-conscious, religious, secular socialist (Bundist), Zionist or Communist in inflection. 36 Rue Amelot in Paris officially maintained an apolitical line, grouping together Zionists, Bundists and Communists within its ranks.[9] It housed the offices of three pre-war

---

[7] Vicki Caron, *Uneasy Asylum. France and the Jewish Refugee Crisis, 1933-1942* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), p.308.
[8] Ibid., p.308.
[9] Jacques Adler notes that Amelot kept close links to the Communist group Solidarité but was conscious of overt Communism jeopardising its network of activities, from official to clandestine; Jacques Adler, *The Jews of Paris and the*

organisations: Colonie Scolaire; the dispensary and clinic, La Mère et l'Enfant; and the workers' soup kitchen, Le Cercle Amical. It would be impossible within the framework here to delineate properly the distinctive political and cultural positioning of each of the Jewish organisations in operation during this period, nor give due attention to the regional variations in provisioning. With the exodus from the Nord and Paris, followed by the German arrival and the government's installation in the spa town of Vichy in the southern zone, many Jewish organisations similarly took flight. Marseilles was to become a focal point for the Jewish community in the southern zone, affording its residents a measure of safety until the Nazis occupied the entire country in response to the Allied landings in North Africa, in November 1942.[10] The Comité de Coordination des Œuvres Juives d'Assistance (CCOJA) operated as an umbrella organisation for the various southern welfare agencies, with CAR its principal operating agency.[11]

On 29 March 1941 the Commissariat Général aux Questions Juives (CGQJ) came into being, with its first Commissioner the right-wing anti-Semite, Xavier Vallat. The CGQJ was extended to Vichy in May 1942, with jurisdiction over the entire country; no other community within France was thus co-ordinated or policed in this way.[12] Jewish social welfare organisations were therefore of immediate importance to both Nazi and Vichy officials, as demonstrated by a CGQJ document in which it demanded an accurate picture of Jewish social services in Paris: the former was keen for the Jewish community to care for itself and needed the exact number, status and

---

"Final Solution": Communal Response and Internal Conflicts, 1940-1944 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), p.174.

[10] A CCOJA document listed the following constellation of Jewish welfare organisations operating in Marseilles alongside the Central Consistory: Œuvre d'Aide Sociale Israélite (OASI); CAR; Entraide Française Israélite (EFI); Fédération des Sociétés Juives Françaises (FSJF); International Jewish Migration Agency (HICEM); Organisation Reconstruction et Travail (ORT); Œuvre de Secours aux Enfants (OSE); Eclaireurs Israélites de France (EIF); Commission des Camps. See CDJC, Fonds UGIF, DCCCXXX-1. An 'OSE Marseilles' report specified the work of the following as: CAR - German refugees; EFI - French families in need; and FSJF - responsibility for Polish families; see AIU, Archives de l'OSE, Boite XXVI, Bobine I, 'OSE Marseilles'.

[11] With permission from Vichy, Louise Weiss travelled to the United States under the auspices of CAR in the summer of 1941 to procure medical supplies, clothing and other necessities; Louise Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne. La Résurrection du Chevalier. Juin 1940-Aout 1944* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1974), p.200 and Annexe I, pp.433-4.

[12] The Police aux Questions Juives (PQJ) was set up in autumn 1941. For further details, see Michael R. Marrus and Robert O. Paxton, *Vichy France and the Jews* (New York: Basic Books, 1981), pp.135-137.

whereabouts of all Jews in France to be made available in order to facilitate the implementation of the 'Final Solution' without unnecessary impediment. The latter was conscious that Jews, with their marginal affiliation, did not divert resources away from nationals in need.[13] The multiplicity of Jewish organisations in the country was one factor behind Dannecker's proposal in the northern zone to group them together into one office that could henceforth be controlled more easily.[14] The UGIF was therefore created on 29 November 1941, replacing the previous Comité de Coordination des Œuvres de Bienfaisance Juives de Paris and it was made mandatory for all Jewish organisations to register with the UGIF, as an umbrella organisation through which the Germans could deal with the Jews. The UGIF was the official Jewish body operating in both zones, with separate committees and staff: the UGIF-N operated as one central administration whilst the UGIF-S' federal structure gave it greater mobility to act.[15] The Central Consistory remained separate, asserting its identity as a purely confessional institution. In effect it represented the native, Israélite community whereas the immigrant Jewish community was represented publicly by an unofficial leadership from various committees, such as Rue Amelot, the collection of immigrant societies within the FJSF or the Communist Soldarité group.

Robert Gildea's comment that loyalty to the *patrie* quickly moved to that of the local community as horizons narrowed can be seen in two such community initiatives to meet refugee and the surrounding population's needs.[16] For the Jews, their community was one defined by locality and by ethnicity. Œuvre d'Aide Sociale Israélite auprès des Populations Repliées d'Alsace et de

---

[13] CDJC, Fonds UGIF, XXVIIIA-165, CGQJ letter to UGIF in Paris, dated 19 August 1942.

[14] Theodor Dannecker was head of the Gestapo's Office of Jewish Affairs in France.

[15] For a detailed investigation into the UGIF leadership and actions, see Richard I. Cohen, *The Burden of Conscience. French Jewish Leadership During the Holocaust* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1987). See, also, Cynthia J. Haft, *The Bargain and the Bridle: the General Union of the Israelites of France, 1941-1944* (Chicago: Dialog Press, 1983) and Maurice Rajsfus, *Des Juifs dans la collaboration: l'UGIF (1941-1944) précédé d'une courte étude sur les Juifs de France en 1939* (Paris: Etudes et Documentation Internationales, 1980). It is beyond the parameters of this thesis to engage with ongoing historiographical debates surrounding the UGIF. Renée Poznanski, *Jews in France During World War II*, (Hanover and London: Brandeis University Press, University Press of New England, 2001), p.488, offers a balanced view as 'neither Gestapo nor resistance'.

[16] Robert Gildea, *Marianne in Chains. In Search of the German Occupation* (Basingstoke and Oxford: Macmillan, 2002), p.64.

Lorraine (OASI) was a grouping of bodies from Strasbourg, set up in Périgieux at the outbreak of war. A report on its activities for October-November 1941 demonstrates the extent to which each small organisation provided a vital support, both material and moral, to a population in need. It also testifies to the volume of support undertaken by local social workers and volunteer staff. During this period the organisation received 1,435 people at its offices, asking for aid and advice, undertook 245 surveys and social visits, regularly attended some 46 sick persons, clothed 400 children and 1,800 adults, as well as providing professional training classes and placements for both young men and women under the auspices of the Organisation Reconstruction et Travail (ORT).[17]

The Paris-based, immigrant organisation Rue Amelot, too, provided immense social welfare support during 1940-45 to a community in need: it distributed 850,000 free meals, 21,000 cash payments to the needy, 27,000 free medical consultations, 12,000 free medical supplies and 26,000 items of clothing.[18] In the month of October-November 1940, 84% of its budget was devoted to soup kitchens (serving between 45-59,000 hot meals per month) highlighting how crucial food supply was for the impoverished Jewish immigrant community.[19] In January 1942, rue Amelot served 40,000 meals through its four soup kitchens, sent 2,000 packages to inmates at Drancy, Pithiviers, Beaune-la-Rolonde, Poitiers and Monts, distributed over 1,000 items of clothing, provided over 900 free medical consultations, funded an orphanage and a legal services clinic.[20] These statistics provide a glimpse of the vast range of official welfare activities provided by this one agency. Clandestine activities continued alongside. Before shifting the chapter's focus to a discussion of women's engagement in clandestine welfare assistance, the following section will outline the legislative circumstances that forced the Jewish community into increasingly dire straits. It will then examine the attendant repercussions on women's personal and professional lives, and therein demonstrate the impact that

---

[17] CDJC, Fonds FSJF, CCXIV-10a, 'L'ORT et notre travail social', *Bulletin de la Fédération des Sociétés Juives en Algérie*, 77 (Février 1942), pp.1-6 (p.5).
[18] Lucien Lazare, *La Résistance Juive en France* (Paris: Stock, 1987), p.203, cited in Christian DesRoches, 'Rue Amelot: Rescue as Resistance in Occupied France, 1940-44', paper given on 21 March 2003 at Montreal Institute of Genocide and Human Rights Studies' (MIGS) workshop, http://migs.concordia.ca/documents/MIGS_DesRoches_March21.pdf, p.34. Accessed 9 February 2008.
[19] Rue Amelot Records, 1939-1945 (New York: YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, 1982), folder 5, 5, cited in ibid, p.18.
[20] Rue Amelot Records, 1939-1945, folder 18, 10, cited in ibid., p.24.

persecution had on Jewish women's concepts of national, cultural and professional identity.

Forced into an acceptance of being 'other'

Marrus and Paxton's seminal *Vichy France and the Jews* detailed the extent to which Vichy was willing to facilitate the Nazis' implementation of the 'Final Solution' to the 'Jewish Question' with an anti-Semitic programme that was not enforced by German diktat.[21] The Jew was a convenient scapegoat for the regime's nationalist propaganda and the authorities recognised that anti-Jewish actions offered some political capital as a means to preserve - and where possible, advance - (some semblance) of French sovereignty. Vichy's first anti-Jewish Statute, promulgated on 3 October 1940, legislated a racial definition of Jewishness. Legislation in the unoccupied zone excluded Jews from the liberal professions, repealed the prohibition of anti-Semitism in the press, gave prefects power to intern foreign Jews, and launched Aryanisation and denaturalisation campaigns.[22] The radicalisation of the authorised press was sanctioned by Vichy's repeal of the Marchandeau Law in August 1940.[23]

Meanwhile the Germans in the occupied zone unravelled their own anti-Jewish programme, the most visible sign of which was the 7 June 1942 introduction of the yellow star for French and foreign Jews over the age of six years.[24] The nurse Julie Crémieux-Dunand labelled it 'un sceau rabaissant, méprisant, infamant'.[25] Janet Teissier du Cros, in Paris for the first time since the defeat, felt the shadow of the occupiers directly, acknowledging the free zone's 'demoralising ambiguity'.[26] Seeing an old man wearing the star, she

---

[21] Marrus and Paxton, *Vichy France and the Jews*, p.5. David Pryce Jones comments that the Nazis took five years to initiate and carry out their anti-Semitic programme whereas Vichy took just eight months, 17 laws and 23 decrees to deal with the 'Jewish Question'. See David Pryce Jones, 'Paris during the German Occupation' in Gerard Hirschfield and Patrick Marsh (eds.), *Collaboration in Europe. Politics and Culture during the Nazi Occupation, 1940-1944* (Oxford, New York and Munich: Berg, 1989), pp.16-30 (p.21).

[22] Marrus and Paxton, *Vichy France and the Jews*, pp.3-5 for opening discussion of Vichy's *Statut des Juifs.*

[23] Ibid., p.3.

[24] The Jews were forced to register, their movements circumscribed, property and businesses Aryanised, the word *Juif/Juive* stamped on their identity and ration papers, and segregation heightened by the imposition of the star. Ibid., p.236.

[25] Julie Crémieux-Dunand, *La vie à Drancy (Récit documentaire)* (Paris: Libraries Gedalge, 1945), p.239.

[26] Janet Teissier du Cros, *Divided Loyalties. A Scotswoman in Occupied France* (Edinburgh: Canongate Press, 1962), p.93.

commented 'the full impact of our defeat came home to me in one stunning blow, the terrible difference between knowing a thing intellectually and feeling it emotionally.'[27] The star represented a defining moment in non-Jewish and Jewish recollections about life under Occupation, signifying an end to Republican, universal ideals. Isolated by measures specifically designed to segregate and impoverish, such as later shopping hours and additional curfew restrictions, and targets of increasingly vicious propaganda, the Jewish community felt increasingly helpless and powerless. Viviane Forester recalled:

> 'La vie se présentait comme un souvenir dont nous étions exclus...Je me souviens d'avoir crié 'au secours' en silence, tant de fois. Et je saurais qu'ailleurs on ne m'entendait pas.'[28]

Forester's sense of bewilderment was shared by thousands, racial legislation thus imposing an identity on individuals who did not necessarily consider themselves to be Jewish or who believed themselves to be religiously or culturally attached to Judaism but French by nationality. The forced recognition of alien identity thus added to the overall confusion of the period. As commented upon by Adam Rayski, the concept of Israélite came to an abrupt end under Occupation: 'The Jew took his place'.[29]

The cumulative effect of social exclusion and socioeconomic impoverishment impacted upon Jewish men and women in numerous ways. Relating the impact of anti-Jewish legislation to the ongoing theme of professionalisation, the imposition of a racial identity that governed what people were authorised to do meant that Jewish women were doubly targeted - by gendered prohibitions on employment and by anti-Semitic barriers to professional practice. The implications of forced identity on Jewish women's professional space - and its contribution to the development of various forms of social activism, such as food protest, resistance activities and relief works - can be elicited from memoir materials. Odette Abadi was forced to disband her medical studies and leave her position in the Loiret as Inspecteur d'hygiène sociale et médecin des écoles and her medical studies. Defined racially as a

---

[27] Ibid., p.235.
[28] Viviane Forrester, *Ce soir, après la guerre* (Cher: J.C.Lattès, 1992), p.155.
[29] Adam Rayski, *The Choice of the Jews Under Vichy: Between Submission and Resistance* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 2005), p.294, citing Robert Badinter, 'Les Juifs et la République', closing address at the colloquium on the bicentenary of the emancipation of the Jews, Strasbourg, 6 October 1991: 'Among many other ... unfortunate and pitiful victims, the anti-Jewish legislation had a conceptual victim. It killed the French Israelite; the Jew took his place.'

Jew, she recalled: 'moi, parisienne, j'avais vécu toute ma vie sans autres liens avec ma Communauté que mes lectures et la fréquentation de quelques amis pratiquants.'[30] Midwifery, however, was still open to Jewish practice, so she decided to retrain. Yvette Baumann, too, was excluded from medical studies by anti-Jewish legislation, so she moved into social services work instead. Obtaining a diploma in 1941 from the Ecole des Surintendantes, Baumann worked in Vichy's Unemployment Office in Lyon alongside Berty Albrecht, for whom she was to move into clandestine work.[31] Welfare was thus a sanctioned space for women - and Jewish women - under Vichy.

Vivette Samuel, like Obadi and many others, felt little affiliation to her Jewish heritage. Having completed her philosophy thesis in May 1940, she hoped for a future career in teaching, calling it 'ma vocation première'.[32] Legislation, however, blocked that path. Vivette felt it fundamental to her identity - and as a silent resistance to Vichy - not to register as a Jew, regarding it as a private, individual matter with which the authorities had no business.[33] Anti-Jewish legislation therefore forced both men and women into alternate professional and henceforth personal trajectories. For Françoise Seligmann, finding herself a social worker after having been a student was a rude awakening, prompting her recognition that adulthood had been forced upon her with the need to fend for oneself.[34] For women like Seligmann and Samuel, at the cusp of adulthood, the anti-Jewish statutes changed their professional futures irrevocably. They entered a profession through force of circumstance, which had been legitimated for Jewish involvement by the authorities, rather than, initially, through their own aspiration.

The revocation of Jews' professional rights was a damaging move psychologically, as well as economically and professionally. The feminist lawyer Yvonne Netter wrote to M le Bâtonnier on 5 August 1941 to register her anger

---

[30] Odette Abadi, *Terre de Détresse. Birkenau-Bergen-Belsen* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1995), p.16. On Abadi's return from deportation, she was appointed Médecin-chef à la direction d'hygiène sociale in Paris.
[31] Guylaine Guidez, *Femmes dans la Guerre, 1939-1945* (Paris: Collection Terres des Femmes, Perrin, 1989), pp.102-104. Baumann was subsequently arrested and deported to Auschwitz in January 1943 notably as a political, rather than racial, deportee.
[32] AIU, Archives de l'OSE, Boite I, Bobine XV, Vivette Samuel, 'Historique de l'OSE, Journée d'Information du 28 novembre 1978', pp.1-23 (p.4).
[33] Vivette Samuel, *Rescuing the Children. A Holocaust Memoir* (Wisconsin and London: University of Wisconsin Press, 2002), p.28.
[34] Françoise Seligmann, *Liberté, quand tu nous tiens...* (Paris: Fayard, 2000), p.52.

and request an exemption to continue practising at the bar. This letter serves as a striking reminder of the complexity of self-perception, identity and activity of just one Jewish woman at that time against a legislative onslaught that accepted only one, racial, identity. It also points to her determination to prove her contribution to French society as the basis upon which possible exemptions could be granted. Netter had converted to Catholicism on 23 December 1940 and she accented this, alongside her military service during the Great War, numerous social services activities, associational duties, a successful career at the bar and her family's French ancestry.[35]

Events quickly demonstrated that the Final Solution was to target every Jew in France regardless of nationality, socioeconomic class, political persuasion or cultural affiliation. 'We had the plague and did not know it', Georgette Elgey later wrote.[36] The established Israélite community held dear to long-cherished notions of French citizenship and, believing itself somehow protected therefore from what was unravelling, called for a moral engagement with its immigrant, co-religionists:

> 'Il faut que chaque israélite puisse contribuer à panser les blessures physiques et morales de nos frères et sœurs qui souffrent innocemment dans de véritables enfers, d'où il faut les sauver coûte que coûte. C'est notre devoir, c'est notre conscience qui le réclame.'[37]

This language, infused with the religious imagery of physical suffering, was designed to prick the Israélite community's conscience and remind them of their obligation to act. Georgette Elgey's sheltered, Catholic upbringing mirrored this social distance, in what she termed a 'class-conscious reflex' towards events.[38] Her Jewish, 'high society' grandmother refused to register as a Jew. Elgey recognised, in hindsight, that this familial environment was 'profoundly chauvinist and xenophobe - even, I now have to admit, anti-Semitic' to the

---

[35] BMD, Fonds Netter, Documents d'Yvonne Netter, 1939-1945. Netter's appeal was rejected in a letter dated 13 February 1942. Among the associations and services she listed were: Foyer Guide Féminin (FGF), Amélioration, Société des Secours des Dames Israélites, Dame Patronesse des Ecole Municipales du IVème and Société d'Aide et Secours aux Blessés Militaires (Netter worked as a nurse during the First World War and was subsequently accredited with military status, as a veteran).

[36] Georgette Elgey, *The Open Window* (London: Woburn Press, 1974), p.20.

[37] CDJC, Fonds FSJF, CCXX-98, Comité de Coordination de Bienfaisance, undated, pp.1-2 (p.1).

[38] Elgey, *Open Window*, p.29.

recent immigrants.[39] Jacqueline Mesnil-Amar felt little different to her Christian friends and considered her background to be similar to that of a middle-class Catholic family. However, her personal experiences subsequently forced her to re-evaluate that thinking: 'mais pouvions-nous nous douter que cette bourgeoisie, au front si uni, aux réactions apparemment si semblables, avait quant à la nôtre peut-être un double visage?'[40] Living as an undeclared Jew, Mesnil-Amar understood the implications of her marked identity, her 'autre visage secret', a phrase that highlighted her perception of the duplicity and splintering of national identity and therein the imperative to mask her personal identity.[41]

War and Nazi Occupation thereby forced Jews to confront their ethnic identity, social standing and concept of nationhood. While some women sought to reconcile their sense of self with the identity imposed upon them, others attempted to mitigate it. Netter's Occupation history demonstrates her multi-layered identity as woman, mother, feminist, lawyer, nurse, social and political activist, Jew and Catholic. Conversion became another facet in Jewish women's negotiation of identity. It also represented an attempt to guarantee physical safety. Netter was one of a number of prominent feminists who converted during the war: Marcelle Kraemer-Bach converted in December 1939; Suzanne Crémieux was baptised in October 1940 in Nimes.[42] Christine Bard's comment that WIZO's refusal to be interviewed regarding Yvonne Netter demonstrates, however, that her conversion still had the power to provoke and was considered a betrayal by many. It is also testament to WIZO's rejection of multiple identities for Jewish women.[43]

---

[39] Ibid., p.20. Similarly, Denise Baumann remembered the privileged status of the term Israélite. Her Eastern European Jewish family had called themselves Israélites in order to distinguish themselves from the newly-arrived Juifs. See Baumann, *Une Famille*, p.207.

[40] Jacqueline Mesnil-Amar, 'Nous étions les juifs de l'oubli...', *Les Nouveaux Cahiers*, 50 (Autumn 1977), pp. 43-49 (pp.44-45).

[41] Jacqueline Mesnil-Amar, *Ceux qui ne dormaient pas. 1944-1946 (Fragments de journal)* (Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1957), p.61.

[42] Simone Weil wrote a letter of protest to Vichy's Minister of National Education decrying her exclusion from teaching on the grounds of an identity defined racially, to which she held no personal commitment and allegiance. See Richard D.E. Burton, *Holy Tears, Holy Blood. France, Catholicism, and the Culture of Suffering in France, 1840-1970* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2004), p.139.

[43] Christine Bard, 'Yvonne Netter (1889-1985): Itinéraire d'une avocate féministe et sioniste dans la première moitie du siècle en France', *Sexe et Race. Discours et Formes Nouvelles d'Exclusion du XIXe au XXe siècle. Séminaires 1989-1990*, pp.142-171 (p.160).

For other Jewish women, who had previously had an ambivalent relationship to their Jewishness, anti-Semitic persecution made their Jewishness a defining factor. The exclusionary and isolating strategies of the Nazi and Vichy authorities could thus forge amongst Jews a greater sense of solidarity in the face of repression, a sense that is shared when considering the experiences of Communist women at this time. Ginette Hirtz recognised her pariah status within her own country, but this generated a heightened affinity to the collective Jewish experience in her reference to 'notre enfermement familial'.[44] Testimony from young girls who were the recipients of Jewish social welfare initiatives during this period points to their increasing sense of community identification. The schoolgirl Renée Roth-Hano, who had benefited from the Fresh Air Fund, noted being 'pleased to return to food restrictions, feeling Jewish again, and all.'[45] The unreality of being away from the city prompted a need for solidarity with her ethnic identity. She remembered the excitement of her mother when she discovered a food canteen on rue Richer that only served Jews.[46] The young Jewish women on whom this chapter rests were in many ways a transitional generation for whom ethnic affiliation was not explicit at the outbreak of war and Jewishness existed as a vaguely defined sense of loyalty to family or tradition. Mesnil-Amar felt little different from her Catholic counterparts. Samuel had noted 'feeling different... I would have preferred not to be so'.[47]

This chapter explores the idea that the experience of persecution and the imposition of an identity contributed to social activism that reconfigured these women's personal identities in a specifically gendered and ethnic way. Juliette Bénichou found in her reaffirmation of Jewishness 'un rang social, un contexte familial et amiable'.[48] While Roth-Hano's conception was one of cultural affiliation and communal solidarity, for Annie Kriegel, the Vel d'Hiv round-up prompted a personal and political reconfiguration of identity within which her Jewish identity was subsumed by activism on behalf of all the repressed. Warned about an imminent round-up taking place in Paris, Kriegel

---

[44] Ginette Hirtz, *Les Hortillonnages sous la grêle. Histoire d'une famille juive en France sous l'occupation* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1982), p.170, p.47.
[45] Renée Roth-Hano, *Touch Wood. A Girlhood in Occupied France* (New York: Four Winds Press, 1988), p.78.
[46] Ibid., p.80. Roth-Hano remembered her mother's pride and unwillingness to accept charitable handouts, but she refused to let her family go hungry.
[47] Samuel, *Rescuing the Children*, p.6.
[48] Juliette Bénichou, *Comme la paille dans le vent. Une jeune fille juive sous l'Occupation* (Paris: Les Editions de Paris, 1997), p.135.

remembered sitting on a bench watching the infamous Vel d'Hiv arrests of 16-17 July 1942 unfold before her. Some 16,000 men, women and children were herded into the sports stadium by French police, subsequent to their removal to Drancy and then deportation to the East. The round-up took place on a huge scale and targeted both French and foreign Jews alike, further exposing the true face of French anti-Semitism in police complicity and the inclusion of children under 16 'so as not to be separated from their parents'. 'It was on that bench that I left my childhood', she later wrote.[49]

The interrelated nature of generational questioning, maturity, professional and political consciousness was developed in Chapter Two with regards to humanitarian and anti-fascist action on behalf of the Spanish Republic - the nascent political activism of the UJFF, for example, or the humanitarian mission of Samuel to Barcelona. Anti-Semitic persecution forced Jewish women to question their perceptions of ethnicity, politics, nationalism and gender. Kriegel chose to negotiate her relationship to Judaism through a political attachment, to Communism, which she believed would overcome social or ethnic divisions. She commented on

> '... le dégré auquel mon identité communiste a refoulé, anémié, écrasé, ventilé, évacuée, la dimension juive de mon identité telle qu'elle avait émergé de la guerre et de la Résistance.'[50]

Ginette Hirtz, however, took the opposite view after the Vel d'Hiv round-up shattered her perception that French Jews would be protected: 'J'ai senti en cet instant que mon être était juif, en dehors de toute considération de nationalité ou de religion, d'ethnie ou de je ne sais quoi.'[51] These reflections upon identity remind us of the interlinked nature of personal questioning and public experience, and of the inability to understand individual motivations and expectations through a circumscribed collective. The ways in which the circumstances of war and Occupation forced all women to re-evaluate their sense of ethnic, religious and political self and to reconcile this with their

---

[49] Annie Kriegel, *Réflexion sur les Questions Juives* (Paris: Hachette, 1984), p.19, cited in Susan Zucotti, *The Holocaust, the French, and the Jews* (New York: Basic Books, 1993), p.104.

[50] Annie Kriegel, *Ce que j'ai cru comprendre* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1991), p.770. Kriegel eventually broke with the PCF in 1956. Lucette Valensi and Nathan Wachtel, *Jewish Memories* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991), p.199, challenge the representation of Communist ideology as the dissolution of Jewish identity, pointing out that the PCF mostly grouped Jews in Yiddish sub-sections, in which members shared affinities of language, religion and locality.

[51] Hirtz, *Les Hortillonnages*, p.74.

perception of French nationality and citizenship, has been an underlying theme throughout each chapter on women's social action under Occupation.

Creating solidarity through ethnicity and maternalism

Having looked at personal and professional reactions to anti-Semitic legislation and persecution that prefigured many Jewish women's social action under Occupation, this section will briefly comment upon Jewish housewives' protests. Although not immediately related to the discussion of social welfare at the heart of this thesis, the demonstrations were significant as personal expressions of anger and frustration at the failure of the authorities and the sanctioned Jewish relief organisations to provide for the community, as well as public expressions of solidarity against hardship and repression. The discussion of Jewish women's responses to Communism prompts a further consideration of the idea of forging solidarity across partisan lines. This section will expand upon the previous chapter's discussion of women's public activism, pointing to the ways in which the interwar rhetoric of maternalism and familialism achieved additional poignancy under Occupation in politicising and mobilising Jewish women's action.

Building upon the anti-fascist groupings that concentrated on refugees and internees, and the housewives' committees of the underground PCF that fomented dissent in the neighbourhood, the Party recognised the opportunity to generate mass support through the 'feminine' and domestic - a two-pronged approach that targeted all women irrespective of ethnicity or religiosity. The links between the Jewish community and PCF were already strong in working-class quarters and both were subject to repression. However, the specificity of the Jewish experience should be noted. Anti-Jewish legislation that made food and material goods more difficult to procure or employment quotas that let to economic impoverishment, for example, all contributed to a direct judicial onslaught on the Jewish family that was bewildering in its intensity. Jewish women were therefore targeted not just in the professional sphere but also in the domestic one, as consumers, mothers and housewives. In this way, they offered a groundswell of discontent and anger against the regime and could be legitimately mobilised, alongside their Gentile counterparts, through their role in the moral economy.

Following the Vel d'Hiv round-ups, some 200 women attacked the UGIF's offices in Paris demanding to know the whereabouts of the arrested and to call for their release. In fact, the police had been monitoring public

disturbances related to the 'Jewish Question' since the beginning of the Occupation, with files noting Jewish housewives' demonstrations. Under the auspices of the Union of Jewish Women (UFJ), women protested at CCOJA's offices against the Pithiviers internments in June and July 1941, with the Paris police noting '[l]e mécontentement s'accroît de jour en jour parmi les juifs de la Capitale contre le Comité de Coordination.'[52] The previous day, some 100 women, the majority of whom did not speak French it was noted, invaded the Comité's offices and hounded its employees as 'Jewish Gestapo'.[53] A report filed a few days later noted that 200 Jewish women had crowded onto the Boulevard Malesherbes, vowing to keep returning until their demands were met.[54] Increased surveillance was undertaken in the 10th, 11th, 18th, 19th and 20th arrondissements (predominantly Jewish working-class areas).[55] Police tried to ascertain whether the Jews involved - men and women, French and foreign - belonged to the Jewish sub-section of the ex-PCF, a further confirmation of Vichy's racial and cultural stereotyping of the JudeoBolshevik as its primary enemy.

These women were creating a public disturbance, as wives and mothers, to highlight their anger at the Comité's complicity in their community's arrest and internment, as well as calling for better provisioning and information in the neighbourhood in general. Poznanski comments that these demonstrations also highlighted the ambivalence of some sectors of Jewish society towards the official aid agencies.[56] The idea of legitimacy was significant: official Jewish agencies were de-legitimised in the eyes of the populace for their relationship to the occupier and/or authorities whereas local initiatives, such as rue Amelot, were held to reflect the genuine needs and convictions of their constituents. Women acting in this public, vocal manner generated negative publicity for Vichy's gendered ideology regarding acceptable and correct womanhood, yet Vichy had deemed them unfeminine and thereby excluded. Paradoxically they were also conforming to gendered prescriptions placing their activism within the domestic sphere. The significance of these women's social actions, however, extended beyond their acts,

---

[52] APP, BA 1812, 79.501-4038. In April 1943, the UFJ became part of Union des Juifs pour la Resistance et l'Entr'aide (UJRE).
[53] APP, BA 1812, 79.501-4038, 26 July 1941.
[54] APP, BA 1812, 79.501-4038, 28 July 1941.
[55] Ibid.
[56] Poznanski, *Jews in France*, p.60.

testifying to a section of the Jewish community's determination not to accept persecution quietly.

Providing social support to the isolated, organising protests and distributing propaganda, for example, were all forms of social action used by Catholic, Communist and Jewish women to maintain the plight of the repressed in the public eye, create civil and administrative disturbance by flooding Vichy with requests and protests, highlight supply failures and demonstrate the moral redundancy of the authorities. Within the underground press, the rhetorical mobilisation of Jewish women's support was achieved through the familial and maternal in which they were primarily addressed as mothers. In July 1943, the Organe du Mouvement National des Femmes Juives dans La Lutte contre le Fascisme released a tract entitled *La Voix des Femmes Juives*, which concentrated on the dates of 14 July (the storming of the Bastille) and the 17 July (a day of vengeance, representing the first anniversary of the Vel d'Hiv round-ups). Addressed to '[m]amans, femmes, jeunes filles juives' and demanding that women '[m]anifestez avec vos soeurs françaises', the tract emphasised the solidarity of French women in sharing the same demands, irrespective of religion, race and ethnicity. It called for funds, clothing, an end to deportations, bread for their children, release of POWs, *nourrices* for children in need, return of the deportees and death to traitors.[57] The use of 'il faut que' reminded women of their duty to act and to think of *mères martyres* forced to hand their children over for safe-keeping. The continuity and currency of such emotive language - speaking of female obligation, suffering and sacrifice - across the 'denominations' was striking. Maternalist logic was again key to the rhetorical mobilisation of women's social action, binding women to their duty as wives and mothers in a shared language of obligation and sacrifice. The UJRE, in particular, distributed tracts that were designed to elicit inter-faith support, for example, specifically addressing mothers: 'Mamans Françaises, songez aux mères juives à qui l'on veut arracher leurs enfants pour les envoyer à la mort.'[58] In this way, the underground press became a vital generator of solidarity, through the promotion of women's shared identities as mothers, not as Jews, Catholics or Communists.

---

[57] CDJC, Fonds Gestapo France, XLIX-2b, *La Voix des Femmes Juives*, (July 1943), pp.1-4 (p.1).
[58] CDJC, Fonds Lucien Lubin, CMXXV-81, citing a UJRE tract dated 13 February 1943.

Maternalist logic was a means to elicit popular support in protest at the persecution of Jews and the repressive measures of the authorities. It was also a driving force within the Jewish community itself - conscious of women's innate relationship to the continuation of the Jewish family and of Judaism itself - that reached its apogee in actions to spare Jewish children from deportation, detailed in the final section's concentration upon the OSE. Juliette Bénichou's grandmother highlighted the importance of physical survival:

> 'J'ai fait ce que j'avais à faire. En période de persécution, le devoir des vieux Juifs est d'essayer de sauver un garçon et une fille en âge de procréer... Un couple. À partir de là, tout peut encore recommencer. Et le devoir des jeunes est de se laisser protéger, de survivre à tout prix.'[59]

But this was linked to a spiritual survival in which actions to save the children, and adults where possible, determined not only the physical continuation of the Jewish population but that of an entire culture, tradition and religion. The concept of maternity functioned as a rhetorical support to the community, offering hope and a future. The pervasiveness of familialist and maternalist rhetoric also had significance to the OSE, in the continuation of welfare roles providing 'social motherhood' to those in need.

Professional commitment, ethnic solidarity and social utility

Following brief commentary on the activities of the OSE under Occupation, the remainder of this chapter will concentrate on its female personnel, firstly to understand the motivations for their involvement, whether related to practical questions, ethnicity or through circumstance. Existing perspectives on the OSE - most notably Sabine Zeitoun's work of the same name, subtitled 'Du légalisme à la Résistance - have focused on the administrative, logistical and resistance aspects of its activities. [60] This discussion will concentrate throughout on the reflections and language of the women involved, not just their actions, to develop a picture of the multifaceted nature of personal motivation, duty and experience. Secondly, the section will illustrate the persistence of questions surrounding professionalisation within

---

[59] Bénichou, *Comme la paille dans le vent*, p.115.

[60] See Sabine Zeitoun, *L'œuvre de Secours aux Enfants (OSE) sous l'Occupation en France* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1990) for a detailed account of the OSE's origins, relationship to the UGIF and its activities in the southern zone. Sabine Zeitoun, *Ces enfants qu'il fallait sauver* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1989) offers a wider view of the numerous inter-faith networks and activities designed to save the Jewish children in France.

social welfare work and its role in generating renewed ethnic affiliation and politicisation in order to consider Jewish women's activities under Occupation as an aspect in the wider development of Jewish social welfare. Instead of engaging with the prevalent literature regarding saving the children as a hallmark of Jewish resistance, it focuses in a different direction, pointing to the salience of interwar, interpersonal contacts and networks - in anti-fascism, feminism and scouting, for example - to Jewish women's Occupation history.

The medico-social organisation, the OSE, concentrated its activities on two main areas: the internment camps and children's homes. Pedagogical activities came to the fore from very early on in the Occupation, protecting children in homes or in hiding with families, and providing them with some semblance of support and stability. As Samuel pointed out in her *Histoire*, originally Russian, the organisation's title translated as care for Jewish populations.[61] However, it is now widely known as Œuvres de Secours aux Enfants (OSE), reflecting its predominant Occupation activity and the work for which it is most remembered. Pre-war medico-social activities concentrated on *gouttes de lait*, nurseries and consultations for Jewish communities in need, the provision of nursery schooling, refectories, *clubs scolaires* and *colonies de vacances*. With the creation of the UGIF, the OSE in effect became its health services agency, officially incorporated as the UGIF's 3rd division, Santé. Between 1940-2 OSE had a relatively stable system in place - 'systématiquement surveillées et régulièrement secourues' - which was able to adapt to meet evolving circumstances.[62] A network of social workers in the large cities worked alongside dispensaries, generally headed by a doctor and *monitrice sociale*. Each region was divided into teams.[63] People were checked regularly, vaccinations given, food supplied by the Red Cross, Suisse Secours and pharmaceutical products by the Unitarian Service Committee (USC).[64] A report on the OSE's activities in Marseilles commented that a new medico-social centre had been opened with the assistance of the USC through which social workers, 'une équipe de jeunes assistantes compétentes et dévouées s'attaquait à son travail', provided for the community's immediate needs, alongside longer-term sanitary, hygiene and medical developments. For

[61] Samuel, 'Historique de l'OSE', p.2.
[62] CDJC, Fonds Lucien Lublin, CMXXIII-3/b, note on OSE activities in the unoccupied zone between June 1940 and April 1941, dated 27 December 1943, pp.1-17 (p.4).
[63] Ibid, p.2.
[64] Ibid., pp.3-4.

example, the social services team looked to improve conditions at the children's welcome centres, created a garden and an infirmary. Contacts were also maintained with a network of *nourrices* to ensure monitoring of the child's health and payment.[65]

The OSE continued its assistance to local Jewish communities while making increased provision for the rising numbers being herded into the concentration camps of the south. The camp at Gurs was the main centre of the OSE's social work. An early report on the camp highlighted the appalling difficult conditions which numerous social workers undertook to improve, with little or no formal training in place.[66] 'Tout est à faire', the report noted: some 12,500 refugees, of whom 6,000 had recently arrived from the Palatinate and Baden, included over 5,000 women and 500 children.[67] There had been 102 deaths from typhus in the several weeks following the arrival of refugees from St Cyprian, the majority of whom had been elderly Germans. Conditions were primitive:

> 'Quant aux infirmières et à l'hôpital, on a l'impression, en les parcourant, de visiter les postes de secours d'une division en campagne, qui n'a jamais été ravitaillés ni en matériel, ni en médicaments.'[68]

The situation at Gurs was desolate, prompting UGIF-S leader Raymond Raoul Lambert to remark that it was 'like a war zone'.[69] The OSE undertook practical measures: improving the sanitation system with better irrigation and drainage; persuading the Commission des Camps to prolong the 'winter campaign' to help sustain the ill in the cold; as well as recognising the need for cultural and educational activities to keep people physically and mentally occupied.[70] Such actions included creating an orchestra, organising a sports pitch and schooling facilities.[71] While OSE reports emphasised the positive achievements made and good relations between the camp and the surrounding community, pervasive anti-Semitism can be seen in a *Paris-Soir* article describing 'les hordes rouges,

---

[65] AIU, Archives de l'OSE, Boite XXVI, Bobine I, 'OSE Marseilles'.
[66] CDJC, Fonds FSJF, CCXX-2, R.R. Lambert, 'Rapport sur la Situation des Internés Israélites du Camp de Gurs', undated, pp.1-4. See also CDJC, Fonds FSJF, CCXVII-51, the depositions of Hanna Schramm and Maria Schendt on life at Gurs.
[67] Ibid., p.2.
[68] Ibid., p.3.
[69] Ibid., p.4.
[70] AIU, Archives de l'OSE, Boite XVII, Bobine 7, Commission des Camps, 'Rapport succinct sur l'activité de la Commission de Février à Novembre 1941', pp.1-8 (p.1-2).
[71] Ibid., pp.3-4.

étrangers suspects, authentiques français, obstinés à rester pacifiques' interned in the Pyrenees, a region 'gangrenée par la peste juive'.[72]

The rigorous, professional system of placement which the OSE followed in the cities and the social welfare system it engendered in the camps were tested to the limit by the increasing volatility of the situation. The situation changed abruptly from July-August 1942 and the OSE had to adapt its branches accordingly, again prioritising the children. In theory, it was easier to liberate children under 15 years old as they were not under police surveillance and had no need for identity cards. Officially, they had not been interned, but had 'voluntarily accompanied' their parents and would be released once a structure was in place to receive them.[73] Vivette Samuel, a voluntary internee for the OSE at Rivesaltes, noted that after the summer round-ups in the southern zone took place, herding Jews into the camps of Rivesaltes, Les Milles and Vénisseux, parents would spontaneously offer their children to the OSE for safekeeping - an implicit response to, and recognition of, the situation worsening.[74] Andrée Salomon, head of the OSE's social services, also commented on the heightened internment numbers in the summer of 1942 in which 'l'attitude de plus en plus rigoureuse du pouvoir central, remplaçant les internés sauvés par d'autres, paralysait finalement toute action sociale.'[75] Here, Salomon would appear to be making a distinction between social and other, more overt, forms of action, signifying that something new was needed to challenge the feeling of being overwhelmed and paralysed by the authorities' unrelenting internment and deportation of the Jews. The evolution of medico-social activities and release of children from the camps towards clandestine efforts to secure and sustain the children in hiding - a task that was inherently politicised as resistance by its dangerous, clandestine nature - thereby succeeded in inverting the notion of a 'rigorous' administration and 'paralysed' Jewish social services.

Salomon was a vital cog in the OSE's positioning and training of social welfare workers in the southern camps. Conscious of the need to maintain as professional a system as possible within the bounds of realism, the OSE and other medico-social and humanitarian aid agencies recognised the need for volunteer, non-professional staff to meet needs. An undated letter from Marc

---

[72] CDJC, Fonds FSJF, CCXIV-36, *Paris-Soir*, 20 August 1942, pp.1-3. (pp.1-2).
[73] CDJC, Fonds Latour, DLXI-93, Andrée Salomon's testimony, pp.1-17 (p.10).
[74] Samuel, *Rescuing the Children*, p.76.
[75] CDJC, Fonds Lucien Lublin, CMXXIII-3/b, p.9.

Jarblum to the OSE in Lyon stated that there were young women looking for employment as teachers and social workers should the OSE be able to find them placement.[76] Vivette Samuel also attributed her actions to a feeling of wanting to end her idleness after leaving Paris. Due to contacts she had made in Marseilles and through friendships made on her trip to Barcelona during the Spanish civil war, who were allied to the USC, she visited the latter 'pour savoir si je pouvais "faire quelque chose"'.[77] Samuel was told that the USC had no positions, but that the OSE were looking for someone to assist in the camps. Her anti-fascist convictions and circumstance, rather than Jewish ethnicity, had brought her to the position of social worker at Rivesaltes. Her desire 'to do something' was shared by many: 'c'est plus par solidarité, parce que nous sentions épargnés que nous souhaitions être utiles aux autres', she wrote.[78] Samuel's use of utility within the various archival and autobiographical accounts examined here, points to its deep personal significance as both a motivation and belief.

Social welfare offered women like Samuel a practical means to keep busy, to assist, and was not necessarily an engagement predicated on ethnic identity. It also reflected the opportunities presented by personal contacts and geographical circumstance. Ruth Lambert, Vivette's counterpart at the camp of Gurs from 1940-3, was also a volunteer. Her appointment stemmed from a chance meeting with Andrée Salomon on a train to Lyon in December 1940. Salomon had been a friend since the early 1930s in Strasbourg. 'Où es-tu? J'aurais tant besoin de toi au Camp de Gurs', Lambert recalled being told.[79] While Samuel's decision was not predicated on any sense of Jewish cultural or ethnic affiliation, Lambert's youth was one 'riche en formation juive, musicale, sociale et humaine'.[80] Judaism was a central part of Lambert's identity as a French woman. The religious specificity of her actions reflected her own beliefs, but not necessarily those of its recipients, however. She had had some experience in social welfare, having worked at Strasbourg's Home Israélite de Jeunes Filles (HIJF) when she was 17 years old.

The unique circumstances of war, Occupation and the Final Solution meant that recruitment could not be limited to those with qualifications. For

---

[76] CDJC, Fonds FJSF, CCXIV-2, undated.
[77] Samuel, 'Historique de l'OSE', p.6.
[78] Ibid., p.10.
[79] CDJC, Fonds Lucien Lublin, CMXXIII-2, Ruth Lambert, 'Témoignage. Le camp de Gurs' (Lyon, 1984), pp.1-22 (p.2).
[80] Ibid., p.2.

Vivette, '[j]e trouve que c'était une grande marquée de confiance puisque je n'avais jamais fait de travail social.'[81] Like the PCF and *secouriste* initiatives reacting to need, the OSE was acutely aware of the importance of qualified personnel and training opportunities to produce capable and confident staff. In April 1942, the OSE set up a Jewish social welfare school, L'Ecole Juive d'Assistantes Sociales. Its lifespan, however, was short-lived, the Préfet visiting in person to forbid its continuation under the pretext that 'les assistants que l'OSE essaimerait à travers la France, pourraient facilement être tentées de s'adonner à des menées anti-nationales.'[82] The 30 pupils who had joined were forced to leave and the school was disbanded. It was significant that at the height of the war, a Jewish organisation was looking to train young women as professionals to work in the social welfare sector. The OSE recognised its duty to provide, where possible, the proper channels for training and offer social workers the prospect of a career, something that that the authorities had de-legitimated through the anti-Jewish statutes. The women who volunteered for OSE work - whatever their motivation - came to be professional, salaried workers for whom the concept of professionalism was not necessarily marked by qualifications but by commitment, diligence and experience. The conclusion will consider this question further, commenting upon the impetus that war and Occupation gave to the further professionalisation and status of the sector.

While circumstance proved no barrier to the persistence of concerns regarding professional training, it also reflected upon the regional dynamic of membership and the fundamental role of interpersonal contacts in joining. At the outbreak of war, OSE members had mostly been of Russian extraction, but war and exodus brought a large number of women from Alsace and Lorraine into the organisation: such as Metz-born Charlotte Sarah Helman, who followed duties in Rivesaltes with work at OSE children's homes in Limoges, Corrèze and Toulouse; or Berthe Raichvarg, who left school in 1932 with no financial means for a secondary education.[83] Working from 1935-1944 for Securité Sociale under the false name Nordier, she was able to procure documentation for, and provide assistance to, the OSE homes in the region.[84] These women

[81] Samuel, 'Historique de l'OSE', p.6.
[82] AIU, Archives de l'OSE, Boite XXVI, Bobine I, 'Le Centre OSE de Marseille, 1941-1943', pp.1-9 (p.5). Latent anti-Semitism was clear in the decision, implicitly referring to the Jew as 'other' and a threat to national security.
[83] Samuel, 'Historique de l'OSE', p.4.
[84] Helman was to stay at Bergen-Belsen until 1947 to assist the reintegration of the camp population; see the CDJC's biographical entry at:

were young and predominantly single, a Jewish corollary to the women of the 1930s who had forged a career path in the burgeoning social welfare sphere of the interwar period, of which it should be remembered Jews themselves were a part (there had been no need to designate them as such). Andrée Salomon had enjoyed a religious and cultural Jewish childhood, like Ruth Lambert, and her Alsatian background and social welfare experience were to determine the course of many individuals' wartime histories.[85]

While the scope and resistance activities of the OSE have been well documented, including its relationship to non-Jewish relief organisations, less scholarly attention has been placed on the personal connections and networks that facilitated its operations. Salomon's Occupation history is a striking demonstration of the way in which the feminist, pacifist, social welfare, humanitarian groupings of women from across religious and ethnic communities worked together, again cementing the significance of looking at the continuities from interwar into wartime women's networking. Salomon paid tribute to the numerous individuals from other organisations who assisted her: Madeleine Baraud of CIMADE (the impetus behind which came from the population expulsions in Alsace-Lorraine, setting up a social welfare system to care for the refugees in the Dordogne and Haute-Vienne); Blanche Dreyfus, a Red Cross nurse who collaborated with the OSE in organising escape routes from the camp at Rivesaltes; and Jacqueline Gineste, a USC nurse at Rivesaltes whom Salomon subsequently recruited for the OSE home at Eaux-les-Bonnes from 1942 to the Liberation.[86]

Continuity of personnel between the pre-war and wartime period was a marked feature of social welfare assistance during the Occupation. It was true not only between Jewish organisations involved alongside the OSE such as the EIF, WIZO, FSJF, Colonie Scolaire, Cercle Ouvrier (Bund) and Communist Jewish groups, such as Solidarité, but also of the relationships formed with other French and international social welfare institutions, such as Aide de la

---

http://mms.pegasis.fr/jsp/core/MmsRedirector.jsp?id=505&type=RESISTANT. Accessed 27 April 2008. For Raichvarg's testimony, see CDJC, Fonds UGIF, DCCCXL-5/6, Berthe Raichvarg, *Plus jamais ça. Recueil de souvenirs d'une jeune Israélite pendant l'Occupation, 1940-45.*

[85] Salomon's adolescence, like Lambert's, was marked by scouting. Since 1933 Salomon had worked for the Caisse Centrale de l'Est, welcoming German-Jewish refugees in need of welfare support; her first contacts with the OSE came in 1935. See Salomon's obituary, Vivette Samuel, 'Une Militante', *L'Arche*, 343 (1985), pp.42-44 (p.44).

[86] CDJC, Fonds Latour, DLXI-93, Salomon, pp.1-17 (p.9, p.3).

Caisse d'Assurances Sociales, Secours Suisse, SSAE and the Red Cross.[87] The OSE was therefore but one in a constellation of welfare organisations hoping to secure better material and moral conditions in the French internment camps and to organise the safe release of inmates where possible. The groups divided the work to be done between themselves, for example, the Quakers and Swiss agencies (Secours Suisse) concentrated on providing food, the OSE on improving hygiene and sanitary conditions and the USC on education and schooling.[88] The presence of these groups was tolerated by Vichy - it did not want to displease the neutral countries whose organisations provided much of this humanitarian aid. As Salomon later reflected, '[l]'ordre de "regroupement familial" de Vichy a crée, par son hypocrisie même, un lien plus étroit entre les différentes œuvres: la CIMADE, le Secours Suisse, les Quakers etc.'[89] The interdenominational composition of the so-called Nimes Committee, chaired by Donald Lowrie, was an organisational mirroring of the personal bonds which Salomon found of inestimable use.[90] Professional contacts and personal friendships thus enabled women to develop experience, expertise and confidence in relief works that they had hitherto found themselves involved in often circumstantially and voluntarily.

In evaluating the extent to which interwar associationalism had forged vital interpersonal contacts for the welfare networks operating in and between the camps, this chapter will also make reference to feminist connections and experiences in the interwar scouting movement as shaping subsequent social welfare employment. Françoise Seligmann's personal trajectory highlights the indispensable support provided by pre-war networks, as well as the role of circumstance in the evolution of her Occupation social action outside of camp welfare initiatives.[91] Although Seligmann's memoirs open in August 1940, much

---

[87] See CDJC, Fonds FSJF, CCXVII-51. The German Jew Hanna Schram paid testament to the diverse activities of individuals and organisations in the camp at Gurs, who strove to provide welfare 'sans distinction de religion', p.8.
[88] CDJC, Fonds Lucien Lublin, CMXXIII-3/b, p.4.
[89] CDJC, Fonds Latour, DLXI-93, Salomon, p.9.
[90] AIU, Archives de l'OSE, Boite XV, Bobine VI, 'Who's Who du Comité de Coordination de Nîmes' detailed the committee's members, including: Madeleine Barot (CIMADE); Père Chaillet (Cardinal Gerlier's representative); Lucie Chevalley (SSAE); Eleanor Dubois (Secours Suisse aux Enfants); Mary Elmes (American Friends Service Committee); Noel Field (USC); Abbé Lagarde (Aumônier-Général Catholique); Raymond Lambert (CAR) and others.
[91] The archives of Seligmann's mother, Fonds Laure Beddoukh (3AF), are held at Angers. See http://bu.univ-angers.fr/EXTRANET/CAF/. Accessed 10 March 2008. Laure was a member of numerous feminist associations, including the UFSF and FGF. She was particularly involved in recognising the importance of

of the testimony relates to the pre-war friendships and experiences of her feminist mother, Laure Beddoukh, in which the interconnectedness of women's histories are evident. In particular, her mother's friendship with the Catholic feminist lawyer Germaine Poinso Chapuis was of fundamental importance during Occupation, helping secure employment to keep Laure and her daughter financially afloat. Chapius was motivated by a sense of shame at the anti-Jewish legislation proffered by a government in 'her name'.[92] Assisting those in need was also, for her, a question of solidarity and a personal conviction that something should be done. Securing safe housing and employment were thus two means of ensuring both a physical and financial survival.

Seligmann's wartime experiences, like many others, cross and merge the boundaries from social action to political resistance. In July 1941 Françoise worked in St. Gaudens for three months as a social assistant for the Centre de détention des jeunes mineures délinquantes de la région de Paris and then from October 1941 as a social assistant for the Tribunal d'Enfants in Lyon.[93] Eventually Françoise became involved with Combat and was asked to leave her official social welfare position to become a full-time clandestine operative alongside Yvette Baumann and Jacqueline Bernard, whose social activism was discussed in the previous chapter - again, suggestive of the strong inter-communal links across racial or political lines between activists. While living as an undeclared Jew, Seligmann stayed in the feminist Marcelle Kraemer Bach's flat, who had crossed the border to Switzerland for safety, and accompanied the endangered from Lyon to a friend's flat by the Swiss border, from where they were conveyed across.[94] Seligmann's experience of social action under Occupation, in both official and clandestine social services networks, reflected her humanitarianism and her need to demonstrate her affiliation to those in need. She testified:

> 'Le déchoir de solidarité à l'égard de ces victimes exige de nous le sacrifice du confort d'une vie tenue à l'écart des souffrances d'autrui. Il faut accepter de rester constamment "en alerte", prêt à se lever et à se mobiliser pour soutenir la cause des opprimés.'[95]

---

training young women in professional careers through her own experience as a sténodactylographer and as a single mother.

[92] Seligmann, *Liberté*, p.48.

[93] Both appointments were arranged through Poinso-Chapuis' contacts in the court system. Ibid., pp.55-61.

[94] Ibid., pp.62-74.

[95] Ibid., p.390.

Although Françoise herself was one of the 'oppressed' by virtue of her Jewish identity and expressed her solidarity with the victims of suffering, the language she used - 'ces victimes', 'nous' - suggests a personal sense of distance between the two.

Language is of utmost significance in reconstructing the motivations, remembrance and experience of women such as Seligmann, Ruth Lambert at Gurs or Vivette Samuel at Rivesaltes, and the negotiation of their ethnic identity through the parameters of their social engagement. References in secondary works to Lambert or Samuel's social action normally focus on their actions at Gurs and Rivesaltes and, in Samuel's case, on her subsequent involvement with the OSE after the war. However, an over-looked facet is the way in which they reconstructed and reflected upon their experiences and their motivations for engagement. Life as a social worker at Gurs was very hard, but personal support and encouragement enabled Ruth Lambert to feel that she was making a positive contribution: mistaken by two Baden women interned at Gurs for Mlle Laure Weil, founder of the HIJF and a well-respected Alsatian-Jewish figure, Lambert looked back on this: 'C'était ce genre d'encouragement que nous permettait implicitement de continuer la tache.'[96] She, too, looked to provide that encouragement in others, writing to Monsieur Capel: 'Il faut que nous continuons à être prêts, tant que nous avons mêmes la possibilité de l'être. ... Votre visite ici est toujours utile.'[97] When Samuel arrived at Rivesaltes in November 1941, there were 20,000 people in the camp, of whom 5,000 were children aged between four and 15 years old.[98] Travelling to the camp with her predecessor, Charles L, she was told 'Votre rôle est, avant tout, d'être présente'.[99] The reminder to 'be present' echoes, like a refrain, through Vivette's journal at this time, as she increasingly understood the psychological significance of her physical presence in the camp, alongside the practical duties

---

[96] CDJC, Fonds Lucien Lublin, CMXXIII-2, Lambert, p.7.
[97] CDJC, Fonds FSJF, CCXX-100. Lambert knew that she was regarded with suspicion by the authorities and quickly developed a code to use in communications with her brother. See CDJC, Fonds Lucien Lublin, CMXXIII-2, Lambert, pp.10-12. Zeitoun notes that the clandestine Garel network tended to exclude social assistants, such as Lambert or Samuel, from operations because they were known to the authorities 'en raison de leurs activités 'douteuses''. See Zeitoun, *L'oeuvre de secours aux Enfants*, p.153.
[98] Samuel, *Rescuing the Children*, p.38. At that time the largest of Vichy's concentration camps, Rivesaltes had originally been a military base for Senegalese soldiers.
[99] AIU, Archives de l'OSE, Boite XVIII, Bobine XIV, Vivette Samuel, 'Journal d'une internée voluntaire', pp.1-36 (p.2).

expected of her.[100] The need for presence as much as action is again suggestive of the use to which volunteerism could be put in such situations where professional training was not always possible in advance. The language with which Samuel described her professional actions demonstrates the primacy of commitment, ability and utility, rather than the attainment of qualifications, in the camp welfare experience.

Samuel quickly came to understand her utility. Living among the camp inmates, she represented their only physical link to a world beyond the barbed wire. She commented on her fellow social workers' awareness that they were placed in positions of moral authority in which men and women double their age and experience sought their advice and assistance, and therein some confidence in their plight. Social welfare thus gave these young women additional legitimacy and standing.[101] In the same vein, Vivette set up an office at Rivesaltes to advertise her presence, as well as to create a welcoming and reassuring environment in which she could talk to the internees and facilitate their decision to agree to the release of their children into the OSE's care.[102] She felt proud to put a poster on the door, advertising the Centre d'hébergement de Rivesaltes, Bureau OSE and its opening hours, and noted how she had added personal touches to make the waiting room more appealing to the women who came, placing flowers on the desk, photographs on the walls, for example.[103] Vivette had intended to work alone, yet within days of beginning her duties, she noted in her journal that several women now performed various tasks for her.[104] She understood the significance, both moral and material, in keeping these women occupied and that it afforded them supplementary rations. On 1 January 1942, Vivette was joined by another assistant, Reinette (Simone Weil), with whom she shared her duties - the former taking over responsibility for social work and Vivette concentrated solely on liberating the children. An OSE report for the months of March to April 1942, highlights the numbers of children involved and the administrative support required to secure their release: in March 1942, 18 children were removed from Rivesaltes, five from Gurs. Nine OSE-owned and five subsidised children's homes were in operation and the OSE was directly looking after 1,300 children,

---

[100] Ibid., p.18.
[101] Vivette Samuel, 'Journal d'une internée voluntaire', *Evidences*, 14 (Novembre 1950), pp.7-12 (p.10).
[102] Samuel, *Rescuing the Children*, p.44.
[103] Samuel, 'Journal d'une internée voluntaire', pp.4-6.
[104] Ibid., p.9.

with an additional 1,400 children being cared for in alternative institutions where their health and welfare were monitored. The following month, 23 children were freed from Rivesaltes and 13 from Gurs; 1,350 children were living in OSE homes.[105]

The language of utility and presence within Lambert's testimony and Samuel's diary and memoirs reflect essential, practical qualities in social action. Such attributes will be further explored in a later discussion of the young women (and men) engaged in clandestine operations outside the OSE camp network, many of whom had - like Ruth Lambert - been scouts in the interwar period. Lambert was able to use the camp experience to her advantage in her later social welfare work within the prison service, explaining:

> 'Ce que j'ai appris là-bas ... savoir composer avec des gens dont on n'a ni l'optique, ni les affinités, durer, durer, durer, pour un meilleur bien des gens dont nous avons mission de nous "occuper". Savoir composer sans pour autant être de leur bord.'[106]

Vivette, too, recognised the immensity of the task at hand and questioned her ability to meet such expectations: 'Comme elle est lourde mais exaltante aussi, ma mission! Saurai-je être à la hauteur de ma tâche?'[107] The language of mission, ubiquitous in secular and confessional women's social action, conveyed the degree to which both women perceived their role as resident social workers to be imbued with a moral purpose. [108] The use of 'mission' again reflects the rhetorical positioning of these young social welfare workers' roles as a form of social motherhood, in securing the release of children from the camps, as well as its prescience in contemporary terminology regarding notions of women's responsibility and duty.

Following Vivette Samuel's personal and professional path upon leaving Rivesaltes enables us to demonstrate the continued significance of pre-war contacts in refugee associations and cross-party anti-fascism across

---

[105] AIU, Archives de l'OSE, Boite XXXII, Bobine 21, Report for April and May 1942. 20 young girls had been liberated and sent to Centre des (illegible) Israélites, with other convoys in preparation.
[106] CDJC, Fonds Lucien Lublin, CMXXIII-2, Lambert, p.12.
[107] Samuel, 'Journal d'une internée voluntaire', p.5. Samuel's journal noted on 22 May 1942 that the previous day had seen the last convoy of children released from Rivesaltes and 'ma mission s'achève, je quitterai moi-même en quelques jours'. She was replaced at Rivesaltes by Simone Weil (Reinette).
[108] Language could be pragmatic as well as rhetorical. Ruth Lambert was relieved of her duties at Gurs on 15 July 1943 for having 'dépassant les limites de sa mission', according to Ministry documentation. See CDJC, Fonds UGIF, CDXI-27.

interconfessional groups under Occupation. In June 1942 Samuel left for Lyon, where she worked as an OSE delegate to Amitié Chrétienne and Abbé Glasberg.[109] She also visited the foreign worker units (Groupements de Travailleurs Etranger; GTE) in the Savoie and Haute-Savoie.[110] Latent bureaucratic anti-Semitism was seen in the ministerial authorisation granted to her on condition that the role was strictly limited to 'un travail d'aide et de secours'.[111] Connections had been made with the foreign worker units most particularly at Rivesaltes, where exit authorisations were obtained to increase the possibility of facilitating escape.[112] One organisation heavily involved in GTE releases and escapes was the Service Social d'Aide aux Emigrants (SSAE), which was led by the feminist social worker Lucie Chevalley, its President from 1932 to 1964. Officially operating as an interface between immigrant organisations and the authorities, its clandestine operation Entr-aide Temporaire (ET) worked to disperse children into safekeeping, through its connections with rue Amelot, the EIF and OSE, as well as to secure evacuations from work camps and regroup families safely. It therefore operated on two levels: adults, led by Mme Béchard and children, led by Denise Milhaud.[113] That the SSAE was founded with the financial and institutional support of Catholic, Jewish and Protestant organisations, demonstrates its truly multi-confessional ethos.

Samuel's personal history mirrored the organisational trajectory of the OSE: Poznanski notes that Rivesaltes was closed in 1943 and Gurs became the primary camp in the south.[114] During this period, the OSE began to close

---

[109] Samuel was authorised by Amitié Chrétienne to enter the camps and distribute material aid on behalf of the Oeuvre de Secours aux Réfugiés Etrangers. See Samuel, *Rescuing the Children*, Appendices.
[110] The SSAE was the official provider of social services for the GTE groups. See Sarah Farmer, 'Out of the Picture: Foreign Labour in Wartime France' in Sarah Fishman et al (eds.), *France at War. Vichy and the Historians* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2000), pp.249-260. The Jewish GTE groups were separated from the non-Jewish ones in the summer of 1942.
[111] Samuel, *Rescuing the Children*, Appendices, 10 July 1942 authorisation from Vichy's Secretariat au Travail. Samuel noted that her 'Ordre de Mission' was made at the request of Donald Lowrie, President of the Comité de Coordination (Nîmes Committee).
[112] CDJC, Fonds Latour, DLXI-93, Salomon, p.6, suggested that guards at Rivesaltes were civil, not military, hence they were easier to persuade/bribe.
[113] Patrick Cabanel, 'Les femmes protestantes dans la France des années 1940: à la recherche d'une spécificité', in Jacques Fijalkow (ed.), *Les femmes dans les années quarante. Juives et non-Juives, souffrances et résistance* (Paris: Les Editions de Paris, 2004), pp.137-156 (p.148).
[114] Poznanski, *Jews in France*, p.375.

down its homes, dispersing the children and increasingly moving into fully clandestine work whilst functioning through the UGIF in an 'official' capacity. Vivette worked as an administrator for the clandestine network (OSE-Garel) in Limoges and then Chambery, securing the placement of children in hiding. Forging cross-confessional, clandestine networks enabled stronger social action, operating on two paths: primarily to ensure the safety of Jewish children placed in hiding and also to support non-Jewish and Jewish young adults evading forced labour to the Reich.

Young women attached to the OSE therefore worked in two main networks: internment camps and children's homes/placements. The personnel was both Jewish and non-Jewish, although the former was dominant. Denise Baumann, born in 1921, was the same generation as Samuel, Lambert, Helman and Raichvarg. Young and single, they represented a continuation of the 1930s figure of social motherhood in welfare. In their OSE roles, they were assisted by the work of other committed social services personnel, grouped in an organisation to which they were close, called the Sixième. La Sixième, Amicale or the Service Social des Jeunes (SSJ) was officially known as the 6th division of the UGIF in charge of Youth. Created by the heads of the Jewish scouting movement in August 1942 with the first spate of convoys to East, the SSJ was created specifically to save young Jews from deportation.[115] However, it quickly evolved into an organisation to prevent the deportation of young men, known as *réfractaires*, to the Reich for forced labour alongside aid to the Jewish community, a demonstration of its ecumenical commitment to fighting repression in its multiple forms. Entirely clandestine, the SSJ worked in the southern zone, with its headquarters in Grenoble.[116] Each regional head had

[115] A January 1943 decree ordered all scouting movements to disband in the South (in the North, scouting movements had been forbidden from the beginning of Occupation). In May 1943, the EIF and Mouvement de la Jeunesse Sioniste (Zionist Youth Movement, MJS, created in May 1942) joined forces in the south and in August were placed under the orders of the Organisation Juive de Combat (OJC; previously known as Armée Juive). For more details on the French Zionist movement during the Occupation, see Catherine Nicault and Anne Grynberg, 'La résistance sioniste sous l'Occupation,' *Pardès*, 16 (1992), *Les Juifs de France dans la Seconde Guerre Mondiale,* pp.145-168. In Paris, in January 1944, the Sixième and PE (physical education) section of the MJS were coordinated under the name Service Social EIF-MJS de Paris.

[116] The seven regions within which the SSJ operated were: Grenoble, Lyons, Clermont-Ferrand, Limoges, Toulouse, Marseilles and Nice. In March 1943, the SSJ installed itself in Paris; see CDJC, Fonds FSJF, CCXVII-II.

some 10 or so social assistants, who were predominantly - but not exclusively - female:

> 'jeunes filles chargées de visiter régulièrement, une ou deux fois par mois selon les possibilités des communications, tous les jeunes de leurs secteurs respectifs.'[117]

These social workers were given responsibility for facilitating the arrival and well-being of young people into families that had agreed to accommodate them. Professionalism was clearly important in a system staffed by individuals dedicated to their work and trained, where possible, and designed, despite its clandestine nature, to be systematic and structured. The identity of each child or adolescent placed with a family had to be kept hidden from an administrative machine designed to target Jews and deport them. The Sixième was thus comprised of numerous departments designed to facilitate the creation and maintenance of false identities alongside the provision of social Assistance: Laboratoire; Service Synthétisation et doublage; Enqûetes Sociales; Assistance Sociale; and Prospection.[118]

The motivating spirits behind Samuel and Lambert's volunteering for OSE duties - utility, self-discipline and friendship - were also reflected by the degree to which many young women engaged in clandestine social action on behalf of the OSE had been involved in scouting and other related youth organisations in the interwar period. The scouting ethic was fundamental to the way in which the Sixième operated and suggests another means through which young women (and men) could negotiate their relationship to Jewishness in the social sphere, as well as again stressing the continuities from pre-war into wartime initiatives. Scouting encouraged among its members a sense of moral purpose, of friendship and solidarity, and a practical and realistic response to challenging conditions. A report on the SSJ's activities during the period noted:

> 'Le travail de ceux-ci exigeant du nerf, du cran, de la décision, des réflexes rapides dont dépendait la vie même de l'assistant, ceux-ci étaient choisis de préférence parmi les jeunes gens et les jeunes filles ayant passé par le mouvement du scoutisme, donc entraînés à une

---

[117] CDJC, Fonds Lucien Lublin, CMXX-23, 'Rapport sur l'activité du Service Social des Jeunes (1942-1944), pp.1-5 (subtitled Service Clandestine de Résistance et de Lutte contre la Déportation) (p.3), noted that women were more 'suited' to social tasks and less overtly Jewish in appearance.
[118] Ibid., p.2.

certaine discipline et au sens de la camaraderie et des responsabilités.'[119]

Denise Lévy's scouting experiences with the Moissac/de Beaulieu scouts (women's group) led her into active involvement with La Sixième. She noted that her group could pass as young urban women who did not have the means to stay in a hotel and thus were spending their holidays camping in the countryside.[120] When it was disbanded in September 1942, she joined the Sixième and undertook a number of different activities including assisting in passing youths to Spain to rejoin the army in North Africa.[121] Furthering her clandestine operations under the cover afforded by a Red Cross badge, in November 1943 she joined Secours National and circulated throughout departments that were considered 'forbidden' due to the increased incidence of Maquis activity.[122]

Acting in concert with the Red Cross was but one institutional example of the ways in which the SSJ formed strong bonds across denominational and official networks in its clandestine operations. Working 'sans distinction de confession ni d'origine', the SSJ forged vital links with non-Jewish and resistance organisations to prevent the deportation of young French workers and Jews.[123] Lévy's work, under the auspices of Secours National, demonstrates that support networks could be forged across public-private and official-clandestine organisations regardless of ethnic affiliation.[124] Andrée Salomon recalled that Secours National accepted Jewish children in the northern zone for re-housing under false identities, if they did not look overtly Jewish.[125] An SSJ report on relations with the Protestant and Catholic religious community, published after the Liberation, noted the significance of good relations being secured with town halls and prefectures, and particularly with

---

[119] Ibid., p.2, in which it noted both masculine and feminine forms of social assistant(e)s.

[120] CDJC, Fonds Lucien Lublin, CMXX-37, Denise Lévy's testimony; other testimonies by SSJ members held at the CDJC include those of Marie Hammer (CMXX-27), Blanche Raphäel (CMXX-31) and Hélène Katz (CMXX- 35).

[121] By January 1943, Lévy was living in Limoges under a false name.

[122] CDJC, Fonds Lucien Lublin, Lévy; she noted that by June 1944 heightened Milice repression had made her clandestine activities near impossible.

[123] CDJC, Fonds Lucien Lublin, CMXX-23, p.2. In addition, see CDJC, Fonds La Sixième, DXLIX-1 for statistics on their operations.

[124] Lévy worked with Secours National, Assistance Publique, the Caisses de la Compensation et d'Allocation Familiale and with private organisations such as Mouvement Populaire des Familles (MPF) and Aide aux Meres: CDJC, Fonds Lucien Lublin, CMXX-37, Lévy.

[125] CDJC, Fonds Latour, DLXI-93, Salomon, p.15.

religious organisations in order to place Jewish children as well as Christian réfractaires in hiding.[126] Amongst the examples given of individuals assisting the SSJ's work were Mme Monin of L'Entraide Sociale in Grenoble, L'Aide aux Mères in St Etienne, Grenoble and Toulouse, Mlle Coulomb, Assistante du Secours National de Milleu and Mlle Gineste, directrice of Œuvres Sociales de l'Evêché.[127] The report also noted that the SSJ had particularly active relations with Catholic organisations in Montauban:

> 'Signalons que la vitrine de la "Résistance civile" actuellent exposée au Service des Œuvres Sociales de l'Evêché de Montauban est montée presqu'exclusivement avec nos pièces.'[128]

The Jewish resister and historian Anny Latour pointed out that in her experience the diocesan charities operated relatively independently of one another, strengthening their separate links to individuals and other religious bodies, as well as to official sources like Secours National.[129] One such charity, Aide aux Mères, based in St. Etienne, was of great importance to the saving of Jewish children. Set up to provide care and support for single mothers, whether widowed or unwed, it afforded social workers a cover of legality and hence legitimacy in the eyes of an administration that lauded women's familial activism.

> 'L'Aide aux Mères a donné des couvertures aux assistants sociales pour leur permettre de faire le travail de visites aux enfants camouflés avec une apparence de légalité; il fallait qu'elles puissent se déplacer, voyager ...',

Salomon testified.[130] Berthe Sagalow had worked at the St. Etienne town hall until anti-Semitic legislation had removed her from her post. She maintained excellent relations with her colleagues, however, and through the Aide aux

---

[126] CDJC, Fonds Lucien Lublin, CMXX-23, p.3. The report commented on orienting children towards 'métiers manuels'. It is significant that the group was working to offer and provide these children with an employment and profession in order to provide a positive long-term future, not just short-term assistance.
[127] CDJC, Fonds Lucien Lublin, CMXXI-24, 'Rapports du Service Social des Jeunes avec les prêtres Catholiques et Protestantes', Lyon, November 1944, pp.2-3.
[128] Ibid., p.1.
[129] Anny Latour, *The Jewish Resistance in France (1940-1944)* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1981), p.65.
[130] CDJC, Fonds Latour, DLXI-93, Salomon, p.17.

Mères group was able to renew ration cards for hidden Jews in the locality.[131] Madeleine Lyon-Caen, too, believed that the inter-dependency of Jewish-Catholic-Protestant connections was vital. She worked for the OSE, having been contacted by Abbé Glasberg and Georges Garel to disperse Jewish children through the Aide aux Mères network.[132]

The wealth of testimony held in archival collections at the CDJC and AIU records the engagement of these young women in dangerous underground operations to secure the safety of others - offering their life history in terms of their actions, agency and their perceptions and motivations. It is important to question their relationship to their ethnicity, whether an imposed identity by Vichy or something with which they felt a part of, to complete the discussion of social action as a means through which Jews negotiated a sense of professional, ethnic and female self. Denise Baumann worked as a teacher at Château de Masgelier, until it was closed down in 1944 and she moved into liaison work for OSE-Garel. At the children's home, she heard Yiddish spoken for the first time. The children came from mixed nationalities, yet she felt a fraternity in the religious celebrations they shared and a sense of belonging that had been missing.[133] The post was crucial to her nascent sense of affiliation - and identification - with Jewishness as both a culture and a religion. Social action was therefore a key factor in the evolution of her ethnic identity:

> 'Je compris alors l'inanité de lutter contre mon appartenance: je n'étais plus "Israélite" mais juive et j'acceptais mon singularité. On m'avait étiquetée et avec quelle sauvagerie! Ma "juiverie" faisait partie de moi-même, comme ma culture française. Elle me donnait des racines profondes et une force supplémentaire.'[134]

Terminology was important to her: she came to reject the (to her) outmoded notion of Israélite and embraced her *Juiverie*, like Ginette Hirtz and many other young women confronted by racial persecution. The Occupation prompted the rejection of the class- and nation-conscious label *Israélite* in favour of the

---

[131] For additional biographical details, see the CDJC's listing at: http://mms.pegasis.fr/jsp/core/MmsRedirector.jsp?id=520&type=RESISTANT. Accessed 27 April 2008.

[132] Madeleine Lyon-Caen visited the children regularly, paying for their board, providing moral and material support. She took some 88 children and nine adults to La Paix, the group's *maison à rempli* in Chamonix. For further details, see the CDJC entry at: http://mms.pegasis.fr/jsp/core/MmsRedirector.jsp?id=442&type=RESISTANT. Accessed 27 April 2008.

[133] Baumann, *Une Famille*, p.211.

[134] Ibid., p.211.

encompassing, inclusive solidarity of *Juif*. Accepting one's identity as *Juif* became one's marker of ethnic solidarity. Social action therefore represented for many Jewish women a means of rejecting outdated ethnic discord and accepting, instead, ethnic, as well as female, solidarity.

Other young women testified that it was the challenge and excitement offered by such work that influenced their engagement in clandestine social welfare rather than a personal sense of ethnic affiliation. Hélène Katz, alias Claude Rousseau, became close to a local Sixième group in the latter part of the Occupation period precisely because 'leur activité sociale avait un certain attrait, et semblait plus intéressant que notre travail d'assistance ou de secrétaire à l'UGIF à l'époque (février 1944).'[135] Andrée Salomon felt almost criminal in having to expose these young Jews to such danger and responsibility.[136] Of the 88 young men and women who worked for the group from 1942 until Liberation, four were shot, 26 arrested by the Milice and Gestapo or killed in Maquis fighting (some 40 were injured).[137] The organisation was proud of the fact that, while losing almost one-third of its members, 'il n'y eut presque pas de pertes parmi les quelques milliers de jeunes à qui ils firent le sacrifice de leur vie.'[138] Working for the SSJ enabled many young Jewish women to provide support to a community in need, motivated by a genuine desire to assist despite the inherent dangers. Initially, Katz's role was administrative, co-ordinating and centralising all the orders for *l'atelier* and working as a liaison agent in the afternoons for OSE, rue Amelot, EIF and SSJ. However, at the point at which those in charge decided that a social service was needed for adults, Katz asked to join and she began making visits to families to procure aid and papers.[139] In February 1944, the SSJ was assisting three families; by August 1944 that number had risen to 350, highlighting the extent to which the SSJ was providing a vital social service.[140]

For the psychologist and social worker Madeleine Dreyfus, social action was driven by humanitarian concerns, ahead of any recognition of ethnic

---

[135] CDJC, Fonds Lucien Lublin, CMXX-35, Hélène Katz's testimony, p.1. Katz also commented that the opportunity to blend into the background, not to have to wear the star and to be at liberty to come and go with more freedom than anti-Jewish legislation and the curfew permitted, were additional attractions.
[136] CDJC, Fonds Latour, DLXI-93, Salomon, p.13.
[137] CDJC, Fonds Lucien Lublin, CMXX-23, pp.3-5.
[138] Ibid., p.4.
[139] CDJC, Fonds Lucien Lublin, CMXX-35, Katz, pp.1-2.
[140] CDJC, Fonds la Sixième, DXLIX-1 and Fonds UGIF, CDXX1-5, OSE documents, 1941-3.

particularism. Her husband wrote an unpublished memoir of his wife in which he considered 'Ecoute' to be the 'keyword of her action'.[141] Having established throughout her career a pattern of service for others, Madeleine engaged in dangerous social welfare work to save human lives, not because the children were Jewish but because they were in need. Dreyfus' work took her from an official role as principal assistant to Jewish families on behalf of the UGIF into clandestine work for the Garel network. In her typed testimony held in the OSE archives, Dreyfus made reference to her *équipe solidaire* - Margot Cohn and Marthe Sternheim. She also worked in an office alongside Anny Latour of the Sixième.[142] Again, feminine solidarity, encouragement and personal contact was important for the continuance of social action, through which she derived great personal self-fulfilment rather than a sense of self-sacrifice. Several times a month, Dreyfus took the train from Lyon to St. Etienne, changing for Chambon-sur-Ligne with about 10 or so children. Madeleine's husband asked her to stop her clandestine social action soon after the birth of their third child in August 1943, but she was determined to continue until a replacement could be found. Shortly afterwards, Dreyfus was arrested and deported. She later testified: 'Juive, femme de Juif, Française, rien ne me préservait du départ.'[143]

While Dreyfus testified to the inconsequential nature of identity to her personal social action, the specific actions of clandestine Zionist welfare organisations pay testament to the political nature of their social action and highlight the continuity of aims and personnel between the interwar and wartime period: social action was not just predicated on resistance to oppression but in service of a particular social and political ideal. During the Occupation, Secretary-General of the disbanded French Zionist women's movement WIZO, Juliette Stern, headed the UGIF's social services section, using this official basis as a means through which to organise the clandestine placement of some 500 children with Gentile families 'with the co-operation of women leaders of

---

[141] Patrick Henry, 'Madeleine Dreyfus, Jewish Activity, Righteous Jews', *Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture*, 7, 1 (2004), pp.134-146.
[142] AIU, Archives de l'OSE, Boite XV, Bobine 6, Madeleine Dreyfus' testimony, pp.1-13 (p.5). See, also, Latour, *Jewish Resistance* and Renée Poznanski, 'The Geopolitics of Jewish Resistance in France' *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, 15, 2 (Fall 2001), pp.245-265. For an exploration of the specificites of Jewish women's resistance, see Renée Poznanski, 'Women in the French-Jewish Underground. *Shield Bearers of the Resistance?'* in Dalia Ofer and Lenore K. Weitzman (eds.), *Women in the Holocaust* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998), pp.234-252.
[143] AIU, Archives de l'OSE, Madeleine Dreyfus, p.12.

the Catholic and Protestant organisations'.[144] She was assisted by Léa Reich, who had worked for WIZO and UFJP in the 1930s alongside Stern and Yvonne Netter, amongst others. Returning to Paris in August 1941 from the provinces, between July 1942 and August 1944 Reich placed children in hiding, destroyed incriminating files on remaining families and maintained contacts with Resistance groups, notably Marie-Madeleine Fourcade's Alliance network.[145] Official social services in the UGIF were belatedly transformed into what Stern believed to be true social service departments covering medical aid, reparations, clothing, legal and placement issues: 'un service social fantôme, sans bureaux, sans fiches, sans dossiers - je dirai presque sans assistés.'[146] Stern and Reich brought a specific, Zionist inflection to their social welfare work, commenting on the significance that their political convictions had to their sense of professionalism: 'Nous aurons ainsi essayé de mériter notre titre d'Assistante juive et Sioniste.'[147] This sense of self, politicised and professionalised, was to prompt Reich to train as a full-qualified social worker, which she achieved five years after the war.[148]

The motivations and experiences of the Jewish women explored in this chapter reveal the interconnected nature of interwar and wartime histories, pointing to the strength and longevity of personal, political and professional commitments in anti-fascist, feminist, youth and welfare associationalism, in which ethnicity was not necessarily a distinctive feature. In the immediate outbreak of war, Jewish women's actions were predicated, like those of their Christian and Communist counterparts, on their actual - and inherited - experiences of war. With defeat and Occupation, state-institutionalised anti-Semitism forced Jewish women into a personal reconfiguration of self, illustrated by Kriegel's Communist activism, which enabled her to reconceptualise her relationship to an imposed identity, or Hirtz's acceptance of a Jewishness to which she had previously felt only marginal affiliation. This

---

[144] *The WIZO Reader's Digest*, II, 23 (October-November 1944), 'WIZO Federations spring into life again', p.18. Madame Getting ran 42b (the UGIF's clandestine social services) alongside Juliette Stern. See Poznanski, *Jews in France*, p.334.
[145] Latour, *Jewish Resistance*, p.43.
[146] CDJC, Fonds FSJF, CCXVII-9, 'La WIZO sous l'Occupation (1943-4)'.
[147] Ibid. Reich was appointed Secretary-General of WIZO in 1947 under Stern's Presidency.
[148] See Michele Bitton, *Présences féminines juives en France, XIXe-XXe siècles. Cent itinéraires* (Aix-en-Provence: Institut d'études et de culture juives, 1995), pp.35-36 for further biographical details on Léa Reich.

process of imposition, negotiation, understanding and acceptance often went alongside young women's transition from youth to maturity, seen particularly in the activities of the Sixième.

As the exclusionary process intensified under Vichy, sites of social action - within camps and children's homes, between Jewish and non-Jewish women's and institutional contacts - represented significant support networks, offering beleaguered Jews a vital means of evading the depersonalisation and destruction of the Final Solution. The OSE was of paramount importance in creating a network of Jewish and non-Jewish activism, personnel and professionalism in which consensus was forged around 'saving the children', something to which every individual - irrespective of personal identity - was committed. Without training, many women displayed commitment, resourcefulness and initiative in securing vital on-the-job experience that could be said to constitute professionalisation, despite the lack of formal qualifications. The development of specifically Jewish social services in the post-war period and the extent to which the Occupation provided individuals from different affiliations with the desire to cement and professionalise their volunteer wartime experiences will be the subject of the conclusion - something Vivette Samuel termed taking 'une expérience douleureuse pour progresser sur le plan professionnel'.[149] This thesis has examined the actions and networks through which French women from disparate religious, political and ethnic groupings became politicised and professionalised from 1934 to 1944, and the language with which this engagement was framed. The conclusion will explore, briefly, the nature of women's public activism in the immediate post-war period.

[149] Interview with VS in Yvonne Knibiehler, *Nous, les assistantes sociales. Naissance d'une profession (Trente ans de souvenirs d'assistantes sociales Françaises, 1930-1960)* (Paris: Editions Aubier Montaigne, 1980), p.248.

Conclusion: French women's agency and identity at Liberation.

This thesis has surveyed a decade in the development of women's social action, identifying important precedents for wartime involvement, exploring the channels through which this activism functioned and the ways in which it was articulated, both discursively and practically. It has demonstrated how women's engagement in social activities was broadened by the circumstances of the Spanish civil war and the Occupation, spurring professional identification and political awareness. As a result, the study offers a revealing window into the development and nature of a women's movement of social agency and political change. A personal engagement with social activism prompted many French women to question their sense of self and to reconsider their political and professional affiliations.

The conclusion will map out individual as well as denominational responses to the Occupation and the terrain of social welfare in a period marked by the return of the deportees, institutionalisation of the modern French welfare state and the granting of female suffrage.[1] Corresponding to the central research questions of the thesis, it will examine a number of related areas, firstly, the impetus that the Occupation gave to women's professionalisation in the social welfare field. Secondly, it will explore how social activism forced women to renegotiate their perception of feminism, femininity and group identity. Within this reconfiguration of personal identity and public commitment, the discourse of social motherhood remained pertinent. The conclusion will also briefly comment upon the ways in which the Catholic, Jewish and Communist commemorative process was reflective of wider questions of political legitimacy and authority. Lynne Taylor has suggested that collective remembrance is about identity rather than historical reality.[2] The extent to which this holds true is aptly demonstrated in the contentious debates over wartime welfare provision as being representative of 'true' France in resistance to occupation and collaboration. Reflective of the comparative project throughout this thesis, the

---

[1] Suffrage was granted to French women by the Comité Française de Libération Nationale's (CFLN) ordinance of 21 April 1944 and French women voted for the first time on 29 April 1945. See Claire Duchen, *Women's Rights and Women's Lives in France 1944-1968* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), pp.34-35. Women admitted to the Provisional Consultative Assembly included several whose social action has been examined throughout this thesis, for example, Madeleine Braun and Marie-Claude Vaillant-Couturier.

[2] Lynne Taylor, 'Occupied France Remembered', *Contemporary European History*, 13, 3 (2004), pp. 357-365 (p.358).

conclusion will draw out points of consensus and tension between the different groups and individuals who had a stake in the commemoration, revitalisation and institutionalisation of social welfare, highlighting the ongoing commonalities and differences between these women and the literature they produced. It will also comment upon the ongoing strength of personal networks in women's social and political activism.

Re-establishing the professionalisation and legitimacy of social welfare

A central aspect of the Fourth Republic was the establishment of the modern welfare state. The professionalisation of the sector therefore ran hand-in-hand with its institutionalisation, and the pro-natalism of the interwar period was endorsed in Charles de Gaulle's regularly cited statement that France needed 'twelve million babies'.[3] Whereas large numbers of women had gravitated to nursing during World War One in response to a specific image that did not outlive the hostilities, the modern image of social worker - born during the interwar period - survived the Second World War.[4] The Occupation experience in fact acted as a spur to professionalisation, cementing social welfare as a career, not just a response to emergency need, underlying the argument that the nature of women's experiences – even when voluntary and circumstantial – improved their professional understanding of the sphere. In April 1946 legislation was enacted to protect the title and state diploma of *assistantes sociales*. The same year, the Catholic UCSS and ecumenical ATS united, becoming the Association Nationale des Assistantes de Service Social (ANAS) and illustrating that the war experience could forge consensus across 'denominational' lines.[5] Confessional issues remained pertinent, however, with

---

[3] In October 1945 Caisse Nationale de Securité Sociale (CNSS) took over the state administration of employee and worker contributions. The family allowance and social insurance schemes became state-controlled. See Susan Pedersen, *Family, Dependence and the Origins of the Welfare State. Britain and France, 1914-1945* (Cambridge, New York and Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p.388. De Gaulle's comment is cited in K.H. Adler, *Jews and Gender in Liberation Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p.71.

[4] Katrin Schultheiss, *Bodies and Souls. Politics and the Professionalisation of Nursing in France, 1880-1922* (Cambridge, Mass., and London: Harvard University Press, 2001), p.180.

[5] A liaison committee made up of several groups, including UCSS and ATS, had been created in December 1944 to discuss Vichy legislation relative to the social services profession; it was entitled Association Nationale des Assistantes Sociales Diplomées (ANASD). See Armelle Mabon-Fall, *Les assistantes*

the 1947 creation of Union Nationale Interfédérale des Œuvres Privées Sanitaires et Sociales (UNIOPSS), a grouping of private associations that stayed close to, but autonomous from, the Catholic political Mouvement Républicain Populaire (MRP).[6]

Jewish social services in the post-war period bucked the dominant trend. While Chapter One discussed social action as an assimilatory tool for the French Jewish community, Dominique Schnapper has reiterated how the term *Israélite* acquired a pejorative meaning after the war, with 1944-5 marking a shift in self-perception whereby Jews were more likely to identity themselves as belonging to one community, of *Juifs*.[7] Plurality of cultural traditions, religious observance and language had marked Jewishness in the interwar period, with the post-war testimonies of the camp social workers Ruth Lambert and Vivette Samuel notably differing in their remembrance of – and fondness for – Jewish food or hearing Yiddish spoken in the 1930s, for example. After the war, Jewish identity was one predominantly defined by loss. Karen Adler has demonstrated the government's ongoing assimilationist rhetoric and policy in the Liberation period.[8] However, the experiences of Occupation and the 'Final Solution' prompted many Jews to reject an assimilationist approach in which Jewishness was subjugated to Frenchness, for an 'exclusive' one in which ethnicity became a matter of public affiliation and solidarity.

The OSE archives contain numerous documents in which participants in the Jewish social welfare sector set out and debated plans for the formation of a specifically Jewish social service. Prior to the war's end, in November 1944, Vivette Samuel, Andrée Salomon and Simone Weil were among the OSE workers who attended a conference on future provisions for the community.[9] Ongoing discussions stressed that priority needed to be given to coordination of the mammoth task ahead before unification of the different bodies could be

---

sociales au temps de Vichy. Du silence à l'oubli (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1995), p.24.

[6] Evelyne Diebolt, *Les femmes dans l'action sanitaire, sociale et culturelle, 1901-2001. Les associations face aux institutions* (Paris: Femmes et Associations, 2001), Annexes.

[7] Dominique Schnapper, *Jewish Identities in France. An Analysis of Contemporary Jewry* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1983), p.102.

[8] See Adler, *Jews and Gender*, pp.106-143, for a discussion of the influence of George Mauco's theories on assimilationism, nationality and ethnicity in the Liberation period.

[9] AIU, Archives de l'OSE, Boite III, Bobine 7, 'Réunion de travail des cadres de services de l'Assistance Medico-Sociale', Lyon, 21-23 November 1944.

approached.[10] Samuel's husband Julien later wrote that the OSE had been at the limit of its capabilities in 1944-5 and needed other groups to continue its operations.[11] The central Jewish social welfare body would thus function as an umbrella organisation.[12] The ongoing debates surrounding a Jewish welfare system point to the different viewpoints of the stakeholders from a political (Communist, Zionist, Bundist) as well as professional (medico-social, hygiene, education) perspective. For example, a 1946 report on the organisational structure of the Jewish community noted the particular rivalry between Communist and Zionist groupings in social and relief matters.[13] Questions of political authority and legitimacy remained pertinent therefore. However, the latent class consciousness that had marked the relationship between Israélite and Juif had lessened.

Pregnant with her second child, Samuel was asked to head a joint OSE-COJASOR action to reopen the OSE's office in Chambery. However, she subsequently chose to enrol at a training school in Paris to gain professional social welfare qualifications.[14] Other Jewish individuals recognised the limitations of not possessing accreditation and chose to train for official qualifications. Few of the Service Social de Jeune's (SSJ) staff were qualified, working as *assistants émérites* and *auxiliaires sociales*: 'Elles savant qu'elles ne soient pas des Assistantes et qu'elles sont limités de leurs possibilités', wrote Micheline Bellair.[15] However, the opportunity to train at the Ecole d'Assistance Sociale in Paris was subsequently made available to them.[16]

This desire for professional status could be seen as a personal response to reconcile the professional and the *ad hoc*, as a valid and suitable career option for a generation of young people reaching employment age at

---

[10] AIU, Archives de l'OSE, Boite IX, Bobine 14, 'Projet de Création d'un Comité de Coordination des Œuvres Sociales Juives de France', dated 5 August 1947.
[11] AIU, Archives de l'OSE, Boite IX, Bobine 14, Julien Samuel, 'Note sur l'organisation d'un comité de coordination des œuvres sociales', dated 5 March 1946, pp.1-2 (p.1).
[12] AIU, Archives de l'OSE, Boite I, Bobine 15, Vivette Samuel, 'Historique de l'OSE. Journée d'information du 28 novembre 1978', pp.1-23 (p.13).
[13] Wiener Library, 995/4/1, 'Observations. On Jews in France and their Position (Winter 1945-1946)', pp.1-22 (p.5).
[14] Samuel, 'Historique de l'OSE', p.12. Samuel worked for the Association des Anciennes Déportées et Internées de la Résistance (ADIR) between 1945 to 1954.
[15] AIU, Archives de l'OSE, Boite X, Bobine 17, Micheline Bellair, 'Le Service Social des Jeunes', *Page Sociales, Entr-aide Française*, 14 (January 1946), pp.12-13 (p.13).
[16] Ibid., p.13.

war's end, as well as a recognition of the need for their actions and themselves to be taken seriously, as politically and socially committed adults. One such young woman was Edith Kremsdorf, a liaison agent for the Sixième, who trained at the Ecole Ménagère et Sociale after the war. She was one of the first teams of social workers, funded by the Joint, to run a programme to assist hidden children resume a normal life. When in 1948 the Joint proposed that young social workers complete their training and gain additional qualifications in the United States, Kremsdorf did so.[17] Social activism on behalf of the Spanish Republic had provided many young anti-fascists with the contacts and experience to offer relief and welfare assistance during wartime. The Occupation experience, too, through circumstance or opportunity, provided young women with the beginnings of a professional, adult career. 'J'ai fait des stages - j'ai passé mon diplôme - mais l'essentiel, je l'avais appris sur le tas pendant la guerre', recalled Samuel.[18]

Professionalisation was therefore a central, but not sole, factor in the development of Jewish social welfare:

> 'Bien des collaborateurs du temps de guerre ont repassé contact avec l'OSE pour un travail de plus ou moins longue haleine, qui tenait encore plus du militantisme que d'un travail de professionnel.'[19]

Jewish social worker OS, surprised to find little had changed in the general welfare sector, was prompted to join the Fonds Social Juif Unifié (FSJU): 'Je cherchai du travail et fus étonnée de voir combien certains services parisiens avaient peu évolué pendant cette époque qui m'avait moi-même tellement marquée.'[20] Ethnic specificity and affiliation, seen particularly in earlier Zionist social welfare activities and latently in care for refugees, was now a prominent feature of Jewish social action. This idea of community 'militancy' was of paramount motivation to many, driven by a sense of duty to provide for a generation of children who had lost their parents. Samuel felt that her professional future had been marked irrevocably by the faith placed by parents in her own ability to save their children.[21] The nature of women's wartime

---

[17] Michèle Bitton, *Présences féminines juives en France, XIXe-XXe siècles. Cent itinéraires* (Aix-en-Provence: Institut d'études et de culture juives, 1995), pp.64-5.
[18] Samuel, 'Historique de l'OSE', p.12.
[19] Ibid., p.13.
[20] Yvonne Knibiehler, *Nous, les assistantes sociales. Naissance d'une profession (Trente ans de souvenirs d'assistantes sociales françaises, 1930-1960)* (Paris: Editions Aubier Montaigne, 1980), pp.247-8 for OS' testimony.
[21] Samuel, 'Historique de l'OSE', p.8.

welfare provided professional young women with a form of surrogate, social motherhood, related to the continued cultural strength of maternalism and added further rhetorical support to the primacy accorded to children at Liberation.

That the OSE conceived of itself as 'la grande famille OSE' is testament not only to the strength of personal and professional attachments between its members and operatives, but also to its ongoing efforts to provide the Jewish community with a spiritual as well as physical home.[22] At Liberation, Germaine Masour was placed in charge of the OSE's Regroupement Familial, which searched for hidden children and their documentation, assisted emigration and found foster parents. The concept of identity was therefore fundamental to social workers' efforts to restore familial information to those children dispersed and in hiding.[23] At Liberation, the resistance group Union des Femmes Juives repeatedly called for 'la protection et la reconstruction du foyer ... le sauvetage de l'enfant'.[24] The double significance of a Jewish woman protecting her home and family was evident: the traditional doctrine of separate spheres remained unchanged by war and both rhetoric and reality met in the matrilineal nature of the religion itself. This thesis has demonstrated the wide currency of maternalist logic to condition women's social welfare activism, 'de se donner les moyens d'agir pour préserver leurs enfants.'[25] Maternalism was used to both describe and encourage women's further engagement in social activism from across the groups studied. While the motivations behind Catholic Cécile de Corlieu's and Communist Lise London's wartime activism diverged in political intent, the language with which they framed their participation, and experienced wider debates about women's involvement, was a shared one.

While in many ways the Holocaust defined the Jewish community's experiences, Catholics and Communists found themselves inextricably bound to those actions represented by their communal identity, that of Catholic Pétainism, if not collaboration, and Communist resistance. The resister was the privileged identity of the Liberation period and impacted the way in which the social welfare sector became a site - and women agents the articulators - of

---

[22] AIU, Archives de l'OSE, Boite XXVI, Bobine 1, 'Une expérience de 4 ans', pp.24-6 (p.25).
[23] AIU, Archives de l'OSE, Boite X, Bobine 17, Vivette Samuel, 'Madame Masour: Une Grande Dame', *Le Bulletin OSE* (March 1984), pp.11-12 (p.12).
[24] CDJC, Fonds Claude Urman, DCCXCIII, Union des Femmes Juives postcard, membership card and pamphlet.
[25] Simone Bertrand (ed.), *Mille Visages. Un Seul Combat. Les femmes dans la Résistance* (Paris: Les Editeurs Français Réunis, 1965), p.7.

public wrangling over political legitimacy, authority and questions of status, whether victimhood, culpability or heroism. The polarised debates that ensued over the contentious nature of Secours National reflected the wider political fault-line across all of the denominational groupings in this period of purging and reconstruction, that of resistance versus collaboration. Pieter Lagrou has noted how the Resistance led an independent life from its sociological body, as metaphorical meaning in the mythologising of the national narrative of World War Two.[26] In the professional sphere, this took the form of an articulation of Communist professionalism and therein legitimacy - despite the often voluntary nature of the agents - at the expense of discredited qualified workers as tools of the collaborationist regime.

At Liberation, Secours National became Entr'aide Française (EF). Renaming was a common policy to distance institutions from their wartime existence and actions according to the imperative of legitimacy under the new Fourth Republic. Women represented EF at committee level, including AF (initially; it was disbanded in January 1945) and UFF members, an indication of the importance of incorporating different groups into the body to signify inclusion.[27] Armelle Mabon-Fall suggests that the social welfare profession underwent 'une forme d'expiation' for having been too close to Vichy's *Révolution Nationale*.[28] Interviews given in the 1980s by women such as social worker LJ, or the social Catholic-inspired series of publications on Service Social and welfare in the 1930s to which Madeleine Delbrêl and Eve Baudouin contributed, offer insight into women's interest in the interwar years in being perceived as professional workers, in part through the assertion of political neutrality. Looking back at the Occupation, SN workers emphasised their neutrality as a positive factor. For Communists, however, political involvement was paramount, as resistance. In fact, the PCF's fear of neo-Vichy resurgence

---

[26] Pieter Lagrou, *The Legacy of Nazi Occupation. Patriotic Memory and National Recovery in Western Europe, 1945-1965* (Cambridge, New York and Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p.26.
[27] See *Pages Sociales*, 14 (January 1946), p.2, for a list of the women and groups included in Entr'aide Française. Of the ten honorary committee members, two were women. Of the central committee, 13 were women, including: Mme Léfaucheux, Délegate du Comité Parisien de Libération aux Affaires Sociales; Mme Alice Duchene, Comité Directeur de l'UFF and Mme Sivadon, Déleguée de l'Assistance Française. Mabon-Fall suggests that women were nominated because they were Communist rather than for their welfare qualifications, thereby highlighting the significance of party political lines; see Mabon Fall, *Du silence à l'oubli*, p.29.
[28] Ibid., p.20.

through the social services prompted a bitter campaign to denigrate Secours National as collaborationist and ANAS was forced to defend the 'good name' of its workers publicly.[29] The Communist Yvonne Dumont, however, stressed that '[t]out dépend du milieu d'où l'on vient': class consciousness therefore remained pertinent to the PCF, despite its sustained Occupation campaign across ideological and socioeconomic divisions to politicise the female masses through the domestic.[30] In criticising SN workers for 'neutrality' and commenting on their 'bourgeois nature', the PCF was again reinvigorating interwar debates about social welfare as a tool of class subjugation. This polarisation continued into questions of professionalism in an interesting subversion of expectation: the political current worked against qualified women, who were discredited by association with Vichy, whereas non-qualified women acting in an *ad-hoc* manner for the Resistance epitomised a patriotic legacy.

How the Communists chose to articulate their distrust of professionalised social welfare and possible Vichy rehabilitation was closely linked to the ways in which they had promoted their social action as a movement of female solidarity and how their social services networks had developed in clandestinity. The continuity of personnel in pre-war and wartime associations and networks contributed to the strength and responsibility of women in clandestinity, where action had operated along inclusive lines. Maternalist logic and the moral economy of the domestic were used to rationalise and broaden the involvement of all women in a political and public challenge to the government. At Liberation, in refusing to forge consensus across the entire welfare sector, this enabled the PCF to demonstrate the collusion and collaboration of those who remained outside of its reach, and thus heighten its own prestige. Contrary to the Jewish impetus for professional training and accreditation after the war to reaffirm ethnic identity and solidarity, here we see its practitioners using social welfare as a means to affirm political identity and therein patriotic and national legitimacy. In this way, while women like Jeanette Vermeersch and Andrée Salomon, from different political and ethnic backgrounds, shared an impetus for welfare activism during wartime to develop and strengthen collective solidarity, their political vision for social welfare diverged at the critical moment of liberation from war and occupation.

[29] Ibid., p.31.
[30] Ibid., p.27.

Reconfiguring a personal identity through social action

The reconfiguration of women's personal and group identity was of paramount significance in the post-war era, in which ideas about nationhood, patriotism, faith and ethnicity continued to be questioned. Institutional rehabilitation aside, many Catholic women attempted a personal reconciliation with their religion. Struggling to reaffirm her spirituality, Madeleine du Fresnes recognised the indispensability of her network of friends and social activism during Occupation which influenced her re-engagement with Rassemblement Moral as 'l'aventure rétrouvée'.[31] She wrote, '[j]'appelais cela être une bonne chrétienne et une bonne Française.'[32] Her reconcilement was a personal one, however, she also noted that a public identity was forced upon her: 'l'autorité nouvelle qui me donnait mon titre d'internée.'[33] Historians such as Colin Nettelbeck and John Sweets point to the rehabilitation of Catholics at Liberation as being achieved through humanitarian efforts and the neutral positioning of local clergy. In particular, spiritual autonomy and the protection of youth enabled the hierarchy to lay claim to a Resistance heritage that it had not necessarily intended.[34] Chapter Three demonstrated the numerous ways in which Catholic 'service to the nation' did not necessarily translate as blind obedience to the government in power or to the dictates of the Church hierarchy, seen by the experiences of de Corlieu - as recorded in her memoirs - or Germaine Pionso Chapius' actions - to which the young Jewish woman Françoise Seligmann paid testimony as guaranteeing both her physical and economic survival during the war.

Catholic women continued in their posts at Liberation as municipal councillors, joined by women from other political groupings, suggestive again of the continuity of personnel in the localities and on 'feminine' issues of childcare, health and food supply. Ongoing social action, experience and networking highlights that 1940 did not represent a break in Catholic social activism and points to the continued significance of humanitarianism, religiosity, duty and loyalty to many women's concept of family and home, irrespective of the

---

[31] Madeleine F. Du Fresnes, *De l'Enfer des Hommes à la Cité de Dieu* (Paris: Editions Spes, 1947), p.260.
[32] Ibid., p.218.
[33] Ibid., p.214.
[34] John F. Sweets, *Choices in Vichy France: The French Under Nazi Occupation* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p.59 and Colin Nettelbeck, 'The Eldest Daughter and the *trente glorieuses*: Catholicism and national identity in postwar France', *Modern and Contemporary France*, 6, 4 (1998), pp.445-462 (pp.449-450).

government in charge. The UFCS continued to promote women's municipal office, the *mère au foyer* and restated the moral duty of women to remain engaged with welfare work: 'De revaloriser le Service Social qui n'est pas seulement un métier mais une mission demandant dévouement, compétence, qualités morales et psychologiques.'[35] The language of *mission* remained prominent, linking the professional - with its notions of competence and ability - with the personal - devotion and morality. Motherhood remained a women's primary role: 'Le jour où la femme fonde un foyer, elle assume une mission', the UFCS reminded its readership.[36]

Maternalism, reflected in the earlier discussion of professionalism, was an additionally poignant factor in Jewish women's renegotiation of identity at the war's end. Jacqueline Mesnil-Amar wrote that 'une certaine façon d'être juive et française allait certainement finir avec la guerre', suggestive that until the war her Jewish and French identity had been one, inextricably linked.[37] In part, persecution intensified this feeling as Chapter Five discussed, in making Jews of women who had, like Samuel, previously felt only French, and in identifying their femininity with the continuation of a collective identity that was being destroyed.

> 'J'ai beaucoup plus exprimé l'enfant juif que je fus autrefois, puis l'adolescente où la très jeune femme d'avant la guerre, plutôt que la femme juive d'après que j'ai cru et espéré devenir, avec ses fluctuations, qui venait du cœur plus que de l'action',

Mesnil-Amar recalled.[38] It was not without tension that she accepted a Jewish woman's vocation to be that of wife and mother, conscious of the personal negotiation that entailed: 'Pour moi, je crois tout au fond de moi-même, certes non sans ambigüité, que la vocation profonde de la femme juive est encore le couple et le foyer.'[39]

Communist women found in the Party's gender politics at Liberation a reconfirmation of familial and maternalist thinking. Jeannette Vermeersch, who dominated the PCF's women's section in the post-war period following her return from exile in Moscow, rejected the outmoded feminist activism of the

---

[35] Union Féminine Civique et Sociale, *UFCS Documents*, undated dossier, BN, 'Etats Généraux de la Renaissance Française', p.14.
[36] Ibid., 'UCFS declaration to Bureau International du Travail, Geneva'.
[37] Jacqueline Mesnil-Amar, 'Nous étions les juifs de l'oubli...', *Les Nouveaux Cahiers*, 50 (Autumn 1977), pp.43-49 (p.47).
[38] Ibid, p.49.
[39] Jacqueline Mesnil-Amar, *Ceux qui ne dormaient pas. 1944-1946 (Fragments de journal)* (Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1957), p.45.

past: 'Loin de nous le féminisme attardé, des suffragettes et féministes, qui a eu un rôle progressif dans le passé.' But she supported women's solidarity and organisation to provide specific attention to their needs and rights: 'Mais cela ne signifie pas qu'il faut oublier la situation particulièrement difficile des femmes et les formes d'organisation spéciales qui doivent.'[40] One of Vermeersch's obituaries pointed to her subsequent lack of comprehension that sexual liberation was key to women's rights as 'un des grands drames du Communisme en France.'[41] The PCF continued to view the liberation of sexual behaviour as a bourgeois distraction from the revolutionary class struggle and Lisa Greenwald has commented on Vermeersch's continued assertion of the collective in the face of de Beauvoir's feminism of the individual.[42] Again, the PCF resuscitated the language and imagery of the interwar period, rejecting the individual as bourgeois elitism and asserting the primacy of the collective, through the family and therein the nation. PCF gender politics remained focused on the familial, following on from the Occupation experience in which the female collective was mobilised and politicised through the domestic and maternal to foment political discontent and reaction against Vichy and the occupiers, not as a fundamental challenge to the gendered discourse of the state. The domestic remained a profoundly political subject in the Liberation period and Vermeersch continued to position women by their status as housewife and mother in disputes over local issues, particularly food.[43] 'Dans ce rôle nouveau de citoyenne, elles n'oublient aucun de leurs devoirs de mère et d'épouse', counselled the UFF, thereby positioning women little differently to that of the UFCS, for example.[44]

---

[40] Jeannette Vermeersch, *Femmes dans la Nation* (Paris: Editions du Parti Communiste Français, 1947), p.31.
[41] BMD, Dossier Jeanette Vermeersch, 'Jeannette la Thorézienne', *Regards*, 74 (December 2001), p.51.
[42] Lisa Greenwald, 'Not "Undifferentiated Magma": Refashioning a Female Identity in France, 1944-45', *Historical Reflections/Réflexions Historiques*, 22, 2 (Spring 1996), pp.407-430 (p.421).
[43] Megan Koreman, *The Expectation of Justice. France, 1944-1946* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1999), p.68. Vermeersch, *Femmes dans la Nation*, p.16, noted that some 10,000 women had demonstrated at the Prefecture in Nevers over lack of food and supply difficulties.
[44] UFF programme, undated, cited in Renée Rousseau, *Les Femmes Rouges. Chronique des années Vermeersch* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1983), p.52.

Associationalism and commemoration

The politics of memorialisation also point to the continuity of familialism and motherhood within Communist women's activism. The process had begun during the Occupation itself, with a police report noting how placards with the names of shot Communist hostages or deported militants were placed on street signs overnight. In Bagnolet, a sign saying rue Danièle Casanova appeared.[45] Hilary Footitt's research into the myth of 'La Française résistante' comments upon the Party's adoption of a quasi-religious sanctification of its martyrs, namely its heroine Danièle Casanova.[46] *Femmes Françaises*' 1946 edition, for example, presented Casanova as Joan of Arc, a patriot and saint dying for her country.[47] Such eulogising did not sit well with everyone, however. When Edith Thomas accompanied PCF members to the Soviet Union in 1946, she commented: 'Ce voyage revêtait le caractère sacré d'un pèlerinage aux ceux saints.'[48] The religious enthusiasm of the 'faithful', from which she had been growing increasingly distanced, reminds us of the 'new Messiah' idea of Communism as an ideology to parallel that of Christianity, seen in the adversarial rhetoric of sections of the Catholic press in the 1930s – hostile articles written by the women of Action Sociale de la Femme or the radical right Parti Social Français, for example. Thomas' uneasiness with the Party prompted her eventual departure in 1947. Sean McMeekin's comment that the ex-Communist memoir was virtually a genre on its own in French twentieth-century literature points to continued Party dissension and resignation.[49]

At Liberation, Yvonne Dumont counted 4,405 local UFF committees in 87 departments and the UFF spoke of having over one million adherents.[50] Prominent Communist women, such as Marie-Claude Vaillant Couturier, were

---

[45] APP, BA 2088, Parti Communiste Français (1941-3), report dated 21 October 1943.

[46] See Hilary Footitt, 'Women and (Cold) War: The Cold War creation of the myth of 'La Française résistante', *French Cultural Studies*, 8, 22 (February 1997), pp.41-51.

[47] For a discussion of how Vermeersch used her pre-war friendship with Casanova and the image of Joan of Arc to acquire a legitimacy and Resistance heritage that she did not possess, see Rousseau, *Les Femmes Rouges*, pp.45-47.

[48] Edith Thomas, *Le Témoin Compromis* (Paris: Viviane Hamy, 1995), p.194.

[49] Sean McMeekin, 'From Moscow to Vichy: Three Working Class Militants and the French Communist Party, 1920-1940', *Contemporary European History*, 9, 1 (2000), pp.1-38 (p.1).

[50] Rousseau, *Les Femmes Rouges*, p.50, comments on the likely inaccuracy of this figure for June 1945, despite it being a 'phase euphorique' for the organisation.

influential in the creation of the Fédération Internationale des Femmes (FDIF), which campaigned for peace, democracy, an end to fascism, improvements to women's social and political conditions, and to ensure a better future for the next generation: this linkage of familial, maternal, political and anti-fascist was another continuity between the interwar, war-time and post-war women's Party associations.[51] An undated report on the activities of the UJRE's Women's Committee commented on the impetus growing to create a Union of Women's Committees (Union des Femmes Juives de France, UFJF; with evident similarities to the Communist UFF taking official shape at this time).[52] It was not until 1966 that the first exclusively Jewish feminist group was set up in France, called Coopération Féminine - its President, Liliane Klein-Lieber, had been a Sixième operative during the war.[53] Resistance and spirituality gave impetus to the post-war Catholic political 'revival' in the Christian democracy movement, in which women such as Pauline Archambault and Germaine Poinso-Chapius were prominent. A network of women's associational activities resumed, in which individuals with affinity in social progress, health, welfare, political and civic rights retained their close working relationship irrespective of their political, religious or ethnic identity. The numerous personal archives held at the Bibliothèque Marguerite Durand and Bibliothèque Historique de la Ville de Paris, for example, demonstrate the continuation of interpersonal affiliations, networks and friendships, with correspondence, papers and conferences into the 1960s and beyond. This study generates important awareness of the historical significance of social activism for women's wartime political involvement, into the post-war period, through an understanding of the development and longevity of the channels through which such activism functioned, was maintained, and the language with which affiliations and engagement were articulated.

---

[51] For further details on the FDIF, see the testimony collected by FNDIRP, *Hommage à Marie-Claude Vaillant-Couturier* (Paris: Publications du FNDIRP, 1997). Vaillant-Couturier was FDIF's Secretary-General from December 1945 for ten years. See, also, Rousseau, *Les Femmes Rouges*, pp.59-63.

[52] CDJC, Fonds Lucien Lublin, CMXXV-81, 'Activité de l'UJRE contre l'antisémitisme'. The Comités des Femmes de l'UJRE worked to unify Jewish women into their groups, providing aid to the injured, home visits and family assistance.

[53] Coopération Féminine was affiliated to the FSJU, the central social organisation of the French-Jewish community and the Conseil Internationale des Femmes Juives (ICJW). See Nelly Las, *Femmes Juives dans le Siècle. Histoire du Conseil International des Femmes Juives de 1899 à nos Jours* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1996), p.180 for further details.

Between public and private: women's social activism and identity

This thesis has primarily used personal narratives to explore the ways in which Catholic, Communist and Jewish women publicly debated, and both publicly and privately experienced and negotiated, the multifaceted nature of their identity through the terrain of social action. The retention of beliefs surrounding 'appropriate' femininity and apoliticism to women's perceptions of being professional operatives suggests that the Occupation did not form either a conceptual break, or a physical one, as the ongoing strength and vitality of women's associational and personal relationships from the pre- into post-war period confirms. Social welfare became firmly entrenched at Liberation as a professional, modern – and women's – career. Paradoxically, women's roles within that institutionalisation remained tied to traditional, essentialist concepts of 'feminine' behaviour, aptitude and, primarily, the rhetoric of social motherhood – as demonstrated by the retention of such language and terms to frame debates about women's agency and to encourage women's engagement.

This study contests the view that women were excluded from political action, instead pointing to the political awareness and experience that women derived from social activism during the interwar period, in a number of related ways: familial and associational relationships working to alleviate the 'social question' in its manifold forms; the lobbying power of politically connected women; the strength and initiative of the women's press, for example. The experiences of the anti-fascist coalition providing relief for the Spanish Republic's refugees or the debates between ecumenical and confessional networks of women securing professional status and respect for welfare reform, for example, point to the critical research questions of the thesis: sites of consensus and tension between women motivated by political objectives, personal religiosity and spirituality, and ethnic solidarity; the importance of interpersonal relationships in spurring political awareness and action, and professional identification; and the impact of opportunism, circumstance and necessity on women's public activism. Social action constituted the ideal terrain on which women could develop responsibility, initiative and experience, as it was one in which they were already culturally positioned and socially legitimised. As agents of politicisation in the localities, women demonstrated strategy and initiative in using the domestic as a basis to further the parameters of their public activism and to question, if not challenge, the established

boundaries of what constituted womanhood and women's agency. Above all, this thesis points to the historical significance of understanding both perception and experience. Examining women's remembrance of their social activism, as well as the experiences themselves, creates a more layered and nuanced picture of French women's life during the interwar period and under Occupation, revealing the complexities of ideological conviction, spirituality, political belief and ethnic affiliation.

Bibliography

Archival Sources

Alliance Israélite Universelle (AIU), Paris

Archives de l'Oeuvre de Secours aux Enfants (OSE)
Archives de Moscou

Archives Nationales (AN), Paris

F7 13266 Principaux groupements féministes
F7 14781 Juifs et propagande Antisémite, 1938-1940
F9 3283 Mission d'Allemagne 1944-1945
F9 3247 Travail medico-social

Bibliothèque de Documentation Internationale Contemporaine (BDIC), Nanterre

F Delta Rés 317 (Fonds Duchêne, Comité Mondial des femmes contre la Guerre et le Fascisme. Section Française (1932-8))
F Delta Rés 270 (Fonds Duchêne, Organisations diverses, 1914-39)
F Delta Rés 320 (Fonds Duchêne, Féminisme 1916-40)
F Delta Rés 266 (Dossier France, Anti-Fascisme, 1934-9)
F Delta Rés 268 (Dossier France, Assistance)
F Delta Rés 2 C (Dossier France. Libération de Toulouse et d'Agen)
F Delta Rés 33 (Dossier France)
F Delta Rés 313 (Fonds Duchêne, Pacifisme)
F Delta Rés 1160 (Dossier France. Services sociaux en France)
F Delta 1266 (Dossier France. Le PCF, 1921-1989)
F Delta 1146 (Dossier France. Femmes et condition féminine, 1909-)
F Delta 1166 (Dossier France. Assistance)

Bibliothèque Historique de la Ville de Paris (BHVP), Paris

Fonds Marie-Louise Bouglé
Fonds Jeanne Bouvier
Fonds Marianne Rauze

Bibliothèque Marguerite Durand (BMD), Paris

Dossier 284/289, Femmes Juives
Dossier 360 ASS, Assistante Sociale
Dossier 362 ASS, Association Israélite pour la Protection de la Jeune Fille et Union (Internationale) des Amies de la Jeune Fille
Dossier 396 FED, Fédération Républicaine de France (Section Féminine)
Dossier 940.4 GUE, Femmes dans la Guerre, 1939-45
Dossier Madeleine Delbrêl
Dossier Edith Thomas
Dossier Marie-Claude Vaillant-Couturier
Dossier Jeannette Vermeersch

Dossier Louise Weiss
Fonds Cécile de Corlieu
Fonds Yvonne Netter

British Library Newspapers at Colindale, London

French Press and Information Service, Committee of National Liberation, *French Women in the War*, two volumes, April 1944

Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine (CDJC), Paris

Fonds Claude Urman
Fonds Commissariat aux Questions Juives (CGQJ)
Fonds David Diamant
Fonds Divers
Fonds Fédération des Sociétés Juives en France (FSJF)
Fonds Gestapo France
Fonds L'Institut d'Etude des Questions Juives (IEQJ)
Fonds La Sixième
Fonds Latour
Fonds Lucien Lublin
Fonds Union General des Israélites de France (UGIF)

Institut Français de l'Histoire Social (IFHS), Paris

14 AS 183 Fonds Hélène Brion

Préfecture de Police, Paris (APP)

BA Deuxième Activité Communiste Pendant l'Occupation
BA 1651Groupes Féministes
BA 1811/2 Communauté Juive; Mouvements Sionistes
BA 1902 Croix de Feu
BA 1945 Parti Populaire Français
BA 1952 Parti Social Français
BA 2002 Front de la Liberté
BA 2005 Groupe des Femmes Socialistes
BA 2088 Parti Communiste Français. Tracts, Manifestations (1941-3)
BA 2128 Affaire Rue de Buci
BA 2160 Espagne. Comité d'Aide aux République Espagnols
BA 2272 Groupes Féministes
BA 2273 Communauté Juive
BA 2314 Communauté Juive
DB 645 Parti Social Français

Wiener Library, London

672 French-Jewish and Anti-Racist Organisations: Various Papers, (1920)-1938
995/4/1 Observations. On Jews in France and their Position (Winter 1945-1946)

Primary Printed Sources

Journals and Newspapers

Action Sociale de le Femme
Affirmation
Archives Israélites de France
Archives Juives
Bulletin du Centre Israélite d'Information
Cahiers du Bolchevisme
Dossiers de l'Action Populaire
Emancipation Nationale
Femmes dans L'Action Mondiale
Femmes Françaises
Femmes Patriotes, Organe des Comités Féminins de la Résistance (MUR)
L'Aube
Les Cahiers des Femmes Catalanes
La Croix
Le Devoir des Femmes
La Femme dans la Vie Sociale
La Femme et la Vie. Journal Social d'Entr'aide Féminine
La Française
Le Flambeau
L'Humanité
Le Journal Juif; from March 1936 renamed Samedi
La Santé Publique. Bulletin Mensuel de Propagande du Parti Social de la Santé Publique
La Tribune des Femmes Socialistes
La Tribune Juive
L'Univers Israélite
La Voix des Femmes Juives
Marie Claire
Paix et Droit
Revue OSE
The WIZO Reader's Digest
Vaillance

Memoirs

Abadi, Odette, *Terre de Détresse. Birkenau-Bergen-Belsen* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1995)

Duchess of Atholl, *Searchlight on Spain* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1938)

Aubrac, Lucie, *Outwitting the Gestapo*, trans. by Konrad Bieber (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1993)

Baumann, Denise, *Une famille commes les autres* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1973)

Beauvoir, Simone de, *Memoirs of a Dutiful Daughter*, trans. by James Kirkup (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1963)

Beauvoir, Simone de, *The Prime of Life*, trans. by Peter Green (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1965)

Beauvoir, Simone de, *Force of Circumstance*, trans. by Richard Howard (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1968)

Bénichou, Juliette, *Comme la paille dans le vent. Une jeune fille juive sous l'Occupation* (Paris: Les Editions de Paris, 1997)

Bidault, Suzanne, *Souvenirs de Guerre et d'Occupation* (Paris: La Table Ronde, 1973)

Bloch, Marc, *Strange Defeat*, trans. by Gerard Hopkins (London: Oxford Press, 1949)

Bood, Micheline, *Les Années Doubles. Journal d'une lycéenne sous l'Occupation* (Paris: Editions Robert Laffont, 1974)

Bouvier, Jeanne, *Mes Mémoires (ou 59 années d'activités industrielle, sociale et intellectuelle d'une ouvrière). Une Syndicaliste Féministe, 1876-1935* (Paris: La Découverte/Maspero, 1983)

Brion, Hélène, *La Voie Féministe (*Paris: Editions Syros, 1978)

Carles, Emilie, *A Life of her Own. A Countrywoman in Twentieth-Century France*, trans. by Avriel H. Goldberger (New Brunswick and New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1991)

Chevrillon, Claire, *Code Name Christiane Clouet. A Woman in the French Resistance*, trans. by Jane Kielty Stott (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1995)

Colette, *Paris de ma fenêtre* (Geneva: Editions du Milieu du Monde, 1944)

Corlieu, Cécile de, *Carnets d'une Chrétienne Moderniste de 1889 à nos jours* (Paris: Privat, 1970)

Cormand, Reine, *La vie d'une famille face à la Gestapo dans la France occupée, novembre 1943 - juin 1945. Témoignage* (Montreux: Amondrez-Thonon, 1972)

Crémieux-Dunand, Julie, *La vie à Drancy (Récit documentaire)* (Paris: Librairies Gedalge, 1945)

Cretzmeyer, Stacy, *Your Name is Renée. Ruth Kapp Hartz's Story as a Hidden Child in Nazi-Occupied France* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999)

Delbrêl, Madeleine, *Ville Marxiste. Terre de Mission* (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1957)

Desarre, Eve, *Mon enfance d'avant le deluge* (Paris: Fayard, 1976)

Duras, Marguerite, *The War. A Memoir*, trans. by Barbara Bray (New York: The New Press, 1986)

Duras, Marguerite, *The Lover*, trans. by Barbara Bray (London: Flamingo, 1986)

Elek, Hélène, *La Mémoire d'Hélène* (Paris: François Maspero, 1977)

Elgey, Georgette, *The Open Window*, trans. by J.A. Underwood (London: Woburn Press, 1974)

Flanner, Janet, *Paris was Yesterday. 1925-1939* (San Diego, New York and London: Harvest/Harcourt Brace Jovanovitch, 1988)

Fourcade, Marie-Madeline, *Noah's Ark: the Secret Underground* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1974)

Forrester, Viviane, *Ce soir, après la guerre* (Cher: J.C.Lattès, 1992)

Fresnes, Madeleine F. du, *De l'Enfer des Hommes à la Cité de Dieu* (Paris: Editions Spes, 1947)

Heftler, Nadine, *Si tu t'en sors... Auschwitz, 1944-1945* (Paris: Editions la Découverte, 1992)

Hirtz, Ginette, *Les Hortillonnages sous la grêle. Histoire d'une famille juive en France sous l'occupation* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1982)

Ibarruri, Dolores, *They Shall Not Pass. The Autobiography of La Pasionaria* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1966)

Jucker, Ninetta, *Curfew in Paris. A Record of the German Occupation* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1960)

Kaplan, Alice. *French Lessons. A Memoir* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1993)

Koch, Helen, *The Weeks Before the Landing* (Unpublished Memoir 4085, Wiener Library, London)

Kraemer-Bach, Marcelle, *La Longue Route* (Paris: La Pensée Universelle, 1988)
Kriegel, Annie, *Ce que j'ai cru comprendre* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1991)

Liegeois, Constance, *Calvaire des Femmes* (Cimey: Editions Marsia, 1945)

London, Lise, *L'Echeveau du Temps. La Mégère de la Rue Daguerre. Souvenirs de Résistance* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1995)

London, Lise, *L'Echeveau du Temps. Le Printemps des Camarades* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1996)

Malraux, Clara, *Memoirs*, trans. by Patrick O'Brien (London: The Bodley Head, 1967)

Mesnil-Amar, Jacqueline, *Ceux qui ne dormaient pas. 1944-1946 (Fragments de journal)* (Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1957)

Meyers, Odette, *Doors to Madame Marie* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1997)

Morhange-Bégué, Claude, *Chamberet. The True Story of a Jewish Family in Wartime France*, trans. by Austryn Wainhouse (London: Peter Owen, 1990)

Netter, Yvonne, *Ma Vie* (handwritten and unpublished, donated by Didier Gompel to the BMD, 1989)

Ouzoulias-Romagon, Cécile, *J'étais agent de liaison des FTPF* (Paris: Editions Messidor, 1988)

Picqueray, May, *May la réfractaire. 85 ans d'anarchie* (Paris: Editions Traffic, 1992)

Roberts, Gisèle Rey, *I Order You to Hope. Memories of Youth in the Time of the Nazis* (Sussex: The Book Guild, 1993)

Rochefoucauld, Edmée de la, *Flashes* (Paris: Bernard Grasset, 1982)

Roth-Hano, Renée, *Touch Wood. A Girlhood in Occupied France* (New York: Four Winds Press, 1988)

Samuel, Vivette, *Rescuing the Children. A Holocaust Memoir*, trans. and with an introduction by Charles B. Paul (Wisconsin and London: University of Wisconsin Press, 2002)

Seligmann, Françoise, *Liberté, quand tu nous tiens...* (Paris: Fayard, 2000)

Sevier, Elisabeth, *Lisette. The Story of a Teen Age Girl in the French Resistance* (Kansas: Sunflower University Press, 1997)

Shiber, Etta, *Paris-Underground* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1943)
Smith, Bonnie G., *Confessions of a Concierge. Madame Lucie's History of Twentieth-Century France* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985)

Stein, Gertrude, *Paris France. Personal Recollections* (London: Peter Owen, 1995)

Stein, Gertrude, *Everybody's Autobiography* (London: Virago, 1985)

Stein, Gertrude, *Wars I Have Seen* (London, B. T. Batsford Ltd, 1945)

Teissier du Cros, Janet, *Divided Loyalties. A Scotswoman in Occupied France* (Edinburgh: Canongate Press, 1962)

Thalmann, Rita, *Tout Commenca à Nuremberg. Entre Histoire et Mémoire* (Paris: Berg International Editeurs, 2004)

Thomas, Edith, *Le Témoin Compromis* (Paris: Viviane Hamy, 1995)

Thorez-Vermeersch, Jeanette, *La Vie en Rouge. Mémoires* (Paris: Belfond, 1998)

Tabouis, Geneviève, *Blackmail or War*, trans. by Paul Selver (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1938)

Téry, Simone, *Front de la Liberté. Espagne 1937-1938* (Paris: Editions Sociales Internationales, 1938)

Thalmann, Rita, *Tout Commença à Nuremberg. Entre histore et mémoire* (Paris: Berg International Editeurs, 2004)

Gex Le Verrier, Madeleine, *France in Torment* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1942)

Vidal-Durand, Brigitte, *Domaine Privé* (Paris: Editions Générales First, 1996)

Weil, Simone, *Seventy Letters*, trans. by Richard Rees (London: Oxford University Press, 1965)

Weil, Simone, *Formative Writings 1929-1941*, edited and trans. by Dorothy Tuck McFarland and Wilhelmina Van Ness (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987)

Weinstein, Frida Scheps, *A Hidden Childhood. A Jewish Girl's Sanctuary in a French Convent, 1942-1945*, trans. by Barbara Loeb Kennedy (New York: Hill and Wang, 1985)

Weiss, Louise, *Souvenirs d'une Enfance Républicaine* (Paris: Denöel, 1937)

Weiss, Louise, *Ce que Femme Veut. Souvenirs de la IIIe République* (Paris: Gallimard, 1946)

Weiss, Louise, *Mémoires d'une Européenne (Tome III) Combats pour les Femmes, 1934-1939* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1980)
Weiss, Louise, *Mémoires d'une Européenne (Tome IV) Le Sacrifice du Chevalier. 3 Septembre 1939-9 Juin 1940* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1971)

Weiss, Louise, *Mémoires d'une Européenne (Tome V) La Résurrection du Chevalier. Juin 1940-Août 1944* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1974)

Wolf, Jacqueline, *"Take Care of Josette". A Memoir in Defense of Occupied France* (New York and London: Franklin Watts, 1981)

Other

Ancel, Marc, *La condition de la femme dans la société contemporaine*, Volume II (Paris: Institut de Droit Compare de l'Université de Paris, Travaux et Recherches, Librairie du Recueil Sirey, 1938)

Au Service de la paix et de l'humanité! La Croix Rouge et la Démocratie Espagnole (Paris: Editions Universelles, 1938)

Baudouin, Eve, *Service Social ou Assistance?* (Paris: Librairie Bloud et Gay, 1942)

Baudouin, Eve, *La mère au travail et le retour au foyer* (Paris: Librairie Bloud et Gay, 1931)

Bonte, Florimond, 'Communistes, Croix de Feu et Catholiques', *Cahiers du Bolshevisme*, 10-11 (June 1936), pp.648-666

Bouglé, C., *De la sociologie à l'action sociale. Pacifisme – Féminisme – Coopération* (Paris: Les Presses Universitaires de France, 1923)

Bouillet, Suzanne, *Comment réaliser la paix* (Paris: Imprimerie des Presses Universitaires de France, 1936)

Bruhat, Yvonne, *Les Femmes et la Révolution Française, 1789-1939* (Paris: Edition du Comité Mondial des Femmes, 1939)

Buland, Jeanne, *Femme, défends toi!* (Paris: Publication du Parti Communiste, Bureau d'Editions, 1932)

Casanova, Danièle, Vermeersch, Jeanette and Chomat, Claudine, *L'Union des Jeunes Filles de France. Pour le bien-être, la paix et l'entr'aide sociale. Rapports présentés au Ier Congrès de l'Union des Jeunes Filles de France, 26-27 Decembre 1936* (Paris: ICC, 1936)

Casanova, Danièle, *Jeunes Filles de Notre Pays. Rapport présenté au VIIIe Congrès de la Fédération des Jeunesses Communistes de France. Marseilles, 8-12 Mars 1936* (Paris: Imprimerie de Le Baudrier, 1936)

Cérez, Jane, *La condition sociale de la femme de 1804 à l'heure présente. Le problème féministe et la guerre* (Paris: Librairie Générale de Droit et de Jurisprudence, 1940)

Charrier, Edmée, *L'Evolution Intellectuelle Féminine* (Paris: Editions Albert Mechelinck, 1931)

Clark, Frances I., *The Position of Women in Contemporary France* (London: P.S. King & Son Ltd, 1937)

Cogniot, G., 'Comment developper encore le mouvement féminin', *Cahiers du Bolchevisme*, 8 (5 August 1937), pp. 704-710

Comité de vigilance des intellectuels antifascistes, *Le Croix de Feu. Leur Chef. Leur Programme* (Paris: CVIA, 1935)

Comité International de Coordination et d'Information pour l'Aide à l'Espagne Républicaine, *Rapport d'activité presenté au Congrès de Solidarité de Madrid, 1 November 1938* (Paris: CICIAER, 1938)

Comité International de Coordination et d'Information pour l'Aide à l'Espagne Républicaine, *L'Espagne et la Paix. Discours prononcé à la seance pleinere de la Conference Internationale d'Aide a l'Espagne Républicaine, 21 November 1937* (Paris: CICIAER, 1937)

Comité National des Femmes Socialistes, *La situation juridique des femmes en France* (rapport du Germaine Quignon et Simone Weller) (Paris: Editions du Parti Socialiste, 1937)

Comité pour le défense des droits des Israélites en Europe centrale et orientale, *La défense des droits et de la dignité des réfugiés et apatrides, Israélite et non Israélites en France en 1934, 1935 et 1936*, undated dossier, Bibliothèque Nationale de France

Cordelier, Suzanne F., *Service Social Féminin* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1938)

Curie, Eva, Barrès, Philippe and de Roussy de Sales, Raoul (eds.), *They Speak for a Nation. Letters from France*, trans. by Drake and Denise De Kay (New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1941)

Delbrêl, Madeleine, *La femme et la maison* (Paris: Les Editions du Temps Présent, 1941)

Delbrêl, Madeleine, *Ampleur et dépendance du Service social* (Paris: Librairie Bloud et Gay, undated)

Duchêne, Gabrielle, *La Femme en URSS* (Paris: Documents de la Conférence Mondiale des Femmes, 1934)

Duclos, Jacques, *Pour l'Union des Femmes de France* (Paris: Editions du Comité Populaire de Propagande, 1936)

Dubreuil, Hyacinthe, *A l'image de la mère. Essai sur la mission de l'assistante sociale* (Paris: Grasset, 1942)

Françaises, Que ferons-nous? (Cher: St-Amand, 1943)

Garrigoux, Jeanne, *Le Parti Social Français et l'Action Sociale: rapport présenté au IIe Congrès National du Parti Social Français (Lyon, Novembre 1937)* (Paris: Imprimerie du PSF, 1937)

Goldsmith, Margaret, *Seven Women Against the World* (London: Methuen & Co., 1935)

Gourdeaux, Marie-Thérèse, *Debout les Femmes! A Bas la Guerre!* (Paris: Librairie de l'Humanité, 1925)

Guillerme, Marc le, *Françaises. Femmes de Devoir* (Paris: Fasquelles Editeurs, 1942)

Jeglot, Cécile, *La Jeune Fille et la Famille* (Paris: Editions Spes, 1942)

Kervénoaël, Jean de, *Les oeuvres privées de l'Etat: Une formule nouvelle: Le Secours National* (Paris: Imprimerie E. Desfossés-Néogravure, 1941)

Lacore, Suzanne, *Femmes Socialistes* (Paris: Librairie Populaire du Parti Socialiste, 1932)

Le Foyer Danielle Casanova, *Livre d'Or dédié aux femmes héroïques mortes pour que vive la France* (Paris: Le Foyer Danielle Casanova, undated)

Lehmann, Andrée, *Le rôle de la femme dans l'histoire de la Gaule* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1944)

Ligue Feminine d'Action Catholique Francaise, *Refaire de la Famille pour refaire la France. Sauvons nos foyers!* (Paris: LFACF 1944)

Ligue Féminine d'Action Catholique Française, *Almanach 1936. Edition spéciale de l'Almanach Encyclopédique de la Famille Française* (Paris: LFACF,1936)

Ligue Féminine d'Action Catholique Française, *Nos Enfants. Almanach de la LFACF* (Paris: LFACF, 1940)

Machard, Raymonde, *Les Françaises. Ce qu'elles valent... Ce qu'elles veulent...* (Paris: Flammarion, 1945)

Netter, Yvonne, *Plaidoyer pour la Femme Française* (Paris: Gallimard, 1936)

Nicolitch, Suzanne D., *Le Socialisme et les Femmes* (Paris: Librairie Populaire du Parti Socialiste, 1933)

Paris, Fernande, *Le travail des femmes et le retour de la mère au foyer* Paris: Librairie du Recueil Sirey, 1943)

Richomme, Agnès, *Entre nous, femmes. Billets de 'Vaillance'* (Lyon: Editions Rivoire)

Sananès, Joseph, *La Femme et son émancipation dans la vie sociale* (Paris: Editions Eugène Figuière, 1935)

Sanua, L., *Figures Féminines. Billets du Samedi* (Paris: Librairie Beaufils, 1946)

Secours Populaire de France, tracts 1936-1938, undated dossier, Bibliothèque Nationale de France

Semaine Sociales de France, *La Science pour l'Action* (Lyon: Chronique Sociale de France, 1936)

Spengler, Joseph J., *France Faces Depopulation* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1938)

Tracts politiques d'organisations diverses faisant appel à la solidarité avec l'Espagne républicaine et à l'aide aux refugiés éspagnols, 1936-1938, undated dossier, Bibliothèque Nationale de France

Union Féminine Civique et Sociale, *La Femme dans la Societé Actuelle* (Paris: Editions Spes, 1928)

Union Féminine Civique et Sociale, *La Vie Municipale Française et la Femme* (Paris: UFCS, 1945)

Union Féminine Civique et Sociale, *La Femme au Service du Pays* (Paris: UFCS, 1945)

Union Féminine Civique et Sociale, *UFCS Documents*, undated dossier, Bibliothèque Nationale de France

Union Nationale pour le Vote des Femmes, *Problèmes Nationaux Vus par des Françaises* (Paris: Editions du Sagittaire, 1934)

Varenne, Georgette, *La Femme dans la France Nouvelle* (Clermont-Ferrand: Imprimeries Mont-Louis, 1940)

Vassart, Cécile, 'Les femmes dans le Parti communiste', *Cahiers du Bolshevisme*, I (January 1937), pp.118-121

Vassart, Cilly, 'Il nous faut gagner les femmes', *Cahiers du Bolchevisme*, 2 (1936), pp.1103-1114

Vermeersch, Jeannette, *Femmes dans la Nation* (Paris: Editions du Parti Communiste Français, 1947)

Weyd, Paule-Marie, *La vie Paysanne Féminine* (Angers: Documentation Rurale et Artisanale, L'école superieure d'agriculture et de viticulture d'Angers, 1941)

Secondary Printed Sources

Articles

Adams, Christine, 'Maternal Societies in France. Private Charity Before the Welfare State', *Journal of Women's History*, 17, 1 (2005), pp.87-111

Adler, Karen H., 'Reading national identity: gender and 'prostitution' during the Occupation', *Modern and Contemporary France*, 7, 1 (February 1999), pp.47-58

Adler, Karen H., 'Vichy Specificities: Repositioning the French Past', *Contemporary European History*, 9, 3 (2000), pp.475-488

Allen, James Smith, 'Sisters of Another Sort: Freemason Women in Modern France, 1725-1940', *Journal of Modern History*, 75 (December 2003), pp.783-835

Allwood, Gill and Wadia, Khursheed, 'French feminism: national and international perspectives', *Modern and Contemporary France*, 10, 2 (2002), pp.211-223

Austin, Roger, 'The Chantiers de la Jeunesse in Languedoc, 1940-44', *French Historical Studies*, 13, 1 (Spring 1983), pp.106-126

Bard, Christine, 'Yvonne Netter (1889-1985): Itinéraire d'une avocate féministe et sioniste dans la première moitie du siècle en France', *Sexe et Race. Discours et Formes Nouvelles d'Exclusion du XIXe au XXe siècle. Séminaires 1989-1990* (1990), pp.142-171

Bard, Christine, 'Les gardiennes de la mémoire', Extrait du Bulletin *Archives du féminisme*, 5 (June 2003), http://www.archivesdufeminisme.fr/article.php3?id_article=27. Accessed 13 February 2008

Baruch, Marianne, 'Témoignage de Marianne Baruch sur sa grand-mère, Cécile Brunschvicg', Extrait du Bulletin *Archives du Féminisme*, 2 (Summer 2001), http://www.archivesdufeminisme.fr/article.php3?id_article=5. Accessed 13 February 2008

Berceot, Florence, 'Laure Beddouckh, enseignante et féministe,' *Archives Juives. Revue d'histoire des juifs de France*, 29/2 (2e semestre 1996), pp.121-124

Berry, David, ''Fascism or Revolution!' Anarchism and Antifascism in France, 1933-39', *Contemporary European History*, 8, 1 (1999), pp.51-71

Blum, Françoise, 'Regards sur les mutations du travail social au XXe siècle', *Le Mouvement Social*, 2, 199 (2002), pp.83-94

Blum, Françoise, Chambelland, Colette, Dreyfus, Michel (eds.) *Vie Sociale. Mouvements de Ffemmes (1919-1940) Guide des sources documentaires*, 11-12 (November-December 1984)

Boswell, Laird, 'Franco-Alsatian Conflict and the Crisis of National Sentiment during the Phoney War', *Journal of Modern History*, 71 (September 1999), pp.552-584

Camiscoli, Elisa, 'Producing Citizens, Reproducing the 'French Race': Immigration, Demography, and Pronatalism in Early Twentieth-Century France', *Gender and History*, 13, 3 (November 2001), pp.593-621

Capdevila, Luc, 'The Quest for Masculinity in a Defeated France, 1940-1945', *Contemporary European History*, 10, 3 (2001), pp.423-445

Capdevila, Luc and Virgili, Fabrice, 'Guerre, femmes et nation en France (1939-1945), article inédit (2000), http://www.ihtp.cnrs.fr/spip.php?article511. Accessed 13 February 2008

Capdevila, Luc, 'Les femmes en Bretagne au lendemain de l'occupation allemande: une libération inachevée', *Mémoires de la Société d'Histoire et d'Archéologie de Bretagne*, LXXVII (1999), pp.363-383

Carles, Emmanuelle, 'Women, Anti-Fascism and Peace in Interwar France: Gabrielle Duchêne's Itinerary', *French History*, 18, 3 (2004), pp.291-314

Carles, Emmanuelle, 'Gabrielle Duchêne et la Recherche d'une Autre Route', Extrait du Bulletin *Archives du Féminisme*, 7 (July 2004), http://www.archivesdufeminisme.fr/article.php3?id_article=59. Accessed 13 February 2008

Caron, Vicki, 'The AntiSemitic Revival in France in the 1930s: The Socioeconomic Dimension Reconsidered', *Journal of Modern History*, 70 (March 1998), pp.24-73

Caron, Vicki, 'Prelude to Vichy: France and the Jewish Refugees in the Era of Appeasement', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 20, 1 (January 1985), pp.157-176

Caron, Vicki, 'The Politics of Frustration: French Jewry and the Refugee Crisis in the 1930s', *Journal of Modern History*, 36, 2 (June 1993), pp.311-356

Clark, Linda L., 'The Primary Education of French Girls: Pedagogical Prescriptons and Social Realities, 1880-1940', *History of Education Quarterly*, 21, 4 (Winter 1981), pp.411-428

Clark, Linda L., 'Higher-Ranking Women Civil Servants and the Vichy Regime: Firings, Hirings, Collaboration and Resistance', *French History*, 13, 3 (1999), pp.332-359

Clarke, Jackie, 'Imagined productive communities: industrial rationalisation and cultural crisis in 1930s France', *Modern and Contemporary France*, 8, 3 (2000), pp.345-357

Cole, Joshua H., '"There are Only Good Mothers": The Ideological Work of Women's Fertility in France before World War One', *French Historical Studies*, 19, 3, (Spring 1996), pp.639-672

Cooper, Sandi E., 'Peace as a Human Right. The Invasion of Women into the World of High International Politics', *Journal of Women's History*, 14, 2 (Summer 2002), pp.9-25

Cova, Anne, 'Où en est l'histoire de la maternité?', *Clio*, 21 (2005), *Maternités*, http://clio.revues.org/document1465.html. Accessed 3 April 2008

Cuchet, Guillaume, 'Nouvelles perspectives historiographiques sur les prêtres-ouvriers (1943-1954)', *Vingtième Siècle*, 87, 3 (2005), pp.177-187

Darrow, Margaret H., 'French Volunteer Nursing and the Myth of War Experience in World War I', *American Historical Review*, 101, 1 (February 1996), pp.80-106

Delacor, Regina M., 'From Potential Friends to Hostile Enemies: the Internment of 'Hostile Foreigners' in France at the Beginning of the Second World War', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 35, 3 (2000), pp.361-368

Delpla, François, 'Les communistes français et la sexualité (1932-1938)', *Le Mouvement Social*, 91 (April-June 1975), pp.121-152

Dermenjian, Geneviève and Loiseau, Dominique, 'La maternité sociale et le Mouvement Populaire des Familles durant les Trente Glorieuses', *Clio*, 21, 2005, *Maternités*, http://clio.revues.org/document1449.html. Accessed 13 February 2008

DesRoches, Christian, 'Rue Amelot: Rescue as Resistance in Occupied France, 1940-44', Paper given at Montreal Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies (MIGS), 21 March 2003, http://migs.concordia.ca/documents/MIGS_DesRoches_March21.pdf. Accessed 13 February 2008

Diamond, Hanna, 'A New Dawn? French Women and the Liberation', *Women's Studies International Forum*, 23, 6 (2000), pp.729-738

Diamond, Hanna, 'Libération! Quelle Libération? L'expérience des femmes toulousaines', *Clio*, 1 (1995), *Résistances et Libérations, France 1940-1945*, http://clio.revues.org/document517.html. Accessed 14 March 2008.

Diamond, Hanna and Gorrara, Claire, 'Gendering the Occupation of France', *Modern and Contemporary France*, 7, 1 (February 1999), pp.7-10

Downs, Laura Lee, 'Les marraines élues de la paix sociale? Les surintendantes d'usine et la rationalisation du travail en Francec, 1917-1935', *Le Mouvement Social*, 165 (October-December 1993), pp.53-76

Downs, Laura Lee, 'Municipal Communism and the Politics of Childhood: Ivry-sur-Seine 1925-1960', *Past and Present*, 166, 1 (February 2000), pp.205-241

Drapac, Vesna, 'Religion in a deChristianised world: French Catholic responses to war and occupation', *Journal of European Studies*, 26 (1996), pp.389-416

Dubesset, Mathilde, 'Les figures du féminin à travers deux revues féminines, l'une catholique, l'autre protestante, La Femmes dans la Vie Sociale et Jeunes Femmes, dans les années 1950-1960', *Le Mouvement Social*, 1, 198 (Janvier-Mars 2002), pp.9-34

Dubesset, Mathilde and Thébaud, Françoise, 'Entretien avec Yvonne Knibiehler', *Clio*, 21 (2005), *Maternités*, http://clio.revues.org/document1707.html. Accessed 3 April 2008

Ehrman, Jacques, 'Simone de Beauvoir and the Related Destinies of Woman and Intellectual', *Yale French Studies*, 27 (1961), pp.26-32

Fishman, Sarah, 'Grand Delusions: The Unintended Consequences of Vichy France's Prisoner of War Propaganda', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 26, 2 (April 1991), pp.229-254

Footitt, Hilary, 'Women and (Cold) War: The Cold War creation of the myth of 'La Française résistante', *French Cultural Studies*, 8, 22 (February 1997), pp.41-51

Fouilloux, Étienne, 'Femmes et catholicisme dans la France contemporaine', *Clio*, 2 (1995), *Femmes et Religions*, http://clio.revues.org/document498.html. Accessed 3 April 2008

Frost, Bob, 'Sites of Danger, Zones of Comfort: Reconstructing Space in Interwar France', http://www.si.umich.edu/~rfrost/papers/Sites.html. Accessed 13 February 2008

Garrioch, David, 'The everyday lives of Parisian women and the October Days of 1789', *Social History*, 24, 3 (October 1999), pp.231-249

Gemie, Sharif, 'Institutional History, Social History, Women's History', *French Historical Studies*, 22, 4 (1999), pp. 613-623

Girard, René, 'Memoirs of a Dutiful Existentialist', *Yale French Studies*, 27 (1961), pp.41-46

Ginsborg, Paul, 'The Politics of the Family in Twentieth-Century Europe', *Contemporary European History*, 9, 3 (2000), pp.411-444

Gorrara, Claire, 'Writing and memory: the Occupation and the construction of the self in 1980s French Literature', *Modern and Contemporary France*, 5, 1 (1997), pp.35-45

Green, Nancy L., 'Gender and Jobs in the Jewish Community: Europe at the Turn of the Twentieth Century', *Jewish Social Studies*, 8, 2/3 (Winter/Spring 2002), pp.39-60

Greenwald, Lisa, 'Not "Undifferentiated Magma": Refashioning a Female Identity in France, 1944-45', *Historical Reflections/Réflexions Historiques*, 22, 2 (Spring 1996), pp.407-430

Halbreich, Rebecca G., 'Women in the French Resistance,' *Ex Post Facto*, 3 (1994), http://userwww.sfsu.edu/~epf/1994/resist.html. Accessed 13 February 2008

Hellman, John, 'Memory, history and national identity in Vichy France', *Modern and Contemporary France*, 9, 1 (2001), pp.37-42

Hellman, John, 'Vichy Background: Political Alternatives for French Catholics in the Nineteen-Thirties', *Journal of Modern History*, 49, 1, On Demand Supplement, (March 1977), pp.D1111-1144

Henry, Patrick, 'Madeleine Dreyfus, Jewish Activity, Righteous Jews', *Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture*, 7, 1 (2004), pp.134-146

Huss, Marie-Monique, 'Pronatalism in the Inter-War Period in France', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 25, 1, (January 1990), pp.39-68

Hyman, Paula, 'Gender and the Shaping of Modern Jewish Identities', *Jewish Social Studies*, 8, 2.3 (Winter/Spring 2002), pp.153-161

Hyman, Paula, 'Challenge to Assimilation: French Jewish Youth Movements Between the Wars', *Jewish Journal of Sociology*, 18, 2, (December 1976), pp.105-114

Hyman, Paula, 'The Jewish Body Politic: Gendered Politics in the Early Twentieth Century', *Nashim*, 2, (Spring 1999), pp.37-51

Jennings, Eric, ''Reinventing Jeanne': The Iconology of Joan of Arc in Vichy Schoolbooks, 1940-44', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 29, 4, (October 1994), pp.711-734

Judt, Tony, '"We Have Discovered History". Defeat, Resistance, and the Intellectuals in France', *Journal of Modern History*, 64, Supplement: Resistance against the Third Reich, pp.S147-172

Kaufmann, Dorothy, 'The Story of Two Women: Dominique Aury and Edith Thomas', *Signs*, 23, 4 (Summer 1998), pp.883-905

Kaufmann, Dorothy, 'Uncovering a Woman's Life: Edith Thomas (Novelist, Historian, *Résistante*), *The French Review*, 67, 1 (October 1993), pp.61-72

Kimble, Sara L., '"For the Family, France and Humanity": Authority and Maternity in the *Tribunaux des Enfants*', *Proceedings for the Western Society for French History*, 31 (2003), pp.212-229

Kitson, Simon, 'From Enthusiasm to Disenchantment: the French Police and the Vichy Regime, 1940-1944', *Contemporary European History*, 11, 3 (2002), pp.371-390

Koos, Cheryl A., "On les aura!": the gendered politics of abortion and the Alliance nationale contre la dépopulation, 1938-1944', *Modern and Contemporary France*, 7, 1 (February 1999), pp.21-33

Koos, Cheryl A., 'Gender, Anti-Individualism, and Nationalism: The Alliance Nationale and the Pronatalist Backlash Against the *Femme Moderne*, 1933-1940', *French Historical Studies*, 19, 3 (Spring 1996), pp.699-723

Koos, Cheryl A., 'Fascism, Fatherhood, and the Family in Interwar France: The Case of Anthoine Rédier and the Légion', *Journal of Family History*, 24, 3 (July 1999), pp.317-329

Kselman, Thomas, 'Catholicism, Christianity and Vichy', *French Historical Studies*, 23, 3 (2000), pp.513-530

Krylova, Anna, 'Stalinist Identity from the Viewpoint of Gender: Rearing a Generation of Professionally Violent Women Fighters in 1930s Stalinist Russia', *Gender and History*, 163 (November 2004), pp.626-653

Lawrence, Paul, Baycroft, Timothy and Grohmann, Carolyn, "Degrees of Foreignness' and the Construction of Identity in French Border Regions during the Interwar Period', *Contemporary European History*, 10, 1 (2001), pp.51-71

List-Pakin, Joanne, 'France 1940-1945. Des juifs en Résistance', *Le Monde Juif*, 152 (Sep-Dec 1994), pp.172-176

Loiseau, Dominique, 'Associations féminines et syndicalisme en Loire-Atlantique des années 1930 aux années 1980', *Clio*, 3 (1996), http://clio.revues.org/document466.html. Accessed 13 February 2008

Loiseau, Dominique, 'Ménagères, organisées...autonomes?' (26 September 1997), http://palissy.humana.univ-nantes.fr/LABOS/FUN/TXT/menag.html. Accessed 13 February 2008

Marrus, Michael R., 'Coming to Terms with Vichy', *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, 9, 1 (Spring 1995), pp.23-41

Mesnil-Amar, Jacqueline, 'Nous étions les juifs de l'oubli...', *Les Nouveaux Cahiers*, 50 (Autumn 1977), pp.43-49

McMeekin, Sean, 'From Moscow to Vichy: Three Working Class Militants and the French Communist Party, 1920-1940', *Contemporary European History*, 9, 1 (2000), pp.1-38

McMillan, James F., 'Clericals, Anticlericals and the Women's Movement in France under the Third Republic', *The Historical Journal*, 24, 2 (1981), pp.361-376

Moore, Alison M., 'Memory and Trauma in Photography of the Tondues: Visuality of the Vichy Past Through the Silent Image of Women', *Gender and History*, 17, 3 (November 2005), pp.657-681

Nettelbeck, Colin, 'The Eldest Daughter and the *trente glorieuses*: Catholicism and national identity in postwar France', *Modern and Contemporary France*, 6, 4 (1998), pp.445-462

Nicault, Catherine and Grynberg, Anne, 'La résistance sioniste sous l'Occupation', *Pardès*, 16 (1992), *Les Juifs de France dans la Seconde Guerre Mondiale*, pp.145-168

Noakes, Lucy, 'Gender, war and memory: discourse and experience in history', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 36, 4 (2001), pp.663-672

Offen, Karen, 'Depopulation, Nationalism, and Feminism in Fin-de-Siècle France', *American Historical Review*, 89, 3 (June 1984), pp.648-676

Offen, Karen, 'French Women's History: Retrospect (1789-1940) and Prospect', *French Historical Studies*, 26, 4 (2003), pp.727-767

Offen, Karen, 'Intrepid Crusader: Ghénia Avril de Ste-Croix Takes on the Prostitution Issue', *Proceedings for the Western Society for French History*, 33 (2005), pp.352-274

Passmore, Kevin, 'Femininity and the Right: from moral order to moral order', *Modern and Contemporary France*, 8, 1 (2000), pp.55-69

Passmore, Kevin, 'Boy Scouting for Grown Ups? Paramilitarism in the Croix de Feu and the Parti Social Français', *French Historical Studies*, 19, 2 (Autumn 1995), pp.527-557

Passmore, Kevin, '"Planting the Tricolor in the Citadels of Communism": Women's Social Action in the Croix de Feu and the Parti Social Français', *Journal of Modern History*, 71 (December 1999), pp.814-851

Paxton, Robert O., 'The Five Stages of Fascism', *Journal of Modern History*, 70, 1 (March 1998), pp.1-23

Pedersen, Jean Elisabeth, 'Regulating Abortion and Birth Control: Gender, Medecine, and Republican Politics in France, 1870-1920', *French Historical Studies*, 19, 3, (Spring 1996), pp.673-698

Peschanski, Denis, 'Legitimacy/Legitimation/Delegitimation: France in the Dark Years, a Textbook Case', *Contemporary European History*, 13, 4 (2004), pp.409-423

Pike, David Wingeate, 'Between the Junes: The French Communists from the Collapse of France to the Invasion of Russia', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 28, 3 (July 1993), pp.465-485

Poubanne, Violaine, 'Les groupes locaux de l'Union française pour le suffrage des femmes (1909-1940)', Extrait du Bulletin *Archives du Féminisme*, 6 (December 2003), http://www.archivesdufeminisme.fr/article.php3?id_article=53. Accessed 13 February 2008

Poznanski, Renée, 'The Geopolitics of Jewish Resistance in France', *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, 15, 2 (Fall 2001), pp.245-265

Prost, Antoine, 'Catholic Conservatives, Population, and the Family in Twentieth Century France', *Population and Development Review*, 14 (1998), Supplement: Population and Resources in Western Intellectual Traditions, pp.147-164

Prost, Antoine, 'What has happened to French Social History?', *The Historifcal Journal*, 35, 3 (September 1992), pp.671-679

Prost, Antoine, 'The Impact of War on French and German Political Cultures', *The Historical Journal*, 37, 1 (March 1994), pp.209-217

Rault, Michèle, 'En mission dans le monder ouvrier, dans les années 1940-70', *Clio*, 15 (2002), *Chrétiennes*, http://clio.revues.org/document65.html. Accessed 13 February 2008

Reggiani, Andres Horacio, 'Procreating France: The Politics of Demography, 1919-1945', *French Historical Studies*, 19, 3 (Spring 1996), pp.725-754

Reid, Donald, 'Resistance and Its Discontents: Affairs, Archives, Avowals and the Aubracs', *Journal of Modern History*, 77 (March 2005), pp.97-137

Reid, Donald, 'Germaine Tillion and Resistance to the Vichy Syndrome', *History and Memory*, 15, 2 (2003), pp. 6-63

Reynolds, Siân, 'The Lost Generation of French Feminists? Anti-Fascist Women in the 1930s', *Women's Studies International Forum*, 23, 6 (2000), pp. 79-88

Reynolds, Siân, 'Women and the Popular Front in France: The Case of the Three Women Ministers', *French History*, 8, 2 (1994), pp.196-224

Reynolds, Siân, 'Alternative Politics: Women and Public Life in France between the Wars', *Stirling French Publications*, Stirling, 1993

Riot-Sarcey, Michèle, 'Women's History in France: An Ill-Defined Subject', *Gender and History*, 9, 1 (April 1997), pp.15-35

Riot-Sarcey, Michèle, 'The Difficulties of Gender in France: Reflections on a Concept', *Gender and History*, 11, 3 (November 1999), pp.489-498

Ripa, Yannick, 'Féminin/Masculin: les enjeux du genre dans l'Espagne de la Seconde République au Franquisme', *Le Mouvement Social*, 1, 198 (2002), pp.111-127

Ripa, Yannick, 'La tonte purificatrice des républicaines pendant la guerre civile espagnole', *Cahiers de l'IHTP*, 31 (October 1995), *Identités féminines et violences politiques (1936-1946)*, Rouquet, François and Voldman, Danièle (ed.), http://www.ihtp.cnrs.fr/spip.php?article246&lang=fr. Accessed 3 April 2008

Roberts, Mary Louise, 'Gender, Consumption, and Commodity Culture', *American Historical Review*, 103, 3 (June 1998), pp.817-844

Rupp, Leila J., 'Constructing Internationalism: The Case of Transnational Women's Organisations, 1888-1945', *American Historical Review*, 99, 5 (December 1994), pp.1571-1600

Salrin, Melissa, '"A Family Beyond Blood": Race, Gender, and Colonialism in *Action Sociale de la Femme*, c.1914-1940', *Proceedings of the Western Society for French History*, 33 (2005), pp.375-391

Samuel, Vivette, 'Cinquante ans après, les enfants cachés prennent la parole', *Le Monde Juif*, 155 (Sep-Dec 1995), pp.156-168

Samuel, Vivette, 'Une Militante', *L'Arche*, 343 (1985), pp.42-44

Schwartz, Paula, 'The politics of food and gender in Occupied Paris', *Modern and Contemporary France*, 7, 1 (February 1999), pp.35-46

Schwartz, Paula, 'Partisanes and Gender Politics in Vichy France', *French Historical Studies*, 16, 1 (Spring 1989), pp.126-151

Schwartz, Paula, 'Résistance et différence des sexes: bilan et perspectives', *Clio*, 1 (1995), *Résistances et Libérations, France 1940-1945*, http://clio.revues.org/document516.html. Accessed 14 March 2008.

Schwartz, Paula, 'La répression des femmes communistes (1940-1944)', *Cahiers de l'IHTP*, 31 (October 1995), *Identités féminines et violences politiques (1936-1946)*, Rouquet, François and Voldman, Danièle (ed.), http://www.ihtp.cnrs.fr/spip.php?article245&lang=fr. Accessed 3 April 2008

Scott, Joan Wallach, 'History in Crisis: The Others' Side of the Story', *American Historical Review*, 94, 3 (June 1989), pp.680-692

Scott, Joan Wallach, 'Gender as a Useful Category of Historical Analysis', *American Historical Review*, 91, 5 (December 1986), pp.1053-1075

Siegel, Mona, '"History is the Opposite of Forgetting": The Limits of Memory and the Lessons of History in Interwar France', *Journal of Modern History*, 74 (December 2002), pp.770-800

Siegel, Mona, '"To the Unknown Mother of the Unknown Soldier": Pacifism, Feminism, and the Politics of Sexual Difference Among French Institutrices Between the Wars', *French Historical Studies*, 22, 3 (Summer 1999), pp.421-451

Smith, Anthony D., 'Culture, Community and Territory: The Politics of Ethnicity and Nationalism', *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-), Ethnicity and International Relations*, 72, 3 (July 1996), pp.445-458

Soucy, Robert J., 'French Fascism and the Croix de Feu: A Dissenting Interpretation', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 26, 1 (January 1991), pp.159-188

Stromberg Childers, Kristen, 'Paternity and the Politics of Citizenship in Interwar France', *Journal of Family History*, 26, 1 (January 2001), pp.90-111

Taylor, Lynne, 'Occupied France Remembered', *Contemporary European History*, 13, 3 (2004), pp.357-365

Thalmann, Rita, 'Femmes Juives dans la Résistance et la Libération du territoire', *Le Monde Juif*, 152 (Sep-Dec 1994), pp.177-182

Thalmann, Rita, 'L'oubli des femmes dans l'historiographie de la Résistance', *Clio*, 1 (1995) *Résistances et Libérations, France 1940-1945*, http://clio.revues.org/document513.html. Accessed 14 March 2008.

Thuau, Soizac, 'Cecile Brunschvicg et la question de l'enfance scolarisée: l'œuvre d'une femme au cœur de l'Etat (1936-1939)', Extrait du Bulletin *Archives du Féminisme*, 4 (Septembre 2002), http://www.archivesdufeminisme.fr/article.php3?id_article=25. Accessed 13 February 2008

Trist, Suzanne, 'Le patronat face à la question des loisirs ouvriers: avant 1936 et après', *Le Mouvement Social*, 150 (Jan-Mar 1990), pp.45-57

Tumblety, Joan, 'Gender, Women and the Occupation of France, 1940-1944', *History Compass*, 1 (2003), EU 037, pp.1-4

Tumblety, Joan, 'Revenge of the fascist knights: masculine identities in Je suis partout, 1940-1944', *Modern and Contemporary France*, 7, 1 (February 1999), pp.11-20

Tumblety, Joan, 'Obedient daughters of Marianne: discourses of patriotism and maternity in the French women's Resistance press during the Second World War', *Women's History Notebooks*, 4, 2 (Summer 1997), pp.1-6

Whitney, Susan B., 'Gender, Class, and Generation in Interwar French Catholicism: The Case of the Jeunesse Ouvrière Chrétienne Féminine', *Journal of Family History*, 26, 4 (October 2001), pp.480-507

Whitney, Susan B., 'Embracing the Status Quo: French Communists, Young Women and the Popular Front', *Journal of Social History*, 30, 1 (1996), pp.29-53

Williams, Andrew, 'France and the New World Order, 1940-1947', *Modern and Contemporary France*, 8, 2 (2000), pp.191-202

Wilson, Stephen, 'History and Traditionalism: Maurras and the Action Française', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 29, 3 (July-September 1968), pp.365-380

Books

Accampo, Elinor A., *Blessed Motherhood, Bitter Fruit. Nelly Roussel and the Politics of Female Pain in Third Republican France* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006)

Accampo, Elinor A., Fuchs, Rachel G. and Stewart, Mary Lynn (eds.), *Gender and the Politics of Social Reform in France, 1970-1914* (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1995)

Adler, Jacques, *The Jews of Paris and the "Final Solution": Communal Response and Internal Conflicts, 1940-1944* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987)

Adler, K. H., *Jews and Gender in Liberation France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003)

Adler, Laure, *Les Femmes Politiques* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1993)

Agulhon, Maurice, *Les Métamorphoses de Marianne. L'imagerie et la symbolique républicaine de 1914 à nos jours* (Paris: Flammarion, 2001)

Agulhon, Maurice, *Marianne into Battle. Republican Imagery and Symbolism in France, 1789-1880*, trans. by Janet Lloyd (Cambridge, New York and London: Cambridge University Press, 1981)

Alexander, Martin S. and Graham, Helen (eds.), *The French and Spanish Popular Fronts. Comparative Perpectives* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989)

Allen, James Smith, *Poignant Relations, Three Modern French Women* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins Press, 2000)

Amar, Marianne and Milza, Pierre, *L'immigration en France au XXe siècle* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1990)

Ambler, John S. (ed.), *The French Welfare State. Surviving Social and Ideological Change* (New York and London: New York University Press, 1991)

Atkin, Nicholas, *The Forgotten French. Exiles in the British Isles, 1940-44* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2003)

Atkin, Nicholas, *The French At War, 1934-1944* (Harlow and London: Longman, 2001)

Aubigné, Jeanne Marle d' and Mouchon, Violette (eds.), *Les Clandestins de Dieu. CIMADE 1939-1945* (Paris: Fayard, 1968)

Azéma, Jean-Pierre and Bédarida, François (eds.), *La France des Années Noires* (Paris: Seuil, 1993)

Baer, Elizabeth R. and Goldenberg, Myrna (eds.), *Experience and Expression. Women, the Nazis and the Holocaust* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2003)

Bard, Christine, Metz, Annie and Neveu, Valérie (eds.), *Guide des sources de l'histoire du féminisme de la Révolution française à nos jours* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, Archives du Féminisme, 2006)

Bard, Christine, *Les femmes dans la société française au 20e siècle* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2001)

Bard, Christine, *Les Filles de Marianne. Histoire des féminismes 1914-1940* (Paris: Fayard, 1995)

Bard, Christine (ed.), *Un siècle d'Antiféminisme* (Paris: Fayard, 1999)

Baskin, Judith R. (ed.), *Women of the Word. Jewish Women and Jewish Writing* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press,1994)

Baumel, Judith Tydor, *Double Jeopardy. Gender and the Holocaust* (London and Portland: Valentine Mitchell, 1998)

Beauvoir, Simone de, *The Blood of Others*, trans. by Yvonne Moyse and Roger Senhouse (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 2002)

Bedarida, Renée, *Les Catholiques dans la guerre, 1939-1945: Entre Vichy et la Résistance* (Paris: Hachette Littératures, 1998)

Beevor, Antony, *The Battle for Spain. The Spanish Civil War 1936-1939* (London: Phoenix, 2006)

Bell, Susan Groag and Offen, Karen M.(eds.), *Women, the Family, and Freedom. The Debate in Documents*, Volume II, 1880-1950 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1983)

Bensimon, Doris and Pinkus, Benjamin (eds.), *Les Juifs de France, Le Sionisme et L'Etat d'Israël: Actes du Colloque International*, Volume I (Paris: Publications Langues'O, 1987)

Bernstein, Deborah S. (ed.), *Pioneers and Homemakers. Jewish Women in Pre-State Israel* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992)

Bernstein, Richard, *Fragile Glory. A Portrait of France and the French* (London: The Bodley Head, 1991)

Bertin, Celia, *Femmes sous l'Occupation* (Paris: Editions Stock, 1993)

Bertin, Celia, *Louise Weiss* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1999)

Bertrand, Simone (ed.), *Mille Visages. Un Seul Combat. Les femmes dans la Résistance* (Paris: Les Editeurs Français Réunis, 1965)

Birnbaum, Pierre, *Jewish Destinies. Citizenship, State, and Community in Modern France*, trans. by Arthur Goldhammer (New York: Hill & Wang, 2000)

Birnbaum, Pierre, *Histoire Politique des Juifs de France. Entre universalisme et particularisme*, (Paris: Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, 1990)

Bitton, Michèle, *Présences féminines juives en France, XIXe-XXe siècles. Cent itinéraires* (Aix-en-Provence: Institut d'études et de culture juives, 1995)

Black, Naomi, *Social Feminism* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1989)

Bock, Gisela and Thane, Pat (eds.), *Maternity and Gender Policies. Women and the Rise of the European Welfare States, 1880s-1950s* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991)
Brenner, Rachel Feldhay, *Writing as Resistance. Four Women Confronting the Holocaust* (University Park Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997)

Bridenthal, Renate, Stuard, Susan Mosher and Weisner, Merry E. (eds.), *Becoming Visible. Women in European History* (New York and Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1998)

Bristow, Edward J., *Prostitution and Prejudice. The Jewish Fight Against White Slavery 1870-1939* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982)

Burlen, Katherine (ed.), *La Banlieue Oasis. Henri Sellier et les cités-jardins 1900-1940* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de Vincennes, 1987)

Burton, Richard D.E., *Holy Tears, Holy Blood. France, Catholicism, and the Culture of Suffering in France, 1840-1970* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2004)

Capdevila, Luc, Rouquet, François, Virgili, Fabrice and Voldman, Danièle, *Hommes et femmes dans la France en guerre (1914-1945)* (Paris: Editions Payot & Rivages, 2003)

Caron, Vicki, *Uneasy Asylum. France and the Jewish Refugee Crisis, 1933-1942* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999)

Chaperon, Sylvie, *Les années Beauvoir (1945-1970)* (Paris: Fayard, 2000)

Charrier, M. F. and Feller, E. (eds.), *Aux origines de l'action sociale: l'invention des services sociaux aux chemins de fer* (Paris: Erès, 2001)

Chatel, Nicole (ed.), *Des Femmes dans la Résistance* (Paris: Julliard, 1972)

Chatfield, Charles and van den Dungen, Peter (eds.), *Peace Movements and Political Cultures* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1988)

Cholvy, Gérard (ed.), *Mouvements de Jeunesse. Chrétiens et Juifs: Sociabilité juvénile dans un cadre européen, 1799-1968* (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1985)

Clark, Linda L., *Schooling the Daughters of Marianne. Textbooks and the Socialisation of Girls in Modern French Primary Schools* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984)

Clark, Linda L., *The Rise of Professional Women in France. Gender and Public Administration Since 1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000)

Cobb, Richard, *French and Germans, Germans and French. A Personal Interpretation of France Under Two Occupations, 1914-1918/1940-1944* (Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1983)

Cohen, Asher, *Persécutions et sauvetages: Juifs et Francais sous l'occupation et sous Vichy* (Paris: Cerf, 1993)

Cohen, Richard I., *The Burden of Conscience. French Jewish Leadership During the Holocaust* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1987)

Conte, Arthur, *Grandes Françaises du XXe Siècle* (Paris: Plon, 1995)

Cooke, Miriam and Woollacott, Angela (eds.), *Gendering War Talk* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993)

Cooper, Helen M., Munich, Adrienne Auslander and Squier, Susan Merrill (eds.), *Arms and the Woman: War, Gender and Literary Representation* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Caroline Press, 1989)

Corbin, Alain, Lalouette, Jacqueline and Riot-Sarcey, Michèle (eds.), *Femmes dans la Cité, 1815-1871* (Grâne: Créaphis, 1997)

Cornick, Martyn and Crossley, Ceri (eds.), *Problems in French History* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave, 2000)

Cova, Anne, *Au service de l'église, de la patrie et de la famille. Femmes catholiques et maternité sous la IIIe République* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2000)

Cova, Anne, *Maternité et Droits des Femmes en France (XIXe-XXe siècles)* (Paris: Anthropos, 1997)

Darrow, Margaret H., *French Women and the First World War. War Stories of the Home Front* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2000)

Dawidowicz, Lucy S., *What is the Use of Jewish History? Essays by Lucy S. Dawidowicz*, edited and with an introduction by Neal Kozodoy (New York: Schocken Books, 1992)

Delbo, Charlotte (ed.), *Convoy to Auschwitz. Women of the French Resistance*, trans. by Carol Cosman (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1987)

Diamond, Hanna, *Women and the Second World War in France, 1939-48: Choices and Constraints* (Harlow: Longman, 1999)

Diamond, Hanna and Kitson, Simon (eds.), *Vichy, Resistance, Liberation. New Perspectives on Wartime France* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2005)

Diamond, Hanna, *Fleeing Hitler. France 1940* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2007)

Diebolt, Evelyne, *Les femmes dans l'action sanitaire, sociale et culturelle, 1901-2001. Les associations face aux institutions* (Paris: Femmes et Associations, 2001)

Diebolt, Evelyne and Douyere-Demeulenaere, Christiane (eds.), *Un siècle de vie associative: quelles opportunités pour les femmes?* (Paris: Femmes et Associations, 2001)

Dombrowski, Nicole Ann, *Women and War in the Twentieth Century. Enlisted With or Without Consent* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1999)

Downs, Laura Lee, *Children in the Promised Land: Working-Class Movements and the Colonies de Vacances in France, 1880-1960* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002)

Downs, Laura Lee, *Manufacturing Inequality: Gender Division in the French and British Metalworking Industries, 1914-1939* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1995)

Downs, Laura Lee, *Writing Gender History* (New York: Hodder Education, 2004)

Drapac, Vesna, *War and Religion. Catholics in the Churches of Occupied Paris* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1998)

Dreyfus-Armand, Geneviève and Temime, Emile, *Les Camps sur la plage: un exil espagnol* (Paris: Editions Autrement, 1995)

Duchen, Claire, *Women's Rights and Women's Lives in France 1944-1968* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994)

Duchen, Claire (ed.), *French Connections. Voices from the Women's Movement in France* (London: Hutchison, 1987)

Duchen, Claire and Bandhauer-Schöffman, Irene, *When the War was Over. Women, War and Peace in Europe, 1946-1956* (London and New York: Leicester University Press, 2000)

Dudink, Stefan, Hagemann, Karen and Tosh, John (eds.), *Masculinities in Politics and War. Gendering Modern History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004)

Duras, Marguerite, *Hiroshima Mon Amour* (New York: Grove Press, 1961)

Dutton, Paul V., *Origins of the French Welfare State. The Struggle for Social Reform in France, 1914-1947* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002)

Dwork, Deborah, *Children with a Star: Jewish Youth in Nazi Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991)

Dyer, Colin, *Population and Society in Twentieth Century France* (London and Sydney: Hodder and Stoughton, 1978)

Earlham, Chris and Richards, Michael (eds.), *The Splintering of Spain: Cultural History and the Spanish Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005)

Evans, Richard J., *Comrades and Sisters: Feminism, Socialism and Pacifism in Europe 1870-1945* (Sussex and New York: Wheatsheaf Books, St.Martin's Press, 1987)

Evleth, Donna, *France Under the German Occupation, 1940-1944. An Annotated Bibliography* (Westport and London: Greenwood Press, 1991)

Evleth, Donna, *The Authorized Press in Vichy and German-Occupied France, 1940-1944. A Bibliography* (Westport and London: Greenwood Press, 1999)

Farge, Arlette and Klapisch-Zuber, Christiane (eds.), *Madame ou Mademoiselle? Itinéraires de la solitude féminine, 18e-20e siècles* (Paris: Montalba, 1984)

Farran, Denise, Scott, Sue and Stanley, Liz (eds.), *Studies in Sexual Politics 13/14. Writing Feminist Biography* (Manchester: University of Manchester, 1986)

Fauré, Christine (ed.), *Political and Historical Encyclopedia of Women* (New York and London: Routledge, 2003)

Fayet-Scribe, Sylvie, *Associations Féminines et Catholicisme. De la charité à l'action sociale, XIXe-XXe siècle* (Paris: Les Editions Ouvrières, 1990)

Fijalkow, Jacques (ed.), *Les femmes dans les années quarante. Juives et non-Juives, souffrances et résistance* (Paris: Les Editions de Paris, 2004)

Finkielkraut, Alain, *The Imaginary Jew*, trans. by Kevin O'Neill and David Suchoff (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1994)

Fishman, Sarah, Downs, Laura Lee, Sinanoglou, Ioannis, Smith, Leonard V., Zaretsky, Robert (eds.), *France at War. Vichy and the Historians* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2000)

Fishman, Sarah, *We Will Wait. Wives of French Prisoners of War, 1940-1945* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1991)

Fishman, Sarah, *The Battle for Children. World War II, Youth Crime, and Juvenile Justice in Twentieth-Century France* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press, 2002)

FNDIRP, *Hommage à Marie-Claude Vaillant-Couturier* (Paris: Publications du FNDIRP, 1997)

Foley, Susan K., *Women in France since 1789. The Meanings of Difference* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004)

Forbes, Jill and Kelly, Michael (eds.), *French Cultural Studies. An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995)

Ford, Caroline, *Divided Houses. Religion and Gender in Modern France* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2005)

Forth, Christopher E., *The Dreyfus Affair and the Crisis of French Manhood* (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 2004)

Fourcaut, Annie, *Femmes à l'usine. Ouvrières et surintendantes dans les enterprises françaises de l'entre-deux-guerres* (Paris: François Maspero, 1982)

Fourcaut, Annie, *Bobigny, Banlieue Rouge* (Paris: Les Editions Ouvrières et Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, 1986)

Frader, Laura L. and Rose, Sonya O. (eds.), *Gender and Class in Modern Europe* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1996)

Fraisse, Geneviève and Perrot, Michelle (eds.), *A History of Women in the West. Part IV: Emerging Feminism from Revolution to World War* (Cambridge, Mass., and London: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1993)

France During the German Occupation, 1940-1944, trans. by Philip W. Whitcomb, two volumes (Stanford: Stanford University Press for the Hoover Institute on War, Revolution, and Peace, 1957)

Francos, Ania, *Il était des femmes dans la Résistance* (Paris: Stock, 1978)

Frankel, Jonathan (ed.), *Jews and Gender. The Challenge to Hierarchy, Studies in Contemporary Jewry. An Annual. XVI* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002)

Freedman, Jane and Tarr, Carrie (eds.), *Women, Immigration and Identities in France* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2000)

Friedlander, Judith, *Vilna on the Seine. Jewish Intellectuals in France since 1968* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1990)

Friedlander, Judith, Cook, Blanche Wiesen, Kessler-Harris, Alice, Smith-Rosenberg, Carol (eds.), *Women in Culture and Politics: A Century of Change* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986)

Fuchs, Rachel G., *Gender and Poverty in Nineteenth Century Europe* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005)

Fyrth, Jim (ed.), *Women's Voices from the Spanish Civil War* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1991)

Gildea, Robert, *Marianne in Chains. In Search of the German Occupation* (Basingstoke and Oxford: Macmillan, 2002)
Gildea, Robert, *France Since 1945* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1997)

Golsan, Richard J., *Vichy's Afterlife. History and Counterhistory in Postwar France* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2000)

Gordon, Linda (ed.), *Women, the State, and Welfare* (Wisconsin and London: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990)

Gorrara, Claire, *Women's Representations of the Occupation in Post-'68 France* (Basingstoke and London: Macmillan Press, 1998)

Gottlieb, Julie V., *Feminine Fascism. Women in Britain's Fascist Movement, 1923-1945* (London and New York: I.B.Tauris Publishers, 2000)

Grayzel, Susan R., *Women's Identities at War. Gender, Motherhood, and Politics in Britain and France during the First World War* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1999)

Green, Nancy L.,*The Pletzl of Paris. Jewish Immigrant Workers in the Belle Epoque* (New York and London: Holmes & Meier, 1986)

Gruber, Helmut and Graves, Pamela (eds.), *Women and Socialism/Socialism and Women. Europe Between the Two World Wars* (New York and Oxford: Bergahn Books, 1998)

Guerrand, R.-H. and Rupp, M.-A., *Brève Histoire du Service Social en France, 1896-1976* (Toulouse: Privat, 1978)

Guidez, Guylaine, *Femmes dans la Guerre, 1939-1945* (Paris: Collection Terres des Femmes, Perrin, 1989)

Haft, Cynthia J., *The Bargain and the Bridle: the General Union of the Israelites of France, 1941-1944* (Chicago: Dialog Press, 1983)

Halls, W.D., *The Youth of Vichy France* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981)

Hause, Steven C., *Women's Suffrage and Social Politics in the French Third Republic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984)

Hawthorne, Melanie and Golan, Richard J. (eds.), *Gender and Fascism in Modern France* (Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1997)

Heinemann, Marlene E., *Gender and Destiny. Women Writers and the Holocaust* (New York, Westport and London: Greenwood Press, 1986)

Higonnet, Margaret, Jenson, Jan, Michel, Sonya, Weitz, Margaret Collins (eds.), *Behind the Lines. Gender and the Two World Wars* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1987)
Hirschfield, Gerhard and Marsh, Patrick (eds.), *Collaboration in Europe. Politics and Culture during the Nazi Occupation, 1940-1944* (Oxford, New York and Munich: Berg, 1989)

Holman, Valerie and Kelly, Debra (eds.), *France At War in the Twentieth Century. Propaganda, Myth and Metaphor* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2000)

Holmes, Diana, *French Women's Writing, 1848-1994* (London and New Jersey: Athlone Press, 1996)

Hoog, Georges, *Histoire du Catholicisme Social en France* (Paris: Editions Domat-Montchrestien, 1946)

Horne, Janet R., *A Social Laboratory for Modern France. The Musée Social and the Rise of the Welfare State* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2002)

Hyman, Paula E., *Gender and Assimilation in Modern Jewish History. The Roles and Representation of Women* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1995)

Hyman, Paula E., *From Dreyfus to Vichy. The Remaking of French Jewry, 1906-1939* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979)

Ingram, Norman, *The Politics of Dissent. Pacifism in France 1919-1939* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991)

Irvine, William D., *French Conservatism in Crisis. The Republican Federation of France in the 1930s* (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1979)

Jackson, Gabriel, *A Concise History of the Spanish Civil War* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1980)

Jackson, Julian, *The Popular Front in France: Defending Democracy, 1934-1938* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988)

Jackson, Julian, *France. The Dark Years 1940-1944* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001)

Jelinek, Estelle C., *Women's Autobiography. Essays in Criticism* (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1980)

Josephson, Harold (ed.), *Biographical Dictionary of Modern Peace Leaders* (Westport and London: Greenwood Press, 1985)

Kaufman, Suzanne K., *Consuming Visions. Mass Culture and the Lourdes Shrine* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2005)

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

Kedward, H.R., *Resistance in Vichy France. A Study of Ideas and Motivations in the Southern Zone, 1940-1942* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978)

Kedward, H. R., *Occupied France. Collaboration and Resistance 1940-1944* (Oxford and Massachusetts: Blackwell, 1985)

Kedward, H. R. and Woods, Nancy (eds.), *The Liberation of France. Image and Event* (Oxford and Washington D.C.: Berg, 1995)

Kidd, William and Reynolds, Siân (eds.), *Contemporary French Cultural Studies* (London: Arnold, 2000)

Klarsfeld, Serge, *Vichy-Auschwitz. Le rôle de Vichy dans la Solution Finale de la Question Juive en France, 1942* (Paris: Fayard, 1983)

Klarsfeld, Serge, *Vichy-Auschwitz. Le rôle de Vichy dans la Solution Finale de la Question Juive en France, 1943-4* (Paris: Fayard, 1985)

Klarsfeld, Serge, *L'Etoile des juifs. Témoignages et documents* (Paris: L'Archipel, 1992)

Klaus, Alisa, *Every Child a Lion. The Origins of Maternal and Infant Health Policy in the United States and France, 1890-1920* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1993)

Klejman, Laurence and Rochefort, Florence, *L'Egalité en Marche. Le Féminisme sous la Troisième République* (Paris: Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques/Des Femmes, 1989)

Knibiehler, Yvonne, *Nous, les assistantes sociales. Naissance d'une profession (Trente ans de souvenirs d'assistantes sociales françaises, 1930-1960)* (Paris: Editions Aubier Montaigne, 1980)

Knibiehler, Yvonne (ed.), *Cornettes et blouses blanches. Les infirmières dans la societé française (1880-1980)* (Paris: Hachette, 1984)

Knibiehler, Yvonne and Fouquet, Catherine, *L'Histoire des Mères du Moyen-âge à nos jours* (Paris: Editions Montalba, 1980)

Koreman, Megan, *The Expectation of Justice. France, 1944-1946* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1999)

Kothen, Robert, *La pensée et l'action sociale des catholiques, 1789-1944* (Paris: Louvain, 1945)

Koven, Seth and Michel, Sonya (eds.), *Mothers of a New World. Maternalist Politics and the Origins of Welfare States* (New York: Routledge, 1993)

Kriegel, Annie, *Réflexions sur les Questions Juives* (Paris: Hachette, 1984)

Kritzman, Lawrence D. (ed.), *Auschwitz and After. Race, Culture and 'the Jewish Question' in France* (New York and London: Routledge, 1995)

Lagrou, Pieter, *The Legacy of Nazi Occupation. Patriotic Memory and National Recovery in Western Europe, 1945-1965* (Cambridge, New York and Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2000)

Larkin, Maurice, *France Since the Popular Front. Government and People, 1936-1986* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986)

Las, Nelly, *Femmes Juives dans le Siècle. Histoire du Conseil International des Femmes Juives de 1899 à nos Jours* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1996)

Laska, Vera (ed.), *Women in the Resistance and in the Holocaust. The Voices of Eyewitnesses* (Westport and London: Greenwood Press, 1983)

Latour, Anny, *The Jewish Resistance in France (1940-1944)*, trans. by Irene R.Ilton (New York: Holocaust Library, 1981)

Lazare, Lucien, *Rescue as Resistance: How Jewish Organizations Fought the Holocaust in France* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996)

Lebovics, Herman, *True France. The Wars Over Cultural Identity, 1900-1945* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1992)

Lerner, Gerda, *The Majority Finds Its Past. Placing Women in History* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1979)

Les Femmes dans La Résistance (à l'initiative de l'Union des Femmes Françaises) (Paris: Editions du Rocher, 1975)

Lionnet, Françoise, *Autobiographical Voices. Race, Gender, Self-Portraiture* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1989)

Mabon-Fall, Armelle, *Les assistantes sociales au temps de Vichy. Du silence à l'oubli* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1995)

Maitron, Jean (ed.), *Dictionnaire biographique du mouvement ouvrier français. IV. 1914-1939: De la Première à la Seconde Guerre Mondiale* (Paris: Editions Ouvriers, 1981-1993)

Malino, Frances and Wasserstein, Bernard (eds.), *The Jews in Modern France* (Hanover and London: Brandeis University Press, University Press of New England, 1985)

Marcus, Laura, *Auto/biographical Discourses. Criticism, Theory, Practice* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1994)

Margadant, Jo Burr, *Madame le Professeur. Women Educators in the Third Republic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990)

Margadant, Jo Burr, *The New Biography. Performing Femininity in Nineteenth Century France* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 2000)

Marrus, Michael R. and Paxton, Robert O., *Vichy France and the Jews* (New York: Basic Books, 1981)

Martin, Elaine (ed.), *Gender, Patriarchy and Fascism in the Third Reich* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1993)

McCarthy, Kathleen D. (ed.), *Lady Bountiful Revisited: Women, Philanthropy, and Power* (New Brunswick and London: Rutgers University Press, 1990)

McLaren, Angus, *The Trials of Masculinity. Policing Sexual Boundaries, 1870-1930* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1997)

McMillan, James, *Twentieth-Century France: Politics and Society in France, 1898-1991* (London: Edward Arnold, 1992)

McMillan, James F., *France and Women 1789-1914. Gender, Society and Politics* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000)

Melman, Billie (ed.), *Borderlines. Genders and Identities in War and Peace, 1870-1930* (New York and London: Routledge, 1998)

Meltzer, Françoise, *For Fear of the Fire. Joan of Arc and the Limits of Subjectivity* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2001)

Milligan, Jennifer, *The Forgotten Generation. French Women Writers of the Inter-war Period*, (Oxford and New York: Berg, 1996)

Milza, Pierre, *Exils et migration: Italiens et Espagnols en France, 1938-1945* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1994)

Monestier, Marianne, *Elles étaient cent et mille. Femmes dans la Résistance* (Paris: Fayard, 1972)

Monet, Laurette-Alexis, *Les Miradors de Vichy* (Paris: Les Editions de Paris, 2001)

Morris, Alan, *Collaboration and Resistance Reviewed. Writers and the Mode Rétro in Post-Gaullist France* (New York and Oxford: Berg, 1992)

Mosse, George L., *Nationalism and Sexuality. Respectability and Abnormal Sexuality in Modern Europe* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1985)
Muel-Dreyfus, Francine, *Vichy and the Eternal Feminine. A Contribution to a Political Sociology of Gender*, trans. by Kathleen A. Johnson (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2001)

Nash, Mary, *Defying Male Civilisation: Women in the Spanish Civil War* (Denver: Arden Press, 1995)

Némirovsky, Irène, *Le Vin de Solitude* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1935)

Némirovsky, Irène, *Suite Française*, trans. by Sandra Smith (London: Vintage Books, 2007)

Nye, Robert A., *Crime, Madness, and Politics in Modern France. The Medical Concept of National Decline* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984)

Ofer, Dalia and Weitzman, Lenore K. (eds.), *Women in the Holocaust* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998)

Offen, Karen, *European Feminisms, 1700-1950. A Political History* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000)

Offen, Karen, Pierson, Ruth Roach and Rendall, Jane (eds.), *Writing Women's History. International Perspectives* (Basingstoke and London: McMillan, 1991)

Panayi, Panikos (ed.), *Minorities in Wartime. National and Racial Groupings in Europe, North America and Australia during the Two World Wars* (Oxford and Providence: Berg, 1993)

Passmore, Kevin (ed.), *Women, gender and fascism in Europe, 1919-45* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003)

Paxton, Robert O., *Old Guard, New Order* (New York: Alfred A.Knopf, 1972)

Peabody, Sue and Stovall, Tyler (eds.), *The Color of Liberty. Histories of Race in France* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003)

Pedersen, Susan, *Family, Dependence and the Origins of the Welfare State. Britain and France, 1914-1945* (Cambridge, New York and Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1993)

Peer, Shanny, *France on Display. Peasants, Provincials, and Folklore in the 1937 Paris World's Fair* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998)

Peitsch, Helmut, Burdett, Charles and Gorrara, Claire (eds.), *European Memories of the Second World War* (New York and Oxford: Bergahn Books, 1999)

Perks, Robert and Thomson, Alastair (eds.), *The Oral History Reader* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998)

Phayer, Michael and Fleischner, Eva, *Cries in the Night. Women Who Challenged the Holocaust* (Kansas City: Sheed and Ward, 1997)

Philippe, Beatrice, *Etre Juif dans la Societé Française du Moyen-Age à nos Jours* (Lausanne: Editeurs Montalba, 1979)

Pierson, Ruth Roach (ed.), *Women and Peace. Theoretical, Historical and Practical Perspectives* (London, New York, Sydney: Croom Helm, 1987)

Pierson, Ruth Roach and Chaudhuri, Nupur (eds.), *Nation, Empire, Colony. Historicizing Gender and Race* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1998)

Pollard, Miranda, *Reign of Virtue. Mobilizing Gender in Vichy France* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1998)

Poujol, Jacques, *Protestants dans la France en guerre (1939-1945). Dictionnaire Thématique et Bibliographique* (Paris: Editions de Paris, 2000)

Poznanski, Renée, *Jews in France During World War II*, trans. by Nathan Bracher (Hanover and London: Brandeis University Press, University Press of New England, 2001)

Prell, Riv-Ellen, *Fighting to Become Americans. Jews, Gender, and the Anxiety of Assimilation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1999)

Prost, Antoine (ed.), *La Résistance, Une Histoire Sociale* (Paris: Les Editions de l'Atelier, 1997)

Prost, Antoine and Vincent, Gérard (eds.), *A History of Private Life. V: Riddles of Identity in Modern Times*, trans. by Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge Mass., and London: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1991)

Rajsfus, Maurice, *Des Juifs dans la collaboration: l'UGIF (1941-1944) precédé d'une courte étude sur les Juifs de France en 1939* (Paris: Etudes et Documentation Internationales, 1980)

Rayski, Adam, *The Choice of the Jews Under Vichy: Between Submission and Resistance*, trans. by Will Sayers (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 2005)

Reynolds, Siân, *France Between the Wars. Gender and Politics* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996)

Rittner, Carol and Roth, John K. (eds.), *Different Voices. Women and the Holocaust* (Minnesota: Paragon House, 1993)

Roberts, Mary Louise, *Disruptive Acts. The New Woman in Fin-de-Siècle France* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2002)
Roberts, Mary Louise, *Civilization Without Sexes. Reconstructing Gender in Postwar France, 1917-1927* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1994)

Rollet, Henri, *La condition de la femme dans l'Eglise. Ces femmes qui ont fait l'Eglise* (Paris: Fayard, 1975)

Rollet, Henri, *Andrée Butillard et le Féminisme Chrétien* (Paris: Spes, 1960)

Rollet, Henri, *L'Action Sociale des Catholiques en France. Volume II (1871-1914)* (Paris: Desclee de Brouwer, 1958)

Rosenberg, Clifford, *Policing Paris. The Origins of Modern Immigration Control Between the Wars* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2006)

Rossiter, Margaret L., *Women in the Resistance* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1986)

Rousseau, Renée, *Les Femmes Rouges. Chronique des années Vermeersch* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1983)

Rousso, Henri, *The Vichy Syndrome. History and Memory in France Since 1944* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1991)

Rousso, Henri, *The Haunting Past. History, Memory, and Justice in Contemporary France*, trans. by Ralph Schoolcraft (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998)

Ryan, Donna F., *The Holocaust and the Jews of Marseille: the Enforcement of Anti-Semitic Policies in Vichy France* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996)

Rupp, Marie-Antoinette, *Quarante années d'action sociale en France (1946-1986). Un canevas pour les travailleuses sociaux* (Toulouse: Privat, 1986)

Sarti, Odile, *The Ligue Patriotique des Françaises, 1902-1933. A Feminine Response to the Secularization of French Society* (New York and London: Garland Publishing Inc., 1992)

Schnapper, Dominique, *Jewish Identities in France. An Analysis of Contemporary Jewry*, trans. by Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1983)

Schneider, William H., *Quality and Quantity. The Quest for Biological Regeneration in Twentieth-Century France* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990)

Schultheiss, Katrin, *Bodies and Souls. Politics and the Professionalisation of Nursing in France, 1880-1922* (Cambridge, Mass., and London: Harvard University Press, 2001)
Scott, Joan Wallach, *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988)

Scott, Joan Wallach, *Only Paradoxes to Offer: French Feminists and the Rights of Man* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996)

Semelin, Jacques, *Unarmed Against Hitler. Civilian Resistance in Europe, 1939-1943* (Westport and London: Prager, 1993)

Siegel, Mona, *The Moral Disarmament of France. Education, Pacifism, and Patriotism, 1914-1940* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004)

Smith, Bonnie G., *Ladies of the Leisure Class. The Bourgeoises of Northern France in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981)

Smith, Paul, *Feminism and the Third Republic. Women's Political and Civil Rights in France, 1918-1945* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996)

Soucy, Robert, *French Fascism: The Second Wave, 1933-1939* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995)

Sowerwine, Charles, *Sisters or Citizens? Women and Socialism in France since 1876* (Cambridge, London and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982)

Stanley, Liz, *The auto/biographical I. The theory and practice of feminist auto/biography* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1992)

Stanley, Liz and Wise, Sue, *Breaking Out. Feminist Consciousness and Feminist Research* (London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983)

Stewart, Victoria, *Women's Autobiography. War and Trauma* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003)

Stovall, Tyler and van den Abbeek, Georges (eds.), *French Civilization and Its Discontents. Nationalism, Colonialism, Race* (Lanham, New York and Oxford: Lexington Books, 2003)

Sullerot, Evelyne, *La Presse Féminine* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1966)

Summerfield, Penny, *Reconstructing Women's Wartime Lives: Discourse and Subjectivity in Oral Histories of the Second World War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998)

Surkis, Judith, *Sexing the Citizen. Morality and Masculinity in France, 1870-1920* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2006)

Sweets, John F., *Choices in Vichy France: The French Under Nazi Occupation* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994)
Taithe, Bertrand, *Defeated Flesh. Welfare, Warfare and the Making of Modern France* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999)

Tallett, Frank and Atkin, Nicholas (eds.), *Catholicism in Britain and France since 1789* (London and Rio Grande: Hambledon Press, 1996)

Talmy, Robert, *Histoire du Mouvement Familial en France (1896-1939)* (Auberias: Union Nationale des Caisses d'Allocations Familiales, 1962)

Taylor, Lynne, *Between Resistance and Collaboration. Popular Protest in Northern France, 1940-45* (Basingstoke and London: Macmillan Press, 2000)

Thalmann, Rita (ed.), *Femmes et Fascismes* (Paris: Tierce, 1986)

Thalmann, Rita (ed.), *La Tentation Nationaliste, 1914-1945. Entre Emancipation et Nationalisme. La Press Féminine d'Europe, 1914-1945* (Paris: Editions Deuxtemps Tierce, 1990)

Thébaud, Françoise, *Quand nos grand-meres donnaient la vie. La maternité en France dans l'entre-deux-guerres* (Lyon: Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 1986)

Thébaud, Françoise (ed.), *A History of Women in the West. V: Toward a Cultural Identity in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, Massachussetts. and London: Harvard University Press, 1994)

Thomas, Edith, *Louise Michel*, trans. by Penelope Williams (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1980)

Tidd, Ursula, *Simone de Beauvoir, Gender and Testimony* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999)

Tilly, Louise A. and Scott, Joan Wallach, *Women, Work and Family* (New York and London: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1978)

Ungar, Steven and Conley, Tom (eds.), *Contested Nationhood in Twentieth-Century France* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1996)

Valensi, Lucette and Wachtel, Nathan, *Jewish Memories*, trans. by Barbara Harshav (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991)

Vegh, Claudine, *I Didn't Say Goodbye. Interviews with Children of the Holocaust*, trans. by Ros Schwartz (New York: E.P. Dutton Inc, 1984)

Veillon, Dominique, *Vivre et Survivre en France 1939-1947* (Paris: Editions Payot & Rivages, 1995)

Vidal-Naquet, Pierre *The Jews. History, Memory and the Present* (New York: Colombia University Press, 1996)

Vinen, Richard, *France 1934-1970* (Basingstoke and London: Macmillan, 1996)

Vinen, Richard, *The Unfree French: Life Under the Occupation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006)

Virgili, Fabrice, *Shorn Women. Gender and Punishment in Liberation France*, trans. by John Flower (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2002)

Warner, Marina, *Joan of Arc. The Image of Female Heroism* (London: Vintage, 1981)

Weinberg, David H., *A Community on Trial. The Jew of Paris in the 1930s* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1977)

Weitz, Margaret Collins, *Sisters in the Resistance. How Women Fought to Free France, 1940-1945* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1995)

Weitz, Margaret Collins, *Femmes. Recent Writings on French Women* (Boston: G.K.Hall & Co.,1985)

Wheeler, Bonnie and Wood, Charles T. (eds.), *Fresh Verdicts on Joan of Arc*, (New York and London: Garland Publishing Inc., 1996)

Wieviorka, Annette, *Déportation et Génocide. Entre la mémoire et l'oubli*, (Paris: Plon, 1992)

Wieviorka, Annette, *Ils étaient juifs, résistants, communistes* (Paris: Denoël, 1986)

Wishnia, Judith, *The Proletarianizing of the Fonctionnaires. Civil Service Workers and the Labor Movement Under the Third Republic* (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1990)

Yagil, Limore, *Chrétiens et juifs sous Vichy, 1940-1944: sauvetage et désobéissance civile* (Paris: Cerf, 2005)

Yagil, Limore, *"L'homme nouveau" et la révolution nationale de Vichy (1940-1944)* (Paris: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 1997)

Zaretsky, Robert, *Nîmes at War. Religion, Politics, and Public Opinion in the Gard, 1938-1944* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania University State Press, 1995)

Zeitoun, Sabine, *Ces enfants qu'il fallait sauver* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1989)

Zeitoun, Sabine, *L'œuvre de Secours aux Enfants (OSE) sous l'Occupation en France* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1990)

Zucotti, Susan, *The Holocaust, the French, and the Jews* (New York: Basic Books, 1993)