CULTURAL HISTORY OF MODERN WAR

James E. Connolly

THE EXPERIENCE OF OCCUPATION IN THE NORD, 1914–18

LIVING WITH THE ENEMY IN FIRST WORLD WAR FRANCE

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In loving memory of Edward Connolly (22 July 1933–7 December 2012), who once asked me why I had read so many books during my research. This is the answer.

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Abbreviations

ADHS	Archives Départementales de la Haute-Savoie
ADN	Archives Départementales du Nord
AML	Archives Municipales de Lille
AMT	Archives Municipales de Tourcoing
AN	Archives Nationales (France)
BDIC	Bibliothèque de Documentation Internationale et Contemporaine
CAN	Cour d'Assises du Département du Nord
CANF	Comité d'Alimentation du Nord de la France
CRB	Commission for Relief in Belgium
NA	National Archives of the United Kingdom
SHD	Service Historique de la Défense
USNA	National Archives of the United States of America

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Introduction

On 19 October 1918, French Prime Minister Georges Clemenceau visited Lille and its environs. The capital of the department of the Nord and its sister towns Roubaix and Tourcoing had been liberated by the British army two days previously, after four years of German occupation. In Tourcoing, Clemenceau addressed the local population and remarked:

> Nothing will be forgotten.
>
> Now, all of you, be with France […] which has made you into veritable combatants, whilst you were under the German boot.
>
> You have led the battle no less than the soldiers themselves have done. You have set a good example, and when one day the history of this war is written, it would be incomplete if it did not mention with honour the resistance of the great towns of Northern France, like Lille, Roubaix and Tourcoing.[1]

This promise of remembrance and an official narrative of resistance under occupation will sound familiar to historians of France in the Second World War. Indeed, the words 'resistance' and 'occupation' almost always evoke this latter conflict, especially among the French. Since the 1970s, the history of this dominant experience of occupation has shifted from a particular focus on resistance to attempts to document and explain the full spectrum of French behaviours and ideologies, notably collaboration, complicity in the Holocaust, and 'accommodation'.[2] This book is similarly concerned with providing an insight into different forms of French conduct under occupation. It seeks to consider the complex reality of occupied life in the Nord in 1914–18, but especially the way in which the occupied *Nordistes* (henceforth referred to as *occupés*) perceived and understood their experience. The aim is to enrich our understanding of an often-neglected aspect of the history of France

and of the First World War by examining the beliefs and behaviours of those forced to respond to the daily presence of the national enemy. To better understand the purpose of this book, it is necessary to return to the opening salvo of the Prime Minister's October 1918 proclamation.

'Nothing will be forgotten'

Clemenceau's statement proved false. The occupation of northern France in the First World War faded rapidly from public-collective and historical memory, in France and beyond. Indeed, the Prime Minister's conflation of the experience of the occupied population with that of French soldiers in part reflected one logic behind this forgetting. French memory of the First World War was characterised by the primacy of the soldiers' experience: combatants were seen as victims of violence, whereas the violence suffered by unarmed civilian populations was ignored.[3] As Annette Becker argued, the memory of the combatants' suffering was 'hypertrophied', whereas a 'hyperamnesia' surrounded the civilian experience, especially that of the occupied populations.[4] Indeed, most war monuments constructed in the occupied region in the interwar period were similar to *monuments aux morts*. For Becker, these evoked the 'normality of suffering' and communicated the message that the inhabitants of the occupied territory had suffered and died for the *Patrie*, just like all other French people.[5] This suffering was thus commemorated, as elsewhere, by honouring military sacrifices. By flattening differences in this way, the unique experience of occupation – a problematic reminder of the inability of France and its Allies to liberate occupied territory for four years – was slotted into and overshadowed by the wider national narrative of the conflict. This is the prevailing explanation of this 'forgetfulness', although on the local scale the reality was more complicated, as will be demonstrated. Nevertheless, the subsequent experience of occupation of the Second World War, and its dominance in French memory since, further reduced the flickering, fading memory of the occupation of 1914–18 to the weakest embers.

History books tell a similar story. This is not the place for an in-depth account of the historiography of the occupation, which can be found elsewhere;[6] however, a brief explanation helps to underline this book's contribution to the evolving literature. Although numerous local histories of the occupation of northern France were published in the interwar period, many were not entirely scholarly,[7] and the topic was largely ignored for decades after 1945. Just as most monuments evoked

the suffering of soldiers, most histories of the First World War tended to focus on military history until the shift to social history from the 1960s. This was followed by an emphasis on cultural history from the 1980s, seen as part of a 'memory boom' surrounding the First World War, which was particularly interested in the forgotten experience of civilians.[8] This development included the revival of historical interest in the occupation of 1914–18, spearheaded by French historians since the 1990s.[9] Yet the topic still remains relatively marginalised, especially in the anglophone world, where rigorous studies devoted entirely to this experience are rare.[10] This book seeks not only to fill this gap but also to present a novel take on the occupation. The result is a localised study offering new conceptual and analytical categories with potentially wider applications.

From 'war cultures' to the 'culture of the occupied'

Of particular importance to this approach is a historiographical notion prevalent among French historians of the First World War associated with the *Historial de la Grande Guerre* in Péronne – the idea of 'war culture(s)', first proposed in the singular by Annette Becker and Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau.[11] It describes the system of representations of the conflict forged by contemporaries, a 'broad-based system through which belligerent populations made sense of the war and persuaded themselves to continue fighting it'.[12] This notion eventually became linked to discussions of brutalisation, violence and, above all, consent. The argument is that the understanding and representations at the heart of war cultures helped belligerent populations, especially the French, endure combat and other wartime suffering.

This has proved divisive in France, with scholars attached to the Collectif de Recherche International et de Débat sur la Guerre de 1914–1918 (CRID) vehemently opposing the scholarly use and indeed historical existence of a 'war culture', questioning the entire cultural approach and often calling for a social or sociological methodology. They are especially critical of the attendant ideas of brutalisation and consent, and tend to focus on various forms of constraint to explain French endurance. Admittedly, there is more to the disagreements than a simple consent–constraint dichotomy.[13] The debate has ebbed and flowed, but it is still alive in the 2010s, including the first study of the occupation by a member of the CRID.[14] However, the controversy mainly concerns the topic of combatants in the war – for the civilian sphere, 'the notion of war culture seems relatively well accepted'.[15]

Although this book is a work of both social and cultural history, it is especially concerned with the occupied population's beliefs and behaviours. As such, it draws heavily on the 'Péronne' school. It takes inspiration from the idea of war cultures and proposes the existence of a 'culture of the occupied' or 'occupied culture' – what I originally termed the '*culture de l'occupé*'.[16] This was a system of representations and of understanding the experience of occupation, a moral-patriotic framework informing the population's response to the German presence. It was particularly concerned with what was considered acceptable and unacceptable behaviour during the occupation. This culture was related to bourgeois social mores and centred around a notion of respectability, although it was held by more than the bourgeoisie alone. Evidence for such a mental framework, a shared understanding of behavioural norms under occupation, is found in a variety of sources – in letters, diary entries, songs, poems, police reports, municipal records and more. This culture was rather Manichean in nature, with its adherents quick to criticise or hold in disdain those perceived as breaking its norms; it tended to classify behaviours as good or bad and left little room for moral-patriotic grey zones. However, this book focuses on both this monochrome vision held by many occupied people and the messier reality of occupied life – and it will strive to distinguish between the two, when possible.

The 'culture of the occupied' differs from 'war cultures' in a variety of ways. First and most evidently, it was largely spontaneous and developed independently of French war culture(s), given the isolation of the occupied zone (discussed below). Second, it has stronger links to pre-war cultures or norms, such as social mores and respectability. CRID scholars such as Rémy Cazals, Nicolas Offenstadt and André Loez have previously criticised cultural historians of the conflict for arguing that a new culture was born rapidly and marked a sharp break with pre-war norms.[17] The 'culture of the occupied' does not represent such a dramatic break. While the experience of living in the presence of the enemy was evidently the central driver behind this culture and was the issue with which it was most concerned, pre-war norms were also important. Catholic ideals, understandings of sexual relations, or the role of local notables all informed the experience of occupation. Thus it was born of a mixture of pre-war norms and daily reality during the war.

Further, I do not claim that the (singular) occupied culture was the only culture under the occupation, although it is the one most visible in the traces left in archival and other sources. Such traces are not unproblematic, and it is worth outlining here the methodological approach I take in this

regard, before returning to the overall conceptual approach. Often lacunae appear in the archival record, due to the whims of contemporary archivists or the ravages of time. For example, British military police files covering northern France were poorly conserved, and virtually all appear to have been destroyed by a failure to repair the roof of a leaky hut sometime after 1918.[18] Other files were destroyed or lost during the final German retreat of 1918 and the events of the Second World War. Even during the occupation, keeping records was difficult due to German regulations restricting correspondence and criminalising the 'possession of writings hostile to the German army' or notes concerning the German military, making diary-keeping a potentially seditious act.[19] Sources that can be located sometimes lack information on the authors or provide no date. There are also many questions surrounding authorial motives, especially pertinent when considering notions of resistance, misconduct and criminality, and post-war representations of these. However, once aware of such issues, the historian can react accordingly, being explicit about sources that pose problems, and ultimately drawing on a rich, varied source base.

As such, this book makes use of evidence from numerous French and British archives, both national and local, and one American one. Sources vary from the official to the unofficial, from French correspondence and police reports, to occupation diaries, as well as German letters, posters or propaganda publications. Published memoirs and other works are also used, albeit more sparingly. The focus is explicitly on the perspective of occupied *Nordistes* rather than the German occupiers. Indeed, in general there is very little scholarship concerning the German experience as occupiers in 1914–18, a problem Larissa Wegner sought to rectify in her Ph.D. thesis.[20] Therefore, most sources used here are in French, the local *patois* and English.

The authors of the sources used are often (but not exclusively) middle class, although I have endeavoured to use documents also relating the experience of the wider population. This evidently informs the notion of a 'culture of the occupied'. Of course, historians tend to look through the eyes of the powerful; thus there may have also been a different occupied culture among the 'popular classes' or others, less focused on respectability than that which dominates this book. Indeed, often those held in disdain by the adherents of the culture did not themselves buy into it. Thus, while the culture put forward here seems cohesive, it merely provides one tool through which we can better understand this occupation and does not explain all occupation behaviours, motivations or world views. Indeed, as Élise Julien stated regarding standard

war culture, the use of the singular does not mean that geographical chronological, or other variations were absent.[21] Yet I do propose that the singular culture outlined in this book was a key part of the experience of many, if not all, occupied *Nordistes*.

Although criticisms of the cultural approach focus predominantly on discussions concerning combatants, and although my proposed culture of the occupied is separate from other war cultures, some similar arguments could be levelled against the central thesis of this book. The most damning of these is the critique of 'culturalism' as a 'logical error to the degree that it systematically relates observed behavior to an unobservable culture, which in turn is always postulated on the basis of observed behavior. Culturalism thereby explains the way people act by… the way they act'.[22] This book aims to avoid such a circular argument partly by focusing as much as possible on the words of the occupied population while also examining wider behaviours for which no justifications were presented. Much of the occupied culture is indeed observable in the sources, and there are explicit instances of occupied individuals explaining their behaviour in relation to wider norms and perceptions that were at the heart of this culture. Beliefs and mentalities often guided behaviour, or helped influence responses to and understandings of this.

Some may criticise the very use of the world 'culture' here, and it is true that it could perhaps be replaced by a less loaded or problematic term such as 'mentality of the occupied', or even a consideration of the beliefs and actions of the occupied without situating these within wider system. However, I believe that there was a widely held system of representations and understandings underpinning the experience of occupation, and that this can be understood as a culture – albeit one different from 'war culture' per se. This book seeks to provide a compelling case for this, and to outline a wide range of behaviours and beliefs set against a complex reality.

This is not the first work of history to consider French behaviours under the 1914–18 occupation. In particular, Annette Becker, Philippe Nivet and Philippe Salson have examined this topic,[23] and new research is ongoing.[24] Becker also offers an explicitly cultural reading of the occupation in her work. Yet even if it is similarly cultural, my approach differs somewhat: for Becker, suffering and patriotism represented the central experience of the occupation.[25] This book considers patriotism as but one admittedly important end of a larger spectrum of responses to the occupation, forming part of a wider analytical framework placing greater

emphasis on less evidently patriotic behaviours, including criminality and what I term 'misconduct' – dealt with in the lengthier first part of this book. I also concentrate more explicitly on the understandings of the time, separating them as best as possible from my own judgement – I aim to both outline the occupied culture and to study it from a critical distance. Thus, the key contribution of this work is its explicit focus on behaviours and perceptions, and the attempt to provide an explanatory framework and new vocabulary to discuss these.

This study examines the occupied culture through a variety of key themes: notions of misconduct, disunity, criminality and resistance, ending with the way in which the occupation and especially the behaviours examined were remembered. These subjects provide an insight into the multifarious French responses to occupation, exposing both the 'underbelly' and the more 'positive' sides of the experience. The idea propagated, directly or indirectly, by certain French writers since 1918 of widespread patriotism and resistance as the most common response to the German presence will thus be called into question.[26] I will demonstrate that there was much resistance, which did not always fit neatly into established categories, but also many other ways in which the French adapted to occupation, often influenced by the notion of respectability – including precursors to collaboration and accommodation, here seen as closely related.

For such a study, as previously noted, the shadow of *the* occupation of 1940–44 looms large, especially regarding the language used to categorise behaviours. It is necessary and useful to engage with the large literature on this subject, yet using this language uncritically or unthinkingly is problematic and risks anachronism. Some scholars lack clarity or precision in the use of such ideas and terms,[27] although others criticise any approach drawing on the historiography of the Second World War.[28] I believe that we should not throw out the baby with the bathwater. To this end, this book reinterprets and replaces some of the analytical categories traditionally used to explain behaviours and attitudes in 1940–44. It draws on but refines them in light of the context of 1914–18, arriving at a new conceptual vocabulary – such as 'misconduct' instead of 'collaboration', or multiple sub-forms of resistance. Of course, this requires a certain degree of conceptual elasticity, but I believe that the suggested notions provide a useful way of categorising and understanding the experience of occupation in the Nord in the First World War. It will be up to the reader to judge the book's success in this regard.

A final note is necessary regarding the approach of this book: while the focus is on the entire occupied section of the Nord, there is an occasional preponderance of examples concerning Lille-Roubaix-Tourcoing because this was the most populous part of this department and therefore, unsurprisingly, the one for which records are richest.[29] This allows for particularly detailed examinations of the conglomeration, especially in the chapter on criminality. Yet why focus exclusively on the Nord anyway?

The specificity of the Nord before the war

By November 1914, the Germans partially occupied nine French departments and fully occupied one (see Figure 1), representing about

Figure 1 Map of the occupied Nord, August 1917.
Map data © 2017 Google and image created with © Scribble Maps.

3.7 per cent of French territory and 8.2 per cent of France's population.[30] The Nord was therefore just one of many occupied areas, and only 70 per cent of its territory was occupied. Yet it was the most populous occupied department, with a wartime population of 1,176,000, according to German census data.[31] The population of all of occupied France in late 1914 was just over 2.12 million.[32] As such, the experience of the Nord was the experience of the majority of occupied French people. The results of the study are therefore instructive and representative, while also remaining part of a local experience.

However, there are more reasons than this demographic argument for examining the Nord. The department has intriguing regional specificities, particularly important within the context of foreign military occupation. The Nord was at its heart a borderland, with the north-westerly coastal frontier of the North Sea set against the Belgian border running along the entire eastern limits of the department. It had been a 'corridor for invasion' since the Middle Ages,[33] and was especially contested between France and the Spanish-Austrian Netherlands. Only after the 1820 treaty of Courtrai did the Franco-Belgian border start to crystallise, although even then it remained relatively fluid, with local inhabitants crossing it at will.[34] The department therefore had a large Belgian population – 230,000 in 1900, as well as many day workers, and in 1911, 91 per cent of foreigners in the Nord and Pas-de-Calais were Belgian.[35]

The department was distinctly urban: by 1914, 71 per cent of the population lived in urban areas, compared to a national average of 56 per cent. Indeed, in 1911 French Flanders was the most densely populated area in France, with 967.5 inhabitants per square kilometre. That same year, the industrial triangle of Lille-Roubaix-Tourcoing had a population of over 600,000 – which would have been the second largest French agglomeration outside of Paris, had the municipalities been unified. This large, urban population was the result of increased industrialisation since the mid nineteenth century.[36] Heavy industry, mainly the production of cast iron and steelwork, was important and was fuelled by the department's coal mines and those of neighbouring Pas-de-Calais.[37] Heavy industry employed over 15,000 people in the Nord; 10,000 of whom worked in Lille-Roubaix-Tourcoing. It was a large operation: in 1913, the Nord-Pas-de-Calais region produced 17.9 per cent of France's cast iron, and 31.4 per cent of its steel.[38]

Yet the backbone of *Nordiste* industry was textile manufacturing. Nearly 40 per cent of French cotton, 85–90 per cent of linen, 40 per cent

of wool and 30 per cent of cloth was produced here. Roubaix was the world leader in cloth production.[39] The textile industry employed about 225,000 people, many of whom were women working in semi-skilled jobs. Often factories were run by paternalistic men hailing from large industrial families comprising a new form of notability, with leading factory owners playing a role in local politics, such as Charles Delesalle, Mayor of Lille during the occupation.[40]

Agriculture was another boon to the department. As Lynne Taylor noted, its flat plains represented 'one of the richest agricultural areas of France' and had been 'intensely cultivated for centuries. The soil is good, and cereals, tubers such as potatoes, beets and turnip, fodder crops and industrial crops, such as flax, chicory, tobacco and sugar beets' were all grown here.[41] In 1913, 'the most important/largest sugar refinery [*la sucrerie la plus importante*] in the world' was located in Escaudoeuvres, near Cambrai.[42] The Nord-Pas-de-Calais also had the highest wheat productivity of Europe, especially in Cambrésis in the Nord. Such intensive agriculture allowed for densely populated rural areas to exist. In total, the region of the Nord-Pas-de-Calais provided 8 per cent of France's wheat production, 12 per cent of apples, and 30 per cent of sugar, despite the fact that the land constituted just 2.2 per cent of French territory and its inhabitants only 7 per cent of the population.[43]

Highly urbanised areas experienced great social inequality: the 'ruling classes' possessed the vast majority of the economic fortune, rendering the middle classes rather weak and the 'popular classes' very poor.[44] This was exacerbated by housing for workers that had been rapidly created, was cramped and provided a very poor sanitary environment. The lot of the working classes was made even harder when faced with below-average levels of education: the number of men having experienced education beyond the age of thirteen was 7.7 per cent, the number of women 6 per cent, compared to a national average of 10.4 per cent and 8.5 per cent respectively.[45]

The working class represented about 60 per cent of the population of cities like Lille, which shaped the political culture. Social inequality encouraged workers to support socialism, which worried the 'well-off'.[46] Belgian socialism greatly influenced the workers of the Nord. Syndicalist groups bloomed, and those taking a socialist bent had over 100,000 members.[47] Indeed, the Nord was a 'hotbed for socialist and syndicalist activities, particularly in the densely populated, working-class Lille urban area'.[48] Roubaix *député* Jules Guesde and his ideology dominated the socialist movement, although leftists were divided until

the creation of the Section Française de l'Intérnationale Ouvrière (SFIO) in 1905, after which date the Fédération du Nord was the second largest in the party, with 11,000 adherents. Socialist victories in Roubaix in 1892 and Lille in 1896 demonstrated the 'threat' of socialism and were subsequently met with a '"liberal" reconquest' in Roubaix in 1901 by Eugène Motte and in Lille in 1904 by Charles Delesalle. By 1914, the SFIO had fourteen deputies in the region, especially around Lille and Valenciennes – progress was slow, despite seemingly widespread support, but nevertheless 'The Nord undeniably constituted one of the bastions of French socialism.'[49]

However, certain segments of the bourgeoisie and peasants were concerned with the defence of property – leading to centralism in rural areas such as Cambrésis.[50] The Radicals, on the other hand, comprised an important political force: the Mayors of Tourcoing, Roubaix and Cambrai in the early twentieth century were all Radicals, although this label was notoriously slippery. They were seen as arbiters of the left–right dispute, hailing from complex origins and representing the moderate left. Concerned with maintaining a certain status quo, they nevertheless remained anti-clerical and *laïque*, willing to ally with socialists or centrists but never with Catholics.[51] The Catholic, conservative right had a 'remarkable audience' in the Nord, although its support fell slightly from 1900. Support was stronger in rural areas, but this always remained greater than its actual parliamentary influence.[52] Whatever their political leaning, members of the political class tended to be bourgeois: merchants, shopkeepers, entrepreneurs, industrialists and landlords. By combining economic and political influence, they essentially became the new 'notables' of the department.

The Nord therefore had a curious mix of socialist sentiment and fairly widespread Catholic piety. As a rule, Catholicism flourished in rural areas but did less well in the cities, although Lille remained 'a religious capital and one of the most dynamic poles of French Catholicism'.[53] Many in the Nord had been unhappy with the 1905 separation of Church and State, with some religious communities consequently migrating to Belgium to seek refuge.[54] After 1905, there was a shift leftwards among certain constituencies towards accepting some aspects of anti-clericalism, but Catholics remained divided over the best course of action: some supported the ideas of *l'abbé* Lemire, a *député*-priest willing to integrate as best as possible into the Third Republic; others remained monarchist and virulently anti-Republican.[55] Between 1905 and 1914, there had been numerous clashes, both metaphorical and physical, between Catholics

and the state (or supporters of its anti-clerical policies). Religious organisations were important, with youth movements attracting about 10,000 members in the Nord by 1913, especially in Flanders, Tourcoing and Cambrésis. Female Catholic leagues attracted massive numbers: in Cambrai in 1912, the Ligue Patriotique des Françaises gathered together 73,823 women.[56] Despite increasingly common anti-clericalism, the Nord therefore remained surprisingly Catholic given its demographic constituency. Yet whether Catholic or not, most *Nordistes* remained loyal to France, if not necessarily the Republic, which would have implications for their approach to occupation.

Among the francophone population there existed a regional *patois*, a variation of the Picard dialect, named *Ch'ti* after its speakers' pronunciation of soft 's' and 'c' sounds. Like some other French *patois*, it was primarily spoken by the lower classes, playing a central role in the popular poems and songs of the region.[57] There were a few literary works, most notably the poems and *chansons populaires* of Auguste Labbe (alias César Latulupe), who founded a society in 1906 charged with protecting the *patois* of Lille.[58] This was part of a strong local identity and culture, born of the specificities outlined here. *Nordistes* seized any opportunity for public gatherings and celebrations, whether watching puppet shows conducted in the local dialect, carnival processions of the wooden *géants du Nord* (giants of the North) or engaging in Catholic celebrations of Joan of Arc.[59] Part of this also involved a strong worker culture, meaning that many passed their spare time in the numerous estaminets (bars/cafés) and *débits de boissons* (public houses). In Lille in 1910, there were no fewer than 3,900 estaminets. Outside of drinking holes, workers turned to music for leisure: the Fédération des musiques du Nord et du Pas-de-Calais had 50,000 members in 1912. Pigeon-fancying provided a popular outdoor activity, with at least 20,000 *colombophiles* subscribed to the regional federation in 1908.[60] This was therefore a border area whose inhabitants had a strong sense of belonging to both *le petit pays* and *le grand pays*. These regional specificities, cultures and identities had the potential to react in interesting and different ways to the German presence. They would inform both the daily reality of military occupation and the way in which the population understood this.

The occupation: beginning and development

From the outbreak of war until September 1914, German troops marched through Belgium and northern France as per the Moltke–Schlieffen

Plan. The invasion was stopped in its tracks by the battle of the Marne on 5–12 September, but the front still shifted until October–November. This period was characterised across northern France and Belgium by ruthless German policies and atrocities, both real and imagined, including rape, pillage, mass executions and the use of civilians as human shields.[61] One of the most infamous German acts in the Nord involved the destruction of the village of Orchies on 26 September 1914 after German soldiers alleged that they had been fired on by armed civilians. The 5,000 inhabitants were evacuated, although some had returned by 1916, living in harsh conditions.[62] Orchies remained the benchmark for German violence, and in October 1914 – a month after its destruction – a German poster in Roubaix reminded the French to obey German orders or suffer the same 'terrible fate'.[63] Other invasion atrocities were widely reported in the Allied press, such as the shooting of at least seven 'patriotic' priests in Cambrai, or German 'terrorism' in Douai.[64] This violence was publicised and investigated during the war by Allied powers.[65] John Horne and Alan Kramer have demonstrated that such atrocities, dismissed as overblown propaganda after the war, were in fact widespread, and based on the false German belief that the population was comprised of *francs-tireurs* waging a guerrilla war, as in 1870–71.[66] Yet the Germans were not alone in drawing on the previous conflict: some *Nordistes* in summer 1914 personally remembered the invasion of 1870 and the subsequent Prussian/German occupation until 1873. Others drew on collective memory of these events, and it was common for locals to use the word 'Prussian' (with attendant derogatory, militaristic connotations) to describe German soldiers in 1914–18 and beyond.[67] Indeed, both the invasion and occupation of the First World War had some parallels with events in 1870–73, such as the taking of civilian hostages to ensure good behaviour.[68] Perhaps unsurprisingly, however, the memory of 1870–73 became overshadowed by the terror and violence of summer 1914, which scarred French mentalities for years to come. As late as 1917, individuals repatriated from occupied France (henceforth referred to as '*rapatriés*') still spoke of the brutality of the invasion when questioned by French secret-service personnel.[69] This lasting fear that the occupiers might (re)turn to violence had implications for behaviours under the occupation, as will be seen.

The war of movement was chaotic. The initial German race to Paris created a period of limbo. Lille was declared an 'open city' on 1 August 1914, meaning that despite the presence of a fortress and garrison, the city would not be defended. This caused considerable dispute among

Préfet du Nord Félix Trépont, who supported the defence of Lille, and the city's mayor, Charles Delesalle, who favoured the 'open city' option to save civilian lives.[70] On 24 August 1914, the French military left, along with some members of the civilian administration – a move that some denounced as abandonment.[71] From this date until the beginning of October, Lille was neither held by the Allies, nor the Germans. The inhabitants had their first encounter with the Germans when a scouting party entered the town on 2 September and occupied the *hôtel de ville*. During this brief incursion, the first of many clashes between French and German authorities occurred when one Lieutenant von Hoffel physically assaulted the Préfet, who had ordered men of military age to leave Lille for the French front.[72]

Lille was retaken by French soldiers on 3 October. For the next ten days, clashes took place between French and German troops within the city's limits as the Germans laid siege. On 13 October 1914, after 1,500 houses and 882 other buildings had been destroyed by artillery fire, the defending French forces capitulated.[73] By this point, 70 per cent of the Nord was in German hands. After the invasion 'came the extended static period, the occupation proper'.[74] Trench warfare ensured that the front would remain relatively stable for four years, meaning that these areas remained under German dominance until October–November 1918.

The Germans administered the Nord in a similar manner to other occupied French departments, all of which were considered as front-line areas (*Etappen*), as opposed to the *Generalgouvernement* pseudo-civilian rule existing in most of Belgium (and the *Nordiste* town of Maubeuge).[75] Occupied France was thus under military rule. A general administrative framework existed: next to each commanding general of one of the seven army groups in occupied France was an *Etappeninspektor*, charged with liaising between the interior and the fighting troops, providing the latter with food, accommodation and transport. Below him was an *Etappenkommandant*, a high-ranking officer representing the highest authority to which French people could appeal, and whose powers were likened to that of a 'little king'.[76] Each Kommandant and his Kommandantur controlled from one to forty French communes and possessed wide-ranging personnel, with its own administrative staff initially composed of soldiers, but later of German civilians, including female secretaries. The Kommandant rarely lasted for the duration of the occupation, reassigned to different sectors or fronts. Economic committees (*Beutesammelstellen*) working alongside the *Etappeninspektor* had the goal of best procuring the resources of the

occupied territory, mainly through requisitions – these were replaced from 1916 by *Wirtschaftskompanien*. Three police forces existed: the German gendarmes, sometimes including *Landsturm* (reserve troops made up of old men); a military police formed of soldiers exempt from front-line service; and the secret police, involved in counter-espionage.[77] Civilians frequently had to lodge troops on their way to the front, feeding them and doing their laundry.[78] As such, there were two types of German soldier in the occupied region: members of the army of occupation and soldiers from the fighting army, temporarily encountering the French whether en route to the front, or on leave from the front.

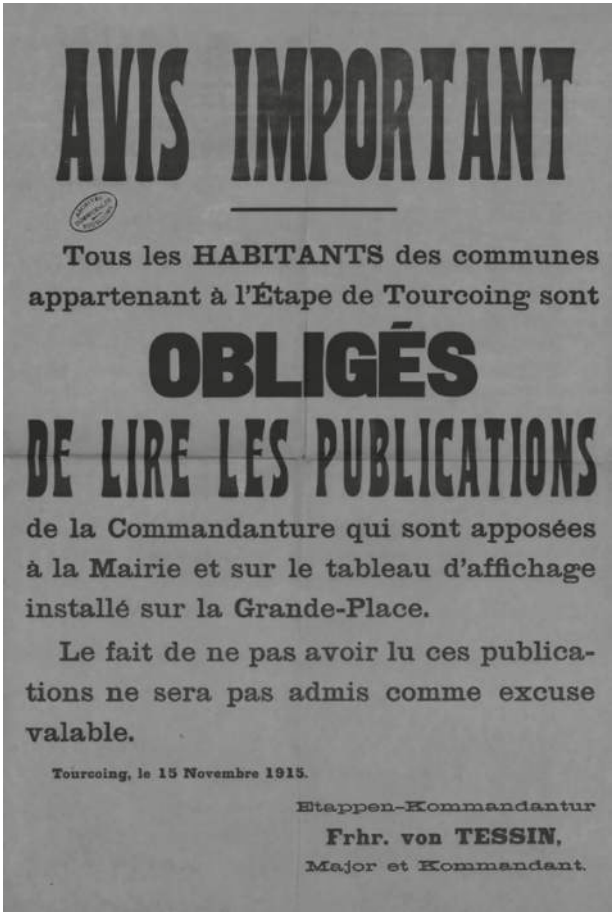
The French administration was sidelined at all but municipal level. No departmental assemblies met during the occupation. The Germans nominated *sous-préfets* such as those of Avesnes and Cambrai, and mayors like that of Étrœungt. While Préfet Félix Trépont was still present – until his deportation in February 1915 and replacement with the Sous-Préfet d'Avesnes (Maurice Anjubault) – his role was purely consultative. The Germans dealt with the mayors and municipal councillors of French communes, using them as middlemen to fulfil German orders and to communicate such demands to locals. In many ways, this meant that municipalities found themselves 'between a rock and a hard place'.[79] The French police and judicial system was still permitted to operate, but their powers had been greatly curbed (see Chapter 5), and ultimately the Germans remained dominant in all spheres of life.

The occupied region was cut off from the rest of the world – Herbert Hoover described occupied France and Belgium as a 'vast concentration camp'.[80] The Germans 'needed the occupied population' and did their 'best to keep them there', such as erecting a 30-kilometre-long electric fence along the Belgian–Dutch border and posting sentries along the Franco-Belgian border.[81] Correspondence between communes was forbidden for all but civil servants, and contact with the outside world was illegal and difficult beyond the introduction of short Red Cross postcards.[82] Public circulation was limited to specific times unless a pass could be presented, and permission was required to move between communes – which few outside of French authorities were granted.[83] French civilians were ordered to kill their carrier pigeons to prevent communication with the Allies, a measure particularly resented by *colombophiles*.[84] The French press was forbidden, apart from publications approved and edited by the Germans, such as the occupation-wide *Gazette des Ardennes*, or the local *Bulletin de Lille*, *Bulletin de Roubaix* and *Écho de Maubeuge*.[85] Freedom of expression was thus curbed, especially anti-German sentiment. Such

policies led to a feeling of acute isolation among *Nordistes* and the population of the entire occupied area.[86]

Almost every aspect of life was regulated by the Germans via manifold rules, from public-hygiene measures[87] to the imposition of German time (an hour ahead of French time), which was enforced with spot checks.[88] Some have seen this and other policies – such as banning the French history syllabus in some schools, the replacement of street names with German ones or the raising of German flags in public places – as representative of a 'Germanisation'.[89] I am unconvinced. Such policies were more short-term markers of dominance – reflective of the overwhelming official German attitude that appeared to involve disdain and cultural superiority[90] – and never constituted a concerted effort to eradicate Frenchness. The occupation was a means to an end, not an end in itself.

Whatever the logic behind them, rules and regulations flooded the occupied zone. The distinction between public and private spheres was weakened, particularly by policies requiring locals to keep doors to houses open at night in case of bombardment, and the obligation to affix a regularly updated list of occupants to the front entrance of all properties.[91] The possession of a photographic identity card was compulsory in Lille from September 1915, slightly later elsewhere.[92] Thousands of posters informed the population of these rules (see Figure 2), as well as the punishments for any infractions – often inevitable.[93] Englishman J. P. Whitaker's account of life in occupied Roubaix stated: 'I do not believe that anyone took a vicious delight in disobeying these commands, but they were so many and so varied that if one were not very careful indeed one was sure to find oneself at cross-purposes with the authorities.'[94] Punishment involved fines, imprisonment or even death, depending on the infraction. The extent and nature of punishment can be seen in the condemnations published in the *Bulletin de Lille*. From 1914 until July 1918, 658 people were condemned to a total of 246 years, eleven months and eight days of 'simple imprisonment' (*détention simple*); 115 people to a total of three years, five months and one day of 'average imprisonment' (*détention moyenne*); and thirty-four people to a total of 267 years and seven months of forced labour. Fines were frequent: eighty-five people were sentenced to 87,118 marks of 'simple fines'; while seventy-eight people faced thirty-seven years, four months and twenty-four days' imprisonment with a fine of 1,000 francs, plus a fine of 161,920 marks and five years, eight months and twenty-five days' imprisonment. Twenty-one were condemned to death, and three to thirty years' imprisonment (*réclusion*).[95] In addition, there were numerous less formal punishments.


AVIS IMPORTANT

Tous les HABITANTS des communes appartenant à l'Étape de Tourcoing sont

OBLIGÉS

DE LIRE LES PUBLICATIONS

de la Commandanture qui sont apposées à la Mairie et sur le tableau d'affichage installé sur la Grande-Place.

Le fait de ne pas avoir lu ces publications ne sera pas admis comme excuse valable.

Tourcoing, le 15 Novembre 1915.

Etappen-Kommandantur
Frhr. von TESSIN,
Major et Kommandant.

Figure 2 German poster, Tourcoing, 15 November 1915: '**IMPORTANT NOTICE**: All the INHABITANTS of the *Étape* of Tourcoing are **OBLIGED** TO READ THE PUBLICATIONS of the Kommandantur displayed at the Mairie and on the noticeboard installed in the main square. The fact of not having read these notices will not be permitted as a valid excuse.' This regulation hints that some locals, truthfully or otherwise, claimed ignorance of German regulations. Presumably those who did not read German posters, not having read *this* poster, remained ignorant of the new rule until punished.
Archives Départementales du Nord, Lille, France, 9R745.

French economic life effectively came to a standstill during the occupation. This was partly due to restrictions on freedom of movement and communication preventing trade beyond the communal limits. Combined with German prescriptions relating to the import and export of goods and materials, this led to what Georges Gromaire called 'paralysed commerce'.[96] A large percentage of the male workforce was mobilised or fled the invasion, thus the majority of the population of occupied France and the Nord was female.[97] Further, the Germans requisitioned goods and buildings from private individuals, agriculture and industry alike, as well as requisitioning members of the occupied population, who were forced to work for the occupiers.[98] Inhabitants were required to declare a variety of material due for requisitioning,[99] although many did not; the Germans knew this so carried out widespread searches, punishing individuals found to be in breach of the regulations, and blurring the distinction between pillage and genuine requisitions.[100] Locals at the time, and various French people afterwards, described German acts as 'systematic pillage', an attempt to destroy the economy of the occupied region both to win the war and to hinder post-war development.[101] The effects of these policies on the wartime economy were clear: unemployment was widespread, with large towns of the Nord awarding unemployment aid to up to 43.02 per cent of the population,[102] leading to a lack of income that could be pumped back into the local economy.

Finances were strained further by the fact that the population was required to pay numerous taxes on an individual and municipal/communal level. Some counted as 'war contributions' to pay for the upkeep of occupation troops, legal under Article 49 of the 1907 Hague Convention.[103] Others were fines levied on communes for the alleged bad behaviour of inhabitants, the French administration or even simply because of Allied attacks elsewhere. This was the case when Valenciennes and Roubaix were fined in response to the Allied bombing of Alexandria and Haïfa in June 1915.[104] The sums demanded were enormous – for instance, by the end of the war the administration of Croix had paid taxes of 1.1 million francs, war contributions of around 8.34 million francs and fines of 2,030 francs.[105] Taxes and contributions forced municipal councillors and clergymen to appeal to wealthy compatriots to help fill the gaps in the administration's coffers.[106] Individual taxes included the infamous dog tax, failure to pay resulting in the destruction of the dog.[107]

The Germans also requisitioned gold and francs, and introduced paper money. These notes were issued grudgingly by the communes because of their illegality – French law only permitted the creation of

such currency with the approval of central government. They effectively constituted 'IOUs', listing sums that would be repaid after the cessation of hostilities.[108] Such money could not be used to pay German taxes and fines, furthering the depletion of existing gold or franc stocks. The circulation of essentially worthless paper money undermined economic stability and confidence, exacerbating the widespread penury of the occupied population.

Food was a primary concern for locals, representing the strongest recurring theme in occupation diaries.[109] A near-famine developed as the occupation went on, due to German requisitions of foodstuffs and appropriation of agricultural land, extracting local resources to serve the German war effort, as well as aforementioned restrictions on movement and trade. As food became rarer, inflation grew rapidly, aggravating the situation. The population's health subsequently declined: diseases such as scurvy, diphtheria, typhoid and scarlet fever became common.[110] Malnutrition was widespread, which some suggest stopped women menstruating[111] – thus for some, biological realities changed during the occupation. Local administrations, the French, Allied and neutral governments and eventually even the Germans recognised the danger for the occupied population. As such, from April 1915, neutral aid organisations intervened to feed the occupied French and Belgian population: Herbert Hoover's Commission for Relief in Belgium (CRB), and its French subsidiary, the Comité d'Alimentation du Nord de la France (CANF), both sometimes referred to as *Hispano-américain* and later *Hispano-néerlandais* relief efforts.[112] Tens of thousands (or more) would have died were it not for these aid organisations,[113] although it was only with much deliberation that Britain allowed CRB-CANF transport ships to pass through the naval blockade.[114] Even with this aid, many experienced malnutrition, general poor physical health caused by privation of gas and coal, and mental-health problems caused by the stress of occupation, the constant sound of shelling at the front and the risk of bombardment.[115]

Added to these sufferings was the threat of deportation. The line between evacuation and deportation was blurred, with the Germans engaging in the forcible removal of populations on a frequent basis during 1916 and early 1917. The occupiers moved about 20,000 civilians – men, women and children – from Lille-Roubaix-Tourcoing to the Ardennes in Easter 1916, allegedly 'to reduce the misery' of the population which had been exacerbated by 'the attitude of England'.[116] These were the most infamous deportations, and because of the presence of

women they became known as the 'kidnapping of young women' across the occupied area.[117] (There is some debate as to whether the primarily female nature of deportation was a reality or perception, although that such a perception should exist is significant.) There was international outcry at German actions,[118] which may explain the apparent winding-down of large deportations after January 1917 – although forced labour continued in one form or another.[119]

However, population movement still occurred until the end of the war in two other forms. The first involved forced and voluntary repatriations from the occupied area to unoccupied France. Evacuees were transported through Switzerland to Évian or Annecy, where they were interviewed by the French military Service des Renseignements (intelligence service) and became refugees within their own country. In total, about 500,000 people were evacuated from the occupied area during the war, including 10 per cent of the Nord's population.[120] One claim for the logic behind this is that the Germans removed 'useless mouths' and kept the potentially productive human material.[121]

The second form was hostage-taking. The Germans took certain individuals hostage to assure the fulfilment of German demands or to dissuade locals from engaging in hostile acts. Sometimes the French were permitted to nominate hostages, sometimes the Germans chose them; often hostages were local notables and had to spend at least a night in a prison.[122] However, occasionally the occupiers took larger numbers of hostages and sent them to camps outside of France, such as in Lithuania or, for most *Nordiste* hostages, Holzminden in Germany. There, these 'civilian prisoners' faced further restrictions and suffering, but most returned home after a certain period of internment.[123]

The occupation of the Nord and northern France more generally from 1914 until 1918 was therefore above all understood as an experience of suffering. Hardship generally increased after 1916 as German rule tightened in response to the military losses of that year (at the battles of the Somme and Verdun) and to the heightened effects of the Allied naval blockade. It has been suggested that harsher German measures, such as the use of deportation and more frequent use of forced labourers, may have been a way of winning over hungry Germans, proving that all necessary measures were being used to secure the German war effort and, especially, food supply.[124] If this is the case, then the policies of occupation from 1916 in some sense represent what Horne has called 'remobilization',[125] an attempt by the *Kaiserreich* to bolster support for the war and reinvigorate Germany's own war culture. These policies may also

have reflected a growing desperation; this is nominally perceived to be the explanation of German policies during the liberation period, involving scorched-earth tactics and the forced evacuation of French civilians from the shifting front.[126] Kramer argues that the exploitation of occupied territories and the attendant destruction of property, industrial and agricultural capital arose from strategic, political and economic calculations.[127] Isabel V. Hull believes that the explanation lies within wider German (Prussian) military culture, which had developed a totalising logic since the Franco-Prussian War, crystallised in the conflict with the Herero.[128]

Although occupation was an unpleasant experience for French civilians throughout the entire four years, it was never as violent as those of the Eastern Front.[129] Nevertheless, in the Nord as elsewhere, total war led to total occupation, to adapt Peter Holquist's summary of the First World War's effects on Russia.[130] Economic woes, hunger, penury, restrictions on liberty of movement and expression, forced labour, deportation, the presence of hundreds of thousands of German troops nearby – in short, a 'total' occupation – suggest a space containing extremely limited choices and courses of action for locals. Yet, as Taylor has pointed out for the Nord-Pas-de-Calais in the Second World War, while the Germans desired to be so, they were not in fact omnipotent.[131] Choices and actions were restricted and subsequently took on greater symbolism, but there still remained a surprising and interesting range of responses to the occupation. Such reactions were guided by the culture of the occupied, a different form of wider war culture inevitably coloured by daily contact with the enemy. It is to these choices, perspectives, understandings – this culture – that this book now turns.

Notes

1 Archives Municipales de Tourcoing (AMT), 4HA26, *Tourcoing libéré 17 octobre 1918, Proclamation de l'administration municipale, visites du Général commandant des troupes britanniques, de M. le Président du Conseil des Ministres, de M. le Président de la République*, 'Réponse de Monsieur le Président du Conseil des Ministres à Monsieur le Maire', 19 October 1918.

2 See, for example, Philippe Burrin, *La France à l'heure allemande, 1940–1944* (Paris: Seuil, 1995), pp. 181–361; Julian Jackson, *France: The Dark Years, 1940–44* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 601–32.

3 Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau and Annette Becker, *1914–1918: Understanding the Great War*, trans. Catherine Temerson (London: Profile, 2002), p. 45.

4 Annette Becker, *Les Cicatrices rouges 14–18: France et Belgique occupées* (Paris: Fayard, 2010), p. 14.

5 Annette Becker, *Oubliés de la Grande Guerre: Humanitaire et culture de guerre* (Paris: Éditions Noêsis, 1998), p. 365.

6 James E. Connolly, 'Fresh eyes, dead topic? Writing the history of the occupation of Northern France in World War One', in Ludivine Broch and Alison Carrol (eds.), *France in an Era of Global War, 1914–45: Occupation, Politics, Empire and Entanglements* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp. 31–49.

7 See Connolly, 'Fresh eyes, dead topic?' and the Bibliography. The most important of these was Georges Gromaire, *L'Occupation allemande en France (1914–1918)* (Paris: Payot, 1925).

8 Jay Winter, *Remembering War: The Great War between Memory and History in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2006), p. 6.

9 See, for example, Becker, *Oubliés de la Grande Guerre*; Becker, *Les Cicatrices rouges*; Philippe Nivet, *La France occupée 1914–1918* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2011); Philippe Nivet, *Les Réfugiés français de la Grande Guerre (1914–1920): Les 'Boches du Nord'* (Paris: Econmica, 2004); Philippe Salson, *L'Aisne occupée: Les civils dans la Grande Guerre* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2015).

10 For the only English-language books on the topic, see Helen McPhail, *The Long Silence: Civilian Life under the German Occupation of Northern France, 1914–1918* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1999); Richard Cobb, *French and Germans, Germans and French: A Personal Interpretation of France under Two Occupations, 1914–1918/1940–1944* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1983); Ben Macintyre, *A Foreign Field: A True Story of Love and Betrayal during the Great War* (London: Harper Collins, 2001); Bernard Wilkin, *Aerial Propaganda and the Wartime Occupation of France, 1914–18* (London and New York: Routledge, 2016). Other works touch upon the occupation as part of wider studies, such as Margaret H. Darrow, *French Women and the First World War: War Stories of the Home Front* (New York: Berg, 2000); Leonard V. Smith, Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau and Annette Becker, *France and the Great War, 1914–1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Tammy Proctor, *Civilians in a World at War, 1914–1918* (New York: New York University Press, 2010) and *Female Intelligence: Women and Espionage in the First World War* (New York: New York University Press, 2003).

11 Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau and Annette Becker, 'Violence et consentement: la "culture de guerre" du première conflit mondial', in Jean-Pierre Rioux and Jean-François Sirinelli (eds.), *Pour une histoire culturelle* (Paris: Seuil, 1997), notably p. 252; Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau and Annette Becker, *14–18, Retrouver la Guerre* (Paris: Gallimard, 2000).

12 Jay Winter and Antoine Prost, *The Great War in History: Debates and Controversies, 1914 to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 159; Smith et al., *France and the Great War*, p. xv.
13 François Buton, André Loez, Nicolas Mariot and Philippe Olivera, '1914–1918: understanding the controversy', *Books and Ideas*, 11 June 2009, at www.booksandideas.net/1914–1918-Understanding-the.html (accessed 7 July 2015).
14 See, for example, Nicolas Mariot, *Tous unis dans la tranchée? Les intellectuels rencontrent le people* (Paris: Seuil, 2013); Salson, *L'Aisne occupée*.
15 Élise Julien, 'À propos de l'historiographie française de la première guerre mondiale', *Labyrinthe*, 18:2 (2004), p. 55.
16 James E. Connolly, 'Encountering Germans: The Experience of Occupation in the Nord, 1914–1918', Ph.D. dissertation (King's College London, 2012); Connolly, 'Fresh Eyes, Dead Topic?'
17 Jean-Yves Le Naour, 'Le champ de bataille des historiens', *La Vie des idées*, 10 November 2008, at www.laviedesidees.fr/Le-champ-de-bataille-des.html (acessed 7 July 2015).
18 Thanks to Julian Putkowski for this information.
19 See, for example, Archives Départementales du Nord (ADN), 9R717, German poster, Roubaix and Tourcoing, 12 February 1916.
20 Larissa Wegner, 'Deutsche Kriegsbesetzung in Nordfrankreich, 1914–1918', Ph.D. dissertation (Albert-Ludwigs-Universität, Freiberg, 2017). This is also true of studies of 1940–45: Talbot Imley, 'The German side of things: eecent scholarship on the German Occupation of France', *French Historical Studies*, 39:1 (2016), pp. 184–5.
21 Julien, 'À propos de l'historiographie française', p. 62.
22 Buton et al., '1914–1918: understanding the controversy'.
23 Becker, *Oubliés de la Grande Guerre* and *Les Cicatrices rouges*; Nivet, *La France occupée*; Salson, *L'Aisne occupée*.
24 See chapters in James Connolly, Emmanul Debruyne, Elise Julien and Matthias Meirlaen (eds.), *En territoire ennemi: Expériences d'occupation, transferts, héritages (1914–1949)* (Lille: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 2018).
25 See Becker, *Les Cicatrices rouges*.
26 See, for example, Jean-Claude Auriol, *Les Ténèbres de l'occupation* (Fontenay-le Comte: Imprimerie Lussaud, 2008); Henri de Forge and Jean Mauclère, *Feuilles françaises dans la tourmente: Les héros de la presse clandestine dans le Nord envahi, 1914–1918* (Paris: Berger Levrault, 1932); Claudine Wallart, *C'était hier, le département du Nord … Le Nord en Guerre – 1914–1918* (Lille: Archives Départementales du Nord, 2008).
27 For uses of 'collaboration' or 'accommodation' in the context of 1914–18, see Becker, *Les Cicatrices rouges*, pp. 15, 249, 296; Nivet, *La France occupée*, pp. 265–78, 293–300.

28 Salson, *L'Aisne occupée*, p. 17.
29 The population of Lille-Roubaix-Tourcoing was about 450,000 in November 1918: Service Historique de la Défense (SHD), 17N394, 'Rapport sur l'aide apportée par les troupes britanniques à la population libérée pendant l'avance du 1er Oct. au 25 Nov. 1918', p. 1.
30 Nivet, *La France occupée*, p. 9. The departments were the Aisne, Ardennes, Marne, Meurthe-et-Moselle, Meuse, Nord, Oise, Pas-de-Calais, Somme and Vosges.
31 Isabelle Molina, 'Les femmes dans le Nord occupé pendant la première Guerre Mondiale', master's dissertation (Lille III, 1999), p. 3. No date for the census is provided.
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33 Lynne Taylor, *Between Resistance and Collaboration: Popular Protest in Northern France, 1940–45* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), p. 7.
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37 Codaccioni, 'Une puissance industrielle', pp. 65–7.
38 Codaccioni, 'Une puissance industrielle', pp. 68–9.
39 Codaccioni, 'Une puissance industrielle', pp. 70 and 74.
40 Codaccioni, 'Une puissance industrielle', pp. 72–3; Robert Vandenbussche, 'La vie des hommes', in Yves-Marie Hilaire (ed.), *Histoire du Nord Pas-de-Calais de 1900 à nos jours* (Toulouse: Privat, 1982), p. 134.
41 Taylor, *Between Resistance and Collaboration*, pp. 7–8.
42 Codaccioni, 'La terre', p. 62.
43 Codaccioni, 'La terre', pp. 61, 64; Codaccioni, 'Une puissance industrielle', p. 79.
44 Félix-Paul Codaccioni, *De l'inégalité sociale dans une grande ville industrielle: Le drame de Lille de 1850 à 1914* (Lille: Editions Universitaires de Lille 3, 1976).
45 Codaccioni, 'Une puissance industrielle', pp. 99–103.
46 Codaccioni, 'Une puissance industrielle', p. 100; Robert Vandenbussche, 'La société politique septentrionale', in Yves-Marie Hilaire (ed.), *Histoire du Nord Pas-de-Calais de 1900 à nos jours* (Toulouse: Privat, 1982), p. 159.
47 Vandenbussche, 'La société politique', pp. 159, 171; Bernard Ménager, 'Une région frontière à l'heure de la paix armée', in Yves-Marie Hilaire

(ed.), *Histoire du Nord Pas-de-Calais de 1900 à nos jours* (Toulouse: Privat, 1982), p. 37.

48 Baycroft, *Culture, Identity and Nationalism*, p. 139.

49 Vandenbuscche, 'La société politique', pp. 162, 168, 170–1.

50 Vandenbuscche, 'La société politique', p. 159.

51 Vandenbuscche, 'La société politique', pp. 165–7.

52 Vandenbuscche, 'La société politique', p. 175.

53 Yves-Marie Hilaire and Robert Vandenbussche, 'Une chrétienté ménacée: religion et "incroyance"', in Yves-Marie Hilaire (ed.), *Histoire du Nord Pas-de-Calais de 1900 à nos jours* (Toulouse: Privat, 1982), pp. 136–8.

54 Baycroft, 'Changing identities', p. 424.

55 Hilaire and Vandenbussche, 'Une chrétienté ménacée', p. 135.

56 Hilaire and Vandenbussche, 'Une chrétienté ménacée', pp. 146–50, 155, 157.

57 Ménager, 'Une région frontière', p. 35; Madeleine Codaccioni, 'Culture en début de siècle', in Yves-Marie Hilaire (ed.), *Histoire du Nord Pas-de-Calais de 1900 à nos jours* (Toulouse: Privat, 1982), p. 182.

58 Codaccioni, 'Culture en début de siècle', p. 183.

59 Codaccioni, 'Culture en début de siècle', pp. 181–2; Vandenbussche, 'La vie des hommes', pp. 126–31.

60 Vandenbussche, 'La vie des hommes', pp. 125–6.

61 Smith et al., *France and the Great War*, p. 44; Isabel V. Hull, *Absolute Destruction: Military Practices and the Culture of War in Imperial Germany* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), p. 215.

62 ADN, 9R716, German poster, Valenciennes, 27 September 1914; ADN, 9R714, secrétaire de la mairie d'Orchies réfugié à Lille to Préfet du Nord, 3 February 1916.

63 ADN, 9R716, German poster, Roubaix, 29 October 1914.

64 Special Correspondent, 'A Tragedy of the War', *The Times*, 22 September 1914, p. 8; Correspondent, 'The Fate of Douai', *The Times*, 8 October 1914, p. 7.

65 See Committee on Alleged German Outrages, *Report of the Committee on Alleged German Outrages appointed by His Britannic Majesty's Government and presided over by The Right Hon. Viscount Bryce, O.M., &c., &c. Formerly British Ambassador at Washington* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1915).

66 John Horne and Alan Kramer, *German Atrocities, 1914: A History of Denial* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2001), especially p. 419.

67 See, for example, Archives Municipales de Lille (AML), 4H279, Martin-Mamy, 'Vive la France éternelle', *Le Progrès du Nord*, 18 October 1918, p. 1.

68 Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, *1870: La France dans la guerre* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1989), p. 262.

69 See, for example, Archives Départementales de la Haute-Savoie (ADHS), 4M513, Le commissaire spécial, Internés et rapatriés, Transmis à l'Intérieur, Direction de la Sûreté Générale, Préfet Annecy, reports from 1917: no. 543, 19 January; no. 737, 14 February; no. 711, 9 February.

70 See many documents in Archives Nationales (AN), 96AP/1–96AP/3, Fonds Félix Trépont; Jean-Jacques Becker, 'À Lille au début de la guerre de 14', *Revue historique*, 256:519 (1976), 89–116; Robert Vandenbussche, 'Lille in German Hands', *Cahiers Bruxellois-Brusselse Cahiers*, 1E:46 (2014), 105–19.

71 Paul Trochon, *La Grande Guerre (1914–1918): Lille avant et pendant l'occupation allemande* (Tourcoing: J. Duvivier, 1922), pp. 17–18.

72 Trochon, *La Grande Guerre*, pp. 50–1; M. Cliquennois-Pâque, *Lille martyre: proclamations, arrêtés et ordonnances du gouvernement allemand, arrêtés municipaux, rotestations des autorités françaises, extraits des journaux allemands, etc., etc. Notes et souvenirs du bombardement et de l'occupation recueillis au jour le jour. Préface par M. Georges Lyon, Recteur de l'Université de Lille* (Lille: Imprimerie Centrale du Nord, 1919), pp. 32–7; Alexandra Richard, 'Le Préfet Félix Trépont, ou la difficile affirmation de l'autorité préfectorale dans le Nord, pendant la Première Guerre mondiale', master's dissertation (Lille III, 2003), p. 56.

73 Wallart, *C'était hier*, p. 15.

74 Smith et al., *France and the Great War*, p. 44.

75 Xavier Rousseaux and Laurence Van Ypersele (eds.), *La Patrie crie vengeance! La répression des 'inciviques' belges au sortir de la guerre 1914–1918* (Brussels: Le Cri édition, 2008), pp. 24–5. The extreme west of Belgium was, however, an *Etappe*: Madeleine Havard de la Montagne, *La Vie agonisante des pays occupés: Lille et la Belgique, notes d'un témoin, octobre 1914–juillet 1916* (Paris: Perrin, 1918), p. 85.

76 Gromaire, *L'Occupation allemande*, p. 385; L. Pauly, *Occupation allemande et guerre totale: Étude de l'évolution du régime des personnes et des biens d'après l'expérience de la dernière guerre* (Nancy: Société d'Impressions Typographiques, 1930), p. 20.

77 Gromaire, *L'Occupation allemande*, pp. 41–56. For more on the German administrative structure, see Nivet, *La France occupée*, pp. 38–41.

78 Gromaire, *L'Occupation allemande*, p. 52; Nivet, *La France occupée*, pp. 27–32.

79 Sébastien Debarge, 'Fourmies occupée pendant la Grande Guerre', *Revue du Nord*, 80:325 (1998), p. 292.

80 Cited in McPhail, *The Long Silence*, p. 55. This was the earlier meaning of the word: see Annette Wieviorka, 'L'expression "camp de concentration" au 20e siècle', *Vingtième Siècle, Revue d'Histoire*, 54:1 (1997), 4–12.

81 Alan Kramer, *Dynamic of Destruction: Culture and Mass Killing in the First World War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 42–4.

82 ADN, 9R792, poster for France and Belgium explaining the rules for sending letters, 3 April 1917. See also Chapter 8.

83 See, for example, ADN, 9R756, German poster, Valenciennes, 7 November 1914.

84 ADN, 9R557, Préfet to Mayors of Nord, 16 October 1914; ADN, 74J225, diary of M. Blin, instituteur en retraite at Auchy-les-Orchies (1914–18), 11 December 1914.

85 Wallart, *C'était hier*, p. 31; Nivet, *La France occupée*, p. 78; L'Abbé Auguste Leman, *Pages actuelles, 1914–1919: Lille sous l'occupation allemande: Les héros du journalisme* (Paris: Bloud et Gay, 1919), pp. 4–7; Georges Dubut-Maison, *Journal d'un bourgeois de Maubeuge, avant, pendant le siècle et l'occupation allemande, 1914–1918* (Tourcoing: J. Duvivier, 1923), 21 November 1914, p. 88. For digitised copies of the *Gazette des Ardennes*, see http://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/feldztggazarden1914bis1915/0001 (accessed 25 January 2017).

86 Marc Blancpain, *Quand Guillaume II gouvernait* '*de la Somme aux Vosges*' (Paris: Fayard, 1980), p. 120; Trochon, *La Grande Guerre*, p. 3; Nivet, *La France occupée*, pp. 15–34.

87 See, for example, ADN, 9R748, German poster, Tourcoing, 9 January 1918; Marie-Hélène Benoît, 'L'état sanitaire de la population civile du Nord envahi pendant la Première Guerre mondiale: Lille en particulier (1914–1918)', master's dissertation (Lille III, 1997), pp. 109–11.

88 De la Montagne, *La Vie agonisante*, p. 218.

89 Nivet, *La France occupée*, pp. 55–84; Auriol, *Les Ténèbres de l'occupation*, p. 23.

90 See AML, 4H60, translations of the German newspaper *Liller Kriegszeitung* and the edited collection *Lille in Deutscher Hand*. For the original newspaper, see www.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/helios/digi/feldzeitungen.html (accessed 20 January 2012).

91 Such a measure was enforced in Lille from September 1915: Annette Becker (ed.), *Journaux de combattants et de civils de la France du Nord dans la Grande Guerre* (Lille: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 1998), diary of Maria Degrutère, 3 September 1915, p. 185.

92 Becker, *Journaux de combattants*, diary of Maria Degrutère, 3 February 1916, pp. 193–4; Michelin's Illustrated Guide to the Battlefields (1914–18), *Lille before and during the War* (London: Michelin, 1919), p. 12; Gromaire, *L'Occupation allemande*, p. 77.

93 For an overview of both German rules and punishments for infractions, see Cliquennois-Pâque, *Lille martyre*; posters in ADN, 9R702–775; AMT, H4A26; McPhail, *The Long Silence*, pp. 91–115; Nivet, *La France occupée*, pp. 125–7; Becker, *Les Cicatrices rouges*, pp. 124–30.

94 J. P. Whitaker, *Under the Heel of the Hun (An Englishman's Two-and-a-Half Years in Roubaix and Lille)* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1917), p. 53.

95 AML, 4H68, 'Relevé des condamnations prononcées par la justice allemande, à Lille et figurant au Bulletin de Lille du no. 1 au no. 385bis' (14 Juillet 1918).

96 Gromaire, *L'Occupation allemande*, pp. 80–5.

97 Philippe Nivet, 'Les femmes dans la France occupée (1914–1918)', in Marion Trévisi and Philippe Nivet (eds.), *Les Femmes et la guerre de l'Antiquité à 1918* (Paris: Economica, 2010), p. 275. In Lille, roughly two-thirds of the population were female in February 1916 (101,876 women and 53,984 men): AML, 4H203, 'Résultat du recensement du 9 au 10 février 1916'.

98 Becker, *Les Cicatrices rouges*, pp. 168–90.
99 ADN, 9R745, German poster, Tourcoing, 24 September 1915; McPhail, *The Long Silence*, pp. 91–4; Becker, *Les Cicatrices rouges*, pp. 159–68.
100 See, for example, *Bulletin de Lille*, 13 July 1916; Nivet, *La France occupée*, pp. 85–96.
101 Gromaire, *L'Occupation allemande*, pp. 394–422; M. L. Baclé, *La Destruction systématique par les allemands des usines métallurgiques du Nord et de l'Est de la France pendant l'occupation militaire (1914–1918)* (Paris: Société d'Encouragement pour l'Industrie Nationale, 1920); Pauly, *Occupation allemande*.
102 Christel Ramirez, 'Les villes et les campagnes dans le Nord pendant l'occupation allemande de 1914–1918', master's dissertation (Lille III, 1999), pp. 136–7; ADN, J1933, François Rouesel, 'Pendant la CCI [Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie] de Roubaix durant l'occupation allemande', 'La Caisse du Chômage' (manuscript); Trochon, *La Grande Guerre*, pp. 109–11.
103 AML, 4H134, German poster, Lille, 6 December 1917; Nivet, *La France occupée*, pp. 107–14.
104 ADN, 9R730, Kommandant Hofmann to Mairie de Roubaix, 20 June 1915.
105 ADN, 9R1244, Mayor of Croix to Mayor of Lille, 9 December 1918.
106 See, for example, AML, 4H4, 'Lettre de Mgr l'évêque de Lille demandant à tous les fidèles de sa ville épiscopale de concourir au paiement de la contribution de guerre', 18 November 1914; and poster, Mayor of Lille, 15 November 1914.
107 Eugène Martin-Mamy, *Quatre ans avec les barbares: Lille pendant l'occupation allemande* (Paris: Renaissance du Livre, 1919), pp. 108–13. See also Gromaire, *L'Occupation allemande*, pp. 168–9; Becker, *Journaux de combattants*, Degrutère diary, 19 March 1916, p. 196.
108 Gromaire, *L'Occupation allemande*, pp. 174–81; ADN, 9R1245–6, passim; ADN, 9R1241, Mayor of Lille to Préfet, 14 December 1918.
109 See, for example, ADN, 142J4, diary of P. P. Desrumaux on the occupation of Lille, 1914–18; ADN, 74J224, diary of M. Trollin (Directeur de l'École Rollin, Lille), 1914–1918; ADN, 74J225, Blin diary; ADN, J959, diary of Joseph Noyelle (avocat, docteur en droit, Secrétaire du Syndicat des Peigneurs à Roubaix, 1905–1932); ADN, J1933, Rouesel manuscript; ADN, J1950, diary of Pierre Motte (1861–1947, notaire à Lille); Becker, *Journaux de combattants*, Degrutère and David Hirsch diaries.
110 Benoît, 'L'état sanitaire', pp. 39–40.
111 Becker, *Les Cicatrices rouges*, pp. 272–3; Françoise Thébaud, *La Femme au temps de la guerre de 14* (Paris: Stock, 1986), pp. 53–4.
112 Gabrielle Yerta and Marguerite Yerta, *Six Women and the Invasion* (London: Macmillan, 1917), p. 306.

113 Becker, *Les Cicatrices rouges*, p. 140. For more on the wider relief effort and hunger, see pp. 131–58; McPhail, *The Long Silence*, pp. 61–90; Gromaire, *L'Occupation allemande*, pp. 187–206; Nivet, *La France occupée*, pp. 150–77.

114 For Britain's role in and response to the relief effort, see National Archives (NA), CAB24/37, Memorandum, Belgium Relief (December 1917); NA, CAB24/66 and 24/21, letter from Director for Europe of the Commission for Relief in Belgium (22 July 1917); British Parliamentary Archives, 1916 Commons Sitting, Prisoners of War, Relief in Belgium, House of Commons Debates, 10 August 1916, vol. 85, cols. 1201–2; NA, CAB24/34, Summary of Blockade Information, 23–9 November 1917.

115 Nivet, *La France occupée*, pp. 177–85; Benoît, 'L'état sanitaire'.

116 Proclamation, Lille, April 1916, cited in Gromaire, *L'Occupation allemande*, p. 278.

117 Darrow, *French Women*, pp. 118–21; Henri Cochin, Nicolas Bourgeois and André M. de Poncheville, *Le Nord dévasté* (Paris: F. Alcan, 1920), p. 10.

118 See, for example, Jules Basdevant, *Les Déportations du Nord de la France et de la Belgique en vue du travail forcé et le droit international* (Paris: Recueil Sirey, 1917); *Le Temps*, *Le Figaro* and *Le Matin*, 29 July 1916; NA, FO 383/138, Foreign Office: Prisoners of War and Aliens Department: General Correspondence from 1906: France: Prisoners (1916) – Maurice de Bunsen to Lord Bertie, 5 October 1916, and Mr Spring Run to Viscount Grey of Falloden at the British Embassy in Washington, 31 July 1916.

119 See Becker, *Les Cicatrices rouges*, pp. 168–90; Basdevant, *Les Déportations du Nord*; Kramer, *Dynamic of Destruction*, pp. 44–5; Gromaire, *L'Occupation allemande*, pp. 207–293.

120 Nivet, *Les Réfugiés français*, especially pp. 56 and 157.

121 Roland Allender, *1914–1918 dans le Nord: Survivre en pays occupé* (Saint-Cyr-sur-Loire: Alan Sutton, 2006), p. 43; Becker, *Oubliés de la Grande Guerre*, p. 72.

122 See, for example, Becker, *Journaux de combattants*, Hirsch diary, 27 June 1915, p. 240.

123 See Claudine Wallart, 'Déportation des prisonniers civils "au camp de concentration" d'Holzminden novembre 1916–avril 1917', *Revue du Nord*, 80:325 (1998), 417–48; Wallart, *C'était hier*, pp. 41–3; Becker, *Les Cicatrices rouges*, pp. 202–11.

124 Becker, *Oubliés de la Grande Guerre*, p. 73.

125 John Horne, 'Introduction', in John Horne (ed.), *State, Society and Mobilization in Europe during the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 15.

126 Wallart, *C'était hier*, p. 65; documents in ADN, 9R1197, attesting to German destruction and scorched-earth policies.

127 Kramer, *Dynamic of Destruction*, p. 41.

128 See Hull, *Absolute Destruction*.

129 See Vejas Gabriel Liulevicius, *War Land on the Eastern Front: Culture, National Identity and German Occupation in World War I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Lisa Mayerhofer, 'Making Friends and Foes: Occupiers and Occupied in First World War Romania, 1916–1918', in Heather Jones, Jennifer O'Brien and Christoph Schmidt-Supprian (eds.), *Untold War: New Perspectives in First World War Studies* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), pp. 119–50.

130 Peter Holquist, 'Violent Russia, Deadly Marxism? Russia in the Epoch of Violence, 1905–21', *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, 4:3 (2003), p. 641.

131 Taylor, *Between Resistance and Collaboration*, p. 3.

Part I

‘Misconduct’ and disunity

This first part of the book considers French behaviours under occupation that challenge the narrative of dignified suffering and patriotism.[1] There is a temptation simply to label such behaviours ‘collaboration’, as certain historians have done.[2] I believe that this should be avoided. Only very few members of the occupied population used the word in a negative sense,[3] making its use anachronistic – although anachronistic terms can still be useful to historians. Yet the term is too associated in French cultural and historical memory with the Vichy regime, especially with the notion of political or ideological complicity with the occupiers, which was largely absent in the context of the First World War. Of course, underlying ideas related to the notion of ‘collaboration’ are useful, as are reflections on the grey area of ‘accommodation’ or more simply ‘survival’.[4] The following chapters include certain behaviours that other scholars of the 1914–18 occupation have labelled as ‘accommodation’ or ‘rapprochement’,[5] but which were subject to criticism during the occupation. Occupied life was complex, defying neat categorisation, and unsurprisingly there existed a fluid, murky boundary between patriotism and treason. Nevertheless, I offer up suggestive analytical categories in my study that focuses in particular on the extremes of the spectrum, with which the dominant occupied culture was particularly concerned.

Central to this culture was the notion of respectability, involving unwritten but widely accepted social mores combined with patriotic expectations, which dictated what was perceived as correct and incorrect behaviour. It informed French interaction with the thousands of German men living alongside them. Many were aware of this moral-patriotic framework and the potential criticism from compatriots for

perceived breaches of the limits of respectability. This was an extension of wider French war culture, outlined by Jean-Yves Le Naour:

> At a time when Frenchmen spilled blood for the endangered motherland, it was intolerable that certain individuals ran away from and avoided their duty. Collective surveillance, actually autosurveillance, called individuals to order: all must have irreproachable conduct, otherwise fighting was pointless, the ideal was sullied and victory compromised.[6]

The next three chapters examine perceived breaches of this moral-patriotic framework, and Chapters 4 and 5 consider disunity and criminality, other understudied aspects of the occupation experience. The reality behind accusations of wrongdoing is almost impossible to discern. Although I attempt to assess the 'actual' scale of such behaviours, the perceptions themselves are the main subject of study, a doorway into occupied culture. The examination of this difficult topic relies on an engagement with many sources written during or after the liberation but which provide an insight into the occupation experience.

In the following chapters I highlight various forms of negatively viewed behaviours and argue that types of behaviour were criticised which do not fall into the remit of the loaded, anachronistic term 'collaboration' and which were not necessarily illegal. Subsequently, I propose a new conceptual category for understanding the 'dark side' of this occupation, and perhaps others. That category is 'misconduct' (*mauvaise conduite*).

Defining *mauvaise conduite*

On 8 November 1918, the Applancourt sisters from Prisches were under investigation for their occupation conduct. It was alleged they told the Germans that their father was hiding weapons, leading to his imprisonment. They were also accused of having German lovers; one daughter admitted this was true. The episode illustrates the conflation of treason and sexual misconduct, discussed in the first two chapters. It is unclear what the truth is, although their mother spoke of her 'dishonour' at her daughters' 'relations with the enemy'. The witnesses interviewed did not approve of the actions of the sisters, and the investigating gendarme stated that he was examining their *mauvaise conduite* (misconduct or bad behaviour).[7] This term does not relate uniquely to occupation behaviour – *mauvaise conduite* existed as a concept before the war, usually denoting sexual behaviour[8] – and it was not employed particularly frequently. Nevertheless, people from the occupied area did occasionally

use *mauvaise conduite* to describe behaviour that was, to them, deplorable from a moral or patriotic standpoint.[9] It was interchangeable with the words 'inconduite'[10] or 'méconduite'[11] but I opt for *mauvaise conduite*, partly echoing the notion of 'bad elements' (*mauvais éléments*) outlined in the most comprehensive interwar work on the occupation.[12] Its antithesis was *belle conduite*, for which individuals were praised after the war.[13]

This notion provides a springboard from which to launch a new conceptual category. I use *mauvaise conduite* as an umbrella term to describe forms of behaviour not all labelled explicitly under this rubric at the time but perceived in a negative light by occupied, and occasionally non-occupied, compatriots. It refers to any kind of complicity, not just actions which were illegal or harmed compatriots, although the multiple forms of misconduct were intertwined, in perceptions and in practice. Certainly, all actions considered as misconduct received opprobrium whether in diaries, interviews with *rapatriés,* or post-war police reports or trials. Sexual relations were derided as much as denunciations; friendly relations were scorned as much as commerce with the Germans. Some have criticised this definition, which I have outlined briefly elsewhere,[14] as being a catch-all term that is too broad.[15] However, that is precisely the point – for adherents of occupied culture, there was little distinction between behaviours that broke the law and those that breached the expectations of occupied culture.

The 'respectable' behaviour against which *mauvaise conduite* was placed involved acts such as refusing to work for the Germans, remaining hostile to and avoiding all forms of intimacy with the enemy and staying 'dignified' despite daily privations. Against this framework, legal actions such as sexual or friendly relations with Germans or leading a lifestyle considered overly lavish could only be perceived as betraying the community. Misconduct also veered into the illegal, although legal, semi-illegal and illegal misconduct were often conflated – complicity never came alone because of the need to redefine the community as one of suffering, both for the occupied population and the fighting French soldiers. Any affront to the community of suffering, whether sleeping with Germans or actively spying for them, suggested further complicity; the abandonment of the local community for the enemy could never be purely symbolic.

To examine all aspects of *mauvaise conduite*, and to highlight the way in which illegal and legal misconduct was conflated, it is necessary to outline the Third Republic's legal understanding of 'collaboration' (as Renée Martinage calls it). In the only work specifically dealing with collaboration in the First World War, Martinage explains that this emanates from Articles 77–9 of the *Code pénal*, involving the crimes of

'intelligence' and 'commerce with the enemy'.[16] This covered not only passing information of a military or political nature to enemies and carrying out espionage on their behalf but also 'furnishing enemies with aid, whether men, money, goods or munitions'.[17] Yet, for many, this legal understanding was not the final word. Less clearly defined 'anti-patriotic' behaviour, theoretically exempt from punishment and arguably less important in the eyes of French law, was frequently perceived as equally repugnant and worthy of punishment or disdain by locals themselves. Consequently, any sort of 'relations' (sexual, friendly, commercial or other) with the Germans could be deemed unsavoury, if not illegal, and thus comprised misconduct. Often legal misconduct was said to occur alongside illegal misconduct. It must be stated that the use of the term 'misconduct' does not reflect a judgement on my part – I aim to reflect, as best as possible, contemporary perceptions and culture.

Notes

1 The first three chapters of this section are derived in part from an article published in *First World War Studies*, March 2013, copyright Taylor & Francis, available online: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/19475020.2012.761382.

2 Philippe Nivet, *La France occupée, 1914–1918* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2011), pp. 293–300; Annette Becker, *Les Cicatrices rouges 14–18: France et Belgique occupées* (Paris: Fayard, 2010), p. 296.

3 One instance can be found in AN, 96AP/1, dossier 1, journal de Félix Trépont (1914–1922), 24 September 1914, p. 195.

4 The notion of accommodation was developed in Philippe Burrin, *La France à l'heure allemande, 1940–1944* (Paris: Seuil, 1995).

5 Nivet, *La France occupée*, pp. 265–92; Becker, *Les Cicatrices rouges*, pp. 249–70.

6 Jean-Yves Le Naour, *Misères et tourmentes de la chair durant la Grande Guerre: Les mœurs sexuelles des français, 1914–1918* (Paris: Aubier, 2002), p. 14.

7 ADN, 9R1197, Prisches, Mission Militaire Française attachée à l'Armée britannique, procès-verbal no. 231, 8 November 1918. For these and similar files, I will include the author's name when required to distinguish from other reports of the same date.

8 ADN, 9R1196, Lys, Prévôté de la 40e Division, procès-verbal no. 142, 30 October 1918.

9 See, for example, SHD, 17N433, Sûreté Générale, 3e Armée Britannique, État-Major, procès-verbal, 21 December 1917, testimony of Henri Duquenne (Courchelettes); ADHS, 4M513, repatriation reports no. 1264, 28 April 1917; no. 675, 5 February 1917.

10 See, for example, SHD, 19N547, Grand Quartier Général, État-Major-Général, Deuxième Bureau, Service de Renseignement de l'Armée, 'Note pour les SR d'Armée', 14 August 1916; SHD, 17N433, Mission Française de Sûreté Générale attachée à la 4e Armée Britannique, procès-verbal no. 238, 7 February 1918 (Auby).
11 Emmanuel Debruyne, 'Les "femmes à boches" en Belgique et en France occupée, 1914–1918', *Revue du Nord*, 96:404–5 (2014), 157–86.
12 Georges Gromaire, *L'Occupation allemande en France (1914–1918)* (Paris: Payot, 1925), p. 334.
13 ADN, 15J87, 'Commission Historique du Nord, Questionnaire de la Guerre de 1914, Département du Nord, Arrondissement de Cambrai, Canton du Cateau, Commune de Montay', 1923.
14 James E. Connolly, '*Mauvaise conduite*: complicity and respectability in the occupied Nord, 1914–1918', *First World War Studies*, 4:1 (2013), 7–21.
15 Philippe Salson, *L'Aisne occupée: Les civils dans la Grande Guerre* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2015), p. 179.
16 Renée Martinage, 'Les collaborateurs devant la cour d'assises du Nord après la très Grande Guerre', *Revue du Nord*, 77:309 (1995), pp. 99–101.
17 *Code Pénal*, article 77, cited in Martinage, 'Les collaborateurs', p. 100.

1

Sexual misconduct

Notions of misconduct were always heavily gendered – it was seen as a fundamentally female phenomenon.[1] This ties in not only with the demographic of the occupied zone but also with the idea that complicity reflected weakness and submission. Similar ideas persisted after the Second World War.[2] Philippe Nivet states that in 1914–18 this gendering of what he calls collaboration was the cornerstone of the non-occupied French view of the occupied populations as 'Boches of the Nord'.[3] In the occupied Nord, many locals also engaged in such gendering: the primary form of misconduct evident in the sources involved intimate relations between Frenchwomen and Germans. Nivet and Le Naour have studied this topic in depth, highlighting the view of such women as 'bad Frenchwomen' or 'women for the Boches' (*femmes à Boches*) by their compatriots on both sides of the trenches.[4] Emmanuel Debruyne, in his extensive study of sexual relations with Germans across occupied France and Belgium, draws on my terms to state that 'The fact of a woman having sexual relations with the occupier constituted, as it were, "mauvaise conduite" par excellence.'[5] Sexual relations with the Germans were viewed as a moral crime, a transgression of what Le Naour calls 'the patriotic taboo',[6] and of what Salson calls 'patriotic conformity'.[7] Studying sexual behaviour is notoriously difficult, but critical use of sources allows for some conclusions to be drawn.

Sexual misconduct was perceived as occurring on a large scale in the Nord: the Commissaire de Police of Comines, interviewed at Évian on 20 December 1917, estimated that eight out of ten women had frequented the Germans, bourgeois women as much as working-class women – the latter having 'at least the excuse of suffering and misery'.[8] *Rapatriés* from Valenciennes estimated that 60 per cent of women engaged in 'debauchery' with the Germans.[9] In 1925, Gromaire estimated that tens

of thousands of women had engaged in sexual relations with Germans across occupied France, which Debruyne concludes 'does not seem unrealistic'.[10] Even if the reality was less dramatic, the belief that this was the case was ubiquitous, and the disdain in which such women were held was central to occupied culture. Nivet, pioneering the use of repatriation testimony, describes this as an obsession of the occupied populations,[11] and Le Naour notes that 'the figure of the "*femme à boches*" is present in almost all testimony'.[12] For Becker, 'relations between Frenchwomen and German men were actually very limited', and documents recording such relations should not be considered witness testimony, because 'accusing thousands of women of relations with the occupier was a way of exonerating the men incapable of winning the war'.[13] The truth behind each account is impossible to verify; the obsession itself is the only verifiable fact. Nevertheless, in this chapter I study the extent and nature of this obsession, the different forms such misconduct took, the criticism it engendered, and its centrality to occupied culture. I begin by considering the evidence for sexual misconduct.

Repatriation reports

Accusations of misconduct flooded French and British secret-service reports regarding 'suspect' individuals in the occupied zone, or interviews with *rapatriés*. Women appear here more than men, and the most common reason for being considered as a suspect – by compatriots and intelligence officers alike – was perceived sexual relations with Germans. This was the case for between c. 70–87 per cent of suspect female *Nordistes* in the sources I have consulted, as the following tables demonstrate.

The statistics in Table 1 are merely a sample of a larger corpus and represent an attempt to impose order on inconsistent documentation.[14] Nevertheless, they provide suggestive information, notably that young women were more likely to have been accused of sexual misconduct (the average age is twenty-seven), and that over half of women whose marital status was recorded were married. Such sources evidently pose problems. *Rapatriés* may have felt pressurised to respond to leading questions about suspicious compatriots,[15] to demonstrate their patriotism and goodwill,[16] or may have been settling personal scores. There are cases where individuals suspected of misconduct denounced others for the same reason, perhaps as a means to protect themselves or disprove accusations against them, perhaps because they genuinely knew those in a similar situation. For example, one woman from

Table 1 Statistical breakdown of suspects from the Nord mentioned in January–April 1917 interviews with repatriated individuals.

Total number of suspects	1,054
Number of unknown sex	5
Number of men (excluding the estimated 125–50 male workers at Saint-Amand)	228 (c. 22% of total)
Number of women (excluding the estimates of sixty female workers at Saint-Amand, and 200 women accused of prostitution near Maubeuge)	821 (c. 78% of total)
Total number of female *Nordistes* accused of some form of sexual misconduct	626 (c. 76% of all *Nordiste* women)
Average age of *Nordistes* accused of sexual misconduct, based on 373 instances where an age is provided	c. 27 years old
Number of *Nordistes* accused of sexual misconduct who were married or presumed to be married (of whom the husbands were mobilised, prisoners of war, or in unoccupied France)	266 38
Widowed	13
Unmarried	172
Unknown marital status	175
Number of named *Nordiste* communes where women were suspected of sexual misconduct	64

Source: Archives Départementales de la Haute-Savoie, 4M513, reports of secret-service interviews with repatriated interviews, and 'Notices individuelles' on suspects.

Table 2 Statistical breakdown of suspects in occupied France compiled by the British I(b) Intelligence Service, July–October 1918.

Total number of suspect individuals identifiable by sex	797
Total number of women among all suspects	702 (88%)
Total number of women from the Nord	416
Total number of female *Nordistes* engaged in some form of sexual misconduct	362 (c. 87% of female *Nordistes*)

Source: USNA Record Group 120, entry 198, and Record Group 165.

Table 3 Statistical breakdown of suspects from the Nord compiled by the Deuxième Bureau, 1914–18.

Total number of suspect individuals identifiable by sex	380
Total number of women among all suspects	288 (c.75%)
Total number of women accused of some form of sexual misconduct	202 (c.70%)

Source: Service Historique de la Défense, 19N1571, 17N433 and 19N549.

Haubourdin accused of intimate relations with Germans – including being photographed with them, which she admitted was true – during her repatriation interrogation denounced twenty-six other women allegedly engaging in sexual relations with the Germans.[17] Further, there are many instances where either an interviewee or the author of a report used the phrasing 'it is said' or 'public rumour has it'. Nevertheless, the French secret service took repatriation denunciations very seriously, issuing an official note in March 1916 remarking that 'Hundreds of suspects have been signalled with more or less certitude and sincerity', and instructed interviewers to take detailed notes on suspects so that they could be punished after the war.[18] French authorities put enough credence in repatriation testimony to draw up lists of 'people of confidence' and 'suspects' based on this.[19] There are also instances of women admitting the facts for which they had been denounced. For example, Jeanne Desdimancre from Lille, twenty-six, admitted that she had been the mistress of Captain Max Kaurisch from the 105th Infantry Regiment; in Avesnes-sur-Helpe, nineteen-year-old Louise Delhaye's husband was at the front, but she admitted to having intimate relations with officers of the Kommandantur, including two named officers and the Kommandant himself (from December 1914 until August 1915); and twenty-six-year-old Mme Berthe Spriet from Lille admitted having intimate relations with German officer Franz Sobtisch, who 'supported her financially'.[20] Other women denied accusations of misconduct.[21] Yet, even if repatriation testimony is questionable, the very existence and widespread nature of such hearsay underlines a central tenet of occupied culture: sexual relations with Germans occurred but were considered by many as unpatriotic and worthy of opprobrium.

Salson criticises over-reliance on repatriation interviews, arguing that interrogators put more credence in the testimony of members of the social elite, who often accused the working classes of anti-patriotic, undignified conduct. In this sense, repatriation documents share the

same problem as other occupation sources or memoirs, almost exclusively providing the perspective of the educated.[22] While this is a problem for historians of the occupation, such a criticism is lessened by the fact that repatriation reports rarely record the profession or social status of suspects and especially those denouncing them. The voices of the accused are also frequently present. Nevertheless, working-class individuals do feature prominently among suspects, notably cabaret, café, estaminet, or bar owners and workers. Such women were more likely to come into close contact with German troops and therefore develop relationships with them, even engaging in prostitution – which was common in Lille's bars as early as January 1915, causing the Germans to complain to the Préfet.[23] Over three years later, in July 1918, the occupiers were still combating this issue and forbade 'female employees' from standing outside cafés and bars in Roubaix.[24] The link between drinking holes and sexual misconduct is also present in a clandestine tract from Lille in December 1915 entitled *La Vérité* (*The Truth*). It listed bars and cafés where Germans engaged in debauchery with Frenchwomen and contained a fake advertisement calling on the population to 'boycott and desert the cafés and houses that fraternise with the enemy'.[25]

Sexual relations with Germans were, of course, not confined to working-class women, and repatriation testimony reflects this: for instance, the wife of a dentist in Lille, the daughter of the President of Lille's Chamber of Commerce, and the wife of a municipal councillor in Tourcoing were all denounced by *rapatriés* in early 1917 for 'intimate relations' with Germans.[26] Another repatriation report remarked that in Lille 'relations between women from good families and Germans are numerous'.[27] In one case, a well-to-do woman from Valenciennes was 'signalled' by her mother's cleaner for night-time visits to German officers in a shop, which she admitted but denied intimate relations[28] – a far cry from members of the bourgeoisie criticising the wider population. Pierre Dumont, a salesman and interpreter at the Mairie of Lille, recorded in his diary in July 1917 that a woman 'from the region' had written to her husband in unoccupied France via the Red Cross, stating that 'I am in good health. Everything is fine, as for three years now another has replaced you.' Dumont's comment hints at both his own judgement and the classless nature of sexual misconduct: 'Do I need to highlight on this subject, the debauchery that thrives here in all classes of society[?]'[29] Thus, reports of sexual misconduct reflected both a complex reality and a wider culture of judgement rather than a simply middle-class one, although the centrality of respectability was more associated with bourgeois norms.

Liberation investigations

Documents remain of post-liberation investigations into 'suspect' women carried out in a small section of the Nord (effectively Lille's metropolitan area) by French gendarmes primarily attached to the British army.[30] These suspects had either previously been denounced by *rapatriés* or were now denounced by liberated populations. As such, the judgements visible in these reports primarily reflect the opinion not only of the wider occupied population but also of the investigating gendarmes who had not experienced the occupation. Such documents provide an insight into occupation sexual misconduct.

The investigation concentrated on almost 500 women, all accused of having engaged in sexual misconduct with Germans. Similar inquiries were also conducted in spring 1917 when the Germans retreated to the Siegfried–Hindenburg line and numerous villages were recaptured by the Allies. Investigating misconduct in the Aisne-Nord sector in April 1917, Commissaire Spécial Busch distinguished three types of suspect women: those who had children born of German fathers, those who had intimate relations with the Germans (including prostitutes), and those who underwent medical visits and had venereal disease.[31] These categories of suspect behaviour are present in all investigations into female conduct.

Post-liberation investigations into female behaviour were often less detailed and shorter than investigations into male misconduct (discussed in Chapter 3), but perhaps this is because this form of misconduct was scrutinised more frequently than others, possibly linked to soldiers' wartime inhibitions and rumours regarding the infidelity of wives and girlfriends, even in unoccupied France.[32] These reports into female misconduct usually comprise a few lines, detailing the woman's actions during the occupation, whether she had undergone 'medical testing' for venereal disease at the hands of German or French authorities, and finally whether the gendarme thought it prudent for her to undergo such tests at the time of writing and/or be expelled from the liberated region. This was the only suggested punishment, even for those who were said to have been involved in illegal actions such as denouncing compatriots,[33] which attests to the temporary nature of these rapid investigations and their conclusions, although expulsion is hardly a mild punishment.

What is clear is that numerous witnesses, and indeed the investigating French authorities, *did* believe that misconduct had taken place during the occupation – and devoted considerable amounts of manpower

and time to uncover the 'truth'. However, gendarmes also investigated tales of German atrocities, pillage and destruction during the German retreat, and occasionally of local resistance – thus they were not ordered to investigate misconduct exclusively.[34] Nevertheless, many reports are dominated by the sexual conduct of women, not necessarily legally defined 'anti-patriotic' conduct. Indeed, in some cases the sexual conduct of women is confirmed or described as questionable or deplorable, although they are not seen as a suspect from a 'national point of view',[35] or not perceived to have caused harm to or denounced compatriots.[36] Only legal treason could be punished and judged, demonstrating not only the non-occupied French authorities' awareness of the complexity of occupied life but also their lack of comprehension of the occupied culture, which often conflated sexual and other misconduct, viewing them as inextricably linked and equally reprehensible. Rare exceptions exist, such as a repatriated woman from Valenciennes who denounced four married women (two of whom were sixty-two and seventy years old) for having German lovers but concluded 'I do not know if they are capable of betraying us.'[37] More commonly, sexual misconduct was perceived as just as treasonous as, and linked to, other forms – as summarised by one repatriated woman's assessment of a compatriot she accuses of having numerous German lovers: 'I do not know of anything for which she can be reproached regarding her sentiments from a national point of view, but I believe she is capable of everything.'[38]

Prostitution and 'contamination'

One form of sexual misconduct was prostitution. It is difficult to determine whether reports of prostitution are true; whether women accused of such actions carried them out, or, if they did, whether they conceived of it as prostitution in the same way that French and German authorities did. As Benoît Majerus notes regarding wartime prostitution in Brussels, prostitutes were a marginal section of societies that, being occupied, are largely occluded from First World War historiography and memory.[39] Nevertheless, there is more concrete evidence about prostitution or alleged prostitution than non-commercial sexual relations. Nivet remarks that many women admitted being prostitutes during Évian interrogations and concludes that 'It seems that there was a sizeable rise in prostitution in the occupied zone.'[40] Debruyne makes a similar claim,[41] and this holds true for the Nord. Of the 490 *Nordiste* women investigated in November 1918, 178 were explicitly mentioned

as being prostitutes or suspected as such (via the phrase 'is considered to have [*passe pour*] prostituted herself')[42] – and most descriptions of the remaining women suggest prostitution, such as 'gave herself multiple times to German soldiers'.[43] The language of reports suggests that prostitution was perceived by investigating authorities as worse than a 'normal', spontaneous relationship between Frenchwomen and Germans. As Majerus notes,

> In wartime, prostitution is even more strongly stigmatised than in peacetime. It is the opposite of the image that a country in war makes of itself […] In an area cut off from its army, patriotic duty is judged to be particularly important […] The prostitute appears in this context as a traitor.[44]

In post-liberation reports, evidence of women officially recognised as prostitutes or 'women of ill repute' (*de mauvaise vie*) by the Germans was seen as incriminating. Such evidence could comprise being a registered prostitute (*cartée*), having undergone medical examinations or time in hospital recovering from venereal disease or having been arrested by the Germans for unlicensed prostitution or propagation of venereal disease.[45] This was not conceived of by post-liberation French authorities as proof of questionable behaviour on the Germans' part: they were not alive to the possibility that Germans may have forced thousands of 'innocent' women to undergo medical examinations, treating them like prostitutes, which occupation memoirs and histories claim did happen.[46] French interest in occupation prostitution is explained by national 'syphilophobia',[47] fear of the 'venereal peril' and national degeneration heightened by the war,[48] plus a fear of disease spreading among the population. The Germans shared these fears, and the German 'total sanitary exam, veritable prophylactic dictatorship'[49] rendered many women suspect in the eyes of the post-liberation French authorities and sometimes the occupied population as well. However, controlling prostitution and venereal disease was also a priority for French authorities, and medical visits of women suspected of prostitution or contamination were in theory supported by French law; this was the case in Tourcoing, where, in January 1915, the Mayor outlined such measures to be carried out by French police.[50]

There is much evidence for prostitution in the Nord. On British intelligence suspect lists, sixty-four *Nordistes* are accused of prostitution,[51] and at least eighty appear in the Évian testimonies examined.[52] In a March 1916 report, the Commissaire Central of Lille noted that 'Since the occupation, clandestine prostitution has developed in a shameful

fashion in Lille and the number of women being contaminated is considerable […] 2,000 women have been treated […].'[53] Throughout the occupation, Lille's police force recorded a number of infractions of the law surrounding public decency and prostitution: from mid-November 1914 until mid-February 1915 alone, fifty-five prostitutes were recorded as having missed their sanitary visits; eighteen were illegally present in bars, eight 'wearing indecent clothes' and seventy-two for generally breaching 'public decency' (*moeurs*) – thirty-three of whom were put in police cells.[54] Table 4 shows figures until October 1918, indicating continued prostitution – although markedly fewer reported infractions in the last few months of occupation, perhaps due to increasing German jurisdiction over prostitution and a strained French police force (see Chapter 5).

Registered cases of venereal disease help to further illuminate the scale of prostitution and sexual relations. As early as January 1915, the Kommandant of Lille informed the municipality that there were three times as many syphilitic women as spaces in treatment facilities.[55] On 13 June 1916, the Sûreté de Lille recorded that it was monitoring 165 registered prostitutes; twenty-three were in nineteen different brothels, and 142 were in isolation or undergoing medical treatment across four clinics.[56] Later that year, the Director of Lille's Bureau of Hygiene, responsible for overseeing the treatment of prostitutes who contracted venereal disease, claimed that clandestine prostitution no longer existed but that official prostitution and related diseases represented a 'scourge'.[57] German documents concerning prostitutes having undergone medical treatment in various hospitals in Lille, and who were discharged in December 1916, list at least 1,221 women (some of whom came from Belgium).[58] In Tourcoing, just one *lazaret* (military quarantine hospital) had treated 410 women by 31 December 1916.[59] Another *lazaret* in Maubeuge treated 1,474 women throughout the war.[60] By the liberation, 6,200 women 'coming from all walks of life' had been treated for venereal disease in the four clinics of Lille. Although not all were necessarily prostitutes, the Commissaire de Police of Lille nevertheless provided these statistics in a paragraph about prostitution, which had 'taken considerable proportions since the arrival of the Germans'.[61] Prostitution and attendant controls therefore existed on a large scale, especially in urban centres.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, many 'contaminated' women risked public shame, so the practice of subjecting women to medical visits sometimes elicited protests by French municipalities. At a September

Table 4 Commissariat central de Lille, recorded infractions relating to prostitution, November 1914–October 1918.

Offence	November 1914–March 1915	April 1915–March 1916 (no records)	April–August 1916	September–December 1916	January–June 1917	July–December 1917	January–June 1918	July–October 1918
Breaching public decency (mœurs)	72 (33 of whom put in police cells)	N/A	75	34	27	68	33	4
Public solicitation (in the street or a bar/café)	0	N/A	1	1	3	10	2	2
Illegal presence of prostitutes in bars	18	N/A	0	2	17	8	0	0

Source: Archives Départementales du Nord, 9R581 and Archives Municipales de Lille, 4H266–71.

1916 meeting of the Municipal Council of Templeuve, secretaries to the Kommandant called for medical tests for prostitutes and women suspected of venereal disease to be overseen by the municipality. The Municipal Council protested that the Germans should carry out such surveillance themselves and argued that only prostitutes should be examined – because:

> On the subject of the misconduct [*l'inconduite*] of women, locals only know rumours, sometimes slanderous, whereas soldiers possess certainties […] Those who are submitted to humiliating medical visits gain an infamous character in public opinion. And if a mistake occurred involving an honest woman, the population would feel a sentiment of emotion & revolt that it is desirable and possible to avoid.[62]

The Municipal Council continued to oppose German medical visits, especially regarding 'honest women', in October 1916.[63] One *rapatriée* from Lille clearly thought that prostitution and 'contamination' were worthy of criticism and denunciation: she gave the name of a woman who had been registered as a prostitute by the Germans, subjected to medical exams and interned in a hospital; 'there is reason to believe that she is contaminated'.[64] Public shame outlasted the war: a number of people wrote to the Mayor of Tourcoing in late 1918 and early 1919 protesting the continued 'imprisonment' of women placed in quarantine hospitals, essentially prisons with armed guards, during the occupation.[65] All the authors (including some of the imprisoned women) claimed that this was a mistake, although some police reports confirmed that the women had engaged in clandestine prostitution.[66]

Even though prostitution and venereal disease posed genuine problems, most women suspected of intimate relations were not explicitly accused of prostitution or of being 'contaminated'. Instead, they were accused of intimate contact with the national enemy. Germans are mentioned in all of the aforementioned 490 post-liberation investigations in the Nord: these women were denounced and investigated precisely because their lovers (whether clients or genuine) were German.[67] Not all such relations were automatically understood as commercial: in one extraordinary case, one Mlle Lenoy of the commune of Lannoy responded to accusations that she had had intimate relations with, and even married, a German infantry sergeant by stating: 'Love does not have a mother country.' The report continued: 'Despite this her conduct was not scandalous.'[68] Yet for many occupied locals, such conduct was indeed scandalous.

Love, marriage, family and children

Loving relationships existed between Frenchwomen and German men in the occupied Nord, even if the line between a financial or favour-based relationship and loving one was unclear given occupation power dynamics. For example, twenty-five-year-old Mlle Jeanne Govaerts from Wattrelos admitted during the liberation that she had relations with a German soldier but claimed she did so 'to procure goods beyond those allocated to her by the provisioning committee'.[69] Most accusations of sexual misconduct do not distinguish between different types of relationships; the very relationship itself was unpalatable, whatever the motives. The actual form of relations was, and is, hard to establish, with many blurred lines – as was acknowledged in September 1916, when German newspaper *Liller Kriegszeitung* published a cartoon depicting a woman sat on a bench in a park next to a German soldier, who had his arm around her. The caption read: 'Comrade Schulze learns French.'[70] Nivet provides evidence of consensual, loving relationships, born of proximity or simple desire, as well as relationships born of hardship – justified by women because of financial need, the need for food and/or providing for children.[71]

Occasionally, repatriation testimony or denunciatory accusations included the phrase 'German lover' and/or explicitly named individual lovers[72] – which may simply be a turn of phrase but also hints at deeper, non-transactional relationships, of which there is some evidence. The daughter of the Mayor of Bachy wrote a letter to her lover, 'My dear beloved Herman', in June 1918; she had not heard from him and was concerned. She signed off 'from your dear Blanche, with her best kisses'.[73] In Valenciennes, Mlle Vandesquielle, twenty-eight, was allegedly 'infatuated with' a German non-commissioned officer (NCO) called Adam with whom she had a daughter, and in March 1918 'they live[d] together as if they were married'.[74] During a liberation investigation, eighteen-year-old Mlle Noteboon from Wattrelos admitted having intimate relations with a soldier called Otto who worked at Tourcoing's train station.[75] Sometimes the use of 'mistress' denoted a serious relationship: twenty-year-old Éveline Debaste of Tourcoing was said to be the mistress of a German aviator who fired his machine guns when taking off to say goodbye to her, to which she responded by 'sending him kisses'. Debaste intended to follow the Germans wherever they went, especially when the French army approached.[76] Letters from Lille censored by the French military after the liberation confirm that some women did

indeed join the Germans upon their departure: one stated that 'all the chic women […] followed' the Germans.[77] Another hinted at the disdain locals felt for such women, explaining that an unnamed woman

> was obliged to leave Lille to avoid being worried; she understood things very well. All accounts on her part were unfavourable as having partied [*fait la noce*, which has connotations of prostitution] with the Boches. What's more, I think that in the neighbourhood she would have been ripped to shreds; think about the scandal for us and the children.[78]

One letter from Lille, however, remarked that the Germans in fact forced 'all the women of the estaminets and all the whores' to come with them.[79] Nevertheless, some women certainly joined the German retreat out of choice in late 1918, and a remarkable account corroborated by multiple witnesses suggested that in Roubaix on 19 October 1918 – the day after the German withdrawal – a local woman accompanied her presumed lover, a German soldier now dressed in civilian clothes, who was arrested.[80] These instances attest to the strength of certain occupation relationships that went beyond purely financial or survival motives.

Rarely, these relationships even evolved into marriages or plans to marry.[81] Marriages had to be authorised by the German military authorities, as noted in a March 1918 poster in Lille.[82] Perhaps the poster was a response to actual cases of marriage, for which there is anecdotal evidence. A summary of interviews of a convoy of 472 individuals from the Nord and Pas-de-Calais, including 269 women, remarked that many women from Gondecourt 'claim they are engaged to Germans and are waiting for the end of the war to get married'.[83] In Dechy, on the outskirts of Douai, twenty-year-old Blanche Long 'is apparently engaged to a German officer whom she will marry after the war' – her mother 'said that her daughter did not have to hide the fact she frequented a German officer, because she would marry him after the war'.[84] According to other repatriation reports, in Trélon, eighteen-year-old Adrienne Carlier was engaged to a German corporal and Alphonsine Bourgeois to an unnamed German; in Roubaix, thirty-eight-year-old Mlle Carpentier was engaged to an officer lodged near her home; in Lille, Valentine Dujardin was engaged to an NCO at Flers.[85] Further evidence is visible beyond such reports. *Roubaisien* David Hirsch, an elderly shopkeeper, noted in his diary in July 1918:

> Mentality that we observe with pain, but which it is necessary to recognise: a very good woman goes to a shop to buy a wedding ring. She explains that she is going to marry a German, a mechanic who has been

> lodged at her house for 6 months and who is very good, he's a man like any other, she says … and they say there are many like this. It is necessary to have no sense of patriotic spirit to reason thusly, especially in these times.[86]

Hirsch's disdain for this woman is evident, even after almost four years of occupation.

There was a familial element to accusations of sexual misconduct, especially prostitution. Women from the same family – mothers and their daughters, sisters, aunts and nieces – were sometimes accused together of sexual misconduct, or of leading/forcing the others into prostitution. Fathers or husbands were also accused of prostituting family members. For instance, forty-year-old Mme Leporc from Trélon was suspected of having intimate relations with Germans and 'inciting her daughter Yvonne', aged eighteen, 'into debauchery'.[87] Mme Delpierre from Lille was said to have 'debauched her thirteen-year-old daughter'.[88] Mme Philippe and Mme Regnier were sisters-in-law from Le Cateau, both suspected of intimate relations.[89] M. Collet from Lille allegedly engaged in gold trafficking with the Germans but also prostituted the 'women in his family' to them.[90] Many examples of sisters suspected of sexual and other misconduct are found in repatriation reports. Post-war investigations likewise concluded that certain women, often cabaret owners, pushed family members into sexual misconduct, mainly prostitution: fifteen instances are reported, including Mme Gilain from Croix who, according to one report, engaged in prostitution and deliberately orchestrated her husband's imprisonment (he died in detention) so that she could lead her daughters into debauchery.[91] It seems, therefore, that an entire family could be tainted with accusations of misconduct (especially sexual), which was not always perceived as an individual act. Certain families did actually engage in such behaviour. Yet sexual misconduct could affect the family unit in other ways.

Some women were accused of having children with Germans, albeit less commonly than general accusations of sexual misconduct. For instance, of the 490 women investigated after the liberation, only twenty-four were found to have had such children, although the word 'child' was usually underlined by the report's author, suggesting it was perceived as particularly damning.[92] Such an attitude echoes the perceived permanent contamination of women raped by Germans during the invasion.[93] In the repatriation testimony examined, thirty-nine women were said to have had German children or to have been pregnant with the child of a German.[94] The total number of such occupation births is impossible to

verify, but there are some indications: Sebastien Debarge demonstrated that in Fourmies the number of recorded births by an unknown father grew from a pre-war figure of 5 per cent to 28 per cent in 1916, 13 per cent in 1917, and 28 per cent in 1918, although he clarifies that this does not necessarily mean the fathers were German.[95] Georges Gromaire's 1925 history estimated 10,000 births from German fathers across the whole occupied area, which Salson believes is exaggerated given statistics for the Aisne.[96] In the Nord, children were certainly born of liaisons with Germans. Mlle Jeanne Planque from Seclin confirmed in a repatriation interview that the father of her child was Corporal Charles Mayek but stated that her aunt had 'engaged her to give herself to this German'.[97] Georgina Lernoud from Cambrai, also during a repatriation interrogation, claimed that the father of her child was a French prisoner of war; the investigating officer discovered the details she provided were false and that the father was in fact a German.[98] Not all births came from consensual relations: in February 1917, Mme Jeanne Scarceriant from Wingles claimed that her eight-month-old child was the result of rape.[99]

Other women were believed to have aborted 'German' children. At Gondecourt, it was reported that German soldiers lodged with locals and 'helped them', sharing food: 'the result has been a shared life, and a regrettable promiscuousness. Numerous children have been the fruit of these relations, but how many children have also been disposed of […]'. The final few words hint at the sense of shame connected to children born of German fathers. The report also stated that the Germans actively sought to prevent abortions, and it was believed that they 'ripped male children from the arms of the mothers and sent them to nuns in Germany'.[100] Other repatriation testimony stated that in Cambrai 'Abortions are frequent', and in Ferrière-la-Grande, 'many women were ill following attempted abortions'.[101] In Crespin, one woman was suspected of being involved in numerous 'affairs of abortion'; and a woman from Hirson (in the Aisne) was nicknamed 'the abortionist'.[102] There may be some substance to such claims. Police in Lille discovered a dead foetus in July 1917 and five further dead newborns, babies or foetuses in January–June 1918, including one case where the mother was clearly identified as having strangled her three-month-old.[103] While the motives are unknown and it cannot be assumed that the fathers were German, this does suggest that the abortions alluded to in the Gondecourt could have occurred.

Post-liberation letters from Nord chastised women who had children with Germans. One sent from Saméon in November 1918 related that 'As for the conduct of Louise, she was not kind. She always frequented

the Boches and never cared about her husband. And even better, she had a baby by a Boche last September, but it died. There's her news, we will never again look at her.'[104] Another author, from Lille, complained that same month that her sister-in-law had lived '*la grande vie*' during the occupation and was going to give birth in January – 'to a Boche'. A letter sent from one such mother from La Rosière-Mérignies provides her explanation:

> Me also, unfortunately I have a three-week old girl, the day when the English arrived. It's the war that was the cause, it lasted too long, for 15 months I had the secretary to the Kommandantur at home very young and me too [sic], so that could not fail to happen [*cela ne peut manquer*] […] I am not alone unfortunately, there are about ten others in Mérignies, I am the last, there are children who are already three years old.[105]

Even here, the author seems to acknowledge a fault, to some extent buying into the wider population's criticism of her behaviour – which breached both pre-war social, notably religious, mores and occupation norms.

Living it up

Another form of misconduct particularly associated with women involved ostentatious displays of joy, enjoyment, or luxury, especially in the company of Germans. For the occupied population, there was a difference between 'frequenting the Germans' (always implying sexual intimacy) and general 'debauchery' (which may have been less likely to involve sexual acts but rather other unrespectable actions such as drunkenness or dancing). Often actions regarded as sexual did not involve sex but constituted a breach of the limits of acceptability, such as playing an accordion in the presence of Germans. Indeed, for some, a man being in a room with a woman on her own was unrespectable, even more so if the man was a German. Yet there was also a distinction between public and private intimacy, with public displays of closeness usually perceived as more reprehensible and private intimacy more based on assumptions.

Stock phrases reappear throughout the aforementioned liberation investigations that provide an insight into the nature and perception of sexual misconduct. Women who 'lived it up' or 'partied', who were seen or heard to be dancing, singing and listening to music with the Germans, and who 'frequented' or 'were frequented' by the Germans, or even those who showed a 'sympathetic attitude' towards the Germans, were considered to be morally suspect.[106] Indeed, during the war, the

French 10th Army, drawing on repatriation testimony, compiled lists of 'suspect persons' and 'questionable inhabitants' (as well as 'trustworthy persons') in occupied territory likely to be reconquered in an Allied advance. Two women in Caudry and two in Denain were listed as suspects because they 'party with the Germans'.[107] Thus, the merest hint at a positive (or even the absence of a negative) attitude towards the Germans, and even friendly rather than overtly sexual actions, gave rise to suspicion among locals. Dancing, singing and generally having a good time with Germans were perceived as a particular brand of anti-patriotic misconduct.

In the commune of Wattrelos, a cabaret owner received Germans at her home, which was a place 'for consuming and dancing'; she was also said to be the mistress of a German and had undergone a sanitary visit.[108] Locals looked on such behaviour with disdain and suspicion, as can be seen in the testimony of one Mme Thibaux regarding the conduct of Mme de Metz, a fellow inhabitant of Solre-le-Château. Other than the denunciations for which de Metz was allegedly responsible, her behaviour was suspect because she had had relations with German soldiers throughout the occupation, especially gendarmes, many of whom were her lovers. Further, 'There were constantly, night and day, parties at her house, people danced and played music there.'[109] In her Évian interrogation, *rapatriée* Mme Gondry of Hautmont stated that Daria Gregoire and her sister Marguerite – daughters in a family of German sympathisers, with their father and their brother working voluntarily for the Germans – 'frequently went to the house of Madame RAMART, Louis, where a certain LACROIX … 22 years old, played the accordion and where people danced and sang'.[110] The fact that such details are mentioned suggests that they were regarded as scandalous: combined with her other behaviour, they provided the final proof of moral corruption. In a post-war document regarding a woman who allegedly prostituted herself during the occupation, the following damning sentence was underlined: 'She feasted with them [the Germans] and got drunk.'[111] Police reports from the Commissariat Central of Lille written during the occupation frequently mention 'offences' (*délits*) of people (usually female cabaret owners) having 'permitted dancing and playing music without authorisation'.[112] Other sources suggest that such cabarets often had Germans as their clientele, with female inhabitants joining them.[113] The unrespectable behaviour of such women breached acceptable norms: these women were perceived as morally and patriotically suspect, and therefore a mental leap from 'positive attitude towards

the Germans' to 'sexual relations with the Germans' was often made, or insinuated; and vice versa.

Flaunting luxury and wealth was also viewed negatively. There was sometimes a class element to this, and perhaps a link to Catholicism. In March 1917, French secret-service personnel interviewed 446 people – thirty-nine men, 260 women and 167 children – repatriated from Lille. A report summarising their testimony noted that the female workers of the textile mills (*filatures*) displayed no sense of economy: they 'seek to satisfy above all their desire for delicacies rather than seeking a little well-being or dealing with the most urgent needs; thus we see women, mothers, buying sweets and chocolates from the patisseries, whilst the rich do without these'.[114] Public displays of joy and extravagance were unfitting during wartime, when occupied civilians believed they were engaged in unified, dignified suffering for France – a 'Calvary' according to many in the pious Nord.[115] Even without accusations of sexual misconduct, women's behaviour was open to criticism.

Development over time: familiarity and fraternisation

There is some evidence that familiarity with the Germans, and especially sexual relations, became more commonplace as the occupation went on. Prolonged, forced cohabitation led some locals to distinguish between individual Germans and the wider national enemy,[116] allowing them to move beyond sentiments of hatred or dehumanisation and engage in cordial and other relations. In particular, the occupying *Landsturm* soldiers (usually older reservists with wives and children back home) were said to be friendlier, kinder and even critical of the war. François Rouesel, a member of Roubaix's Chamber of Commerce, noted this in his unpublished memoirs:

> The population got used to their presence, forgetting that they were enemies and treating them with kindness and sometimes even with sympathy. [*Landsturm* soldiers] put children on their knees and played with them and ended up being part of the family. Strange but very human mentality, towards which we let ourselves creep by daily contact.[117]

M. Blin, a teacher and fellow *Roubaisien*, reinforced this notion of increased familiarity over time, remarking in February 1917 that people had stopped calling the Germans 'dirty Boches', opting instead for just 'Boches' because they realised that they were men like any other.[118] The distinction between individuals and the wider German army was made

even by those who engaged in actions opposing the latter. Middle-class *Lilloise* Antoinette Tierce, later decorated for hiding British soldiers, wrote positively about certain Germans in her memoirs, remarking of one officer: 'He was a German, it is true, but an honest, straightforward German, and his heart was in the right place.'[119] She later cited her mother's comments that 'the Germans are just like all the rest; there's good and bad amongst them'.[120] Such attitudes help explain the development of sexual and other misconduct.

In rare cases, increasing familiarity bred indifference to misconduct. The Commissaire de Police of Denain noted in December 1918 that 'The number of women having relations with Germans did not cease to grow over time and, recently, they were not afraid to be open about this.'[121] According to the testimony of a butcher, in Courchelettes two widowed daughters of a rich castle-owner who died at the beginning of the war engaged in relations with Germans lodged in their castle:

> Everybody knows that the two sisters walk daily either in the roads of Courchelettes, or in the park of the castle, arm-in-arm with German officers; they speak fluent German. At the beginning, the population […] was indignant to see this familiarity, but a few days before my evacuation on 19 April 1917 people no longer paid any attention to their conduct.[122]

However, the length of the war led others to double down on criticism of the occupiers and those who were too close to them. Jeanne Lefebvre – a Catholic, middle-class housewife and mother from Saint-André-lez-Lille – lodged dozens of soldiers and officers throughout the war, for periods as short as a day to as long as four months. She found many of her lodgers polite or 'agreeable', and most kept to themselves, avoiding her and her teenage children as much as possible.[123] Yet her feelings towards individual soldiers evolved alongside a growing hatred for the occupying force, as her April 1918 diary entry shows:

> Saturday 20, we had a visit from two German soldiers whom we lodged three years ago, they came to say hello to us and tell us that they held a good memory of us, [and] even if now I hate them all, I must recognise that there are still some kind ones who hate the war as much as us, but are obliged to fulfil their duty.[124]

Lefebvre never engaged in friendly or other relations with the Germans, in fact displaying an increasingly distant attitude, such as when she learnt in August 1918 that a German who had lodged with them for seven weeks was hospitalised: 'good riddance! You would not believe

the worries we have lodging these damned people'.[125] Her growing anger at local suffering fuelled sharper criticism of others who did not share her perspective. She mentioned sexual misconduct for the first time in April 1918, remarking that her new German lodger had come from Valenciennes, where he had stayed with a Frenchwoman and her mother. He possessed photographs of the women and left to visit them. Lefebvre's response was: '*Bon voyage*, it seems that some people become familiar very quickly, I find that shady, without wanting to be impolite, it's necessary in any case to stand your ground and do not forget that they invaded us.' She called women who had relations with Germans 'sad Frenchwomen' who 'disgust' her.[126] The continuation of the war had only made her more judgemental of women engaging in sexual misconduct.

Similarly, in a February 1918 diary entry, Blin complained that 'The "*meat for soldiers*" attracted by an easy & joyous life in the large industrial towns, due in large part to the immigration of our Belgian neighbours[,] is not lacking in Roub[x]. It is spreading here, shamelessly, its immodesty and its immoral seduction'.[127] The way in which this had developed over time was clear: three months later, Blin noted that

> The permanent 'rubbing together' has brought enemies together: conversations in public, walks in the company of soldiers, people are no longer embarrassed [*on ne se gêne plus*]. Handshakes, exchanged greetings that could not be more polite. Couples walk together, *hand-in-hand* or offering up an arm … in broad daylight … '*Quo vadis*?' ask the kind souls [*bonnes âmes*] who still get surprised. Why be surprised? The prolonged occupation has created relations that have become familiar, bit by bit. The courtesy [*obligeance*] of the occupiers has smoothened certain edges. Commercial relations have established a pretty close solidarity of interests. That explains this. But here still it is important to make a distinction: the exceptions justify the strict rule imposed on themselves by those whose eyes look beyond the infernal line & whose hearts only beat for our heroes.[128]

Even in this appraisal of the complicated nature of Franco-German relations over time, Blin nevertheless acknowledged the norms of occupied culture ('the strict rule') and implicitly criticised sexual relations with Germans. Further, while the lengthy occupation led to increasingly frequent familiarity, for Blin these remained 'exceptions' – others still adhered to or at least understood these norms. Women who engaged in sexual relations with Germans breached the occupied culture, demonstrating that it was not shared by all. Yet it was a dominant discourse somewhat similar to Salson's 'patriotic conformity' – and although he

studies grey zones in more detail,[129] he also acknowledges that expressing romantic sentiments towards Germans was difficult 'in a context where it was agreed [*il convient*] to display a certain distance towards the enemy'.[130] While grey zones – survival, making do, getting used to and interacting with Germans when necessary – certainly existed, the often simplistic occupied culture ignored these complexities and was quick to chastise those seen to be breaching its norms.

Criticism and contempt

Women perceived as engaging in sexual misconduct were held in contempt by many locals during and after the occupation. This has already been seen via the phenomenon of denouncing such women, and in Lefebvre and Blin's diary entries, but it is visible in many other sources. The language used is especially telling. Séraphine Descamps from Trélon was said to live a 'scandalous' life with German officers.[131] In the commune of Lys-lez-Lannoy, according to the Mayor, one Mme Terrasse had always demonstrated 'good' behaviour before the war. However, during the occupation she demonstrated 'deplorable conduct': although she was not a prostitute, 'her house was frequented by many German soldiers', one of whom had been her lover, with whom she often walked in the street and 'partied'. She was consequently expelled from her home by her father-in-law, moving in with her aunt in Leers, where her conduct was 'very reprehensible' – 'her house was the meeting place of enemy policemen, and a lot of goods and food seized by them was bought by her and resold for her profit'.[132] The negative judgement of her behaviour is palpable – again, sexual and other misconduct is linked – and is closely tied to wider, especially bourgeois, social mores. For example, in July 1915, a woman from Tourcoing who had left 'the maternal domicile' to live with a Frenchman was refused the allowance to which she had been entitled while living with her mother, because the municipality thought that this would encourage 'the misconduct [*l'inconduite*] of this girl' and would be 'contrary to all moral principles'.[133] In this instance, pre-war morality interacted with the experience of occupation to create a new morality.

Although the wider population often bought into behavioural norms, middle-class judgement and mores were central, just as in the Aisne where 'displaying too openly one's friendship for a German would mean a social death'.[134] Many women who had relations with Germans were seen as betraying not only their country but also their husbands at the

front, and polite society. Often the extra detail 'the husband is at the front/mobilised/prisoner' was added without commentary by those interrogating *rapatriés*, or post-war investigators.[135] This critical detail spoke for itself, its concise phrasing full of the restraint seen as lacking in these women. A wartime French intelligence report about occupied Lille suggests that such relationships may have represented attempts to ameliorate the situation of husbands, brothers and sons who were prisoners of war.[136] Nevertheless, the view of refugees was simplistic: 'The women of mobilised men prostitute themselves shamelessly.'[137] Similarly, M. Blin remarked in February 1915: 'The Gaumont Cinema is converted into a "lazarett" for contaminated women from Roubaix. There are at least 150. What shame! Greater shame still: women whose husbands are soldiers seem to find themselves in a less-than-interesting position […] and names are being cited.'[138]

Disgust at sexual misconduct even made it into verse. One song allegedly written during the occupation by *Lillois* champion of *patois*, Labbe,[139] entitled 'A l' poubelle les paillaisses à Boches' ('Get in the bin, mattresses for the Boches') expressed anger at women who danced and drank alcohol in the company of Germans. It also demonstrated their lack of social mores and morals in saying that these women replied to the vendors of the German-published *Bulletin de Lille*, who would cry out the name of that newspaper, by shouting 'Putain de Lille!' (Whore of Lille) at them.[140] Such a nickname for the publication could comprise a form of resistance against the German-imposed order, but Labbe clearly did not see this as such. Instead, he hinted that these women came from the lower class, or had no manners – and thus perhaps that it was no surprise that they would 'frequent' the Germans. Labbe wrote another two songs on the subject of female misconduct, one being 'What one sees during the war (Occupation of Lille by the Germans).' The first thing he thought worth mentioning in his list of what one sees in Lille during the war was female misconduct: 'But I see so many revolting facts / That despite myself, I get angry, / Too many women are indeed with the Germans / That's what one sees during the war.'[141] Labbe's evident outrage continued in the second and third verses, noting that 'In the evening, is shameful to see around town / These women in the arms of the *Alboches*', and explicitly mentioning the possibility of German-born children: 'I would not be at all surprised next year / To see tiny Prussians come into the world / In the cabbages of August, it's certain / That more than one woman will harvest some shame.'[142] The French

equivalent of the anglophone 'stork' myth is that boys are born from cabbages and girls from roses, so for Labbe French femininity was doubly corrupted by Prussian masculinity.

Labbe's other song dealing with sexual misconduct, entitled 'Les Bochartes' (female Boches) was ostensibly written on 5 August 1915. The second verse is striking:

> Forgetting those who at the border
> Are bravely getting their skin torn open,
> These *Bochartes*, lower than earth,
> Betray their blood, their flag,
> Close to the *Alboches*, these rogues,
> To please these villains,
> Make themselves cowards and spies,
> In badmouthing our poor soldiers,
> These women without honour,
> Monstrous and without shame,
> Do not even have a heart worth two *sous*.[143]

The language used reflects the disdain in which the author, and often the occupied population at large, held women who were 'with the Germans'. Intimacy with the enemy was an intolerable transgression and a form of treason.[144] The Germans were aware of and mocked such sentiment: a cartoon in *Liller Kreigszeitung* from December 1916 depicts a scowling old man sat by his window, wearing a bowler hat and holding a cane. The caption states: 'Monsieur Henri noticed with displeasure that citizens of Lille entertained German soldiers quite well.'[145]

Criticism of sexual and other misconduct came from more than just bourgeois individuals such as the fictional Monsieur Henri, and went beyond merely staring angrily – it included violent language, popular reprisals and revenge, examined in the following chapter. Yet less violent, underlying contempt for sexual misconduct outlasted the occupation. Letters sent from the Nord in November–December 1918 complained about and condemned such behaviour.[146] Similarly, François Rouesel's unpublished post-war memoirs contained a lengthy section entitled 'Troops billeted in neighbourhoods', in which he remarked:

> Some gossips claimed that these familiarities sometimes became excessive and unfortunately it seems likely that the gossips were not always wrong. Despite the sentiment of indignation that we feel in the presence of such facts, one must unfortunately note that nature never ceases to

> assert itself and that the departure of almost all husbands for war greatly facilitated these rapprochements. Also, the day of the departure, when these [German] soldiers left the town, we witnessed the *adieux* with a sentiment of bitterness […] Long furtive looks followed the soldiers until the end of the road. We witnessed this spectacle and felt irrepressible, negative feelings at seeing how little place the sentiment of duty and of the *Patrie* held in the hearts of certain scatter-brained women [*écervelées*] […] And yet how many women of doubtful behaviour made eyes at German soldiers and officers[?] One cannot think about it without feeling revolted.[147]

Rouesel acknowledged the familiarity that came with occupation but remained critical of and disgusted by this, especially regarding women. Again, his judgement had a classist element. He did briefly acknowledge that 'Men themselves could not resist the sentiment of humanity that established itself' when soldiers billeted with the family left for the front, but for Rouesel this was still wrong: 'They forgot [*on oublie*] that they are enemies.'[148]

As has been demonstrated, across the occupied Nord it was believed that many women engaged in sexual misconduct with the Germans; this was the primary form of misconduct, one that had some basis in reality. However, negatively perceived behaviours were not the sole reserve of women and went beyond the purely sexual. The following chapter considers other ways that Frenchmen and women 'forgot' that the Germans were 'enemies'.

Notes

1 Antoine Redier, *Les Allemands dans nos maisons* (Paris: Éditions Cartier, 1945), pp. 242–3. Redier also suggests that female misconduct was not always voluntary.

2 Anne Simonin, 'La femme invisible: la collaboratrice politique', *Histoire@ Politique: Politique, Culture, Société*, 9:3 (2009), pp. 1 and 3.

3 Philippe Nivet, *Les Réfugiés français de la Grande Guerre (1914–1920): Les 'Boches du Nord'* (Paris: Economica, 2004).

4 Nivet, *Les Réfugiés français*, pp. 387–421; Philippe Nivet, *La France occupée 1914–1918* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2011), pp. 279–92; Jean-Yves Le Naour, *Misères et tourmentes de la chair durant la Grande Guerre: Les mœurs sexuelles des Français, 1914–1918* (Paris: Aubier, 2002), pp. 276–300; Jean-Yves Le Naour, 'Femmes tondues et répression des "femmes à boches" en 1918', *Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine*, 47:1 (2000), 148–58.

5 Emmanuel Debruyne, 'Les "femmes à boches" en Belgique et en France occupée (1914–1918)', *Revue du Nord*, 96:404–5 (2014), p. 158.

6 Le Naour, *Misères et tourmentes*, p. 290.
7 Philippe Salson, *L'Aisne occupée: Les civils dans la Grande Guerre* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2015), pp. 255, 261–3.
8 ADHS, 4M519, Commissariat d'Évian, interrogatoire no. 3362, 20 December 1917, cited in Le Naour, 'Femmes tondues', p. 152.
9 ADHS, 4M352, report no. 356, 19 December 1916, cited in Nivet, *Les Réfugiés français*, p. 388.
10 Debruyne, 'Les "femmes à boches"', p. 184.
11 Nivet, *Les Réfugiés français*, p. 387.
12 Le Naour, *Misères et tourmentes*, p. 276.
13 Annette Becker, *Les Cicatrices rouges 14–18: France et Belgique occupées* (Paris: Fayard, 2010), pp. 240–1.
14 Further repatriation testimony can be found in ADHS, 4M342–3 and 4M517–20, comprising 7,038 pages in total.
15 SHD, 19N669, n.a., 'Questionnaire pour les Personnes rapatriées des Régions envahies', n.d. Question 19/24 asked respondants to indicate 'Suspect and trustworthy inhabitants'.
16 Salson, *L'Aisne occupée*, p. 265.
17 ADHS, 4M513, repatriation reports no. 1202, 24 April 1917; no. 1228, 25 April 1917; Notice Individuelle (Marthe Delobel), 26 April 1917.
18 SHD, 19N547, GQG, État-Major-Général, Deuxième Bureau, SRA, 'Note pour les SR d'Armée', 14 August 1916.
19 See SHD, 19N1571.
20 ADHS, 4M513, Notices Individuelles, 6, 9 and 10 March 1917.
21 See, for example, ADHS, 4M513, Notice Individuelles from 1917, Marthe Michel (Valenciennes), 23 February; Céline Draveloose (Lille), 10 March; Léontine Collette (Lambersart), 14 March.
22 Salson, *L'Aisne occupée*, pp. 130–1.
23 ADN, 9R588, Kommandant of Lille to Préfet, 7 January 1915.
24 ADN, 74J225, diary of M. Blin (instituteur en retraite at Auchy-les-Orchies), 10 July 1918.
25 ADN, 3U281/77, 1er CA Région, Conseil de Guerre, plainte no. 613, inventaire des pièces de la procédure suivie contre la nommée Rouvaux née Henneguin Marguerite Joséphine inculpée d'intelligence avec l'ennemi, *La Vérité* (Lille), 15 December 1915 (no. 1).
26 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 972, 13 March 1917.
27 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 892, 7 March 1917.
28 ADHS, 4M513, Notice Individuelle, Jenny Goujet, 20 February 1917.
29 ADN, 74J241, personal papers of Pierre Dumont ('répresentant de commerce […] employé comme interprète à la mairie de Lille de 1914 à 1919'), 25 July 1917.
30 ADN, 9R1196. The communes are: Croix, Flers, Lannoy, Leers, Lys, Mouvaux, Roubaix, Toufflers, Wasquehal and Wattrelos.

31 Service Historique de l'Armée de Terre, 19N547, rapport du commissaire Busch du 3 avril 1917, cited in Le Naour, 'Femmes tondues', p. 155.
32 David Englander, 'The French soldier, 1914–18', *French History*, 1:1 (1987), p. 57.
33 ADN, 9R1196, Croix, Chasseing, 7 November 1918.
34 See ADN, 9R1197, passim.
35 ADN, 9R1197, Croix, Porceaux, 9 November 1918; Mouvaux, Fontaneau, 1 November 1918; Mouvaux, Déprez, 30 October 1918; Roubaix, Feóx-Courtis, 31 October 1918.
36 ADN, 9R1197, Croix, Duhain, 8 November 1918; Lannoy, Mignot, 4 November 1918; Lannoy, Huilliez, 14 November 1918.
37 SHD, 17N433, Mission Militaire Française attachée à l'Armée Britannique, procès-verbal no. 397, 3 March 1918.
38 SHD, 17N433, procès-verbal no. 3070, 22 February 1918.
39 Benoît Majerus, 'La prostitution à Bruxelles pendant la Grande Guerre: contrôle et pratique', *Crime, Histoire & Sociétés/Crime, History & Societies*, 7:1 (2003), at https://chs.revues.org/603 (accessed 29 January 2016).
40 Philippe Nivet, *La France occupée, 1914–1918* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2011), p. 283.
41 Debruyne, 'Les "femmes à boches" ', p. 160.
42 ADN, 9R1196, Croix, Poreaux, no. 154, 7 November 1918.
43 ADN, 9R1196, Wasquehal, Fleury, no. 97, 5 November 1918.
44 Majerus, 'La prostitution à Bruxelles', pp. 7–8. Original emphasis.
45 ADN, 9R1196, Croix, Duhain, no. 276, 9 November 1918 and Chasseing, no. 294, 10 November 1918; Wasquehal, Fleury, no. 78, 5 November 1918, et passim.
46 See, for example, Paul Trochon, *La Grande Guerre (1914–1918): Lille avant et pendant l'occupation allemande* (Tourcoing: J. Duvivier, 1922), pp. 128–9; Georges Gromaire, *L'Occupation allemande en France (1914–1918)* (Paris: Payot, 1925), pp. 459–63; Redier, *Les Allemands*, p. 46.
47 Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, *L'Enfant de l'ennemi, 1914–1918: Viol, avortement, infanticide pendant la Grande Guerre* (Paris: Aubier, 1995), p. 155.
48 Le Naour, *Misères et tourmentes*, p. 127.
49 Le Naour, *Misères et tourmentes*, p. 142; Debruyne, 'Les "femmes à boches" ', pp. 162–8.
50 AMT, 4HA30, Mayor of Tourcoing, publication légale, 22 January 1915.
51 National Archives of the United States of America (USNA), Record Group 120, entry 198, and Record Group 165.
52 ADHS, 4M513.
53 ADN, 9R580, Commissaire Central Intérimaire, 'Mesures à prendre', 24 March 1916.
54 ADN, 9R581, Commissariat Central de Lille, reports, 3 November 1914–12 February 1915.

55 Bibliothèque de Documentation Internationale et Contemporaine (BDIC), FΔ1526, Conférence à la Commandanture, 9 January 1915.
56 ADN, 9R589, 'État des femmes prostituées soumises actuellement au contrôle français et qui sont inscrites sur les registres de la Sûreté', 13 June 1916.
57 AML, 4H265 bis, Directeur du Bureau d'Hygiène to Mayor of Lille, 22 November 1916.
58 AML, 4H265 bis, 'Dispensaire des filles soumises', December 1916. The list is incomplete and messy.
59 AMT, H4A30, 'Refuge de Femmes, Boulevard Gambetta 270', 15 January 1917.
60 Nivet, *La France occupée*, pp. 283–4.
61 ADN, 9R584, report of Commissaire de Police de Lille, 12 November 1918.
62 ADN, 9R742, Commune de Templeuve, Extrait du registre aux délibérations de conseil municipal, 15 September 1916. My emphasis.
63 ADN, 9R742, Mayor of Templeuve to Préfet, 2 October 1916.
64 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 958, 12 March 1917.
65 See AMT, 4HA30, 'Asile des Femmes, Rue de Seclin, Note pour Monsieur le Secrétariat Général de la Mairie', 12 March 1918.
66 AMT, 4HA30, Commissariat Central de Police de Tourcoing, report, 22 December 1918, and passim.
67 ADN, 9R1196.
68 ADN, 9R1196, Lannoy, Ghesquier, no. 29, 15 November 1918.
69 ADN, 9R1196, Wattrelos, Huissier, 3 November 1918.
70 *Liller Kriegszeitung,* 28 September 1916, p. 2.
71 Nivet, *La France occupée*, pp. 285–90.
72 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 954, 12 March 1917 (Fives-Lilles); Notice Individuelles from 1917, Jeanne Desquilbet, 28 February (Fourmies); Léa Jacquet, 28 February (Fourmies); Gabrielle Podevin, 2 March (Fourmies).
73 ADN, 9R1193, Bachy, Blanche to Herman, June 1918.
74 SHD, 17N433, procès-verbal no. 397, 3 March 1918.
75 ADN, 9R1196, Wattrelos, Huissier, 6 November 1918.
76 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 1196, 24 April 1917.
77 SHD, 16N1462, Commission de Contrôle Postal de Lille, 16 November 1918, p. 6.
78 SHD, 16N1462, 1 January 1919, p. 2 (actually p. 6).
79 SHD, 16N1462, 1 January 1919, p. 2 (actually p. 6).
80 ADN, 9R1196, Lys, Cousinet, 31 October 1918.
81 Nivet, *La France occupée*, p. 290.
82 AML, 4H202, Ordonnance, General Von Quast, 16 March 1918.
83 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 1226, 25 April 1917.
84 ADHS, 4M513, Notices Individuelles, Blanche Lang and Mathilde Lang, 19 March 1917.

85 ADHS, 4M513, reports from 1917: no. 889, 7 March; no. 883, 6 March; no. 1002, 15 March; no. 1148, 20 April.
86 Annette Becker (ed.), *Journaux de combattants et de civils de la France du Nord dans la Grande Guerre* (Lille: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 1998), Hirsch diary, 18 July 1918, p. 299. Also cited in Le Naour, *Misères et tourmentes*, p. 287.
87 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 899, 7 March 1917.
88 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 1203, 24 April 1917.
89 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 585, 24 January 1917.
90 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 999, 12 March 1917.
91 ADHS, 4M513, Croix, Dupuis, 8 November 1918.
92 ADN, 9R1196, passim.
93 Audoin-Rouzeau, *L'Enfant de l'ennemi*.
94 ADHS, 4M513.
95 Sébastien Debarge, 'Fourmies occupée pendant la Grande Guerre', *Revue du Nord*, 80:325 (1998), p. 296.
96 Salson, *L'Aisne occupée*, pp. 269–70.
97 ADHS, 4M513, Notice Individuelle, 23 April 1917.
98 ADHS, 4M513, Notice Individuelle, 14 February 1917.
99 ADHS, 4M513, Notice Individuelle, 22 February 1917.
100 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 1226, 25 April 1917.
101 ADHS, 4M513, reports no. 771, 9 February 1917; no. 514, 18 January 1917.
102 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 889, 7 March 1917; Notice Indivuelle, Victorine Massin, 26 April 1917.
103 AML, 4H269, police report, 22–3 July 1917; 4H270, police reports, 16–17 January 1918, 19–20 February 1918, 9–10 March 1918, 17–18 April 1918 and 15–16 June 1918.
104 SHD, 16N1462, Contrôle postal de Lille, 16 November 1918, p. 5.
105 *Ibid*.
106 For example, ADN, 9R1196, Croix, Duhain, no. 123, 6 November 1918 and no. 254, 8 November 1918; Dupuis, no. 193 and no. 199, 7 November 1918, and no. 245, 8 November 1918; Fleury, no. 156, 9 November 1918; Duchain, no. 183, 7 November 1918; Roubaix, Paris, n.d. (seemingly 25–7 October 1918); Flers, Beaussart, no. 59, 5 November 1918; Lys, Fontaneau, 29 October 1918.
107 SHD, 19N1571, Deuxième Bureau SR, 'Zone des missions d'Agents du SR au-delà des lignes', n.d., 'Renseignement' cards, Caudry and Denain. A distinction was made between 'suspect' and 'douteux'.
108 ADN, 9R1196, Wattrelos, Hussier, no. 43, 8 November 1918.
109 ADN, 9R1197, Solre-le-Château, report, Jean Duschamps (Force Spéciale de Gendarmerie attachée à l'Armée Britannique, Prévôté de D-1), 16 November 1918. Testimony of Mme Thibaux.

110 USNA, Record Group 120, Entry 198, procès-verbal, 'déclaration de Madame GONDRY, Marie, rapatriée de Hautmont, Nord', 1918.
111 ADN, 9R1196, Croix, Dupuis, no. 192, 7 November 1918.
112 See, for example, AML, 4H267, Commissariat Central de Lille, 'crimes, délits, évènements' report, 11–12 December 1916, et passim.
113 Roubaisien David Hirsch noted on 12 July 1915 that 'All cafés are closed day and night except those exclusively for the Germans.' Becker, *Journaux de combattants*, p. 242.
114 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 989, 14 March 1917.
115 AML, 4H241, Mlle Munch to Mayor, 9 November 1918.
116 Nivet, *La France occupée*, p. 290; Salson, *L'Aisne occupée*, pp. 255–9.
117 ADN, J1933, manuscrit de François Rouesel, 'Pendant la CCI [Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie] de Roubaix durant l'occupation allemande', 'Les premières troupes allemandes à Roubaix', p. 7.
118 ADN, 74J225, Blin diary, 26 February 1917.
119 Antoinette Tierce, *Between Two Fires: Being a True Account of How the Author Sheltered Four Escaped British Prisoners of War in Her House in Lille During the German Occupation of That City*, trans. J. Lewis May (London: John Lane, 1931), p. 72.
120 Tierce, *Between Two Fires*, p. 150.
121 ADN, 9R513, Commissaire de Police à Denain to Sous-Préfet à Valenciennes, 24 December 1918, p. 19.
122 SHD, 17N433, procès-verbal, British 3rd Army, 21 December 1917.
123 Jeanne Lefebvre, *Mon journal sous l'occupation dans ma maison occupée par l'ennemi* (Paris: Éditions Jourdan, 2014), especially 18 April 1915 (p. 41) and 6 May 1915 (p. 42).
124 Lefebvre, *Mon journal sous l'occupation*, 24 April 1918, p. 230.
125 Lefebvre, *Mon journal sous l'occupation*, August 1918, pp. 256–7.
126 Lefebvre, *Mon journal sous l'occupation*, 27 April 1918 (pp. 232–3) and 29 April 1918 (p. 233).
127 ADN, 74J225, Blin diary, 11 February 1918.
128 ADN, 74J225, 19 May 1918.
129 Salson, *L'Aisne occupée*, pp. 255–79.
130 Salson, *L'Aisne occupée*, p. 261.
131 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 899, 7 March 1917 (Trélon).
132 ADN, 9R1196, Croix, Cousinet, 17 November 1918.
133 AMT, H4A27, report, Mairie de Tourcoing, Bureau de Bienfaisance, 20 July 1915.
134 Salson, *L'Aisne occupée*, p. 261.
135 See ADN, 9R1196.
136 ADN, 9R1196, report no. 1140, 19 April 1917.
137 ADN, 9R1196, report no. 496, 17 January 1917 (Valenciennes).

138 ADN, 74J225, Blin diary, 10 February 1915.
139 Auguste Labbe, *À la Guerre comme à la Guerre: Les Boches à Lille – recueil de chansons lilloises écrites pendant l'occupation allemande, par Auguste Labbe alias César Latulupe, ex-prisonnier civil du bagne d'Anrath et d'Holzminden* (Lille: Édition Populaire, 1919), p. 2 (préface by J. Chauleur).
140 Labbe, *À la Guerre*, p. 49.
141 Labbe, *À la Guerre*, 'Chin qu'on vo' pendant la guerre (Occupation de Lille par les Allemands)', p. 10.
142 Labbe, *À la Guerre*, p. 10.
143 Labbe, *À la Guerre*, p. 47.
144 Le Naour, 'Femmes tondues', p. 151.
145 *Liller Kriegszeitung*, 3 December 1916, p. 2.
146 SHD, 16N462, Contrôle postal de Lille, 18 November 1918 (five complaints); 16 December 1918.
147 ADN, J1933, Rouesel manuscript. The foreword is dated 14 August 1916 but seems to have been written in 1919.
148 ADN, J1933, Rouesel manuscript.

2

General misconduct and popular reprisals

Three main forms of misconduct involving both men and women can be identified: denunciations, working for the Germans and espionage. As with sexual misconduct, there was a strong belief among locals that compatriots engaged in such activities, but the line between perceptions and reality is and was often blurred. Nevertheless, as will be demonstrated, the strength of belief in misconduct and disdain for perceived traitors was so great that the latter were the victims of popular reprisals and revenge during and after the war. Such extreme expressions of the occupied culture, whereby those who breached its norms deserved punishment, suggesting that it was adhered to by more than just the middle classes.

Denunciations

On 10 June 1915, M. Blin described the 'sensational' events taking place at Roubaix's *hôtel de ville*. The Germans had installed a 'locked window display' accompanied by the following sign: 'Documents available to the public. Anonymous letters in which the French slander [Blin's wording] their compatriots.' Blin was disgusted but perversely hopeful on seeing this, noting, 'This shameful wound, displayed in broad daylight, this public ridicule of the cowardly accusations expressed in a revolting crudeness, may stop, henceforth, the pens of the villainous individuals who have the shamelessness to employ this procedure unworthy of real French people.'[1] The following day, many people came to read the anonymous letters,[2] and on 12 June Blin himself took a closer look, remarking:

> Many curious people stop in front of the display. I note in particular two new letters: the 1st is signed: '*A soul devoted to your soldiers*' (Is it actually

> their soul … & a free devotion?); – the second: '*a female friend devoted to Germany*'. They therefore come from women, like the majority of the others.[3]

Blin echoed a widespread belief: those who denounced compatriots to the Germans were overwhelmingly perceived to have been women, often those engaging in sexual misconduct.[4] Gromaire put forward both the demographic and cultural arguments for female misconduct and especially denunciation, writing that, 'There were more women than men among the bad elements, because of the excessive numbers of women and the familiar rapports that established themselves between these types of women and the invaders.'[5]

References to denunciation can be found regarding localities across the Nord. Individuals engaging in such actions were referred to as *dénonciateurs*/*dénonciatrices*, *délateurs*/*délatrices*, as well as 'indicators' – usually signifying a more official role, working for the German police or secret service and being financially compensated for information provided.[6] Denunciation was usually via anonymous letter but was sometimes verbal and involved informing the Germans of compatriots contravening German orders, such as those hiding goods that should have been declared or requisitioned, or hiding Allied servicemen. Sometimes individuals were denounced for having insulted Germans or those associated with them (voluntary workers and women in relationships).[7] The motives for denunciations are often unclear, although some reasons include settling personal scores, financial compensation from the Germans,[8] or jealousy – for example, of a neighbour who hid goods when others had their goods requisitioned.[9] Tierce, denounced during the occupation for hiding English soldiers, recounted in her memoirs that the Germans actively encouraged denunciation – although they had little trust in denunciators because 'They know they don't give their information out of love of the Germans, but simply to satisfy some private revenge.'[10]

However, it was believed that many female denunciators did act out of (sometimes literal) love for the Germans. Mme Louvion from Masnières was said to be 'intimate' with a German sergeant-major, 'partied' with him and others, and was a denunciator.[11] The aforementioned Mme Gilain from Croix ostensibly denounced her husband, who died in prison, in order to sleep with Germans.[12] Thirty-five-year-old Mme Piette from Fourmies was said to be 'in constant relations with the Kommandantur', where officers called her 'the mother of the officers', and

she 'caused considerable damage to inhabitants by her denunciations'. In a somewhat oedipal accusation, she was also allegedly the mistress of numerous officers.[13] In Valenciennes, Mlle Leroy:

> had numerous lovers. She ostensibly received [these] day and night and generated her means of existence from the generosity of her passing friends […] She was known under the name 'Gold Helmet' and to attract all the friendship from Germans she denounced inhabitants […] Also she was very feared and everyone was scared of her.[14]

Such allegations conflate legal but unacceptable sexual misconduct with genuinely illegal misconduct.

The link between relations or contact with the Germans and denunciation may not have always been justified, as non-occupied French authorities realised. A summary of a convoy of *rapatriés* from Anzin noted that the Germans constantly carried out searches, but the public was wrong to think that they originated from denunciations; it recorded that every individual entering the Kommandantur, often for a personal matter, was immediately suspected of being a denunciator, and every victim of a search immediately accused their neighbour of denunciation.[15] Thus, the strong belief in widespread denunciations could have been based on misunderstandings, but misunderstandings that formed around the norms of the occupied culture and its notions of good and bad behaviour.

Instances of named denunciators in repatriation and post-liberation reports regarding the Nord are actually rather infrequent: fourteen women among those subject to the immediate post-liberation investigations were linked to denunciations, although for others denunciation was often implied.[16] Sixty-six women, twenty-five men and one family were signalled as possible denunciators or 'indicators' in the Évian testimony examined.[17] British intelligence files relate eight suspected female denunciators, three male, and one whole family.[18] Such suggestive figures do not, however, give an indication of the full extent of the phenomenon; many denunciations were anonymous, thus it was difficult for *occupés* to provide accurate information on the authors.

Nevertheless, the perception of frequent denunciations was strong among French and Germans alike. In March 1915, the Kommandant of Tourcoing remarked that 'Recently anonymous letters have been multiplying', some even addressed to him personally, containing 'coarse remarks'. He ordered the Mayor to put up a poster stating that anonymous letters to the Kommandantur or other officers were forbidden; the

municipality would face a fine of 1,000 francs for each letter received for which the author could not be discovered.[19] These may not have been letters of denunciation per se – the tone of the Kommandant suggests that some letters insulted the Germans – but this request nevertheless demonstrates the existence of frequent anonymous letters. Not all *Kommandanten* reacted angrily: in Douai, in early 1917, it was said that letters of denunciation were so commonplace that the Germans were both shocked and amused by this.[20] Similarly, a summary of February 1917 interviews with 471 *rapatriés*, mostly women and children, from the Nord recorded that, 'Numerous denunciations have as their motive private vengeances; the principal authors are sacked housemaids and workers working voluntarily for the Germans. They [the denunciations] denote such base sentiments that the German Kommandant at Valenciennes declared he was shocked by them.'[21] Further summaries of interviews of hundreds of people from Caudry and Villers-Guislan speak of the frequency of denunciations and note that women 'in relations' with Germans served as 'indicators'; in Caudry, these women had previously had 'an irreproachable conduct'.[22] Across the Nord, according to *rapatriés*, the Germans mocked the 'French people who are tearing each other apart [*se mordent entre eux*]' via 'the system of denunciation'.[23]

Men were also believed to have been denunciators or informants, albeit less commonly. The twenty-three male denunciators signalled in repatriation interviews came from all walks of life: mechanic Ernest Lecopyer from Fourmies allegedly denounced his boss for hiding 30,000 kilograms of copper;[24] Augustin Longatte from Gouzeaucourt, owner of a bar frequented by Germans, allegedly denounced his neighbour for hiding a horse;[25] M. Delobel from Lille was named as a denunciator and close friend of the Kommandant;[26] and an unnamed builder from Roubaix ostensibly denounced a man for whom he had constructed a hiding place for goods.[27] However, a recurring form of denunciation involved men in positions of authority, themselves denounced by compatriots during and after the liberation. This is examined further in the following chapter; a few examples will suffice here. The Mayor of Saint-Rémy-Chaussée was suspected of threatening citizens with denunciation if they did not do what he said.[28] In Denain, the Adjunct to the Mayor, M. Delphien, was accused of similar threats,[29] although he was also on the Deuxième Bureau's list of 'trustworthy persons' during the war.[30] The *curé* (parish priest) of Anstaing accused the Mayor of denouncing the fact that he had hidden photographic equipment, but the investigation into the matter concluded that this was not the case.[31]

The German-nominated Mayor of Boussois, M. Boulogne, was accused of having denounced people to the Germans for being involved in cross-border trade.[32] M. Lesaffre, Adjunct to the Mayor of Comines, appears to have denounced a compatriot to the Germans for hiding his car; the letter of denunciation was also printed in *Le Progrès du Nord* on 12 June 1919, a few days before investigations began.[33]

It is therefore evident that local populations believed a large number of denunciations took place during the war, and that they often viewed possibly arbitrary German actions against them as a directed 'attack' resulting from denunciations. Many denunciations may have been in the *imaginaire*, itself demonstrative of occupation expectations, but genuine cases did exist, with no discernible chronological pattern. In Tourcoing, according to police reports, in May 1915,

> An individual came to the gendarme station […] he had denounced unregistered neighbours [of working age obliged to register with the Germans].
>
> […] The denunciator was seemingly getting revenge on the pretext that he is annoyed by them [the neighbours] because his son works at the Selliez factory in Roubaix, for the Germans.[34]

Other evidence can be found: Irma Lemaire from Fourmies stated during her repatriation interview that she had denounced the Mayor for possessing alcohol and for engaging in gold trafficking in Belgium; she claimed that the Mayor got his revenge by stopping her *allocation*.[35] In another case, in Mouvaux in December 1916, a Frenchwoman was responsible for German gendarmes carrying out detailed searches of the local French police station. The Germans found nothing and admitted to the Commissaire that they had been acting in response to a letter of denunciation written by a woman. The French police later discovered her identity.[36] When Germans searched David Hirsch's shop in late November 1917, they immediately found his hidden stock and informed him that they had been alerted by a letter of denunciation. He had to go to the nearest police station the following day.[37] Hirsch had no way of identifying the denunciator; perhaps the letter was a forgery intended to sow distrust among the population, but that would not explain how the Germans came to know of the hidden goods.

Nivet calls denunciation the form of collaboration with the most serious consequences.[38] Those harbouring Allied personnel or helping them escape could and did face imprisonment or the death penalty (see Chapter 8). In Cambrai, the Directrice of the Hospice Général

helped 100 French soldiers return to France but was denounced by two Frenchmen and a Frenchwoman and condemned to ten years' imprisonment.[39] Many others denounced for hiding goods or breaching other German rules were fined, imprisoned or deported. For instance, on 20 June 1915, in Faches-Thumesnil on the outskirts of Lille, one Mme Devilde denounced a man hiding a revolver and munitions in his house; he was sentenced to death by a war tribunal, commuted to five years' forced labour, where he died.[40] In Denain, M. Guidez was denounced by Frédéric Dejaeghère for being absent from work and was punished to twenty days' imprisonment, then sent to a discipline battalion;[41] in Le Cateau, Mme Lénéchal was denounced by Henriette Dauon for having hidden copper and other goods, and fined 100 marks.[42]

It is therefore unsurprising that verified authors of denunciations – men and women – were punished in the post-war period, notably by the Cour d'Assises du Nord. For example, Eugène Delforge from Monchecourt (an arrondissement of Douai) was found guilty in October 1920 of *intelligence avec l'ennemi* and subsequently sentenced to three years' imprisonment. His crimes mainly involved denunciations: among others, he denounced a woman for hiding a gun, another woman for travelling without a pass, five hidden French soldiers and, on numerous occasions, the Mayoral Adjunct for hiding weapons and harbouring an escaped English aviator.[43] That same month, Mme Auvertin of Lille was sentenced to two years' imprisonment for having denounced an *Alsacien* man who had been hiding from the Germans; he was subsequently punished with over ten years' imprisonment.[44] In Tourcoing in July 1915, Frenchwomen had denounced French gendarmes Rousseau and Scritte for purportedly calling the Germans *cochons* (pigs), which led to Rousseau's imprisonment for six months. Rousseau claimed the women had misheard the word *couchez* (sleep).[45] One Mme Anvelier was found guilty of this fact in January 1922 and was sentenced to four years' imprisonment.[46] Julie Hoedt was also sentenced for this crime in July 1923, punished (in abstentia) with deportation to 'fortified prison'.[47] Therefore, some denunciations recorded during the occupation were proven to have been correct. Renée Martinage has demonstrated that around thirty of the forty-three persons condemned from 1919 to 1925 by the Cour d'Assises du Nord for *intelligence avec l'ennemi* were found guilty of denunciation, and many of the others were guilty of multiple illegal actions, including denunciation.[48] The wartime gendering of denunciation was evident at these trials: all but one of twenty-eight women put on trial were accused of denunciation; sixteen of the

forty-three individuals found guilty were women, fifteen for denunciation.[49] Around a dozen individuals were also investigated during and after the liberation for denunciation.[50] Such numbers are small, but they represent only those cases where concrete evidence could be provided for a crime usually carried out in anonymity, and nevertheless suggest that there was truth behind some accusations of denunciation.

Working for the Germans

Occupés of both sexes were believed by compatriots to have worked for the Germans voluntarily in tasks as varied as making sandbags, manufacturing munitions, nursing, farming, chopping wood, cooking, cleaning, even being part of the German police. Evidence suggests that voluntary labour involving a small minority of people was commonplace in the Nord. Among the women investigated in November 1918, fifteen suspected prostitutes were accused of this.[51] I(b) (British intelligence) reports contain seven men signalled as voluntary workers, two of whom – a father and son – were said to have been working in a munitions factory.[52] The early 1917 repatriation interviews mention alleged voluntary labour thirty-two times across twenty-two communes, mostly comprising summaries of the extent of voluntary work rather than lists of named individuals.[53] In Roisies, it was reported that numerous men were forced to work; however, 'Lots of people work at the German military depot; among them many volunteers. They earn 3 francs a day.'[54] A man in Denain appeared in multiple repatriation reports, suspected of being an interpreter and journalist for the Germans, writing for the *Gazette des Ardennes* and the *Bruxellois*.[55] Also in Denain, Céline Blinette admitted during her repatriation interrogation that she had made 200 sandbags for the Germans, for which she was paid 30 francs.[56] In Peux-aux-Bois, between 125 and 150 people aged seventeen to forty allegedly worked voluntarily for the Germans in Morval forest. They made posts 'that they know are destined to support barbed wire in trenches'.[57] A widow and mistress of a German officer in Valenciennes ostensibly not only worked for the occupiers but also actively aided them in recruiting further female volunteers 'for the confection of blankets, belts, shirts, but in reality to make sandbags[;] the women did not protest because they were paid 15 francs a day'.[58]

However, it was and is often unclear whether work, especially factory or agricultural labour, was genuinely voluntary because French communes were forced to pay both voluntary and forced labourers.[59]

Also, the Germans often forced workers to sign documents demonstrating that they had chosen to work for them 'voluntarily'.[60] Reported German methods of 'persuading' people to work included imprisonment, beatings and physical torture (see Chapter 8). Avoiding punishment likely encouraged some to work voluntarily. Another motive was better treatment: for example, in April 1917, a poster put up across occupied France and Belgium announced that those working for the Germans voluntarily could write and receive a letter of four pages of ten lines once a week, whereas forced labourers could only receive a single, shorter postcard (usually containing pre-written responses to be crossed out).[61] The final reason for voluntary work was increased pay, as mentioned above, which was particularly tempting as penury and hunger increased, and which may have pushed the poorest into accepting German work.[62] Nivet suggests that the number of volunteers increased over time,[63] which would fit in with this argument, although unfortunately the sources examined here do not allow for such a precise assessment.

The distance between reality and perceptions, but the importance of the latter for inter-French judgement, is evident in events in Tourcoing in June 1915. The Germans demanded the municipality provide workers to clean the railway station.[64] The municipality complied, ordering the police to procure the required number of workers. One of these was M. Cesse, whose wife wrote to the Mayor, asking if her husband could be exempted from such work because

> I have four small children of young age and the fifth that he will come [sic] and we are criticised by everyone and we have a lot of distress both of us and we want to repair our honour if you would allow us[.] I hope Monsieur Dron that you will not refuse my demand please for we are in desolation both of us.[65]

It seems that the source of Mme Cesse's distress was the affront to her family's honour and the attendant criticism resulting from her husband's perceived employment by the Germans. Such criticism was felt acutely by this working-class family, despite the fact that M. Cesse was not a volunteer; he was considered to be working for the enemy, and that was enough.

Even in alleged cases of voluntary work there were blurred lines: for instance, repatriation testimony remarked that at Hautmont women were not forced to work and some volunteered; men were forced to work in factories, but 'there are also volunteers'.[66] In Valenciennes, women initially worked voluntarily for the Germans, but when they wanted to stop

they were forced to work.[67] Yet some historical works note with pride that the German policy of forced labour was implemented precisely because there were so few volunteers.[68] The occupiers did repeatedly call for volunteers (even to construct third-line trenches), suggesting that volunteer levels were not adequate.[69] In rare instances where the number of volunteers is recorded, it is low. At the Pollet textile factory in Tourcoing in May 1915 (during the work-stoppage crisis discussed below), local police reported thirteen voluntary ('or so-called') workers creating sandbags, and at least twenty-one in June.[70] A report seemingly written by the French police noted that 170 civilians 'work with the Germans' in six factories in Roubaix-Tourcoing at the end of July 1915, although some factory owners had been imprisoned to encourage workers to recommence work, so the voluntary nature of this is questionable.[71] In Mouvaux, according to a post-war police report, twelve people had worked voluntarily for the Germans during the occupation – one of whom, Arthur Vercaigne, also spied for them.[72]

Nevertheless, the existence of voluntary workers, however small in number and whatever their motives, provoked strong emotions. Fellow *occupés* found their actions morally and patriotically repugnant, although it is likely that those forced to carry out war-related tasks by the Germans also came under attack from compatriots. Antoine Redier cited the testimony of a woman who claimed to have been forced to work in the fields for the Germans, alongside voluntary workers. Locals did not take kindly to seeing this group: 'People on the road screamed at us: "Look at this scum, these bitches [*ordures*] who are passing by!"'[73] Within occupied culture, perceived volunteers were treated as traitors. A clandestine publication from November 1915 used that exact word to describe 'men and women who work for the German authority [and] assist in the pillage of our towns, ransack our factories, lay to waste the material of our mills, assist in the dilapidation of France [and] the ruin of our country, work against those who must defend our *Patrie*'.[74]

In September 1917, Blin demonstrated the continued disdain directed at those perceived to be working for the Germans of their own free will:

> Bourgeois opinion is not favourable to *roubaisien* workers who, turning up voluntarily to German summons, work on the outskirts of Wambrechies & Linselles. Other than their daily salary of 7fr. they return with wood, green and other beans, potatoes, etc. that they sell at a good price. [H]umanity, conscience, patriotism, honesty, all the sentiments that make man dignified fade away before such narrow selfishness![75]

Mme Marie Prouvost from Roubaix echoed Blin's class-based criticism in her repatriation testimony, remarking in early 1917 that the 'old bourgeoisie of Roubaix' remained as patriotic, dignified and courageous as ever, whereas the 'working class, small shopkeepers, women of ill repute and [sic] (whilst there are numerous exceptions) have lost the sentiment of honour or patriotism because of daily contact with the enemy. Many work voluntarily, attracted by the high salaries offered by the Germans'.[76] Similar classist critiques appear in repatriation testimony concerning Saint-Amand-les-Eaux, a spa town surrounded by forest whose inhabitants were seen as especially willing to work voluntarily, including men aged between twenty and twenty-five felling trees and 'demolishing' factory material, and many women bottling water.[77] One report focuses in particular on the testimony of M. Bottiau, chief tax official, who claimed that the working class 'accommodated itself the best' with the occupiers, having such 'familiarity' with the Germans and such high salaries that they wished for the war to continue. He concluded:

> As for patriotism, it does not exist […] the major part of St-Amand is composed of antipatriotic elements […]
>
> In the workers' *milieu*, one feels more and more the hatred of the poor against the rich, the worker against the boss. The workers work for the Germans, demolish the industrial material with a ferocious animosity […] It is to be feared that after the war, the struggle of classes will be livelier than ever. It is necessary to add, however, that if the population of St-Amand is very antipatriotic, this same sentiment does not exist or exists a lot less in the surrounding area.[78]

Such an account is likely exaggerated, but it demonstrates the centrality of bourgeois criticism to occupied culture. However, while the working class was criticised in such accounts, certain workers also adhered to this culture, as will be seen.

The negative reaction to perceived voluntary labourers outlasted the occupation, demonstrated in a letter from one Mlle Munch to the Mayor of Lille, dated 9 November 1918. She had spent the occupation with her mother in her village of Pérenchies, and her only brother was killed in a gas attack. The letter praised the courage of the French army and demonstrated her belief that the Mayor and Lille suffered a Calvary. She attached a poem she had written in 1916 criticising Belgian and French men digging German trenches voluntarily. The poem spoke directly to these workers, starting by using the formal, plural 'vous' and ending with the informal, singular 'tu' – suggesting that she was talking to one

worker in particular. The men are told that 'for your brothers you are making tombs […] / For money, oh!' She invoked a desire for revenge which would manifest itself when French soldiers 'will punish the bad people without pity', because:

> You [*tu*] have sullied my sacred earth,
> Turning over weapons to Germany
> You are a stranger to your brothers
> Finally, go die far from France.[79]

This self-identified 'Frenchwoman of heart' therefore points to the existence of French (and Belgian) civilians working for the Germans. Even if they were not doing so voluntarily, in the eyes of Munch there was no distinction: working for the Germans was treasonous and cowardly. The mention of money suggests that she was writing about voluntary labourers, which would certainly explain her hatred and desire for revenge.

Some rare individuals, mainly men, worked for the Germans in a manner that left little scope for misunderstandings. In March 1918, the Secretary of the Mairie of Hellemmes wrote to both the Préfet and the Procureur de la République to complain about Frenchman M. Astaes, who was part of the German police. He was said to have terrorised inhabitants and was protected by the occupiers.[80] Post-war investigations and trials targeted such people and other voluntary workers. One concluded that at Trélon, twenty-year-old textile worker René Détrait had been a German policeman during the occupation, wearing an armband, helping out with requisitions, denouncing and 'terrorising' the local population. He had fled to Paris after the war, and it is unclear if he was eventually punished.[81] Jules Bachy from Fourmies was found to have written for and distributed the *Gazette des Ardennes*, but because he was seventy-eight and in ill health in January 1919, he received no immediate punishment, and he does not appear in any judicial records.[82] The aforementioned denunciator Eugène Delforge had accompanied Germans in their searches while wearing a German uniform and carrying a revolver.[83] Two men from Eccles were punished in October 1920 for helping out with armed German searches.[84] The same month, one Georges Gomy was sentenced to a year's imprisonment after being found guilty 'of having, in the arrondissement of Lille, in 1914, 1915, 1916, engaged in correspondence with enemy subjects, by working voluntary for the said enemy on works of military defence'.[85] In January 1921, Belgian Frédéric Henri Dejaeghère from Fives-Lilles was sentenced to five years'

detention not only for denunciations but also for having worked voluntarily for the Germans, particularly commanding a company of other French volunteers to help with the destruction of the Usine des Forges in Denain.[86] A man from Wattrelos had even, in 1914–15, dressed in a German uniform and had overseen his civilian compatriots engaged in forced labour.[87] Another man had acted as an auxiliary policeman in Cambrai throughout the whole occupation.[88] The number of people found guilty of this is low, and the severity of the punishments is not surprising – working freely for the Germans constituted legal treason. However, it is proof that voluntary workers did exist, suggesting that there was some truth to accusations of such misconduct.

Espionage

A small number of *occupés* were believed to have spied for the Germans. There was some overlap with espionage, being a denunciator/indicator, or working for the German police. For locals and the French secret service, spying involved both providing information to the Germans more generally and being a paid German agent – normally attached to the German secret police or intelligence service engaged in counter-espionage in the occupied area. Women, particularly those ostensibly engaging in sexual misconduct, were suspected of this slightly more than men. A total of thirty-six women and twenty men, mostly from Lille or Roubaix, were accused of espionage in repatriation testimony. Among the men, foreign civilians feature prominently (Italians, Dutch, Swiss, Germans or those with German family).[89] A handful of women signalled as spies reappear across the testimony of numerous *rapatriés* from Lille from late April to mid-March 1917. These women were allegedly mistresses of high-ranking Germans, moved freely within and outside the occupied area, and spied for the Germans in occupied and unoccupied France. Rose Roussier from Lille, nicknamed 'Zette', was, in April 1917, suspected of returning to France via Holland – a route that could only be possible with the aid of the Germans, who sent her on a mission. It was said she was accompanied to the Dutch border by German soldiers. She had also been, in occupied France, the mistress of Crown Prince Ruprecht of Bavaria, hence her second nickname: *la petite princesse*. Roussier was apparently friends with other suspected spies in relationships with Germans: Jeanne Defrance and Alice Rousseau/Desrousseaux from Lille (apparently another mistress of the Crown Prince), and Micheline Foures and Fernande 'Mouton' Matton from La

Madeleine. According to one statement, Matton was forcibly repatriated because she gave the Kommandant of La Madeleine a sexually transmitted disease.[90]

Some of these suspects were repatriated and interrogated in March 1917. Alice Desrousseaux made no mention of her alleged espionage, but she and a fellow woman themselves denounced another woman from Lille as a spy, providing considerable detail: Rachelle Van den Bulke (known as 'Régina') of 30 rue Faidherbe helped a French agent called 'Fournier' exchange correspondence between occupied and unoccupied France. Fournier entrusted her with the letters, but she handed them to the German intelligence service, for whom she worked. She went to the German intelligence office at rue Victor Hugo in Tourcoing and received 1,200 francs a month for her services.[91] Van den Bulke appears in other testimony, sometimes with a different spelling, and in one case both her and Desrousseaux/Rousseau are credited with passing a letter to the French Minister of War.[92] Fernande Matton was interrogated twice. The first time, she confirmed that Rose Roussier had indeed been the mistress of the Crown Prince of Bavaria; the second time, she herself denied being his mistress. She outlined a complex series of events: rejections of advances from Germans, splitting up with her boyfriend, finally entering into relations with Max von Wittenhorts, a gendarmerie commander, until December 1916 when he was forced to leave Roubaix for having aided Matton by passing letters to her friend in Brussels. Matton ended by denouncing Jeanne Defrance and Rose Roussier as women of ill repute who had venereal disease.[93] It is not possible to delve further into these complicated, fascinating accounts, but what is important to note is that most of this core group of suspected spies denounced their so-called friends as spies, women of ill repute, or both; in doing so they implicitly or explicitly denied that they themselves were spies, and echoed key judgements of occupied culture. Each seemed to have had detailed knowledge of the others, suggesting that perhaps they had been involved in similar activities and desired to exonerate themselves once repatriated by denouncing former friends.

It is possible not only that these women were indeed spying for the Germans but also that accusations stemmed from a belief in pre-existing relations with the Germans. For instance, Mme Pourez-Conteran from Roubaix was labelled by a *rapatrié* as being susceptible 'of engaging in espionage' because she had 'intimate relations' with German officers and had been the mistress of Kommandant Hofmann, for whom she served as an interpreter.[94] Whatever the reality of the above cases, spying

was heavily associated with Lille and its environs. The German police headquarters in Lille was allegedly 'a refuge for spies';[95] in Lambersart, a German-speaking Frenchwoman nicknamed 'The Spy' owned a villa where other women 'engaged in diverse festivities';[96] one Frenchman was claimed to be 'head of the Office of the Intelligence Service at 9–10 Rue du Pas' in Lille and was personally criticised in the clandestine publication *Les Vidanges* (discussed below).[97]

French intelligence officers believed that the Germans recruited 'numerous women from special *milieux* (dressmakers, hat-makers, governesses, teachers, opera singers)' to be spies and even suspected women of espionage simply because of their profession.[98] Yet other non-occupied French authorities were cautious about reports of espionage, especially the commonplace conflation of sexual misconduct and spying. In a note to interpreters attached to the British army regarding their duties in the event of an advance, interpreter Letore drew on his experience from the spring 1917 advances, warning:

> experience has proved to me that public rumour can make too quickly and therefore unjustly spies of all women of ill repute who have had intimate relations with the Germans. These women and girls must be suspects, of course; they are surely not spies […] the people who accuse have suffered greatly from Boche brutality [… and] can unwittingly exaggerate the facts. Those whom they have accused have suffered greatly too […] No-one is more horrified than me that these women could descend so low; yet horror does not exclude pity; certainly it must not lead us to injustice.[99]

This not only demonstrates the seriousness with which non-occupied French, especially military, authorities regarded accusations of espionage; but also that these authorities sometimes held more nuanced views than the *occupés* themselves. The occupied culture had strict norms, a simplistic, Manichean labelling, and quick judgements. It largely ignored the subtleties of occupied life with which many struggled; its standards were idealistic rather than realistic.

Yet there is some, limited evidence beyond repatriation reports of French espionage for the Germans. The Commissaire de Police of Condé, Vieux-Condé, Escautpont and Crespin addressed a summary of the occupation to the Sous-Préfet of Valenciennes in November 1918. He explained that the 'German civilian police' searched for hidden Allied soldiers and authorised 'unscrupulous people, so-called *ravitailleurs* [suppliers of goods, discussed in Chapter 5]' to have freedom of movement to carry out commerce, even across the Belgian border, on the

condition that they denounced those who contravened German rules. He continued: 'About 20 spies operated in my area and are very dangerous. There are others. I found on Belgian Maurice Schandewyld, from Fresnes, arrested *in flagrante* for fabrication of false money […], papers naming him an agent of German security services […] The Germans were also informed by loose women and other people.'[100]

In January 1919, three individuals from Wignehies, a village west of Fourmies, were found guilty by a French intelligence investigation of espionage during the occupation: Belgian Marie Werbrouck, her twenty-six-year-old daughter Armide and fifty-five-year-old Georges Duchat. They had, among other things, denounced locals during the occupation and were responsible for German searches. Marie Werbrouck was arrested and imprisoned; an arrest warrant was issued for the other two. According to Marie Werbrouck's own testimony, her daughter had divorced in July 1914 and, in February 1916, had became involved with German Franz Meyer. In January 1917, she gave birth to a child, but it died hours later. Her daughter was then sent to Valenciennes' prison and 'placed in a cupboard to listen to prisoners' conversations', which she would repeat to an officer (Naussbaum) who was a friend of her lover. Marie Werbrouck denied knowing that her daughter worked for the German police and claimed that she accidentally caused German searches by simply talking to Naussbaum about hidden goods. Her daughter had left for Sivy in Belgium on 10 November 1918 with the German driver who lodged at their house; Marie had not heard from her since.[101] This case is exceptional because the words 'espionage' or 'spy' were not used to describe any of those found guilty of *intelligence avec l'ennemi* by the Cour d'Assises du Nord, although there was a legal blurred line between being a denunciator/'indicator' and a genuine spy – all these comprised *intelligence avec l'ennemi* and especially *correspondance avec l'ennemi*. However, punishment of those believed to have engaged in misconduct went beyond the purely legal.

Revenge during the occupation: from insult to assault

Acts of revenge or expressions of disgust concerning suspect individuals were not limited to the liberation or post-war period. Sources testify to verbal attacks against individuals during the occupation, usually women believed to have been engaging in intimate relations with the Germans or those working voluntarily for the occupiers.[102] Insults such as *Bocharte* and *femme à Boches* were used frequently, plus variations

such as *Bochette* or *Bochesse*[103] – and for all those engaging in misconduct, including men, *embochés*.[104] Unsurprisingly, the Germans forbade such insults, and diarists recorded that people were punished for this.[105] Redier, writing of women who were German mistresses, stated, 'We hardly dared to look at these women, as we went to prison for having displeased them.'[106]

Despite or perhaps because of this, some *occupés* explicitly expressed their desire for post-war revenge, retribution or justice. Some repatriation testimony stated that inhabitants photographed women (especially married or young women) who had relations with Germans, showing them walking arm in arm and entering hotels. The purpose of such photographs was clear: in Valenciennes, an album was deposited at the Mairie; in Roubaix, two sisters were photographed with Germans, and 'numerous examples of these photos were produced and distributed to numerous people who have the intention of proving the *inconduite* of these young women after the war'.[107] Women photographed in comprising positions were also mentioned in reports on Lille and Tourcoing.[108] I have not discovered actual examples of such photographs.

More verifiable were clandestine tracts, which circulated in Lille-Roubaix-Tourcoing and Brussels throughout the war, three of which used similar, insulting language to criticise those engaging in misconduct.[109] These publications are examined in more detail in Chapter 8. The title of one, *Les Vidanges* (a pun on 'life of angels' and 'taking out the rubbish') gives an indication of the attitude its authors held towards *embochés*. The only preserved copy dates from January 1917 and comprises a list of suspect individuals, often described in a mocking, insulting way. The explanation of the list highlights a mindset central to the wider occupied culture:

> We are publishing a correct and verified list of the filthy females and disgusting characters engaging in commerce and the rest with our enemies.
>
> Whilst the husband, brother, or son finds himself at the front or is sleeping six feet under, these swine party, and prostitute their very beings, their family and their motherland under the German boot! …
>
> The motherland and their families must not suffer this smear. The women whom we denounce for punishment by honest people enrolled in their manner under the flags of the invader, they have chosen the position that suits their insanity; some of them think of profiting from the automobiles of their friends and of making it abroad the day of their next retreat, but whatever happens, we will find them again one day, and their names will have been thrown like rubbish … in the bin!!… EAGLE EYE [*ŒIL DE LYNX*].[110]

Once again, it is primarily women who were the object of this criticism, although men were also named and shamed in these publications.

Expressions of criticism occasionally went beyond words. Suspected spy Mouton even remarked that there was, in Lille, a 'secret society' called 'Les Vengeurs' (The Avengers) who had

> as their mission to execute all denunciators. It is thus that the denunciator of Miss Cavell and the French teacher was punished by two members of this society. These two members, righters of wrongs [*justiciers*], were themselves denounced and arrested in January 1916, but yet another new denunciator was executed shortly afterwards.[111]

No other sources point to similar executions, but there are hints of physical vengeance. Maxence van der Meersch attributes much importance to attacks on suspect individuals in his novel *Invasion '14* – Fanny, the wife of an absent Belgian soldier, is subject of physical abuse in a bread queue because she was pregnant by a German.[112] This may seem imbued with a heavy sense of poetic licence, but it appears to have had some basis in actual events, although it is not clear whether the young van der Meersch, only eleven in October 1918, witnessed or knew about them.[113] Marc Blancpain, in his 1980 memoir of the occupation, refers to similar incidents:

> those who we called '*les femmes à boches*' were hated and, exposed, lived in danger; we smashed their windows with pebbles; pointed out by fingers, they were shoved and hit slyly in the street or in the long food queues; we sung filthy and threatening laments behind them or under their windows; sick, we let them snuff it at home, saying: 'They're only getting what they deserve.'
>
> We sometimes took advantage of the darkness of winter nights to push them into a canal or the freezing waters of a river.[114]

Archival evidence suggests there is some truth behind van der Meersch and Blancpain's prose. In Denain, according to *rapatriés*, there were 'veritable battles of women' in 1914 – those who worked freely for the Germans, nicknamed the *femmes à sacs* (sandbag women) were hit, insulted, threatened with having their hair cut.[115] The first example of popular vengeance in Lille occurred on 12 February 1915. As a police report indicates, a group of about 100 'demonstrators spontaneously went' to an estaminet run by a Belgian man suspected of having denounced hidden French soldiers. The crowd threw stones at the window, smashing the glass, causing a few hundred francs' material damage. No one was injured, and three hours later order was

re-established, with no arrests made.[116] The same day, M. Trollin, a head teacher from Lille, noted in his diary, 'A crowd sacked a cabaret [in] rue de l'Hop. S^{t} Roch: the female owner denounced a French soldier who was hiding in a neighbouring house.'[117] It is unclear if Trollin is referencing the same event, albeit with different details. Similar events occurred, again in Lille, on 4 March 1915, this time targeting a woman: a crowd of about 500 people 'booed' thirty-nine-year-old Mme Devildre, on boulevard Victor Hugo. A French policeman helped to accompany Devildre home, seemingly attempting to ameliorate the disorder which could engender German reprisals for the entire city. During the walk, 'stones were thrown at Devildre by children, and by women who followed her and called her a "whore"'. Devildre called two passing German soldiers, but their intervention exacerbated the anger of the crowd. Once at her sister's house, the sister called for more German soldiers, and about ten came to disperse the crowd – shots were fired, but no one was injured. Devildre had also been molested by crowds on 2 and 3 March.[118]

An interesting case is related in a letter from one Kleeberg, working for the military police at the Kommandantur of Lille, to M. Pollet, head of the civilian police of Lille, on 19 April 1915:

> On 18/4/15 a gathering occurred around 1p.m. […] around a French middle-class woman. The unfortunate woman was mistreated by numerous women for reasons that I do not know. They tore her clothes[,] they kicked her and they tore her hair. At the same time, cries of 'She's with the dirty *boches*' etc were heard.[119]

Such attacks were likely carried out by working-class individuals, representing an extreme expression of disgust at those breaching the expectations of occupied life and hinting that at least some workers adhered to the norms of occupied culture. It is curious that such similar events took place so close to each other and so relatively early on in the war, with no recorded incidents of such violence after 1915 in the Nord. Such attacks were a precursor to what became known as the *affaire des sacs* (sandbag affair).

The sandbag affair

The traditional narrative of this *affaire* is that the Germans had ordered locals to create sandbags, fencing and other material which they claimed would be used for purely defensive or non-military purposes in the occupied area. Once it became clear that such goods were being sent to

the front, workers and factory owners refused to cooperate – in Becker's words, they 'led the combat'[120] – via a series of strikes from April–July 1915, primarily in the Lille-Roubaix-Tourcoing area.[121] Military material was indeed being fabricated here: in Lille alone, an estimated 220,000–230,000 sandbags a day were produced in spring–summer 1915.[122] Yet although industrialists and local notables did play an important role (see Chapter 6), the strikes actually started with crowds of outraged working-class locals refusing to allow the workers to enter the factories, launching verbal and physical attacks including pulling hair and beatings.[123] Many victims and perpetrators were women. One case study is representative: in late April 1915, female workers of the Selliez clothing factory in Roubaix were insulted for numerous consecutive days by local residents who, a French police report noted, 'had built themselves up into an angry state'.[124] The women were targeted because the factory was working with the Germans. Some locals believed it was making uniforms, but it was in fact producing around 900 empty sandbags and trellises a day.[125] This 'conflict' culminated in a 'small riot' on 30 April. At 7.00 a.m., the approximately 450 women employees 'got to work, but, by a sort of tacit agreement, they did not start work, apart from about fifty who, having a batch of goods to finish, entered to complete this job'. The latter left the factory individually at 8.00–8.30 p.m. once their work was finished, and each woman was assaulted by locals in 'hostile and violent demonstrations'. One of the perpetrators, a *cabaratière* (cabaret owner) named Mme Mordacq, 'acted in a particularly brutal manner'.[126] In his diary, Blin recorded that these disturbances were accompanied by children singing: 'The [female] workers of Selliez / Have betrayed the French / Who will come and hunt them down / When the peace is signed.'[127] Two French policemen were at the scene but were unable to restore order. Despite the violence to which they had been subjected, none of the victims complained to the local police commissioner.[128]

In late June, again in Roubaix, a man was arrested for having said, 'You have to be a coward to work for the Germans and against your brothers.' He told the arresting German officer that he would repeat these words to his Kommandant. The same day, three women who made sandbags were 'smacked'. The Commissaire Central concluded, 'It is certain that a strong movement of discontentment has been occurring for a few days in the working population.'[129] Days later, in Roubaix, crowds not only physically assaulted a woman believed to be working for the Germans but threw manure at a French *commissaire* (M. Orlianges) who tried to calm the situation – because he allegedly had a mistress who oversaw the

manufacture of sandbags in her house. Orlianges called on a German gendarme who came to his aid, even firing a shot into the crowd before his revolver was knocked from his hand.[130] A French police investigation was launched, during which women freely admitted assaulting other women who they believed were making sandbags. The finer details of this are complex and fascinating, and I have examined them elsewhere.[131] They demonstrate the strength and violence of working-class criticisms of those who were thought to have worked for the Germans. These attacks, which in some sense have an element of *charivari* about them,[132] were a means of reinforcing the occupied culture. In particular, they explicitly demonstrated what was acceptable or not according to the moral-patriotic norms: in this case, making sandbags which would aid the German war effort was clearly unacceptable.

Whether in response to threats and attacks from compatriots or a genuine *crise de conscience*, many in Lille-Roubaix-Tourcoing refused to continue working until late July 1915, when harsh German measures (stricter curfews, fines for municipalities, imprisoning bosses and attackers, punishing absentees) quelled the public disorder.[133] (In her memoirs, May Corballis [Sœur Marguerite], an English nun living in Roubaix until November 1916, suggested a different resolution: she had personally convinced the Kommandant that making sandbags was 'anti-patriotic' work, and 'he agreed to not ask the people to make any more'. This seems unlikely, and in any case would not apply beyond Roubaix.[134]) The harsh German reaction offers a probable explanation for the lack of similar disorders and acts of public retribution for the duration of the war, but the liberation afforded new opportunities for enacting 'justice' on those who had engaged in misconduct.

Post-war popular purges?

From October 1918, few 'purges' like those seen in the aftermath of the Second World War took place. This was perhaps linked to the rapid Allied reoccupation, which imposed its own strict controls, dissuading mass disorder – perhaps also because of aforementioned military investigations into and removal of suspect individuals. Yet some acts of popular retribution did occur. On the evening of 19 October 1918, 'a group of young people accompanied by women traversed several roads of the *quartier St-Maurice* [in Lille], demonstrating in front of the houses where women had engaged in relations with German soldiers'. Five women had their houses targeted, and vandalism and theft were

carried out: windows were smashed, money and property (which the crowd claimed the women had obtained as favours from the Germans) was stolen.[135] That same evening, a crowd of 200 men and women (possibly the same people) vandalised and stole from a pâtisserie and an estaminet whose owners were 'known for having engaged in commerce with the Germans during the occupation'.[136] A police report from the next day (20–1 October 1918) explained that similar scenes occurred in the eighth arrondissement: at the house of a woman who had lodged a German, all the window panes were smashed with stones, and the crowd broke into the house to steal goods. Window panes were smashed at another woman's home, and 'a house known for having engaged in commerce and relations' with the Germans was pillaged by 'a crowd of unknown individuals'. The female owner had been warned in advance and had kept her distance.[137]

On 17 November, crowds sacked a house in Croix believed to belong to a married woman said to have had a German lover during the occupation and to have engaged in commerce with the enemy. The owner of this house was actually her aunt, and the suspect – one Mme Terasse – had already fled the commune.[138] For Le Naour, such police reports 'are shockingly silent and hide undoubtedly violent realities behind laconic and discreet phrases', such as 'the population hounded her'.[139] Thus, there were some unofficial, fairly violent 'purges', and there were probably further unreported examples of this, or reported examples for which the documents are missing. Here the crowds appear to have wanted to remove the wealth accumulated during the occupation by certain suspects, and to damage their buildings, rather than any more permanent or serious punishment of the suspects. This may make their expression of anger representative of a desire to punish outside the realms of the law, which they saw as inadequate, and a recognition that the suspects had not broken any laws (or had, but that this could not be proved) – yet had still behaved badly, had still in some way betrayed their *Patrie*. Misconduct was not confined to legal definitions.

Rare sources also mention female head-shaving taking place, one of the most infamous symbols of popular punishment of alleged collaborators during the Liberation of the Second World War.[140] As Le Naour notes, attempting to study and shed light on similar events during and after the liberation of the First World War leads to 'a wall of silence considerably more insurmountable than that of the shameful secret of 1944: indeed, if the sources and archives abound regarding the second liberation, the manifestation of odious head-shavings at the end of the

First World War have barely been recorded'.[141] But there is some hard evidence of head-shavings. In his interwar book *Occupied, 1918–1930: A Postscript to the Western Front*, British journalist Ferdinand Tuohy noted of reoccupied northern France: 'Not a few of the black-listed ones – women – were found to have been shorn by fellow-citizens as a stigma of shame', although he also hints at more serious methods of retribution, for 'others were come upon with their throats cut'.[142] Further, Le Naour cites the testimony of peasant soldier Grenadou, referring to the liberation of 1918: 'When we arrived in that area, they were settling scores, old quarrels from the time of the Germans. They cut the hair of good/beautiful [*bonnes*] women. Talk about a circus! We didn't find that to our taste.'[143] Similarly, a photographer from Valenciennes testified to head-shavings in November 1918.[144] Thus, although not as widespread as in Belgium in 1918,[145] some popular, physical reprisals did occur in the Nord. Curiously, this phenomenon, even if it was limited in nature due to the absence of the latent civil war which explained the explosion of popular justice in 1944–45,[146] is rarely mentioned in later accounts of the occupation and liberation. However, there was another form of revenge that took place at the liberation: denunciations of suspect individuals. This phenomenon and the subsequent investigations shed light on the specificity of male misconduct during the occupation.

Notes

1 ADN, 74J225, diary of M. Blin (instituteur en retraite at Auchy-les-Orchies), 10 June 1915.
2 ADN, 74J225, 11 June 1915.
3 ADN, 74J225, 12 June 1915.
4 Georges Gromaire, *L'Occupation allemande en France (1914–1918)* (Paris: Payot, 1925), pp. 335–7; Philippe Nivet, 'Les Femmes dans la France occupée (1914–1918)', in Marion Trévisi and Philippe Nivet (eds.), *Les Femmes et la guerre de l'Antiquité à 1918* (Paris: Economica, 2010), p. 309; Jean-Yves Le Naour, *Misères et tourmentes de la chair durant la Grande Guerre: Les mœurs sexuelles des Français, 1914–1918* (Paris: Aubier, 2002), p. 282.
5 Gromaire, *L'Occupation allemande*, p. 336.
6 See numerous documents in ADN, 9R1196; ADHS, 4M513, 4M517–20; SHD, 17N433 and 19N1571. A poster in Maubeuge stated that individuals would receive financial compensation for providing information on hidden goods: Georges Dubut-Maison, *Journal d'un bourgeois de Maubeuge, avant, pendant le siècle et l'occupation allemande, 1914–1918* (Tourcoing: J. Duvivier, 1923), 21 December 1914, p. 92.

7 ADHS, 4M513, repatriation report no. 494, 17 January 1917 (Hestraud); ADN, 2U1/466, Cour d'Assises du Département du Nord (CAN), arrêt, 3 February 1922.
8 One confirmed case of denunciation in Arleux involved a man who received 5,000 marks for having informed the Germans about a supply of copper: Renée Martinage, 'Les collaborateurs devant la cour d'assises du Nord après la très Grande Guerre', *Revue du Nord*, 77:309 (1995), p. 105; ADN, 2U1/466, CAN, 3 February 1922.
9 See, for example, ADHS, report no. 688, 7 February 1917 (Hautmont and Jeumont).
10 Antoinette Tierce, *Between Two Fires: Being a True Account of How the Author Sheltered Four Escaped British Prisoners of War in Her House in Lille During the German Occupation of That City*, trans. J. Lewis May (London: John Lane, 1931), p. 162.
11 SHD, 17N433, Sûreté Générale, IIIe Armée britannique, État-Major, procès-verbal, 22 November 1917.
12 ADN, 9R1196, Croix, Force spéciale de Gendarmerie, Section prévotale de Roubaix, Dupuis, report no. 219, 8 November 1918 (henceforth listed as commune, name of investigator, report number when relevant, date).
13 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 866, 6 March 1917.
14 SHD, 17N433, Mission Militiare Française attachée à la 4e Armée Britannique, procès-verbal no. 397, 3 March 1918.
15 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 788, 22 February 1917.
16 ADN, 9R1196, passim.
17 ADHS, 4M513; SHD, 17N433, 17N547 and 17N1571. The relevant communes were Aniche, Cantaing[-sur-Escaut], Cambrai, Denain, Douai, Fourmies, Gouzeaucourt, Hasnon, Haubourdin, Jenlain, Landrecies, Le Cateau, Lille, Louvroil, Maubeuge, Onnaing, Ronchin, Roubaix, Rousies, Saint-Amand, Saint-Olle, Tourcoing, Trélon, Valenciennes and Vieux-Condé.
18 USNA, Record Group 120, entry 198; Record Group 165.
19 AMT, 4HA29, Kommandant to Mayor, 16 April 1915.
20 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 1074, 21 March 1917.
21 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 769, 19 February 1917.
22 ADHS, 4M513, reports no. 722, 13 February 1917; no. 695, 8 February 1917.
23 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 493, 17 January 1917.
24 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 825, 29 February 1917.
25 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 714, 15 February 1917.
26 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 953, 12 March 1917.
27 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 1061, 21 March 191.
28 ADN, 9R1193, Saint-Rémy-Chaussée, Affaire Lescaillez, Petition from the inhabitants of Saint-Rémy-Chaussée to Monsieur le Général Commandant la mission française attachée à l'armée britannique, 11 January 1919; procès-verbal, 12 March 1919.

29 ADN, 9R1193, Denain, n.a., handwritten summary of the affair, n.d.
30 SHD, 19N1571, fiche de renseignement, Denain.
31 ADN, 9R1229, Ainstaing, curé Prussenac to Préfet, 12 December 1918; Commissaire Spécial de Lille to Préfet, 20 January 1919.
32 ADN, 9R1229, Boussois, Gendarmerie nationale investigation, Couturier, 21 December 1918.
33 ADN, 9R1229, Comines, procès-verbal (n.a.), 20 June 1919.
34 AMT, H432, Ville de Tourcoing, Poste Central de Police, report, 27 May 1915.
35 ADHS, 4M513, Notice Individuelle, Irma Lemaire, 28 February 1917.
36 ADN, 9R750, Commissaire de Police de Mouvaux to Préfet, 6 December 1918.
37 Annette Becker (ed.), *Journaux de combattants et de civils de la France du Nord dans la Grande Guerre* (Lille: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 1998), Hirsch diary, 30 December 1917, p. 288.
38 Philippe Nivet, *La France occupée 1914–1918* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2011), p. 298.
39 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 474, 12 January 1917; NA, KV2/844, account of Mme L'Hotelier, Directrice of the Hospice Général of Cambrai, 28 November 1918.
40 ADN, 2U1/445, CAN, arrêt, 26 February 1921.
41 ADN, 2U1/445, CAN, arrêt, 21 January 1921.
42 ADN, 2U1/447, CAN, arrêt, 19 July 1923.
43 ADN, 2U1/444, CAN, arrêt, 23 October 1920.
44 ADN, 2U1/444, CAN, arrêt, 12 October 1920. For more court documents, see ADN, 2U1/445–8; 2U2/515, 2U274/174; 3U281/31–78; 3U303/6; 3U303/7.
45 AMT, H4A29, rapport concernant l'affaire des agents Scrittes and Rousseau, n.d.; ADN, 9R745, German poster, Tourcoing, 12 July 1915.
46 ADN, 2U1/446, CAN, arrêt, 23 January 1922.
47 ADN, 2U1/447, CAN, arrêt, 13 July 1923.
48 Martinage, 'Les collaborateurs', p. 104.
49 Martinage, 'Les collaborateurs', pp. 107 and 113; documents in ADN, 2U1/445–8, CAN, 1921–25. These fifteen came from Lille, Cambrai, Le Nouvion-en-Thiérache, Ruitz (an arrondissement of Béthune), Tourcoing, Roubaix, Saint-Amand (an arrondissement of Valenciennes) and Le Cateau. Men engaged in denunciations in Lille and its suburbs, Monchecourt, Sobre-le-Château, Obrechies, Eccles, Obies, Wattrelos, Denain, Douai and Valenciennes.
50 ADN, 9R1197.
51 See ADN, 9R1196; for example Croix, Dupuis and Poreaux, 8 November 1918. All came from Croix.
52 USNA, Record Group 120, Entry 198, procès-verbal, 'déclaration de Madame GONDRY, Marie, rapatriée de Hautmont, Nord', 1918.

53 ADHS, 4M513, passim. The communes are Fourmies, La Madeleine, Le Cateau, Prouvy, Beugnies, Denain, Hautmont, Prisches, Roisies, Maubeuge, Valenciennes, Preux-aux-Bois, Raismes, Roubaix, Saint-Amand-les-Eaux, Aulnoye, Cambrai, Wazemmes, Tourcoing, Fives-Lilles, Lille and Lecelles.
54 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 481, 16 January 1917.
55 ADHS, 4M513, reports from 1917: no. 791, 22 February; no. 707, 8 February; no. 833, 28 February.
56 ADHS, 4M513, Notice Individuelle, Céline Blinette, 9 February 1917.
57 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 671, 5 February 1917.
58 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 780, 20 February 1917.
59 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 1179, 23 February 1917 (Saint-Amand-les-Eaux).
60 Gromaire, *L'Occupation allemande*, p. 221; ADHS, 4M513, report no. 588, 24 January 1917 (Le Cateau).
61 ADN, 9R729, German poster, 3 April 1917.
62 See Jean-François Condette, 'Résister au travail forcé dans le Nord occupé (1914–1918)', in Robert Vandenbussche (ed.), *La Résistance en France et Belgique occupées (1914–1918)* (Lille: Presses de l'Université Charles de Gaulle-Lille 3, 2012), pp. 17–18.
63 Nivet, *La France occupée*, p. 293.
64 AMT, 4HA32, Directeur de la Voirie Municipale to Mayor, 30 June 1915.
65 AMT, 4HA32, Mme Cesse to Mayor, 'late June 1915'. The original contains many spelling mistakes that I have not recreated in the translation.
66 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 526, 18 January 1917.
67 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 769, 19 February 1917.
68 Becker writes of the population's 'massive refusal of voluntary work'. Annette Becker, *Oubliés de la Grande Guerre: Humanitaire et culture de guerre* (Paris: Éditions Noêsis, 1998), p. 59.
69 See, for example, German posters in ADN, 9R716, Roubaix, 28 August 1915; ADN, 9R746, Tourcoing, 28 June 1916; ADN, 9R717, Lille, 17 February 1916; and ADN, 9R705, Lomme, 20 October 1916.
70 AMT, H4A32, Commissaire Central to Mayor, 21 May 1915; liste (suite) des ouvriers tisserands travaillant chez Mme Vve POLLET, rue Soufflot, 18 June 1915, seemingly a police document.
71 AMT, H4A32, Situation du travail, 31 July 1915.
72 ADN, 9R750, Commissaire de Police de Mouvaux to Préfet, 6 December 1918.
73 Antoine Redier, *Les Allemands dans nos maisons* (Paris: Éditions Cartier, 1945), pp. 255–6.
74 ADN, 3U281/77, 1er CA Région, Conseil de Guerre, Plainte no. 613, inventory of trial of Mme Rouvaux, *La Liberté – organe n'ayant passé par aucune censure: Bulletin de propagande patriotique*, 15 November 1915.
75 ADN, 74J225, Blin diary, 20 September 1917.
76 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 1211, 25 April 1917.

77 ADHS, 4M513, reports from 1917: no. 1074, 21 March; no. 1179, 23 April; no. 1069, 22 March.
78 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 1179, 23 April 1917.
79 AML, 4H291, Mlle Munch to Mayor, 9 November 1918.
80 ADN, 9R515, Léon Vasseur to Préfet, 8 March 1918; Léon Vasseur to Procurer de la République de Lille, 25 March 1918.
81 ADN, 9R1197, Trélon, Commissaire de Police, Chef du Service de Sûreté, à Monsieur le Capitaine Chef du SR, 5 January 1918 [actually 1919].
82 ADN, 9R1197, Fourmies, report, III Armée, État-Major, Deuxième Bureau, SR, Service de sûreté, 29 January 1919.
83 ADN, 2U1/444, CAN, arrêt, 23 October 1920.
84 ADN, 2U1/444, CAN, arrêt, 30 October 1920.
85 ADN, 2U1/444, CAN, arrêt, 21 October 1921.
86 ADN, 2U1/445, CAN, arrêt, 21 January 1921.
87 ADN, 2U1/445, CAN, arrêt, 28 February 1921.
88 ADN, 2U1/445, CAN, arrêt, 2 July 1921.
89 ADHS, 4M513; SHD, 19N547.
90 ADHS, 4M513, reports from 1917: no. 971, 13 March; no. 984, 14 March; no. 894, 7 March; no. 895, 7 March; no. 957, 12 March; no. 936, 10 March; no. 1037, 17 March; no. 953, 12 March; no. 927, 9 March; no. 988, 12 March; no. 1253, 28 April; no. 968, 13 March; no. 918, 8 March; no. 1043, 19 March; Notices Individuelles from 1917: 16 March (Fernande Matton), 19 March (Micheline Foures), 9 March (Margeurite Pecqueur), 10 March (Alice Desrousseaux).
91 ADHS, 4M513, reports no. 965, 12 March 1917; no. 968, 13 March 1917.
92 ADHS, 4M513, reports from 1917: no. 894, 7 March; no. 918, 8 March; no. 968, 13 March 1917.
93 ADHS, 4M513, reports no. 1034, 17 March 1917; no. 1058, 19 March 1917.
94 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 104, 19 March 1917.
95 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 1003, 15 March 1917.
96 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 955, 12 March 1917.
97 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 936, 10 March 1917.
98 ADHS, 4M513, Notices Individuelles, Elmire Coillaux and Angèle Erhard (Lille), 10 March 1917.
99 SHD, 17N393, 'Devoirs des interprètes en cas d'avance. Conseils de l'OI LETORE aux Interprètes du IVe Corps', n.d.
100 ADN, 9R512, Commissaire de Police for Condé, Vieux-Condé, Fresnes, Escautpont and Crespin, 'Situation pendant la guerre de 1914–1918', to Sous-Préfet in Valenciennes, 28 November 1918.
101 ADN, 9R1197, Sobre-le-Château, Grand Quartier Général des armées françaises de l'est, État-Major, Service spécial, Sûreté générale aux Armées, 'Note pour les armées (Deuxième Bureau-SR) et les Régions de la Zone des

Armées (BCR)', 23 January 1919; procès-verbal, IIIe Armée, État-Major, Deuxième Bureau-SR, Service de Sûreté, 15 January 1919.

102 See, for example, Gromaire, *L'Occupation allemande*, p. 248.

103 Nivet, *La France occupée*, p. 339.

104 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 1167, 21 April 1917 (Lille); Nivet, *La France occupée*, p. 339; Auguste Labbe, 'Les Balafrés', *L'Écho du Nord*, 24 December 1918, p. 1.

105 Becker, *Journaux de combattants*, Degrutère diary, 2 October 1915, p. 187; Hirsch diary, 16 July 1915, p. 242.

106 Redier, *Les Allemands*, p. 263.

107 ADHS, 4M513, reports no. 769, 19 February 1917; no. 1199, 23 April 1917.

108 ADHS, 4M513, reports no. 1148, 20 April 1917; no. 1192, 24 April 1917.

109 ADN, 3U281/77, Rouvaux trial, *La Liberté*, 15 November 1915; *Les Vidanges: Bulletin Concernant le Chapitre de la Malpropreté à Bruxelles, Lille, Roub-Tourcoing*, 1 January 1917 (no. 1, edition B); *La Vérité* (Lille), 15 December 1915 (no. 1).

110 ADN, 3U281/77, *Les Vidanges*. The original contains many spelling mistakes that I have not recreated in the translation.

111 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 1058, 19 March 1917.

112 Maxence van der Meersch, *Invasion '14*, trans. Gerard Hopkins (London: Constable & Co, 1937; originally Paris, 1935), pp. 273–6.

113 Jean-Yves Le Naour, 'Femmes tondues et répression des "femmes à boches" en 1918', *Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine*, 47:1 (2000), p. 151.

114 Marc Blancpain, *Quand Guillaume II gouvernait 'de la Somme aux Vosges'* (Paris: Fayard, 1980), p. 246. The municipal police of Lille reported bodies of men and women found in the canal throughout the occupation, but the coroner always listed suicide as the cause of death. See AML, 4H266–71.

115 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 705, 9 February 1917.

116 ADN, 9R581, report, Commissaire de Police du 5e arrondissement contained within a report by the Commissaire Central de Lille to the Préfet, 12 February 1915.

117 ADN, 74J224, diary of M. Trollin (Directeur de l'École Rollin, Lille), 12 February 1915.

118 AML, 4H273, report, Commissaire de Police du 7e arrondissement, 4 March 1915.

119 AML, 4H274, Kleeberg, Commandanture de Lille, Police Militaire, to Chef de la Police Civile de Lille, 19 April 1915.

120 Annette Becker, *Les Cicatrices rouges 14–18: France et Belgique occupées* (Paris: Fayard, 2010), p. 176.

121 See the majority of documents in AMT, H4A32 and AML, 4H121.

122 ADN, 74J224, Trollin diary, 19 June 1915; BDIC, FΔ1526, extrait du rapport de la section du transport du 14/6/15 au Gouvernement, 18 June 1915.

123 See ADN, 9R716, 726, 735, 753; AMT, H4A32; AML, 4H121.
124 ADN, 9R735, Commissaire de Police Barthouil, Commissariat Central de Roubaix, to Préfet, 30 April 1915.
125 AMT, H4A32, report, 'Schittelecalle' (no further information is available), 'Cessation du travail chez Mr Georges Sellier [sic] à Roubaix', 4 May 1915.
126 ADN, 9R735, Barthouil to Préfet, 30 April 1915.
127 ADN, 74J225, Blin diary, 30 April 1915.
128 ADN, 9R735, Barthouil to Préfet, 30 April 1915.
129 AMT, 4HA32, Commissaire Central de Roubaix to Mayor, 22 June 1915.
130 ADN, 9R726, report, Benet, 24 June 1915, cited in Commissaire Central to Mayor of Roubaix, 5 July 1915 ('Au sujet de la conduite de M. ORLIANGES'), p. 8.
131 James E. Connolly, 'Sandbags, strikes and scandals: public disorder and problematic policing in occupied Roubaix during the First World War', *Historical Reflections*, 42:3 (2016), 9–28.
132 Natalie Zemon Davis, 'The reasons of misrule: youth groups and Charivaris in sixteenth-century France', *Past & Present*, 50 (February 1971), 41–75.
133 See AMT, H4A32, passim; ADN, 9R745, German poster, Tourcoing, 12 July 1915.
134 University of Leeds Library, LIDDLE/WWI/WO/021, memoirs, May Corballis (Sœur Marguerite), 22–5 June 1915, pp. 41–3.
135 ADN, 9R1240, Commissaire Special de Lille to Préfet, 20 October 1918.
136 ADN, 9R1240, report, Commissariat de la Police, Lille, 19–20 October 1918.
137 AML, 4H271, Commissariat Central de Lille, report, 20–1 October 1918.
138 ADN, 9R1196, Croix, Cousinet, 17 November 1918; report, British Army, 14 November 1918.
139 Le Naour, 'Femmes tondues', p. 153.
140 Fabrice Virgili, *La France 'virile': Des femmes tondues à la libération* (Paris: Payot, 2000).
141 Le Naour, 'Femmes tondues', pp. 148–9.
142 Ferdinand Tuohy, *Occupied, 1918–1930: A Postscript to the Western Front* (London: Thornton Butterworth, 1931), p. 18.
143 Ephraïm Grenadou and Alain Prévost, *Grenadou, paysan français* (Paris, 1978), p. 131, cited in Le Naour, 'Femmes tondues', p. 149.
144 Nivet, *La France occupée*, p. 343.
145 For the Belgian experience, see Laurence van Yypersele, 'Sortir de la guerre, sortir de l'occupation: les violences populaires en Belgique au lendemain de la première guerre mondiale', *Vingtième siècle: Revue d'histoire*, 83 (July–September 2004), 65–74; Laurence Van Ypersele and Xavier Rousseaux, 'Leaving the war: popular violence and judicial repression of "unpatriotic" behaviour in Belgium (1918–1921)', *European Review of History: Revue Européenne d'Histoire*, 12:1 (2005), 3–22; Laurence Van Ypersele, ' "Au nom

de la patrie, à mort les traîtres!": la répression des inciviques belges de 1914 à 1918', *Histoire@Politique: Politique, Culture, Société*, 3 (November–December 2007), at www.cairn.info/load_pdf.php?ID_ARTICLE=HP_003_0003 (accessed 27 November 2017).

146 See, for example, Julian Jackson, *France: The Dark Years, 1940–44* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 580.

3

Male misconduct

Men suspected of misconduct were often high-profile individuals in positions of authority. Municipal, administrative forms of misconduct – roughly analogous to what Nivet calls 'political collaboration'[1] – were taken seriously by the French authorities after the liberation. Members of the Gendarmerie Nationale and the Commissariat Spécial of Lille carried out time-consuming investigations up to the end of 1919. All but two of these involved accusations of questionable occupation conduct on the part of the Mayor, the Municipal Council, adjuncts to the Mayor, secretaries to the Mairie, or rural policemen (*gardes champêtres*).[2] Only six of these thirty investigations concluded that the accusations were true, and even among these six there were calls for further investigation.[3] The majority of the other investigations contain no official verdict and are thus inconclusive. Despite this, such enquiries provide a rich source base from which to examine popular perceptions of male misconduct and the related phenomena of post-war denunciations of poor occupation behaviour among men. The male specificity within the norms of occupied culture and ideas of misconduct involved an overlap between general forms of misconduct and the political sphere, creating a belief that men in positions of authority had abused their power.

Denouncing misconduct

Post-war investigations were often carried out at the request of inhabitants. M. Albert, an interpreter attached to the British army, arrived in the commune of Eccles on 11 November 1918 and immediately received a verbal complaint from numerous locals accusing three inhabitants of having worked for the Germans as spies and denunciators. He asked for a written, signed complaint, which he received the following

morning.[4] Such complaints fit Sheila Fitzpatrick and Robert Gellately's definition of denunciations, comprising 'spontaneous communications from individual citizens to the state […] containing accusations of wrongdoing by other citizens or officials and implicitly or explicitly calling for punishment'.[5] These post-war denunciations were understood, by the authors and the authorities, as the opposite of denouncing compatriots to the Germans during the occupation. However, the symbolic, linguistic difference between *délation* (perceived as a negative act of betrayal/treason) and *dénonciation* (seen as a patriotic-civic duty) is rarely present.[6] Denunciation of male misconduct took numerous forms. Most frequently, inhabitants signed petitions, decrying the behaviour of notables during the occupation and calling for further investigations. One example is a petition from inhabitants of the commune of Saint-Rémy-Chaussée to the 'general commanding the French Mission attached to the British army', sent on 11 January 1919:

> The undersigned, inhabitants of the commune of St Rémy Chaussée, canton of Berlaimont Nord, have the honour of drawing your attention to the facts and behaviours of the mayor of their commune during the war. They have serious reasons to complain about the vexations to which they were all subjected, and from which (they do not hesitate to add) they suffered just as much as from foreign occupation.[7]

This petition's fifty signatories accused the Mayor of being involved in arbitrary requisitions, of refusing to pay inhabitants the military and other benefits to which they were entitled, and of a 'despicable' personal attitude towards the Germans (including providing them with food and other goods). He was especially criticised for 'The facility with which he delivered [*livrait*] to the Germans men, women, young girls, denouncing them if they refused, and punishing them with fines and imprisonment.'[8] Yet the subsequent investigation into both the writing of the petition and the Mayor's actions during the occupation highlights the complexity of the situation. Witness testimony was of varying reliability, and the role of public rumour became evident. One M. Raviart stated in his police interview: 'I reproach Mayor Lescaillez for having designated that I work for the Germans, against my will' and remarked that the Mayor had refused to pay his benefits even though his daughter was ill – just one of many similar statements in this file.[9] Such accusations may indeed be true, but they may also reflect an inability of the general population to comprehend the difficulties facing mayors and municipal administrations, caught between 'a rock and a hard place'. And the way in which some

locals exaggerated the ability of local notables to resist the Germans.[10] Raviart's testimony ended with common phrasing: 'I have heard that this Mayor trafficked goods with the Germans but I cannot give you any information on the subject.'[11] Clearly, public rumour surrounding the actions of the Mayor was widespread. Even though Raviart did not know anything of the Mayor's alleged commerce with the Germans, the fact that he had heard people talking about this made it worth mentioning – and almost made it a truth unto itself. Disentangling truth from accusations, as ever, is not easy, but further considering post-war denunciations and investigations provides an insight into the role of men in popular perceptions of misconduct.

Motives: duty, truth, or revenge?

Post-war petitions and letters denouncing occupation misconduct had a variety of motives beyond disdain for such behaviour. In the Lescaillez affair, there is evidence to suggest that more than a sense of patriotic duty lay behind the petition. One M. Bernier stated that the author of the petition, M. Martin, came to his house in March 1919 and asked the family if they would like to sign. Bernier said that he knew nothing of the affair, but Martin added, 'If you say what I want you to say, you will be rewarded.' Bernier maintained that he had nothing to say, so Martin left.[12] This calls into question the validity of the signatures, and possibly even the later witness statements – although this single statement could itself be false, an attempt to defend the Mayor and sully the reputation of Martin. Indeed, it was Lescaillez himself who told the gendarmes that they should interview Bernier.[13] Overall, the statements are contradictory and confusing, a fact to which a handwritten summary of the case attests.[14]

A similar problem can be seen in the investigation into alleged misconduct of the Mayor of Bachy and a local policeman. A letter of complaint signed by numerous inhabitants was sent to the Préfet, but the Commissaire Spécial of Lille noted that the man responsible for the petition had 'a reputation in the commune as a systematic complainer'.[15] Thus, this and other petitions may have been what Sheila Fitzpatrick classifies as 'manipulative' denunciations – a form of vengeance, an attempt at personal gain or political manoeuvring.[16] This was a commonplace defence used by men accused of misconduct. The Mayor of Crèvecœur-sur-l'Escaut was suspected of having close relations with the Germans, putting personal interest before that of citizens and even

threatening them with German punishments. In a letter to the Sous-Préfet of Cambrai, the Mayor denied all wrongdoing, calling the petition 'a veritable collection of lies which cannot survive serious examination' and stating, 'What's more, the electoral campaign has started, led by my political enemies.'[17] These enemies were using the occupation (and the difficult position in which the Mayor found himself) against him, for their own benefit rather than out of any moral-patriotic sentiment. It is unclear whether the French authorities believed this version of events, but they did call for a 'cross-examination' into the Mayor's actions.[18] Frustratingly, no further documents on this affair have been preserved.

Other examples of a political understanding of denunciation existed in Comines,[19] and Ligny-en-Cambrésis – where, in June 1920, the municipality ordered the replacement of the teacher of the local boys' school for general occupation misconduct.[20] The Inspecteur de l'Enseignement Primaire argued that the teacher was a pawn in a political game: the new Municipal Council was formed of *poilus* who wanted to 'cause harm to the former mayor', but the latter defended himself and threatened the councillors with sensational revelations, 'So they changed their mind, and they found a scapegoat: the teacher.'[21] It is unsurprising that the accused denied wrongdoing, and politicians accused their political enemies of being behind such accusations; this was probably the truth regarding some, but not all, post-war accusations.

Men who had been at the front during the war also signed post-war petitions decrying the wartime actions of mayors and municipal councillors. These men, absent during the occupation, could only formulate opinions based on rumour, demonstrating its centrality to local occupied life. This was the case in Bachy and Râches.[22] The most striking instance occurred in Denain regarding the conduct of M. Delphien, Adjunct to the Mayor and Acting Mayor from September 1914 until August 1916 (when he was seemingly deported to Germany). In December 1918, the Sous-Préfet of Valenciennes proposed Delphien for a citation in the *Journal Officiel* for his good behaviour during the occupation, notably for resisting German demands; he was cited on 14 July 1919. Yet, the following month, the Sous-Préfet expressed his conviction that Delphien had 'acted very badly during the occupation' and desired to distance himself officially from the citation, which he regretted. In September 1919, the Sous-Préfet proposed to the Préfet that Delphien and his fellow adjunct be dealt with by the military authorities.[23] The Préfet explained to the general now responsible for the 'affaire Delphien' that Delphien and a fellow adjunct were 'the

object of complaints emanating from the "Ligue des Poilus [Soldiers' League]"'.[24] In fact, former combatants had led the campaign against the two notables – not only did they write letters to French authorities but they also carried out their own investigations with the aid of local police, gathering considerable witness testimony attesting that these individuals had behaved badly during the war.[25] Veterans, local policemen and witnesses accused M. Delphien of overseeing requisitions of workers for the Germans and threatening those who refused to work, providing the occupiers with a list of men of mobilisation age, permitting workers to make sandbags, refusing to provide food to hidden Allied soldiers, showing weakness in the face of the enemy, offering cigarettes to German soldiers and wanting 'to offer a bouquet of flowers to a German colonel'. Delphien denied and explained away the accusations, but the evidence against him was overwhelming, hence the involvement of the military.[26] The fate of Delphien and his fellow mayoral adjunct is not recorded.

This affair demonstrates the strength of feeling among those who did not live through the occupation, for whom the conduct of the occupied population (especially notables) was important. This was often fuelled by the accounts of those who had experienced occupation. In particular, male, political misconduct had to be punished. Whether this emanated from a feeling of solidarity with occupied civilians, a desire to help them right the wrongs of the occupation or, more simply, suspicion of the occupied population held by many soldiers, is unclear.[27] What is clear, however, is that these denunciations were understood in terms of civic-patriotic duty, as represented by the justification in César Lemaire's letter to the Préfet regarding Mons-en-Pévèle: 'I take the responsibility of writing you this letter to give you some information on the poor administration of the commune [during the occupation].'[28] Denunciations were also an expression of outrage that the justice system had not investigated or punished the suspect individuals up to this point.

Anonymous animosity

Anonymous denunciations also existed. This was the origin of the investigation in Crèvecœur-sur-l'Escaut: a postcard sent to the Préfet in late July 1919 showed the Mayor and his family standing in a courtyard with German gendarmes. The message on the back is short and simple: 'When will you fire this mayor who sold out to the Boches[?]'[29] (see Figures 3 and 4). Another copy of this postcard was sent to the Minister of the

Figure 3 Postcard of the Mayor of Crèvecœur-sur-l'Escaut and his family with German gendarmes (front), sent to Préfet du Nord, 31 July 1919.
Archives Départementales du Nord, Lille, France, 9R1193.

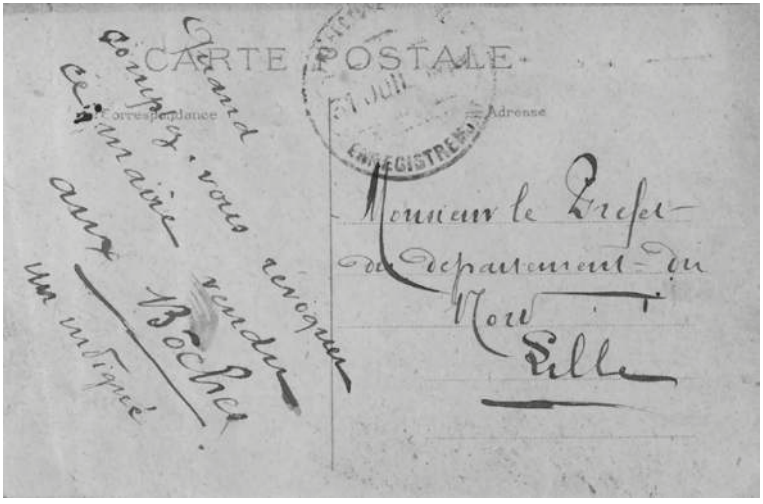

Figure 4 Postcard of the Mayor of Crèvecœur-sur-l'Escaut and his family with German gendarmes (reverse), sent to Préfet du Nord, 31 July 1919.
Archives Départementales du Nord, Lille, France, 9R1193.

Interior earlier in the month; also anonymous, it seems to have been written by another person and included a list of what those in the photo had done wrong. The Mayor had ostensibly been too friendly with the Germans, had not paid *allocations* to citizens and had turned his back on French prisoners of war.[30]

One of the most bizarre anonymous denunciations is a twenty-verse song regarding the actions of the Mayor of Marcq-en-Barœul, a copy of which was forwarded to the Préfet by the commune's *commissaire de police* in September 1919. It was accompanied by a photo showing the Mayor's son sitting down next to a German soldier. In the letter, the Commissaire stated that because of the photo and the song, 'in all likelihood, much will be said about these men during the next electoral period'.[31] The political implications of occupation (mis)conduct are evident. The song itself is entitled 'Complaint Dedicated to the Mayor of Marcq' and spoke of a village abandoned by its mayor, who, out of fear of imprisonment, 'betrays what responsibility dictates' and 'abdicates authority'.[32] One of his sons is mentioned, presumably the one in the photo, who 'gets on well / Alas with the foreigner'.[33] The Mayor was accused of being too friendly with the Germans, of helping them choose hostages and of not resisting German demands (especially regarding the deportations of 1916). The penultimate verse summed up the way a mayor was supposed to have acted during the occupation:

> It was necessary to give in
> To force, of course,
> But first to fight fearlessly
> For our unrecognised rights
> Because without this resistance
> Calm is bought at a high price
> It is no longer prudence
> And it is cowardice.[34]

Thus, the author recognised that resisting *all* German demands was impossible during the occupation – but some form of protest was needed *before* the inevitable acquiescence. This attitude was widely understood and accepted (see Chapter 6). Thus, mayors who acquiesced to German demands too readily, without protest, were perceived by adherents of occupied culture as having behaved badly. This was worthy of post-war denunciation to the highest echelons of French power, even if it was not total complicity.

Many of those who wrote denunciations to the French authorities or who gave statements to investigating gendarmes seemed not to understand the difficult position in which municipal administrations (and aid organisations) found themselves during the occupation. A case in point is the 'affaire Berteaux' in Fourmies. M. Berteaux was the mayoral secretary responsible for coordinating provisioning during the occupation. He was later denounced for having been involved in commerce with the Germans, giving a German officer 400,000 francs, setting up a shop that sold only German goods at prices locals could not afford, and selling the Germans various goods of the Provisioning Committee (Comité de Ravitaillement), which were destined exclusively for the French civilians.[35] Further, he allegedly often stated, 'I am neutral' and exchanged gifts with German officers; his wife made German flags.[36] The investigating policeman interviewed Berteaux in June 1919 and noted that he did not deny the accusations. Berteaux stated, 'If I gave merchandise to Germans, it's because I was obliged to "oil the machine" […] Members of the American and Hispano-Dutch commissions will vouch for me.'[37] His Comité de Ravitaillement colleagues indeed echoed Berteaux's sentiments. One defended Berteaux in a letter to the CANF's President, stating that the inquiry 'is giving satisfaction to the basest grudges' and 'displays an absolute ignorance of the obligations he faced regarding the Germans, from which he could not free himself without seriously compromising the proper functioning of provisioning'. The letter concluded: 'The case of M. Berteaux is the same as that of numerous other delegates, one seems to ignore the necessity of their rapports with the enemy and the compromises they had to make in the interest of the population.'[38]

This view was reinforced by the summary of the CRB meeting of 27 April 1919 at Vervins, its first meeting since the liberation, where unanimous support was expressed for Berteaux.[39] Indeed, the CRB noted that former delegates had a duty to combat any suspicion, insult or stain against the organisation, especially from non-occupied compatriots who would confuse 'obligatory rapports' with 'complicity' and 'guilt'.[40] This is an explicit admission that those who did not suffer the occupation would not be able to understand the complexities of the situation, that there was a distinction between administrative relations with the Germans which were necessary for the good of the local area, and outright unpatriotic and morally suspect relations. Yet those who wrote petitions and denunciations, or who gave statements to investigating gendarmes, often do not appear to have believed in such a distinction. This was perhaps

because they were not part of the administration so were not aware of the extreme difficulties faced, but probably also because they genuinely judged certain acts to be morally repugnant, whether there were 'mitigating circumstances' or not. This was the uncompromising occupied culture.

Similar accusations were made against other notables. In Saint-Rémy-Chaussée, the Mayor was accused of aiding the Germans in requisitions, of refusing to pay *allocations* or paying them late and of being responsible for forced labour.[41] Perhaps the population was ignorant that municipal coffers had been completely drained by the Germans or of the fact that mayors faced severe reprisals if they did not acquiesce to German demands. The 'municipalisation of power' encouraged by the Germans meant that they could 'apply pressure more easily for the execution of their demands'.[42] With increased municipal power came increased responsibility and, thus, greater chances of being accused of wrongdoing by the population at large. Indeed, contrary to the protests of the CANF above, the non-occupied French authorities were aware of the complexity of the administrative situation and did stress that dealings with the Germans did not automatically comprise 'complacency [*complaisance*]'. They understood that sometimes municipalities had to cooperate to avoid reprisals, and this was not a legitimate incrimination against a mayor or civil authority, especially for 'modest civil servants'.[43]

Naturally, some accusations are more likely to be true than others, particularly those corroborated by numerous witnesses from all walks of life. Nevertheless, claims that were likely false or proven false provide an insight into the occupied population's understanding and perception of their experience. They attest to a widespread belief in misconduct and an acknowledgement of the representational and conceptual framework born of occupation and crystallised by the liberation, which the authors of untrue accusations used to their advantage.

Inconclusive conclusions

Whereas investigations into female, sexual misconduct were more numerous, they were also considerably less thorough – reports mostly comprised just a page or two per suspect. By contrast, investigations into the thirty-three male suspects created nearly 800 pages of documentation involving lengthy witness statements and cross-examinations.[44] This, as well as the content of such enquiries, suggests that male misconduct was

taken more seriously by the French/Allied authorities and was understood as no less treasonous by the former *occupés* themselves. Yet despite the depth of investigations into the misconduct of male figures of authority, many lack definitive conclusions – or hint at evidence that would allow for such conclusions but which is often not preserved. Even when guilty verdicts are present, they rarely state what (if any) punishments the accused faced. In Neuville-en-Ferrain, the investigating gendarme concluded that 'the rural policemen Walcke seems to have had a servile attitude towards the Germans […] He was on the best terms with the Kommandantur and German policemen.'[45] Further investigations were carried out, but the documentation is absent. In the commune of Catillon-sur-Sambre, *Messieurs* Dambrine and Pamart (the Adjunct and the Secretary to the Mayor respectively) were arrested after being found guilty of various forms of *intelligence avec l'ennemi*, but no further information is given.[46] Judging by Martinage's study into judicial punishment of 'collaborators', it is likely that many such suspects were ultimately not punished at all.[47]

Nevertheless, some conclusions can be drawn. There was a belief among some formerly occupied people that local politicians or notables had engaged in a host of compromising activities, which were frowned upon but not always illegal. Some may be seen by the historian as inevitabilities of the occupation: to preserve what little influence they had left, mayors needed to have good relations with the Germans, in what Robert Vandenbussche labelled a *modus vivendi*.[48] However, this understanding was largely absent from the hard-line, idealistic norms of occupied culture. This explains, for example, the suspicion of Municipal Councillor M. Defives of Saint-André-lez-Lille, said to have been in constant touch with the Kommandantur and on friendly terms with the Germans;[49] or of M. Dumontier of Comines, who kept a cinema exclusively for German use, and whose daughter was the fiancée of a German soldier.[50] Many inhabitants of the occupied Nord understood such actions as inherently symbolic and shameful. Any perceived negative behaviours carried out by men in positions of authority might be considered 'political' misconduct. However, this behaviour was never ideological, certainly not a stated policy, and accusations were often unreflective of the complex reality of occupied life – or entirely false. Nevertheless, the actions of which people were accused or suspected are interesting regardless of 'objective reality', precisely because some people believe that they *could have* happened. This is equally true of another form of male misconduct.

Commercial and financial misconduct

Men were disproportionately accused of commercial relations with the Germans,[51] ranging from general 'exchange' of goods to perceived war profiteering, including explicit 'gold traffic' whereby men actively sought out French money and gave it to the Germans for a commission. Some forms of commerce crossed the line into wider criminality and are therefore examined in more detail in Chapter 5. The forms of commercial misconduct examined here mostly comprised illegal *commerce avec l'ennemi* actively aiding the German war effort, although the line between official and unofficial commercial relations was blurred.

Commercial misconduct was the most common accusation laid against men in the repatriation testimony examined: 130 out of 228 suspect men (57 per cent) were accused of this.[52] British intelligence reports list ninety-five men from across all of occupied France, not just the Nord; thirty-nine are reported as having engaged in traffic or trade with the enemy – in gold, flour, or other goods. Among these was the Mayor of Tainsiers, also noted as having frequently received officers at his house and having been on friendly terms with the Germans,[53] or M. Minon of Villers-Sire-Nicole, a clerk at the Mairie accused of traffic with the enemy.[54] Women were less frequently mentioned as engaging in this sort of commercial exchange – just forty in French repatriation reports (4.9 per cent of all suspect women) – and when they were it was usually considered to also involve a sexual element.[55]

Men suspected of commercial relations with the Germans came from a range of backgrounds. The most common professions among suspects mentioned in repatriation reports include bakers, grocers, merchants, butchers or cattle owners – thus those with better access to goods or money.[56] A few examples suffice to demonstrate the variety of forms this behaviour could take, as well as its perceived existence across the Nord. A man from Escarmain, nicknamed Mignory, sold horses to the Germans, and even gave the Kommandant flowers and a German flag.[57] Two men 'of Spanish origin' from Anzin worked as *ravitailleurs* for the Germans, buying food in Belgium and selling it at the front.[58] Baker M. Soyez from Denain was denounced on two separate occasions for gold trafficking, which in this instance meant using gold to buy sugar from the Germans, then selling his products to compatriots at exorbitant prices. He apparently also called the French 'cowards'.[59] Forty-five-year-old Arthur Dupas from Walincourt was estimated to have provided the Germans with at least 30,000 francs in gold, made from

selling alcohol.[60] Two men from Roubaix 'provisioned' the Germans and engaged in 'trafficking gold and paper money', which they carried out at the Taverne Viennoise, owned by their tout Marie.[61] Other forms of misconduct overlapped: in Sin-le-Noble, M. Vion was alleged to have provisioned the Germans, engaged in gold traffic with them and also prostituted his daughters to them.[62] Grocer Régis Huard from Fourmies spoke German very well, had close connections with German officers, denounced compatriots, but also sold goods to the population while selling butter to the Germans; he was signalled by his repatriated mistress, but the author of the report stated that she seemed sincere in her declarations.[63] Such men supplying the Germans and the wider population in some manner alleviated the harsh conditions of occupied life, even if they profited financially from this. These individuals were nevertheless criticised by many compatriots and perceived as criminals, discussed in Chapter 5.

In a rare avowal, M. Devillers from Gouzeaucourt claimed that he had been evacuated to La Longueville and 'had been forced by German gendarmes from this locality to go and withdraw, for their personal consumption, food and other goods from the American Comité de Ravitaillement. M. Habille, a teacher charged with these distributions, and the Mayor himself knew about this subterfuge and closed their eyes'.[64] Similarly, mayors or members of municipalities or provisioning committees were also believed to have been involved in commercial misconduct: the Mayors of Valenciennes, Hautmont, the Adjunct Mayor of Saint-Amand and a member of the Comité de Ravitaillement from Lille were all denounced for this in repatriation testimony.[65]

Conversely, diaries are largely silent on commercial misconduct, with some exceptions. Hirsch recorded in January 1917 that the Allied blockade meant that Germans in Maubeuge had started to buy bread from civilians.[66] Given that he lived in Roubaix, this information likely comprises hearsay. Blin, writing about Roubaix, hinted at commercial misconduct twice. In April 1915, he drew a connection between financial relations and patriotism: 'Oh! These shopkeepers! For them, particularly, money has no *patrie*: Would you like some sauerkraut from Strasbourg?' By September 1917, commercial motives had led to commonplace and, for him, disgusting behaviour:

> '*Earn money, lots of money*' is, at this time, people's obsession. Smuggling, *ravitaillement*, clandestine commerce; everything goes to achieve this. Base behaviours no longer carry weight, moral integrity is dead. It is up to each

> person to empty the pockets of others to fill his/her own. Everything is inverted and perverted; conscience has become the science of mercantilism; conquered country, rotten country.[67]

This suggests that commercial misconduct increased as the occupation continued. Blin was not the only one to object to these behaviours, which were targeted in the clandestine tract *La Liberté*, which appeared in Lille-Roubaix-Tourcoing in November 1915. It contained a lengthy article entitled 'THE MONEY CHANGERS!' that began by asking: 'What to say about these Belgians and French people, these pseudo-Belgians and pseudo-French people, who for months have engaged in the exchange of gold and French paper money for the Germans?' It continued to speak of 'their criminal indignity and rapaciousness', calling them 'traitors' and 'criminals, the worst criminals' because they provide the Germans with 'impure metal from which our brothers and sons will possibly die' or money with which Germany 'will kill thousands and thousands of our soldiers'. The publication called on the population to desert and boycott the offices of money changers, before concluding:

> You are French people, Belgians; they are the worst sell-outs!
>
> But let them watch out for national vengeance. The real patriots watch and document. When the moment comes, they will denounce in the full light of day the bandits who exchange the national wealth for their own profit, for the enemy's profit. Whether they are bankers or manufacturers[,] cabaret owners or wood-turners, brokers or owners of houses of ill repute, we will pillory them, they and their firms, so that it will not be said that France and the Republic, once the great ordeal has passed, have pushed imprudence and folly so much that they open their arms and heart to the brigands who cash in when their real sons suffered and hoped.
>
> Down with those who sell out the *patrie*![68]

Outrage at commercial misconduct is understandable: selling or providing goods to the occupiers, or exchanging money with the Germans, comprised *commerce avec l'ennemi* but also deprived locals of much-needed resources. This also explains why *La Liberté*'s prediction was partly true, as detailed investigations were carried out into a few specific allegations of this type of behaviour.

In Catillon-sur-Sambre, mentioned above, the Secretary to the Mayor and Adjunct to the Mayor were arrested, charged with intelligence and commerce with the enemy, including increasing the price of CRB goods and keeping the profit, stealing CRB goods, forgery, use of false documents, swindling and embezzlement.[69] The key figures in the mayoral

administration of Râches were likewise accused of engaging in such misconduct.[70] In Boussois, the Mayor was said to have allowed CRB flour to be used to bake bread for the Germans, contravening international law.[71] According to French military intelligence, in Denain two men constantly exchanged goods with the Germans, making large profits.[72] In Le Cateau, the former mayor was involved in an 'active cheese trade' with the Germans![73] In Valenciennes, four shopkeepers/food suppliers were engaged in similar activities and were subsequently met with disdain by their compatriots who resented them for giving the Germans what little foodstuffs were available. Both the locals and the French intelligence officer writing the report noted that these men 'deserved to be punished'.[74] Indeed, two of these men bought wine from the Germans and resold it at a higher price to already poor civilians.[75] Other such examples exist.[76]

In the Cour d'Assises du Nord, just five men were punished for commerce with the enemy after the war. Louis Bonvarlet from Lille was sentenced to seven years' imprisonment in 1921 for 'serving as a tout for gold and money to the benefit of German *bureaux de change*'.[77] Adolphe Lamourette from Templeuve had been a German agent and indicator in 1917–18, and in 1917 had provided 'help and money' to the Germans by visiting compatriots who were hiding gold then denouncing them to the Germans.[78] Paul Duez both made sandbags for the Germans and provided them with weapons and aid in Roubaix in January–June 1915.[79] Alex Balieu provided the Germans with provisions and food in Avesnes, Valenciennes, Cambrai and Belgium from 1915 to 1918.[80] Finally, in Avesnes, Jules Bourlion had become 'a veritable agent of the Germans' from 1915–18: as well as denouncing individuals and providing military information to the Germans, he also bought wood for them from Mormal forest.[81] Bourlion in fact appeared in three repatriation reports in February 1917, with his name mistakenly recorded as 'Burillon' and 'Burion'; he was denounced every time for commercial relations and his familiarity with the Germans.[82] A similar confirmation of a repatriation denunciation came with the verdict for one of the rare women found guilty of commerce with the Germans: Mme Patoir, a widow from Valenciennes.[83] This suggests that at least some repatriation testimony was true, and that commercial misconduct was easier to prove than other forms.

Reflections on misconduct

Misconduct was perceived as existing in male and female forms, conflating personal immorality with patriotic perversion. The *occupés* were

permanently suspicious of each other – as the Allied authorities were of the *occupés* themselves – with many seeing any sign of goodwill towards the Germans as a marker of deeper compromise and anti-patriotic tendencies. The dominant occupied culture condemned any breaches of respectable, patriotic social relations, of wartime norms dictating that the enemy must be hated. Of course, not everyone bought into this world view or criticised others, not least those engaging in misconduct. A certain degree of familiarity, fraternisation and accommodation was inevitable, and there are sources attesting to the normalisation of this experience among some locals. However, the frequency and strength of criticisms of perceived misconduct cannot be ignored, and these continued throughout the occupation; this overshadows rarer evidence for eventual acceptance or resignation regarding forced or voluntary interactions with Germans. Thus, while criticisms of misconduct only reflect one part of occupied life, it is an important part that is extremely visible to the historian – and this a central aspect of the occupied culture proposed here.

If the number of men suspected of such behaviours was small, this is in part explained by the lower male population during the occupation; on the other hand, the proportion of men convicted after 1918 was comparatively high given this demographic deficit, even if the overall number remained low. The fact that most men were in positions of authority during the occupation often brought a political or differently symbolic understanding of their breaches of expected norms. This explains both the phenomenon of post-war denunciations and the seriousness with which Allied authorities dealt with the attendant investigations and trials. Ultimately, male misconduct was overshadowed during the occupation and afterwards by the obsession with *femmes à Boches*; certain women in the largely female occupied Nord were understood to have betrayed their brothers, fathers, husbands or sons at the front by their sexual relations with the national enemy. Their treason, like their occupied life, was highly gendered.

The reality of misconduct is hard to gauge, especially in light of the problematic sources that allow us to glimpse this phenomenon. As Sheila Fitzpatrick notes, Diderot's encyclopaedia states that 'One is inclined to think that the delator is a corrupt man, the accuser an angry man, and the denouncer an indignant man.'[84] Yet this does not mean that all denunciations, or indeed accusatory witness testimonies and mentions of misconduct, are inherently false. There was truth behind at least some of the denunciations, accusations and witness testimonies

studied in the past three chapters; perhaps a greater truth than has previously been present in accounts of this occupation. Misconduct did genuinely occur, as the post-war trials demonstrate – even if their limited numbers suggest that the extent of the phenomenon, legally defined, was small. Perhaps this was precisely the aim of such trials, because the evidence examined here hints at widespread misconduct in the Nord. At the very least, there was an undeniable fixation with misconduct among both the Allied authorities and many *occupés* themselves. For the latter, perceived breaches of the acceptable, respectable norms of wartime society comprised a betrayal which at best undermined the wider claims of dignified suffering and at worst threatened national survival. Both during and after the war, retribution and justice were demanded concerning those ostensibly engaging in such unrespectable actions. However, there were other behaviours carried out by certain *occupés* that similarly undermined the notion of dignified suffering, and which are worthy of further investigation. Two key examples were expressions of disunity among the French, and engaging in criminal activities – the subjects of the next two chapters.

Notes

1 Philippe Nivet, *La France occupée 1914–1918* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2011), pp. 395–8.
2 ADN, 9R1193 and 9R1229, liberation reports into suspect occupation behaviour.
3 The six are: ADN, 9R1193, Crèvecœur-sur-l'Escaut, Denain, Fourmies, Gognies, Neuville-en-Ferrain, and ADN, 9R1229, Catillon.
4 ADN, 9R1197, Eccles, procès-verbal, Force spéciale de gendarmerie attachée à l'Armée britannique, Leydet, 14 November 1918 (henceforth listed as commune, name of investigator, report number when relevant, date). Testimony of M. Durand, 'interprète attaché au 12e [Lançier] Anglais'.
5 Sheila Fitzpatrick and Robert Gellately, 'Introduction to the practices of denunciation in modern European history', *Journal of Modern History*, 68:4 (1996), p. 747.
6 Sheila Fitzpatrick, 'Signals from below: Soviet letters of denunciation of the 1930s', *Journal of Modern History*, 68:4 (1996), p. 831. In sources on the Nord, *délation* is rarely used, with *dénonciation* and *dénoncer* used to express both occupation *délation* and post-war *dénonciation*.
7 ADN, 9R1193, Saint-Rémy-Chaussée, Affaire Lescaillez, Petition from the inhabitants of Saint-Rémy-Chaussée to Monsieur le Général Commandant la mission française attachée à l'armée britannique, 11 January 1919. Original emphasis.

8 ADN, 9R1193, petition, 11 January 1919. Original emphasis.
9 ADN, 9R1193, Saint-Rémy-Chaussée, Affaire Lescaillez, procès-verbal, Gendarmerie nationale, Vernet, 24 March 1919 (henceforth listed as commune, name of investigator, report number when relevant, date). Statement of M. Raviart.
10 Sébastien Debarge, 'Fourmies occupée pendant la Grande Guerre', *Revue du Nord*, 80:325 (1998), p. 292.
11 ADN, 9R1193, Saint-Rémy-Chaussée, Affaire Lescaillez, procès-verbal, Vernet, 24 March 1919; statement of M. Raviart.
12 ADN, 9R1193, Saint-Rémy-Chaussée, Affaire Lescaillez, procès-verbal, 12 April 1919; statement of M. Bernier.
13 ADN, 9R1193, Saint-Rémy-Chaussée, Affaire Lescaillez, procès-verbal, Vernet and Hudault, 12 April 1919; statement of M. Lescaillez.
14 ADN, 9R1193, Saint-Rémy-Chaussée, Affaire Lescaillez, procès-verbal, handwritten note, n.a., n.d.
15 ADN, 9R1193, Saint-Rémy-Chaussée, Affaire Lescaillez, procès-verbal, Bachy, Commissaire Spécial de Lille to Préfet, 11 August 1919.
16 Fitzpatrick, 'Signals from Below', p. 863.
17 ADN, 9R1193, Crèvecœur-sur-l'Escaut, Mayor to Sous-Préfet of Cambrai, 5 October 1919, original emphasis.
18 ADN, 9R1193, Crèvecœur-sur-l'Escaut, Sous-Préfet of Cambrai to Préfet, 17 October 1919.
19 ADN, 9R1229, Comines, Procès-verbal, Biarnais, no. 77, 4 July 1919; statement of M. Lesaffre.
20 ADN, 9R1229, Ligny-en-Cambrésis, 'Extrait du Registre aux Délibérations du Conseil Municipal de la Commune de Ligny-en-Cambrésis', session of 10 July 1920.
21 ADN, 9R1229, Inspecteur de l'Enseignement Primaire of Cambrai to Directeur Départemental, 19 August 1920.
22 ADN, 9R1193, Bachy, petition to Delugé Préfectoral, 20 July 1919; petition to Commandant de Place de Bachy, n.d.; petition to Président du Conseil Ministère de l'Intérieur [sic], 27 May 1919; report, Rossey, 29 July 1918; ADN, 9R1229, Râches, procès-verbal, Déburcaus and Hatte, 17 February 1919.
23 ADN, 9R1193, typewritten document summarising chronology of Affaire Delphien, n.a., n.d.
24 ADN, 9R1193, Denain, Préfet to Genéral Commandant, 1er Corps d'Armée, 2 October 1919.
25 ADN, 9R1193, Sous-Préfet of Valenciennes to Préfet, 23 September 1919.
26 ADN, 9R1193, typewritten document, n.a., n.d.
27 David Englander, 'The French Soldier, 1914–18', *French History*, 1:1 (1987), p. 65.

28 ADN, 9R1129, Mons-en-Pévèle, Césare Lemaire to Préfet, 27 April 1919.
29 ADN, 9R1193, Crèvecœur-sur-l'Escaut, postcard to Préfet, stamped 31 July 1919, original emphasis.
30 ADN, 9R1193, postcard to Ministre de l'Intérieur, stamped 12 July 1919.
31 ADN, 9R1229, Marcq-en-Barœul, Commissaire de Police to Préfet, 13 September 1919.
32 ADN, 9R1229, Complainte dédiée au Maire de Marcq, first verse.
33 ADN, 9R1229, Complainte dédiée au Maire de Marcq, third verse.
34 ADN, 9R1229, Complainte dédiée au Maire de Marcq, nineteenth verse.
35 ADN, 9R1193, Fourmies, affaire Berteaux, seemingly secrétariat général du Comité du Ravitaillement des Régions Libérées to Préfet, 21 June 1919.
36 ADN, 9R1193, Fourmies, Lieutenant Gallissot to Préfet, 12 June 1919.
37 ADN, 9R1193, Fourmies, Lieutenant Gallissot to Préfet, 12 June 1919.
38 ADN, 9R1193, Fourmies, M. Droulers to Président du CANF, Brussels, 28 May 1919.
39 ADN, 9R1193, Fourmies, summary of the session of 27 April 1919 of the 'délégués régionaux de l'ancienne administration CRB réunis en l'Hôtel de Ville de VERVINS'.
40 *Ibid.* My emphasis.
41 ADN, 9R1193, Saint-Rémy-Chaussée, petition to the général commandant de la mission française attachée à l'armée britannique, 11 January 1919. See also ADN, 9R1193, Denain; ADN, 9R1229, Mons-en-Pévèle.
42 Eric Bukowski, 'Cambrai: une ville du Nord occupée lors de la Première Guerre mondiale', master's dissertation (Lille III, 1986), p. 60.
43 SHD, 16N581, État-Major Général, Section des Renseignements aux Armées, 'Réintegration des Réfugiés dans les Territoires Envhais', to GQG le 26 Juin 1916, 'B. Triage des suspectes et des indésirables'.
44 ADN, 9R1193 and 9R1229, passim.
45 ADN, 9R1193, Neuville-en-Ferrain, Commissaire Spécial de Lille to Préfet, 21 June 1919.
46 ADN, 9R1229, Catillon, Commissaire Divisionnaire, Chef de la 2e Brigade de Police to Procureur de la République, 28 April 1919.
47 Renée Martinage, 'Les collaborateurs devant la cour d'assises du Nord après la très Grande Guerre', *Revue du Nord*, 77:309 (1995), 95–115.
48 Robert Vandenbussche, 'Le pouvoir municipal à Douai sous l'occupation (1914–1918)', *Revue du Nord*, 61:241 (1979), p. 445.
49 USNA, Record Group 120, Entry 198, I(b) 283, 2 July 1918.
50 USNA, Record Group 120, Entry 198, I(b) 349, 7 October 1918.
51 See also Philippe Salson, *L'Aisne occupée: Les civils dans la Grande Guerre* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2015), pp. 237–53; Nivet, *La France occupée*, p. 295; Gromaire, *L'Occupation allemande*, p. 171.
52 ADHS, 4M513.

53 USNA, Record Group 120, Entry 198, I(b) 290, 12 July 1918.
54 USNA, Record Group 120, Entry 198, I(b) 316, 5 August 1918.
55 See, for example, ADHS, 4M513, repatriation report no. 476, 12 January 1917 (Escarmain).
56 ADHS, 4M513, passim.
57 ADHS, 4M513, reports no. 476, 12 January 1917.
58 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 723, 13 February 1917.
59 ADHS, 4M513, reports no. 790, 22 February 1917; no. 797, 28 February 1917.
60 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 759, 17 February 1917.
61 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 1263, 27 April 1917.
62 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 1075, 21 March 1917.
63 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 834, 28 February 1917.
64 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 741, 15 February 1917.
65 ADHS, 4M513, reports no. 728, 13 February 1917; no. 532, 19 January 1917; 22 March 1917; no. 1203, 24 April 1917.
66 Annette Becker (ed.), *Journaux de combattants et de civils de la France du Nord dans la Grande Guerre* (Lille: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 1998), Hirsch diary, 5 January 1917, p. 268.
67 ADN, 74J225, diary of M. Blin (instituteur en retraite at Auchy-les-Orchies), 24 April 1915 and 18 September 1917.
68 ADN, 3U281/77, 1er CA Région, Conseil de Guerre, plainte no. 613, inventory of trial of Mme Rouvaux, *La Liberté*, 15 November 1915.
69 ADN, 9R1229, Catillon, Commissaire Divisionnaire to Procureur de la République, 28 April 1919.
70 ADN, 9R1229, Râches, procès-verbal, Déburcaus and Hatte, 17 February 1919.
71 ADN, 9R1229, Boussois, Brigadier de Gendarmerie to Jeumont (neighbouring commune), 8 January 1919.
72 SHD, 19N1571, X Armée, Deuxième Bureau, 'Fiches de Renseignements sur les Pays envahis par l'ennemi 1914–1916 et sans date', Carton 423, Région du Front – Zone ouest à l'ouest de l'Oise, Denain, Habitants suspects.
73 SHD, 19N1571, Canton de Le Cateau [sic], Commune de Bazeul, suspect.
74 SHD, 17N433, Mission française attachée à la 4e Armée Britannique, Commissaire Spécial Mollex, procès-verbal no. 397, 3 March 1918.
75 *Ibid*.
76 See SHD, 17N433, passim; SHD, 19N1571 passim; ADHS, 4M513; ADN, 9R1193; ADN, 9R1229, passim.
77 ADN, 2U1/445, CAN, arrêt, no. 13, 17 January 1921.
78 ADN, 2U1/445, CAN, arrêt, 1 March 1921.
79 ADN, 2U1/445, CAN, arrêt, 21 October 1921.
80 ADN, 2U1/448, CAN, arrêt, 12 April 1924.
81 ADN, 2U1/445, CAN, arrêt, 18 June 1921.

82 AHDS, 4M513, reports no. 726, 13 February 1917; no. 667, 3 February 1917; no. 674, 5 February 1917.
83 AHDS, 4M513, report no. 780, 20 February 1917; ADN, 2U1/448, CAN, arrêt, 3 May 1924.
84 Fitzpatrick, 'Signals from Below', p. 832.

4

Une sacrée désunion? Conflict continues

Occupied culture drew on both pre-war norms and the experience of daily interaction with the enemy; it did not mark a wholly clean break with what went before. The occupation did not erase all pre-war conflicts and tensions, but provided a new context for these and fresh areas of contention. Only a few scholars have examined such division among the occupied population. Salson demonstrates that the Aisne experienced class conflict, 'social violence' and criticism of municipalities – especially regarding their role in food provisioning.[1] Nivet highlights the tensions between refugees evacuated further behind enemy lines and host populations.[2] Similar conflicts were present in the occupied Nord to varying degrees.[3] This chapter considers three important flashpoints: religious, political and social divisions. Studying these allows for a more comprehensive view of local reactions to the occupation and the gap between the expectations of occupied culture and the reality of occupied life.

Naturally, complete unity among any population is impossible. In unoccupied France, attempts to impose a political and social *Union Sacrée* – an abandonment of pre-existing conflicts for the national good – broke down by 1917 at the latest,[4] and the *Union* was often more a lofty aim than a lived reality. Yet post-war memoirs and histories regarding the occupied zone say little about social, political or religious divisions among locals, giving the impression of a real, permanent *Union Sacrée* here. This is best summarised by Gromaire's remark that:

> In general, the population acted in a dignified and exemplary fashion […] workers showed the greatest firmness and courage. The *bourgeoisie moyenne* remained in this period, as always, the backbone of the nation. It conserved a magnificent solidarity and a lucid awareness of its duties. Rich

> like poor, the lamentable percentage of miscreants signalled above aside, knew how to suffer and to cope wonderfully with the sacrifices they owed France.[5]

Such a view has even permeated histories since the 1990s. Annette Becker claims that in occupied France and Belgium, 'The republic, the kingdom of Belgium, were seen as incontestable regimes, to be defended in their entirety. All other struggles, social, political, religious, were put aside.'[6] I will suggest that, although there were many acts of unity, the occupied French did not engage in unqualified solidarity. Indeed, the experience of occupation offered opportunities for and even encouraged expressions of disunity among locals, beyond forms of misconduct examined thus far. Such a state of affairs may seem self-evident, but it has rarely been studied.

Religious conflict

Tensions between the Third Republic and Catholicism, especially between anti-clericals and clericals, had worsened with the separation of Church and State in December 1905, and continued up to 1914.[7] Yet at the outbreak of war, and for the remainder of the conflict, Catholics generally offered support for the national effort.[8] Much work has been carried out on the implicit and explicit religious undertones in the 'war cultures' of belligerents, and, more specifically, in France itself.[9] However, few works deal exclusively with religion in occupied France. Patrick J. Houlihan emphasised the way in which transnational Catholicism brought some French Catholics closer to Catholic Bavarian troops,[10] whereas Carine Cnudde-Lecointre demonstrated that here, as elsewhere, certain Catholics viewed the war as a divine punishment for the sins of secular France.[11] This was partly why some individuals described the occupation as an expiatory experience, a 'Calvary' and 'martyrdom'.[12] The faithful professing this opinion was one thing, but when clergymen criticised the Republic and its secularism, French authorities perceived this as a dangerous threat to unity. Clergy in the unoccupied section of the Nord were sanctioned for such behaviour,[13] but in the occupied area this was seen as particularly unacceptable given the need to support each other in this time of suffering.

The first Republican suspicions of clergymen's actions and motives in the occupied Nord came in January 1915, when socialist *député* Albert Inghels wrote to the Préfet:

> I have learned from trustworthy people that the clericals in the churches are right now engaged in a campaign against the Republic, they have no shame in heaping all their sarcastic phrases onto republicans[.] The campaign is being led with the total complicity of the Germans in their newspapers such as 'Le Bien public' Le Belge' etc not forgetting the Bulletin Ardennais.

The author continued by criticising the 'arrogance' of these clericals, who attracted people to churches by posting casualty lists inside, describing this as an 'abuse' carried out by priests. These events occurred, he noted, in Tourcoing and Lille.[14]

Historians have concluded that before the war the diocese of Lille had been in a 'latent state of civil war' between clericals and anti-clericals,[15] and clearly this did not disappear with the occupation. Lille was a battleground for further such conflict in 1916. In his New Year wishes for 1916, the Bishop of Lille (Monseigneur Charost) remarked that 'God is sending us a test, he has chosen us as expiatory victims for the faults of France.'[16] This theme reappeared later that year. From 12 to 17 March 1916, the Lent conference season at the parish of Saint-Étienne in Lille contained three talks on secularism, modern impiety and morals without God; these subjects were underlined, seemingly, by a local policeman investigating anti-Republican sentiment in churches.[17] In late March 1916, the Commissaire de Police of Lille informed the Préfet of the contents of the recent mass celebrating the feast of Saint Joseph in Saint Joseph's church, which had been under police surveillance:

> Monseigneur Charost preached for about an hour. After having recounted the life of Saint Joseph and his escape to Egypt, he spoke of the catastrophe of Moulins-Lille (explosion of the *dix-huit ponts*). On this subject he said that it was a punishment that God had sent, because among the 750 people living on rue de Ronchin, 200 at most were for the church. In rue Desaix, where there were so many victims, just a single child went to catechism and even then not always regularly. His words produced a bad effect on the witnesses.[18]

Clearly the bishop's opinion was not shared by his parishioners, and the Commissaire had felt Monseigneur Charost's words striking enough to report to the Préfet. The very fact that the police monitored masses at a time when its personnel was strained (see the next chapter) underlines the suspicion with which the Republican regime viewed the Church. However, in this instance, Charost concluded the sermon more positively, by speaking of the hoped-for victory of France at the battle of Verdun.[19]

The following month, according to another police report, at the church of Saint Étienne in Lille, the priest gave a sermon entitled, 'A great peril for faith – School without God.'[20] Monseigneur Charost apparently supported such an attack on the secular school system, himself stating in a sermon in May 1916 that Catholics were obligated to send their children to religious schools. The sermon upset a teacher, who complained about this in a letter seemingly sent to the Préfet in February 1917. It is unclear quite why this teacher took so long to bring this to the attention of the French authorities.[21] Throughout the war, Charost professed anti-Republican sentiments and understood events as a divine punishment for France's sins.[22] However, he was careful to adhere to French law. In July and September 1916, a leaflet entitled 'The National Sin' was distributed in the letter boxes of houses in certain areas of Lille. The leaflet stated that the suffering experienced by the local population was God's punishment (out of love) for the sins of France – sins of legislators acting with a criminal folly in pursuing secular policies, sins of children sent to secular schools, sins of electors voting for men 'without religion'[23] (a nod to the socialist gains in the region). When Charost was confronted with this leaflet by the Acting Préfet, he denied all knowledge of its existence, promising to stop further leaflets from appearing and to punish the person responsible.[24] Just two days later, Charost had indeed ceased the circulation of the leaflet and had located its author – M. Margérin, rector of the Catholic University, whose right to print was revoked.[25]

Nevertheless, a similar theme was present in a 'conference' given to students of technical classes in Roubaix in October 1916. A copy of this lengthy speech has been preserved, although it is unclear who the speaker/author was. The text attacked the Republic, and especially the 1914 Chamber of Deputies ('the most socialist and the worst France has ever elected'), for having focused on religious persecution rather than national defence. It continued: 'So, here is the justice of God falling down suddenly on France, the plague of God appears at the border, invades her soil and occupies her richest provinces.' Just as 'official France' had impoverished the Church, so now France itself was being impoverished and its economic future undermined. 'This is justice, we have sinned, it's the plague of God that is occurring' was the key, repeated sentence of the text. The author also attacked the Republic's expulsion of religious orders, especially from schools, and its 'persecution of those who consecrated their lives to God'. Both the occupation and trench warfare were the direct result. It ended:

> CONCLUSION: It is official France herself that called for the plague that is striking her; and if she had put as much energy into preparing for war as she did into attacking God and his Church, the German people would never have dreamed of attacking. They chased God from France, it is the plague of God that has come. We are waiting for official France to enact, above all, new reparatory and liberating laws.
>
> [When] God [is] returned, the plague will go away.[26]

The branch of Catholic thinking, attributing the suffering of the war and occupation to the sins of the Republic, was clearly alive and well in Lille and Roubaix in 1916. There was no *Union Sacrée* with the regime for individuals professing such views.

Although evidence is scarce, there is some suggestion that in other towns similar religious conflict occurred. In Cambrai, according to Eric Bukowski's unpublished study, Monseigneur Chollet wanted to use the war to renew the faith of those who had strayed from the Church. To do so, he engaged in a *modus vivendi* with the occupiers to reinstate certain religious practices banned before the war, such as processions. Chollet 'seems to have continued the religious battle that ravaged the town before the war and he wanted to use the occupation to accentuate his role in the town'.[27] Yet one repatriation report from February 1917 also remarked that Chollet's sermons 'are always full of profound patriotism and demonstrate great courage. He therefore contributes greatly to supporting the morale of the population'.[28] Admittedly, the two positions – reasserting the place of religion in local society and patriotism – were not mutually exclusive. There are other examples of clergymen from Lille alluding to French victory in patriotic sermons without criticising the French Government or the Republic – arguably representative of a genuine *Union Sacrée* among certain priests.[29] According to Blin's diary, in July 1915, one priest 'arrested for preaching certain Victory' was condemned to death, commuted to two years' imprisonment.[30] Other priests and Charost himself were involved in forms of resistance, examined in Part II. Throughout the war, Charost promoted a Catholic form of patriotism and advocated various forms of solidarity: he implored believers to help the municipality pay fines,[31] and played an important role in the Church's 'moral and social works' focused on combating juvenile delinquency, prostitution, and providing food and goods to the poor of Lille.[32] Cnudde-Lecointre argued that Charost supported the *Union Sacrée* because he hoped it would allow the Church to return to its rightful place in French society,[33] although his repeated criticism of the Republic suggests that for him this did not necessitate an end to pre-war conflict.

Overall, no blanket statement can be made regarding the clergy's attitude regarding the occupation. However, it is clear that at least until late 1916 some saw it as an opportunity to continue and even heighten attacks of the secular Republic.

Towards political conflict

Given the anti-clerical policies of the Third Republic, religious and political conflict were not mutually exclusive. In August 1916, the Mayor and Municipal Council of Anstaing addressed a twelve-page letter to the local *curé*, a copy of which was sent to the Préfet. The priest, M. Prussenac, had moved to the village from Lille's Saint-Saveur parish in 1915 after the death of his predecessor.[34] Since then, the municipality claimed, he had been making false 'allegations against us and most of our electorate'. The angry letter listed the priest's actions, interspersed with the phrase, 'We accuse you', echoing the style of Émile Zola's *J'accuse*. The authors accused the priest, among other things, of having said (in the pulpit or in the sacristy) that the socialists were the cause of the war, of telling a woman who paid for a mass for her son at the front that the son was not a practising Catholic and was therefore 'yet another one who will not return', of having said that God was getting revenge via the plague of war because the French became detached from him, of calling the war 'necessary', of sullying the reputation of the municipality, and of stating that socialists were 'thugs'. He attacked 'Our deputies, our senators, all that is secular.' The municipality outlined that it was fulfilling its duty during the occupation by providing food for the population and generally assuring its well-being, in an act of solidarity that helped everyone 'without bias' – contrary to the attitude of the *curé*. These socialists even highlighted how Prussenac's predecessor was a 'dignified priest' who only preached religion, never mentioned politics and was well respected. The new *curé*, the authors argued, was going against the tenets of Christianity and 'would be kicked out of the temple' if Christ were to return. He was engaging in 'an underhand war against us, without a care for our ruins, our distress'; he 'sowed hatred and discord' rather than focusing on the generosity and mercy. An attempt to show the priest the error of his ways extended into an assessment of human nature mixing politics and religion: 'Theologians do not admit that human nature, in its essential qualities, is good; we socialists, we find the contrary, that man in his natural tendencies […] is generous, compassionate, loving, and that he is animated […] towards tenderness and sacrifice.' The authors

claimed that if the priest continued to discuss politics and continued his ill-intentioned accusations, his faithful (who already reproached him for his attitude) would distance themselves from him. He could discuss the '*Union Sacrée* among all, peace, faith in the future', but not politics. The authors ended by providing an example of the type of sermon he should be giving, emphasising equality for all, peace among nations and kindness instead of selfishness – especially in the tragedy of war.[35]

The 1916 letter seems to have had no effect: Anstaing was one of the communes subject to detailed investigations in 1918–19. The reason? The *curé* denounced the Mayor's occupation behaviour to French authorities. He accused the Mayor of having denounced him to Germans for hiding photographic equipment, of having denounced his wine stash, and of generally being subservient to the occupiers.[36] The Procureur de la République decided that there was not enough evidence to open judicial proceedings against the now-former mayor, although it did seem like he had 'acted reprehensibly' during the occupation.[37] Yet the final report by the Commissaire Spécial of Lille noted that the priest's denunciation was motivated by his previous 'campaign' against the municipality and his anger at the 1916 letter. It was true that the Mayor had at times 'become the instrument of the Kommandantur' and 'had given in too easily to [German] demands'. However, the Commissaire concluded that the Kommandant was 'particularly brutal' and the Mayor 'suffered greatly during the occupation' – eventually being expelled from his home (which was pillaged), arrested for fifteen days and threatened with a knife by the Kommandant.[38] Yet again the complexity of occupied life is laid bare: individuals could be involved in misconduct but also suffer punishments from the Germans. Also laid bare is political tension during and after the occupation, although this is not the only example.

In January 1915, Député Inghels and the socialists of Tourcoing's Municipal Council wrote separately to the Préfet. They complained that the Mayor, radical Gustave Dron, was ignoring the socialist minority's suggestions to resolve the food-provisioning crisis by copying Roubaix's Municipal Council and writing to the Kommandant to secure more flour. Instead, *Tourquennois* had to walk to Roubaix to get bread.[39] Inghels suggested that Dron ignored any ideas that were not his own, refused to discuss proposals, and was 'intransigent'; the 'little manners of an angry mayor' were starving the population. Furthermore, Inghels noted, the previous week Dron had overseen the distribution of flour but had excluded the cooperative 'La solidarité' because it was socialist: 'everyone was sickened, even our adversaries'. The socialists had not complained

earlier, because unity was important, but had now reached the end of their tether:

> We did not want and we still do not want that in the present sad circumstances, in the painful ordeal that we are going through, the shadow of a dispute between French citizens can appear or seem to appear, but unfortunately this situation can no longer continue. We are treated in an insolent and harsh fashion by a maniac whose pride goes too far and who believes that he can do anything, joining his boot with that of the Kaiser in order to crush us.[40]

The letter ended by asking the Préfet to intervene for the sake of the population.[41] While there is an insinuation of genuinely anti-patriotic misconduct here, the dispute was more a disagreement about the role of mayors and municipal councillors during wartime, and Dron's treatment of socialists.

Days later, in a second letter of complaint, the socialist municipal councillors explicitly accused the Mayor of breaching the *Union Sacrée* and abusing his power. The letter began:

> On 3 August last year, i.e. at the very beginning of the hostilities that would go on to bathe our beautiful department of the Nord in blood, the municipal council of Tourcoing went to the *Mairie* saying that during the war political opinions should disappear and that it was entirely ready to put itself at the service of the Municipal Administration for whatever useful task; the latter took note of our declaration, but the Mayor took care to never call on the municipal council for anything.[42]

The Municipal Council agreed to meet three times a week to discuss issues affecting the town. Yet, on 4 December 1914, the Mayor refused to participate at such meetings; then on 22 January 1915 he ordered that no more meetings of the council would take place until further notice. The socialists 'protested energetically' against this decision and implored the Préfet to overturn it.[43] Frustratingly, neither the Préfet's response nor the nature of relations within the municipality of Tourcoing for the rest of the occupation are documented. However, Dron remained mayor and, despite the insinuations of the socialists, did not merely acquiesce to the Germans, as will be seen in Chapter 6. Despite this, the clash of January 1915 demonstrated both that the Municipal Council believed that unity was important during the occupation and that such unity was lacking in Tourcoing at this time. The source of disunity was a single individual, which was a common occurrence during the occupation.

The political gets personal

The early occupation in particular saw conflict between key political personalities, notably municipal councillors, mayors and Préfet Trépont. These representatives disagreed on the best way to react to German orders from an official standpoint. Trépont's unpublished war memoirs, seemingly written after his return to France in January 1916, prove useful in this regard. However, they also represent his attempt to justify his own actions in this period and comprise a response to accusations that he had not supported the defence of Lille during the invasion. A government inquiry found the accusations to be false, and the attendant documentation, including Trépont's diary, sheds yet more light on political infighting.[44] Trépont was critical of what he perceived as any weakness in dealings with the Germans, whereas mayors tended to seek a *modus vivendi* while maintaining some opposition. In particular, Trépont attacked the Mayor of Lille, Delesalle, whom he disliked before the occupation because of the events of spring 1914 and disagreements about the defence of Lille during the invasion. Delesalle's election in April–May 1914 was plagued by electoral fraud; he resigned, and was re-elected in July 1914, but Trépont viewed his position as illegitimate.[45] The experience of occupation exacerbated Trépont's criticism of Delesalle.

On 12 February 1915, Trépont wrote to the Minister of the Interior providing a summary of the occupation thus far. This was a day after his refusal to acquiesce to German demands and threats, and five days before the beginning of his imprisonment that would lead to his eventual deportation to Germany. Explaining how he guided municipalities, Trépont remarked that:

> Without doubt some failures occurred. Certain mayors neglected to take my advice, or believed that they must neglect it. It is regrettable that M. the Mayor of Lille too frequently ignored the Representative of the French Government, and did not endeavour, as was his duty, to establish with my administration the community of views and the indispensable *entente*.

The danger of disunity was clear, and Delesalle incarnated this; yet the majority of mayors, Trépont noted, did demonstrate such unity. This letter did not mention the precise failures of Delesalle, but it is implied that he acquiesced too readily in providing the Germans with workers or lists of men of working age.[46] A diary written by an employee of the Prefecture, seemingly Trépont's right-hand man and Secrétaire Général de la Préfecture, M. Borromée, similarly accuses Delesalle of such weaknesses

and of abandoning his duty.[47] It is true that Delesalle avoided the harshest punishments during the occupation, such as deportation, causing historian Robert Vandenbussche to argue that he did give in too easily to German demands.[48] However, I will demonstrate in Chapter 6 that Delesalle was no pushover for the Germans. In any case, whether we take Trépont's criticisms at face value or consider Trépont himself to have been embroiled in clashes of personalities and politics, it is clear that political disunity existed here.

Naturally, tensions between key political figures continued throughout the war, often linked to accusations of misconduct and situations specific to the occupation. Personal attacks between local notables took on a symbolic, political significance. The Mayor of Loos (M. Potié) was involved in a series of disputes in 1916 and 1917, particularly with Acting Préfet Anjubault (previously Sous-Préfet d'Avesnes). From May to June 1916, Potié corresponded and spoke in person with Anjubault regarding a loan of 240,000 francs from Lille for Loos,[49] which had been voted by the municipality of Loos but which required prefectoral authorisation. Anjubault refused this because the demand was not accompanied by a separate, detailed financial breakdown, as he had outlined in a December 1915 decree;[50] actually, the demand did contain a breakdown, but not as a separate document, and it was not as comprehensive as the standard model.[51] Potié wrote numerous letters to Anjubault to persuade him to authorise this loan, which was required to pay for, among other things, food provision, municipal salaries, occupation taxes and unemployment benefit. The tone of both men grew increasingly angry. Anjubault stated that 'the representative of the French Government has better things to do than to engage in a polemic with the mayors of the occupied area'.[52] Potié responded: 'It's not a polemic that divides us, but a question of responsibility.'[53] Anjubault eventually issued him a formal warning, refusing to respond to further letters.[54] However, this was not the end of the conflict.

In July 1916, Potié clashed with a pharmacy worker in Lille regarding the distribution of medicine. Potié was interviewed by the Commissaire de Police of Loos but during the interview launched a scathing attack on Anjubault. He considered Anjubault to be avoiding his responsibilities, noted that everyone he spoke to said Anjubault was 'not up to the task' and refused to recognise Anjubault's authority because he had not been appointed by the French Government. The Commissaire tried to explain to Potié 'the extent to which the words he had spoken were imprudent and serious and above all incompatible with the current situation', but Potié shouted over the Commissaire.[55] The Mayor's attitude had not changed when, the next month, he was reported to the police for having

stated, in front of numerous people in a café in Lille, that he had visited Anjubault, who had refused to see him. Potié told his audience: 'The Sous-Préfet did well not to see me, he must have sensed what was coming to him: I would have smashed my cane in his face.'[56] While Anjubault's position was legally questionable, and his actions regarding the loan for Loos could be seen as petty, most mayors and notables tried their best to work with him during the occupation; Potié's reaction was exceptional. Yet Potié himself was not free from criticism: in March 1917, a clerk at the Mairie of Loos wrote a formal complaint about the attitude of the Mayor. The clerk was 'disgusted at the way' Potié was 'fulfilling his mandate', including a scandal in which he had sold a cow at great profit to the local hospice, only to have it slaughtered and keep the meat for himself and his friends. The clerk underlined that 'The actions of this man are so disgusting, [that] after the war, I would prefer to work as a road-mender than continue to be his clerk. I told him this, in any case, a few days ago, during a violent discussion I had with him.'[57]

Infighting involving a mixture of politics and personalities continued into the final year of the war. In February 1918, the Mayor of Toufflers, Paul Bont, exchanged stern words with Anjubault on the subject of how to spend local paper money. The Préfet's letters are not preserved, but it seems that he was unwilling to offer advice on such spending. Bont's letter extended to a criticism of 'the administration' (centralised, prefectoral guidance and regulations), seen as distinct from the acts of mayors who were:

> crushed by the great weight of the occupation and the invasion, which the Administration resolves by feigning to ignore […] and which the public powers seem to have envisaged with a light heart, unless they have envisaged nothing at all! The mayors are well within their rights to formulate their judgements, shedding clear light on the facts and circumstances.
>
> They would betray their populations, in sometimes not providing a faithful echo of the discontent provoked by certain vexations and the failure of the Administration.[58]

Bont attacked not only the perceived complacency of the Prefecture during the occupation but also the lack of governmental planning for invasion in 1914, and outlined his right to speak frankly. He certainly did so towards the end of the letter, maintaining that his commune would continue to attempt new solutions to administrative problems, because:

> Our only satisfaction (for at present it is admitted that public gratitude is zero) is to obtain exceptional results, so that people can take inspiration from these. You see the contrast in mentalities. We see that a marching

> troop needs an *avant-garde*; others prefer to see all their elements huddled together in a single mass with neither head nor tail; no particular incidents *en route*, so no fuss. It's more administrative![59]

It is unsurprising that relations between municipalities and the last representative of centralised administration became strained, given that municipalities were faced with increasing financial struggles, problems of food supply, a feeling of impotence towards the occupiers, criticism from the wider population and generally overwhelming administrative work due to the 'municipalisation of power'. The fact that from February 1915 the Préfet had been named by the Germans, even if Anjubault was still legally a *sous-préfet*, further complicated matters. Like accusations of misconduct concerning men in positions of authority, political disputes and clashes often involved both personal and systemic criticism. Nevertheless, both the Préfet and mayors explicitly or implicitly stated that they desired cooperation, unity and steadfastness in this time of need; and they were outraged when others, in their minds, were deliberately sabotaging this. Aiming for political unity and solidarity was an important part of occupied culture, but this aim was never entirely fulfilled. That said, the cases examined here were exceptional, and, in general, politics in occupied France involved considerable cooperation even among those with contrasting political views, for the good of the population.

Social conflict

Previous chapters have already touched upon perceived differences in the experience of occupation according to social class: for instance, certain members of the bourgeoisie believed that in Roubaix the working class suffered less, in Lille mill workers displayed no sense of economy, and in Saint-Amand the working class 'accommodated itself' with the Germans. Social tensions seem to have been strongest in the industrial triangle of Lille-Roubaix-Tourcoing, where pre-war conflicts took on new meaning when compounded with the suffering of occupation. This meant that criticisms did not come exclusively from the middle class: repatriation testimony suggests that the working class was equally critical of bosses and the bourgeoisie by early 1917. A summary of interviews with 472 *rapatriés* from Lille in April 1917 remarked that,

> Between workers and bosses from Lille, the pre-war antagonism has lost nothing of its intensity. It is to be feared that after the hostilities there will be an explosion of troubles: the working class[,] pushed by the misery and

> suffering that it has encountered[,] professes hatred towards the wealthy class which manages to use gold to buy provisions.[60]

Another summary of interviews with *Lillois* remarked that the 'poor class, despite the assistance it is provided by municipality and private initiative, protests in general and often against public authorities and those who help them'.[61]

Mme Pollet, the owner of a large factory in Tourcoing that was forced to work for the Germans, in her repatriation interrogation felt that she 'had to signal a resurgence of the pre-war antagonism between bosses and workers; she attributes this animosity to the growing suffering that the working class has to bear'.[62] The situation in Tourcoing so alarmed the authors of repatriation reports that one officer advised that after the eventual German evacuation of Tourcoing, 'it will be prudent to assure order via an armed force[,] if possible English[,] to avoid troubles and demonstrations. After a lull at the beginning of the war, which lasted for a good few months, the working class embittered by sufferings is beginning to again demonstrate hostile sentiments towards bosses.' The author stated that the cause of this discontent was the privation and suffering endured in the harsh winter of 1916–17, when workers used up all their money and still were not able to feed themselves or heat their homes, whereas the 'rich' could do so.[63] Thus, the abandonment of social conflict at the beginning of the war did not endure and was particularly apparent from late 1916.

However, class conflict involved recriminations from above and below, and not all occupied French people were willing to let accusations slide. Criticism of industrialists and the middle class was so strong in late 1916 that one individual (presumably a factory boss or other member of the bourgeoisie) produced a typewritten rebuttal. The document appears to be a tract or poster discussing events in Tourcoing, entitled 'Some reflections'. It is a detailed, angry response to accusations against the rich, beginning:

> The recent German poster on the subject of the right to requisition man-power is causing a great emotion in town; people are saying: 'These measures always fall on the workers and the poor, the "rich" do not suffer from them.'
>
> That is a false affirmation; for certain demagogues, all those who in one way or another receive benefits from the town are […] workers and poor. The others are 'rich' even though very few are in reality.

The author argued that workers were in fact the 'last people to be affected by the occupation' – not materially, but regarding 'life, liberty, home,

family'. It was people of means who had to lodge Germans, feed them, who were expelled from their home or taken as hostages. The Germans spoke to industrialists when they demanded work be carried out; it was these bosses who resisted such demands and who were deported in 1915. The author underlined that the Easter 1916 'deportations' made no distinction between rich or poor. However, the text ended in a manner encouraging further division. It attacked the municipality for having provided the Germans with a list of unemployed people whom the Germans would use as labourers. Thus, the staff of the Mairie 'delivered compatriots' to the enemy: 'they knew their responsibility; they are trying to escape from it in seeking to divide yet again compatriots whom common suffering should unite'.[64]

Municipalities were perceived as stoking social divisions in other ways. Mayoral Adjunct Henri Thérin, a socialist, was made replacement Mayor of Roubaix in March 1915 after the arrest of Mayor and fellow socialist Jean-Baptiste Lebas. Thérin was attacked by one repatriated woman for misconduct and, implicitly, for his socialist values favouring attacks on the wealthy. Mme Prouvost stated that 'The replacement mayor […] is greatly criticised; he is terrorised by the Germans and is completely in their pocket. He did not protest against the requisition of copper, alleging that the measure would only affect the rich class, the working and destitute class not possessing any.'[65]

The reality of class-based differences regarding occupied life is hard to judge, as the sources are often contradictory: some state that the middle class suffered the most,[66] others the working class.[67] Locals of all classes were affected by various hardships of occupation – requisitions, forced labour, fines, deportation, unemployment, hunger – although it is likely that those with recourse to greater finances could use money to circumvent some of these, at least temporarily. As the occupation continued, few people avoided some level of impoverishment and hunger, no matter what their social class. Yet it is clear that some locals believed that certain social groups suffered more or less than others, whatever the truth of the matter, and this fuelled a sense of disunity and conflict – which also drew on pre-war tensions between workers and bosses.

Conclusions regarding disunity

The notion of the occupied population jettisoning all existing disagreements is problematic, as various pre-war conflicts continued among some sections of the population. The occupation also provided

fertile ground for new forms and expressions of disunity. However, evidence for these forms of disunity is relatively scarce, and, while absence of proof is not proof of absence, the existence and importance of disunity should not be exaggerated. Many clergymen, politicians, administrators and members of the wider population did put aside differences, or at least public expressions of these, in the exceptional situation of the occupation. That not all did so is to be expected; this brief and suggestive outline of aspects of disunity here aims to adds nuance to our understanding of the occupation rather than undermine genuine forms of solidarity that existed. Notions of unity or solidarity – of disparate groups of individuals coming together for a greater good, or acting in a certain manner – are implicit throughout Part II. They also provide an important starting point for the next chapter, which examines French behaviours that further strained the local authorities and inter-French solidarity: acts of criminality.

Notes

1 Philippe Salson, *L'Aisne occupée: Les civils dans la Grande Guerre* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2015), pp. 138–43.
2 Philippe Nivet, *Les Réfugiés français de la Grande Guerre (1914–1920): Les 'Boches du Nord'* (Paris: Econmica, 2004), pp. 192–3.
3 For an example of refugees criticising *Nordistes*, see ADHS, 4M513, Notice Individuelle, Laurence Malamain, 10 February 1917: she was evacuated to Poix du Nord in July 1916 and called its inhabitants 'More Boches than the Boches'.
4 Leonard V. Smith, Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau and Annette Becker, *France and the Great War, 1914–1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 27–9, 119, 133–4.
5 Georges Gromaire, *L'Occupation allemande en France (1914–1918)* (Paris: Payot, 1925), p. 337.
6 Annette Becker, *Les Cicatrices rouges 14–18: France et Belgique occupées* (Paris: Fayard, 2010), p. 258.
7 Becker, *Les Cicatrices rouges*, p. 65.
8 See Annette Becker, *La Guerre et la foi: De la mort à la mémoire, 1914–1930* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1994).
9 See, for example, Becker, *La Guerre et la foi*; Alan Kramer, *Dynamic of Destruction: Culture and Mass Killing in the First World War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Cécile Hautelin, 'Intellectuels, barbarie et occupation: 1914–1918', master's dissertation (Lille III, 1999), p. 50.
10 Patrick J. Houlihan, 'Local Catholicism as transnational war experience: everyday religious practice in occupied Northern France, 1914–1918', *Central European History*, 45:2 (2012), 233–67.

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15 Cnudde-Lecointre, 'L'Église', p. 10, citing Robert Vandenbussche.
16 'Vœux pour la nouvelle année présentés à l'archevêque le 30 décembre 1915, Archives Diocésaines de Lille', cited in Cnudde-Lecointre, 'L'Église', p. 43.
17 ADN, 9R585, Paroisse de Saint-Étienne, 'Station de carême 1916, Croire: Question de VIE et de MORT pour les peuples comme pour les individus, Programme des conférences'.
18 ADN, 9R585, report, Commissaire Central de Police to Préfet, 23 March 1916.
19 *Ibid.*
20 ADN, 9R585, report, Commissaire Central de Police to Préfet, 19 April 1916.
21 ADN, 9R585, letter from M. Heltier, professeur au Lycée Fénelou, Lille, 20 February 1917. Presumably sent to the Préfet.
22 Carine Cnudde-Lecointre, 'Monseigneur Charost, évêque de Lille durant la Grande Guerre', *Revue du Nord*, 80:325 (1998), 355–66.
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24 ADN, 9R585, note from Anjubault (Sous-Préfect d'Avesnes faisant fonctions du Préfet du Nord) to Préfet (for his return), 13 October 1916.
25 ADN, 9R585, note, Guérin to Préfet, 15 October 1916.
26 ADN, 9R726, 'Conférence faite aux jeunes gens qui suivent les cours techniques au siège du Syndicat mixte, rue de la Paix, à Roubaix', October 1916.
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28 ADHS, 4M513, repatriation report no. 711, 9 February 1917.
29 ADN, 9R585, report, Commissaire Central de Police to Préfet, 23 March 1916 (b); report, Commissaire Central de Police to Préfet, 22 May 1916.
30 ADN, 74J225, diary of M. Blin (instituteur en retraite at Auchy-les-Orchies), 5 and 8 July 1915.
31 For example, AML, 4H4, 'Lettre de Mgr l'évêque de Lille demandant à tous les fidèles de sa ville épiscopale de concourir au paiement de la contribution de guerre', 18 November 1914.
32 Cnudde-Lecointre, 'Monseigneur Charost', pp. 361–2.
33 Cnudde-Lecointre, 'Monseigneur Charost', p. 363.
34 ADN, 9R1229, Anstaing, Commissaire Spécial de Lille to Préfet, 20 January 1919.

35 ADN, 9R510, Mairie d'Anstaing, letter, Curé d'Anstaing to Préfet and M. Prussenac, 10 August 1916.
36 ADN, 9R1229, Anstaing, Commissaire Spécial de Lille to Préfet, 20 January 1919; M. Prussenac to Préfet, 12 December 1918.
37 ADN, 9R1229, Anstaing, Procureur de la République in Lille to Préfet, 30 December 1918.
38 ADN, 9R1229, Anstaing, Commissaire Spécial de Lille to Préfet, 20 January 1919.
39 AN, 96AP/2, dossier 9, 'Renseignements sur la période d'occupation', Socialists of Tourcoing's Municipal Council to Mayor, 19 January 1915; Inghels to Préfet, 22 January 1915; Parti socialiste, Fédération du Nord, Section de Tourcoing, to Préfet, 28 and 29 January 1915.
40 AN, 96AP/2, dossier 9, Inghels letter.
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42 AN, 96AP/2, dossier 9, Parti socialiste letter, 29 January 1915.
43 AN, 96AP/2, dossier 9, Parti socialiste letter, 29 January 1915.
44 See AN, 96AP/1–96AP/3, Fonds Félix Trépont.
45 AN, 96AP/1, dossier 1, diary of Félix Trépont (1914–17), 20 August 1914, p. 52; Michel Offerlé, 'L'électeur et ses papiers: enquête sur les cartes et les listes électorales (1848–1939)', *Genèses*, 13:1 (1993), p. 50.
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48 Robert Vandenbussche, 'La fonction municipal sous la Troisième République: l'exemple du département du Nord', *Revue du Nord*, 76:305 (1994), p. 335.
49 ADN, 9R707, Mayor of Loos to Acting Préfet Anjubault, 27 May 1916; 2, 7, 10, 13 and 18 June 1916.
50 ADN, 9R707, Préfet to Mayors of Nord, 7 December 1915.
51 ADN, 9R707, extrait du registre des aux délibérations du conseil municipal, commune de Loos, 21 May 1916.
52 ADN, 9R707, Anjubault to Mayor of Loos, 10 June 1916.
53 ADN, 9R707, Mayor of Loos to Anjubault, 10 June 1916.
54 ADN, 9R707, Anjubault to Mayor of Loos, 13 June 1916.
55 ADN, 9R506, procès-verbal, Commissaire de Police de Loos, 6 July 1916.
56 ADN, 9R506, procès-verbal, Commissaire de Police de Loos, 24 August 1916.
57 ADN, 9R506, procès-verbal, Commissaire de Police de Loos, 9 March 1917.
58 ADN, 9R247, Mayor of Toufflers to Préfet, 28 February 1918.
59 ADN, 9R247, Mayor of Toufflers to Préfet, 28 February 1918.
60 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 1137, 19 April 1917.

61 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 989, 14 March 1917.
62 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 1170, 21 April 1917.
63 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 1175, 21 April 1917.
64 ADN, 9R755, n.a., 'Quelques réflexions', n.d. (The content shows it was written after 1 October 1916 and before 1917.)
65 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 1211, 25 April 1917.
66 See, for example, ADN, J1761, speech by Pierre Motte given in London sometime after the war regarding the occupation of Lille, p. 15.
67 See, for example, ADN, 74J223, report, 'La vie à Lille et ses environs', p. 8, 30 June 1916; ADN, J1933, manuscrit de François Rouesel, 'Pendant la CCI [Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie] de Roubaix durant l'occupation allemande', 'L'alimentation de la population', pp. 7–8.

5

Moral borderlands: Criminality during the occupation

Examining misconduct has already required a blurring of the lines between illegal and legal definitions of behaviours in occupied France. This chapter leans towards the legal by considering general criminality, another neglected area in works on the occupation. Studying criminality poses well-known challenges. Police reports and statistics evidently only demonstrate *reported* crimes, simply offering a glimpse into actual criminality – albeit a useful, suggestive one. Thus, the reality of criminality is as occluded as that of misconduct. Further, foreign occupation raises the question of what constituted crime, and *whose* laws were being broken: the Germans criminalised many forms of previously legal activities, such as opening or closing house doors outside of specifically allotted times.[1] In some cases, actions viewed by the occupier as illegal could be said to represent resistance, such as refusing to work for the Germans. This was particularly the case because, just as Sophie De Schaepdrijver states for Belgium, 'The German authority was felt [by the occupied] to be completely illegitimate.'[2] Breaking the occupiers' laws and rules was therefore a perfectly legitimate course of action for occupied civilians. Whether this constituted 'real' criminality is questionable, but here this issue is engaged with only occasionally, as resistance is examined in Part II of the book. Similarly, many actions examined here comprise *délits* (offences or petty crime) according to the French judicial system, thus it could be more pertinent to speak of *délinquance* (delinquency). However, this distinction is artificial in English, and I use 'delinquency' in its anglicised sense later on, so 'criminality' is the best term to describe the wider range of actions studied. Finally, it is difficult to know whether the type and extent of criminality was directly caused by the occupation, or whether a particular subset of the population

would be engaged in similarly criminal activities during peacetime. This is not the purpose of this section, however.

Here I examine criminality on a local scale, focusing predominantly on Lille-Roubaix-Tourcoing, for which sources are comprehensive. I aim to assess the possibilities and peculiarities of occupied life, to demonstrate the multitude of actions and decisions open to occupied civilians willing to infringe upon social and legal conventions. By doing so, I will shed light on further 'dark spots' in the history of the occupation.

This chapter considers the situation of the French police force before examining the most common occupation crimes: theft, fraud and smuggling. Such actions were tools for survival for certain *occupés*, yet they clearly infringed upon respectable social relations. Just as the trenches shifted the physical front, so the occupation altered the internalised socio-cultural-moral front of the local population. The role of young people in crime in particular greatly concerned contemporaries; these concerns and the daily reality of crime became part of the culture of the occupied.

Moral economy

Since the 1990s, historians of the First World War have noted the 'need to look more closely at the way that societies negotiated a new wartime moral economy, adapting pre-war moral, legal and religious norms to create acceptable wartime values which had their own internal logic'.[3] The altered occupation moral economy is especially visible when studying criminality. The term 'moral economy' is most associated with E. P. Thompson, describing the 'traditional view of social norms and obligations, of the proper economic functions of several parties of the community'.[4] Thompson perceived the moral economy 'as a popular consensus about what distinguishes legitimate from illegitimate practices, a consensus rooted in the past and capable of inspiring action'.[5] The prevailing concept of the moral economy in the social sciences has emphasised conflict and resistance, particularly regarding Third World insurrections.[6]

In occupied France, the moral economy shifted among a certain part of the population, making previously illegitimate actions (such as theft and fraud) more acceptable. It was seen as legitimate for an individual to have access to the basic social goods needed for survival,[7] such as firewood or food, whatever form that access may take. This view is mirrored in *Invasion '14*, in which van der Meersch writes of the revolution in moral values that took place, with one sixty-year-old woman who had never

committed a crime being forced to steal by circumstances.[8] For some, survival replaced conventional morals, yet on the collective level such actions were still illegitimate, subverting respectability. This was partly because of pre-war socio-cultural understanding of social goods and the means of access to these, enforced by the French administration and law. For the police or municipal government, the moral economy remained encoded in juridical documents; engaging in criminal acts undermined the collective good, removing social goods from their legitimate owners and thus fracturing the social relations underpinning the moral economy itself. For them, criminal misconduct threatened the stability and survival of local areas, not just during the occupation but also after the liberation. The role of the French police in 1914–18 thus provides an important insight into both occupation criminality and the culture of the occupied.

Policing

In November 1918, the Commissaire de Police of Condé, Vieux-Condé, Fresnes, Escautpont and Crespin summarised his force's occupation experience:

> Bad instincts surfaced, some civilians participated in pillage with the soldiers who burgled houses; work had ceased […] The police was overwhelmed by all kinds of tasks. Nevertheless, it assured the maintenance of order, recorded crimes and offences and took the perpetrators to civil courts, which was not easy because circulation was hindered, sometimes impossible. The surveillance of fraudsters was carried out.[9]

Thus, the French police force was able to operate during the occupation but struggled to cope with the scale of criminality. This was because it had too few men, and because the occupation provided a particular breeding ground for crime. The Commissaire explained that the German civil police force was set apart from its French counterpart by its main aim of searching for those who harboured Allied soldiers and helped them to escape. It also aided the creation of German espionage networks by paying *ravitailleurs* for denunciations. Such 'unscrupulous people' were occasionally even employed as fully paid German policemen.[10] The dichotomy between the French and German police forces involved a split of power whereby the French police worked for, and the German police against, the population – the Germans using undesirable individuals for this. This is a precursor in some ways to the 'rival police forces' of Second World War France, albeit with fewer complexities.[11] The latter

part of the report highlights that the Germans were suspicious of the French police, occasionally arresting French policemen.[12]

Power struggles between the two forces occurred regularly. Unsurprisingly, given the Germans' heavy-handed governance and strong military presence, this was more of a problem for the French police than for the Germans. The former frequently attempted to carry out German demands, at least regarding the maintenance of order, a policy with which it agreed and which may be seen as a rare area of common ground between the French and German authorities.[13] Yet this was no guarantee of German non-interference or non-punishment. In Maubeuge, as early as January 1915, French policemen were arrested for breaching German curfew orders.[14] Likewise, on 25 August 1916, the Commissaire Central of Lille posted a policeman next to the Palais Rameau, who could intervene if gatherings banned by the Germans occurred. However, that evening, the Germans arrested the policeman in question, stating that only the German military police was involved with maintaining order in this respect. The following day, the Commissaire asked the Mayor to intervene on the policeman's behalf, only to discover that he had been released earlier that day.[15]

Similarly evocative of these clashes and pre-existing tensions was an incident of 6 April 1916: Commissaire de Police Boinet of the eighth arrondissement of Lille was walking outside at 8.25 p.m. when two German soldiers shouted at him. A heated conversation took place. The Germans informed him that he was breaking curfew without a valid pass. Boinet stated that he did not need one: policemen were permitted to move around without permission, and he was their boss. Finally, one soldier confiscated his identity card and told him to report to the local police office the next morning. Boinet annoyed the soldier by stating, 'If you like […] But yes, if you like. I am not saying anything indecent to you, so there is no need to take offence.'[16] The language and tone used by Boinet in his following interactions demonstrate considerable frustration. The importance of respectability is evident, with Boinet maintaining a respectful (if occasionally sarcastic) tone towards the Germans but himself being treated with disrespect.

The next morning, before Boinet was due at the relevant police station, the same German soldier called at his house, eventually kicking his door off the hinges. Boinet complained about this to the Commissaire Central, asking that his letter be forwarded to the German authorities in order to punish the soldier.[17] The Germans responded that Boinet was in the wrong and that his report was in fact 'discourteous' in its tone and

content.[18] The precariousness and instability of the French police's situation is evident, as is the importance Boinet placed on respectable social relations.

Yet the power struggle did not exclusively involve the French and German police forces. Aware of the discordance and the changing power structures, certain locals used the situation to their advantage, in a further example of misconduct and social inversion. This occurred as early as November 1914, when Mme Lefebvre complained to the Germans about the sentencing of her eighteen-year-old sister by the Tribunal Correctionnel de Lille to two years' imprisonment for theft. Lefebvre asserted that this was an act of vengeance on the part of the French police, because her sister had had intimate relations with German soldiers and her (Lefebvre's) husband worked 'on automobiles' for the German military authority. Lefebvre claimed that she was 'molested by the French police, who searched her house and the house of her sister and withdrew the [financial] assistance she had'. Her complaint was passed on to the head of the German military police and then to the Kommandant. The latter asked that the policemen in question be punished, but the Mayor of Lille stated that before taking any decisions, he wanted an inquiry establishing the truth of the complaint. The affair seemed to be a way for 'a woman of ill repute to gain pity from the German authority regarding her fate by shamelessly distorting the acts of theft for which her sister had been condemned by [French] law'.[19] Such incidents offer a suggestive example of the abuse of occupation power structures, with those at the bottom of the social hierarchy – the unrespectable 'women of ill repute' – playing off the Germans against the French police.

This was a commonplace occurrence. In July 1915, the Commissaire Central of Lille wrote to the Mayor, noting that French policemen were threatened with denunciation every time they intervened in an incident, such as incarcerating drunken individuals. He continued:

> every time policemen approach a delinquent it is an additional enemy that they create, [therefore] a moment will come when the desire to avoid any trouble will incite policemen to neglect their duty […] rather than intervene, so that our police force, greatly reduced in number, completely disarmed and constantly threatened with arrest, will only constitute an apparent rather than real force and will be incapable of maintaining order more than ever necessary.[20]

The Commissaire gave an example of this worrying state of affairs. On 11 July 1915, three French policemen from the sixth arrondissement

arrested ex-convict Constant Hugo for drunkenness and physical violence towards his wife. During the journey from Hugo's house to the police station, Hugo 'did not cease to say to officer Mullier, who led him [to the station], that he would denounce him to the Kommandantur'. This is exactly what happened: Hugo denounced not only Mullier but all the policemen present at the station, claiming that he was physically assaulted and insulted on the pretext that he worked for the German authority. The Commissaire stated that this was false, because he had personally instructed all police personnel to abstain from all acts of violence and 'to carry out neither acts nor reflections that could be interpreted as hostile to the German Authority. Nothing as of yet has demonstrated that these instructions were not followed scrupulously.' Hugo's complaint did indeed lead to the arrest, by the Germans, of those officers who could have mistreated him – although an internal police investigation demonstrated that they had not done so. Hugo was bruised, but this was in fact a result of his wife having thrown household objects at him in order to defend herself, a fact she freely admitted. The Commissaire Central therefore ended his letter by asking the Mayor to persuade the Germans to release the arrested policemen.[21] It is unclear if this occurred.

A case where the conclusion is visible is that of M. Willerval, a policeman from Tourcoing. He was brought before a German war tribunal on 13 March 1916, accused of aiding, feeding and clothing hidden French soldiers from September to October 1915. Strikingly, the accusers were the soldiers themselves. The defence, led by M. Spéder, the interpreter at the Mairie, rubbished these claims. Spéder argued that the 'soldiers' were in fact vagabonds who had been convicted before and during the occupation. Labelling them as 'deserters' from the French army, Spéder explained how their previous criminal record exempted them from being in the army. He purported that their motivation for denouncing Willerval was survival: they presented themselves to the Germans as French soldiers and denounced Willerval to reduce their sentences, in the hope that they would still be in a German prison at the end of hostilities, to avoid the French justice system. The tribunal was swayed by Spéder's case, and Willerval was acquitted.[22]

Spéder defended more French policemen from accusations made by compatriots. In July 1915, two policemen (Scrittes and Rousseau) from Tourcoing were accused by two women of having insulted the Germans while accompanying soldiers in finding lodgings. Spéder's defence noted that a certain part of the population 'understands poorly its obligation

to lodge [German soldiers]' and subsequently complained about the French police's role. This was especially the case in houses and cabarets which in peacetime were 'already at war with the police or its surveillance' and which 'rapidly find themselves ready to use reprisals against [the police] out of vengeance. This must certainly be the reason in the current case.'[23] Again, a reversal of the social hierarchy is visible: those normally 'at war' with the police could assert their dominance during the occupation. It is not clear what happened to Scrittes, but Rousseau was sentenced to six months' imprisonment in Germany for his alleged insults towards the Germans,[24] demonstrating the serious consequences of such denunciations. Other denunciations of the French police took place in Tourcoing in August 1916.[25]

Misuse of power structures existed beyond denunciations, including in the final year of the war. During the night of 17–18 February 1918, the owner of an estaminet in Lille discovered an intruder behind the bar. A small fight ensued, after which the thief, later identified as Julien Devolder, managed to escape with various goods. According to the owner, 'To operate, Devolder wore a greatcoat and a German cap.' After Devolder had left, the owner found documents in German on the floor, containing the inscription '2 Batt. Res. Feldart, Rgt. 44. 17.11.18, labelled with the name of a certain Kar. Hofsommer'.[26] Perhaps Devolder had stolen the clothes and papers from a German soldier. The Germans arrested Devolder and still had him in custody at the time of the writing of the police report.[27]

This bizarre incident was not as isolated as might first be imagined: a month earlier, three Frenchmen and a Frenchwoman had been arrested for 'merchandise fraud and complicity in fraud'. One of the men had 'usurped the status of the German military police to seize a certain quantity of soap'.[28] This and the above examples represent just some cases of criminal misconduct that blur the boundaries between infractions of a legal nature and those of a patriotic nature – engaging in a form of deception against compatriots by abusing occupation power structures and assuming the identity of the national enemy.

There are other examples hinting at the wider population's acknowledgement that the Germans were the dominant force, such as when a cabaret owner from Lille had a large sum of money stolen from her house on 2 July 1918; she first notified the German military police of this, only informing the French police two days later.[29] This shift in power played a role in increased criminality, because the French police was restricted in its actions and because *occupés* perceived the French

police as lacking authority in any meaningful sense. Further, the nature of German occupation created previously non-existent avenues of action, offered new choices and 'forced' some to pursue criminal actions out of sheer necessity.

What, then, was the legal and practical reality of the dual authority concerning the French police force and justice system? For local French authorities, this was unclear: indeed, in October 1916, the Procureur de la République of Lille wrote to Governor von Graevenitz stating his understanding of legal procedure for criminal cases and asking for verification of this. He spoke of the 'difficulties […] that can lead to certain divergences of view between the jurisdictions functioning in parallel for almost two years, and can even produce, sometimes, an involuntary confusion of powers'.[30] Von Graevenitz explained that a French person suspected of having committed a crime only fell under German jurisdiction if the act was committed against Germans or the German authority – in all other cases, 'the solution of the penal affair comes under the competence of French courts'.[31] The Germans desired to maintain authority over those whose actions affected them directly but distanced themselves from general peace-keeping, which may partially explain the seemingly high level of criminality. However, committing a crime against another French person often involved a breach of both German regulations (such as the curfew) and French solidarity. The French juridical machinery nevertheless sputtered along with reduced powers during the occupation, with *tribunaux correctionels* (criminal courts) still taking place and arrest warrants still issued on behalf of local *juges d'instruction* (magistrates).[32]

The French police force faced not only a confusing legal situation, the threat of denunciations to the Germans, and German interference, but also dwindling numbers of personnel. Table 5 demonstrates the decline in police numbers for the Lille area. There was a significant drop in personnel across many communes, the most extreme example occurring in Lille Ouest from seventy-six policemen before the occupation to just two in 1916. Thus, in March 1916, the Commissaire Central of Lille documented the current state of affairs and suggested actions to be taken come the liberation to maintain (or restore) public order, such as recruiting hundreds of extra policemen, restoring the telephone network and placing prostitutes in a secure medical facility. This report also expressed fears of popular reprisals, even summary executions, during the liberation, given that the understaffed police could barely fulfil its current duties. A plan was drawn up regarding rapid responses to and

Table 5 Police personnel in Lille-Roubaix-Tourcoing, pre-war and 1916.

Commune	Number of police before the occupation – *gardes champêtres* (rural officers) and *gardes civils* (civil guards) respectively	Number in 1916
Cysoing	4, 25	4, 14
Haubourdin	6, 51	6, 0
Lannoy	14, 60	8, 29
Lille (Nord) i.e. La Madeleine	4, 60	4, 60
Lille (Ouest)	6, 70	2, 0
Lille (Sud-Est)	14, 0	3, 0
Pont-à-Marcq	At least one *garde-champêtre*	2, 0
Quesnoy-sur-Deule	1, 8	1, 0
Roubaix (Ouest)	5, 24	5, 8
Seclin	1, 48, and 1 *garde-chasse*	8, 0, 0
Tourcoing (Nord-Est)	12, 24	10, 0
Tourcoing (Sud)	19, 15	19, 11

Source: Archives Départementales du Nord, 9R245.

Note: Different statistics are provided elsewhere: Archives Départementales du Nord, 9R580, Commissaire Central intérimaire (de Lille), 'mésures à prendre', 24 March 1916, states that there were 122 professional agents and 130 auxiliary agents; Archives Municipales de Lille, 4H274, n.a., typewritten document, 5 May 1916, states that there were 444 police personnel, including administrators.

dispersal of crowds.[33] By October 1918, the police force of Lille had diminished so greatly that the Mayor had to appeal to retired policemen who had not already been called up during the occupation, and others, to plug the personnel gap.[34]

The reduced force had trouble combating criminality. For instance, in May 1917, inhabitants complained that surveillance of the Jardin Lardener in the Fives-Lille area was suspended for an hour each day, and '[people] use this to engage in plunder here'.[35] The policeman guarding the *jardin* had to leave the premises for lunch, whereas before the occupation there was enough food for the guard to eat his lunch on duty. Now, the gardener acted as a replacement during the lunch break, because no other policemen were available, already being engaged in surveillance elsewhere.[36] This hints at the scale of crime and criminality: nearly all locations from where goods could be stolen needed to be under constant police observation; even a gap in the surveillance

of an hour or so could lead to theft or other crimes. On the same date, twenty-six locations and buildings were watched constantly by the French police, requiring a total of fifty-five policemen.[37] Sometimes *agents de l'octroi* (tax inspectors) also engaged in surveillance, particularly of *locaux d'alimentation* (supply depots) and *boulangeries*, although there was confusion over jurisdiction, and occasionally professional rivalries.[38]

The Germans sometimes ordered the French police to increase surveillance, such as in the main railway station of Tourcoing in May 1917, where wooden planks from the fences were being stolen every day.[39] These thefts had been a problem since at least March 1917, when people were using the holes in the fence to steal more wood from inside the station.[40] Desperate *occupés* therefore turned to theft, discovering novel methods to acquire much-needed goods. In both cases, the blame fell on the occupied population, and the responsibility for preventing further occurrences lay with the French municipality. The French police could engender punishments and criticism from the Germans by overstepping its alleged duties, but also by not going far enough in its actions; in this respect its position mirrored that of the wider occupied population, negotiating survival between a rock and a hard place.

The police were also prevented from other work by having to accompany the Germans during requisitions – an act that French policemen viewed a means of maintaining public order rather than complicity.[41] If verbal or physical disputes broke out between French civilians and the Germans during requisitions, this could result in punishments for the entire population of a town or commune; by accompanying the Germans, French policeman reduced the likelihood of this. Such aid provided to the Germans by the French police gave rise to a feeling of betrayal among certain locals, visible in the resistance tract *La Liberté*, a self-confessed 'Bulletin of patriotic propaganda' distributed in the Lille-Roubaix-Tourcoing area. The 15 November 1915 issue contained a lengthy article entitled 'POLICE', beginning with emotional, literary language explaining how the population had seen the 'Vigilant guardians' as 'the symbolic personification of Patriotism and of fairness' – but they were wrong, and 'since the day of the capture of our town of Roubaix[,] these puppets have put themselves in the service of the German matadors, acted as cicerones, informed them, served them with an affability that would make Redskins blush!'[42] Condemning recent 'brutal behaviours [*mœurs*]' of the Roubaix police, the article noted that the only distinguishing feature between the French police and the Germans

was the absence of a belt buckle engraved with *Gott mitt Uns*. The police chief was blamed for allowing French agents to become 'valets' for the Germans.[43] The author's (and perhaps the wider population's) anger towards, disdain for and disappointment in the French police is clear.

During the occupation, the local French police force found itself under great pressure and criticism from both the French and Germans. This had a knock-on effect on criminality: despite close German surveillance, the *occupés* were able to engage in a surprising number of criminal actions. The occupied zone became an environment in which crime could be legitimised as the best or only means of survival, and thus the moral economy was reconfigured. Such a response to the occupation was adopted by certain *occupés*, pitting survival instincts against respectability.

Theft

The most widespread crime carried out during the occupation was theft. The link between penury, hunger and theft is clear,[44] although this phenomenon (and crime in general) is largely absent from post-1918 memoirs or histories, even in post-1990 historiography.[45] Conversely, police reports for Lille and Tourcoing, the *Bulletin de Lille* and German posters for the Nord contain virtually daily accounts of theft.[46] There were two forms, matching the conflicting jurisdictions: thefts carried out to the detriment of fellow *occupés*, and those committed to the detriment of the Germans. The latter could be perceived as a form of resistance, but stealing German property was not always carried out simply because the owner was German. Theft to the detriment of fellow *occupés*, on the other hand, was a betrayal of the expectations of the *Union Sacrée*, and of the population's claim to be suffering together in dignity, for France. In this sense, it constituted a particular brand of misconduct – anti-patriotic *and* criminal behaviour, rather than what was perceived as criminally unpatriotic behaviour. However, the criminal aspect of the occupied population did not always make as clear-cut a distinction between the nationality of the victims of crime as I make here.

Thefts from Germans

Thefts committed to the detriment of individual German soldiers or 'the German authority' occurred frequently. The occupiers also considered 'theft' as the possession or use of goods which they believed should

be handed to them during requisitions, although this distinction is clear in the sentences. 'Anti-German' thefts were highlighted via lists of punishments, notably in the 'German Military Justice' section of the *Bulletin de Lille*. On 26 May 1916, for instance, the *Bulletin* noted an increase in the number of thefts of large and small goods, taken by children from carriages transporting parcels. A list of punishments was printed: thirteen males sentenced to between seven and twenty-eight days 'of regular privation of liberty [*privation moyenne de la liberté*]' and one male sentenced to fourteen days' detention. The next set of punishments would be harsher, it was stated.[47] Perhaps the relatively short length of these prison sentences resulted from a lack of incarceration space caused by a large criminal population, rather than the lenience alluded to in the announcement itself. A week later, the problem had not been solved, and another almost identical notice was published. While only three people were punished this time, theft from German vehicles was still a growing problem.[48]

Similar announcements and posters appeared throughout the occupation. Although supposed to underline the consequences of infractions of German regulations, they offer an insight into the fact that such laws were being breached on a regular basis – and that the German regime was not as omnipotent as it or later occupation accounts claimed. This mirrors Taylor's findings regarding Nord-Pas-de-Calais in the Second World War.[49] The difference in this earlier occupation was that it was both the French *and* German authorities who found themselves constrained, partly due to a less clear-cut cooperation between the two police forces.

On 26 May 1916, the *Bulletin* informed readers that thirty-six individuals (twenty-five men and eleven women) had been punished for theft since January 1916, ranging from fourteen days to seven weeks in prison.[50] This was one of the longest lists of punished individuals appearing in the *Bulletin*, indicating the predominance of theft of 'German-owned' goods among occupation crimes. Such announcements also highlight that many of the perpetrators were young children, echoing studies regarding the later Occupation.[51] Schooling was important in this regard. While some classes continued to run throughout the occupation, many did so sporadically.[52] Schools often closed because of lack of heating in winter, outbreaks of illness or because the building or teaching material had been requisitioned by the Germans. These were more likely from 1917 when the Germans exploited the occupied area more energetically.[53] Manon Pignot's study of occupied children's diaries underlined their 'profound sense of boredom'.[54] Children often had little to do when not forced to

carry out agricultural tasks for the Germans,[55] and school closures and boredom pushed some children towards 'vagabondage'. The moral well-being of the population, particularly the young, became a key occupation concern, discussed below.

French police reports hint that this concern may have been justified, registering many 'anti-German' thefts committed by youths, particularly from German vehicles. For example, on 5–6 October 1916, a woman aged fifty-two and four boys (aged twelve to fourteen) were investigated for stealing clothes from a German transport vehicle.[56] As this was a few days before von Graevenitz outlined the jurisdictional separation, the investigation was carried out by French policemen, demonstrating the confusing situation in which the French police found themselves in the first half of the occupation.[57]

Thefts committed to the detriment of the Germans also highlight the blurring of moral boundaries. For example, on 19–20 June 1916, three men aged seventeen, nineteen and twenty were arrested 'for the theft of around 50 skeins of cotton to the detriment of the German Army, for whom they have been working for some time'.[58] It is not clear if they worked for the Germans voluntarily. Even if they had been forced, this would still have elicited disdain from some locals; yet they also stole from the Germans. Was this a form of resistance, a simple exploitation of the situation to increase their chances of survival, or something else?

Thefts from fellow occupés

Thefts carried out by *occupés* to the detriment of compatriots are also recorded in French police reports, which shed light on another form of misconduct and further call into question the hagiographic accounts of the occupation. Becker mentions only briefly that there were thefts committed between *occupés* but attempts no further examination.[59] Yet François Rouesel, member of the Chamber of Commerce of Roubaix, hints at the extent of theft in his unpublished memoirs, written like a diary. Regarding December 1916, he noted that despite the rigours of the German military police, numerous imprisonments and deportations to Germany, 'security has not existed in our town since the war from the point of view of thefts and burglaries'.[60] Examining the extent of this phenomenon allows for a deeper understanding of the complexities of French behaviours under occupation, and perhaps represents the beginnings of a rectification of a historiographical oversight.

Returning to the *Bulletin*, beyond the German proclamations there is evidence of inter-French theft in the 'Local gossip' section. For example, the 18 May 1916 issue notes that 'On 8 May, Louis Gruson, 44 years old […] was arrested for theft of vegetables, in different gardens […] He appeared before the criminal court on 10 May, and was condemned to 6 months' imprisonment[;] he was a recidivist.' This is representative because the most commonplace subcategory of theft was stealing food; it also potentially indicates the role pre-war criminals played in occupation crime, unless the author meant that Gruson had committed other crimes during the occupation.

The contents of the *Bulletin* suggest that crime increased during the occupation. In March 1916, it published a warning to its readers to be wary of pickpockets who had been operating at the Marché de Wazemmes and the supply stores.[61] The existence of pickpockets at a market is hardly shocking. What is striking, though, is the need to publish such a warning, presumably to inform readers of the (growing?) scale of the problem. A few months later, a pickpocket was caught red-handed: a thirty-seven-year-old woman was found in possession of purses, wallets and identity cards, and was sent to the remand centre.[62] The theft of identity cards could have led to serious punishment for the owners,[63] and therefore undermined inter-French solidarity.

There is some evidence of organised crime during the occupation and the extremes to which it led people. In Lille on 21 December 1915, the body of a police sergeant was found in a pond. Investigations concluded that he had been murdered and quickly led to the arrest of four men between twenty-seven and thirty-two years old recently suspected of stealing poultry in the neighbourhood. One of the suspects admitted that they had murdered the sergeant because he had been keeping the men under surveillance.[64] The surprisingly rapid arrests demonstrate that the French police was not entirely powerless. Perhaps it was only the murder that spurred the police into action, with thieving so widespread and commonplace that until a more serious crime was committed the police would or could not intervene, merely watch. This was not the only case of serious crime: a 'band of miscreants' operated in Roubaix, and one of its leaders was executed in 1917 for possessing a revolver.[65] He had twice been arrested for theft during the occupation, and before the war 'engaged in plunder and robbery'.[66] Therefore, strict German curbs on everyday activity did not manage to stop criminal actions, even those of organised gangs of pre-war criminals.

The *Bulletin* also highlights frequent 'small-scale' thefts, presumably carried out by desperate individuals. For instance, the 6 June 1916 issue contained ten mentions of theft, whether thefts committed since the last issue four days before, or those charged with theft during this period.[67] These reports were so frequent that, presumably to counterbalance the damaging effect on the population's morale, a section entitled 'Act of Probity' was sometimes published. One instance recounts a man who found 100 bread tickets and returned them to their owner, earning the *Bulletin*'s congratulations.[68] Thus, according to the *Bulletin*, not every item that disappeared was necessarily stolen, although it seems that this was often probably the case for most 'disappearances'.

On 11 January 1916, tragedy struck in Lille: a munitions depot called the Dix-Huit Ponts exploded, killing 134 people (including thirty Germans) and injuring up to 400.[69] Directly afterwards, the *Bulletin* informed its readers that some unscrupulous individuals were taking advantage of the situation by entering the ruins and stealing goods. One such person was caught and condemned to two months' imprisonment. The article ends with a plea: 'So respect the tragedy! Respect the ruins!'[70] The ruins of the explosion of the Dix-Huit Ponts were not being respected, just as the ruins of the invaded territories themselves were not, despite calls for dignity and fraternity in suffering. Indeed, other examples mentioned in the *Bulletin* are equally striking, such as thefts from churches or tombs.[71] The *Bulletin*'s constant reports of thefts of foodstuffs, clothes and shoes, as well as money and various objects, presents an image of widespread inter-French theft.[72] This image is backed up by the Mairie of Lille's daily notes to municipal councillors, which record many instances of thefts from mid-1917; these became increasingly common as the occupation continued and the liberation drew nearer.[73]

The French police and theft

Police reports offer further insight into criminality, allowing an assessment of the constituency of the criminal population. Examples of youths committing crime abound, suggesting that they were more likely to be reported. This is particularly the case for another type of theft: those involving new organisations which had a particular set of consequences unique to the occupation, i.e. the theft of goods belonging to the CRB or the CANF, ultimately to the detriment of the population as a whole. Such thefts were overwhelmingly carried out by children or adolescents. In Lille, between 23 and 30 November 1917 alone, six boys

aged between ten and fifteen were the subject of investigations for having stolen foodstuffs and other goods from CANF transportation vehicles.[74] The young age of criminals may be due to the demographic changes of the war and the occupation. Perhaps some parents encouraged their children to commit such acts, hoping that their infantile status would protect them from the harshest of punishments. Post-war questionnaires completed by teachers attest to the largely positive attitudes of German soldiers towards French children, as well as the latter's rebelliousness – it was common, for example, for children to insult or mock Germans present on school grounds without serious consequences.[75] Nevertheless, in Roubaix and Tourcoing in September 1916, increased youth crime was targeted in a German poster stating that parents would be punished for the misbehaviour of their children.[76]

Yet youths were not alone in committing thefts to the detriment of the CRB/CANF, which occurred from the CANF's inception and grew in scale throughout the war. In May 1917, thefts from supply wagons were affecting the relief effort.[77] At the end of February 1918, two women and a man were arrested for having stolen regularly from the CANF over a period of eighteen to twenty weeks,[78] and in July, one young man of seventeen stole 17,852 francs 'to the detriment of the Town'.[79] On one night in August 1918, 480 boxes of condensed milk were stolen from the CANF depot at the Descamps factory in Lille,[80] where dozens more had been stolen the preceding March.[81] Overall, CANF dock workers repeatedly stole goods in 1918.[82]

The French were willing to work with the Germans to prevent these crimes. At the end of May 1917, the Mayor of Lille informed the Kommandantur that thefts of eggs from wagons were becoming more frequent. The preceding day, almost 1,000 eggs had been stolen.[83] This foreshadowed the situation in the Second World War, whereby French authorities were most willing to work with the Germans regarding food provisioning.[84] Sometimes the authors of these thefts were discovered, providing a warning against oversimplified conclusions concerning criminality. In January 1918, for example, it was revealed that the authors of the theft of briquettes from the local coal depot were in fact German soldiers,[85] and from February to April 1918 further thefts were attributed to Germans, notably from CANF wagons and depots.[86] However, most thieves were French, as the testimony of key CANF personnel attests: every time sugar was unloaded, a certain quantity went missing, putting suspicion on the workers; thus, from December 1917 onwards, CANF workers were subjected to searches.[87]

Police reports suggest there was a correlation between the number of thefts committed and the length of the occupation – unsurprising given the increased suffering and hunger as the war continued. However, reports for Lille regarding 1914 and 1915 are incomplete, because of the fire at the *hôtel de ville* in April 1916.[88] This may give a distorted view of events. Yet it seems that until mid-1915 the French police were concerned mostly with maintaining good relations between the locals and the Germans, performing tasks such as investigating thefts carried out to the detriment of the Germans,[89] and sometimes crimes committed by Germans.[90] From 1916 onwards, the police focused mainly on theft, both to the detriment of the aid organisations or the town, and targeting individuals. In August 1916, there were no fewer than twenty-seven recorded thefts (or people arrested or investigated for theft) in Lille.[91] There was at least a theft a day for all but three days of the month.[92] Many involved youths (particularly boys) stealing potatoes or coal[93] – again highlighting the predominance of youth crime.

Misconduct and pure criminality did not always go hand in hand. On 12–13 August 1916, 22,000 francs were stolen from Mme Rosse, 'owner of a brothel'.[94] This was a large sum (a loaf of bread cost 6 francs that year),[95] suggesting that Rosse's clients were Germans and her trade booming. Perhaps stealing from such a woman would have been regarded as preferable to stealing from the CANF/CRB, although, as this chapter demonstrates, the moral economy of some *occupés* was as broken as the financial economy. Penury naturally provided ample motives for crime. Such reasoning is apparent in the words of the *occupés* themselves. Four people were arrested and interrogated by French police for stealing from Lille's wood depot in April 1918.[96] All gave similar statements to forty-eight-year-old Arthur Dumont, who admitted to the theft but justified his actions because his family had been without coal for six days. It was the first time he had stolen goods;[97] indeed, the attached reports on the individuals charged stated that all had 'good habitual conduct' and morality. They and their families were 'well noted' in the commune, they were not 'drunkards', 'debauched', 'libertines', and did not live in 'concubinage'.[98] In short, they were upstanding, respectable members of the community, who seem to have turned to theft as a last resort, out of a survival instinct brought on by the hardships of the occupation.

Yet criminality breached both respectable social norms and highlighted the lack of solidarity. In May 1917, the Commissaire Central of Roubaix wrote to the Mayor, explaining crime rates. He spoke of thefts caused by hunger and injustice, and of the idea that many were profiting

from the war. The springboard for this message was 'a case of theft that seems conceived by the influence of sentiments deserving to be related and to which it is necessary to pay genuine attention'. That afternoon, three mothers had entered an *épicérie* and picked up 5 kilograms of beans, leaving 5 francs in payment. They had been informed that, rather than the 1 franc a kilogram they had paid, the beans cost 6.5 francs a kilo. Consequently, the owner gave chase. A passing policeman intervened and took all involved persons to the Commissariat. The Commissaire stated that 'equality in suffering is a terrible fiction [*une fiction navrante*]'. He explained that every day 'the scandal increases, speculation no longer has any limits' and the poor were dying of hunger – which he feared could lead to pillage: 'People [*on*] whisper very loudly, people cope badly with the worsening and increasing provocations and the physical weakening produces its effect on morals which collapse and on consciences which, soon, will no longer react …'. The Commissaire wanted to signal

> the situation[:] on one hand the people who howl in hunger but which a small remainder of conscience still maintains on the correct path [*la bonne voie*] and on the other hand the exploiters – they are legion – who living well, celebrating without hiding themselves, allow themselves all possible fantasies, increasing at their will [the price of] those essential products without worrying or caring about the teeth-gnashing of the starving population.[99]

Occupied Roubaix was not an exemplar of patriotic unity; criminal and other misconduct was widespread, worrying the Commissaire.

It is impossible to know whether survival was the motive for crime, but desperation rather than targeted malice probably guided the actions of many occupation thieves – even if there were thefts from the very aid organisations that were helping to ameliorate the situations engendering crime. Complex motives are also evident in discussions of non-criminal misconduct – and, for some, like diarist Suzanne Beck from the occupied Aisne, the connections between both forms of misconduct were evident. She linked personal and sexual morality, and for her:

> female thieves, female denunciators, prostitutes, were all part of the same group, or were even the same people; she blamed this on poverty, exclusion, solitude, and was therefore not shocked that female refugees, quasi-strangers, were the first among the 'women for soldiers' [*femmes à soldats*], certain among them finding themselves 'in an interesting situation'.[100]

A link was often drawn in the later investigations into sexual misconduct, with details of thefts seen to reinforce the case for misconduct[101] – moral,

sexual *and* patriotic perversity were inextricably linked. Becker suggests that German requisitions constituted legalised theft,[102] which altered the moral situation in which the *occupés* found themselves. The impact of German pillage and the hunger and poverty caused by the occupation may indeed have altered the moral compass of the population, just as front-line soldiers of both sides often turned to theft for survival.[103] The Germans had legitimised theft as a means of access to social goods, and occupied civilians internalised and acted upon this reasoning: the moral economy was thus reconfigured. The line between criminal instinct and survival is equally blurred when examining other types of crime.

Fraud

Fraud encompasses numerous criminal activities, but its meaning here includes *escroquerie* (fraud), *détournement* (embezzlement/misappropriation) of goods and money, the fabrication of false money, and the illegal selling of goods. Another form is a crime particular to the occupation, that of being a *ravitailleur*, i.e. someone who transported goods (particularly foodstuffs) across communal and national borders in order to sell them to the occupied population. For the occupiers, fraud consisted of possessing or selling contraband, including selling goods without declaring the sale. Punishment ranged from four weeks' 'arrest' up to five years in prison and a 10,000-mark fine.[104] Depending on who the victims were, and on the specific nature of the crime, fraud can thus be perceived as a form of criminal misconduct. The occupied and non-occupied French were united in their contempt for those considered 'war profiteers', people exploiting the wartime situation to enrich themselves.[105] However, fraud may in some cases be perceived as a form of resistance, undermining the occupiers and providing goods to locals. Black markets, fraud and speculation are common phenomena during military occupations and at home fronts during total war.[106] In this respect, the situation in northern France was similar to that in Belgium,[107] and had parallels with Second World War France.[108] However, these themes have received little attention regarding northern France in the First World War, hindering our understanding of a key part of occupation life.

Fraud concerning aid organisations

On 3 April 1916, the CANF warned locals that its goods could not be sold to anyone else. It also reiterated the extraordinary nature of the CRB

and CANF's efforts – goods had been transported across the Atlantic, then to Holland, through Belgium, and to northern France, without a single *centime* of personal profit. As such, 'In the face of this universal selflessness, no French person, we are certain, will wish to compromise the good reputation of our region of the Nord, in speculating on the price of goods of which each parcel is due to efforts uniquely inspired by devotion and generosity'.[109] However, another poster warned that 'scandalous operations' (reselling of CANF goods) continued, which could lead to a cessation of all aid, endangering the lives of the entire occupied population.[110] This was not mere rhetoric, as it was only with considerable effort that the 'soul of the CRB', Herbert Hoover, and others, had convinced the Allies to allow CRB/CANF goods to bypass the blockade.[111] The British in particular feared that the Germans would seize the goods themselves, leading to tight restrictions on the functioning of the aid operations, including an agreement with the Germans not to requisition CRB goods.[112] French civilians selling CRB/CANF goods broke these legally binding regulations, particularly if they sold their goods to Germans. The Mayor of Lille noted that each inhabitant was only entitled to an amount of goods matching personal or family needs and that the observation of this condition was itself crucial to the continuation of such aid in the commune.[113] Any infraction of this constituted criminal fraud. Yet CANF-related fraud was a persistent thorn in the French authorities' side, despite the willingness of the *juge d'instruction* to issue arrest warrants for suspects.[114] Thus, French police and *agents de l'octroi* monitored supply depots.[115] Further posters invoking the *Code pénal* appeared regularly to remind the population of the illegality and repercussions of CANF fraud.[116] This did not solve the problem: for instance, from September to mid-December 1916, thirty-five abuses occurred across Lille, including attempting to procure goods without a valid card, theft, taking more than the permitted ration and attempting to bribe a guard.[117]

The population itself believed in widespread CANF-related fraud and price hikes carried out not only by bakers and food sellers but also the local administration and CANF employees. Abuses of power were perceived to occur in *mairies* across the Nord. The mood and logic was very similar to that visible in Belgium, where 'The obsessive fear of the *profitariat* was well established.' With so many people receiving aid, 'there must therefore – it was said – inevitably be abuses'. It was clear that some profited from the situation, leading to the opinion: 'To endure penury patriotically, that was all well and good, but why was it always up to the same people to set an example?'[118]

Such was the strength of this belief and the accompanying disgust that in April 1917 the Mayor of Lille fought back in a poster. He warned compatriots against 'slanderous rumours that ill-informed individuals or people of bad faith are circulating among the population', which spread 'thanks to the conditions in which we live, with a deplorable intensity'. These 'attacks as odious as they are unjustified' targeted men who had devoted soul and body to *ravitaillement* for more than two years, who were above all suspicion and who deserved the admiration and gratitude of everyone. The Mayor admitted that such a complex operation may have led to some minor abuses but proclaimed forcefully that the 'campaign of perfidious insinuations' must end – by taking rumour-mongers to court. He concluded: 'You have demonstrated, in the terrible years we are living through, a spirit of patience, of concord and solidarity of which I am profoundly grateful, and I do not doubt that you will see this through to the end.'[119] Key themes of the occupation are visible here: the idea of inter-French solidarity, the importance of respectability and thus the painfulness of accusations of wrongdoing, and the heavy burden laid upon French municipalities and administrators. Such a poster seems to reflect the post-war view of misconduct, i.e. that a small minority acted badly and unpatriotically, and to insinuate that this was any more than a fringe occurrence was simply mistaken. Yet the poster also demonstrates the fracturing of the *Union Sacrée* (or rather attendant inter-French solidarity) and the strength of rumours and internecine squabbles among the occupied population – caused by widespread perception of misconduct, whatever the realities.

Suspicion of CANF fraud was also common in Roubaix and Tourcoing, where the Mayors followed the same pattern, highlighting the selflessness and importance of the CANF's mission, and not allowing a few mistakes to undermine the entire project.[120] In November 1916, anonymous handwritten posters appeared across Tourcoing in local CANF depots and markets, accusing its employees of fraud and favouritism. Friends of the Mayor were said to benefit from better rations than the wider population, while the CANF employees themselves were accused of passing goods 'between friends'.[121] In response, the Mayor published a poster underlining the integrity of the provisioning process and its personnel, and explaining that fraud could not happen because of the various checks and measures in place. Those few cases of wrongdoing that had existed were dealt with rapidly, and, indeed, could not function for an extended period due to surveillance.[122] Despite this, the Commissaire Central was concerned that this campaign of 'systematic

denigration' might outlast the occupation, as it appeared to have a political bent. The Socialist Party in particular seemed 'very well informed of what is happening regarding food supply'.[123] This also suggests there was some truth to accusations. Similar 'defamations' were made against the CANF committee and municipality of Roubaix.[124]

Suspicion of CANF members was sometimes justified. In Lille, a sixty-five-year-old CANF inspector was found guilty of fraud involving paid subscriptions in return for coal that never materialised. He was charged and sent to the *parquet* (magistrate's court).[125] In Hellemmes, the Adjunct to the Mayor and member of the local CANF branch was relieved of his functions on 3 October 1917. He had breached numerous regulations, although actually to the population's benefit, such as giving people flour as well as their bread rations.[126] The CANF operation, therefore, seems to have provided a breeding ground for fraud, in the midst of humanitarian relief.

Other fraud

Other forms of fraud occurred. In an interwar book of occupation poetry, a poem dated July 1916 and entitled 'Fraudeuse' (female fraudster) attacks a woman who stole grain in order to make bread,[127] depriving fellow *occupés* of their grain ration. The poem reflected reality: most recorded cases of fraud concern bakers or their assistants procuring excess grain or bread for themselves, using CANF grain in their products, or members of the wider population purchasing contraband bread.[128] This blurs the line between theft and fraud. Such was the scale of fraud by 1916 that the municipality of Lille upped its surveillance of goods and food depots, actively punishing culprits.[129] Likewise, in Tourcoing in December 1916, the police launched a series of raids to seize fraudulently acquired foodstuffs, especially rice, from shopkeepers.[130] Henceforth, French authorities were obsessed with curbing fraud. Usually, once someone was caught red-handed, the municipality demanded that they pay a fine.[131] Only a refusal to do so led to judicial action or removal from their job.[132]

This obsession was justified, as the scale of fraud was enormous, and suspects were sometimes involved in other misconduct. In Lille in June 1918, nine men were arrested by the French police on suspicion of trafficking goods, from sugar to gold. Their houses or establishments were searched. Many of these men had links to the Germans, having engaged in commerce with them or having frequented German establishments

and personnel. Most had previous criminal records and were considered as being of dubious morality.[133] These arrests were part of a police operation to discover who had been illegally hoarding sugar – in the preceding days, all sugar supplies in Lille had dried up, before hundreds of kilograms reappeared at considerably inflated prices.[134] The Germans slowed proceedings, especially because numerous suspects worked in banks controlled by the occupier. Soldiers explained that goods seized by the French police that had been bought from Germans could not be confiscated.[135] The suspects also attempted to play the Germans against the French police, sometimes successfully,[136] but some policemen nevertheless prevailed: in one shop, they discovered seventy-seven 100-kilogram sacks of granulated sugar, a crate containing a dozen kilograms of sugar cubes and two cellars brimming with around 400 cases of sugar (containing about 25 kilograms each).[137]

Fraudsters were inventive. In Lille, a man was sentenced by the Tribunal Correctionnel to eight days' imprisonment and a fine of 200 francs for the creation and sale of a 'soap powder' which contained no soap. His punishment was to serve as an example to the numerous other speculators and falsifiers who 'have a coin […] in the location of their heart', and whose god was their wallet.[138] Making and selling alcohol – banned by French and German authorities in the occupied area in 1914[139] – also occurred.[140] It was dangerous in other ways: in Tourcoing in 1916, a man was blinded and another two died after drinking home-made gin.[141] Overall, alcohol fraud was relatively limited. Another type, however, was more widespread: smuggling.

Fonceurs *and* ravitailleurs

Smugglers were described as both *fonceurs* and *ravitailleurs*. For Redier, *fonceur* meant different things in war and peace. In peacetime, *fonceurs* were 'audacious fraudsters who sneak by customs officials and cross the border via incredible routes known to them alone'. In wartime, however, *foncer* became a lucrative occupation for people with little or no honesty willing to buy goods in one area and resell them for scandalous prices elsewhere. Yet he admits that *foncer* was sometimes an honourable action involving celebrated resisters such as Louise de Bettignies and Louise Thuliez (accomplices of Redier's wife, Léonie Vanhoutte).[142] However, many *occupés* focused on the negative side of smuggling. On 7 April 1916, Blin wrote of 'The lucrative commerce of *fonceurs*' which was 'momentarily stopped'.[143] For local newspaper *Le Progrès du Nord*,

such actions were unquestionably negative. Reappearing after the liberation, on 22 November 1918, a list of five grievances were published on the front page. Two of these related to *ravitailleurs* or fraudsters: 'The swindlers of the occupation are still the masters of the pavement' and 'Some of the *ravitailleurs* who exploited us are still there.'[144] In occupied Roubaix, François Rouesel remarked that the only way to procure food:

> was to go and search for some at the Belgian border or to buy some from the fraudsters. But the border was carefully guarded by troops […] Every day, the prisons of Roubaix were full of unfortunate individuals who had been arrested for having collected a few kilos of potatoes from the border.[145]

Rouesel was sympathetic towards such people, but his attitude evolved over time. So frequent were such actions that, by the end of 1916, 'The name of fraudsters disappeared to make way for that of "fonceurs" to designate those who crossed the border to supply prohibited merchandise.' Further, 'The calm and serious part of the population even welcomed these *fonceurs* sympathetically, since they provided it, at inflated prices without doubt, with food supplies which it would not have been able to procure without them.'[146] This illustrates the moral minefield regarding smuggling and the existence of a black market. Rouesel was concerned that the dishonour associated with being a fraudster had disappeared, which could be dangerous for the future:

> We forget that the war will not last forever and that once peace is established, it will be necessary to re-establish at the same time public morality, to react severely against fraud if we do not wish to make out of the young working population[,] which has unlearnt [the notion of] work and which has become used to this irregular existence, a breeding ground of fraudsters capable of then becoming thieves, then burglars and all the way to murderers.[147]

His class-based judgement is evident. A similarly negative view of *ravitailleurs* can be found in an undated poem concerning Lille, which called *ravitailleurs* unscrupulous 'utter [*fieffés*] thieves' who had 'a plateful of butter / For them and their family members, / They skimp on our rations / To fill up their bellies.' The final stanza is perplexing, hinting at a perceived crossover between sexual misconduct and criminal misconduct:

> MORALITY
> Always look for the woman [*Cherchez toujours la femme*]
> The male is in the woman [*Le mâle est dans la femme* – a pun on 'evil is in the woman'].[148]

Others had a sharper understanding of the grey area of smuggling and black-market provision of goods. *Rapatriés* noted that there were many *ravitailleurs* at Valenciennes, some of whom were ostensibly given permission to cross the border by the Germans in return for a cut of their profits. These 'individuals exempt of all scruples' may have been 'accomplices or agents of the Germans and charged with missions during their trips in Belgium'. However, at the same time, the report acknowledged the confusing, interconnected relationship between the population and those selling goods:

> The *rapatriés* from Valenciennes freely admit that the population maintains and even provokes the existence of *ravitailleurs*, for if they did not buy goods that the latter sell, their commerce would collapse. But if the population who suffer privations have an excuse, their weakness does not exclude the severe judgement which must fall upon these *mercantis* [a derogatory term for profiteers], hated by all the inhabitants.[149]

Thus, the perception of *ravitailleurs/fonceurs* held by the occupied population at large and both occupied and non-occupied French authorities remained overwhelmingly one of suspicion. Many interviews of *rapatriés* focus on this point. It was often suggested that *ravitailleurs/fonceurs* were in the pocket of the Germans, procuring gold for the latter, denouncing compatriots, or working for the German counter-espionage service,[150] even if their actions occasionally did 'help the population out'.[151]

The occupiers themselves drew no distinctions between 'good' and 'bad' smuggling, as would be the case in the 1940–44 Occupation.[152] In his memoirs, Ferdinand Heusghem from Fourmies stated that when *contrebandiers* were caught by the Germans, they were tortured.[153] Little evidence corroborates this, but the Germans clearly took the matter seriously: in a single day in 1915, more than 100 *ravitailleurs* were arrested in Fourmies, although there was no fixed organisation dedicated to this, and the quantities of goods involved were quite meagre.[154] Barbed-wire fences were built at the Belgian border, guarded by constant patrols. Initially implemented to prevent the emigration of young men from the occupied area,[155] these measures also targeted fraud and smuggling. The Germans were concerned by any border crossing, for military and intelligence reasons. For *occupés*, crossing the Belgian frontier was the best means of procuring rare items, as Belgium's relatively more comfortable occupation made various goods easier to find here.[156] The importance of the border for both the French and Germans is evident in the few existing statistics for the border town of Wattrelos, where penury and hardship

pushed locals to risk their lives, with tragic consequences. From January to September 1916 a total of thirty-two people were injured attempting to cross, buy or sell goods at the border, thirty of whom were shot by German sentries; eleven of these thirty were killed. Most (nineteen) were adolescents or children; the youngest was a nine-year-old girl shot by a sentry.[157] Often the role of smuggling was explicit, such as the case of a forty-eight-year-old woman from Roubaix killed when attempting to cross the border with a sack of potatoes on 23 August 1916.[158]

Other preventative measures existed. In summer 1916, in Roubaix, it was forbidden to remain by the border or outside houses located on the border, even for the inhabitants – people were punished for this.[159] Yet smuggling continued. In Tourcoing in April 1918, the Germans attempted to turn the population against smugglers in a poster regarding the recent increase of *pâtisseries* made with goods acquired by cross-border smuggling.[160] The food in question was confiscated, and henceforth a fine of 1,000 marks and three months' imprisonment became the punishment for making foodstuffs using fraudulently acquired ingredients.[161]

The French police also did not differentiate between 'positive' smuggling and the black market, unlike in the Second World War.[162] Instead, pre-war attitudes towards fraud and smuggling continued, although French policemen were less heavy-handed. Those suspected of smuggling or possessing contraband were arrested and questioned,[163] sometimes revealing that they purchased goods from German soldiers.[164] It is unclear whether further action was taken against such individuals.

Yet movement between the frontiers should not necessarily be viewed as an explicitly criminal act. The borderland between Belgium and France had been fluid for generations; thus, *Nordistes* crossing the frontier may have been attempting to return home, or may not have regarded such a movement as implicitly criminal. However, once again it is hard to distinguish between survival and criminality – borders, whether geographic, patriotic, or moral, remained blurred in the occupied Nord.

Making money

False money attracted much attention. The occupation had restructured the local economy significantly, and the gold franc – either appropriated by or hidden from the Germans – was replaced by communal, municipal or regional paper money (*bons*). This local currency existed in tandem with German marks. Despite restrictions on movement, financial

transactions were possible across communal boundaries, especially via soldiers transferring money from one commune to another. This led to a complex situation in which numerous local currencies circulated in any given area. Such confusion opened the door to abuse, particularly falsifying *bons* from another locality from the one in which it was being used. *Bons* required the signature of the mayor of the commune from which the money was issued, a mayoral stamp and a serial number. Thus, to falsify money, a basic printing press and an ability to forge the Mayor's signature was needed. Verification of these *bons* was made difficult by travel and communication restrictions.

The falsification of *bons* was widespread, as evidenced by lists of valid and invalid *bons* presented by Germans to French municipalities to combat fraud.[165] These documents also demonstrate the number of local currencies: one poster contained no fewer than sixty-seven separate, legitimate *bons* for the Nord, Somme and Pas-de-Calais.[166] Such lists were issued at the request of mayors, such as the Mayor of Lille.[167] From 1916, cases of *occupés* arrested for the manufacture and distribution of false money increased.[168] By early 1917, the Mayor of Lille informed the Kommandant that 'Every day, our clerks receive false banknotes and the only way of avoiding all these losses is to order small communes to immediately remove the banknotes they have issued from circulation.'[169] So widespread was the problem that it affected the French administration, such as in November 1917 when the *recette municipale* (tax office) of Lille made a payment to the Germans accidentally containing three false notes.[170]

In many cases, the counterfeiters could not be discovered. The police of Tourcoing encountered this impasse frequently between 1917 and the end of the occupation, when falsification was particularly acute. One hundred and sixteen falsified *billets* were seized between April 1917 and February 1918,[171] and at least thirty-eight investigations into falsified money occurred from December 1917 to February 1918. Unsurprisingly, nearly everyone found in possession of false money denied having created it or implicitly did so by giving a detailed explanation of how they came to be in possession of it.[172] The investigating police officers usually believed such stories – reports contain key phrases concerning the respectability of interviewees, such as being 'well considered',[173] 'honourably known' or possessing 'good faith'.[174] The notion of respectability once again comes to the fore: these were respectable people who were not betraying the national and local community in the same way as those engaging in other forms of misconduct. Most discoveries of false money

in Tourcoing were made at CANF depots and centres,[175] again raising the possibility of some *occupés* undermining the relief effort. However, it could simply be the case that CANF buildings were under increased scrutiny and surveillance, meaning that false documents were more likely to be discovered here.

Both the German and French authorities put considerable effort into combating this perennial thorn in their side. Sometimes Germans were suspected of trading in falsified money,[176] but locals were the main perpetrators. Falsifiers of money were listed in the *Bulletin* or posters,[177] in French police reports,[178] and in letters between German and French authorities.[179] Just like other types of fraud, falsification of money was perceived by Germans and French alike as an unrespectful act leading to negative consequences for all those in the occupied area.

Fears for the present and the future

Concerns about increased criminality plagued locals. The *Bulletin* of 16 June 1916 noted that: 'The long inaction to which we are submitted is disastrous [*funeste*] to children (and also to property owners).'[180] Others agreed that the period of mass unemployment combined with the general effects of the occupation to erode the work ethic and morals of the population. The occupation was an affront to respectability, involving a 'disclocation of the social order'[181] – and crime, especially juvenile delinquency, was the most visible form of this.

In December 1916, Rouesel wrote extensively on the perceived threat of crime, in the present and the future. He noted that numerous thefts and pillages took place in Roubaix and its environs, mainly at night. Animals were stolen from fields, material from factories, and some people even broke into inhabited houses, armed with revolvers. Arrests were rare, but when they did occur the arrested included many 'young people, even coming from honourable families, who would never have become burglars if they had not started by smuggling [*foncer*] at the border'.[182] He concluded:

> This is what it is good to say and repeat, for if a severe reaction is not produced soon after the war we will be exposed to a generation composed in part of gangsters [*apaches*] who will succeed the brave and honest workers from Roubaix that we have known until now.[183]

This criminal behaviour, he argued, was exemplary of a wider disrespect for the Government. For Rousel, this should be corrected in schools,

where children should learn that they owe not just a blood debt to the *Patrie* but a civic debt to the Government.[184]

Such concerns did not dissipate with time, although for some they were expressed in a more nuanced manner. In February 1918, fellow diarist Blin pondered the negative treatment of *occupés* by non-occupied French and admitted that 'Without doubt, we are not without reproach.' In particular, he proclaimed, 'A thoughtless and loud youth, happy to live in flabby [*molle*] idleness is too often remarkable for their lack of heart and absence of moral sense.' However, Blin maintained that 'the population remains, in its large majority, worthy of France, worthy of the children that she has sent in front of the enemy to save the honour and integrity of the *Patrie*!'[185] Two months later, Blin was less positive:

> Murder rue de l'Epeule; an adolescent slits the throat of a woman and her young daughter. The war prepares […] a sad generation. The distinction between 'mine & yours' is no longer made: conscience is smothered by the struggle for life […] idleness gives birth to all vices: a very true and tangibly real maxim at the moment.[186]

While fears and cases of youth criminality therefore appear to have exacerbated as the occupation continued, this problem attracted particular attention from early 1917. In April 1917, socialist Député du Nord Henri Ghesquière wrote to the Mayor of Lille, informing him of 'acts of vandalism' taking place across the city, including children destroying urinals and trees. Ghesquière concluded: 'What will become of these children when we wish them to leave the environment of idleness and vice in which they will have contracted the habits of theft, begging, pillage, vandalism […]? We dare not think about it!'[187] He asked if police, educational or labour measures could be taken to fix this problem, 'if only to give the impression that the French authority has not entirely abandoned its rights'.[188]

Later that month, the Commissaire Central of Lille agreed with Ghesquière but argued that it was not his responsibility 'to research the ways and the methods to employ to ward off the evil that will constitute, it must be recognised, a veritable social danger, even greater because the bad habits resulting from idleness will have contaminated other elements of this young generation'.[189] The responsibility, it seemed, lay with the educational system. In May, the Commissaire informed the Acting Préfet of what he labelled 'a definite social danger, a threat to the good reputation and the prosperity of secular school'. Since the occupation,

> The number of adolescents sent to the public prosecutor for thefts of all types has become worrying. At the beginning, the majority of delinquents comprised young people older than school age and finding themselves, because of the circumstances, in forced idleness.
>
> Now, school pupils often meeting in gangs frequently commit skilful thefts with a dexterity not always acquired by genuine professional.[190]

The Commissaire provided examples of recent arrests of such youths, emphasising that these were numerous and hinting at more gangs unknown to the police. He concluded: 'There therefore exists a real danger of propagation that teaching staff could try to curb within their means.'[191] Just like Rouesel, therefore, the Commissaire perceived Republican education as a means to instil good morals; without this formative organ of the French state, local youths fell into immorality. Indeed, the state had increasingly concerned itself with combating youth immorality and delinquency since the late 1800s.[192] Thus, the situation of a German occupation undermined not only the authority of the Republic and the reputation of France but also the prospects for future generations.

The Germans themselves expressed concern about youth delinquency. Von Graevenitz wrote to the Mayor of Lille in May 1917, stating that recently children had caused 'significant damage' to railway lines, by pulling apart fences and walls. Only some perpetrators had been arrested, but, as they were minors, their parents were punished with 'detention' for 'lacking surveillance'.

> Everywhere […] we note an unusual number of idle children who skulk around and take advantage of any occasion for wrongdoing. These gangs of impudent children systematically steal everything found in the vehicles of the military[,] the post office, [or transporting] *ravitaillement* and fodder; annoy the soldiers and guards, throwing stones at them, etc.[193]

The damage to railway lines was understood by the Germans as sabotage, rendering such actions dangerous for the perpetrators, the town and the population as a whole. Von Graevenitz held the town responsible and ordered the Mayor 'to react energetically against the growing licentiousness of this Youth, with appropriate measures (imposing jobs in schools, organising gymnastic exercises, under the surveillance of teachers; forced work [*occupation forcée*] in public services, etc.)'.[194]

Yet again the Commissaire Central believed that this represented more of a danger for French society than for the Germans, even speaking of the '*inconduite*' of certain youths.[195] He reminded the Mayor that, for

more than a year, he had ordered his men to intervene upon seeing wayward youths whenever possible. They were then to take them home, getting the parents to promise to send them to school or at least maintain surveillance over them. However, he argued,

> This method has succeeded sometimes, but most of the time it is a drop in the ocean. Familial authority no longer exists in many homes due to the departure of the father, the weakness of the mother and[,] the most bitter point to note, often by the misconduct [*inconduite*] of the latter. In this last case, the regular presence of the child at the home constitutes a nuisance for the mother and indeed she does not reproach the child for prolonged and repeated absences; the child benefits from an even greater liberty because he feels encouraged. He soon makes converts and a gang is formed.[196]

In many ways, this reflected conservative Catholic thought, widespread in the Nord during and after the occupation, according to which the family was 'the locus wherein social discipline is inculcated', and the father embodied the natural authority of the family.[197] Conversely, while the Republic had in some ways reinforced the importance of parental authority, it had also set itself above it when that authority was judged inadequate.[198] The war and occupation allegedly engendered the dissolution or impotence of the family unit, explaining the emphasis on schooling as a means to instil morals, but, by the Commissaire's logic, weak parents were responsible for their children's absenteeism from school. The Commissaire therefore drew on both conservative Catholic and secular Republican reasoning in his quest to elicit support for counter-delinquency operations. At the same time, he highlighted recent police attempts to combat this ill – including procuring the names of ninety 'vagabonds', among other ideas.[199]

However, the Inspecteur Général de l'Enseignement Technique (General Inspector of Technical Education), perhaps unsurprisingly, provided a solely Republican and pragmatic explanation for the 'idleness' of numerous children. It was simply because the majority of young people were not able to attend their courses as they could not travel to and from class without a pass, which the Germans would not provide.[200] Either way, the specific conditions of occupied life meant that, as the Inspecteur stated, 'the number of vagabonds of both sexes is growing'.[201] Thus, young girls and women also engaged in criminal, unrespectable acts – although for these girls there were links to sexual misconduct. They were assumed to be adult in terms of their sexual choices but, like boys, required further control in the wider moral sphere.

Youth 'vagabondage' and delinquency sometimes led to general destructiveness, such as in Tourcoing, where children used makeshift slingshots to damage street lights.[202] The police, ordered to combat this, increased surveillance near schools.[203] These actions constituted not only a moral and social danger for the occupied region but also, potentially, a patriotic danger: youth criminality could cross the ill-defined bridge to full-blown anti-patriotic misconduct. For instance, in Lille in April 1918, 'youths' knocked on inhabitants' doors and threw stones at their windows. When the inhabitants reprimanded them, the latter were 'rudely insulted'. The same delinquents 'engaged in lodging with the occupying army', indicating to the Germans that a house was empty when the inhabitant was merely momentarily absent. The youths told the Germans to break the door, which they saw as a 'farce'. The investigating policeman noted: 'The parents of these young people are well considered but not energetic enough, for I have signalled their children's misconduct [*mauvaises conduites*] on numerous occasions.'[204] There was, thus, a blurring of criminality and misconduct among youths, as elsewhere – another example of the powerlessness of locals (in this instance, parents) faced with the occupation. An anonymous denunciation of 'a gathering in a group' sent to the Mayor of Lille in June 1918 reinforced this blurring of criminal and other misconduct: it was noted that the fifteen-year-old son of a neighbour engaged in trade with the Germans rather than work and encouraged other boys to do the same.[205]

Thus, youth criminality and idleness posed a major problem for the local French authorities, who believed the two to be linked and a threat to the values and future of the Republic. There are a few indicators of the reality, such as the lists drawn up by the police of children found 'vagabonding' during school hours and subsequently taken to police stations. Only incomplete lists for 1917 remain, focusing on just a few arrondissements of Lille. Nevertheless, they indicate 427 children of both sexes 'arrested' at least once from January to May 1917 alone.[206] By February 1918, a massive surveillance operation was under way. It split the entire population of Lille's 3,616 adolescents aged fourteen to seventeen into groups of thirty, and charged members of a newly created 'central commission for the repression of vagabondage' with monitoring their activities – one member per group.[207] Members, drawn from notables and other respectable individuals, had to indicate when intervention was required.[208] Yet again, respectability was central to the occupation experience.

On 6 June 1918, Georges Lyon, the Recteur of the Université de Lille[209] congratulated the Mayor for the commission's work and the implementation of what he perceived to be liberal polices from which French society could benefit, even after the war. He ended by noting that 'French youth of which the heroism and self-denial make it the admiration of the entire world, must be preserved at all cost from the double scourge which could rapidly annihilate the seeds [*en leurs germes*] of the most beautiful virtues: laziness and *inconduite*.'[210] These charitable works represent a form of unity within the wider disunity of criminality, delinquency, and misconduct. Indeed, the Mayor himself underlined this unity in his opening address to the first meeting of the commission on 18 April 1918:

> Men came from all political leanings, all social classes, realising once more the sacred union [*l'union sainte*]. A shared thought will motivate all of us, that of maintaining a minimum level of morality among the population which will permit it to repair, as much as possible, the ruins, to dress these wounds.[211]

This was met with rapturous applause from the members of the commission. As late as September 1918, when the liberation seemed near, the Mairie championed surveillance of wayward youths and worried about their future. By this point, a 'feminine section' of women engaging in surveillance of young girls was also in operation.[212] As such, despite the evidence of political struggles and disunity studied in previous chapters, the daily reality of criminality and the notables' response to it demonstrates one area in which unity, including on a political level, was attempted and sometimes achieved. Occupied life bred criminality, which increased as the occupation went on, but this in turn fostered concerns that sharpened some locals' sense of identity and Frenchness, spurring them on to plan for a post-war future.

Criminality in context

The problem of criminality during the occupation highlights yet further avenues of action open to the population. Criminality was in many ways a subset of misconduct, arguably the most frequent form; it was a struggle for survival, but one which often came at the expense of compatriots. Such was the scale of criminality that local notables feared for the future of local youth. However, the potentially selfish, unrespectable and unpatriotic actions studied so far were not the only responses to the occupation. Just as in the Second World War, the occupied Nord of 1914–18

saw choices made on both sides of the moral-patriotic spectrum. Many memoirs, histories, and other works on this occupation have highlighted the unity and resistance of the French civilians faced with the occupiers. Part I has demonstrated that complete unity was never more than a myth. Part II will now demonstrate, on the other hand, that certain *occupés* did respond to the occupiers with resistance – and this resistance was itself firmly rooted in the culture of the occupied.

Notes

1 ADN, 9R745, German poster, Tourcoing, 30 June 1915.
2 Sophie De Schaepdrijver, *La Belgique et la Première Guerre mondiale*, trans. Claudine Spitaels and Marnix Vincent (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2004), p. 120. The occupation of Belgium provides a rich source of comparison regarding criminality. See, for example, Pieter Leloup, Xavier Rousseaux and Antoon Vrints, 'Banditry in occupied and liberated Belgium, 1914–21', *Social History*, 39:1 (2014), 83–105.
3 Heather Jones, Jennifer O'Brien and Christoph Schmidt-Supprian, 'Introduction: Untold War', in Heather Jones, Jennifer O'Brien and Christoph Schmidt-Supprian (eds.), *Untold War: New Perspectives in First World War Studies* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), p. 15.
4 E. P. Thompson, 'The moral economy of the English crowd in the eighteenth century', *Past & Present*, 50 (1971), p. 76.
5 Thomas Clay Arnold, 'Rethinking moral economy', *The American Political Science Review*, 95:1 (2001), p. 86.
6 Arnold, 'Rethinking moral economy', p. 86; James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1985); James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1990).
7 For more on the notion of social goods, see Arnold, 'Rethinking moral economy', p. 90.
8 Maxence van der Meersch, *Invasion '14*, trans. Gerard Hopkins (London: Constable & Co, 1937), p. 115.
9 ADN, 9R512, Commissaire de Police de Condé, Vieux-Condé, Fresnes, Escautpont and Crespin, 'Situation pendant la guerre de 1914–1918', to Sous-Préfet à Valenciennes, 28 November 1918.
10 *Ibid.*
11 Richard Vinen, *The Unfree French: Life under the Occupation* (London: Allen Lane, 2006), pp. 128–32.
12 ADN, 9R512, report, Commissaire de Police de Condé, 28 November 1918.
13 Including helping the Germans to transfer prisoners: ADN, 9R353, passim.

14 Georges Dubut-Maison, *Journal d'un bourgeois de Maubeuge, avant, pendant le siècle et l'occupation allemande, 1914–1918* (Tourcoing: J. Duvivier, 1923), 7 January 1915, p. 96.
15 AML, 4H274, Commissaire Central de Police of Lille to Mayor, no. 3227 and no. 3243, 26 August 1916.
16 ADN, 9R580, Ville de Lille, Commissariat de Police du 8e arrondissement, Commissaire de Police Boinet to Commissaire Central, 7 April 1916.
17 *Ibid.*
18 ADN, 9R580, Loben (sublieutenant and police officer) to Commissaire Central, 17 April 1916.
19 ADN, 9R556, extrait des procès-verbaux de la Commandature de Lille, session of 21 November 1914, 'VIII – Plainte Lefebvre'.
20 AML, 4H274, Commissaire Central de Police of Lille to Mayor, 21 July 1915.
21 *Ibid.*
22 ADN, 9R753, séance du Conseil de Guerre, 13 March 1916.
23 AMT, H4A29, 'Rapport Concernant les Agents Scrittes et Rousseau', n.d. Seemingly written by Spéder.
24 AMT, H4A29, note from von Tessin, Kommandantur of Tourcoing, no. 603, 10 July 1915; ADN, 9R745, German poster, 'Condamnation', 12 July 1915.
25 ADN, 9R752, Commissaire Central to Préfet, 16 August 1916, a and b.
26 AML, 4H270, Ville de Lille, Commissariat Central de Police, report, 'crimes, délits, évènements', 18–19 February 1918.
27 *Ibid.*
28 AML, 4H270, Ville de Lille, Commissariat Central de Police, report, 'crimes, délits, évènements', 14–15 January 1918.
29 AML, 4H271, Ville de Lille, Commissariat Central de Police, report, 'crimes, délits, évènements', 4–5 July 1918.
30 ADN, 9R325, Procureur de la République of Lille to von Graevenitz, 12 October 1916.
31 ADN, 9R325, von Graevenitz to Procureur de la République, 1 February 1917.
32 See AML, 4H271, report, 5–6 July; and 9R253, Inspecteur de l'Assistance publique du Nord to Préfet, 29 October 1917.
33 ADN, 9R580, Commissaire Central Intérimaire, 'Mesures à prendre', 24 March 1916.
34 AML, 4H274, letter template from Mayor to 'Monsieur', 4 October 1918; letter template from the *secrétaire général* to 'Monsieur', 12 October 1918.
35 AML, 4H274, Mayor of Lille to Commissaire Central, 5 May 1917.
36 AML, 4H274, Commissaire Central to Mayor, 8 May 1917, no. 12411.
37 AML, 4H274, 'Endroits où des agents sont de service en permanence', 3 May 1917.
38 AML, 4H103, Président du Comité Exécutif de la Comité d'Alimentation du Nord de la France, district de Lille, to Mayor, 2 September 1916;

Commissaire Central of Lille to Mayor, 23 April 1917; Directeur de l'octroi to Mayor, 13 April 1917.

39 AMT, H4A29, note no. 1877 from Kommandant von Tessin, Tourcoing, 26 May 1917.

40 AMT, H4A29, no. 906, 16 March 1917.

41 For example, a *commissaire de police* of the fourth arrondissement of Lille accompanied Germans searching for weapons in inhabited buildings: ADN, 9R581, Ville de Lille, Commissariat Central de Police, report, 'crimes, délits, évènements', 3–4 January 1915.

42 ADN, 3U281/77, 1er CA Région, Conseil de Guerre, plainte no. 613, inventory of trial of Mme Rouvaux, *La Liberté*, 15 November 1915.

43 *Ibid.*

44 Annette Becker, *Les Cicatrices rouges 14–18: France et Belgique occupées* (Paris: Fayard, 2010), p. 139.

45 Becker mentions crime briefly in *Les Cicatrices rouges*, pp. 242, 251–3.

46 See, for example, AMT, 4J, Ville de Tourcoing, 'Procès verbaux, judiciaires et administratives, 24 Aout 1907 au 21 sept [sic] 1916'.

47 *Bulletin de Lille*, 9 January 1916.

48 *Bulletin de Lille*, 16 January 1916.

49 Lynne Taylor, *Between Resistance and Collaboration: Popular Protest in Northern France, 1940–45* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), p. 3.

50 *Bulletin de Lille*, 26 May 1916.

51 Sarah Fishman, *The Battle for Children: World War II, Youth Crime and Juvenile Justice in Twentieth-Century France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

52 Manon Pignot, *Allons enfants de la patrie: Génération Grande Guerre* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2012), p. 186.

53 See, for example, the Académie de Lille questionnaires completed by teachers across the Nord in 1920 in BDIC, FΔ1126/03, such as dossier B.322, Valenciennes, 25 May 1920, or Dossier B.323, Haulchin, réponse au questionnaire concernant l'occupation allemande, 30 May 1920. See also ADN, 9R510, von Graevenitz to Anjubault, 4 September 1917; ADHS, 4M513, repatriation report no. 526, 18 January 1917.

54 Pignot, *Allons enfants*, pp. 188–9.

55 BDIC, FΔ1126/03, Dossier B.352, Hasnon, réponses au questionnaire sur le territoire occupé par les armées allemandes, 30 May 1920. From 1917, pupils and teachers were forced to collect nettles and berries, making their hands bleed. Most other questionnaire responses in FΔ1126/03 contain similar stories, suggesting such forced labour for pupils was commonplace across the Nord.

56 AML, 4H267, report, 5–6 October 1916.

57 AML, 4H266, reports, 11–12 May, and 19–20 June 1916.

58 AML, 4H266, report, 19–20 June 1916.

59 Becker, *Les Cicatrices rouges*, pp. 252–3.
60 ADN, J1933, manuscrit de François Rouesel, 'Pendant la CCI [Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie] de Roubaix durant l'occupation allemande', 'Les Fraudes, les vols et cambriolages [16/12/1916]', p. 1.
61 *Bulletin de Lille*, 30 March 1916.
62 *Bulletin de Lille*, 20 July 1916.
63 *Bulletin de Lille*, 25 June 1916; ADN, 9R746, German poster, Tourcoing, 12 July 1916: anyone found without a valid identity card was liable to be considered a spy or hidden Allied soldier.
64 *Bulletin de Lille*, 30 December 1915.
65 ADN, 9R732, German poster, Roubaix, 30 June 1917.
66 ADN, 9R732, typewritten document, n.d., n.a, probably a police document.
67 *Bulletin de Lille*, 6 July 1916.
68 *Bulletin de Lille*, 9 July 1916.
69 Claudine Wallart, *C'était hier, le département du Nord … le Nord en guerre – 1914–1918* (Lille: Archives Départementales du Nord, 2008), p. 49.
70 *Bulletin de Lille*, 27 January 1916.
71 *Bulletin de Lille*, 20 July 1916 and 8 June 1916.
72 *Bulletin de Lille*, 'Chronique locale' section, 4 June 1916, 11 June 1916, 16 June 1916, 13 July 1916 and 16 July 1916.
73 AML, 4H/19–21, Mairie de Lille, notes journalières à Messieurs les Conseilleurs Municipaux (June 1915–December 1918).
74 AML, 4H269, police reports, 23–4, 27–8 and 29–30 November 1917.
75 See, for example, BDIC, FΔ1126/03, dossier B.448, Fourmies, 31 May 1920; dossier B.433, Bugincourt, 28 May 1920; dossier B.367, Tourcoing, n.d.; dossier B.327, Villers Guislan, 29 May 1920.
76 ADN, 9R718, German poster, Roubaix and Tourcoing, 8 September 1916.
77 AML, 4H103, CANF members Le Blan and Vanbrse to unknown, 1 May 1917.
78 AML, 4H270, report, 28 February–1 March 1918.
79 AML, 4H270, report, 5–6 July 1918.
80 AML, 4H271, report, 29–30 August 1918.
81 AML, 4H270, reports, 4–5 March and 15–16 March 1918. On both occasions, forty-eight boxes of milk were stolen.
82 AML, 4H270, reports, 15–16 January, 15–16 February, 23–4 April 1918, 15–16 June, 2–3 July, 30–1 July, 19–20 August 1918.
83 AML, 4H103, Mayor to Kommandantur, 30 May 1917.
84 Taylor, *Between Resistance and Collaboration*, pp. 30–7.
85 AML, 4H103, report, Corsin, 29 January 1918.
86 AML, 4H103, Juge d'instruction à Lille to Mayor, 25 February 1918; Commissaire Central de Lille to Mayor, 1 and 5 April 1918; Mayor to Police Militaire, 12 August 1918.
87 See, for example, AML, 4H103, Directeur des Finances to M. Leconte, 24 December 1917.

88 See Wallart, *C'était hier*, p. 49. AML archivists confirmed the role of the fire in this.
89 See, for example, ADN, 9R581, report, 9–10 January 1915.
90 ADN, 9R581, report, 15 December 1914.
91 AML, 4H266, reports, 31 July–1 August until 29–30 August 1916, excluding 29–30 August, 28–9 August and 19–20 August.
92 AML, 4H266, report, 31 July–1 August 1916.
93 AML, 4H266, reports, 1–2 August, 3–4 August and 4–5 August 1916.
94 AML, 4H266, report, 12–13 August 1916.
95 Helen McPhail, *The Long Silence: Civilian Life under the German Occupation of Northern France, 1914–1918* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1999), p. 83.
96 AML, 4H270, report, Commissariat de Police du 7e arrondissement, no. 706, citing the report of Alphone Moisson, 15 April 1918.
97 AML, 4H270, report, Commissariat de Police du 7e arrondissement, no. 706 A, 'Explications du Dumont Arthur'.
98 AML, 4H270, 'Tribunal de Lille, Parquet du Procureur de la Publique – Renseignements concernant Dumont Arthur inculpé de vol à bois […]', 17 April 1918.
99 ADN, 9R731, Commissaire Central of Roubaix to Mayor, 30 May 1917.
100 Becker, *Les Cicatrices rouges*, p. 242.
101 See ADN, 9R1196, passim.
102 Becker, *Les Cicatrices rouges*, p. 252.
103 Reflected in war literature, such as Henri Barbusse, *Under Fire*, trans. Robin Buss (London: Penguin, 2003), first published 1916, pp. 163–4; and Ernst Jünger, *Storm of Steel*, trans. Michael Hofmann (London: Penguin, 2003), first published 1920, pp. 131–3.
104 ADN, 9R718, German poster, Roubaix, 30 November 1916.
105 See François Bouloc, *Les Profiteurs de guerre, 1914–18* (Brussels: Complexe, 2008).
106 Tammy Proctor, *Civilians in a World at War, 1914–1918* (New York: New York University Press, 2010), pp. 89–90.
107 See Sophie De Schaepdrijver, *La Belgique et la Première Guerre mondiale*, trans. Claudine Spitaels and Marnix Vincent (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2004), pp. 118 and 232.
108 See, for example, Vinen, *The Unfree French*, pp. 215–46; Taylor, *Between Resistance and Collaboration*; and Lynne Taylor, 'The black market in occupied Northern France, 1940–44', *Contemporary European History*, 6:2 (1997), 153–76.
109 AML, 4H103, CANF, District de Lille, 'Avertissement au Public', 3 April 1916.
110 AML, 4H103, CANF, District de Lille, 'AVIS AU PUBLIC CONCERNANT LA REVENTE DES DENRÉES, CHAUSSURES OU VETEMENTS distribuées par les Comités de ravitaillement du Nord de la France', n.d.
111 Becker, *Les Cicatrices rouges*, p. 141.

112 Becker, *Les Cicatrices rouges*, pp. 141–5; McPhail, *The Long Silence*, pp. 62–3; Georges Gromaire, *L'Occupation allemande en France (1914–1918)* (Paris: Payot, 1925), p. 193.
113 AML, 4H103, Maire de Lille, 'Extrait du registre aux arrêtés du Maire de Lille', no. 1679, 18 March 1918.
114 See, for example, AML, 4H270, report, 12–13 March 1918.
115 See, for example, AML, 4H103, Directeur de l'Octroi, CANF, District de Lille, 13 April 1917.
116 AML, 4H103, CANF, 'Avertissement au public', 3 April 1916. This poster invoked Articles 491, 496 and 505 of the *Code pénal* which referred to the punishment of fraudsters.
117 AML, 4H103, Mayor to CANF, 18 December 1916.
118 De Schaepdrijver, *Belgique*, p. 233.
119 AML, 4H103, poster, Mayor of Lille, 7 April 1917.
120 ADN, 9R752, Réunion générale des employés du ravitaillement, 6 October [seemingly 1916].
121 ADN, 9R752, Commissaire Central de Tourcoing to Préfet, 8 November 1916.
122 ADN, 9R752, avertissement, Mayor of Tourcoing, 6 November 1916.
123 ADN, 9R752, Commissaire Central to Préfet, 8 November 1916.
124 ADN, 9R731, Commissaire Central de Roubaix, 'RAVITAILLEMENT: AFFAIRE DE BRABANDER, Centre VILLE [sic]: Intervention Officieuse du Commissaire Central. Plainte en diffamation contre M. VALLE GUSTAVE. Boucher-Chevilleur', 14 May 1917.
125 AML, 4H117, M. Laurel to Mayor, 12 December 1916.
126 ADN, 9R515, 'Delesalle, adjoint au maire, 1917' file, passim.
127 Jules Mousseron, *Les Boches au pays noir: Souvenirs de la guerre et de l'occupation allemande – poésies patoises* (Lille: J. Tallandier, 1931), p. 63.
128 See AML, 4H103, report, Vérificateur de l'Octroi de Lille, n.d., but speaking about events on 14 December 1916. Fourteen other detailed reports can be found here in which *agents de l'octroi* stopped suspicious *occupés* leaving *boulangeries* or food depots and discovered hidden food on their person.
129 AML, 4H103, Directeur de l'Octroi to Mayor, 13 April 1917.
130 AML, 4H103, Directeur des Services Financiers de Lille, 'Saisie du riz à Tourcoing', 21 December 1916.
131 AML, 4H103, M. Gustave Duneufgardin, Greffier, Tribunal de simple police de Lille, 'Jugement Contradictoire, MP et BECKER Léa', 29 September 1917.
132 AML, 4H103, passim. For example, Mayor to Mme Westeen, 6 December 1917.
133 ADN, 9R328, Commissaire de Police [Trioly], 'Renseignements sur des personnes chez lesquelles les perquisitions ont été opérées au sujet d'accaparement des sucres et autres denrées', 27 June 1918.

134 ADN, 9R328, 'Rapport concernant l'accaparement des sucres', 27 June 1918.
135 ADN, 9R328, 'Renseignements'.
136 ADN, 9R328, 'Rapport'.
137 ADN, 9R328, Ville de Lille: Commissariat de Police du 6e arrondissement, report no. 201, Commissaire Edmont Molinier, 14 June 1918.
138 AML, 4H103, Tribunal Correctionnel, audience du 29 Juillet 1916.
139 Hélène Benoît, 'L'État sanitaire de la population civile du Nord envahi pendant la Première Guerre mondiale: Lille en particulier (1914–1918)', master's dissertation (Lille III, 1997), p. 100. See ADN, 9R518, French poster, 'Danger de consommer actuellement DES ALCOOLS ET DES BOISSONS ALCOOLIQUES', 30 November 1916.
140 ADN, 9R328, 'Renseignements'. Pierre Ernest Durand, a wine-seller before the war, made his own wine during the occupation. See also ADN, M417/10139 regarding clandestine distilleries in Lille in 1917.
141 AMT, H4A27, Anjubault to Mayor of Tourcoing, 30 November 1916.
142 Antoine Redier, *Les Allemands dans nos maisons* (Paris: Éditions Cartier, 1945), p. 150.
143 ADN, 74J225, diary of M. Blin (instituteur en retraite at Auchy-les-Orchies), 7 April 1916.
144 *Le Progrès du Nord*, 22 November 1918.
145 ADN, J1933, Rouesel manuscript, 'L'Alimentation de la population', p. 3.
146 ADN, J1933, 'Les Fraudes, les vols et cambriolages [16/12/1916]', p. 2.
147 ADN, J1933, 'Les Fraudes, les vols et cambriolages [16/12/1916]', p. 3.
148 AML, 4H103, printed poem, n.d., n.a.
149 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 769, 19 February 1917, summary of interviews with 471 people from the Nord.
150 ADHS, 4M513, reports, no. 735, 14 February 1917 (Cambrai); no. 746, 15 February 1917 (Anzin); no. 753, 16 February 1917 (Denain); no. 796, 23 February 1917 (Valenciennes); no. 830, 24 February 1917 (Fourmies); no. 916, 8 March 1917 (Lille); no. 952, 12 March 1917 (Lille); ADN, 9R512, report, Commissaire de Police de Condé, 28 November 1918.
151 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 916, 8 March 1917, summary of interviews of 461 people from Lille.
152 Taylor, 'The Black market', pp. 157, 172–3.
153 Fernand Heusghem, *Jeunesse 1914–1918: Souvenirs de l'occupation* (Paris: Plon 1938), pp. 31–2.
154 Sébastien Debarge, 'Fourmies occupée pendant la Grande Guerre', *Revue du Nord*, 80:325 (1998), p. 95.
155 AMT, H4A27, typed document, Mayor of Tourcoing, 30 March 1917.
156 See Xavier Rousseaux and Laurence Van Ypersele, 'La Grande Guerre comme contexte', in Xavier Rousseaux and Laurence Van Ypersele (eds.), *La Patrie crie vengeance! La répression des 'inciviques' belges au sortir de*

la guerre 1914–1918 (Brussels: Le Cri édition, 2008), pp. 24–8; Becker, *Les Cicatrices rouges*, pp. 123–4. The investigating French authorities also believed this: ADHS, 4M513, report no. 1054, 19 March 1917 (Tournai).

157 ADN, 9R766, Commissaire de Police of Wattrelos to Préfet, 29 January 1916; 10, 12, 30 May 1916; 4, 22, 30 June 1916; 8, 12, 14, 24, 26, 28–9 July; 6, 8, 11, 13, 16, 18, 23 August 1916; 16 and 21 September 1916; 11 October 1916.

158 ADN, 9R766, Commissaire de Police of Wattrelos to Préfet, 23 August 1916.

159 ADN, 9R718, German poster, Roubaix, 15 August 1916; ADN, 9R252, von Graevenitz to Anjubault, 29 April 1915.

160 ADN, 9R748, German poster, Tourcoing, 19 April 1918.

161 *Ibid.*

162 Taylor, 'Black market', p. 172.

163 AML, 4H266, report, 23–4 June 1916; AML, 4H267, report, 23–4 September and 7–8 October 1916; ADHS, 4M513, report no. 526, 18 January 1917, summary of interviews with 506 people from the Nord and the Somme.

164 AML, 4H267, 20–1 August 1916.

165 See, for example, AML, 4H143, German poster, Cysoing, 25 March 1917.

166 AML, 4H143, liste des bons d'émission approuvés par l'Autorité allemande, n.a., n.d.

167 AML, 4H143, Mayor to Kommandant, 30 August 1916.

168 ADN, 9R515, Commissaire de Police of Roubaix to Préfet, 9 March 1916; ADN, 9R582, Ville de Lille, Commissariat Central de Police, report, 'crimes, délits, évènements', 4–6 August 1916.

169 AML, 4H143, Mayor to Kommandant, 7 March 1917.

170 AML, 4H143, Von Rauch ('pour le Gouverneur en congé') to Mayor of Lille, 2 November 1917.

171 AMT, H4A25, Mayor to Procureur de la République, 18 May 1918.

172 See, for example, AMT, H4A25, Ville de Tourcoing, Commissariat de Police, 3e arrondissement, procès-verbal no. 252, 12 December 1917.

173 AMT, H4A25, Ville de Tourcoing, Commissariat de Police, 1er arrondissement, procès-verbal no. 1317, 27 January 1918.

174 AMT, H4A25, Ville de Tourcoing, Commissariat de Police, 3e arrondissement, procès-verbal no. 86, 11 February 1918.

175 *Ibid.*

176 AML, 4H143, Mayor to Kommandant, 27 June 1917.

177 ADN, 9R582, German posters, Roubaix, 29 August 1918; *Bulletin de Lille*, 1 June 1916 and 23 April 1916.

178 AML, 4H266; AML, 4H143; AMT, 4HA25; or ADN, 9R730, Commissaire Central de Roubaix to Préfet, 15 October 1915.

179 AML, 4H143, Staelin (of the Kommandantur) to Mayor, 10 October 1918.

180 *Bulletin de Lille*, 16 June 1916.

181 Pignot, *Allons enfants*, p. 233.
182 ADN, J1933, Rouesel manuscript, 'Les fraudes, les vols et cambriolages [16/12/1916]', pp. 3–4.
183 Rouesel, 'Les fraudes, les vols', p. 4.
184 ADN, J1933, Rouesel manuscript, 'La fraude après la guerre', 23 March 1917.
185 ADN, 74J225, Blin diary, 11 February 1918.
186 Blin diary, 16 April 1918.
187 AML, 4H222, Henri Ghesquière to Mayor, 15 April 1917.
188 *Ibid.*
189 AML, 4H222, Commissaire Central of Lille to Mayor, 23 April 1917.
190 ADN, 9R580, Commissaire Central de Lille to Préfet, 8 May 1917.
191 *Ibid.*
192 See Sylvia Schafer, *Children in Moral Danger and the Problem of Government in Third Republic France* (Princeton, NY: Princeton University Press, 1997).
193 ADN, 9R580, von Graevenitz to Mayor, 10 May 1917.
194 *Ibid.*
195 *Ibid.*, Commissaire Central of Lille to Mayor, 16 May 1917.
196 *Ibid.*
197 Antoine Prost, 'Catholic conservatives, population, and the family in twentieth century France', *Population and Development Review*, 14 (1988), p. 150.
198 Schafer, *Children in Moral Danger*, pp. 25–86.
199 AML, 4H222, Commissaire Central of Lille to Mayor, 16 May 1917.
200 AML, 4H222, Inspecteur Général de l'Enseignement Technique to Mayor, 20 May 1917.
201 AML, 4H222, Inspecteur Général de l'Enseignement Technique to Mayor, 16 May 1917.
202 AMT, H4A28, letter, n.a. to Commissaire Central, 'début de novembre' 1915.
203 AMT, H4A28, Mayor to 'Monsieur le Directeur', 11 November 1915.
204 AML, 4H222, handwritten police report, Walter, 24 April 1918.
205 AML, 4H222, handwritten denunciation, n.a., 19 June 1918.
206 AML, 4H222, 'enfants et adolescents trouvés errant sur la voie publique', stamped 31 May 1917; 4–8e arrondissements, 'Liste des enfants trouvés vagabondant pendant les heures de classe et conduits par les agents au poste de police pendant l'année 1917.'
207 AML, 4H224, arrêté of mayor, 6 and 10 April 1918. It was also known as the 'Comité central de la surveillance de la jeunesse'. For more information, see AML, 4H225–31.
208 There were initially 146 members, including lawyers, doctors, teachers, accountants, industrialists and landlords. See AML, 4H224, especially Mayor to M. Ghesquière, 27 February and 9 April 1918. For more information, see AML, 4H225–31.

209 See François-Xavier Boone, 'La Guerre de Georges Lyon: l'occupation de Lille par les Allemands (août 1914–octobre 1918)', master's dissertation (Lille III, 1997).
210 AML, 4H224, Georges Lyon to Mayor, 6 June 1918.
211 AML, 4H224, 'Répression du Vagabondage, Réunion Constitutive de l'Œuvre', 18 April [seemingly 1918].
212 AML, 4H/21, Mairie de Lille, notes journalières à Messieurs les Conseillers Municipaux, 1 and 8 September 1918.

Part II

Popular patriotism and resistance *avant la majuscule*

The experience of occupation in the Nord involved more than misconduct, crime and disunity. The spectrum of possible behaviour, while more restricted than in peacetime, still allowed for choices to be made. Indeed, precisely because actions were limited, the consequences of every decision were exemplified and exaggerated. The Manichean judgements of the dominant occupied culture placed those engaging in misconduct on one side of the spectrum and 'patriots' and those opposing the occupiers on the other. Lynne Taylor has criticised the focus in Second World War historiography on the extremes of resistance and collaboration and emphasised the grey zones in between;[1] in the context of 1914–18, criminality represents one of many such grey zones. Nevertheless, the occupied culture was itself especially concerned with the extremes of behaviour, often understood through the lens of respectability. This part of the book considers the other side of the spectrum, a key aspect of the way in which locals understood and reacted to the occupation: opposition and resistance.

Most interwar texts dealing with the occupation, and even certain histories since the 1990s, depict French civilians as overwhelmingly patriotic, opposing the Germans as much as possible.[2] Becker, for example, notes that the Germans were shocked by 'the compact, massive, resistance of the population to the occupation'.[3] Such is the consensus regarding resistance in 1914–18 that the January 2010 biannual conference of the Musée de la Résistance of Bondues focused for the first time on resistance in occupied France and Belgium during the First World War, rather than the Second.[4] In this sense, resistance is one of the most studied and documented phenomena of occupied life yet still offers important insights into the experience and understanding of occupation.

My use of the term 'resistance' to describe the behaviours examined in this part of the book results from considerable theoretical reflection.[5] Scholars do not agree on precisely what constitutes resistance,[6] and some, such as Julian Jackson, argue against definitions so all-encompassing that the term becomes meaningless.[7] In their examination of the use and meanings of the concept across numerous multidisciplinary academic studies, sociologists Jocelyn A. Hollander and Rachel L. Einwohner identify two core elements of resistance upon which most scholars agree: action and opposition.[8] There is more debate concerning the other key factors: recognition and intent. Recognition often revolves around 'visibility', with early works focusing on protest movements or revolutions, taking for granted that resistance is visible and easily recognised as resistance.[9] The shift came with James C. Scott's argument for 'everyday' resistance among Asian peasants,[10] which emphasised 'low-profile techniques' allowing resistance to go unnoticed by the powerful.[11] This 'everyday' or 'invisible' resistance found currency among certain, but not all, researchers.[12] The debate concerning 'intent' is less intense, but the difficulty is in proving a historical actor's motives.[13] The actions I examine here meet most or all of these criteria.

Certain histories of occupied France and Belgium in 1914–18 contain excellent examinations of resistance that are less concerned with analytical or theoretical definitions.[14] As with historians of the Second World War, those who do define their terms do not always agree: Nivet and Becker's 'resistance' is broad, whereas Salson considers similar actions but avoids the label 'resistance', opting instead for 'opposing the occupier'.[15] Others adopt a narrower definition, comprising only organised escape and espionage networks.[16] Emmanuel Debruyne explains his use of 'resistance' in detail, emphasising above all a clandestine commitment,[17] although he occasionally considers notables' protests as resistance.[18] My approach is closer to that of Nivet and Salson. However, I find the distinction between 'opposition' and 'resistance' arbitrary and treat the terms as interchangeable given the centrality of opposition to acts of resistance and the limited channels through which to express opposition in 1914–18. I propose three main categories of resistance: respectable, symbolic (or 'performative'), and active. There were some similarities to forms of resistance associated with the Second World War but no equivalent of the Resistance: in 1914–18, practically no armed resistance occurred. It is important to explain this to comprehend the forms of resistance that did occur, and their place within occupied culture.

Armed resistance explained away

Soon after war was declared and the Germans invaded via the north, local French authorities forbade armed resistance on the part of civilians. The Mayor of Roubaix, for example, offered the following advice to the population:

> Do not commit any act that could serve as a pretext for terrible reprisals.
>
> If an individual commits an act against a German soldier, in the present circumstances it would be criminal folly. Such an act could only be the work of an *agent provocateur*.
>
> This will not occur in Roubaix.
>
> *We are absolutely counting on the fact that the population of Roubaix will provide a good example of calm and will keep its composure.*[19]

Similar advice was proffered in Belgium.[20] This proclamation echoes the reticence of many rural communes to encourage civilian armed resistance during the Franco-Prussian War.[21] Indeed, what applied to many mayors in 1870 also applied in 1914: their first reflex was to disarm their citizens to ensure that they were not tempted to use such weapons, and to show goodwill towards the invader.[22] Across the Nord, especially in Lille-Roubaix-Tourcoing, the population was asked to deposit all weapons at designated municipal buildings.[23]

Once the Germans arrived, they demanded that locals deposit remaining weapons at the Kommandantur.[24] For local notables such Rouesel, this policy was acceptable because 'civilians should not take any part in hostilities, weapons could be a danger for the security of troops and in taking them away, the German authority avoided a possible conflict that could cause a dangerous incident for the population'.[25] Naturally, not everyone complied, such as the Mayor of Noyelles-lez-Seclin, who still possessed a revolver on the final date for handing in weapons.[26] The Germans therefore searched for and requisitioned weaponry throughout the occupation.[27] Handing in weapons was for many a logical, if difficult, decision. A civilian caught possessing a weapon risked the death penalty, although imprisonment and forced labour were the most frequent sentences.[28]

Whether requisitioned by force or voluntarily handed in, weapons were therefore hard to come by and dangerous to own in occupied France. Further, the concentration of Germans made armed resistance seem futile and suicidal. Troop numbers were higher in larger localities, particularly those with vital railway links or near the front, such as Lille-Roubaix-Tourcoing, Cambrai or Valenciennes. One indicator of the scale of the German presence is that from June to August 1915 a total of 169,191

Germans used Tourcoing's tramway; from September to November 1915, the total was 194,328, although most were not part of the army of occupation.[29] Still, the close proximity of tens of thousands of armed Germans, the difficulty in acquiring weapons and severe restrictions on liberty of movement and communication undermined the feasibility of armed resistance. Further, the population was in no physical state to fight. For example, in June 1917, forced labourer Jules Claeys weighed just 38 kilograms after three months' labour.[30] Many other sources attest to the poor physiological and psychological state of locals.[31]

Nevertheless, there were isolated incidents of civilian violence, such as the alleged shooting of German sentries (one of whom died) by two civilians in Roubaix in October 1917. One of the 'murderers' was shot and killed while trying to flee the German police during a follow-up inquiry.[32] A handful of other examples of individual violence exist, not all clearly acts of resistance, such as Arthur Debiève from Gommegnies who was sentenced to ten years' captivity for having mortally wounded a German soldier who was stealing his vegetables.[33] However, these remain the exceptions that prove the rule. The occupied population did not engage in Werner Rings' 'Resistance Enchained': 'the desperate fight of those who were cut off, without help, and with practically no hope of surviving'.[34] Occupied civilians were cut off, but there *was* hope for survival; they were receiving help, directly from the neutral aid organisations, and indirectly from the Allies' armed struggle against the Central Powers. As Horne and Kramer note, widespread civilian resistance usually occurs with the defeat of conventional forces,[35] when all hope of military victory is lost; but occupied *Nordistes* had faith in the Allied victory. It was not the role of occupied civilians to fight the national enemy. The nature of the war of attrition, in which huge armies made small gains at great loss, and the flat plains of the Nord (lacking mountainous or wooded terrain useful for guerrilla warfare) also detracted from the feasibility of armed resistance. Despite being convinced by material conditions and patriotism that they lived at the military front,[36] the *occupés* remained above all civilians, not combatants.

As well as being difficult, armed resistance was discouraged by French municipalities who wanted to avoid bloodthirsty and costly urban warfare involving civilians, which could even lead to social disorder (the Paris Commune was still in living memory). Also, authorities did not wish to give the Germans any pretext for reprisals, as happened in the Franco-Prussian War after *franc-tireur* attacks on the Prussians.[37] Despite this, but precisely because of commonplace *franc-tireur* attacks in 1870–71, the Germans saw *francs-tireurs* everywhere during the

invasion and responded in kind. Emmanuel Debruyne argues that atrocities played a major role in discouraging armed resistance in 1914–18.[38] Isabel Hull has also emphasised the foundational role of 1870–71 for the German military,[39] and argued for a 'spiral of extremity' in the occupations of 1914–18 involving 'untrammelled military power'.[40] This persuaded local notables and the wider population of the foolishness of resistance.

French authorities also wished to avoid breaching the 1907 Hague Convention, which forbade armed resistance unless partisans were organised into clearly identifiable groups.[41] Such units would be crushed by the Germans, and also ran contrary to the French Government's abandonment of the invaded regions, whereby even fortress cities such as Lille were declared 'open cities'. Guerrilla resistance breaching the Hague Convention would give the Germans a legitimate pretext for reprisals, 'to prove the enemy right'.[42] It would also show a lack of respect for the law, and, if anything distinguishes this occupation and particularly the resistance that took place, it is a devotion to, almost adulation of, the law, and the importance of respectability. This is a key part of the first chapter of this section on 'respectable resistance'. The second chapter examines symbolic expressions of patriotism and opposition, whereas the final chapter considers more active forms of resistance. All demonstrate that the experience of occupation involved the extremes of misconduct and resistance, both of which were central to the population's understand of and reaction to their situation.

Notes

1 Lynne Taylor, 'The black market in occupied Northern France, 1940–44', *Contemporary European History*, 6:2 (1997), p. 155.

2 See, for example, Antoine Redier, *Les Allemands dans nos maisons* (Paris: Éditions Cartier, 1945); Henri de Forge and Jean Mauclère, *Feuilles françaises dans la tourmente: Les héros de la presse clandestine dans le Nord envahi, 1914–1918* (Paris: Berger Levrault, 1932); Eugène Martin-Mamy, *Quatre ans avec les barbares: Lille pendant l'occupation allemande* (Paris: Renaissance du Livre, 1919). For recent histories, see Annette Becker, *Les Cicatrices rouges 14–18: France et Belgique occupées* (Paris: Fayard, 2010); Jean-Claude Auriol, *Les Ténèbres de l'occupation* (Fontenay-le Comte: Imprimerie Lussaud, 2008); Sébastien Debarge, 'Fourmies occupée pendant la Grande Guerre', *Revue du Nord*, 80:325 (1998), p. 306; Claudine Wallart, *C'était hier, le département du Nord … Le Nord en Guerre – 1914–1918* (Lille: Archives Départementales du Nord, 2008), p. 45.

3 Annette Becker, *Oubliés de la Grande Guerre: Humanitaire et culture de guerre* (Paris: Éditions Noêsis, 1998), pp. 39–40.
4 Robert Vandenbussche (ed.), *La Résistance en France et Belgique occupées (1914–1918)* (Lille: Presses de l'Université Charles de Gaulle-Lille 3, 2012).
5 I first outlined this argument in James E. Connolly, 'Notable protests: respectable resistance in occupied Northern France, 1914–1918', *Historical Research*, 88:242 (2015), 693–715.
6 See, for example, Jocelyn A. Hollander and Rachel L. Einwohner, 'Conceptualizing resistance', *Sociological Forum*, 19:4 (2004), 533–54; Pierre Laborie, 'Qu'est-ce que la Résistance?' in François Marcot, Bruno Leroux and Christine Levisse-Touzé (eds.), *Dictionnaire historique de la Résistance*: *Résistance intérieure et France libre* (Paris: R. Laffont, 2006), pp. 31–9; Alya Aglan, 'De la Résistance aux résistances: la "notion de résistance" vue par les historiens français', in *Les Courants politiques et la Résistance: Continuités ou ruptures?* (Luxembourg: Édition Archives Nationales, 2003), pp. 225–36; H. R. Kedward, 'La Résistance, l'histoire et l'anthropologie: quelques domaines de la théorie', in Jean-Marie Guillon and Pierre Laborie (eds.), *Mémoire et Histoire: La Résistance* (Toulouse: Privat, 1995), pp. 109–18.
7 Julian Jackson, *France: The Dark Years, 1940–44* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 387.
8 Hollander and Einwohner, 'Conceptualizing resistance', p. 538.
9 Hollander and Einwohner, 'Conceptualizing resistance', pp. 539–40.
10 James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1985).
11 Hollander and Einwohner, 'Conceptualizing resistance', p. 539. 'Low-profile techniques' is from p. xvi.
12 Hollander and Einwohner, 'Conceptualizing resistance', pp. 539–40.
13 Hollander and Einwohner, 'Conceptualizing resistance', p. 542.
14 See, for example, Sophie De Schaepdrijver, *La Belgique et la Première Guerre mondiale*, trans. Claudine Spitaels and Marnix Vincent (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2004), pp. 122–3, 231; Tammy Proctor, *Civilians in a World at War, 1914–1918* (New York: New York University Press, 2010), pp. 135–41.
15 Philippe Nivet, *La France occupée*, *1914–1918* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2011), pp. 207–64; Philippe Nivet, 'Refuser l'occupation, accepter la guerre', in Nicolas Beaupré, Heather Jones and Anne Rasmussen (eds.), *Dans la guerre, 1914–1918: Accepter, endurer, refuser* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2015), pp. 129–53; Becker, *Les Cicatrices rouges*, pp. 257–70; Philippe Salson, *L'Aisne occupée: Les civils dans la Grande Guerre* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2015), pp. 193–211.
16 Olivier Forcade, 'L'espionnage féminin ou un nouvel héroïsme au combat en 1914–1918', in Marion Trévisi and Philippe Nivet (eds.), *Les Femmes et la guerre de l'Antiquité à 1918* (Paris: Economica, 2010), pp. 266–73.

17 Emmanuel Debruyne, 'Combattre l'occupant en Belgique et dans les départements français occupés en 1914–1918: une résistance "avant la lettre"', *Vingtième Siècle: Revue d'histoire*, 115:3 (2012), 15–30.
18 Emmanuel Debruyne and Jehanne Paternostre, *La Résistance au quotidien, 1914–1918: Témoignages inédits* (Brussels: Racine, 2009), p. 17.
19 Poster, Maire de Roubaix, on display at the Historial de la Grande Guerre, n.d., original emphasis.
20 Annie Deperchin and Laurence Van Ypersele, 'Droit et occupation: le cas de la France et de la Belgique', in John Horne (ed.), *Vers la guerre totale: Le tournant de 1914–1915* (Paris: Tallandier, 2010), p. 164.
21 Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, *1870: La France dans la Guerre* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1989), pp. 132–3, 211–12.
22 Audoin-Rouzeau, *1870*, p. 210.
23 ADN, 9R753, M. Spéder, 'Plaidoyer de Monsieur SPÉDER en faveur des inculpés: MM/RICH, DESTOMBES, DUMORTIER, DESCAMPS, et DRUEZ', n.d.
24 AMT, H4A26, German poster, Tourcoing, 20 October 1914, article III.
25 ADN, J1933, Manuscrit de François Rouesel, 'Pendant la CCI [Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie] de Roubaix durant l'occupation allemande', 'Les réquisitions d'armes, de bicyclettes et d'automobiles', p. 7.
26 For example, ADN, 9R556, extrait des procès-verbaux de la Commandanture de Lille, 8 November 1914.
27 ADN, 9R516, German poster, Lambersart, 5 May 1917.
28 ADN, 9R717, German poster, Général Commandant l'Armée, 25 November 1915, article III; ADN, 9R719, German poster, Roubaix, 30 June 1917: Léopold Moulard was executed for possessing a revolver and munitions; ADN, 9R716, German poster, Roubaix, 21 July 1915: Guillaume Alphonse Delannoy was sentenced to five years' forced labour for possessing a revolver and munitions; German poster, Roubaix, 9 June 1915: Henry Hespel was sentenced to three years' imprisonment for possessing weapons.
29 AMT, H4A32, Directeur de la Compagnie des Tramways de Roubaix & de Tourcoing to Mayor of Tourcoing, 3 September, 11 October, 10 November and 7 December 1915.
30 ADN, 9R245, Préfet to Kommandantur of Lille, 29 October 1917.
31 See, for example, Paul Trochon, *La Grande Guerre (1914–1918): Lille avant et pendant l'occupation allemande* (Tourcoing: J. Duvivier, 1922), pp. 195–212; Philippe Nivet, 'Les femmes dans la France occupée (1914–1918)', in Marion Trévisi and Philippe Nivet (eds.), *Les Femmes et la guerre de l'Antiquité à 1918* (Paris: Economica, 2010), p. 278; Hélène Benoît, 'L'État sanitaire de la population civile du Nord envahi pendant la Première Guerre mondiale: Lille en particulier (1914–1918)', master's dissertation (Lille III, 1997); ADN, 9R1293, list of refugees and civilian prisoners who died during the occupation.

32 ADN, 9R732, Commissaire Central de Roubaix to Anjubault, 13 October 1917.
33 See, for example, AN, F23/375, Ministère des Régions Libérées, Secrétariat Général, Département du Nord, Récompense Honorifique, Proposition en faveur de M. Debiève Arthur, from Gommegnies, 28 May 1923.
34 Michael R. Marrus, 'Jewish resistance to the Holocaust', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 30:1 (1995), p. 103.
35 Johne Horne and Alan Kramer, 'War between soldiers and enemy civilians, 1914–1915', in Roger Chickering and Stig Förster (eds.), *Great War, Total War: Combat and Mobilization on the Western Front, 1914–1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 167.
36 Leonard V. Smith, Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau and Annette Becker, *France and the Great War, 1914–1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 44.
37 Audoin-Rouzeau, *1870*, pp. 136–7, 214, 262; Nivet, 'Refuser l'occupation', p. 145.
38 Emmanuel Debruyne, 'Resistance: the prequel', paper given at the International Society for the Study of the First World War 2009 conference, emailed to the author, p. 3.
39 Isabel V. Hull, *Absolute Destruction: Military Practices and the Culture of War in Imperial Germany* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), pp. 109, 117.
40 Hull, *Absolute Destruction*, p. 248.
41 Annexe to the Hague Convention, Section III, Article 1.
42 Debruyne, 'Resistance: the prequel', p. 3.

6

Notable protests: Respectable resistance (*coups de gueule polis*)

In occupied France and Belgium, notables frequently protested against German demands and policies.[1] I suggest a new conceptual category to explain and examine such behaviour: 'respectable resistance'. This potentially oxymoronic term is a reconfiguration and extension of what is sometimes called 'municipal resistance' or 'administrative resistance' in the context of the Second World War.[2] Other historians of occupied France and Belgium in 1914–18 variously describe such behaviour as 'moral resistance',[3] 'resistance of religious and civic authorities',[4] 'passive resistance' or 'defiance'.[5] This phenomenon meets all four criteria outlined by Hollander and Einwohner, thus does comprise resistance: it constituted a form of action that opposed the occupiers and was recognised as resistance by the Germans and the French at the time and beyond. Indeed, when President Millerand opened an exhibition in Lille in May 1921 dedicated to the occupation, the display 'French Resistances' contained a subsection entitled 'The Protests of Civic and Religious Authorities'.[6] These protests were intended to resist German demands, as will be demonstrated. Such resistance is understood as a 'weapon of the weak', although it was neither 'everyday' nor 'invisible'.

Studying this type of resistance may seem rather unadventurous given its prominence in works on the occupation. Yet the form, style and content of these protests provide an insight into occupied culture, especially the importance of respectability. This world view and its concomitant behaviour, although not exclusively *Nordiste* or even uniquely French, were nevertheless deeply rooted in the Third Republic. The 'bourgeois Republic' is often perceived as a 'Republic of lawyers',[7] built on notions of notability and with its own norms for public discourse that defined what was respectable – although not always involving polite discussion. Yet when the limits of acceptability were breached or an affront to honour

occurred, it was common for politicians to resolve matters by a duel.[8] Notable protests, in some sense verbal-textual duels, therefore represent French, bourgeois, Third Republic-inspired resistance par excellence.

In this period, notables included Gambetta's *couches nouvelles*: the middle classes of the *petite bourgeoisie*, *petite paysannerie*, landowners, members of the liberal professions, functionaries and even industrialists. They formed the backbone of the Third Republic, as voters and politicians, and tended to have radical political leanings.[9] Following contemporary usage, 'notables' here means those in positions of authority who were theoretically respected by their fellow countrymen and the Germans. This included members of the local French administration, bishops and industrialists. One occupation diarist described 'notables' as comprising 'high society' or 'the head of the population'.[10] Occasionally the Germans designated people as notables, using them as middlemen responsible for the communication of German demands and the behaviour of the population.[11] Other times, the population itself chose its 'heads'. For instance, municipal councils provided the Germans with a list of hostages, the most explicit demonstration of the notables' role as guardians of the population.[12] The idea was that the local population would respect these men enough to avoid engaging in acts of resistance, for which the hostages could be killed, although killings were rare beyond the invasion period. Thus, being a notable was not always beneficial during the occupation, even if it did have some advantages such as increased freedom of movement or better access to goods.[13]

Social interactions between occupier and occupied followed a set of unwritten rules: respect and politeness had to be shown, even to the enemy. Written and verbal exchanges were couched in polite language, seemingly demonstrating respect between the author and the recipient. This partly reflected contemporary bourgeois social mores and French etiquette while providing an acceptable outlet for grievances and opposition. Respectability meant not only an adherence to social conventions but also to legal ones – the law represented the bedrock of the Republic and was central to French culture.[14] The infusion of courtesy and judicial reasoning was at the heart of this respectable resistance, one in direct opposition to perceived German barbarism, mockingly referred to as '*Kultur*' by occupied and unoccupied Allied populations alike.[15] Not all notables intended their protests to be a form of resistance per se, instead seeing these as safeguarding the interests of their compatriots. Yet often the Germans recognised these actions as such, and the desired outcomes opposed the occupiers' will.

Polite protests?

Oscar Fanyau, former Mayor of Hellemmes, wrote to the Kommandant of Hellemmes-Lille on 23 October 1916.[16] Fanyau had refused a German order of 16 July 1916 that the occupied population declare all metal in its possession and explained his decision in a letter, stating:

> Very sincerely, I will say to you that, if I have not declared metals […] it's because my conscience refuses this.
>
> Do not see in my abstention a refusal of obedience or a lack of respect for the German Authority, but do not ask me, a Frenchman, who had the honour of serving his country as an officer, to declare and hand over metals [that will be used] to fabricate projectiles destined to kill my brothers; this would be contrary to my honour and my patriotism.
>
> Tak[e] these metals, the German Authority knows of the copper and bronze that is in my house, for two years they have been within view of the numerous officers and soldiers who have lodged in my home[, and have been officially registered].
>
> Please accept, Monsieur le Kommandant, the assurance of my greatest respect.[17]

The polite language and desire for respectability is clear, as is the moral-patriotic conundrum. Fanyau did not wish to disobey the German authority, to which he proffered respect, but neither could he disobey his patriotic conscience. His conclusion is illustrative of the often performative nature of resistance during this occupation: as long as he had refused the Germans' order and was not seen to acquiesce, he was willing to allow the Germans to take the metal. This was, however, not enough for the Germans, who imprisoned Fanyau. He died upon entering his cell, two days after writing the letter.[18] The cause of death is unclear.

The notion of respectability visible in Fanyau's letter was important even during the invasion. In the aforementioned incident on 5 September 1914, during the Germans' first incursion into Lille, Lieutenant von Hoffel and other soldiers entered the Prefecture. Von Hoffel burst into the office of Préfet Trépont, blaming him for ordering all men of military age to leave for the French front (which Trépont had done). He blindfolded and physically assaulted Trépont, despite the protestations of the employees of the Prefecture and the French translator. He then announced that Trépont would be shot, at which point the interpreter informed the lieutenant that Trépont was a functionary holding the title of 'Excellence'. This had the desired effect: eventually Trépont was released.[19] This incident demonstrates the strength of social mores and conventions. Even

the Germans, holding all the power in this situation, gave in once a certain logic of respectability was invoked. This logic underlined verbal and written notable protests in the occupied Nord, which occurred frequently for the duration of the war. I have examined approximately 120 letters in depth, comprising hundreds of pages mainly written by the Mayors of Lille, Tourcoing and Roubaix, the Bishop of Lille, Préfet Trépont or Acting Préfet Anjubault, although mayors or municipal councillors of eight other communes are represented here.[20] There is evidence that many more such protests occurred across the Nord.[21]

A strong element of patriotism and duty to the Republic also underscored respectable resistance. Trépont himself demonstrated this: on 6 November 1914, he was taken to the Kommandantur, where the Germans asked him to collaborate with them and issued personal threats. Trépont responded, 'Above myself, there is my duty.'[22] Yet, as with Fanyau, there is a sense in which duty overlapped with performance – not only did opposition have to take place, but it had to be *seen* and *known* to have taken place. Intent and recognition were not mutually exclusive here, for the intent was often precisely for opposition to be recognised. Perhaps these were self-referential performances, cementing one's position as a notable – it was expected that notables would resist; thus, one was a notable *because* one was seen to resist. These elites were proving to themselves, as well as to the wider population and the French Government, that they were worthy of their position.

The performative aspect was not lost on locals, who seemed receptive to this. Occupation diarist Maria Degrutère recorded municipal opposition to the Germans, using formulations such as 'the Mayor of Lille has written a superb letter to the Governor protesting against this new unjust measure'.[23] She was aware of other letters of protest, suggesting the wider population had access to these.[24] Other occupation diaries and post-occupation works attest to the population's knowledge of municipal opposition and the success it occasionally engendered, with some diaries even containing typewritten copies of letters of protest.[25] Indeed, even the British and unoccupied French were aware of this phenomenon during the war.[26]

The Germans themselves were under no doubt as to the performative nature of such opposition, seeing it as an attempt by notables to avoid negative repercussions after the war. The following quotation from a March 1916 note from the Kommandant of Tourcoing to the Mayor illustrates the German perspective:

> [F]or some time the *Mairie* takes great pleasure in showing a passive resistance that absolutely cannot endure, in furnishing tortuous explanations and in asking unjustified questions. The Kommandantur has no desire to read letters that are manifestly written with the intention, for the *mairie*, to justify itself 'later' to the Government.
>
> The *Mairie* should therefore, in future, leave aside all excuses and subterfuge, and simply declare […] if it is in a state or not to execute the given order.[27]

This is not the only example of the Germans explicitly seeing notable protests as resistance; in one instance they described protests as 'open revolt'.[28] The belief that French notables were engaged in a process of deliberate obstruction, an attempt at slowing down decisions and policy implementation, may have been justified. It is plausible that this was a key motive behind notable protests and other aspects of notable relations with the occupiers. Notables mention this explicitly only rarely.[29] Such opposition took place in the Second World War and is described by François Marcot as 'administrative braking [*freinage*]', although he categorises it as a form of 'opposition' distinct from actual resistance because it lacks an element of transgression.[30] Yet the pattern outlined is suggestive for this occupation: notables could 'slow down the German machine' until the risk was too great for their own security.[31] In the occupied Nord, the sheer number of letters of protests and traces of other forms thereof is striking and justifies the application of this model. The Germans became increasingly frustrated with having to respond to French complaints, and *Kommandanten* spent a considerable amount of time doing so. So too did French notables, but perhaps this was for them the best means of passing time which would normally have been spent working in a fully functional political-economic sphere. 'Braking' is examined further below.

It is not clear whether all notables perceived their actions in the same light as the Germans, whether there was always a 'performative intent' or even intent to resist or disrupt. Yet many believed it was important, not only for the occupied population but also for the non-occupied French, and perhaps for posterity, that they were seen to resist *somehow*. For the occupied French, all actions and behaviours inevitably had a performative element. Notables were being judged by occupied compatriots, and the Germans, but were also aware of the judgement of the French Government in the present and potentially in the future. A few cases mention this categorically: the Mayor of Halluin, during a heated exchange of letters with the Kommandant concerning the cessation of

work in the commune's factories, spoke of the duty he and the population had.[32] He had to refuse to force workers to recommence work, and to pay the wartime contribution demanded, which he explained thusly:

> I cannot forget, in fact, that there are 2,5000 Halluinois serving under the flag, among whom are my 5 sons; I would not want a single one of them to be able to reproach me one day for having helped to forge weapons against them, with disregard for patriotism and the demands of natural law itself.[33]

However, he was happy to pay contributions not linked explicitly to the manufacture of arms and the continuation of the war effort.[34] Similarly, Acting Préfet Anjubault was keenly aware of the shadow of the French Government looming over him and his compatriots. When interrogated in August 1916 by a German *conseilleur de justice* for protesting against the requisition of metals, he stated, 'it is not up to me but to my government alone, later, to approve or disavow the acts of Frenchmen during the occupation'.[35] As such, was the intent of respectable resistance actually to resist, or simply self-serving and future-looking, covering one's position to avoid prospective accusations? The two were not mutually exclusive: resistance was often the aim, in the sense of opposing the efficient implementation of German policy, or avoiding aiding the German war effort. Yet a sense of duty, inextricably linked with an awareness of future judgement by the French Government, did underline such resistance.[36] The two combined to create respectable resistance.

Letters of protest expressed both opposition to and outrage at German measures and, in doing so, underlined the impotence of local French administrations. For instance, the Mayor of Lille wrote to von Graevenitz in December 1916 regarding the punishment of the entire city in response to an alleged attack on German soldiers in the Faubourg des Postes.[37] He noted:

> The population of this neighbourhood has already been punished, and <u>two months later</u>, whilst the <u>guilty parties have been arrested</u>, you hold responsible the entire population of the Town that has, so to speak, no relation with this neighbourhood and that has not ceased to demonstrate the most dignified attitude for two years.
>
> We are therefore condemned without being able to defend ourselves.
>
> I have no way of appealing this judgement and am forced to put up with it, but it will not be without an energetic protest.[38]

Even from within this subordinate position, the Mayor felt it necessary and perhaps beneficial to raise an official complaint.

Often notable protests contained underlying ironic, humorous, or even provocative language. A complex case illustrates this. On 20 June 1915, the Germans informed the municipalities of the towns of Roubaix and Valenciennes that they had to pay a 150,000-franc fine for the Allied bombing of Alexandria and Haïfa.[39] Four days later, the Acting Mayor of Roubaix, socialist Henri Thérin, wrote to the Kommandant, arguing against the fine. He did not understand why these two towns, thousands of kilometres from the sites of the bombardments, were chosen above others. He also complained about the most recent fine of 100,000 francs levied on the town for the alleged shooting of a German sentry by a French civilian. Regarding this latter point, he used polite language to deliver a direct argument, noting that 'very detailed enquiries involving locals of the area' had not been able to establish that the shooting occurred. Indeed, the inquiries:

> allow us to believe that this sentry could have been subject to hallucinations common to soldiers in times of war, [and as such] the municipal Administration, under duress and forced, consented to pay this fine because the facts reproached against it allegedly took place in the territory of our town and could be true, even though no one has been able to demonstrate this.[40]

Although the Municipal Council disagreed with the Germans, the form and content of its language gave the appearance of respecting them and social conventions enough to cede to their demands. However, the suggestion that this German could have been hallucinating and the lack of proof appears rather provocative and mischievous in tone. The municipality refused to pay the 150,000-franc fine, seeing it as contrary to international law. It asked the Kommandant 'to please transmit the present letter to M. the Head of the German Headquarters'.[41] The German response was to send twenty-five municipal councillors of Roubaix to Güstrow as hostages. It is not clear when they were transported, but they returned on 11 August 1915,[42] presumably because the contribution was paid, as had happened in other cases.[43]

Despite the effusion of courtesy in the language used by French notables, the Germans sometimes explicitly disapproved of the linguistic content of letters of protest. In August 1917, Anjubault complained that the Kommandant of Baisieux had changed the dates of school holidays from those he had established, concluding, 'The solution to questions of this nature having no connection to the needs of an army of occupation, I ask the superior German authority to overturn the decision taken by

the Kommandant of Baisieux.'[44] Von Graevenitz was not pleased with Anjubault's formulation, informing him, 'in your relations with the German military authorities, you should try your hardest to take a more respectful tone and use the German language. The closure of the school of Baisiuex took place for military reasons. There is no motive to modify the measures taken by the local Kommandantur.'[45] This is the only indication of French notables being told to use German in their letters. German demands were usually transmitted in the original language with translations, but this is not the case for French-language documents. Most of the time French notables were free to write in French.

Resistance as refusal and reproach

The target and form of notable protests varied greatly, but one of the most frequent examples involved constant German demands for lists of locals. The occupiers were especially interested in potential labourers, mostly unemployed men or men of military age, but they also wanted information on those who could be repatriated, reducing the strain on the German military to police and generally provide for them. Both relied on the logic of control and efficiency. This information was kept by local French administrations, and the simplest means of access was for the administrators to hand over the documents. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the reality was far from simple.

The socialist Mayor of Roubaix, Jean-Baptiste Lebas, refused in early January 1915 to give the Germans the list of men turning eighteen in 1914 and 1915, for which he was threatened with deportation.[46] Four days later, he refused a further demand for the 'classes' of 1916 and 1917. The Germans changed tactics: another refusal meant the population would be deprived of flour.[47] Lebas and the Municipal Council refused; a diarist at the Prefecture praised them for this.[48] Lebas continued his opposition until he was arrested in March 1915 and imprisoned in the fortress of Rastatt, where he remained until January 1916; he was not permitted to return to Roubaix on his release.[49] Lebas's replacement, Thérin, continued to protest German demands, despite one *répatriée*'s testimony to the contrary.[50]

Other notables acted similarly in March 1915. On 8 March, Mayor of Tourcoing, Gustave Dron, 'is arrested. Pretexts offered: refusal to furnish the list of unemployed people; refusal to pay a new instalment of the war contribution.'[51] Similarly, when asked to provide a list of

1,200–1,500 'destitute individuals susceptible to be repatriated to France', the Mayor of Lille informed Governor von Heinrich:

> I regret being unable to furnish you with this list because my situation as an elected civil servant of this population absolutely forbids me from accepting a measure that would have as its goal sending a large number of my fellow citizens far away from their home, against their will.
>
> I do not doubt, Excellence, that you recognise that this is for me a duty to my conscience from which I cannot shy away.[52]

The final sentence illustrates the respectable nature of such resistance, born out of a sense of duty and a humanitarian impulse. The Mayor hoped that the Governor, as a general loyal to his own country, would at least comprehend the decision, if not support it. Indeed, this was the case on certain occasions. In August 1917, an unknown number of workers were ordered to present themselves at the Kommandantur of Wattrelos, with suitcases and provisions, seemingly to be deported for forced labour. The Commissaire de Police was ordered by the Kommandant to accompany them.[53] In response, he approached the Mayor, noting that he already suffered in giving these workers their summons, and that 'it is not at all up to a French person to lead any another French person to the enemy'. The Mayor, however, reminded the Commissaire that this was a German order, to be carried out under threat of imprisonment. The Commissaire subsequently approached the Kommandant himself, arguing that, 'as a French civil servant I could not execute an order contrary to my dignity and my patriotic sentiments, that his loyalty was large enough to understand the justice of this refusal'. The Kommandant 'responded that it was good', informing the Commissaire that he only had to sign a register of those workers present at the Kommandantur, rather than lead them there himself – a 'happy solution'.[54] This tactic of appealing to notions of respectability and patriotic duty was why the Mayor of Lille ended another protest with, 'You are a soldier, Excellence, you place the sentiment of duty too highly to wish to ask me to betray my own. If I acted any other way, you would have deep within you only disdain for me.'[55]

Unlike the strikes of the *affaire des sacs*, notables' opposition was not confined to 1915. Throughout the occupation, Mayor of Lille, Charles Delesalle, refused to give the Germans various lists of men of military age or the unemployed, among other protests.[56] Despite this, one prefectoral employee and diarist criticised Delesalle for acquiescing too readily to German demands and not offering enough resistance.[57] Perhaps the personal animosity between Delesalle and Trépont surrounding pre-war

electoral fraud in Lille and debates about how best to defend the town during the invasion spread to the employees of the Prefecture. However, the same diarist claimed that senator Auguste Potié 'criticises the Mayor of Lille who pays too much and too quickly'.[58] Indeed, Vandenbussche compares Delesalle unfavourably to other mayors, arguing that he acquiesced too readily and remarking that he was never deported or imprisoned for his opposition, even though he had been taken hostage in the early occupation.[59] Yet there were many instances where Delesalle did oppose the occupiers. For example, on 3 January 1916, the Germans demanded the list of workers at the Ateliers de la Société de la Gare du Nord, many of whom had not turned up for work recently. They emphasised that such workers were not being used for war operations but for tasks that assured the good functioning of Lille's transport network.[60] Delesalle responded that he could not access the lists of a private company, and 'anyway, if I had this list in my hands my duty would imperiously forbid me from intervening and influencing [the workers] in any way regarding a decision that is only a matter for each individual's conscience'.[61]

The next day, von Graevenitz reiterated his order.[62] Delesalle continued his refusal, explaining that the municipality had the right to requisition goods but not people; it had hitherto carried out all public works demanded of it by the Germans via its own workers, but in this instance the Germans would have to advertise for workers themselves.[63] There are numerous examples of German-authored calls for volunteer workers, especially in Lille.[64] The very existence of these appeals in an area in which the Germans were the dominant group suggests that this form of respectable protest was successful. This was at least the case until the Easter 1916 *enlèvements*, which the Germans justified in part by a lack of sufficient volunteers.[65] Success was not guaranteed, though. Across the Nord and beyond, municipalities and notables refused to give the Germans the lists they demanded throughout the occupation and were subsequently punished – individual notables being imprisoned or fined, or entire municipalities fined,[66] among other sanctions.

Perhaps because of the risk of sanctions, not all notables followed the same course of action. In a letter to the Acting Préfet in August 1916, the Commissaire de Police of Wattrelos insinuated that the Mayor was complicit in providing lists of 'gardeners' who could be forcibly employed by the Germans in the Motte factory in Roubaix. The Commissaire himself had refused to provide the lists to Germans but gave the information to the Mayor, leaving the latter in a difficult position. The Commissaire's

motives are evident in his letter to the Préfet: 'Whilst the Mairie certainly made no unfavourable remark to me, I wanted to keep you updated of this fact […] so that in the future it will not be twisted[,] and to give you the reasons for my conduct.'[67] Was he fearful of future reproaches from the Préfet, the Mayor, the French Government, or others? Whatever the case, the Commissaire wanted to register his resistance officially, even if its usefulness was questionable.

Centralised criticism?

Notable protests were mostly made on an individual basis, but there is some suggestion of centralisation. The diary of an unnamed aide of Préfet Trépont (seemingly his secretary, M. Borromé) hints at the Prefecture's understanding of how civil servants should behave, based on historical precedents. In January 1915, the aide noted that a memorandum from 1871 'clearly established the attitude that civil servants in invaded territory should observe […] which confirms my opinion. The duty is maximum resistance'.[68] Trépont echoed this sentiment. On 14 January, he called a meeting of around twenty mayors from the arrondissements of Lille and spoke to them about provisions, war contributions, lists of men of military age 'and clearly indicated to them their duty as French mayors regarding the German authority'.[69] Similarly, on 26 January, he addressed all prefectoral employees of military age (from seventeen to fifty) and 'explained his attitude that cannot be contradicted; he invited them to take inspiration from their conscience and their sentiment of patriotic duty'.[70] According to Trépont's summary of the occupation, which naturally paints himself in a positive light, he encouraged even more explicit opposition: the German authority suggested that rich communes pay war contributions on behalf of poor communes that could not afford it, but Trépont advised mayors to refuse this. He also stated that paper money could be used only for provisioning and not the payment of such contributions. Trépont was subsequently accused by the Governor of preaching passive resistance to the payment of war contributions.[71] In his memoirs, diary entries and other documentation, Trépont was extremely critical of notables he perceived as ignoring his advice by offering little resistance to the occupiers.[72]

Even if Trépont's accounts are exaggerated, he himself did write numerous letters of protest in the early occupation,[73] and the Germans believed that he was preaching resistance – this is why he was deported to Germany in February 1915, replaced with German-approved

Anjubault.[74] Anjubault was no mere puppet, however, despite Trépont's later accusations.[75] He engaged in considerable protest, complaining, among other things, about the 1916 deportations, the use of French military medical personnel in the occupied area and the use of civilians, especially children, for military ends.[76] Consequently, Anjubault invoked the ire of the Germans on many occasions and was among the four *Lillois* hostages taken in July 1915 as punishment for the alleged harbouring of escaped Allied prisoners of war.[77] In January 1918 he was eventually sent with his family to Antoing in Belgium, seemingly because of his opposition.[78]

Beyond the Prefecture, Jules Hélot's wartime diary, published in 1919, provides a case study hinting at premeditated, loosely organised respectable resistance. As President of the Chamber of Commerce of Cambrai, Hélot was an influential notable who, he claims, encouraged and led respectable resistance across various communes.[79] He also took on the role of Sous-Préfet of Cambrai, although there are contradictory explanations for this. According to Trépont, in December 1914 Hélot was asked to do so by the German *Etappeninspektor* of Valenciennes. Hélot asked Trépont to appoint him to this post, but Trépont refused.[80] Trépont's diaries and memoirs concerning the period up to February 1915 criticise Hélot for working too closely with the Germans.[81] In 1916, French intelligence confirmed that Hélot was a German-appointed *sous-préfet* – although 'certain witnesses indicate that he does not even have the right to leave the town'.[82] However, according to Hélot's own diary, he had actively lobbied to replace the existing *sous-préfet* (who wanted to return to unoccupied France) so that he could help the local population, and Trépont had actually approved him as the provisional replacement.[83]

Whatever the circumstances of Hélot's appointment, his position meant he was well placed to discuss responses to German demands with other notables. His diary allows for an examination of alleged oppositional strategies, although we must take into account the fact that it was published in 1919 and likely edited to put a positive spin on events. Hélot claims to have been more headstrong than other notables from the outset: on 17 November 1914, the Germans demanded a 59,000-franc war contribution from the municipality of Cambrai. Under the threat of requisitioning works of art from the museum and library, the Municipal Council decided to pay 20,000 francs; Hélot suggested that they give nothing and 'offer ourselves as hostages, for after this demand, another will come, without us being able to see the end.' The council rejected this tactic.[84] Hélot was displeased, writing the following month:

> He who risks nothing, has nothing, and the civil servants are wrong not to do like us, not to pay a little audaciousness; after all, we only risk being detained 48 hours, in the worst case. It would not be thus, without doubt, if they [the Germans] knew what happens in these meetings, where I preach and exalt patriotism and resistance to their demands; these conferences somewhat resemble, my word, meetings of conspirators.[85]

Indeed, Hélot's idea of resistance involved vigorous protests, not simply inaction. In January 1915, he expressed anger at the Percepteur (tax inspector) of Mœuvres, who was

> convinced that he will be carrying out his duty in refusing to complete the receipts as much as he can; trying to do nothing is the only effort that seems to him worthy of being attempted. *Voilà* the mentality of civil servants […] If only the heads of service were still there to put them on the right path![86]

He contrasted this with the behaviour of the Percepteur of Clary, who that morning went to the Chamber of Commerce to deal with the loans required and to discuss the latest German tax. This *fonctionnaire* 'has perfectly understood the necessity to refuse until breaking point, and he is going to encourage the resistance that I recommended'.[87] The logic and intent behind Hélot's respectable resistance echoed that of others:

> I consider that out of personal dignity, and to defend our national interests, we should only cede to force […] This resistance, beyond the essential reasons outlined, is also necessary to avoid the danger of seeing later discussions about reimbursement, by our administrations, under the pretext that we would have too easily ceded to the injunctions of the enemy, or that we would not have acted in taking all the vital precautions, within the realms of possibility.[88]

Such resistance was occasionally successful, but Hélot perceived it in terms of buying time. On 21 January 1915, he went to Noyelles to confront the officer in charge of requisitioning and met with success: 'In the presence of my resistance, he abandoned his demands; evidently he would come back to these, but at least it is time won.'[89] Similarly, he noted the next month, 'Everywhere I preach resistance by inertia, responding to brutality only by delays. But that is becoming very hard and it is important to support each other in their goodwill.'[90] He spoke of 'the strength of inertia' but admitted that notables should cede when collective reprisals were likely,[91] and that 'every individual remained faced with his conscience, that it was not necessary to carry out *donquichottisme*'.[92] Nevertheless, they should be willing to accept

personal punishments: 'I said again today to some mayors whom I incited to resistance and who complained about their situation which was so critical and threatening: our dear soldiers are considerably more deserving than us, they sacrifice themselves without reluctance. How could we complain?'[93]

However, as the realities of occupation entrenched themselves, Hélot's attitude became more flexible. In October 1915, he remarked, 'since I have noticed that they [the Germans] came to dominate the country so much under their yoke, and that they would not back down for anything, I am resigned to appreciate that it is necessary to choose the lesser of two evils'.[94] Still, despite constant punishments, Hélot continued to counsel as much resistance as possible, and certain notables – especially those municipal councils he advised – continued to practise it throughout the occupation.[95] Tactics included lying to the Germans about the amount of money or goods a commune possessed.[96] This was sometimes successful – in September 1915, Hélot proclaimed, 'Decidedly the resistance, the delays, often have a positive effect', giving the example of the German demand for 32 million francs from the municipality of Cambrai, increasing by 100,000 francs a day, eventually reduced to 16 million francs.[97] By July 1916, Hélot had helped to create a syndicate of communes for mutual economic aid, something that Trépont had explicitly forbidden.[98] The Germans saw this as an opportunity to extract more money from the *occupés*. The syndicate was unanimous in choosing resistance, and Hélot decided on a respectable form: a letter. 'They all approved the terms of the refusal to yield to these orders. Devised as very firm and dignified, this letter that I wanted to be polite in its form was therefore adopted.'[99] In late 1917, members of the syndicate all agreed 'on the impossibility of resisting usefully' but acknowledged that Hélot should nevertheless send a letter of protest in his name, 'saying that I echo the grievances of all'.[100] Respectable resistance had thus morphed from frequent, pseudo-organised notable protests based on a genuine hope for policy reversal or at least buying time, into rarer individual protests carried out in the understanding that they were in vain. Other instances of respectable resistance were more spontaneous,[101] but a common factor to all was the primacy of judicial reasoning.

Law: an illusory shield and a blunt sword

Notables constantly referred to the law to justify and bolster their protests. In particular, they cited the 1864 Geneva Convention and the

1907 Hague Convention, representing humanitarian and international law respectively.[102] Becker has written on the importance of these conventions for the *occupés*, calling the Hague Convention 'an always-repeated mantra' but one that 'hardly protected them'.[103] The problem was the ill-defined juridical status of military occupations in Article 43 of the Hague Convention; military occupations represented a situation that was neither war nor peace yet both at the same time.[104] The Hague Convention had been undermined by caveats and non-compliance during the signing of the accords: Russia, Austria-Hungary and Germany reserved the right not to apply Article 44, which banned belligerents from forcing occupied populations to provide information on the army or means of defence of another belligerent.[105] Further, the wording of the Convention was ambiguous. A distinction was drawn between the 'army of occupation' and the 'fighting army', especially in the oft-cited Article 52, which begins, 'Requisitions in kind and services shall not be demanded from municipalities or inhabitants except for the needs of the army of occupation.'[106] However, identifying precisely where the needs of the army of occupation finished and where those of the wider fighting army began was not easy.[107]

French notables continued to rely on a legal form of protest despite this, and despite Germany's disregard for international agreements in its 1902 manual on the laws of war,[108] the violation of Belgian neutrality in 1914 or other acts flouting international law.[109] Of course, all belligerents broke international law in some way during the war.[110] Judicial reasoning in notable protests was at its strongest when forced labour or manufacturing goods for the enemy were the targets of criticism. On 1 April 1916, the Kommandant of Loos received two letters of protest concerning the events of the previous morning, involving thirty local young men being forced to work in railway construction in Sequedin. The first was from the Mayor of Loos, who invoked Article 52 of the Hague Convention, which forbade belligerents from forcing occupied populations to take part in operations against their own country. The municipality considered the construction of a railway behind a battlefront as analogous to the construction of trenches or fortifications. As such, it 'would not be able, in any manner, to associate itself with this act of forced labour' and considered its duty to ask the German authority 'not to continue to make young people of the Commune participate in the works in question.'[111]

The second letter was from Anjubault, further demonstrating the language of respectful, legal protest. He noted the importance of railways in

modern warfare, highlighting that, the Hague Convention aside, since the international conference of 1874 in Brussels,

> doctrine prohibited requisition for work on railways as constituting for the populations the obligation of taking part in war operations against their homeland.
>
> This theory being admitted for more than 40 years in a manner favourable to the inhabitants of occupied countries, I have the imperious duty to intervene and demand that the German superior Authority put an end to the constraint of which the young people of the commune of Loos are currently victims.[112]

Neither letter had a substantial impact – the Germans rejected or ignored these legal protests.

Local notables similarly protested the use of French civilians for even more explicit military tasks such as digging trenches. They again cited Article 52 of the Hague Convention,[113] as well as Article 46, which protected 'Family honour and rights, the lives of persons, and private property.'[114] The latter was also relevant for protesting against the Easter 1916 *enlèvements*: for Anjubault, 'It would be failing in my duty not to formally protest against such a decision, by nature adding to the sufferings of the population the most cruel of moral hardships, which could cause the destruction of the family home.'[115] These events and later deportations sparked outrage across the occupied area and beyond; in the Nord, many mayors and other notables provided a chorus of protests referencing Article 46.[116] Françoise Thébaud suggests that these protests combined with worldwide outrage, especially by the King of Spain, to result in the cessation of deportations in November 1916.[117] In these and other protests, French notables often referenced the Germans' own rules of warfare. For example, the Mayor and *députés* of Tourcoing argued that 'such measures would not only go against the most elementary norms of the rights of peoples, but would also be in flagrant contradiction of all the principles proclaimed by the German general staff itself in its "Exposé on the laws of war" '. This document stated that civilians in an occupied area should not be considered as enemies in the active sense of the word; for the authors of this protest, deportations 'would resemble acts of war against a peaceful civilian population'.[118] Other claims of German contradiction and hypocrisy abound.[119]

Invocations of international law lasted throughout the occupation. As late as January 1918, Anjubault protested against the taking of hostages in Habourdin following the killing of a German soldier by a local who

subsequently committed suicide. He noted that this was an individual act, and if the author had still been alive, he would have been punished as an individual. Further, the use of collective punishment was forbidden by Article 50 of the Hague Convention.[120] He asked that the hostages be released, and three days later they were liberated.[121] It is not clear if this was a direct result of Anjubault's protests, and it must be noted that he had made similar protests two years earlier,[122] so the Germans evidently did not agree with the juridical point.

Sometimes notables invoked breaches of the 1906 Geneva Convention.[123] Others protested against German policies using *French* law, which was theoretically guaranteed to exist in the occupied territory under Article 43 of the Hague Convention.[124] Notables therefore refused German demands because they infringed French law or because under the Third Republic notables did not possess the powers to carry out these demands. In December 1916, the Inspecteur de l'Assistance Publique informed the Préfet that he could not send an orphan to work for the Germans, as per their demands, because French law only allowed orphans to be housed with people who had undergone serious scrutiny and who could assure the material and moral well-being of the child. The German authority did not meet these criteria![125] The inspector was frequently arrested for his numerous acts of respectable resistance,[126] and his predecessor had also been arrested for refusing to force the orphans to work for the Germans, a refusal which the Préfet saw as just.[127] In another instance, the Inspecteur Primaire of Cambrai was imprisoned for refusing to allow the German officer charged with the surveillance of schools to accompany him in his visits – because French law forbade entry into the schools for persons other than those designated in a law of October 1886.[128] As a fellow teacher noted, the Inspector 'found himself in the difficult position of either transgressing French law or disobeying the occupying authority. As he is still French, I presume that he concluded that his duty was to obey the laws of his country.'[129] A similar tone was taken by the guards at the prison of Loos, who refused to carry out manual labour for the Germans in March 1917;[130] they were punished with forced labour, which the director of the prison saw as an affront to their dignity as French functionaries.[131]

The Germans attempted to persuade notables that they did not have to fear negative judgement for breaking French laws. In January 1916, Anjubault was ordered to incarcerate a thirteen-year-old boy and a fourteen-year-old girl in the Colonie Industrielle de Saint-Bernard (a juvenile correctional facility). He responded that this was

an establishment exclusively for males and that a *préfet* could not order an incarceration – to do so would be an abuse of power for which he would be held personally responsible.[132] Von Graevenitz accepted the point concerning the girl but restated the order regarding the boy, while reassuring Anjubault's conscience:

> The Prefecture is sufficiently covered by this order, with respect to the authority that is placed above it, if it should perhaps fear that later reproaches will be made against it, because it has taken, in wartime, a measure that had as its goal to prevent a young Frenchman, without parents, from staying without supervision.[133]

In any case, the director of the Colonie refused the German demand, citing Article 66 of the *Code pénal*. However, he later admitted that 'Despite my energetic protest, I had to give in and accept that child.'[134] Many similar cases occurred.[135] The latest example, a demonstration of how little the strategy of respectable resistance changed, was a letter from Anjubault to the Kommandantur in September 1918. The Germans had demanded that money gained from the harvest be used to pay the workers of Sequedin. Anjubault replied that such a decision was beyond the authority of the Préfet, because the money belonged to the individuals whose harvest had been requisitioned.[136] Years of vain invocations of such logic does not seem to have dissuaded Anjubault from maintaining his respectable resistance.

L'affaire des sacs

The confluence of legal logic and firm opposition was especially evident during the *affaire des sacs*, when locals struggled to respond to German orders concerning the manufacture of sandbags and gas masks. Work stoppages began in April 1915, and by 18 June, Governor von Heinrich wrote to the Mayor of Lille, demanding that he use 'all his influence to influence the locals to restart work'. The Governor, aware of the importance of performance and judgement for the *occupés*, added, 'To guarantee the workers against inconveniences after the conclusion of peace, the Government is willing to provide them with a certificate outlining that they were forced to work.' In the case of non-compliance of workers, the city's administration would be charged with manufacturing the sandbags. If even that did not work, the raw materials would be sent to Germany and the costs of transport and manufacture levied on Lille.[137] The Mayor's response was firm:

> I regret that I must respectfully say to you that it is impossible to fulfill your desires.
>
> Forcing a worker or a boss to work is absolutely contrary to my right; advising him to work, absolutely contrary to my duty, as outlined unequivocally by art. 52 of the Hague Convention.
>
> [… The proposed solution] cannot even be envisaged, for my duty as a French Mayor forbids this even more formally.
>
> Whatever personal risks that I may incur, I therefore regret that I cannot give you satisfaction.[138]

The disagreement continued for a few days.[139] Eventually, the Mayor spoke to the head of the military police. The latter was very courteous and frank, asking the Mayor precisely what punishment would make him acquiesce and how the situation could be resolved amicably.[140] The final German response included a 6 p.m.–5 a.m. curfew and a suspension of passes for the western part of Lille. A poster stated that the population's conception of Article 52 of the Hague Convention was false – the work demanded did *not* comprise operations against France.[141]

On the same day, in the commune of Halluin, where the Mayor had also protested against work involving sandbags, the Germans put up another poster.[142] Acknowledging the role of Article 52 as the basis of current disagreements, the Kommandant stated that it was neither up to him nor French notables to decide who was right, because they were not competent; it would be the work of diplomats after the war. For the moment, 'it is exclusively the interpretation of the German military authority that is valid […] Today and perhaps for a long time to come […] there is only one will, and that is the will of the German military authority.'[143] In other circumstances, the Germans used their own comprehension of the Convention to justify their actions, such as war contributions allegedly justified by Article 49.[144] In this instance, the Germans wanted to stop all resistance:

> I can assure you that the German military authority will not stray under any condition from its demands and its rights, **EVEN IF A TOWN OF 15,000 INHABITANTS MUST PERISH AS A RESULT**.
>
> […] This is the final word and piece of good advice I give you this evening: return to reason and do what it takes so that all the workers restart work without delay, otherwise **YOU EXPOSE YOUR TOWN, YOUR FAMILIES** and even yourselves **TO THE WORST HARDSHIPS.**[145]

Despite such threats, the Mayor of Lille was unwavering. On 3 July 1915, he told von Heinrich, 'you are striking against an immense

innocent population that has until now demonstrated, despite its sufferings, the greatest calm'. All this was because some workers refused 'of their own free will and after reflection' to manufacture sandbags for the trenches 'at a time when their husbands or their brothers are being killed heroically in front of these same trenches'; and because the Mayor 'refuses to intervene and to advise that which he considers in his soul and conscience as a crime against his *patrie*'. Von Heinrich demanded 375,000 francs for the manufacture of 600,000 sandbags. The Mayor responded: 'I regret that I am unable to acquiesce to this order.'[146] The Receveur Municipal (tax officer) and Adjoint au Maire were arrested, and the Germans forced their way into the Recette Municipale (local tax office) to take the money.[147] Meanwhile, eight leading owners of textile factories were arrested, seven of whom were sent to Germany on 2 July. They returned to Lille on 7 August, presumably because work had recommenced in their factories,[148] which happened elsewhere after the arrest (or threat thereof) of factory owners[149] – although this was not always the case.[150]

Contrary to the Mayor of Lille's insistence that the decision not to work was down to individual workers, industrialists themselves appear to have played an active role in the *affaire*. Many refused to continue supervising work for the Germans, although they did not necessarily encourage their workers to stop. This was the case for Tourcoing-based industrialist M. Couvreur, threatened with arrest and transportation to Germany.[151] He had 'overseen work [*faisait travailler*] for the Germans for many months' and, despite his altered position, emphasised that his employees were free to continue working.[152] What accounted for his change of heart? The popular mood of rebellion and apparent revenge against those working for the Germans? The realisation that the gabions and fences his factory was making were probably being used for trench construction? What is clear is that Couvreur made his decision following a discussion with fellow industrialists. This is mirrored in *Invasion '14* when industrialist Hennedyck faced a dilemma:

> If he worked for the enemy he would be guilty of treason; on the other hand, if he refused, he would be leaving those of his fellow mill owners in the lurch who had kept their works running under orders from the enemy, to say nothing of exposing the working population to reprisals.[153]

He was shown his 'duty' by the workers and finally persuaded other industrialists to lead resistance – despite arguments that it was their

duty to safeguard French industry for after the war – which led to their imprisonment and transportation to Germany.[154]

The reality was no less agonising or dramatic for industrialists. Again, an awareness of future judgement combined with a performative element to shape conduct. In the middle of the *affaire des sacs*, the Syndicat des Fabricants (Union of Manufacturers) of Lille-Roubaix-Tourcoing stated that it was 'occupied and preoccupied with laudable interest by the questions that will emerge at the moment of the return to work after the occupation'.[155] It emphasised the extreme importance of the question of recent German orders that French industrialists work for the German authority in tasks with a clear military end. The troubling dilemma, it said, 'is this: "Either you work, or we will seize possession of your factory…" '. The Syndicat admitted that 'Force trumps law here.' However, it had some questions and potential answers:

> Without blaming the decision that everyone believes they must take, isn't there, however, a reason to protest collectively … and … what's more, isn't it good to examine the possible consequences of this forced labour?
>
> It is firstly indisputable that a unanimous protest from all the industrialists of the area – who are a power not to be overlooked, would have more impact than a protest from isolated industrialists in front of the German Authority, in front of our workers, and in front of the French Government, who, let us not forget, will be the judge as a last resort.
>
> This protest, people will say, will be a token one in front of the German Authority. This is possible. But when a right is violated by force, protest imposes itself despite everything, and it is even more striking when we stand together.[156]

This resistance was clearly understood as futile and performative. These employers were aware of the judgement of fellow *occupés*, particularly their workers, whom they hoped to both impress and inform:

> And in front of the workers? […] it seems that a general and collective protest of the entire industry would markedly reinforce that which a single industrialist could express. For it is necessary that workers do not say that their bosses d[id] not have the courage to protest together and energetically when they felt threatened. Already, they imply that the bosses earn money by working for the Germans … That their interest is satisfied … and … negative people are entirely ready to make them accomplices. The silence of bosses could also be interpreted in this way.
>
> In this collective protest, we could at the same time make it known to the worker who ignores this, that the German Authority does not have the

> right to force him to work and to go to get him with two gendarmes. It is up to the bosses to enlighten their workers.[157]

The Syndicat also perceived a legal justification for resistance: it was 'indisputable' that manufacturing sandbags for trenches breached the Hague Convention. Agreeing that a collective refusal was stronger than an isolated protest, the Syndicat questioned what the consequences of such action vis-à-vis the French Government after the war could be. It reasoned that during the occupation an industrialist refusing to work could be imprisoned, and 'His industry is taken over by the Germans who use it to their advantage or destroy it.' However, after the war, the French Government would probably repay the industrialist for damages ensued. The alternative was less favourable: to manufacture sandbags was to play a part in war operations: 'it's as if we worked to manufacture shells, bullets! … It's an undeniable crime of *Lèse-Patrie*, which will be blamed on the industrialist, who consented to oversee the work [*faire travailler*] himself.'[158] The conclusions were unequivocal:

> it is possible that an absolute opposition to the Germans, with all its consequences, is the only permitted action and the only line of conduct that the French Government accepts, and that the very laudable desire to safeguard an industry and the livelihood of the workers will not be judged a sufficient justification.[159]

However, some required further clarification. In their desire for respectability and their adulation of the law, certain industrialists called upon legal advice to guide their actions. The owners of the P. Dumortier Frères factory in Tourcoing drafted the counsel of four lawyers from Lille-Roubaix-Tourcoing during the *affaire des sacs*.[160] They were consulted in particular on the legality of allowing workers to turn corn into flour and load it onto canal boats. The industrialists had previously not permitted this,[161] following their workers refusing to carry out the task.[162] Upon being asked again to authorise this work, lawyers suggested that doing so and even giving the Germans their maximum requisition demand would be acceptable from a legal-patriotic viewpoint, because it would also provide food for the rest for the population and prevent the Germans from requisitioning the entire stock.[163] It was believed that the Germans would allow Dumortier Frères to keep 25 per cent of its stock in return for cooperation. Despite this advice, the industrialists still asked the Mayor to confirm if, in these conditions, 'our work […] would not constitute a crime against the *Patrie* and would not be held against us.'[164] The Mayor's response has not been preserved.

Former Bâtonnier (President of the Bar) Eugène Delemer repeated the logic he had used to advise *Roubaisien* industrialists on the legality of making sandbags: 'in this case, you would not expose yourself to any penal or other responsibility, because […] there is neither crime nor infraction where there is no will, and there is no will whilst one acts under the influence of constraint'.[165] For Delemer, then, authorising the manufacture of sandbags and other goods for the enemy was acceptable if it was done under the threat of force. But what about doing so freely? Even in this hypothesis, Delemer argued, for Dumortier Frères, 'there would not be guilt' because the *Code pénal* only punished treason, comprising providing the enemy with goods with the express aim of helping 'its businesses' or 'serving its goals' – 'however, evidently nothing of the sort could ever be held against you'. Further, this law only concerned goods, whereas the owners would be providing *labour* because the corn had already been requisitioned, therefore no longer belonged to the owners.[166] Providing labour was thus not the same as directly furnishing goods. However, Delemer concluded that 'If we place ourselves [under the judgement] of the moral and patriotic point of view, or simply of public opinion, it is not doubtful for a single instant that it would be better to abstain, unless it is impossible to avoid this.'[167]

The law, therefore, did not always favour all-out resistance. It was not just industrialists who sought legal advice; throughout the occupation, two professors of international law provided the Mayor of Lille with their perspective on potential actions, at his request.[168] The collection of letters between the Mayor, the Germans and these experts constitutes compelling evidence for respectable, legal protest. These jurists concluded during the *affaire des sacs* that any work aiding the manufacture of sandbags constituted participating in operations against their own country. Sandbags, they argued, were *the* crucial aspect of the war, and participation in their manufacture could conceivably count as *intelligence avec l'ennemi*.[169] Other issues were more complicated, such as furnishing goods to the Germans, the municipality's responsibility in paying unemployment or other benefits, and the requisition of *occupés*.[170] The Mayor's respectable protests were greatly informed by this advice, such as the refusal to pay a new war contribution in June 1916, understood as contrary to international law.[171] This legal resistance served as an example for other communes, for example Cambrai, where administrators did not have access to legal counsel.[172]

Religious resistance

Clergymen played their own role in respectable resistance. The Doyen de Saint-Christophe of Tourcoing engaged in a different form of non-violent opposition in August 1916. Rather than protesting to the Germans, he instead preached resistance to German requisitions (particularly of copper), for which he was sentenced to ten years' imprisonment in Germany.[173] This was a widely known event both during and after the occupation,[174] representative of the few occasions of non-protest notable resistance.[175] However, the Doyen had engaged in notable protests earlier that year, criticising the Easter 1916 *enlèvements*.[176] There were also cases of clergymen resisting German demands, such as refusing to ring the church bells for alleged German victories,[177] or to allow the Germans to requisition bells.[178]

Higher up the ecclesiastical hierarchy, bishops utilised the same protest tactics as other notables. The Bishop of Lille, Monseigneur Charost, was especially vocal, aiming to protect the Church, its goods and fellow Christians.[179] He was regarded as important enough by the occupiers to be taken hostage multiple times, such as in the early months of the occupation and in July 1915.[180] Charost accompanied the Mayor of Lille and Préfet in frequent (sometimes daily, sometimes bi-weekly) 'conferences' with the Kommandantur. Here, he often directed the Kommandant's attention towards individual cases of arrested *occupés*, both the wider population and clergymen, asking for leniency.[181] For instance, on 10 December 1914, Charost called for clemency in the case of the sacristan of the St Michel church who had been arrested for climbing to the top of the clock tower with a lit lamp. Charost argued that the sacristan had probably been looking for the direction of cannon fire; his actions had no military purpose. The Kommandant responded that he could not intervene – justice must be independent – but suggested that Charost address a letter to the judges, which occurred. Charost also wrote a letter to all priests urging them to forbid all personnel from climbing church towers.[182] Similarly, two days later, Charost defended the priest of the Faubourg du Sud who had allegedly stated in a sermon that the Germans would soon be chased out of France. The Bishop explained that if the *curé* had given hope to his compatriots, this was not done to insult the Germans.[183]

Beyond face-to-face interventions, Charost wrote many letters throughout the occupation.[184] He protested against the deportations of 1916, against requisitions of church material such as bells, or of

clergymen,[185] and criticised requisitions of industrial and other material whose disappearance would endanger the economic prosperity of the Nord.[186] Indeed, while the Doyen de Saint-Christophe preached open resistance to the requisition of copper, Charost protested in a letter to the Kommandant of Lille. He highlighted the 'infinitely respectable character' of the reasons leading the population to refuse the German demand for copper. The letter concluded:

> From what front would they dare to think of the dead and tomorrow deal with the looks of survivors if they made or announced the delivery of engines of war that would decimate them[?]
>
> I limit myself to represent accurately the state of the public soul. I hope that this situation, deserving to be taken into consideration at the highest level, will point the German authority towards a solution that saves the conscience and the honour of a people for whom these will soon be all they possess.[187]

This was another polite but firm protest, and many more followed.[188]

Similarly, the Bishop of Cambrai, Monseigneur Chollet, preached a patriotic message that strengthened the morale of the population.[189] While Bukowski notes that Chollet's actions alternated between compromise with and resistance to the occupiers, he concludes that Chollet did engage in resistance via personal protests to the Germans, or including his name on municipal protests.[190] Religious notables therefore also engaged in respectable resistance, seen as part of the same phenomenon as municipal resistance,[191] although not all clergymen confined themselves to notable protests, as will be seen later.[192]

Despite differing political views (Charost and Chollet were anti-modernist right-wingers),[193] Catholic resistance was therefore, overall, not too dissimilar to that of Republicans. Both expressed patriotism and a faith in the Allied or French victory, no matter what 'France' meant to them. Both drew on shared notions of respectability and social norms so important to *Nordistes*, whether Catholic or not; and all authors of protests desired Allied victory and wished to prevent aiding a German victory.

Resistance restrained: punishments and successes

How successful was respectable resistance? If 'success' means the withdrawal or softening of policies against which notables protested, or the general amelioration of occupied life, then this was questionable. Despite the respectable nature of protests, the Germans were frequently

frustrated by them, perceiving them as performative nuisances, 'administrative braking' or full-blown resistance. Such frustration usually resulted in the threat of further fines or punishments for the notables, municipality and the population. If resistance continued, punishments were applied.

Occasionally letters of protest unequivocally exacerbated the situation. For example, on 19 May 1917, the Directeur des Musées et de l'École Nationale des Arts Industriels wrote a letter to the Kommandant of Roubaix, protesting against the requisitioning of teaching material, quoting the Hague Convention. The furious Kommandant came to the school immediately after receiving the letter, screaming insults at the Directeur, after which everything imaginable was requisitioned, instead of the more limited planned requisitions.[194] Other notable protests often led to increased fines and punishments,[195] although many notables were suspected of some form of opposition to the Germans throughout the occupation, whether justified or not.[196] Another German response was simply to refuse further communication on the subject.[197]

Opposition could have short-term success. M. Welhoff, a notable working at the Recette Municipale of Lille, refused in July 1915 to hand over the keys to the safe to allow the Germans to take 375,000 francs required for the manufacture of sandbags. He continued his refusal, even when imprisoned, and eventually the Germans simply broke into the safe themselves.[198] Here, resistance failed in one sense (the Germans still accessed the money) but succeeded in others (a slight delay occurred, and Welhoff never acquiesced). As in other cases, the Germans sought cooperation, rather than commencing with brute force. This resistance stands in stark contrast to antisemitic accusations in Trépont's diaries that Welhoff was unpatriotic during the invasion.[199]

Sometimes official protests did bear fruit, such as in late July 1918, when the Procureur de la République secured the release of one of two French policemen accused of exceeding their jurisdiction in investigating a criminal case.[200] Judging each instance of resistance on a case-by-case basis proves impossible given the lacunae in the archives, but examples of wholly successful resistance are considerably rarer than those of failed resistance. Even notable protests which initially had a favourable conclusion eventually ended with accusations of resistance and the threat of punishment. The theatre of Lille provides a case study. In November 1915, the Germans ordered that the municipality had to facilitate the building works needed to complete the theatre, including providing information.[201] The Mayor opposed this, explaining that the

municipality had existing contracts with entrepreneurs, many of whom were living in Paris. He concluded:

> We have demonstrated the best will in executing your orders for all the work concerning the needs of the German army […] The proof is in the execution of more than 3,000 orders given by you […] Yet, we do not have the right to go further, and you would not want to demand of us[,] at the time when our population suffers from so many needs that we cannot meet, when our resources are not enough to attenuate profound misery, that we spend large sums of money on works of luxury and pleasure.[202]

Three days later, the Governor informed the Mayor that 'On account of the demand that you addressed to me in person […] and of your letter […] I renounce for the moment [the order] to make workers of the Town finish the work on the New Theatre.' However, he reserved the right 'to make soldiers carry out this work' if the town did not fulfil its promise of installing heating in the old theatre by 20 November.[203] This resistance thus seemed successful. Yet within a month an unknown incident had taken place that caused the Governor to insinuate that municipal employees had refused to give him the plans, incorrectly stating that these plans were in Paris. He ended by stating:

> This incident forces me to express yet again my opinion that the Municipality could save itself and citizens from considerable inconveniences, if it imposed a duty on its subordinate employees to abandon this passive resistance that appears so often in their relations with the German authorities. Experience should have shown the Town Administration that such resistance is entirely without result and that the German authorities will not allow this to deter them in the pursuit of their goal.[204]

Certain notables acknowledged their subordinate position and the ultimate futility of resistance.[205] Pierre Dumont, interpreter at the Mairie of Lille, said as much in a June 1916 diary entry:

> We have decided on resistance, at the risk of passing some bad days, and … to give in afterwards. We consult works of International Law, we address complaints to the Governor, but the conclusion is invariable: 'Pay… otherwise…!'
>
> It's David versus Goliath; and yet it is necessary to resist, out of principle. For weeks there will be an exchange of long letters, we will struggle as long as possible until the moment when the German authority will say: 'That's enough, pay otherwise… (the list of harsh measures will follow)'.[206]

This sums up both the nature of and logic behind respectable resistance. By the publication of Gromaire's work in 1925, the fruitlessness of resistance during the occupation was widely accepted.[207]

Given the large amount of paperwork involved in reading and responding to notable protests and the delays incurred, resistance as 'administrative braking' was mildly successful. Overall, though, the pragmatic results of notable protests were limited. Yet *occupés* were aware of notable resistance, so it was successful in a morale-boosting sense.[208] Some individuals felt pride and a sense of optimism as a result of such resistance. However, occupied civilians who were not notables also engaged in resistance with similar morale-boosting effects. It is to this symbolic resistance that this book now turns.

Notes

1 I first examined key aspects of this topic and chapter in James E. Connolly, 'Notable protests: respectable resistance in occupied Northern France, 1914–1918', *Historical Research*, 88:242 (2015), 693–715. See also Sophie De Schaepdrijver, *La Belgique et la Première Guerre mondiale*, trans. Claudine Spitaels and Marnix Vincent (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2004), pp. 222–3; Annette Becker, *Oubliés de la Grande Guerre: Humanitaire et culture de guerre* (Paris: Éditions Noêsis, 1998), pp. 78–9; Philippe Nivet, 'Refuser l'occupation, accepter la guerre', in Nicolas Beaupré, Heather Jones and Anne Rasmussen (eds.), *Dans la guerre, 1914–1918: Accepter, endurer, refuser* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2015), pp. 136–7; Carine Cnudde-Lecointre, 'Monseigneur Charost, évêque de Lille durant la Grande Guerre', *Revue du Nord*, 80:325 (1998), 355–66; Robert Vandenbussche, 'Le pouvoir municipal à Douai sous l'occupation (1914–1918)', *Revue du Nord*, 61:241 (1979), 445–74.

2 H. Michel, *The Shadow War*, trans. R. H. Barry (London: Deutsch, 1972), p. 195, cited in M. R. D. Foot, *Resistance: An Analysis of European Resistance to Nazism, 1940–1945* (London: Eyre Methuen, 1976), p. 9. Jean Moulin famously engaged in such resistance: Julian Jackson, *France: The Dark Years, 1940–44* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 166. For 1914–18, see Sébastien Debarge, 'Fourmies occupée pendant la Grande Guerre', *Revue du Nord*, 80:325 (1998), p. 294.

3 De Schaepdrijver, *Belgique*, p. 123; Emmanuel Debruyne and Jehanne Paternostre, *La Résistance au quotidien, 1914–1918: Témoignages inédits* (Brussels: Racine, 2009), pp. 16–17; John Horne, 'Atrocités et exactions contre les civils', in Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau and Jean-Jacques Becker (eds.), *Encyclopédie de la Grande Guerre. 1914–1918* (Paris: Bayard, 2004), pp. 375–6.

4 Philippe Nivet, *La France occupée, 1914–1918* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2011), p. 236.
5 Tammy Proctor, *Civilians in a World at War, 1914–1918* (New York: New York University Press, 2010), pp. 135–41.
6 AML, 4H76, *Ville de Lille, Palais Rameau, 16–30 Mai 1921, Exposition des Œuvres Sociales du Département du Nord, 12e Section, Nos Familles sous le Joug Allemand*, p. 11.
7 Jean-Pierre Azéma and Michel Winock, *La Troisième République (1870–1940)* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1976), pp. 126–39; Jean-Marie Mayeur and Madeleine Rebérioux, *The Third Republic from Its Origins to the Great War, 1871–1914*, trans. J. R. Foster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 341–2; Roger Magraw, *France 1815–1914: The Bourgeois Century* (London: Fontana, 1983), pp. 225–54, 362–75. However, this term is contested: Gilles Le Béguec, *La République des avocats* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2003), pp. 3–5; Gilles Le Béguec (ed.), *Avocats et barreaux en France 1910–1930* (Nancy: Presses Universitaires de Nancy, 1994), pp. 92–4.
8 Piers Paul Read, *The Dreyfus Affair: The Story of the Most Infamous Miscarriage of Justice in French History* (London: Bloomsbury, 2012), p. 41.
9 Azéma and Winock, *La Troisième République*, pp. 126–45, 136; Mayeur and Rebérioux, *The Third Republic*, pp. 5–41; Magraw, *France 1815–1914*, pp. 209–34.
10 ADN, J1933, Manuscrit de François Rouesel, 'Pendant la CCI [Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie] de Roubaix durant l'occupation allemande', 'Déportation en Allemagne de deux cents notables de la région occupée', pp. 1–2.
11 See ADN, 9R755, typewritten note, n.a., 'Quelques réflexions', n.d.; ADN, 9R515, Préfet to Kommandantur of Lille, 5 January 1918; ADN, 9R1229, procès-verbal, M. Lesquel, 16 January 1919; Jules Hélot, *Cinquante mois sons le joug allemand: L'occupation allemande à Cambrai et dans le Cambrésis* (Paris: Plon-Nourit et Cie, 1919), 3 July 1915, p. 272.
12 See, for example, ADN, 9R716, German poster, Roubaix, 29 October 1914.
13 ADHS, 4M513, repatriation report no. 1175, 21 April 1917, summary of interviews with 470 people from Tourcoing.
14 Annie Deperchin has noted that 'Les Français sont très légalistes': Annie Deperchin, 'La justice et la guerre du droit', at Historial de la Grande Guerre: Colloque – Grande Guerre et Justice, October 2010, at www.historial.org/Centre-international-de-recherche/Actualites-conferences-colloques-publications/Colloques-Ecole-d-ete/Colloques-passes/Grande-Guerre-et-Justice/(language)/fre-FR (accessed 29 January 2017).
15 See ADN, 15J87, memoirs of G. Momal, Doyen of Troisvilles, Chapters 8 and 9; John Horne and Alan Kramer, *German Atrocities, 1914: A History of Denial* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2001), pp. 229–61, 291–325; Alan Kramer, *Dynamic of Destruction: Culture and Mass Killing in the First World*

War (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 180–96; Ruth Harris, 'The "child of the Barbarian": rape, race and nationalism in France during the First World War', *Past & Present*, 141:1 (November 1993), 170–206.

16 ADN, 9R506, Seánce du Conseil Municipal d'Hellemmes, 31 October 1916. Fanyau was Mayor from 1904 to 1912.

17 AML, 4H74, Oscar Fanyau to Kommandant of Hellemmes-Lille, 23 October 1916.

18 AML, 4H74, 'Tribunal de la Kommandantur', Schmidt to Mairie de Lille, 25 October 1916; ADN, 9R506, Seánce du Conseil Municipal d'Hellemmes, 31 October 1916.

19 M. Cliquennois-Pâque, *Lille martyre: Proclamations, arrêtés et ordonnances du gouvernement allemand, arrêtés municipaux, protestations des autorités françaises, extraits des journaux allemands, etc., etc. Notes et souvenirs du bombardement et de l'occupation recueillis au jour le jour. Préface par M. Georges Lyon, Recteur de l'Université de Lille* (Lille: Imprimerie Centrale du Nord, 1919), pp. 32–7; Alexandra Richard, 'Le Préfet Félix Trépont, ou la difficile affirmation de l'autorité préfectorale dans le Nord, pendant la Première Guerre mondiale', master's dissertation (Lille III, 2003), p. 56.

20 The communes are Cambrai, Hellemmes, Pint-à-Marcq, Quesnoy-sur-Deule, Roncq, Templeneuve, Tourcoing, Wambrechies and Wattrelos.

21 See Connolly, 'Notable protests', p. 698.

22 Richard, 'Le Préfet', p. 63.

23 Annette Becker (ed.), *Journaux de combattants et de civils de la France du Nord dans la Grande Guerre* (Lille: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 1998), Degrutère diary, 1 May 1916, p. 199.

24 Becker, *Journaux de combattants*, Degrutère diary, 16–20 June 1915 (p. 181) and 18 April 1916 (p. 197).

25 See, for example, ADN, 74J224, diary of M. Trollin (Directeur de l'École Rollin, Lille), 20–4 June 1915, 6 July 1915 and 20 August 1915, and 19 June 1917; 74J225, diary of M. Blin (instituteur en retraite at Auchy-les-Orchies), 8 January 1915, 8 July 1915, 26 August 1916, 18 August 1917; ADN, 74J241, personal papers of Pierre Dumont ('répresentant de commerce […] employé comme interprète à la mairie de Lille de 1914 à 1919'), 19 June 1916, 24 July 1916, 27 November 1917.

26 See, for example, NA, FO383/13, Mr Faulkner to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 24 December 1915; letters in ADN, 74J223 sent from occupied to unoccupied France, especially one sent from London, n.a., 21 June 1916, containing an attached letter sent on 9 May 1916, addressed to Mlle Delomel, Calais, by X, from Lille.

27 ADN, 9R508, Kommandant of Tourcoing to Mayor of Tourcoing, 28 March 1916, cited in 'Procès-verbal de l'entrevue du 31 Mars 1916 entre la Commandanture allemande et le Maire de la Ville (de Tourcoing)'; original emphasis.

28 ADN, 9R515, von Carlowitz, Général Commandant-en-Chef, seemingly to Mairie of Hellemmes, 1 November 1917; ADN, 9R635, von Graevenitz to Mayor of Lille, 13 December 1915.
29 See, for example, Hélot, *Cinquante mois*, 21 January 1915, p. 129.
30 François Marcot, 'Les résistants dans leur temps', in François Marcot, Bruno Leroux and Christine Levisse-Touzé (eds.), *Dictionnaire historique de la Résistance: Résistance intérieure et France libre* (Paris: R. Laffont, 2006), p. 38. Original emphasis.
31 Marcot, 'Les résistants', p. 39.
32 ADN, 9R514, Mayor of Halluin to Kommandant Schranck, 27 June 1915.
33 ADN, 9R514, Mayor of Halluin to Kommandant Schranck, 26 June 1915.
34 *Ibid.*
35 ADN, 9R220, 'Interrogatoire auquel a été soumis par le Conseilleur de Justice allemande Dresen le Sous-Préfet d'Avesnes, faisant fonctions de Préfet du Nord, le 27 Août 1916, à la suite de sa lettre de protestation à l'Autorité allemande contre la réquisition des métaux chez les particuliers'.
36 For an example of this, see ADN, 9R768, Commissaire de Police de Wattrelos to Préfet, 7 August 1916.
37 For more detail on this affair, see AML, 4H143, von Graevenitz to Mayor, 28 December 1916.
38 AML, 4H143, Mayor to von Graevenitz, 29 December 1916. Original emphasis.
39 ADN, 9R730, Kommandant Hofmann to Mairie de Roubaix, 20 June 1915.
40 ADN, 9R730, H. Thérin, 1er adjoint faisant fonctions de Maire, to Hofmann, 24 June 1915.
41 *Ibid.*
42 ADN, 9R507, Président de la Délégation spécial to Préfet, 12 August 1915.
43 For example, ADN, 9R714, Mayor of Quesnoy-sur-Deule to Préfet, 29 June 1915.
44 ADN, 9R510, Anjubault to Kommandantur of Lille, 7 August 1917.
45 ADN, 9R510, von Graevenitz to Anjubault, 4 September 1917.
46 ADN, 74J225, Blin diary, 8 January 1915.
47 ADN, 74J225, Blin diary, 12 January 1915.
48 AN, 96AP/2, dossier 9, journal dactylographique (October 1914–January 1915, seemingly of M. Borromée), 7 January 1915.
49 Nivet, 'Réfuser l'occupation', p. 137.
50 ADHS, report no. 1211, 25 April 1917.
51 ADN, 74J225, Blin diary, 8 March 1915.
52 ADN, 9R668, Mayor of Lille to Governor von Heinrich, 22 March 1915.
53 ADN, 9R768, Marie de Wattrelos, 'Feuille de renseignements transmise à M. le Commissaire de Police le 2.8.1917'.
54 ADN, 9R768, Commissaire de Police de Wattrelos to Préfet, 3 August 1917.
55 ADN, 9R693, Mayor of Lille to von Heinrich, 18 June 1915.

56 Delesalle defended Lille 'like a man possessed. But what to do with a knife to the throat?' Antoine Redier, *Les Allemands dans nos maisons* (Paris: Éditions Cartier, 1945), p. 177.
57 AN, 96AP/2, dossier 9, journal dactylographique, 2 January 1915.
58 AN, 96AP/2, dossier 9, journal dactylographique, 15 December 1914.
59 Robert Vandenbussche, 'La fonction municipale sous la Troisième République: l'exemple du département du Nord', *Revue du Nord*, 76:305 (1994), p. 333.
60 ADN, 9R694, von Graevenitz to Mayor of Lille, 3 January 1916.
61 ADN, 9R694, Mayor of Lille to von Graevenitz, 4 January 1916.
62 ADN, 9R694, von Graevenitz to Mayor of Lille, 5 January 1916.
63 ADN, 9R694, Mayor of Lille to von Graevenitz, 5 January 1916.
64 For example, see the German posters for 20 October 1916 in ADN, 9R519 (Lambersart), 9R702 (Lomme), 9R704 (Le Marais). See also ADN, 9R708, La Madeleine, 1 September 1916; 9R716, Roubaix, 28 August 1916; 9R746, Lille, 8 January 1916, and Tourcoing, 18 January, 21 March, and 28 June 1916.
65 'Actes de l'Autorité Allemande: Proclamation', *Bulletin de Lille*, 23 April 1916.
66 Annette Becker, *Les Cicatrices rouges 14–18: France et Belgique occupées* (Paris: Fayard, 2010), p. 182.
67 ADN, 9R768, Commissaire de Police de Wattrelos to Préfet, 7 August 1916.
68 AN, 96AP/2, dossier 9, journal dactylographique, 6 January 1915.
69 AN, 96AP/2, dossier 9, journal dactylographique, 14 January 1915.
70 AN, 96AP/2, dossier 9, journal dactylographique, 26 January 1915.
71 AN, 96AP/3, dossier 4, Préfet to Minister of the Interior, 12 February 1915, pp. 32–6; journal de Félix Trépont, pp. 193–4.
72 See documents in AN, 96AP/1–3.
73 AN, 96AP/1–3; Richard, 'Le Préfet', pp. 63–4.
74 Cliquennois-Pâque, *Lille martyre*, p. 116; Claudine Wallart, *C'était hier, le département du Nord … Le Nord en Guerre – 1914–1918* (Lille: Archives Départementales du Nord, 2008), p. 31; Becker, *Les Cicatrices rouges*, p. 95.
75 Richard, 'Le Préfet', pp. 67–70; documents in AN, 96AP/3.
76 ADN, 9R774, Anjubault to Kommandantur of Lille, 17 April 1916 and 7 August 1917; ADN, 9R841, Anjubault to Kommandantur of Lille, 26 October, 11 November, 18 December 1916; 18 June 1917; ADN, 9R761, Anjubault to Kommandantur of Lille, 7 August 1917.
77 ADN, 9R655, proclamation of von Graevenitz, Lille, 27 July 1915; von Graevenitz to l'administration de la Ville de Lille, 26 July 1915. The others were Monseigneur Charost, Bishop of Lille, Charles Delesalle, Mayor of Lille, and M. Crepy St Leger (unknown).
78 ADN, 9R220, typewritten note, n.a., n.d., including the message Anjubault received on 8 Janaury 1918.

79 Hélot had contact with and influence over the following communes, among others, some beyond the Nord: Valenciennes, Moeuvres, Clary, Saint-Quentin, Noyelles, Cantaing, Bermerain, Carnières and Solesme: Hélot, *Cinquante mois*.
80 AN, 96AP/2, dossier 9, journal dactylographique, 3 December 1914.
81 AN, 96AP/1, dossier 1, début du journal dactylographié, p. 193.
82 SHD, 19N549, IIIe Armée, ETAT-MAJOR, Deuxième Bureau, Service de Renseignements, La vie française en pays envahi, notes prises en 1916 au cours de l'étude des départements de l'AISNE, de l'OISE, des Arrondissements de Cambrai et d'Avesnes (Nord) et de quelques communes de la Somme, p. 16.
83 Hélot, *Cinquante mois*, 25 November 1914–5 December 1914 (pp. 77–87), especially 5 December 1914, p. 85.
84 Hélot, *Cinquante mois*, 17 November 1914, p. 72.
85 Hélot, *Cinquante mois*, 30 December 1914, pp. 110–11.
86 Hélot, *Cinquante mois*, 11 January 1915, p. 120.
87 *Ibid*.
88 *Ibid*.
89 Hélot, *Cinquante mois*, 21 January 1915, p. 129.
90 Hélot, *Cinquante mois*, 13 February 1915, p. 153.
91 Hélot, *Cinquante mois*, 15 February 1915, p. 154.
92 Hélot, *Cinquante mois*, 19 April 1915, p. 204.
93 Hélot, *Cinquante mois*, 3 April 1915, p. 194.
94 Hélot, *Cinquante mois*, 28 October 1915, p. 338.
95 Hélot, *Cinquante mois*, 12 February 1915 (p. 152); 10 June 1915 (p. 247); 2–8 July 1915 (pp. 271–5); 26 July 1917 (p. 507); 2 November 1917 (pp. 526–7).
96 Hélot, *Cinquante mois*, 12 February 1915, pp. 151–2.
97 Hélot, *Cinquante mois*, 21 September 1915, p. 316.
98 AN, 96AP/3, dossier 4, Préfet to Minister of the Interior, 12 February 1915, p. 32.
99 Hélot, *Cinquante mois*, 9 July 1916, p. 415.
100 Hélot, *Cinquante mois*, 2 November 1917, p. 527.
101 See, for example, ADN, 9R827, 'Comparution à l'Hôtel de ville devant M. le Commandant des femmes transportées dans les Ardennes en Avril 1916 et revenues depuis à Tourcoing', 1 June 1917.
102 Becker, *Les Cicatrices rouges*, p. 88.
103 Becker, *Les Cicatrices rouges*, p. 90.
104 Becker, *Les Cicatrices rouges*, p. 90.
105 Becker, *Les Cicatrices rouges*, p. 87; Annexe to the Hague Convention, Section III, Article 44.
106 Annexe to the Hague Convention, Section III, Article 52.
107 Becker, *Les Cicatrices rouges*, pp. 170–1.

108 Isabel V. Hull, *Absolute Destruction: Military Practices and the Culture of War in Imperial Germany* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), p. 120.
109 Malbone W. Graham, Jr., 'Neutrality and the World War', *The American Journal of International Law*, 17:4 (1923), p. 720; Larry Zuckerman, *The Rape of Belgium: The Untold Story of World War I* (New York: New York University Press, 2004), pp. 9, 63, 89.
110 Deperchin, 'La justice'.
111 ADN, 9R707, Mayor of Loos to Kommandant, 1 April 1916.
112 ADN, 9R707, Anjubault to Kommandant of Loos, 1 April 1916.
113 See, for example, ADN, 9R841, Anjubault to Kommandant of Lille, 26 October, 16 November, 18 December 1916, and 18 June 1917.
114 Annexe to the Hague Convention, Section III, Article 46.
115 ADN, 9R841, Anjubault to Kommandantur of Lille, 17 April 1916.
116 See, for example: ADN, 9R841, 18 December 1916 and 18 June 1917; AMT, H4A39, Mayor of Tourcoing and regional socialist *députés*, to Kommandant, 17 April 1916; letters in ADN, 74J223, sent from occupied to unoccupied France mentioning the protests of the Mayor and Bishop of Lille and Mayors of Tourcoing and Roubaix; Cnudde-Lecointre, 'Monseigneur Charost', p. 364.
117 Françoise Thébaud, *La Femme au temps de la guerre de 14* (Paris: Stock, 1986), p. 87.
118 AMT, H4A39, Mayor of Tourcoing and Députés Delory, Ghesquière, Inghels and Ragheboom, to Kommandant, 17 April 1916.
119 See, for example, ADN, 9R841, Delory, Ghesquière and Inghels, to Kommandant of Lille, 17 October 1916; ADN, 9R764, Mayor of Wambrechies to Kommandant, 10 September 1916; Louis Selosse, avec le concours de M. Jacquey, *Guerre de 1914–1918: Occupation de Lille par les Allemands – consultations données à la Mairie de Lille* (Paris: Receuil Sirey, 1927), 'Consultation en réponse aux lettres municipales des 25 et 26 juin 1915 sur certaines réquisitions exercées par l'Autorité Allemande', pp. 21–2.
120 ADN, 9R515, Anjubault to Kommandantur of Lille, 5 January 1918.
121 ADN, 9R515, a handwritten note regarding the above letter states that the hostages were released on 8 January 1918.
122 See, for example, ADN, 9R715, Anjubault to Haut Commandant de la 6ème armée, 13 January 1916.
123 ADN, 9R220, Anjubault to Kommandantur of Lille, 7 August 1917.
124 Annexe to the Hague Convention, Section III, Article 43.
125 ADN, 9R253, Inspecteur de l'Assistance Publique du Nord to Anjubault, 19 December 1916.
126 See for, example, ADN, 9R253, note, 'Affaire du pupille Claeys, Jules – Réquisition de services', 22 October 1917; ADN, 9R254, 'Copie certifiée conforme' of the 'ordonnance' of von Graevenitz, 22 October 1917;

ADN, 9R251, von Kern, for the Kommandant, to Préfet, 29 November 1916.

127 ADN, 9R374, Anjubault to Kommandantur of Lille, 14 May 1915.

128 ADN, 9R313, 'Extrait d'un rapport de Melle Ballon, Inspectrice des Écoles à Valenciennes. Arrestation de M. Desseaint, Inspecteur Primaire à Cambrai. Valenciennes', 20 July 1918.

129 *Ibid*.

130 ADN, 9R359, Directeur de la Maison Centrale de Loos to Kommandant of Loos, 16 March 1917. See also Annie Deperchin, 'Un établissement pénitentiaire pendant la Grande Guerre: Loos', *Revue du Nord*, 80:325 (1998), 337–54.

131 Deperchin, 'Un établissement pénitentiaire'. For more on Loos prison, see ADN, 9R357–60.

132 ADN, 9R377, Anjubault to Police Militaire, Lille, 18 January 1916.

133 ADN, 9R377, von Graevenitz to Prefecture, 21 January 1916.

134 ADN, 9R377, Directeur de la Colonie Industrielle de Saint-Bernard to Préfet, 3 February 1916.

135 See, for example, ADN, 9R715, Mayor of Roncq to Kommandant, 23 August 1916; AMT, H4A28, Mayor of Tourcoing to Kommandant, 1 March 1916.

136 ADN, 9R741, Prefecture to Kommandantur of Lille, 10 September 1918.

137 ADN, 9R693, von Heinrich to Mayor of Lille, 18 June 1915.

138 ADN, 9R693, Mayor of Lille to von Heinrich, 19 June 1915.

139 ADN, 9R693, 21 June 1915; von Heinrich to Mayor of Lille, 20 June 1915.

140 ADN, 9R693, 'Affaire de la confection des sacs: Souvenir d'une conversation avec le Capitaine Himmel le jeudi 24 juin 1915'.

141 ADN, 9R693, German poster, 30 June 1915.

142 ADN, 9R514, Mayor of Halluin to Kommandant Schranck, 27 June 1915.

143 AMT, H4A32, German poster, Halluin, 30 June 1915.

144 AML, 4H134, German poster, Lille, 6 December 1917.

145 AMT, H4A32, German poster, Halluin, 30 June 1915, original emphasis.

146 AMT, H4A32, Mayor of Lille to von Heinrich, 3 July 1915, original emphasis.

147 AMT, H4A32, 'Renseignements confidentiels et très urgents', n.a., 5 July 1915.

148 ADN, 9R639, typewritten document by *le sous-inspecteur* [Waxy], 22 August 1915.

149 See, for example, AMT, 4H32, handwritten note, n.a., n.d., stating that when the Germans threatened M. Tiberghien of 'Mm. Tiberghien frères' with arrest and transportation to Germany, he engaged in a dialogue with his workers, who turned up to work the next morning. However, other documents state that it was an engineer and the director of the factory, M. Louis, who was threatened with arrest and transportation. It is plausible that both faced the same punishment. AMT, 4H32, Commissaire Central

de Tourcoing to Mayor, 21 May 1915; handwritten document, n.a., 24 June 1915. Tiberghien was indeed deported for refusing to force his employees to work: AN, F23/375, Ministère des Régions Libérées, Secrétariat Général, Département du Nord, Récompense Honorifique, proposition en faveur de M. Tiberghien Gustave, from Tourcoing, 28 December 1922.

150 See AMT, 4H32, typewritten document, n.a., 20–5 June 1915. M. Couvreur was arrested and sent to Valenciennes when he and his employees refused to work. The workforce was replaced by German soldiers.

151 AMT, 4H32, typewritten document, n.a., 20–5 June 1915.

152 AMT, 4H32, handwritten document, n.a., 18 June 1915.

153 Maxence van der Meersch, *Invasion '14*, trans. Gerard Hopkins (London: Constable & Co, 1937), p. 130.

154 Meersch, *Invasion '14*, p. 139.

155 AMT, 4HA32, typewritten document, seemingly written by the Syndicat des Fabricants and signed by 'Dubar', 7 July 1915. This could be industrialist Firmin Dubar, involved in the clandestine publication *La Patience*.

156 *Ibid*., original emphasis.

157 *Ibid*.

158 *Ibid*., original emphasis.

159 *Ibid*., original emphasis.

160 AMT, 4HA32, P. Dumortier Frères to Maîtres Leroux, Chattelyn, and Delemer, 22 June 1915. For further information, see AMT, 4HA32, P. Dumortier Frères to M. Vuylstèke, Tourcoing, 12 July 1915.

161 AMT, 4HA32, 'Consultation de M. Joseph Leroux', 6 July 1915.

162 AMT, 4HA32, P. Dumortier Frères to Lieutenant Schilling de l'Administration des Affaires Civiles à Roubaix, 24 June 1915.

163 AMT, 4HA32, P. Dumortier Frères to M. Vuylstèke, Tourcoing, 12 July 1915; 'Consultation de M. Joseph Leroux', 6 July 1915.

164 AMT, 4HA32, P. Dumortier Frères to Mayor of Tourcoing, 5 July 1915.

165 AMT, 4HA32, Eugène Delemer to P. Dumortier Frères, 23 June 1915.

166 *Ibid*.

167 *Ibid*.

168 Selosse and Jacquey, *Guerre de 1914–1918*, especially Mayor to M. Selosse, 2 November 1914, p. 5; originals in ADN, 9R205–6.

169 Selosse and Jacquey, *Guerre de 1914–1918*, 'Consultation en réponse aux lettres municipales des 25 et 26 juin 1915 sur certaines réquisitions exercées par l'autorité allemande', 28 June 1915, pp. 21–32, especially pp. 24 and 27. For more on the *affaire des sacs*, see pp. 13–32.

170 ADN, 9R205–6, passim.

171 ADN, 9R205–6, 'Juin 1916 Contribution de Guerre: Diverses notes', pp. 48–53, especially p. 50; 'Janvier 1917: Consultation au sujet de la Maison Miele', pp. 54–61; Annie Deperchin and Laurence Van Ypersele, 'Droit et occupation: le cas de la France et de la Belgique', in John Horne (ed.), *Vers la guerre totale: Le tournant de 1914–1915* (Paris: Tallandier, 2010), pp. 166–8.

172 Deperchin and Van Ypersele, 'Droit et occupation', pp. 167–8.
173 ADN, J1772, 'Avis de M. le chanoine Leclerq à ses paroissiens', 13 August 1916.
174 See, for example, ADN, 9R746, German poster, Tourcoing, 19 August 1916; ADN, J1933, Rouesel manuscript, 'Réquisition des cuivres et bronzes chez les particuliers [19/9/1916]', p. 2; ADN, 74J224, diary of M. Trollin (Directeur de l'École Rollin, Lille), 20 August 1916; Cliquennois-Pâque, *Lille martyre*, pp. 247–8.
175 Such as the fabrication of false identity cards by employees of the Mairie of Lille: ADN, 74J241, Dumont papers, 29 October 1916.
176 AMT, H4A39, Le Doyen de St. Christophe and Le Doyen de Notre Dame, 'pour tout le clergé de Tourcoing', to Kommandant von Tessin of Tourcoing, 10 April 1916.
177 See, for example, ADN, 74J225, Blin diary, 19 December 1914.
178 Becker, *Journaux de combattants*, Degrutère diary, 6 March 1917, p. 209.
179 Carine Cnudde-Lecointre, 'L'Église et la foi dans le Nord durant la Grande Guerre', master's dissertation (Lille III, 1996), p. 60; Cnudde-Lecointre, 'Monseigneur Charost', p. 365.
180 ADN, 9R655, Von Graevenitz to l'Administration de la Ville de Lille, 26 July 1915.
181 See ADN, 9R556, 'Extrait des Procès-verbaux de la Commandanture de Lille', 8 November and 31 December 1914, 2 and 16 January 1915; ADN, 9R557: 'Extrait des procès-verbaux de la commandanture de Lille', 30 January 1915.
182 BDIC, FΔ1526, Conférence à la Commandanture, 10 December 1914.
183 BDIC, FΔ1526, 12 December 1914.
184 See BDIC, FΔ1501.
185 See letters in ADN, 74J223, letter sent from London, n.a., 21 June 1916, containing an attached letter sent on 9 May 1916, addressed to Mlle Delomel, Calais, by X, from Lille; Cnudde-Lecointre, 'Monseigneur Charost', pp. 360–1; Cliquennois-Pâque, *Lille martyre*, p. 293.
186 Cnudde-Lecointre, 'Monseigneur Charost', p. 365.
187 Charost to von Graevenitz, n.d., cited in Cliquennois-Pâque, *Lille martyre*, pp. 246–7.
188 See BDIC, FΔ1501.
189 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 711, 9 February 1917.
190 Eric Bukowski, 'Cambrai: une ville du Nord occupée lors de la Première Guerre mondiale', master's dissertation (Lille III, 1986), pp. 63–4.
191 Eugène Martin-Mamy, *Quatre ans avec les barbares: Lille pendant l'occupation allemande* (Paris: Renaissance du Livre, 1919), pp. 186–255.
192 See, for example, Cnudde-Lecointre, 'L'Église', p. 59; ADHS, 4M513, report no. 1074, 21 March 1917.
193 Yves-Marie Hilaire and Robert Vandenbussche, 'Une chrétienté ménacée: religion et "incroyance"', in Yves-Marie Hilaire (ed.), *Histoire du Nord Pas-de-Calais de 1900 à nos jours* (Toulouse: Privat, 1982), p. 151.

194 ADN, 9R734, report, n.a. (probably the interim headteacher) to Préfet, n.d. (sometime after 20 May 1917).
195 See, for example, ADN, 9R515, von Carlowitz, Général Commandant en Chef, seemingly to Mairie of Hellemmes, 1 November 1917; Georges Gromaire, *L'Occupation allemande en France (1914–1918)* (Paris: Payot, 1925), pp. 162, 345, 353–5, 457–8.
196 See ADN, 9R797, handwritten note, n.a., n.d.
197 ADN, 9R253, von Graevenitz to Prefecture of Lille, 24 December 1916.
198 Cliquennois-Pâque, *Lille martyre*, pp. 136–42; 'Procès-verbal des incidents qui se sont produits à la Recette municipale les 5 et 6 juillet 1915'.
199 AN, 96AP/1, dossier 1, Trépont diary, August 1914, pp. 93–6.
200 ADN, 9R220, Procureur de la République à Lille to von Graevenitz, 29 July 1918; von Gravenitz to Procureur, 31 July 1918.
201 ADN, 9R635, von Graevenitz to Mairie of Lille, 8 November 1915.
202 ADN, 9R635, Mayor of Lille to von Graevenitz, 8 November 1915.
203 ADN, 9R635, von Heinrich to Mayor of Lille, 11 November 1915. The change of governor is curious.
204 ADN, 9R635, von Graevenitz to Mayor of Lille, 13 December 1915.
205 See, for example, ADN, 9R707, functionaries of Loos (n.a.), typewritten note to 'Monsieur' (possibly the Préfet), n.d.; ADN, 9R584, report, seemingly by the Commissaire de Police of Lille, 12 November 1918; ADN, 9R377, Directeur de la Colonie de St Bernard to Préfet, 4 February 1916.
206 ADN, 74J241, Dumont papers, 19 June 1916.
207 Gromaire, *L'Occupation allemande*, pp. 14–15, 56, 164, 167–8, 214.
208 Cnudde-Lecointre, 'L'Église', p. 61.

7

Symbolic resistance (*coups de cœur*)

Members of the wider population expressed their patriotism through symbolic gestures, constituting a different form of resistance. Other scholars have labelled this 'symbolic resistance',[1] 'moral opposition' or a 'patriotic religion'[2] that demonstrated both the population's loyalty to France and its refusal to be subdued by the Germans. The commonplace patriotism studied here was a marker of the Third Republic's success in fostering and promoting national identity and 'civic nationalism'.[3] This is particularly apt given the largely female demographic of the occupied Nord, and the pre-war policies of the Republic to inculcate its daughters with a unique form of patriotism, even preparing them for wartime duties.[4] Of course, even anti-Republican, Catholic education had taught that France was great,[5] encouraging its own kind of loyalty to the *Patrie*. Republicans and clericals alike drew on these pre-war loyalties to the nation, a bond that was strengthened for many by the daily presence of a national enemy. Once invaded, the French saw the *Patrie* as violated; none more so than the *occupés*, who experienced this at first hand. Symbolic or 'passive' resistance and open, non-violent hostility to the Germans was also found in other occupied countries in 1914–18,[6] underlining the fact that the experience of enemy domination heightened local patriotism.

'Symbolic resistance' here describes a variety of acts attesting to the patriotism of the *occupés*. Sometimes cases of Scott's 'everyday resistance'[7] existed, subversive gestures that were not necessarily patriotic per se carried out by a subordinated population, but most of the actions examined here involved asserting Frenchness and opposition to the occupiers. The disparate actions studied include singing songs, writing poems, telling jokes or using humour to mock the occupation and occupiers, wearing or displaying national colours, demonstrating

humanitarian impulses towards Allied prisoners of war, and preventing successful German requisitions. Similar actions in Europe in the Second World War have been understood as resistance.[8] Many of these had an explicitly performative element to them, and engaging in such activities usually contradicted German regulations. At the very least, these actions were recognised by the Germans as a form of resistance, and *occupés* shared this view.

The intent behind these acts, difficult to discern, rarely appears to have been to resist the Germans in any pragmatic sense. Mostly, it was a desire to express patriotism, but in doing so to resist moral-cultural domination and humiliation by the occupiers. Indeed, the two feelings were connected: the population's patriotism was so strong that some found any sign of German culture humiliating and insulting. Trollin described the opening of Lille's theatre, which hosted German plays and operas throughout the occupation, as a 'Supreme insult!!'[9] Similarly, after seeing the replacement of the French flag with the German one at the *hôtel de ville* of Roubaix – a commonplace policy[10] – Blin remarked, 'Oh shame!'[11] Furthermore, many Catholics perceived the presence of Protestant Prussians in their churches as a profanation – not only did Protestant mass take place here, but sometimes churches became barracks.[12] The purpose of symbolic resistance was to reassert one's national, cultural identity in the face of such provocations.

Some may have wished to express pro-French or pro-Allied sentiments precisely because of German orders to the contrary, demonstrating freedom of expression and thought in opposition to German control. Once the population had become 'prisoners', as Trollin put it,[13] acts of rebellion kept morale high by undermining the gaolers' power. For Becker, 'These small daily patriotic acts are symptomatic […] of a tireless desire to demonstrate one's refusal of the German order.'[14] Alongside this dominant society, a parallel, rebel society existed, one of 'daily civil resistance among faceless people' involving thousands of 'small acts as anodyne' as crossing the road to avoid a German.[15] While we must be careful to avoid an overly patriotic reading of French behaviours, and my categorisation is not quite as wide as that of Becker, certain actions clearly constituted symbolic resistance. Becker is right to state that such resistance was a means of undermining the German presence, perhaps also of surviving the occupation with some dignity intact. The first means of opposing the Germans was the use of humour.

Humour

Numerous sources attest to occupied *Nordistes*' strong sense of humour. This was a tool to deal with a difficult situation, in some cases comprising resistance. Just as Chad Bryant has demonstrated for the Czech protectorate in World War II, in the occupied Nord of 1914–18 jokes constituted a particular form of resistance against a regime that demanded total conformity and obedience. Ambiguous jokes provided a safer form of opposition.[16] However, Bryant outlines the problems and multiple meanings jokes offer:

> The motivations and intentions in telling a joke might have been selfish. Joke-telling might have acted as a 'safety valve', a harmless vent that allowed Czechs to continue working in factories while maintaining a vague sense of patriotism and integrity. Other jokesters might have had little or no regard for the fate of the national collective […] we might see such acts of 'resistance' as small, personal and calculated victories – opportunities seized at a moment in time. Then the victory disappeared.[17]

This model is equally applicable to the occupied Nord. The use of humour also allowed the *occupés* 'to make sense of an absurd world, or at least laugh it away for a few seconds'.[18] Some contest the notion of humour as resistance, particularly regarding the occupation of 1940–44, but admit nevertheless that jokes could be subversive forms of opposition and irreverence.[19] Humour provides a covert outlet for opposition by the oppressed,[20] yet also represents an admission that little can be done to alter the situation in any meaningful way. This does not mean that oppressed peoples are the only constituencies expressing humour: the Germans also did so, such as in cartoons and jokes published in *Liller Kriegszeitung*, often linked to notions of cultural superiority.[21] The *occupés* similarly expressed their cultural identity through humour and in this sense resisted the German presence.

Occupation diarists provide the richest source base for jokes and humour. Even writing a diary was an act of resistance because it was forbidden to possess 'writings hostile to Germany';[22] some were punished for committing this offence, and for possessing diaries seen as expressions of hostility.[23] The Royal Air Force later attested to the difficulty of keeping diaries and the ingenuity required to hide them during the occupation.[24] My understanding of diaries as resistance is not as extreme as that of Becker, who even sees resistance in the grammar and syntax.[25] It is not necessary to read between the lines to see resistance in diaries, primarily visible in jokes.

Trollin chronicled anecdotes and jokes, but these appeared only until mid-1915. He noted in January 1915 that at Ronchin a German asked a child why he was not at school, to which the child replied, 'Why are you not in Paris?'[26] He recounted a similar incident in April 1915: some children were playing soldiers when a passing German officer complimented their marching. One of the children told the officer, 'We also know how to do the Paris march.' The officer told them to do so, and the boy marched backwards, at which point 'The officer said nothing and left'.[27] (The post-war testimony of a girl from Jolimetz, 60 kilometres south-east of Ronchin, recalled the same event there, suggesting that this was a joke that spread throughout the Nord.[28]) Such triumphalist humour, underlining the Germans' failure at the Marne and their inability to advance since, was confined to 1915 in Trollin's diary. Nevertheless, it represents resistance to the notion of German superiority and victory.

A common theme was animal-based mockery of the Germans. One joke recounted a German officer telling an *Alsacien-Lorrain*, a civilian living in the Nord with whom he lodged, to serve him the best meal he had. The *Alsacien* served up a dish of milk in which potatoes were floating. 'What's this muck?' asked the officer, 'where I'm from we serve this to pigs.' The civilian responded, predictably, 'And where I'm from too!'[29] A further porcine joke involved Germans requisitioning a farmer's pigs. He implored them to leave him at least one.

> — Yes, on the condition that you name him Joseph.
> — Oh! No; I do not want to dishonour the saint.
> — In that case, call him Guillaume [the Kaiser's name] if you wish.
> — [I like that] even less, for I do not want to dishonour my pig.[30]

Yet humour was not restricted to jokes. Mockery and laughter were a common reaction to German posters, policies and parades (see Figure 5). Englishman J. P. Whitaker's account of the occupation of Lille and Roubaix noted:

> One of the dire threats announced on the posters over which we had many a quiet laugh, was: 'Anyone guilty of this offence will be sent to Germany.' If the authorities had only known it, this was not the best way to impress their serfs. Their remark was '*l'Allemagne doit être un pays terrible*' [Germany must be a terrible country].[31]

Correspondingly, Trollin recounts how in March 1915, on the first day of a new curfew in Lille, 'it's funny: we laugh from one window to another[,] mocking ourselves'.[32] Following the German killing of carrier

Figure 5 Columns of German infantry moving through the main square of Lille.

pigeons, Blin mixed humour with optimism, exclaiming, 'The pigeons are dead, but not the ducks!'[33] In Roubaix, when it was made compulsory to give an egg a day to the Kommandantur in 1915, 'We composed songs to the glory of recalcitrant and patriotic hens, who refused to lay at the required pace.'[34] Musical praise of hens can indeed be found in archives and a post-war collection of occupation songs.[35] Perhaps humour was the inevitable result of a tragicomic situation, whereby in this instance the Germans allegedly requested eggs from chickens of both sexes.[36] In Troisvilles, locals laughed at a German poster (presumably in response to rabies outbreaks) ordering the muzzling of cats.[37] Humour was thus a common response to the occupation.

Lillois Martin-Mamy's published occupation diary contains many amusing anecdotes. When he and others were taken hostage, they were ordered not to talk, so asked their guards if they could ask questions or thank them. The hostages were 'Torn between a strong desire to laugh, a profound indignation and a certain anxiety.'[38] A later comment is insightful: 'It is necessary to give one's enemies the credit they are due. The Germans brought us humiliation, misery, hunger, theft and juridical murder; but they also brought us gaiety. For French people, that is an important gift.'[39] In particular, Martin-Mamy noted, *Lillois* found

German parades involving goose-stepping highly comical: 'Amused and sneering they watch and laugh. They laugh because the spectacle is comically irresistible, and then they laugh again, because having laughed they feel avenged.'[40] This sense of vengeance represents a cornerstone of the logic and intent behind occupation humour. Martin-Mamy wrote that German officers misinterpreted such laughter as German culture bearing fruit, believing the *Lillois* to be happy: 'They watch and do not understand. One cannot be a barbarian and understand irony.'[41] Not all Germans were this naive. Redier claimed that French laughter was so common that a poster was put up in Lille forbidding laughter in front of posters,[42] although I have found no such proclamation. Similarly, according to one memoir, in Tourcoing, because clandestine publications suggested that many announced German victories were false, every time a church bell rang for an alleged victory, the population laughed. The Kommandantur eventually banned locals from laughing in public altogether.[43] While there is little evidence for such bold claims, they nevertheless speak to the importance of laughter and humour to the occupied population, even in the post-war representation of their plight. The widespread employment of humour betrays its somewhat cathartic, pro-survival properties. Redier noted in his admittedly patriotic history of the occupation through which he lived: 'We mocked them as much as we could', and, despite the harshness of the occupation, 'Rather than crying about it, it was better to laugh about it.'[44] This logic was mirrored elsewhere: 'We should have felt doubly prisoners if we had not made fun of our jailers, and to be prisoners only once was quite sufficient.'[45]

Songs and poems: verse versus the Germans

Humour was also expressed in the songs and poems composed and performed at this time. Redier hinted that singing was commonplace during the occupation.[46] This drew on local culture and identity, as traditional 'popular songs of refusal' were 'particularly deep-rooted in the Nord'.[47] The content of songs and poems highlights their role as forms of resistance, similar to those of the Second World War.[48] Collections of such work published after 1918, but which claim to have been written during the occupation, provide considerable evidence.[49] Naturally, it is possible that some of these were edited or even fabricated entirely after the event. Yet they remain convincing enough to be used for informative analysis. Humour was not the only sentiment expressed but was a common theme. A repatriated man from Valenciennes noted in early

1917 that children performed a song, even in front of Germans, which directly spoke to, mocked and criticised the Kaiser. The chorus was:

> By your [*ton*] pride, your cowardice,
> You cause the spilling of blood, tears,
> The whole world is disgusted
> And wants to shoot you;
> It's in Berlin that we want
> To avenge our fathers and all our brothers.
> Take care Guillaume the spy
> For your Prussians we have Cannons.[50]

It is hard to imagine such violent lyrics being sung in front of French-speaking Germans without negative consequences for the performer. The aim was evidently an expression of anti-German sentiment.

Unlike the above example, most songs and poems were written in *Ch'ti*. This suggests that the composers and singers believed they were engaging in dangerous, subversive activities. The use of a dialect that even French-speaking Germans would find hard to understand meant that *occupés* could display anti-German sentiment with a reduced possibility of discovery or reproach. The benefit of German non-comprehension combined with a strong sense of localism and regionalism to make *Ch'ti* a useful language of resistance. German domination reinforced *Nordiste* identity – an identity that was not only 'not German' but regional and national at the same time. Further, texts in the primarily oral *patois* may have been easier, or more likely, to circulate among the Nord's industrial and agricultural populations who spoke the dialect. Labbe composed and performed songs that increased locals' morale. The author of the preface to his published works noted that Labbe 'found sudden inspiration to document with tireless gusto the high buffoonery of which the attitude and appearance of the German soldiers in Lille offered us a daily spectacle'.[51] His song 'Les All'mands à Lille' (The Germans in Lille) provides further evidence that *occupés* ridiculed German public spectacles. In this instance, Labbe mocked the poor musical quality of the daily parade of the 39th Hanoverian *Landsturm* regiment. The refrain is unambiguous:

> The *Landsturm* has
> The *Landsturm* has
> Caused so much laughter in Lille
> That for a long time in our town
> We will remember it.[52]

A similar song entitled 'La Parate' (The Parade) explains that even the memory of *Landsturm* parades still made the French laugh after the occupation – indeed, at the time, the population was crying with laughter.[53] German celebrations were thus prime targets for lyrical resistance.

Jules Mousseron, a former miner and celebrated *patois* poet from Denain, penned many poems during the occupation. One from 1915 explicitly mocked German victories: 'They announce their strange successes. / In our churches they ring the bells; / They are very good at false glory.'[54] Another occasion ridiculed in verse was the public celebration of the Kaiser's birthday on 27 January. In 1915, Labbe composed an irreverent ditty about this, seen from the perspective of two pigeons,[55] and an anonymous *Lillois* author also wrote a song on the same subject based on 'L'Angelus de la mer'. The language of the second verse evokes the disdain, even hatred, some locals felt towards the Germans and especially the Kaiser:

> The goddess [statue in Lille's main square] is covered in your Germanic flags
> But from above the pigeons
> Deposit little symbolic droppings in your colours
> These replace the flowers
> Like these birds, all the citizens of Lille
> Do the same on the portrait of your Kaiser
> Curses on him and all his family
> His image would be better next to Lucifer.[56]

Labbe called the Kaiser the Antichrist,[57] echoing the widespread view that he was responsible for the war.[58] Thus, the culture of the occupied dehumanised the figurehead of the 'barbaric' enemy without the aid of Allied propaganda. It was against such barbarity that the *occupés* resisted; by denouncing it in songs, a personal, moral victory was achieved.

Many more songs contained strong anti-German emotions. Labbe recounted the requisition of goods, noting that all that remained was the Germans – 'this plague', 'these rough Prussians' – and ultimately mocked German 'Kulture'.[59] He called the Germans vampires, 'dirty Boches',[60] and often accused them of lying, particularly via their posters and publications. Two songs were entitled 'Minteux! … Minteux! … Minteux!' (Liars!…) and 'Mintiries boches' (Boche Lies).[61] This sentiment was echoed by a contemporary song written by one P. Couvreur mocking 'Les Trois Canards' – *Le Bruxellois*, *La*

Gazette des Ardennes and the *Bulletin de Lille*.[62] Yet ducks were not the only birds causing a stir. Strong emotions are present in poems concerning German orders to kill animals, seen by the *occupés* as the height of cruelty.[63] The obligatory killing of pigeons was perceived by Mousseron as 'L' massacr' des pigeons innochints' (The massacre of innocent pigeons), and the birds were just as much heroic victims of the war as the *occupés* themselves: 'Our gracious domestic pigeons / Birds of peaceful ideas, / Have thus spilled their blood / The same as the non-combatant civilian.' This poem contains what the author insists was the true story of a woman who did not declare her pigeon because it was infirm. She was sent to a military tribunal and sentenced to a 400-mark fine, but the pigeon itself was 'deported' to Germany, never to be seen again.[64] Conversely, the Germans argued that the French mistreated various animals,[65] leading certain *occupés* to claim that the Germans were perfect humanitarians – when it came to animals.[66]

German barbarism and lack of humanity were recurring themes of these cultural productions. Mousseron portrayed the occupiers as smelly, greedy, drunkards, who lacked solidarity, often fighting between themselves.[67] Such criticisms are visible in poems and songs written throughout the occupation, with little change over time. However, the focus was not always on the Germans; the patriotism of the *occupés* was championed in numerous works. They were shown, for instance, to express humanitarian concerns for Allied prisoners of war, offering them aid.[68] In a sonnet written in April 1915, Labbe stated that the rest of France should know that the *Lillois* remained hopeful for victory, and above all remained French.[69] He praised the relief work of the *fourneaux économiques de la guerre* (wartime soup kitchens),[70] but at the same time attacked 'pessimists',[71] war profiteers,[72] and, especially, women engaged in relations with the Germans.[73] Similarly, a printed poem in *Ch'ti* appeared in Blin's diary in February 1918, criticising theft and moral decline resulting from penury.[74] A 1919 publication contained 139 poems written in standard French in Lille during the occupation and touching upon all of the above themes.[75] There is some evidence that these song and poems were taken seriously by Germans who heard and understood them. For instance, Labbe was arrested in October 1915 and was sentenced to nine months' imprisonment. He was sent to Anrath and eventually spent a year at Holzminden, where he continued to compose songs.[76] In Cambrai, one Mlle Schneider was imprisoned for ten days for writing anti-German poems.[77]

The composition of songs was not the only way music and resistance intersected. One of the most frequently cited events of the occupation was the singing of the *Marseillaise*, an expression of patriotic fervour often punished by the occupiers. Blin noted that one man was sentenced to four weeks' imprisonment for having done so in October 1915;[78] Degrutère mentioned ten people imprisoned for the same act on 14 July 1915,[79] and a teacher in Villers-Plouich was imprisoned for four months for having encouraged her pupils to sing the *Marseillaise* and for 'having spoken Francophile words'.[80] Blin also stated that the deportees of Easter 1916 sang the *Marseillaise* and *Flotte petit drapeau* while being evacuated;[81] a multitude of sources attest to such singing among evacuees, deportees and forced labourers across the Nord and beyond.[82] As Nivet noted, 'In the context of the occupation, *La Marseillaise*, like *L'Internationale*, appeared as a seditious song.'[83] Expressing French pride and patriotism also represented a refusal to be considered just a German-administered territory.

Trooping the colour

Patriotic sentiment was further expressed through the colours of the French flag, another motif visible in poems – where *occupés* perceived French troops to be fighting for the 'dear flag',[84] and *Bochartes* as betraying their flag.[85] Such was the symbolic power of flags that a man from Escarmain was considered suspect by *rapatriés* because he presented the Kommandant with the German flag.[86] At the liberation, locals expressed their joy by waving French, British, American and Belgian flags to greet Allied armies.[87] Quite where the flags came from is unclear, but some observers assumed that many hid them in the hope of victory.[88]

During the occupation, the *bleu-blanc-rouge* of the French flag provided a symbol around which locals could rally to oppose the German presence and assert their national identity. On 22 February 1915, Blin remarked, 'Women wear the tricolour cockade: defiance, exasperation, patriotism?'[89] Three days later, Blin was clearer in his understanding of the purpose and effects of these colours: 'Tricolour cockades, to testify that Frenchwomen are courageous [*ont du cœur*]. Cold & dignified audaciousness. These knots pinned all over the place charm the eyes: it's beautiful and emotional at the same time: it's an example of the frank French way [*la franche manière française*]'.[90] Two days later, Blin noted that local schoolchildren 'don tricolour ribbons and sing the Marseillaise. Consequence: M. *L'Insp[ecteur] primaire* is called to

the Kommandant[u]r'.[91] Indeed, during the *affaire des sacs* period, the Germans became increasingly frustrated with displays of French patriotism. Degrutère recorded on 4 March 1915 that:

> 200 hirsute French prisoners arrive in Lille […] Great emotion among the *Lillois*. Local women are now openly wearing the tricolour cockade. This displeases the Germans who claim that we are under their domination; they arrest many of these women. Gathering; a soldier hits his rifle butt into the crowd, causing more agitation.[92]

The next day *occupés* were punished for crying 'Vive la France', and by 6 March all insignias were banned alongside the wearing of national colours in any form.[93] Yet, on 24 March 1915, the Kommandant of Roubaix explained via a poster that:

> Until now I have tolerated the placement of small flags in national colours on the graves of French and English soldiers.
>
> My tolerance has been thanked in the following fashion: A few days ago, in a provocative and tasteless manner, a tricolour flag three metres high was placed on the graves of soldiers.
>
> I have punished the guilty parties as well as the manager of the cemetery with imprisonment and I order:
>
> It is forbidden to place any type of object bearing the national colours of the enemies of Germany, for example flags, ribbons, cockades etc., on the graves of soldiers.[94]

The *conservateur* (manager) and *gardien* (guard) of a cemetery in Roubaix were imprisoned for three and five days respectively.[95] By 14 July 1915, German measures appeared to be working, as Blin was lamenting that the 'tricolour flags remain hidden', despite the fact that he had seen 'a "patriot" in a high hat!'[96] Yet some 'youngsters amused themselves by sticking small tricolour flags into corks that they then threw in the canal'.[97] Other similar incidents occurred in Lille.[98] Not all were confined to 1915: in Lille, a widowed cabaret owner hung two French flags from her building in May 1916, causing a French policeman to ask her to remove them. She refused, so the policeman had to do so himself, and the Germans seized the flags.[99] A photograph taken by the British army in liberated Douai in October 1918 hints that the Germans kept many confiscated French flags under lock and key (see Figure 6).

Small, almost hidden, symbols were used to demonstrate allegiance to the Allied cause. In September 1915, Blin remarked, 'This is a pleasure to see: women's underwear shops display in their windows designs for embroidery, newspaper holders, pincushions, etc. with the

Figure 6 British soldier checking a store of French flags confiscated from the inhabitants of Douai by the Germans, 25 October 1918.

effigy of King Albert, Poincaré, G[enera]l Joffre, tricolour flowers and flags as armaments. From where and how do [they] get here?'[100] Such symbols reappeared throughout the occupation. As late as August 1918, Blin noted that bookshops were selling cards containing the French flag and a heart on them (the Catholic patriotic symbol), which people wore underneath their coats, occasionally showing them to French passers-by.[101] Thus, both Catholic and Republican symbols were used to reinforce a sense of Frenchness and opposition to the occupiers.

As with some of the above cases, explicit displays of patriotism involving national colours were mostly reserved for national and religious holidays, especially Bastille Day. Most documented instances relate to 1915, meaning that these came during the final stages of the *affair des sacs*. Perhaps, like the strikes themselves, such symbolic manifestations were not often repeated due to harsh German punishments. In any case, in 1915 in Tourcoing, according to one memoir:

> 14 July was the occasion of a patriotic demonstration. Everyone went out in their best clothes, wearing French colours on their buttons. This

> demonstration of memory and hope was immediately banned. Everyone therefore replaced the tricolour ribbons with natural flowers. It is impossible to depict the rage of the occupier, and fines rained down.[102]

The author attributes this 'constant state […] of latent rebellion' with the creation of compulsory idenity cards in Tourcoing on 18 August 1915.[103] On Bastille Day 1915 in Douai, flowers in the national colours were left on the tombs of French soldiers.[104] In Roubaix, Blin recorded that there was a 'Demonstration at the cemetery: wreaths and bouquets were placed on the graves of French and English soldiers – Some "patriots" wore tailored clothes and top hats. Numerous young girls dressed in tricolour, and that's it: weariness and despondency are too profound to react.'[105] The unpublished memoirs of May Corballis (Sœur Marguerite), an English Catholic nun living in occupied Roubaix, attest to similar acts. Corballis was offered a bouquet of tricolour flowers in May 1915, although she does not state by whom; but German officers did not notice the significance of this, and she spoke about their ignorance with soldiers who said nothing and simply mocked the stupidity of their own officers.[106] If true, these soldiers were therefore complicit in an act demonstrating French patriotism and perhaps did not see the gesture as an explicit insult or a form of resistance. Corballis also hints at the way in which different forms of symbolic resistance overlapped, noting that 'Whenever people could turn [the Germans] into ridicule they did', before detailing an alleged incident in October 1915 whereby a woman openly wore tricolour ribbons in the street. A *Landsturm* soldier ordered her to remove the ribbon, remarking, 'You are in Germany now'; she explained that she was French and in France, and the soldier would have to pull the ribbon off her. He did so, but 'yards and yards were on the ground and he could not get to the end of it, to the great joy of the crowd; he[,] purple with rage, marched the good lady off to prison; she was fined but she did not care, hundreds of those tricks were played on them'. Seemingly verifying Blin's claims, she continued: 'One day all the children of a very big school marched out all wearing the French colours; the poor directress of the school who was a nun and knew nothing about it was heavily fined.'[107]

The graves of Allied servicemen were also a focal point of patriotic sentiment. In January 1915, Blin placed flowers on the graves of two British airmen, which were already 'covered with bouquets, wreaths, touching souvenirs of the pious gratitude of those to whom the aviators brought "news" at the price of their existence, sublime sacrifice and very moving'.[108] This sentiment did not disappear. On 1 November

(*la Toussaint*) 1916, Blin attempted to place flowers on the same graves. He was forbidden from doing so but noted that the tombs were already flooded with flowers.[109] The symbolism of the Allied dead was evident. Funeral services were held for these servicemen, which combined grief and patriotism.[110] In early 1916 and October 1917, the Mayor of Lille refused to participate in a burial ceremony for killed German personnel unless the Germans also buried and provided a ceremony for killed French military personnel.[111]

Living Allied soldiers also proved conduits for a certain type of resistance. Many *occupés* greeted Allied prisoners of war marching through towns and villages, an event particularly frequent in Lille-Roubaix-Tourcoing,[112] but not exclusive to these towns.[113] Many believed that the German goal was to demoralise the *occupés*, but the effect seemed reversed. *Occupés* smiled at prisoners of war, shook their hands, gave them food and goods, shouted 'Vive la France' or 'Vive l'Angleterre', even cried. Such events were particularly commonplace in 1914 and 1915,[114] causing the Germans to forbid these actions and to punish contraventions.[115] In Lille, during one night in March 1915, over 400 people were arrested for this.[116] However, the *occupés* continued to carry out these acts throughout the occupation,[117] meaning that as late as May 1918 the Germans had to 'yet again remind the population' of the list of restrictions concerning prisoners of war, the breaching of which they perceived as 'passive resistance'.[118] A July 1918 issue of *Liller Kriegszeitung* depicted *Lillois* approaching Scottish prisoners of war (see Figure 7), and in August 1918, people were still punished for such behaviour.[119] The intent of these actions is clear: Trollin noted that a crowd surrounding Allied prisoners in Lille in March 1915 'violently demonstrates its patriotic faith'.[120] Even a German onlooker appeared to understand what was taking place:

> The Grand' Place is completely blocked. The locals gather by the thousands. A sinister noise has attracted them from all corners of the Town […] A frisson goes through the crowd […]
>
> On the balcony of the neighbouring house, numerous women furtively pull out their handkerchiefs and wave discreetly to the prisoners … Below, in the square a Frenchwoman with a particularly fierce temperament cannot, despite the danger, control her patriotic sentiments and cries with a piercing voice: 'Vive la France!' They arrest her. She loses her composure; then she tries to resist.[121]

In performing such actions, the population was also trying to boost the morale of the prisoners of war (which seemed to work),[122] and expressing a humanitarian impulse. Allied prisoners, especially Russians,

Figure 7 Front cover of *Liller Kriegszeitung*, no. 118 (18 July 1918) showing *Lillois* running to greet British, especially Scottish, prisoners of war. The caption reads 'A great day for *Lillois*'.
Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg, *Liller Kriegszeitung*, no. 118 (18 July 1918), p. 1; accessible online at http://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/feldztglilkr1917bis1918/0713?sid=a8dc59fd084727fd59a0ee45840b4647).

in the occupied area were generally treated badly by the Germans,[123] despite German claims to the contrary.[124] They were used for front-line forced-labour operations – as were German prisoners of war by the Allies[125] – meaning the *occupés* frequently came into contact with them, experiencing their maltreatment at first hand. Consequently, sometimes the intent of the above actions was not resistance but compassion, although the two were connected: by showing compassion to Allied prisoners, the *occupés* demonstrated a desire for Allied victory, and humanitarian motives inextricably connected with their own understanding of the war – a war of civilisation against barbarism. This compassionate resistance may be a forerunner to the humanitarian ideas underlining some of the resistance of the Second World War, outlined by Rod Kedward.[126]

Resisting requisitions

The refusal of certain *occupés* to hand over goods requisitioned by the Germans is well documented across occupied France and Belgium.[127] It is difficult to establish the true nature and extent of this, as the acts were as hidden as the objects themselves – a common problem in studying resistance.[128] Further, the intent behind such actions may not have been as heroic or patriotic as it might seem, as some may simply have hidden goods out of a desire for survival or economic self-interest. Indeed, Salson categorises hiding goods as more a form of 'evasion' than contestation.[129] Others may have engaged in black marketeering and did not want the authorities (German or French) to find out. Yet I believe that these actions do represent a form of opposition. Likewise, Debarge sees the motives as a combination of economic resistance, a desire not to furnish goods which could be used against the *Patrie* and the preservation of property.[130] Many *occupés* perceived their non-compliance thusly, a means of withholding resources from the Germans.

This was the view of the Yerta sisters in the Aisne, who hid their mattresses so that 'the enemy of France' could not sleep on them.[131] Similarly, in Wallers, inhabitants left their mattresses out in the rain so that they would be unfit for use.[132] In Tourcoing, many people sold items before they could be requisitioned,[133] and one man said that he would rather hide his car than give it to the Germans.[134] Indeed, Tourcoing in particular saw much resistance to requisitions. Here, factory owner M. Sion hid cotton reserves for two years before being discovered,[135] and hiding copper was commonplace[136] – despite the Mayor's belief that the population should declare its goods given the professionalism of German search teams.[137]

German efficiency meant that hiding places became increasingly rare as the occupation went on, but *occupés* still attempted to withhold goods. All over the Nord, as elsewhere,[138] people refused German requisitions and concealed goods.[139] Even priests or nuns like Corballis hid material from the Germans.[140] Despite the commonplace occurrence of such actions, this was not an easy task because of denunciations and meticulous German search teams, as David Hirsch related.[141] Many individuals managed to hide a small number of items, whereas others hid thousands of kilograms of goods, according to repatriation reports. Such was the case for M. Coquelet of Valenciennes, who hid 20,000 kilograms of potatoes;[142] or Ernest Lecopyer from Fourmies, who concealed 30,000 kilograms of copper.[143] In Roubaix, cloth worth 2 million francs was

hidden until March 1917.[144] However, such reports may be exaggerated attempts to curry favour with interviewers. Overall, few people succeeded in hiding goods for the duration of the occupation, and uncovering concealed items usually created a knock-on effect making further concealment more difficult. For example, in January 1917, the discovery of hidden goods in some factory basements led to a massive search of all basements in Lille-Roubaix-Tourcoing.[145]

Those found guilty of withholding material were threatened with fines up to 1,000 marks and up to three months' imprisonment.[146] For individuals hiding military materiel, the penalty was more severe.[147] These punishments were commonplace throughout the occupation,[148] and certain individuals later received recognition for such actions from the French Government, in the form of the *Médaille des Victimes de l'Invasion* (discussed later).[149] It is clear that many individuals sabotaged requisitions by hiding material and goods that they were supposed to declare. Indeed, doing so seemed like a reflex action, the natural thing to do when asked to furnish the occupiers with further resources. Numerous *occupés* thus put patriotic and/or material interest above their own self-preservation, risking harsh penalties if caught. In doing so, they forced the Germans to spend time and resources finding material.

Summarising symbolic resistance

Many *occupés* expressed their patriotism throughout the occupation via the use of symbolic forms of resistance. Beyond those examined here, other manifestations of patriotism included French children playing at 'war' and having the Allies win, using hand gestures or graffiti to insult the Germans, defacing German posters, and damaging or removing German signposts.[150] This attitude was bound up in hatred of the 'barbaric' enemy and, due to the circumstances of the occupation and the importance of respectability, led inevitably to non-violent means of asserting opposition to the occupiers. While not aiding the Allied victory or having any real military value, symbolic, 'passive' resistance allowed the *occupés* to retain their identity in their own no man's land. It allowed them to maintain and preach faith in the Allied victory, which remained widespread throughout the occupied area, despite the suffering experienced.[151] It also provided a morale boost and ultimately allowed the *occupés* to remain French. In this way, a certain form of respectability was maintained. This was cultural resistance, central to occupied culture and occupied life. However, more 'active' forms of resistance did exist,

although these were even rarer and were never as 'active' as those of the Second World War. This is the subject of the final chapter of Part II.

Notes

1 Annette Becker, *Les Cicatrices rouges 14–18: France et Belgique occupées* (Paris: Fayard, 2010), p. 253.
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3 See, for example, Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870–1914* (Palo Alto, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1976), p. 304; Margaret H. Darrow, 'In the land of Joan of Arc: the civic education of girls and the prospect of war in France, 1871–1914', *French Historical Studies*, 31:2 (2008), 263–91.
4 See Darrow, 'In the land of Joan of Arc'.
5 Darrow, 'In the land of Joan of Arc', p. 273.
6 See, for example, Lisa Mayerhofer, 'Making friends and foes: occupiers and occupied in First World War Romania, 1916–1918', in Heather Jones, Jennifer O'Brien and Christoph Schmidt-Supprian (eds.), *Untold War: New Perspectives in First World War Studies* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), pp. 122–3.
7 James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1985).
8 These constitute resistance in Robert Gildea, Olivier Wieviorka and Annette Warring, 'Introduction', in Robert Gildea, Olivier Wieviorka and Annette Warring (eds.), *Surviving Hitler and Mussolini: Daily Life in Occupied Europe* (Oxford: Berg, 2006), p. 11.
9 ADN, 74J224, diary of M. Trollin (Directeur de l'École Rollin, Lille), 25 December 1915, original emphasis.
10 See Christel Ramirez, 'Les villes et les campagnes dans le Nord pendant l'occupation allemande de 1914–1918', master's dissertation (Lille III, 1999), p. 11; Louis Trenard (ed.), *L'Histoire de Cambrai* (Lille, Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 1970), p. 259.
11 ADN, 74J225, diary of M. Blin (instituteur en retraite at Auchy-les-Orchies), 18 October 1914.
12 ADN, 15J87, memoirs of G. Momal, Doyen of Troisvilles, Chapters 7–8 and 12.
13 ADN, 74J224, Trollin diary, 25 October 1915.
14 Becker, *Les Cicatrices rouges*, p. 254.
15 Becker, *Les Cicatrices rouges*, pp. 254–6.
16 Chad Bryant, 'The language of resistance? Czech jokes and joke-telling under Nazi occupation, 1943–45', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 41:1 (2006), pp. 136 and 140.
17 Bryant, 'The language of resistance?', p. 148.

18 Bryant, 'The language of resistance?', p. 149.
19 Julian Jackson, *France: The Dark Years, 1940–44* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 282–3.
20 J. A. Hollander and R. L. Einwohner, 'Conceptualizing resistance', *Sociological Forum*, 19:4 (2004), p. 540.
21 See, for example, *Liller Kriegszeitung*, 25 February 1915, p. 1.
22 Becker, *Les Cicatrices rouges*, p. 110; Mme Deherripont's diary, cited in Annette Becker, *Oubliés de la Grande Guerre: Humanitaire et culture de guerre* (Paris: Éditions Noêsis, 1998), p. 20; ADN, 9R717, German poster, 12 February 1916.
23 ADN, 9R719, German poster, Roubaix, 5 February1917; ADN, 9R797, Commissaire Central de Tourcoing to Préfet, 8 December 1916.
24 NA, AIR 1/1212/204/5/2629, Royal Air Force Investigation Committee on bomb raids in France and Belgium (1919), introduction, p. 2.
25 Becker, *Les Cicatrices rouges*, p. 112.
26 ADN, 74J224, Trollin diary, 30 January 1915.
27 ADN, 74J224, Trollin diary, 7 April 1915.
28 Manon Pignot, *Allons enfants de la patrie: Génération Grande Guerre* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2012), p. 237.
29 ADN, 74J224, Trollin diary, 23 April 1915.
30 ADN, 74J224, Trollin diary, 18 May 1915.
31 J. P. Whitaker, *Under the Heel of the Hun (An Englishman's Two-and-a-Half Years in Roubaix and Lille)* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1917), p. 57.
32 ADN, 74J224, Trollin diary, 5–6 March 1915.
33 ADN, 74J225, Blin diary, 3 January 1915.
34 Antoine Redier, *Les Allemands dans nos maisons* (Paris: Éditions Cartier, 1945), p. 184.
35 See ADN, 87J2, P. Couvreur, *À propos de bottes: Chansons d'occupation* (Lille: Nuez et Cie, 1919), pp. 32–4.
36 Redier, *Les Allemands*, p. 188.
37 ADN, 15J87, Memoirs of Momal, Chapter 11.
38 Eugène Martin-Mamy, *Quatre ans avec les barbares: Lille pendant l'occupation allemande* (Paris: Renaissance du Livre, 1919), pp. 36–7.
39 Martin-Mamy, *Quatre ans avec les barbares*, p. 165.
40 Martin-Mamy, *Quatre ans avec les barbares*, pp. 165–6.
41 Martin-Mamy, *Quatre ans avec les barbares*, p. 167.
42 Redier, *Les Allemands*, p. 136.
43 Jean Mauclère, *L'Orage sur la ville: Tourcoing pendant l'occupation allemande, 1914–1918* (Paris: Berger-Levrault, 1933), p. 96.
44 Redier, *Les Allemands*, pp. 136 and 144.
45 Gabrielle Yerta and Marguerite Yerta, *Six Women and the Invasion* (London: Macmillan, 1917), p. 174.
46 Redier, *Les Allemands*, p. 148.

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49 Collections not examined here include T. Pique, *1914–18: Quatre ans d'occupation allemande ou les crimes boches, récits vécus* (Lille: Gutenberg, 1921); Pierre Baucher, *Au long des rues, souvenirs de l'occupation allemande à Lille* (Strasbourg: Imprimerie Strasbourgeoise, 1921), pp. 282–301. There are also examples of such songs in Georges Dubut-Maison, *Journal d'un bourgeois de Maubeuge, avant, pendant le siècle et l'occupation allemande, 1914–1918* (Tourcoing: J. Duvivier, 1923), 30 April 1915, p. 113.
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51 J. Chauleur, 'Préface', in Auguste Labbe, *À la guerre comme à la guerre: Les Boches à Lille – recueil de chansons lilloises écrites pendant l'occupation allemande, par Auguste Labbe alias César Latulupe, ex-prisonnier civil du bagne d'Anrath et d'Holzminden* (Lille: Édition Populaire, 1919), p. 2.
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53 Labbe, *À la Guerre*, pp. 23–4.
54 Jules Mousseron, *Les Boches au pays noir: Souvenirs de la guerre et de l'occupation allemande – poésies patoises* (Lille: J. Tallandier, 1931), 'Les Insensés', p. 43.
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58 See, for example, ADHS, 4M513, report no. 744, 15 February 1917; ADN, 74J241, personal papers of Pierre Dumont ('répresentant de commerce […] employé comme interprète à la mairie de Lille de 1914 à 1919'), 4 March 1915.
59 Labbe, *À la Guerre*, 'L' nouviell' "Kulture"', p. 20.
60 Labbe, *À la Guerre*, 'Anniversaire du bombardement d' Lille', p. 56.
61 Labbe, *À la Guerre*, written in November 1914 and June 1915, pp. 6–7, 38–9.
62 Couvreur, *À Propos*, pp. 56–9.
63 See Martin-Mamy, *Quatre ans*, pp. 108–33 for the 'Massacre des Innocents' (dogs); Georges Gromaire, *L'Occupation allemande en France (1914–1918)* (Paris: Payot, 1925), pp. 168–9.

64 Mousseron, *Les Boches au pays noir*, 'L' Pigeon Infirme', pp. 54–9, specifically p. 56.
65 ADN, 9R748, German poster, Tourcoing, 16 January 1918.
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68 Mousseron, *Les Boches au pays noir*, 'Humanité' (1917), p. 64.
69 Labbe, *À la Guerre*, 'A l' première hirondelle de r'tour à Lille (Printemps 1915)', p. 29.
70 Labbe, *À la Guerre*, 'Les Fourneaux économiques de la guerre', p. 25.
71 Labbe, *À la Guerre*, 'Les Pessimistes', p. 54.
72 Labbe, *À la Guerre*, 'Chin qu'on vo' pendant la guerre (Occupation de Lille par les Allemands)', p. 11.
73 Labbe, *À la Guerre*, pp. 10–12; 'Les Bochartes' (5 August 1915), pp. 47–8; 'A l' Poubelle les Paillaisses à Boches', p. 49.
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77 Eric Bukowski, 'Cambrai: une ville du Nord occupée lors de la Première Guerre mondiale', master's dissertation (Lille III, 1986), p. 79.
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83 Nivet, 'Les femmes dans la France occupée', p. 290.

84 AML, 4H291, Mlle Munch to Mayor, 9 November 1918, poem written in Pérenchies 'en 1916 contre les civils français et Belges [sic] faisant de bon grè [sic], des tranchées pour les Allemands'.
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86 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 476, 12 January 1917.
87 See, for example, ADN, J1950, diary of Pierre Motte (notaire à Lille), 17 October 1918.
88 Special Correspondent, 'The Agony of Lille', *The Times*, 19 October 1918, p. 7.
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90 ADN, 74J225, Blin diary, 25 February 1915.
91 ADN, 74J225, Blin diary, 27 February 1915.
92 Becker, *Journaux de combattants*, Degrutère diary, 4 March 1915, p. 174.
93 Becker, *Journaux de combattants*, Degrutère diary, 5 and 6 March 1915; AML, 4H134, German poster, Lille, 6 March 1915.
94 ADN, 9R716, German poster, Roubaix, 24 March 1915.
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103 Mauclère, *L'Orage sur la ville*, p. 104.
104 Robert Vandenbussche, 'Le pouvoir municipal à Douai sous l'occupation (1914–1918)', *Revue du Nord*, 61:241 (1979), p. 462.
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106 University of Leeds Library, LIDDLE/WWI/WO/021, memoirs, May Corballis (Sœur Marguerite), 7 May 1915, p. 38.
107 May Corballis (Sœur Marguerite) memoirs, 5 October 1915, p. 47.
108 ADN, 74J225, Blin diary, 16 January 1915.
109 ADN, 74J225, Blin diary, 1 November 1916.
110 ADN, 74J225, Blin diary, 6 April 1915.
111 ADN, 74J241, Dumont papers, Mayor of Lille to Rittmeister Staelin, 8 October 1917.
112 See, for example, AMT, H4A25, Commission Historique du Nord, Questionnaire de la Guerre de 1914, Réponse de la Ville de Tourcoing (n.d., but sent to municipal council on 29 April 1921), response 32; Paul Trochon, *La Grande Guerre (1914–1918): Lille avant et pendant l'occupation allemande* (Tourcoing: J. Duvivier, 1922), p. 221; ADN, 15J87, Memoirs of Momal, Chapter 17.

113 ADN, 9R513, Commissaire de Police of Denain to Sous-Préfet of Valenciennes, 24 December 1918, p. 10; Fleury, *Sous la botte*, vol. II, p. 19, 150.
114 ADN, 74J241, Dumont papers, 4 March 1915; ADN, 74J225, Blin diary, 12 November 1914; ADN, 74J224, Trollin diary, 4–9 March 1915; Becker, *Journaux de combattants*, Degrutère diary, 4 March 1917 and Hirsch diary, 12 November 1914 and 5 March 1915, pp. 174, 227 and 233 respectively.
115 See, for example, *Bulletin de Lille*, 23 December 1915; ADN, 9R557, extrait des procès-verbaux de la Commandanture de Lille, 4 November 1914; AML, 4H134, German poster, Lille, 6 March 1915.
116 ADN, 74J224, Trollin diary, 7 March 1915.
117 *Bulletin de Lille*, 13 July 1916.
118 ADN, 9R748, German poster, Tourcoing, 17 May 1918.
119 ADN, 9R721, German poster, Roubaix, 31 August 1918.
120 ADN, 9R224, Trollin diary, 4 March 1915.
121 AML, 4H60, translations from *Lille in Deutscher Hand* (1915), 'Nouvelles de Victoires à Lille'.
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127 De Schaepdrijver, *La Belgique*, p. 214; Sébastien Debarge, 'Fourmies occupée pendant la Grande Guerre', *Revue du Nord*, 80:325 (1998), pp. 167–70; Isabelle Molina, 'Les Femmes dans le Nord occupé pendant la première Guerre Mondiale', master's dissertation (Lille III, 1999), p. 19; Cnudde-Lecointre, 'L'Église et la foi', p. 59; Philippe Salson, *L'Aisne occupée: Les civils dans la Grande Guerre* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2015), pp. 171–92; Special Correspondent, 'The Agony of Lille', p. 7.
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130 Debarge, 'Fourmies occupée', pp. 167–70.
131 Yerta and Yerta, *Six Women*, p. 132.

132 Pierre Cottel, *Un village du Nord sous l'occupation allemande durant la première guerre mondiale: De 1910 à 1939, Wallers d'une guerre à l'autre* (Wallers: Publi-Express, 2000), p. 31.
133 Sophie Bajart, 'Les Femmes à Tourcoing sous l'occupation allemande: 1914–1918', master's dissertation (Lille III, 1997), p. 110.
134 Mauclère, *L'Orage sur la ville*, p. 20.
135 Mauclère, *L'Orage sur la ville*, p. 25.
136 Mauclère, *L'Orage sur la ville*, p. 145.
137 ADN, 74J225, Blin diary, 8 October 1917.
138 See, for example, ADHS, 4M513, report no. 505, 17 January 1917 (Croix-Moligneaux), and no. 681, 6 February 1917 (Leschelle).
139 See, for example, ADHS, 4M513, reports no. 706, 9 February 1917 (Denain); no. 709, 9 February 1917 (Cambrai); no. 561, 20 January 1917 (Monceau-Saint-Waast); no. 829, 28 February 1917 (Fourmies).
140 Cnudde-Lecointre, 'L'Église et la foi', p. 59; University of Leeds Library, LIDDLE/WWI/WO/021, Corballis memoirs, 5 October 1915, p. 48.
141 Becker, *Journaux de combattants*, Hirsch diary, 30 December 1917, p. 288.
142 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 770, 19 February 1917.
143 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 829, 28 February 1917.
144 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 1146, 20 April 1917.
145 ADN, 74J225, Blin diary, 26 January 1917.
146 ADN, 9R745, German poster, Valenciennes, 9 April 1915; German poster, Tourcoing, 17 September 1915.
147 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 762, 17 February 1917 (Walincourt).
148 ADN, 9R720, German poster, Roubaix, 29 August 1917; ADN, 74J224, Trollin diary, 15 April 1916; ADN, 9R716, German poster, Roubaix, 9 June 1915; ADN, 9R795, Gardien-Chef de la Maison d'Arrêt de Loos to Préfet, 21 March and 15 July 1915.
149 See, for example, AN, F23/375, proposition en faveur de Mme Froment Louise, Lille, 16 August 1922; Proposition en faveur de M. Plucbe Paul, Villers Plouich, 31 August 1922; Proposition en faveur de M. Suin Camille, Cerfontaine, 20 November 1922. All were awarded the *Médaille des Victimes de l'Invasion*, 3e classe, for being punished for hiding goods during the occupation.
150 Redier, *Les Allemands*, pp. 211–12; Joseph Mongis, *Quatre ans sous la botte allemande* (Paris: Éditions Rouff, 1919), p. 4; and AMT, H4A29, report into the 'manifestation hostiles' of 11 April 1915; ADN, 74J225, Blin diary, 5 February 1915; AMT, H4A29, Commissaire Central to Mayor, 22 May 1915, note from von Tessin, 17, 20, 22 May 1915; ADN, 9R509, German poster, Croix, 15 September 1918, ADN, 9R748, German poster, Tourcoing, 5 January 1918.
151 Trochon, *La Grande Guerre*, pp. 324–5; Whitaker, *Under the Heel of the Hun*, p. 10.

8

Active resistance (*coups de poker*, *coups d'éclat*)

Certain members of the occupied population engaged in actions that were often organised, purposeful infringements of German rules, or attempts to undermine the German war effort and were therefore more 'classical' resistance than the forms previously examined. Such acts were riskier, punishable by the harshest penalties. They represent resistance as conceived by Debruyne and other scholars.[1] This 'active' resistance rarely involved armed or violent resistance, although there were isolated examples of this.[2] Instead, it comprised helping escaped Allied prisoners of war, engaging in espionage, escape and correspondence networks, and creating clandestine publications whose organisation and morale-boosting effects represent a crossover between symbolic and active resistance. I also consider explicit refusals to work for the Germans as a more active subsection of resistance; perhaps a controversial categorisation but one justified by the severity of the punishment inflicted for such refusals and the clear moral-patriotic choice involved. Many of the acts studied here constitute the most commonplace examples of resistance cited and commemorated from 1918 onwards, even though they never involved more than a minority of *occupés*. Active resistance became renowned among the wider population during the occupation itself, which perhaps explains why there is substantial archival documentation on this topic, and why – despite its rare occurrence – it reappears in the accounts of *rapatriés*, in diaries and in memoirs.

Patriotic publications and clandestine correspondence

While the clandestine press of the occupied Nord was minuscule compared to that of the Second World War, a handful of publications did exist. The most celebrated and successful one resulted from a highly organised

operation: in Roubaix, *l'abbé* (Father) Pinte, industrialist Firmin Dubar, professor of pharmacy Joseph Willot and other collaborators fashioned an illegal radio receiver to pick up Allied transmissions from the Eiffel Tower (although they were not the only people to do so).[3] This information was used from February 1915 to create a clandestine newspaper whose name changed many times, including *La Patience* (*Patience*), *L'Oiseau de France* (*The Bird from France*), *L'Écho de France* (*The Echo from France*) and *Le Journal des Occupés… Inoccupés* (*The Newspaper of the Occupied … Unoccupied*).[4] The publication lasted until the imprisonment of the editors by the Germans in December 1916,[5] and, according to one source, the circulation was 250 copies every month[6] – mainly in the Lille-Roubaix-Tourcoing area, but sometimes copies reached Douai and Belgian towns.[7] It is impossible to know how many people read these publications.[8]

The full story of this network is compelling, and recounted well elsewhere,[9] but examining the form and content of the publication provides further insight into occupied life and the purpose of such resistance. Apart from some local news and Allied communiqués relating the international situation, there was much overlap with symbolic resistance, with the paper relying on humour and reinforcing patriotism. A frequent theme was the call for *occupés* to remain dignified and remember the greatness of France: one issue of *La Patience* contained the slogan 'That which makes the *Patrie* great is the moral value of her children. Be strong, be generous, to make an even stronger and more generous France!' A similar message followed just below: 'Be strong. True characters are revealed in times of hardship and "No-one knows themselves as long as they have not suffered."'[10] The message preached was clearer in the following issue, the front page of which contained the following advice underneath the title: 'Knowing to show, around oneself, despite the sadness of the current time, an unshakable patience, an invincible confidence, is to modestly serve the interests of the *Patrie*.'[11] This slogan was repeated in other issues,[12] demonstrating the way in which suffering was turned into martyrdom and heroism, as well as the importance of respectable conduct. The tagline changed along with the paper's name: in November 1915, *La Liberté* had under its title, 'Let us suffer in silence with confidence and patience whilst we wait for the time of our deliverance that will come soon.'[13] For Becker, these calls to prudence demonstrated how the *occupés* wished to avoid extreme opposition to the Germans and by doing so condemned German practices.[14] This logic works well with my notion of respectability. Indeed, this was

the officially sanctioned attitude: occupied populations were praised for their strength, endurance and patience, as the French President himself stated in Tourcoing on 21 October 1918.[15]

Humour is visible throughout these publications. In one issue, a copy of an article entitled 'Les Bavarois à Lille' (The Bavarians in Lille) from a German-published paper is republished, with sarcastic underlining of incorrect facts.[16] Another issue contains the tongue-in-cheek Ten Commandments of von Heinrich, such as 'Thou shalt not leave the house after 5 p.m. / On pain of imprisonment.'[17] Many other articles mocked the Germans and show contempt for their perceived barbarism. Such is the case for a poem entitled 'Occupation,'[18] and the 'Silhouettes de Boches' series.[19] Humour was even added to editorial details and advertisements. Two newspapers appeared in late 1915 that resembled those of the *Patience* network in their layout, and may have been created by the same people, although their tone and content involved more personal and darker humour.[20] *La Liberté* (November 1915) noted that its administration and editorial board were located at the Banque de France which had become the German *Wirtschaftsausschuss* (Economic Committee) at Roubaix; its telegraphic address was said to be the Kommandantur of Lille.[21] *La Vérité* (December 1915) followed suit with a joke about its administration and offices: 'Not managing to be located in a calm place, they were set up in a cellar for cars.'[22]

For *La Vérité*, advertisements offered more opportunities for humour, even though at the beginning of the 'advertisement' section it stated, 'Business being non-existent under German domination, we advise our clients to save their money for better times.'[23] It nevertheless contained mock advertisements highlighting those places where the Germans were welcomed too readily. The description of the Taverne Royale in Lille is demonstrative: 'Carefully prepared, spicy debauchery, kneaded by well-groomed hands in the French style. Very hospitable to Germans. Graded tariff for soldiers, NCOs and officers, even superiors. Complete absence of scruples, of dignity, of decency and of standards [*des troncs*].'[24] The female owner of the Taverne Royale was investigated by French authorities after the war for *intelligence avec l'ennemi*, and that copy of *La Vérité* used as evidence. No final conclusions are preserved, but the documentation suggests that she was guilty.[25] *La Vérité*'s attitude towards the Taverne Royale is representative of a wider tonal shift in late 1915, with anger and disgust at the Germans and those engaged in misconduct sitting prominently alongside positive patriotism. *La Vérité* contained a lengthy article criticising the 'filthy [*immondes*] females' of its title, in

which the following line was repeated: 'Ah! the vile; the disgusting, the filthy females!!!'[26] In the previous month's *La Liberté*, the original call to patience was accompanied by a call for shaming:

> whilst waiting for our imminent deliverance let everyone do their duty in denouncing at the desired moment all the people having had relations with the German army, who have favoured it; all the immodest, shameless women and girls who have given or sold themselves to the Prussians, etc. Take note of them, help us to unmask them, whilst waiting for the imminent day when we can enact justice.[27]

The target of this resistance was thus not only the Germans but also 'tainted' *occupés*. There also seems to be a link between *La Vérité* and *La Liberté*, with the latter stating: 'In our next issue we will give a list of the girls and women having had relations with the soldiers of the Emperor.'[28] If these publications were the work of the *Patience* network, perhaps the shift to a more violent, denunciatory tone was reflective of the new reality of occupation, or simply anger that *occupés* had denounced clandestine publications in May 1915.[29]

The newspapers of Pinte, Willot and Dubar also urged people to resist German requisitions,[30] as well as informing them of the risks of possessing a clandestine publication. Readers were told to pass on copies but eventually to burn them, relaying news verbally instead. To avoid endangering locals, and to fool the Germans, the publications stated that they were published outside of occupied France.[31] Some copies even bore a rubber stamp stating that they had been dropped by airmail.[32] These details are impressive given the extreme difficulty in publishing this work in a period of shortages and paper requisitions. Such precautionary measures were ultimately futile: the Germans dismantled the organisation, and the main collaborators were condemned in April 1917, with Pinte, Willot and Dubar sentenced to ten years' imprisonment.[33] There can be no doubt that these men saw their actions as patriotic resistance: Pinte is alleged to have said, just before his sentence, 'Death on the battlefield, death here … it's still for France.'[34] Freed at the Armistice, by 1922 Pinte and Dubar had been nominated for the *Légion d'honneur* (Willot died in 1919 as a result of his imprisonment).[35] All three eventually received this honour, and other collaborators were nominated for various awards.[36] *L'Oiseau de France* also received the *Prix Buisson* from the Académie Française in 1920.[37] Indeed, the publication's exploits were so well known that they featured in fictional form in *Invasion '14*.[38]

Despite the German dismantling of the *Patience* network, its resistance was relatively successful. Access to news from the outside world had considerable, positive impact on locals. Blin noted in January 1915 that 'The moral barometer […] rises again, rises, change of feelings due to the arrival in the last few days of newspapers that have crossed the front.'[39] In March 1915, he was given a copy of the *Journal des Occupés … Inoccupés*,[40] and in late July he found a copy of *L'Hirondelle de France* in his letterbox. He followed the instructions carefully: 'It is recommended to burn the paper after reading. I burn it, therefore, and it's with a sort of religious respect that I watch the page burn.'[41] In May the following year, Blin wrote that 'L'"oiseau de France" aerial messenger brings us in these islands the truth and comfort. Welcome, valiant bird!'[42] Blin either meant the publication *L'Oiseau de France*, or he was using the term as a nickname for French planes dropping Allied publications – a commonplace event,[43] and the subject of Mousseron's 1917 poem 'L'Osiau d' France'.[44] Either way, the confidence-inspiring effect of both resistance and Allied papers is clear. The municipality of Tourcoing certainly valued the publication – in its response to the Commission Historique du Nord's post-war questionnaire on the occupation, it described *La Patience* as an 'admirable work of patriotic propaganda, thrown in the middle of the Germanophile propaganda to revive our faith in the future and verify our hopes'.[45] Indeed, such was the value of ostensibly Allied, patriotic publications that *rapatriés* complained when planes stopped dropping these in their area.[46]

After the arrest and sentencing of the *Patience* collaborators, there is little trace of other clandestine publications apart from the aforementioned *Les Vidanges*. As the title suggests, this publication focused entirely on naming and shaming those involved in misconduct, perhaps due to a potential lack of a wireless radio and thus a means to access news. The name may also have been ironic, as some *Lillois* had misheard the name as 'Vie d'Anges' (Life of Angels).[47] Its descriptions of suspect women contained deeply misogynistic humour. One woman was said to be a 'Vile [*infecte*] personality having infection for the Boches … Female remarkable for her ugliness and her considerable knowledge of [applications for] mercurial ointment.' It published a list of 'Some addresses where scenes occur of which the only examples are those of the porcine race.'[48] Similar articles appeared in Belgian clandestine papers in 1917.[49] The goal seemed to be to encourage reprisals during and after the occupation. Judging by the testimony of *rapatriés*, by March 1917 at least two issues of *Les Vidanges* had been published,[50] and people did remember those

whose names appeared in it.[51] The authors were allegedly two men, MM. Gabiot and Godinne, who were imprisoned by March 1917 following a denunciation.[52] Interwar historian of Lille's occupation, Pierre Baucher, incorrectly dated the publication as existing 'around 1915', but correctly demonstrated its infringement of respectable norms:

> The authors believed it their duty to outline here, in the most vulgar terms, the names of those who engaged in traffic with the Germans, women of all classes who received enemies, as well as the houses in which they lived. It has to be said, to the honour of the *Lillois*, that this hideous paper which only had a short existence stirred up their disapproval, that the German police was disturbed, discovered and punished the authors of these crude denunciations.[53]

This resistance was unrespectable and not appreciated by everyone; it was both part of and transgressed occupied culture. It is evidence that one could be unrespectable in upholding respectable norms, just as one could engage in resistance but also misconduct.

Clandestine publications in the occupied Nord were very limited in scale and form compared to occupied Belgium.[54] *La Patience* and *Les Vidanges* demonstrate that some small cases of organised resistance did take place and emphasise the importance of humour and respectability within this opposition. Unable to resist physically, some *occupés* organised this 'written moral resistance'.[55] The intent of such publications was seemingly morale-boosting, via both mocking the Germans and contradicting their propaganda-laden news.[56]

Patriotic or informative publications appeared in other forms. It was difficult, but not impossible, to access Allied or even German papers, offering precious news on war developments which differed from the propaganda of the *Gazette des Ardennes*. Certain individuals, and occasionally employees of the Mairie, translated German newspapers and distributed them among the population.[57] *Le Matin* appeared relatively frequently because it was read by German officers,[58] and French papers were dropped by Allied planes and balloons, including *Le Cri des Flandres* and *Le Courrier de l'Air*. For example, on the week of 6 July 1918, in a sortie particularly focused on Lille-Roubaix-Tourcoing and Valenciennes, 4,985 copies of *Le Courrier de l'Air* were dropped by British planes.[59] However, access to such publications could be costly, often involving secret reading groups where one person would read the papers to a roomful of people, for a fee.[60] Some *occupés* introduced French papers into occupied territory and distributed them freely, for

which they were punished.[61] This was clearly resistance to the German monopoly on information.

So too was engaging in correspondence with unoccupied France or other occupied communes. This was commonplace, with the smugglers and *passeurs* carrying letters as well as goods; sometimes the Spanish ambassador transported letters.[62] However, the number of letters sent and received diminished as the occupation went on, particularly after 1915. Nevertheless, attempts continued.[63] Whitaker even claimed to have engaged in two-way correspondence with his mother in England,[64] and there is proof of letters reaching France and Britain.[65] Indeed, the Mayor of Lille was called in front of a German judge in August 1916 because his letter protesting against the deportations of April 1916 had been published in Allied papers. When asked how his letter arrived in unoccupied France, he claimed ignorance and guessed that it had been attached to a letter that had managed to cross the lines, or was smuggled by a repatriated individual.[66] The latter suggestion was an important means of communication. A nine-page typewritten letter from M. Bouqueniaux from Trélon was successfully smuggled by one Mlle Sol in March 1917. Its content was recorded by French intelligence officers:

> How good it is to send news to France, as for 30 months we have hardly counted ourselves as French, where we are encircled by an iron claw that oppresses us and separates us from the rest of the world. We know nothing about what is happening in our dear France […][67]

The sense of engaging in an act of resistance via correspondence is palpable:

> in the evening we are spied on by agents of the 'Boche' police who walk past to listen through the doors and windows […] Please excuse the printing and spelling mistakes, but we must stop our work every now and then to listen to whether we are under surveillance, so we are distracted. The typewriter is loud […][68]

Bouqueniaux was right to be concerned, as those caught transporting or engaging in illicit correspondence were punished.[69] One woman in Roubaix was sentenced to six weeks' imprisonment and a 3,000-mark fine in February 1917 for transporting letters.[70] In some cases, entire towns were chastised: Tourcoing was fined 20,000 francs in August 1915 because 'numerous inhabitants' had been engaging in illegal correspondence for months.[71] However, individuals involved in these acts were not always unwavering patriots and resisters: occasionally women

engaging in or suspected of misconduct trafficked correspondence, using their intimacy with the Germans to their advantage.[72] In one instance, a woman from Lille allegedly helped a French secret agent to transport letters between France and the occupied area but was in fact working for the German secret service, giving the documents to the latter.[73] Again in Lille, a network called 'Radolpha' transported correspondence, but its agents were considered suspicious by *rapatriés*.[74] Other methods existed: in January 1915, the Kommandant of Lille complained that letters were being sent via Red Cross personnel, prisoners of war or even German officers.[75]

This correspondence raised the morale of locals, providing a much-needed link to the outside world and circumventing German dominance. The attitude behind such actions is evident in Blin's diary entry of January 1915: 'Green poster: Herr K[ommandan]t informs us that all "correspondence between the occupied area and the interior of France is officially forbidden." Nonsense! Correspondence will continue.'[76] By proving that the Germans did not have complete control, and providing information and occasionally mirth, clandestine publications and correspondence reinforced the confidence of the *occupés* and constituted non-violent resistance.

Avoiding work

Refusing to work for the Germans comprised active resistance because of the choice being made, the open defiance it represented and the punishments incurred. In some cases it led people to hide from the Germans, foreshadowing the *réfractaires* of the Second World War. Such a refusal is considered one of the most widespread phenomena of the occupation. Becker states that 'Out of patriotism, the refusal of voluntary work was massive',[77] which eventually led to forced labour.[78] Jean-François Condette underlines the importance of forced labour to the German war effort but also states that 'the inhabitants of the Nord, in their great majority, entered into resistance and attempted to escape from German orders [regarding forced labour]'.[79] These claims are too bold, as Salson argues: making such a generalisation based on some well-documented cases of refusal is problematic, when traces of instances of workers obeying have likely not been preserved.[80]

Yet the recorded cases of refusals are worthy of study, comprising a specific form of resistance, albeit one evolving as the occupation endured. From December 1914, roll calls were enforced whereby workers had

to present themselves, and refusals to do so were common. However, from October 1916, across the occupied zone unemployed workers or those refusing to work were drafted into forced-labour battalions, *Zivil Arbeiter Bataillonen*, often involved in trench construction or agricultural labour; Condette estimates that 50,000 such workers existed across occupied France.[81] Work therefore proved harder to resist, with most refusals carried out in vain.[82] In the latter half of the occupation there existed a combination of forced labour and calls for volunteers, comprising for Condette a 'daily hunt for workers'.[83] Mass refusals occurred sporadically from 1916,[84] but many were confined to 1915. This is unsurprising given the above measures and the brutal treatment of those refusing to work. Normal practice involved imprisonment accompanied by a diet of bread and water or complete deprivation of food,[85] threats and actual cases of shooting,[86] beatings,[87] and general maltreatment and torture.[88] The most infamous practice was that men were forced to stand, or were tied to a post, in a field and left for hours on end, often in cold or wet weather, sometimes naked or in their underwear. They were taken in again once they agreed to carry out work, usually signing an engagement of voluntary work.[89] It was reported in 1917 that at Saint-Saulve, sixteen-year-olds experienced this, and with every continued refusal to work, the wire attaching them to the post was tightened. Most only gave in 'after their hands were covered in blood'.[90] Many were sent to work on the trenches or other front-line duties as further punishment,[91] mirroring the treatment of Allied prisoner-of-war forced labourers.[92]

Despite this, beyond the *affaire des sacs*, some small-scale refusals did take place, even if only temporarily. This was the case in Templeuve, where in early July 1916 the Germans established a munitions depot and ordered the municipality to provide eighteen workers. The municipality refused, so the Germans responded with threats and demands for thirty workers. Faced with another refusal, the Germans forcibly rounded up men on 22 July, threatening to shoot those who resisted. Among these men were Louis Delebassée, Lucien Dhélin and Étienne Martin, who 'opposed all attempts at recruitment with the most formal resistance'. They were imprisoned; Delebassée was released after a week due to illness, but for thirty-nine days the occupiers 'tried out all the most ingenious ideas of German repression on Martin and Dhélin, in the form of "hard prison" [a diet of bread and water] and "black prison" [deprivation of sunlight and a bed]'.[93] In November 1916, the Mayor of Templeuve asked the Préfet to inform the French Government of the 'courageous attitude' of these three men.[94] The Mayor had also aided

Martin by providing him with an identity card and a job, with the hope of 'sheltering him from the soliciting of manpower'.[95] Further, another man had responded to the first call-up by hiding in the countryside, remaining untraceable for six weeks. The Mayor believed that these four men honoured the commune by their 'salutary example of resistance', even though three of them eventually gave in to the 'German machinery [*engrenage*]'. Everyone else around them contented themselves with the notion of 'the futility of resistance' and passivity, and often criticised the four. Out of a sense of duty, these men risked life and liberty, 'And this simple fact [is] unfortunately rare enough to deserve to be highlighted.' The Mayor believed that Martin was the only man 'from our little region' who resisted victoriously, deserving to be especially honoured; he should receive compensation from the Government when the time came.[96]

This affair underlined that attempted resistance to forced labour was rare, and successful refusals even rarer. Yet even in Templeuve this was not the only example. Another mass refusal occurred here in May 1917: seventy-six women were asked to work on German trenches; all refused, agreeing instead to work on agricultural tasks. However, two sisters refused 'politely but categorically' to work for the Germans in any form at all. They were threatened with deportation to Germany, but this was not carried out. The Germans confined the women to the outskirts of the town, trying for nine days to get them to engage in other tasks: 'The offer of the most benign gardening tasks was met by the woman with a smiling, but intransigent resistance.' The new Kommandant ('a very good man' according to the Mayor) initially facilitated a more positive conclusion:

> Unable to give in, since he had received his orders, but hesitant about taking big measures, on the other hand internally obliged to admire the rare sense of duty of these young women, he proclaimed once more that in wartime work is a rule for which there is no exception. But he finished by conceding to us that if it comes to it, if they were employed by the commune he could turn a blind eye whilst affirming that the principle was safe.[97]

This was a temporary 'salvation' for the women, who stated their logic: 'From the moment when it's for the French, we will be road-sweepers if we are asked.' They did this for five weeks, but 'Unfortunately certain women, without having been subjected to the same risks or having attempted any resistance, envied their relative independence.' This led to a denunciation on 28 June during a roll call of female workers, who said that 'they would strike if these 2 people were not forced to

work for the Germans'. The next day, the sisters were imprisoned and condemned to a diet of bread and water. Their philosophical response was: 'One does not die by eating dry bread and drinking water.' However, poor conditions led to one of them becoming seriously ill. They eventually appeared before a *conseil de guerre*, where other locals labelled them as 'leaders' (of resistance). One was sentenced to two months' imprisonment and a 5,000-mark fine, the other to a 2,500-mark fine. Once again, the Mayor asked that these individuals receive recognition and compensation after the liberation.[98] I have discovered no evidence of such compensation. However, compensation was forthcoming for at least twenty-seven *Nordistes* from various communes,[99] demonstrating not only the geographical scope but also the infrequent occurrence of this resistance. Nevertheless, refusing to work for the Germans was the most common reason for awarding a medal and/or financial compensation after the war. Also, some individuals were awarded the same compensation for being forced to work rather than refusing to work.[100] Not all mayors were as accommodating as the Mayor of Templeuve: the Mayor of Saint-Rémy-Chaussée allegedly denounced a man who refused to work for the Germans and escaped from German labour.[101]

The reasoning behind refusals echoes that of notable protests. One forced labourer wrote to his 'Dear Julie', telling her, 'Rather death than digging trenches. There are 500 of us *Lillois* civilians here. Not a traitor among us.'[102] Another wrote to his mother in June 1917:

> This morning they made us get up at 3.15 and leave at 4.15 to go to work in the trenches but we refused, but they put [us] in holes for an hour because, dear mother, I do not want to work to kill my brothers; this evening they are going to give us papers to sign, but we are going to say no.[103]

Not everyone withstood the pressure – another forced labourer, evidently distraught, wrote that he and his comrades had been forced to build trenches 'to kill our fathers, our brothers and our cousins'.[104]

Yet for non-forced labourers, even absence from work was seen as a hostile act against the German army, punishable by up to a year's imprisonment.[105] A clear-cut refusal to work was punished by up to three years' imprisonment and a fine of 10,000 marks, as those in Tourcoing who attempted to prevent men from working in June 1917 were reminded.[106] Some went beyond temporary absenteeism, however, opting instead for a life of hiding to avoid working for the Germans. Van der Meersch's character Alain did just this and faced the wrath of fellow *occupés* who were angry at him for provoking the Germans – eventually they denounced

him,[107] just as with the sisters from Templeneuve above or in other real-life cases.[108] Writing in particular about these *évadés*, van der Meersch noted that:

> It was no unusual thing during the war to see young people deliberately outlaw themselves and, under the pressures of necessity, take to a life of novel and dangerous excitement as a result of which they got into bad company, became demoralised by long periods spent in German prisons, were corrupted, lost their social status, and sank beyond the hope of recovery, though their first step down the slippery slope took, more often than not, the form of an act of heroism.[109]

Thus, unrespectability, misconduct and resistance were never completely separate from each other. This life of adventure and heroism did exist, and at least eleven *Nordistes* were given medals for such behaviour after the war. One man from Eppe-Sauvage successfully hid for three years; captured in July 1917, he was imprisoned for a year then sent to a forced-labour battalion.[110] He was nominated for the *Médaille de la Reconnaissance Française* (medal of French gratitude) but was only awarded the *Médaille des Victimes de l'Invasion*, third class,[111] which all eleven received. Another man from Douai hid for two years,[112] a *Tourquennois* for one,[113] and only two men remained undetected: one from Mouchin from February 1917 until the Armistice, another from Tourcoing from mid-1917 until the Armistice.[114] The remaining six hid successfully for at least a month each.[115] However ineffectual it was ultimately, resistance in the form of avoiding carrying out work for the Germans did occur, although this was always small-scale, usually individual and rarer than some have suggested.

Crossing the line

Civilians

The weight of occupation, especially being forced to work against one's country, was too much to bear for certain individuals. They took evasion a step further and attempted to escape the occupied area entirely, mostly in order to join the Allied armies and aid the war effort. Such a response to occupation was fairly widespread and occurred throughout the conflict. In Douai, in just two months of 1917, about 150–200 men succeeded in crossing the Belgian then Dutch borders, for which the town was punished.[116] A Jesuit priest allegedly helped these men, giving them false *laissez-passer* – he was responsible for aiding 500 men to get

to Holland before being denounced and imprisoned.[117] Denunciations of those involved in such resistance were relatively commonplace.[118] Occasionally, the Germans used *agents-provocateurs* who claimed to be *passeurs* offering safe passage to Holland, only to arrest and imprison the men who took up the offer. This led to the arrest of over seventy Frenchmen in Denain.[119] However impressive such numbers may be, they never reached the heights of the Belgian analogue. About 32,000 Belgians managed to reach the army of the Yser via Holland,[120] despite similar problems of denunciations – although their journey was shorter.

Priests also played a role in Denain,[121] and Cambrai, where, in February 1917, 'lots of young people are trying to reach French lines via Holland; they travel at night. To this end there exists a secret organisation; these young people hide in the day in presbyteries and the priests receive them and help their evasion.'[122] These clergymen engaged in acts of national solidarity and resistance. Holland was central to any escape – apart from one story of forced labourers at the front making their way towards the British during an advance[123] – and was also one of the major territories for spies during the war.[124]

German ordinances hint at an authority responding to and attempting to gain control of a genuine problem. In Valenciennes, a poster of October 1915 highlighted cases of attempted escape. The occupiers attributed such attempts to 'the fear of exposing themselves, at the conclusion of peace, to severe punishments from French authorities for having failed to enter, presently, in the service of the army'. The German authority stated that no military tribunal could legally or morally make such a judgement and that it was 'persuaded that the intelligence and good sense of the population will energetically oppose these erroneous and unreasonable ideas and serve to prevent any attempt to evade [German] inspection in the interests of those men called up for inspection'.[125] In reality, attempts to escape were likely motivated more by a genuine desire to join the French army or simply to reach unoccupied France than by a fear of post-war French judicial reprisals. Some men felt it was their duty to at least try to join the army; other *occupés* occasionally looked down on those who had made no attempt. *Rapatriés* from Caudry bemoaned that with the number of men of fighting age (*mobilisables*) remaining there, two whole army divisions could be formed.[126] Similarly, Blin noted in February 1918:

> Too many *mobilisables* having not succeeded in leaving our region have accepted too easily a situation that shelters them from the dangers of war

> […] The duty was to try to reach England via Holland. Cross [the border] or get captured; the means to evade have not been lacking and many 'decided men' have done so.[127]

Further sources suggest that leaving the occupied area was easier than might be expected.[128] *The Times* reported that its own correspondent left occupied France via Belgium and Holland in December 1914, by bribing Germans.[129] However, in 1917, *rapatriés* from Valenciennes, Saint-Saulve and Anzin complained that the copies of *Le Petit Journal* and *Le Matin* which occasionally appeared in the occupied area sometimes detailed the ruses people used to escape. These publications implied that doing so was easy, involving (like the *Times* journalist) a simple bribe to German sentries. The result was an increase in the number of sentries, making escape harder in reality.[130] Indeed, a clandestine letter sent to London in 1916 stated that although many men attempted to escape to Belgium, only some succeeded – the rest were 'killed like rabbits', every week.[131] Some certainly were: in Douai, a man tried to leave the occupied area by dressing as a woman but was shot dead at Hénin-Liétard.[132] A handful of people received (sometimes posthumous) honorary compensation from the French Government after the war for such attempts.[133]

Those wishing to reach unoccupied France were aided by *passeurs*, who were not always perceived as unequivocal resisters and who were often held in suspicion by the population, like fraudsters – some *were* fraudsters.[134] This scepticism extended to non-occupied French authorities: M. Aliotte from Vieux-Condé helped young men reach Holland during the occupation and was subsequently nominated for the *Médaille de la Reconnaissance Française* after the war; his case was rejected, as, despite his courageous conduct concerning such men, he had also been imprisoned for fifteen months for theft![135] Others were considerably more respectable, such as Princess Marie de Croÿ of Bellignies.[136] Whatever their motives, these guides also helped to transport an even more dangerous 'cargo': Allied servicemen.

Allied servicemen

Whether soldiers having lagged behind the retreat of 1914, escaped prisoners of war, or downed airmen, there were a surprising number of Allied servicemen trying to avoid Germans in occupied France. There were two options: remain in hiding until the end of the war, or attempt to return to Allied lines. Often the two were combined, with servicemen

hiding for a certain period and eventually escaping. Harbouring Allied servicemen – providing them with food, clothes, shelter or medical care – and helping them to escape was one of the most explicit forms of resistance.[137] It was also one of the most dangerous: Allied servicemen behind German lines were supposed to give themselves up immediately, and civilians had to inform the Germans of such men. Any serviceman found in civilian clothes would be killed, and any civilian who had aided them would be guilty of treason and punished accordingly.[138] Nevertheless, many *occupés* did aid Allied servicemen – one of the most well known and commonly documented acts of resistance, for which numerous archival sources provide evidence across the Nord.[139] Unsurprisingly, communes closest to the front saw more examples of this, so many cases took place outside the Nord, especially in Saint-Quentin.[140] Clearly, for the Germans this was resistance, and many French people also recognised such acts as resistance or at least patriotic opposition. So too did the British and French Governments both during and after the war.[141]

Attitudes to Allied servicemen altered over time: in Douai, André Cochain was among twenty soldiers in hiding. Initially looked after by the Desplanque family, who had two sons at the front, he was treated like one of their sons. Cochain stayed with them until February 1915, when he feared denunciation by a woman who had five children at the front. Consequently, he moved hiding places, staying with Mme Lévy. For the first few months, she 'was very good for him, and also tended to injured men and French soldiers', but soon 'she made acquaintances with German officers; these frequented her living room and sometimes stayed at hers until very late at night'. By mid-1916, after she had met with high-ranking Germans, including members of Crown Prince Ruprecht of Bavaria's staff, Cochain no longer felt safe, and left without telling Lévy.[142] This case highlights the blurred line between resistance and misconduct some *occupés* walked. It also suggests that as the occupation went on a certain amount of complicity with the Germans may have been necessary for survival; thus, resistance lessened.

To facilitate the passage of Allied servicemen out of the occupied area, some created organised escape networks, precursors to those of the Second World War. One of the most famous examples was the Comité Jacquet: based in Lille, its leaders were Eugène Jacquet, Georges Maertens, Ernest Deconnink and Belgian Sylvère Verhulst. These men aided at least 200 Allied servicemen, many of whom they also helped escape across the Belgian and Dutch borders.[143] They carried out their actions with the

knowledge and assistance of numerous other compatriots who kept their secret, provided shelter and food or actively led men across the border.[144] The downfall of the *Comité* was the 'Mapplebeck' affair: in March 1915, English aviator Corporal Mapplebeck was attacked and had to make a forced landing on the outskirts of Lille. The *Comité* provided him with nourishment and shelter, eventually assisting him in escaping the occupied area. Once returned to his unit, Mapplebeck went on a sortie over Lille and dropped a note, humorously thanking von Heinrich for his hospitality. Mapplebeck was doubly foolish, as he had kept a diary during his time in Lille, and hid it in Jacquet's house.[145] He started a chain of events ending in the execution of all four members of the *Comité* on 22 September 1915, and the arrest of over 200 others suspected of involvement. Jacquet himself expressed shock at the consequences of the Mapplebeck affair: 'I would never have thought that an affair that fell onto me by chance would become so heavy and would bring me such problems!'[146]

The manner in which the *Comité* members faced their death demonstrates much about the intent of such resisters. In a joint letter to their friends, the four men wrote:

> Dear friends, comrades,
> Here we are at the end! In a few moments we will be shot.
> We are going to die bravely as good Frenchmen, as a brave Belgian man.
> Standing up! Our eyes uncovered, our hands free
> Adieu to all and good luck
> *Vive la République*
> *Vive la France*.[147]

They perceived their sentence as a sacrifice for France, highlighting the strength of their patriotism and the sense of duty that led them to carry out such actions.[148] Yet within their actions there also lay an element of respectability, which Jacquet himself was keen to reinforce in his last letter to his wife and family: 'We are acquitted of the charge of espionage. This is quite right. ENGLAND will therefore have to do its duty towards you.'[149] Jacquet also reinforced the vision of his actions as a duty to France: 'THE NATION will be there, Friends too, and you can say that your Husband died like a good Soldier faced with the enemy, without ever having trembled!'[150] *Lillois* were informed of the execution via a poster.[151] The affair had a profound effect on the population of Lille-Roubaix-Tourcoing, evidenced by the frequency with which diarists mentioned these events.[152] The German sentence undoubtedly aimed to discourage a repetition of the *Comité*'s actions, but above all it made

martyrs out of the four men. Surprisingly quickly, the story of the *Comité* reached beyond the occupied area,[153] and by the end of the occupation it had become legendary (see the next chapter).

A similarly celebrated case was that of Louise de Bettignies and her accomplices, such as Louise Thuliez,[154] Léonie Vanhoutte,[155] and others[156] – one estimate puts the number of collaborators at eighty.[157] De Bettignies was in fact working for and financed by both British and French intelligence,[158] and created the Service Alice,[159] so-called after her codename, Alice Dubois. The Service comprised an escape network, but she and other members also engaged in espionage, transmitting military intelligence such as train and troop movements to the Allies.[160] Their network was more comprehensive than that of Jacquet, lasted longer, and succeeded in joining together two pre-existing networks.[161] It was responsible for the successful escape of about 1,000 servicemen.[162] The full story of de Bettignies and her network is fascinating.[163] Like the Comité Jacquet, accomplices were eventually discovered and punished by the Germans. De Bettignies herself was arrested in October 1915 and died in prison on 27 September 1918;[164] thus, the many honours she received were posthumous.[165] It is noticeable that many of these resisters were caught in 1915 or 1916,[166] after which active resistance was more difficult and less frequent. Some French escape networks tied in with Belgian ones. Thus, men aided in France by de Bettignies were helped further in Belgium by Edith Cavell[167] – indeed, Thuliez worked with both women. As such, patriotism for a single homeland may not have been central to the motivations of these resisters, although the Belgian–French border had always been a fluid one, and the wartime alliance further reinforced notions of shared identities.

Not all *occupés* were willing to incur the risks involved in harbouring and assisting Allied personnel. Many engaging in this form of resistance were denounced, which occurred in particular in Lille, Le Cateau, Roubaix, Fourmies and Haubourdin.[168] The Comité Jacquet was denounced, as were members of the Service Alice,[169] and the Directrice of the Hospice Général in Cambrai who had helped 100 French soldiers return to France.[170] Some may have denounced others out of fear of German reprisals if they discovered the men themselves. Others may have wanted to win German favour, to improve their personal situation or to enact vengeance.

What was the overall intent behind, and effect of, harbouring Allied personnel and creating escape networks? Given the high numbers of men

killed on the Western Front, and the relatively small number of Allied servicemen or men of military age who successfully escaped the occupied zone, it is questionable whether their presence in the Allied military would have turned the tide of battle. However, in aiding such men, *occupés* asserted their patriotism, their humanitarianism, their willingness to defy the Germans and their wish for an Allied victory. They also adhered to their principles, reconfiguring their moral-patriotic compass so that for them their actions were always justified, always respectable. Returning soldiers to Allied lines was a minor moral-patriotic victory that *occupés* linked inextricably to the Allied victory. There was, for this and other forms of resistance, a non-military value to the actions, which took on new meanings in the interwar period. However, for some, like de Bettignies, the victory was even more real because they were actively working *for* the Allies – they were themselves participating in the war.

Espionage and Allied secret services

The Allies were naturally interested in the information that *occupés* could provide them and subsequently recruited numerous people like de Bettignies, often refugees and *rapatriés* sent back to their place of origin.[171] In occupied France, Belgium and Luxembourg, 6,000–6,400 individuals, including many women, worked for Allied secret services in espionage and escape networks.[172] Most operated in Belgium, but some, like members of La Dame Blanche, crossed into the Nord.[173] Each *service* (resistance group) contained about twenty to thirty people, with the largest ones working for the British,[174] although there was considerable competition for recruitment among Allied secret services, even among the various branches of the British intelligence services.[175] The Allies were particularly interested in troop and train movements.[176]

Yet it was not easy to recruit people to engage in an activity 'as discredited as espionage'.[177] The *occupés* were, as ever, concerned with social respectability, and to enter into these *services*, the pejorative connotation of espionage had to be removed.[178] Both occupied and non-occupied French people during the war (especially in 1914) experienced spy-mania, a psychosis about spies epitomised by the Mata Hari affair.[179] The French secret service collected considerable documentation on suspected spies.[180] For many, a gendered understanding of espionage meant it was seen as feminine and negative,[181] relying on seduction and betrayal. Indeed, many spies during the war were female, especially agents in the occupied area, and it was not uncommon for them to be labelled by

certain people as prostitutes, among other typologies.[182] The perception of 'loose' women and prostitutes as potential spies by locals has already been established; occupied populations differed little from their free compatriots in this respect. However, the idea of a traitorous spy such as Hari was accompanied by that of a patriotic spy, or spy-martyr, such as Marthe Richer/Richard.[183] Still, those working for the British in occupied Belgium wanted to be recognised as soldiers, not 'vulgar' spies,[184] echoing somewhat the sentiment of Jacquet's last letter. Tammy Proctor argues that, given that female espionage was portrayed as a hidden evil tied to sexuality, after the war, female Allied agents in the occupied territories were largely forgotten because they fit neither the 'horizontal collaborator' nor the 'martyred victim' label.[185] Olivier Forcade agrees that such women were seen as victims first, then resisters.[186] Male agents faced fewer questions regarding their motives and respectability, and although men did engage in espionage, the understanding of spying as mainly feminine lasted throughout the occupation.

The initial decision to engage in espionage for the Allies represented a desire to contribute in some way to an Allied victory and subsequent liberation of their homeland. Some agents working for the Allied secret services were paid, whereas others refused to accept money except operational costs.[187] Motives varied from a sense of adventure, financial gain and a certain freedom (especially for women), to patriotic, religious and moral conviction.[188] Agents in the occupied area were perceived by the British to have been, generally, working for patriotic reasons; and they hailed from diverse social classes, from priests and gendarmes to seamstresses, smugglers and railway officials.[189] These agents were trained and sent to occupied France and Belgium via balloons and parachutes.[190] Their job was observation: watching railway lines,[191] and noting down information on military units. Many other *occupés*, probably at the instigation of Allied agents, engaged in this task, including entire families taking shifts at observation posts.[192]

In the Nord, it is hard to evaluate the total number of people who engaged in this resistance, but there is evidence of Allied agents and espionage networks operating here.[193] In June 1915, Blin allegedly spoke with a French secret agent,[194] and agents were certainly present in occupied territory, albeit more commonly from 1917. For example, male agents Lefebvre and Faux were dropped by a British balloon at Vieux-Condé on the night of 26–7 February 1917. They sent a pigeon back on 27 February asking for more pigeons, but the Royal Flying Corps could not fulfil the request due to bad weather conditions.[195] In the meantime,

according to one *rapatrié*, Lefebvre had given many women of Condé news of their mobilised husbands. One local woman denounced him, but Lefebvre himself 'was not very audacious, and when arrested, soon confessed and denounced his accomplice'.[196] Like all belligerents, the Germans took espionage very seriously,[197] thus both Levebvre and Faux were condemned to death, executed on 31 January 1918.[198]

Another death was that of British agent Jules Bar, a miner from Trith-Saint-Léger, near Valenciennes. Captured after jumping from a British plane, he was executed on 26 June 1917. In his last letter, Bar noted that he left behind other members of his network, and echoed the sentiments of Jacquet: 'I will die without fear, because I believe I have carried out my duty […] I will walk to the execution post without weakness, for I want to show the Germans how a Frenchman knows how to die for his *Patrie*.'[199] It is not known whether Bar's network survived him.

Janet Morgan argues that none of the agent-balloonists sent into France by the British in December 1917 and January 1918 had been able to set up a network, and many died.[200] Such plans included the creation of a service 'LL' to monitor railway movements on the line Sallaumines–Billy-Montigny–Hénin-Liétard, and the line Lens–Beaumont–Douai. This information was to be transmitted to GHQ. A similar 'service GG' for Hénin–Liétard was to be created.[201] It is unclear if these plans came to fruition. Nevertheless, after the war, the British I(b) intelligence agency praised such work: 'This information was of vital importance in drawing up the enemy's order of battle. It had a direct effect on the operations and movements of our own forces, and became therefore the first objective of our Secret Service.'[202] Nevertheless, it is unlikely that this resistance actually turned the tide of any battles, given the nature of trench warfare.

In Maubeuge, seven members of an espionage network were denounced; five were sentenced to imprisonment and two executed in November 1915.[203] In Lille, Belgian teenager Léon Trulin and his friends photographed military installations and passed on the information to the Allies.[204] Denounced by a friend, Trulin was executed on 8 November 1915.[205] As with the Comité Jacquet, Trulin's case became rapidly well known, seen as emblematic of occupation resistance:[206] Martin-Mamy described him as 'a soldier without uniform'.[207] Some individuals were punished by the Germans – although not all were genuine spies[208] – for transmitting information to the Allies and were thus later rewarded by the French or British Governments (see the Epilogue). Spying was therefore reconfigured from a dishonourable action to a respectable one worthy of official praise, although locals rarely expressed their opinion

on Allied spies. The aid they offered such agents during the war suggests that they had accepted Allied intelligence operations as legitimate, as opposed to treasonous, unrespectable, pro-German spying. However, lacking the performative aspect of respectable resistance, espionage could never be as widespread or acceptable as the former.

Useful information was often transmitted back to the Allies via carrier pigeons, which had been parachuted into the occupied area.[209] The British secret service in particular put a lot of effort and resources into methods of transporting pigeons and agents into occupied France and Belgium.[210] From March 1917, in certain localities pigeons were dropped on a regular basis, depending on the weather. This was the case in Vieux-Condé, Valenciennes and Douai.[211] However, paid agents were not the only people sending information via pigeons. From early 1917 in the 'Pigeon Dropping Stunt', the British sent questionnaires asking the *occupés* to detail information on military units and movements. The questionnaires were to be returned by pigeon or, from early 1918, by inflatable balloons dropped with them.[212] The Germans were aware of these questionnaires, but this did not dissuade everyone. A middle-class diarist from Maubeuge recorded that such questionnaires had been found and sent back by a group of friends from November 1917; by May 1918 all twenty-one friends had been arrested and faced trial. One, a municipal councillor, hanged himself in his cell rather than face a second interrogation; others were imprisoned or executed.[213] Elsewhere, more *Nordistes* were punished for espionage involving carrier pigeons.[214] Many completed the questionnaires: indeed, so confident were the British that they made sure to add instructions informing the *occupés* to disguise their handwriting in case of discovery by Germans. Yet they did not wish to dissuade *occupés* from responding.[215] Their French collaborator remarked that:

> As far as the Flemish population are concerned the question of disguising the handwriting is not of so much importance, but I know how much the French people are fond of glory, and, unless they are warned, I am afraid some of them will be sticking their names to the bottom of the message just to show how they are trying to help their country.[216]

These fears were well founded. A man from Valenciennes completed a questionnaire, which was intercepted by the Germans; he was discovered and killed. In 1928, the town erected a monument in his honour.[217] The only message successfully retrieved from the balloon system (as opposed to the more successful pigeon scheme) was found on a German wire

during a British raid – and the sender had 'been indiscreet enough, in spite of definite instructions to the contrary, to sign her full name and address'.[218] At least three people from Nomain were executed in October 1917 after their completed questionnaires were discovered, one of which was 'imprudently signed'.[219] These deaths meant that it was not the Germans who ultimately prevented further information from being transmitted, as the British noted:

> No measures which the enemy thought fit to adopt in occupied territory were capable of preventing either the despatch of the balloons or the picking up of the pigeons and subsequent despatch of the information by the inhabitants. Many of them unfortunately were shot, but this in no way deterred others, although we were later asked by the French Government to desist for a period from putting this operation into practice.[220]

Nevertheless, the consequences of successfully transmitting information were sometimes spectacular. In Wallers, on 6 August 1918, an airdropped pigeon was found with a letter asking for the *occupés* to provide militarily important information. It was passed among the inhabitants until someone knowing relevant details was found – this person noted that at Lourchies there was a depot of numerous munitions trains. A farmer sent the pigeon back, and just four days later Allied planes bombed the depot, destroying it completely. The two men were decorated after the war for their actions.[221] In general, I(b) was surprised by the results of the 'Pigeon Dropping Stunt'. It had predicted a 5 per cent return of questionnaires but on average received 40 per cent, sometimes more. The information 'in most cases was of a very high order and had the advantage of being fresh and rapidly transmitted. For instance, the balloons were usually despatched at about 11 o'clock at night and many of the messages were received at 9 o'clock the next morning.'[222] The official British history of carrier pigeons in the war also attests to the success of the scheme and the valuable information provided,[223] as do French Deuxième Bureau documents.[224] Many *occupés*, including *Nordistes*, therefore engaged in this resistance, which explains the monuments to carrier pigeons of the war still standing in Lille and at Le Cateau.[225]

Other forms of active resistance took place across the Nord, from relatively rare acts of sabotage,[226] to frequent fabrication of documents (mainly identity cards and *laissez-passer*).[227] Although never more than the actions of a minority, most forms of active resistance represented a desire to oppose German cultural and military control, to improve the

morale of fellow *occupés*, to remain in contact with the outside world and to participate in the war effort. Even within the morally suspect world of active resistance, many remained convinced that they were doing the right, the respectable thing, and balked at any suggestion otherwise. Active resistance, by never comprising armed resistance, retained an air of respectability for many, but perhaps that was simply self-justification. For those participating in it, it was a duty, an honourable means of joining the war effort and increasing the chances of Allied victory – or at least decreasing the possibility of a German one. The overall effects of active resistance, or of any of the forms of resistance studied, are difficult to judge, but resistance in this occupation certainly provided a blueprint for that of 1939–45.[228] It also allowed the *occupés* to maintain their identity and to give them a sense of purpose. As resister *curé* Delattre said, 'I am a priest more than ever; I am a *Lillois* more than ever; I am French more than ever.'[229]

Resistance reviewed

Resistance in all its forms meant that locals felt less helpless and developed pride in their locality and its apparent defiance. At a time when misconduct was perceived as widespread, resistance provided a counter-example of how to behave and further fanned the flame of patriotism. Certain types of resistance were more commonplace than others: many notables of all political stripes protested German orders, and symbolic expressions of patriotism occurred in multiple localities throughout the occupation; active resistance, on the other hand, involved a small minority, but eventually became the most-cited form of opposition to the Germans. Oppositional acts tended to be more frequent up to the end of 1915, after which instances of perceived or real defiance against the occupiers were punished more severely and thus became riskier. However, some resistance did continue throughout the war. The previous three chapters have demonstrated that such actions – representing the counterpoint to misconduct, disunity and acts of criminality – were important to locals' understanding of their experience, however unrepresentative or potentially unsuccessful they were as forms of resistance. This part of the book has underlined that there is some truth behind the idea of widespread patriotism in the occupied Nord, which manifested itself across and motivated multiple forms of resistance. This patriotism was central to the dominant occupied culture,

causing adherents to criticise those engaged in allegedly unpatriotic actions and to laud the actions of those perceived to be engaging in the preferred behaviour: resistance.

Studying different forms of resistance also underlines the importance of respectability to a large segment of the occupied population. The most commonplace forms of opposition to the occupiers involved polite protests aimed at protecting locals, or symbolic displays of Frenchness, rather than explicit insults or armed conflict. For many, the occupiers could be defied or even ridiculed but had to be respected in daily interactions – to do so reduced the chances of punishment and reinforced notions of French civilisation. Active resistance muddied the waters somewhat, but even here there were instances of resisters justifying their actions as fulfilling a duty, expressing patriotism and doing nothing wrong – accusations of wrongdoing or shady activities would undermine their sense of acting in a respectable manner and their national identity.

In both parts of this book, I have examined key behaviours that dominated the perception, representation and reality of the occupation of the Nord during the First World War. However, the end of the occupation did not mark a clean break with what went before; as such, in the final chapter I will consider the nature of the liberation and the way in which the occupation of 1914–18, and especially misconduct and resistance, were remembered and, crucially, forgotten.

Notes

1 Emmanuel Debruyne, 'Combattre l'occupant en Belgique et dans les départements français occupés en 1914–1918: une résistance "avant la lettre"', *Vingtième Siècle: Revue d'histoire*, 115:3 (2012), 15–30; Emmanuel Debruyne, *Le Réseau Edith Cavell: Des femmes et des hommes en résistance* (Brussels: Racine, 2015); Robert Vandenbussche (ed.), *La Résistance en France et Belgique occupées (1914–1918)* (Lille: Presses de l'Université Charles de Gaulle-Lille 3, 2012).

2 ADN, 9R716, German poster, Roubaix, 29 April 1915; ADN, 9R720, German poster, Roubaix, 14 October 1917; ADN, 9R732, Commissaire Central to Préfet, 13 October 1917; ADN, 9R746, German poster, Tourcoing, 20 August 1917; AN, F23/375, Ministère des Régions Libérées, Secrétariat Général, Département du Nord, Récompense Honorifique, Proposition en faveur de M. Debiéve Arthur, from Gommegnies, 28 May 1923.

3 ADHS, 4M513, repatriation report no. 1062, 21 March 1917.

4 For copies of the publications, see ADN, 9R973–8; Jean Heuclin and Jean-Paul Visse (eds.), *La Presse clandestine dans le Nord occupé, 1914–1918* (Valenciennes: Presses Universitaires de Valenciennes, 2014).
5 Auguste Leman, *Pages actuelles, 1914–1919: Lille sous l'occupation allemande: les héros du journalisme* (Paris: Bloud et Gay, 1919), especially pp. 7–11; ADHS, 4M513, report no. 1031, 16 March 1917 (Lille) and no. 1252, 28 April 1917 (Tourcoing); Helen McPhail, *The Long Silence: Civilian Life under the German Occupation of Northern France, 1914–1918* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1999), pp. 133–4.
6 Leman, *Pages actuelles*, p. 17.
7 McPhail, *The Long Silence*, p. 133.
8 Deborah Buffton, 'The Ritual of Surrender: Northern France under Two Occupations, 1914–1918, 1940–44', Ph.D. dissertation (University of Wisconsin, 1987), pp. 117–20.
9 Leman, *Pages actuelles*; Henri de Forge and Jean Mauclère, *Feuilles françaises dans la tourmente: Les héros de la presse clandestine dans le Nord envahi, 1914–1918* (Paris: Berger Levrault, 1932); McPhail, *The Long Silence*, pp. 126–35.
10 ADN, 9R973, *La Patience*, no. [5] (n.d.), p. 33 of typewritten copy.
11 ADN, 9R973, *La Patience*, March 1915 (no. 6).
12 See, for example, ADN, 9R973, *La Patience*, April 1915 and May 1915.
13 ADN, 3U281/77, 1er CA Région, Conseil de Guerre, plainte no. 613, inventory of trial of Mme Rouvaux, *La Liberté – Organe n'ayant passé par aucune censure: Bulletin de propagande patriotique* (15 November 1915).
14 Annette Becker, *Les Cicatrices rouges 14–18: France et Belgique occupées* (Paris: Fayard, 2010), p. 261.
15 AMT, H4A26, *Tourcoing Libéré*, 'Allocution prononcée dans l'hôtel de ville de Tourcoing, le 21 Octobre 1918, par M. le Président de la République, en réponse au discours de bienvenue M. Vandevenne, adjoint, faisant fonctions de Maire de Tourcoing', pp. 13–15.
16 *La Patience*, no. 5.
17 *La Patience*, March 1915.
18 *La Patience*, March 1915.
19 *La Patience*, March 1915 and April 1915.
20 Neither feature among the different iterations of the network's publications listed in Heuclin and Visse, *La Presse clandestine*.
21 *La Liberté*.
22 ADN, 3U281/77, Rouvaux inventory, *La Vérité*, 15 December 1915.
23 *La Vérité*, 15 December 1915.
24 *La Vérité*, 15 December 1915.
25 ADN, 3U281/77, L'Inspecteur de Police Mobile Drouot to the Contrôleur Général des Services de Recherche, 18 March 1919, et passim.
26 *La Vérité*.

27 *La Liberté*.
28 *La Liberté*.
29 *La Liberté*, untitled typewritten document bearing the slogan of *La Patience*, May 1915.
30 ADN, 9R973, *La Patience*, n.d.
31 ADN, 9R973, *La Patience*, March 1915, 'Observations et recommandations'.
32 McPhail, *The Long Silence*, pp. 132–3.
33 ADN, 9R720, German poster, 'Condamnation', Roubaix, 29 August 1917; ADN, 9R799, sheet marked 'Avril 1917'; ADHS, 4M513, report no. 1252, 28 April 1917 (Tourcoing).
34 De Forge and Mauclère, *Feuilles françaises*, p. 92.
35 AN, F23/377, Secrétaire du Comité du Musée de l'Invasion du Département du Nord, to Monsieur Reibeil, Ministre des Régions Libérées, 23 August 1922; McPhail, *The Long Silence*, p. 134.
36 AN, BB32/300, Ministre du Travail to Ministre le Garde des Sceaux, Ministre de la Justice, concerning *L'Oiseau de France* collaborator Paul Assoignon, 2 July 1921; AN, F23/375, Ministère des Régions Libérées, Secrétariat Général, Récompense aux Otages, proposition concernant M. Dispa Jules Aimé, Roubaix, 7 March 1921; AN, F23/375, proposition concernant M. Dutrieux, Tourcoing, 7 March 1921; AN, F23/377, proposition concernant Mme Dispa, Roubaix, n.d.
37 McPhail, *The Long Silence*, p. 135.
38 Maxence van der Meersch, *Invasion '14*, trans. Gerard Hopkins (London: Constable & Co, 1937), pp. 57–60, 261.
39 ADN, 9R225, Blin diary, 30 January 1915.
40 ADN, 9R225, Blin diary, 19 March 1915.
41 ADN, 9R225, Blin diary, 29 July 1915.
42 ADN, 9R225, Blin diary, 10 May 1916.
43 See Bernard Wilkin, *Aerial Propaganda and the Wartime Occupation of France, 1914–18* (London and New York: Routledge, 2016).
44 'L'Osiau d' France, 1917', in Jules Mousseron, *Les Boches au pays noir: Souvenirs de la guerre et de l'occupation allemande – poésies patoises* (Lille: J. Tallandier, 1931), p. 80.
45 AMT, HA25, Commission Historique du Nord, Questionnaire de la Guerre de 1914, Réponse de la Ville de Tourcoing (n.d., sent to Municipal Council on 29 April 1921), response 74.
46 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 514, 18 Janaury 1917 (Ferrière-la-Grande).
47 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 892, 7 March 1917.
48 ADN, 3U281/77, ADN, 3U281/77, Rouvaux inventory, *Les Vidanges: Bulletin concernant le chapitre de la malpropreté à Bruxelles, Lille, Roub-Tourcoing*, no. 1, edition B (1 January 1917).
49 Sophie De Schaepdrijver, *La Belgique et la Première Guerre mondiale*, trans. Claudine Spitaels and Marnix Vincent (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2004), p. 231.

50 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 914, 8 March 1917 (Lille).
51 ADHS, 4M513, reports from 1917: no. 936, 10 March (Lille); no. 1188, 24 April (Lille); no. 1199, 23 April (Roubaix).
52 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 941, 10 March 1917 (Lille). However, in report no. 914, 8 March 1917 (Lille), it is stated that the Germans had not discovered the authors.
53 Pierre Baucher, *Au long des rues, souvenirs de l'occupation allemande à Lille* (Strasbourg: Imprimerie Strasbourgeoise, 1921), p. 195, cited in Philippe Nivet, *La France occupée 1914–1918* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2011), p. 436, note 90.
54 There were about eighty publications in Belgium: Emmanuel Debruyne and Jehanne Paternostre, *La Résistance au quotidien, 1914–1918: Témoignages inédits* (Brussels: Racine, 2009), p. 121. See also Emmanuel Debruyne and Sophie De Schaepdrijver, '*Sursum corda*: the underground press in occupied Belgium, 1914–1918', *First World War Studies*, 4:1 (2013), 23–38; Emmanuel Debruyne, '"Véridiques, antiprussiens et patriotes": Les journaux prohibés en pays occupé (1914–1918)', in Robert Vandenbussche (ed.), *La Résistance en France et Belgique occupées (1914–1918)* (Lille: Presses de l'Université Charles de Gaulle-Lille 3, 2012), pp. 77–98; Emmanuel Debruyne, 'Forbidden reading in occupied countries: Belgium and France, 1914–1918', in S. Towheed and E. G. C. King, *Reading and the First World War* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 227–41.
55 Jean-Claude Auriol, *Les Ténèbres de l'occupation* (Fontenay-le Comte: Imprimerie Lussaud, 2008), p. 116.
56 Debruyne and Paternostre, *La Résistance au quotidien*, p. 18; De Schaepdrijver, *La Belgique*, p. 242.
57 For example, in Lille, sixty-two Frenchmen (including the Mayor) were permitted to receive French translations of German-language papers: see documents in AML, 4H29–30 and 4H60; ADN, 9R753, Commissaire Central de Tourcoing to Préfet, 2 February 1916; Paul Trochon, *La Grande Guerre (1914–1918): Lille avant et pendant l'occupation allemande* (Tourcoing: J. Duvivier, 1922), p. 121.
58 74J225, diary of M. Blin (instituteur en retraite at Auchy-les-Orchies), 16 February and 28 March 1916.
59 Trochon, *La Grande Guerre*, p. 117 and 121; NA, WO106/45, Propaganda and Intelligence Schemes – Aerial dropping information to Agents, 1916–1920. See also Wilkin, *Aerial Propaganda*.
60 Trochon, *La Grande Guerre*, p. 122; J. P. Whitaker, *Under the Heel of the Hun (An Englishman's Two-and-a-Half Years in Roubaix and Lille)* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1917), pp. 62–3.
61 See, for example, AN, F23/375, Récompenses Honorifiques aux Otages, Médaille de la Reconnaissance Française, Proposition en faveur de M. Vanlaton Eugène, from Lille, 3 February 1921.

62 Séverine Salome, 'Valenciennes sous l'occupation allemande: 1914–18', master's dissertation (Lille III, 1998), p. 73; Georges Dubut-Maison, *Journal d'un bourgeois de Maubeuge, avant, pendant le siècle et l'occupation allemande, 1914–1918* (Tourcoing: J. Duvivier, 1923), 15 April 1915, pp. 110–11.
63 See ADN, 9R716, German poster, Roubaix, 21 April 1915; ADN, 9R719, German poster, Roubaix, 15 Febraury 1917; Trochon, *La Grande Guerre*, pp. 116–17.
64 Whitaker, *Under the Heel of the Hun*, pp. 63–4.
65 ADN, 74J223, Ministère de la Guerre, État-Major, 5e Bureau, Contrôle Postal Militaire, 23 June 1916; *Le Temps*, *Le Figaro* and *Le Matin* (29 July 1916).
66 ADN, 9R822, Comparution de M. le Maire devant le Juge pour la publication, en France, de lettres de protestation contre l'évacuation forcée par l'Autorité allemande, 7 August 1916.
67 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 881, 6 March 1917, M. Bouqueniaux from Trélon, to M. Jourdain (Moulain de l'Abbaye-Gif, Seine et Oise), 13 February 1917. Carried by Mlle Berthe Sol, who arrived on 3 March.
68 *Ibid*.
69 See, for example, Annette Becker (ed.), *Journaux de combattants et de civils de la France du Nord dans la Grande Guerre* (Lille: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 1998), Hirsch diary, 21 November 1915, p. 256; ADN, 74J224, diary of M. Trollin (Directeur de l'École Rollin, Lille), 6 August 1915; ADN, 9R745, German poster, Roubaix, 21 April 1915, and Tourcoing, 24 August 1915; ADHS, 4M513, reports no. 684, 6 February 1917 (Maubeuge) and no. 503, 17 January 1917 (Solesnes).
70 ADN, 9R719, German poster, Roubaix, 15 February 1917.
71 ADN, 9R745, German poster, Tourcoing, 12 August 1915.
72 See, for example, ADHS, 4M513, reports no. 1031, 16 March 1917 (Lille); no. 971, 13 March 1917 (Lille).
73 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 965, 12 March 1917.
74 ADHS, 4M513, reports no. 1185 and no. 1199, 23 April 1917.
75 *Bulletin de Lille*, 3 January 1915, cited in Nivet, *La France occupée*, p. 17.
76 ADN, 74J225, Blin diary, 2 January 1915.
77 Becker, *Les Cicatrices rouges*, p. 171.
78 Becker, *Les Cicatrices rouges*, p. 176.
79 Jean-François Condette, 'Résister au travail forcé dans le Nord occupé (1914–1918)', in Robert Vandenbussche (ed.), *La Résistance en France et Belgique occupées (1914–1918)* (Lille: Presses de l'Université Charles de Gaulle-Lille 3, 2012), p. 16.
80 Philippe Salson, *L'Aisne occupée: Les civils dans la Grande Guerre* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2015), pp. 178–9.
81 Condette, 'Résister au travail forcé', p. 25.

82 Georges Gromaire, *L'Occupation allemande en France (1914–1918)* (Paris: Payot, 1925), pp. 214–15, 219.
83 Condette, 'Résister au travail forcé', p. 60.
84 For example, in March 1916, the Kommandantur of Lomme punished the commune for refusals to make fences. AML, 4H121, Préfet to Kommandant of Lomme, and Kommandant of Lomme to Mairie of Lomme, 18 March 1916.
85 ADHS, 4M513, reports no. 519, 18 Janaury 1917 (Sous le Bois); no. 524, 18 January 1917 (Saint-Rémy-du-Nord); no. 491, 16 January 1917 (Somme/Nord); no. 481, 16 January 1917 (Roisies); ADN, 9R252, 'Déclaration du Pupille PIVION Emile', n.d.
86 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 481, 16 January 1917 (Roisies); Eric Bukowski, 'Cambrai: une ville du Nord occupée lors de la Première Guerre mondiale', master's dissertation (Lille III, 1986), p. 73.
87 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 522, 17 January 1917 (Nord); no. 548, 19 January 1917 (Somme); AMT, H4A32, Adjunct to Mayor of Bondues to Mayor of Tourcoing, 1 July 1915; ADN, 9R252, 'Déclaration du Pupille PIVION Emile', and Directeur de la Colonie de St Bernard to Préfet, 30 July 1916.
88 Evidence of torture can be found for Lille, Roubaix, Tourcoing and Maubeuge (where 3,500 people were said to have been tortured) in ADHS, 4M513, reports no. 1,000, 15 March 1917; and no. 685, 6 February 1917.
89 This was reported in Valenciennes, Douai, Ferrière-la-Grande, Hautmont, Louvroil, Moeuvres, Maubeuge and across the Nord: ADHS, 4M513, reports no. 773, 19 February 1917; no. 780, 20 February 1917; no. 514, 18 January 1917; no. 522, 17 January 1917; no. 528, 18 January 1917; no. 518, 18 January 1917; no. 493, 17 January 1917; no. 1024, 16 March 1917; ADN, 9R513, Commissaire de Police of Denain to Sous-Préfet of Valenciennes, 24 December 1918, pp. 9–10.
90 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 737, 14 February 1917.
91 ADHS, 4M513, reports no. 551, 19 January 1917 (Hirson); no. 548, 19 January 1917 (Leval).
92 Heather Jones, *Violence against Prisoners of War in the First World War: Britain, France and Germany, 1914–1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 140.
93 ADN, 9R742, Mayor of Templeuve to Préfet, 27 November 1916.
94 *Ibid*.
95 ADN, 9R742, Mayor of Templeuve to Préfet, 4 February 1917.
96 *Ibid*.
97 ADN, 9R742, Mayor of Templeuve to Préfet, 8 August 1917.
98 *Ibid*.
99 See documents in AN, BB32/300 and F23/375. Further files in the AN may also contain evidence of compensation to *Nordistes*.

100 See, for example, AN, F23/375, proposition en faveur de M. Barrat (Tourcoing), 27 September 1922: awarded the *Médaille des Victimes de l'Invasion*, third class.
101 ADN, 9R1193, Saint-Rémy-Chaussée, Affaire Lescaillez, procès-verbal of gendarmes Vernet and Salle, 31 March 1919, a.
102 ADN, 9R698, L. Den, forced labourer at Dourges, to Julie, 14 June (probably 1917).
103 ADN, 9R698, F. Fromentin, forced labourer at Dourges, to his mother, 13 June 1917.
104 ADN, 9R698, n.a., n.d., 'Dourges. Place Wicar'.
105 ADN, 9R745, German poster, Tourcoing, 14 May 1915.
106 ADN, 9R746, German poster, Tourcoing, 28 June 1917.
107 Meersch, *Invasion '14*, pp. 47–8.
108 ADN, 2U1/446, CAN, no. 71, 16 October 1922.
109 Meersch, *Invasion '14*, p. 45.
110 AN, F23/375, proposition concernant M. Balois, 4 May 1923 (henceforth name of recipient, place if relevant, date).
111 AN, F23/375, M. Balois, 2 July 1923.
112 AN, F23/375, M. Barbaux, 4 April 1923.
113 AN, F23/375, M. Claisse, 5 March 1923.
114 AN, F23/375, M. Cloart, 10 March 1923; M. Vinckier, 12 December 1922.
115 AN, F23/375, M. Lagache; M. Ostin (Mouvaux), 31 August 1922; M. Thuysbaert (Tourcoing), 23 November 1922; M. Vanden Bosch (Tourcoing), 23 November 1922; M. Vanlaethem (Tourcoing), 23 November 1922; M. Vernhenne (Tourcoing), 28 December 1922.
116 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 1024, 16 March 1917.
117 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 1074, 21 March 1917.
118 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 1185, 23 April 1917 (Roubaix); ADN, 9R1229, Râches, complaints against the Mayor, procès-verbal, Débarcaus and Hatte, 17 February 1919.
119 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 799, 23 February 1917; ADN, 9R513, Commissaire de Police of Denain to Sous-Préfect of Valenciennes, 24 December 1918, p. 9.
120 De Schaepdrijver, *La Belgique*, p. 123.
121 ADN, 9R513, Commissaire de Police of Denain to Sous-Préfet of Valenciennes, 24 December 1918, p. 9.
122 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 736, 14 February 1917.
123 ADN, 74J225, Blin diary, 13 April 1917.
124 See documents in SHD, 19N547.
125 ADN, 9R745, German poster, Valenciennes, 2 October 1915.
126 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 722, 13 February 1917.
127 ADN, 74J225, Blin diary, 11 February 1918.
128 ADN, J1933, Manuscrit de François Rouesel, 'Pendant la CCI [Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie] de Roubaix durant l'occupation allemande',

'Les évasions par la Hollande'; Jean Mauclère, *L'Orage sur la ville: Tourcoing pendant l'occupation allemande, 1914–1918* (Paris: Berger-Levrault, 1933), pp. 52–5; Carine Cnudde-Lecointre, 'L'Église et la foi dans le Nord durant la Grande Guerre', master's dissertation (Lille III, 1996), p. 18.

129 Correspondant, 'The Black Days of Lille', *The Times*, 22 December 1914, p. 7.

130 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 737, 14 February 1917.

131 ADN, 74J223, X from Lille to M. Besegher, Noisy-le-Sec, 20 April 1916.

132 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 1267, 28 April 1917.

133 See, for example, AN, F23/375: M. Poulain (Valenciennes), 5 October 1922; AN, F23/377, M. Rousselle (Bousbecques), n.d.; M. Gabet (Bertry), n.d.; M. Marchand (Mons-en-Barœul), n.d.

134 See, for example, ADHS, 4M513, report no. 944, 9 March 1917 (Fourmies).

135 AN, BB32/3, Ministère de la Justice, Médaille de la Reconnaissance Française, proposition concernant M. Émile Aliotte, 28 March 1923. However, two other members of his family were nominated for the medal; one received it.

136 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 1084, 23 March 1917 (Bellignies and Bavay).

137 Françoise Thébaud, *La Femme au temps de la guerre de 14* (Paris: Stock, 1986), p. 61.

138 *Bulletin de Lille*, 22 June 1916, 'Actes de l'Autorité allemande: Proclamation du Genéral Commandant l'Armée du 25 November 1915, en vertu de l'Ordre du 1er Avril 1916', points 4–6; ADN, 9R746, German poster, Roubaix and Tourcoing, 4 September 1916.

139 See, for example, NA, KV2/844, intelligence report on Georges Gaston Quien, account of Mme L'Hotelier, Directrice of the Hospice Général of Cambrai, 28 November 1918; ADN, 9R799, German poster, Halluin, April 1917; ADHS, 4M513, reports from 1917: no. 474, 12 January (Cambrai); no. 582, 24 January (Le Cateau); no. 1202, 24 April (Haubourdin).

140 See, for example, NA, FO383/261, Foreign Office, Prisoners of War and Aliens Department, General Correspondence from 1906, France, Prisoners (1917), thirteen-page summary of Abbé Deschodt's resisance, n.d, n.a.

141 See, for example, NA, FO383/380, Prisoners of War and Aliens Department, General Correspondence, France, Prisoners (1918), French Ambassador in London [to Foreign Office], 4 March 1918; Government Committee on the Treatment by the Enemy of British Prisoners of War to Secretary of the Prisoner of War Department, 1 February 1918; Antoinette Tierce, *Between Two Fires: Being a True Account of How the Author Sheltered Four Escaped British Prisoners of War in Her House in Lille during the German Occupation of That City*, trans. J. Lewis May (London: John Lane, 1931), p. 91; AN, BB32/300, Ernst Beurrier to M. Bersy, 10 February 1924 and Secrétaire Général Civil de la Présidence de la République to Garde des Sceaux, 26 January 1920; AN, F23/375, M. Drouin (Cappelle), n.d.; M. Dubreu (Roubaix), n.d.; M. Duterte (Marquette-lez-Lille), 15 June 1923.

142 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 1050, 17 March 1917.
143 ADN, 9R656 (Musée 352), unfinished account of the Affaire Mapplebeck, by Jacquet.
144 See, for example, AN, F23/375, M. Delefosse (Lille), 27 March 1923; ADN, 9R1242, notes from Lille's Municipal Council, 18 January 1919.
145 For more details on the Comité, see documents in ADN, 9R656 (Musée 352); Paul Bardou, *Eugène Jacquet et ses amis: Histoire de quatre fusillés de Lille par un témoin* (Lille: Stéphane Bercour, 1919); René Deruyk, *La Mort pour la liberté: Histoire du Comité Jacquet* (Lille: La Voix du Nord, 1993).
146 ADN, 9R656 (Musée 353), account of the Affaire Mapplebeck.
147 ADN, 9R656, last letter of the *fusillés lillois*, 22 September 1915. Original emphasis.
148 For further analysis of the letters of executed resisters, see Emmanuel Debruyne and Laurence Van Ypersele, *Je serai fusillé demain: Dernières lettres des patriotes belges et français fusillés par l'occupant, 1914–1918* (Brussels: Racine, 2011).
149 These words were repeated in: Correspondant, 'The Shooting of the Lille Tradesman', *The Times*, 18 February 1916, p. 5.
150 ADN, 9R656 (Musée 353), Jacquet to his wife and children, 21 September 1915.
151 ADN, 9R716, German poster, Lille, 22 September 1915.
152 ADN, 74J241, Dumont papers, 12 and 27 July, and 22 September 1915; ADN, 74J225, Blin diary, 22 September 1915; ADN, 74J224, Trollin diary, 24 September 1915; Becker, *Journaux de combattants*, Degrutère diary, 26 July and 22 September 1915, and Hirsch diary, 21 September 1915, pp. 183, 186 and 244.
153 Correspondant, 'A Tradesman Hero', *The Times*, 14 February 1916, p. 7, and the above-mentioned article on 18 February.
154 Louise Thuliez, *Condamnée à mort* (Paris: Flammarion, 1933); McPhail, *The Long Silence*, pp. 138–57.
155 Chantal Antier, Marianne Walle and Olivier Lahaie, *Les Espionnes dans la Grande Guerre* (Rennes: Éditions Ouest-France, 2008), p. 194 (spelt Van Houtte); Olivier Forcade, 'L'espionnage féminin ou un nouvel héroïsme au combat en 1914–1918', in Marion Trévisi and Philippe Nivet (eds.), *Les Femmes et la guerre de l'Antiquité à 1918* (Paris: Economica, 2010), pp. 368–9; Antoine Redier, *La Guerre des femmes: Histoire de Louise de Bettignies et de ses compagnes* (Paris: Éditions de la Vraie France, 1930), pp. 33–65. Redier eventually married Vanhoutte: René Deruyk, *Louise de Bettignies, résistante lilloise (1880–1918)* (Lille: La Voix du Nord, 1998), p. 55. See also Tammy M. Proctor, *Female Intelligence: Women and Espionage in the First World War* (New York: New York University Press, 2003).
156 ADN, 16J99, memoirs of Madeleine Berroyer (November 1914–June 1916); Isabelle Molina, 'Les Femmes dans le Nord occupé pendant la première Guerre Mondiale', master's dissertation (Lille III, 1999), p. 19.

157 Claudine Wallart, *C'était hier, le département du Nord … Le Nord en Guerre – 1914–1918* (Lille: Archives Départementales du Nord, 2008), p. 47.
158 Deruyk, *Louise de Bettignies*, p. 101.
159 Known by the British as the 'Ramble' network: Antier et al., *Les Espionnes*, p. 139.
160 Wallart, *C'était hier*, p. 47.
161 Deruyk, *Louise de Bettignies*, p. 60.
162 Forcade, 'L'espionnage féminin', pp. 368–9.
163 See Redier, *La Guerre des femmes*; Deruyk, *Louise de Bettignies*; Antier et al., *Les Espionnes*, pp. 138–42 and 194–5; Philippe Nivet, 'Les femmes dans la France occupée (1914–1918)', in Marion Trévisi and Philippe Nivet (eds.), *Les Femmes et la guerre de l'Antiquité à 1918* (Paris: Economica, 2010), pp. 293–6; McPhail, *The Long Silence*, pp. 147–55; Proctor, *Female Intelligence*, pp. 116–19.
164 Antier et al., *Les Espionnes*, p. 142.
165 Antier et al., *Les Espionnes*, p. 197; NA, WO/372/23 (image 1664), Medal card for Louise de Bettignies, awarded OBE; Nivet, 'Les femmes', pp. 319–21; 'Reburial of French Heroine', *The Times*, 24 February 1920, p. 16.
166 See, for example, Dubut-Maison, *Journal d'un bourgeois*, 17 May 1916, pp. 149–50.
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169 Wallart, *C'était hier*, p. 45; NA, KV2/844, documents on Gaston Quien; 'Quien Trial Develops', *The Times*, 29 August 1919, p. 9.
170 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 474; NA, KV2/844, account of Mme L'Hotelier, Directrice of the Hospice Général of Cambrai, 28 November 1918; Christel Ramirez, 'Les Villes et les campagnes dans le Nord pendant l'occupation allemande de 1914–1918', master's dissertation (Lille III, 1999), p. 26.
171 Janet Morgan, *The Secrets of Rue St Roch: Intelligence Operations behind Enemy Lines in the First World War* (London: Allen Lane, 2004), pp. 11–12.
172 NA, WO106/45, Defence and operational plans, History of Secret Service and Intelligence Organisations, 'R' (Lieutenant-Colonel R. J. Drake, I(b) GHQ), 'History of I(b), January 1917-April 1919', 5 May 1919, p. 33; Chantal Antier, 'Résister, espionner: nouvelle fonction pour la femme en 1914–1918', *Guerres Mondiales et Conflits Contemporains*, 232:4 (2008), 143–54; Debruyne and Paternostre, *La Résistance au quotidien*, p. 20; Proctor, *Female Intelligence*, p. 95.
173 Forcade, 'L'espionnage féminin', pp. 369–70; Proctor, *Female Intelligence*, p. 75; Becker, *Les Cicatrices rouges*, p. 263; Antier et al., *Les Espionnes*, pp. 144–5.
174 Debruyne and Paternostre, *La Résistance au quotidien*, pp. 19–20.

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177 Debruyne and Paternostre, *La Résistance au quotidien*, p. 21.
178 Becker, *Les Cicatrices rouges*, p. 265.
179 Antier et al., *Les Espionnes*, pp. 43–6, 74–103; Proctor, *Female Intelligence*, pp. 126–31; Forcade, 'L'espionnage féminin', pp. 364–6.
180 See ADHS, 3M324 and SHD, 19N547.
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193 See the medals awarded in AN, BB32/1, M. Afchain (Caudry), 16 June 1921; AN, F23/375, Mme Durand (Recquignies), 6 November 1922; AN, F23/377, M. Feu Masse (Marcoing), n.d.; M. Demoulin (Villers-en-Cauchies), n.d.
194 ADN, 9R225, Blin diary, 6 June 1915.
195 NA, WO106/45, GHQ I(b), 'British agent Lefebvre', 28 May 1918.
196 NA, WO106/45, GHQ I(b), Lieut. IO, 'Allied Agent LEFEBVRE alias "LE NUSSE" of BRUAY', 23 May 1918.
197 ADN, 9R705, German poster, Lomme, 2 April 1917.
198 NA, WO106/45, GHQ I(b) report from Évian-les-Bains, 23 May 1918, testimony of M. Malaise from Condé-sur-l'Escaut.
199 ADN, 15J85, Commune of Avesnelles, response to the Commission Historique du Nord questionnaire, 7 August 1922.

200 Morgan, *The Secrets of Rue St Roch*, p. 192.
201 NA, WO106/45, documents on Service 'LL' and 'GG', n.d., n.a.
202 NA, WO106/45, History of I(b), p. 6.
203 Dubut-Maison, *Journal d'un bourgeois*, 1 November 1915, pp. 132–5. Five individuals (two women, three men) were sentenced to imprisonment ranging from three and a half to thirteen years, and two men (Eugène Dallhuin and Achille Doucedame) were executed.
204 AN, F23/377, documents on Raymond Denain (Marcq-en-Barœul), an accomplice of Trulin.
205 ADHS, 4M513, report no. 937, 10 March 1917 (Lille) and no. 1164, 20 April 1917 (Lille); ADN, 74J224, Trollin diary, 8 November 1915; ADN, 9R656, Mangold, Conseiller du Tribunal de Guerre to l'État-Civil de la Mairie de Lille, 11 November 1915.
206 Becker, *Journaux de combattants*, Degrutère diary, 8 November 1915, p. 246; ADN, 9R584, report seemingly by the Commissaire de Police of Lille, 12 November 1918.
207 Eugène Martin-Mamy, *Quatre ans avec les barbares: Lille pendant l'occupation allemande* (Paris: Renaissance du Livre, 1919), p. 138.
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209 Morgan, *The Secrets of Rue St Roch*, pp. 178–81.
210 See NA, WO106/45, especially I(b) 2/252, 'SCHEME for ESTABLISHMENT of PIGEON SERVICES connected with AGENTS in FRANCE', n.d. et passim.
211 NA, WO106/45, History of I(b), p. 26 et passim.
212 History of I(b), pp. 27–8; Morgan, *The Secrets of Rue St Roch*, pp. 189–90.
213 Dubut-Maison, *Journal d'un bourgeois*, 4 May 1918, pp. 239–44.
214 ADN, 9R742, report by Mayor of Templeuve containing a copy of a German poster, Templeuve, 12 September 1917, attesting to a man and woman condemned to death for espionage with carrier pigeons; AN, F23/377, M. Cannone (Ors), n.d. Mme Wasselil (Rumegies), n.d.
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221 Pierre Cottel, *Un village du Nord sous l'occupation allemande durant la première guerre mondiale: De 1910 à 1939, Wallers d'une guerre à l'autre* (Wallers: Publi-Express, 2000), p. 59.
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223 A. H. Osman, *Pigeons in the Great War: A Complete History of the Carrier-Pigeon Service during the Great War, 1914–1918* (London: 'Racing Pigeon' Publishing Company, 1929), pp. 46–8.
224 See SHD, 19N547, Note by Tanant, Chef de l'État-Major of Deuxième Bureau, Service des Renseignements, 18 August 1917.
225 Annette Becker, 'D'une guerre à l'autre: mémoire de l'occupation et de la résistance: 1914–1940', *Revue du Nord*, 76:306 (1994), p. 461.
226 See, for example, ADN, 9R746, German poster, Tourcoing, 12 July 1916, and 21 December 1916; ADN, 9R753, German poster, Lille, 10 July 1916; Robert Vandenbussche, 'Le pouvoir municipal à Douai sous l'occupation (1914–1918)', *Revue du Nord*, 61:241 (1979), p. 462.
227 See, for example, ADN, 9R795, Gardien-Chef de la Maison d'Arrêt de Lille to Préfet, 2 and 3 June, and 2 August 1915; ADN, 9R765, Commissaire de Police of Wattrelos to Préfet, 27 August 1916; ADN, 9R766, Commissaire de Police of Wattrelos to Préfet, 17 September 1917; ADN, 9R721, German poster, Roubaix, 13 July 1918; ADN, 9R732, German poster, 15 March 1917.
228 Becker, 'D'une guerre à l'autre', especially pp. 265 and 459.
229 Cnudde-Lecointre, 'L'Église et la foi', p. 117.

9

Epilogue: Liberation, remembering and forgetting

Liberation

From August to November 1918, the war of movement recommenced as the Allies pushed back the Germans across the Western Front during the Hundred Days offensive. For the occupied Nord, the end of German domination drew ever closer, but so too did the perils of combat. The notes of Lille's Municipal Council for September–October 1918 record increasingly frequent instances of direct fire from Allied artillery, German anti-aircraft shells falling back to earth, or bombs dropped by Allied planes; these common occurrences throughout the war, responsible for injuring or killing German soldiers and French civilians, now became deadlier.[1] Direct fire was not the only destructive force: the final German retreat, which took place at different times depending on locality, was often chaotic and destructive. Requisitions of materiel were implemented before the military's departure, including dismantling factory machinery. This was accompanied by the destruction of sites of economic or strategic importance such as railway stations, mines or bridges in what Wallart calls 'scorched earth' policies.[2] In Lille, the Saint-Saveur railway station and all but one bridge were destroyed on 15–17 October.[3] Buildings in neighbouring Roubaix were purposefully demolished the same night, whereas the main town square of Cambrai and adjacent houses had been destroyed by 9 October; in Fourmies, the Germans blew up a munitions train before their retreat on 8 November, causing considerable damage to neighbouring buildings.[4] All of the mines of the Nord, apart from those of Béthune, were purposefully flooded.[5]

The occupiers also forcibly evacuated large swathes of locals, transporting them to Belgium or the Netherlands, allegedly to prevent

civilian casualties during forthcoming combat. Thus, the population of Cambrai was evacuated in early September 1918, sent initially to Valenciennes, then to the outskirts of Liège, before being repatriated to Évian on 4 October.[6] The roughly 14,000 inhabitants of Douai were also evacuated to Mons on 2–4 September.[7] In October, Habourdin, Aniche, Condé, Valenciennes, Fresnes, Denain, Bruay and Anzin were evacuated.[8] The departure of civilian men from Lille was ordered on 30 September;[9] 500 out of 1,476 municipal employees were allowed to remain, but municipal life was nevertheless paralysed.[10] Here, locals committed many crimes in this period, especially theft and pillage but even some murders,[11] a situation exacerbated by the German evacuation on 8 October of all French policemen under the age of fifty-five, including the Chief Commissioner.[12] Given this, it is even more surprising that few instances of violent vengeance against those accused of misconduct occurred (see Chapter 2). Perhaps the fact that there was no power vacuum – the Germans were still present – and the uncertainty surrounding the military situation played a role. Locals could not predict what the Allied advance meant for them and remained acutely aware of the German presence. This attitude is visible in the diary of Jeanne Lefebvre from Saint-André-lez-Lille. Forced to leave her house to stay with her uncle on 6 October 1918, she remarked on 12 October:

> The situation is not evolving, the Germans are still here whilst we hear more and more talk of peace […] It appears that the English surrounded Lille and were seven times as numerous as the Germans, so many things are said […] Yesterday, people said it was only a matter of hours, that the peace was signed, that all the [German] offices were emptied. Me, I no longer believe anything, there is too much contradictory information and the Germans still occupy our area.[13]

In fact, the end was near, but the forced evacuations meant that certain chroniclers of occupied life were not present for the liberation of their towns. Although Lefebvre managed to return home on 16 October,[14] Dumont (interpreter at the Mairie of Lille) was evacuated on 2 October and arrived in Belgium on 10 October;[15] Blin's diary stopped on 18 September 1918, and Trollin had also been evacuated by October 1918.[16] Nevertheless, the towns of the Nord were not entirely evacuated, so some locals were present for the final German retreat and the eventual liberation.[17] For many, like the *Lillois*, although they were aware of Allied progress, their deliverance was a sudden shock – the Germans disappeared overnight.[18]

The date of liberation varied from town to town: Canadians liberated Cambrai on 9 October 1918, Douai on 17 October and Valenciennes on 2 November; the British liberated Lille on 17 October, and Avesnes and Maubeuge on 10 November.[19] There was a universal reaction to this new-found freedom: joy, jubilation, relief, gratitude and expressions of patriotic fervour. Solicitor Pierre Motte from Lille noted in his diary that inhabitants displayed French and British flags.[20] Crowds greeted the liberators, women kissed them, and many sang.[21] Photographs, newspaper reports and film of the liberation of Lille and other towns corroborate this, demonstrating the extent of locals' sentiments (see Figures 8–10).[22] Similar scenes occurred throughout the Nord, notably in Valenciennes, Roubaix, Tourcoing and Maubeuge.[23]

Official celebrations began straight away, including military parades by the liberating armies, exchanging honours and celebratory discourses, and visits to key towns by the President and Prime Minister, such as those mentioned in the opening lines of this book. Marshalls Pétain and Foch, and King George V also visited the liberated regions.[24] However,

Figure 8 Girls kissing the first French soldier to enter Lille, 18 October 1918.

Figure 9 Frenchwomen and children cheering the arrival of the men of the British 57th Division at Lille, 18 October 1918.

this was not the end of military occupation: Allied armies remained in the liberated Nord for months, initially carrying out humanitarian work. A French military report underlined that for the period up to 25 November 1918 the British army provided considerable transport, food and health care to the destitute, hungry population, including transporting tens of thousands of refugees and saving the 790,000 inhabitants (450,000 of whom were in Lille-Roubaix-Tourcoing) from famine. The report's author described this as 'a marvellous act of systematic and ingenious charity' and concluded, 'For this beautiful work, [British] army heads and soldiers have the right to the most profound gratitude of France.'[25] However, eventually the British presence and regulations led to discontentment among locals, who complained of a second occupation.[26] Further, lack of provisions continued to plague the area despite the fact that on 31 December 1918 the CANF was abolished and the Ministry of Liberated Regions henceforth oversaw food provisioning and attendant controls.[27]

Figure 10 French civilians listening to a British regimental band playing in the Grande Place of Lille, 18 October 1918.
© Imperial War Museum, Q 9581.

Thus, the liberation did not represent the end of the hardships related to the war. Other problems existed. Many evacuated locals sought to return home, a complex process lasting until 1920 for many.[28] Further, a vast programme of reconstruction was required for the entire battlefield area and former occupied zone, which had suffered heavily at both Allied and German hands (see Figures 11–12).[29] This was why Jeanne Lefebvre remarked on 24 October 1918, 'We are liberated, but now that the first moments of joy have passed, we only see sadness and desolation everywhere.'[30] The scale of destruction was massive: across the Nord eighteen communes were completely destroyed, sixty-five were more than 50 per cent destroyed, and 526 were damaged, with just fifty-nine intact. Further, 53,172 buildings and farms were completely destroyed, with 30,117 seriously damaged and 164,626 partially damaged.[31] Infrastructure – road, canals and especially railways – was devastated.[32] Both combat and occupation were responsible.

Figure 11 View of the main square in Cambrai, showing damaged buildings and the town hall, 23 October 1918.

Reconstruction took many years, overseen by the Ministry for Liberated Regions and local authorities, financed by reparations, central government, local initiatives and bolstered by international aid such as British adoptions of French towns.[33] Some aspects of reconstruction lasted until the 1930s, such as the reconstruction of Cambrai, completed in 1932.[34] Yet, overall, the effort was impressively rapid, with industrial and agricultural production approaching, reaching, and in some areas overtaking, pre-war levels by the mid to late 1920s.[35] By this point, thousands of kilometres of roads and railways had been repaired; canals, factories, mines and thermal energy plants were reopened; and temporary housing had been superseded by permanent lodgings.[36] However, this remarkable process of reconstruction is beyond the scope of this book.

In the meantime, locals struggled to come to terms with their unique wartime experience and to frame it within both local and national memory, via what Nivet calls 'moral reconstruction'.[37] Other scholars and I have studied this in more detail elsewhere, but a brief examination is necessary before drawing some general conclusions.[38]

Figure 12 British soldier checking a wreck of a tram in the ruined Grande Place at Douai, 25 October 1918.

Remembering and forgetting

Misconduct

Misconduct remained in local consciousness for a short period after the liberation, but this weak memory soon became occluded, overshadowed by stronger memories. It was especially visible in the local press, which was interested in the persecution of individuals who had engaged in occupation misconduct. On 22 November 1918, *Le Progrès du Nord* contained a list of 'simple contestations' on its front page, remarking that 'The swindlers of the occupation are still the masters of the pavement' and 'Some of the *ravitailleurs* who exploited us are still there.' This marked the start of a campaign against '*mercantis*', 'hoarders' and war profiteers.[39] A week later, an article criticised *mercantis* who had engaged in 'infamous complacencies' with the Germans.[40] The paper's outrage was palpable the following day. In the middle of the front page was the following notice:

> THEY HAVE RETURNED! If you walk in the streets of the Centre or if you enter the large cafés, you will meet here, returned from Brussels, most of the bandits who enriched themselves during the occupation by working with the Boches. This scandal must cease.[41]

Underneath this proclamation was an article entitled 'THE INSOLENT SCOUNDRELS', expanding upon the above statement. It was even suggested that these people were being protected by those in positions of authority. A similar proclamation was published the next day.[42]

In December 1918, *Le Progrès* reported a conversation between two *mercantis*, overhead in a café in Lille. The men had left Lille with the Germans because they feared 'justice', but as soon as they realised that no one was being punished for their occupation behaviour, they returned.[43] This notion that suspect persons were not being punished, or were even being protected, was shared by the wider population, as revealed by the French military's *contrôle postal* of Lille. One *Lillois* wrote of a man he knew was guilty of 'suspect relations' during the occupation: 'From the way in which our Allies envisage the crime of "commerce with the enemy", I am now expecting to see him soon benefit from an acquittal and be released.' He concluded: 'It is enough to make you disgusted at having remained French. I am sickened and only demand to get myself far away from this unhappy town of Lille, so afflicted and so criticised.'[44]

The campaign of *Le Progrès* had some success: on 18 December, it reported on 'The traitor Hubert', a *ravitailleur*, German agent and correspondent for the *Gazette des Ardennes*, who had been brought to the paper's attention by a reader in response to its article on *mercantis*.[45] The following day, the paper boasted, 'The campaign that we have led here against the strange times of the occupation has begun to bear fruit.' One C. Dauphin, allegedly an accomplice of Hubert and fellow contributor to the *Gazette*, had written to the editor. He denied any association with Hubert and claims of denunciation or commerce with the enemy but did admit that he had written one article for the *Gazette*, which was approved by the Mayor of Lambersart. He outlined his logic: 'If I had relations with some soldiers whose mentality seemed good to me, it was only to do good around me: I perceived that the services I offered, considering the favours that I obtained, whilst benefitting me [*avec les mains toujours garnies*], could not constitute a crime.'[46] A few days later, *Le Progrès* refuted Dauphin's claims and highlighted a central tenet of misconduct, responding with, 'A crime, no, my poor Dauphin, but all the

honest people with spirit will say to you […] that no one who is honest has the right to have friendly relations with "enemy soldiers who seem good to them."'[47]

Cases of those arrested or sentenced for bad occupation behaviour – trafficking in gold, or 'sexual affairs' involving Germans – were reported in December 1918.[48] Other newspapers mentioned misconduct in late 1918 but expressed less outrage than *Le Progrès*.[49] The memory of misconduct was thus alive and well in the last months of 1918, at least in the pages of the regional press. Articles on this theme were rarer after 1918, but some examples do exist. On 20 October 1919, *Le Progrès* published a piece entitled 'The Hunt for the *Embochés*' detailing the arrest of a *Lillois* for intelligence and commerce with the enemy. The sentences of eleven collaborators of the *Gazette* were also reported.[50] In 1921, industrialists of Lille who had complied with the German order to create sandbags faced legal action at the Parquet. *La Croix du Nord* printed former Acting Préfet Anjubault's version of events on 21 March 1921.[51] Another newspaper published an interview with the lawyer of one of the accused arguing for the innocence of the industrialists.[52] This argument won the day, and all were acquitted, the judge ruling that they had been forced to work by the Germans. Such acquittals, Nivet argues, 'made a scandal' and led the editor of the socialist *La Bataille* to note, 'Only imbeciles have confidence in the judicial system of their country.'[53] Yet what was the reality of punishments? Were the former *occupés* justified in complaining about apparent clemency?

Punishments in the Nord were limited compared to events in politically complex Belgium or Alsace-Lorraine after 1918,[54] and especially to the post-1944 *épuration*, when new crimes were created to facilitate punishment.[55] As Martinage has demonstrated via examining court records, the number of those taken to court for *intelligence avec l'ennemi* or *commerce avec l'ennemi* was surprisingly low in the Nord.[56] Between 1918 and 1925, 123 people accused of *intelligence avec l'ennemi* appeared before the Cour d'Assises du Nord, of which eighty-three were tried in the Cour d'Assises de Douai. Of those, forty-three were condemned, with punishments ranging from minor correctional sentences up to twenty years' imprisonment in a 'fortified prison' or deportation.[57] The rest were acquitted.[58]

This was not the only avenue through which suspect individuals passed: Nivet notes that *conseils de guerre* judged such people until October 1919; and in 1920, 'the civilian judicial system of the Nord'

judged hundreds of such cases, although not all ended in a trial. The Parquet of Valenciennes hosted twenty-four affairs of *intelligence avec l'ennemi* in July 1923 alone.[59] Other sources attest to the punishment of suspect activity, such as the archives of the women's prison in Rennes.[60] A precise overall number of *Nordistes* put on trial or found guilty does not exist, but from the available data this seems small. This is not to say that the French Government did not take accusations of misconduct seriously. Nivet believes that 'until the end of the 1930s […] the marginal part of the population of the Nord who collaborated with the enemy did not benefit from any clemency. They remained the dark side of the heroic France of 1914–1918.'[61] The apparent lack of widespread punishment may also be due to the fact that many denunciations leading to investigations were ostensibly 'incorrect', based on rumour or born out of personal quarrels, with many ending in acquittal.[62] Only the high-profile cases were taken to court, and evidently only those who had broken laws could be punished. As the preliminary investigative documents regarding the Nord demonstrate, many more individuals were found, or admitted to being, guilty of breaching the limits of respectability, of the dominant occupied culture – but judicial punishment for such behaviour was not possible. This was noted by central government,[63] and criticised by locals.

The official punishment of those who had engaged in misconduct could be perceived as a way for both central and local government to remove the dark side of the occupation from the wider collective memory – or at least to be seen to fulfil local demands for retribution, albeit on a small scale. Once some key individuals had been punished, and the objectives of one form of memory were met, that memory could potentially weaken. This was not a memory that could be celebrated, but perhaps it could be dealt with and disposed of. Thébaud suggests this regarding female misconduct, asking, 'What became of these "bad women" after the arrival of French troops? Some had already been shorn as Grenadou mentioned. Others were judged; some committed suicide. And then they were forgotten…'[64]

The rather limited number of punished individuals, on the other hand, may have given the impression that those who had engaged in misconduct were a minority – as opposed to the ostensibly commonplace resistance, and widespread suffering. This appears rather contrary to the large numbers of complaints locals made about occupation conduct of numerous compatriots, both during and after the occupation. The extent of the official inquiry into these suspects suggests a belief among French

authorities that the '*Boches du Nord*' moniker could have had some truth to it; yet the end results hint at a desire to minimise the perception of wide-scale misconduct. However, this may have been an acknowledgement by the investigators/judges of the complex realities of the occupation, and the distinction between perception and reality. Whatever the reasoning, the slow wait for and small number of punishments did not satisfy locals, but it paved the way for a narrative of patriotic resistance during the occupation. Although aspects of misconduct were mentioned in some interwar texts,[65] and are present in histories since the 1990s,[66] resistance and suffering dominate.

Remembering patriotism and resistance

Immediately after the liberation, a narrative of widespread patriotism and multifarious resistance among the *occupés* crystallised. On 19 October 1918, the Mayor of Tourcoing gave a speech to visiting Prime Minister Clemenceau outlining the experience of occupation. He detailed the suffering at the hands of the Germans, set against the resistance of the population, particularly concerning the refusal to work for or to hand over metals, and the resistance of the former mayor, at that time imprisoned in Germany.[67] A few days later, the Mayor similarly welcomed visiting President Poincaré in an official address and espoused that 'the Flemish people have never put up with tyranny' to explain why, 'under the foreign boot, we remained calm and dignified, valiant and strong, certain of the triumph of our cause, of the final victory'.[68] Poincaré cemented the narrative by professing the strength of locals' patriotism, to whom 'all the gratitude of France must go, at the same time as to the admirable French and Allied armies'.[69] The new Préfet echoed this attitude, especially the notion of national gratitude.[70] The official line on the occupation experience was taking shape: locals had engaged in exemplary behaviour including widespread patriotism, dignity and opposition to the German presence, despite harsh suffering. The nation owed them a debt of gratitude.

This gratitude was primarily expressed through medals awarded to certain categories of former *occupés*. Those having engaged in acts of heroism and bravery were awarded the *Légion d'honneur*: at least twenty-eight *Nordistes* were awarded this posthumously.[71] Others were awarded the *Médaille de la Réconnaissance Française*, created in 1917.[72] Potential recipients often nominated themselves; others were nominated by their mayors; all applications had to be accompanied by supporting

documentation.[73] Locals could apply from April 1922 to December 1923, by which time 4,257 such applications had been received, although only 2,885 examined.[74] Applicants also included those believed to have gone through extraordinary experiences, providing a civic or patriotic service during the occupation. Thus, the Director of the Galeries Lilloises was nominated for his role in extinguishing the fire in the *hôtel de ville* in 1916, and helping inhabitants evacuate their property.[75] One man from Saint-Amand-les-Eaux requested the medal because he had injured himself falling off a wagon during German requisitions; his request was denied.[76] A successful candidate was Mme Allard from Valenciennes, who had worked for the Red Cross during the occupation, tending to evacuees and prisoners of war.[77] At least eighty-seven *Nordistes* received the *Médaille de la Réconnaissance Française*.[78]

Other forms of compensation and recognition existed. On 30 June 1921, the *Médaille des Victimes de l'Invasion* was created at the request of the Minister of Liberated Regions. It was awarded initially to hostages, deportees, those imprisoned by the enemy or who had been subjected to forced labour, but from April 1922 also to those who had experienced serious brutality or ill-treatment. Depending on the judgement of the investigating committee, recipients were awarded a bronze, silver or vermeil medal.[79] For the Nord, 166 men and twenty-two women received a bronze medal; two women and six men received a silver medal; and one man received a vermeil medal. Recipients hailed from sixty-one different communes and included those who had been punished for engaging in active resistance, notably espionage and evasion networks.[80] The medal came with a certificate explaining its attribution 'in view of perpetuating in their family and among their fellow citizens, the memory of their civic virtues in the invaded regions, during enemy occupation'. Even this medal from the national government seemed to be geared towards local remembrance.

On 14 March 1936, a law established the *Médaille des Prisonniers Civils, Déportés et Otages de la Grande Guerre* (Medal of the Civilian Prisoners, Deportees and Hostages of the Great War).[81] It could not be awarded to those already in possession of the *Médaille des Victimes de l'Invasion*. Its goal was 'to commemorate the memory of their sacrifices and to honour their acts of devotion to the *Patrie*, in recognition of the suffering that they had to suffer for [the *Patrie*] in the war of 1914–1918'. In total, more than 10,400 of these medals were awarded to inhabitants of the entire occupied zone,[82] including to at least 107 *Nordistes*.[83] Foreign decorations were also conferred on those who engaged in resistance to

the benefit of Allied powers. By 1923, out of a total of ninety-nine British medals awarded to Frenchmen and Frenchwomen, *Nordistes* received two OBEs (Officer of the British Empire) (Military Division), sixteen MBEs (Member of the British Empire) (Military Division), thirty-seven medals of the BEO (Military Division), and one medal of the BEO (Civil Division). Recipients came from twenty-three different communes and included de Bettignies, Trulin, members of the Comité Jacquet, the *Patience* network, and their accomplices.[84]

Decorations, particularly the *Légion d'honneur* or the *Croix de guerre*, were also awarded to entire communes, towns and villages. The narrative of suffering, sacrifice and resistance was thus yet again reinforced. To name just a few, Courchelettes and Valenciennes were awarded the *Croix de guerre*.[85] So too was Crèvecœur-sur-l'Éscaut, which, 'Destroyed by bombardments, displayed the most beautiful attitude under shelling and during the sufferings of occupation.'[86] The questions surrounding the conduct of the village's mayor thus did not hinder the attribution of such a commendation. Cambrai and Douai received the *Légion d'honneur* in September 1919.[87] The latter was described as a 'town painfully wounded by four years of a harsh occupation', which had 'drawn the strength to resist all the suffering and even to prepare for, as much as possible, its renaissance for a fully French life'.[88] Beyond these citations, at least 140 localities in the Nord (most of which had been occupied) received *L'Ordre de l'armée* in the early 1920s. Such distinctions were awarded for their alleged dignified and patriotic suffering during the occupation. Stock phrases and themes appeared, such as 'dignified and courageous attitude/the most beautiful attitude'[89] or 'faith in victory'.[90]

Symbols of gratitude and commemoration therefore acknowledged extreme suffering and extraordinary heroism or patriotism. Indeed, a link was drawn between the two, thus victimhood and resistance were the backbone of the official commemorative framework. However, this framework also seemed to press for a removal of the particularities of the occupation experience, calling for a speedy reunion with France and France's wartime narrative. The extreme suffering of combatants was the apogee of this rather paradoxical world view – and no matter how much the *occupés* had suffered or resisted, their experience would never be able to trump the more universal trench experience in national memory.

The occupation cast a long shadow for locals, and this official narrative reappeared in the interwar years. Occupation behaviour was not the only subject of interest: in the immediate post-war period, the local

press reported on and called for reparations, for instance.[91] Indeed, the Treaty of Versailles eventually called for Germany to pay for loss of property and life in the occupied regions,[92] although John Maynard Keynes saw the amount demanded as excessive.[93] The developments concerning reparations highlighted suffering and appealed to a sense of justice, whereas the resistance narrative allowed for pride.

Resistance in the press

Accounts of occupation resistance featured heavily in the local press in the interwar period. Articles recounted tales of heroism or informed readers of the fate of those punished by the Germans. The position of key resisters was already crystallised in late 1918: Catholic daily *La Croix du Nord* reported on the actions of the Doyen of Saint-Christophe in Lille, and the November 1918 service in memory of Léon Trulin[94] – both Catholic resisters. Catholic martyrdom was therefore linked to resistance, unlike in the later Occupation, when the Church was associated with Vichy,[95] and resistance with un-Catholic suicide and taking control of one's destiny rather than expiatory suffering.[96]

In November and December 1918, *Le Progrès* reported on all types of opposition, from notable protests to active resistance, including Jacquet and Trulin.[97] It even appealed in December 1918 for readers to submit stories of courage during the occupation, from which the paper wished to create a *Livre d'Or*.[98] The publication further asked those who engaged in acts of resistance to make themselves known out of an explicit duty to memory: 'For there are gestures that cannot remain ignored, and names that the future must remember.'[99] The same month, *L'Écho du Nord* launched a 'competition of tales and songs on the occupation and the war' because 'no historian will be able to recount all that our populations endured and all the courage they required to resist the daily persecutions of the Boches'. It was in the public interest to provide testimony of the horrors of this painful period. Entries had to be a maximum of 200 lines and based on reality, with 'acts of collective and individual heroism' the first suggested theme.[100]

Into the 1930s, dozens of articles reported on the smallest developments regarding celebrated resisters. Thus, the posthumous awarding of the *Légion d'honneur* to Trulin on 2 June 1935 appeared in the publication of local historical society *Les Amis de Lille*.[101] *Les Amis* used Trulin's resistance as a means to cement the occupation in public memory, and to advocate peace. It remarked:

> What is the meaning of this ceremony if it is not to declare alongside Léon Trulin our horror of the bloody carnage and our desire to be Men of Peace […]
>
> Our Nord was during the war without Fear and without Reproach; its population […] paid during the war, beyond the sacrifice of the combatants, the tribute of blood and of suffering without hope.[102]

The sacrifices of the Nord amalgamated with the sacrifices of combatants, and *Nordistes* rejoined the nation further by sharing the popular pacifist sentiment.

The inauguration of an inscription bearing Trulin's name on the wall of Lille's citadel was reported by multiple local papers in November 1935.[103] The authors blended hagiography with patriotism and religious virtue: one described the ceremony as 'The pilgrimage of the citadel'.[104] Most stories on Trulin, like articles on other resisters, offered a summary of his deeds and discussed him in reverential tones. They portrayed him as a child, although he was eighteen at the time of his execution, and underlined his lack of fear during death (refusing a blindfold) and his Christian sentiments (he forgave the Germans in his final words to his executioners and his last letter to his mother). *Les Amis de Lille* made an explicit reference to Christ: 'returned to life by our love, in all his glory, Léon Trulin is still alive'.[105]

Similar articles were published about the Comité Jacquet,[106] and less well-known resisters,[107] although surprisingly few articles dealt with de Bettignies.[108] All were alike in style, based on the awarding of medals, the creation of monuments, sometimes the retelling of heroics – and always full of praise for the subjects' alleged love of France and sense of duty. The actions of these heroes were cast within a redemptive, heroic framework. However, often the retelling of heroics eventually represented not the effective continuation of a certain memory but the rediscovery of such events. Just as Margaret H. Darrow has argued for the case of de Bettignies, whenever there was publicity, the press discovered resisters anew, each time extolling how much they had done for France, and how much they had been forgotten. Often journalists misspelled the names of key resisters.[109] In some cases, the press was aware of the lack of a resilient memory and its role in keeping the flames burning: after publishing extracts from the memoirs of Louise Thuliez (resister and friend of de Bettignies) in December 1933, *La Dépêche du Nord* concluded in stating: 'Is not Mlle Thuliez right in being shocked that, apart from the monument erected in honour of Louise de Bettignies, there exists nothing in France to recall the sacrifice of the martyrs of the *patrie*[?]'. The publication of

her memoirs was a salvo in the struggle against oblivion. It was not the first such attempt: the previous year the President of the Committee for the Memory of Trulin (Philippe Kah) published *L'Adolescent chargé de gloire*, the story of Trulin. The front page of *Les Amis de Lille* contained the heading: '"L'Adolescent chargé de gloire" Is Published: Every *Lillois* Family Must Own This Book'.[110] The same heading dominated from October to December 1932,[111] although the motives behind such publicity may not have been wholly patriotic considering that the *Amis* had edited the book.[112] The role of locals championing such memories was clear in the *Croix du Nord*'s review of Kah's work: 'One day, when our grandchildren, become grandparents, recount beautiful true stories to their grandsons […] they will take inspiration from the book that has just appeared about Léon Trulin.'[113] However, reading and passing down such stories, whether in the press or other publications, was not the only form of memory transmission; ceremonies and monuments were dedicated to occupation events and personalities in the interwar period.

Ceremonies and monuments

Monuments directly relating to the occupation are rare in the Nord.[114] Among these, active resisters and their deaths were the most frequently commemorated themes – Lille still has its monuments to the Comité Jacquet, Trulin and de Bettignies.[115] Unlike the handful of monuments to suffering experienced on a collective scale during the occupation,[116] resistance was usually remembered symbolically through *individual* monuments, or in a more individualistic manner.[117] Roads and town squares were named after resisters,[118] and personal tombs in cemeteries commemorated them – such as those in Lille's eastern cemetery concerning *Patience* collaborators Willot and Pinte.[119]

Often ceremonies and monuments were the result of campaigning on behalf of organisations created to perpetuate a certain memory and to influence local policy in this regard. Representative in this respect were forms of commemoration surrounding Trulin – around whom it was later said a 'cult of memory' was built[120] – and the Comité Jacquet. The creation and celebration of a monument to Trulin on the wall of the citadel in 1935 has already been mentioned, as has the ceremony awarding him a posthumous *Légion d'honneur*. These were stages in a piecemeal but organised commemorative process, which saw Trulin's resistance forever tied to that of the Comité Jacquet, and these five *fusillés lillois* (shot *Lillois*) in turn representing the occupation experience.

Trulin was awarded numerous decorations and citations posthumously in 1919 and 1920,[121] and on 30 September and 1 October 1922 fêtes run by the Comité du Commerce et des Fêtes du Vieux-Lille were held in his honour.[122] In May 1923, a poster called for as many *Lillois* as possible to aid in the posing of a commemorative plaque on the 'Walls of the five *fusillés lillois*' (Trulin being one of the five).[123] The ceremony attracted much attention.[124] This plaque was not enough for those safeguarding the memory of these men, and eventually a full-blown monument entitled 'Lille à ses fusillés' was unveiled in March 1929. It cost 200,000 francs, raised by contributions from the population at large with a subsidy from the municipality.[125] Just one year before, however, some were unhappy about an alleged lack of commemoration regarding Trulin. In November 1928, *Les Amis de Lille* wrote of Trulin, one of the 'most glorious' victims of the war: 'This little hero, has he been known, understood, appreciated enough, glorified as he deserves?'[126] This was despite the fact that the *monument aux fusillés* had been planned since 1924.[127] A separate statue of Trulin was paid for by public donations, placed on the Avenue du Peuple Belge in 1934; it can now be found outside Lille's theatre.[128]

Yet Trulin's memory remained linked inextricably to that of the Comité Jacquet, itself safeguarded by another 'Comité Jacquet' founded in April 1920 'to perpetuate the memory of Eugène Jacquet and his companions and, in general, the heroes of Lille shot during the occupation' by 'erecting a funerary monument to them' and aiding their families.[129] A 'Comité Georges Maertens' was also created, charged with receiving subscriptions to pay for a 'sepulchre worthy of him' in Lille's eastern cemetery and to provide financial aid to his widow.[130] By September 1919, enough money had been raised for the monument, with excess money given to his widow. Maerten was the only genuine *Lillois* of the Comité Jacquet, perhaps explaining why he was the only *fusillé* to whom a separate organisation was dedicated. His monument was unveiled in a ceremony on 26 September 1920, involving key notables, veterans, as well as British, Belgian and French military detachments.[131] The Comité Maertens thus fulfilled its objectives rapidly.

The interwar Comité Jacquet outlasted its initial aims and continued a yearly procession on the anniversary of the execution of the *fusillés*.[132] However, by 1937, the Minister of the Interior judged the Comité's activity to be 'insufficient' enough to maintain its status as an *œuvre de guerre* (war charity), so dissolved it.[133] Yet, in 1939, as war approached, the Comité returned with renewed vigour and purpose. It aimed to

unite locals, heal divisions and draw inspiration from the *fusillés*.[134] The Comité was to be enlarged, strengthened and its personnel (many of whom had died) replaced.[135] The *comité d'honneur* was reconstituted, and members called for a *journée des fusillés* to be celebrated regularly, although the onset of war appears to have prevented this.[136] A link was thus drawn between the resistance of 1914–18 and the response to the upcoming war of 1939–45.[137]

Other resisters were the subject of real or attempted commemoration via ceremonies and monuments.[138] De Bettignies was also promoted within the pantheon of heroes.[139] However, monuments and ceremonies perversely provided concrete and short-term outlets for memory and commemoration. They were receptacles into which memories could be poured and stored, sites of memory that provided a way of both remembering the occupation on certain occasions (such as anniversaries of deaths), but forgetting the occupation experience on a daily basis. The monuments suggested that the occupation was not forgotten, but once these memorials were built the population moved on. The goals of the organisations dedicated to the memory of resisters was fulfilled, undermining their purpose and perversely weakening the memory of those whom they wanted to remember. *La Dépêche* in November 1932 – a year after the well-attended ceremony for the sixteenth anniversary of Trulin's death[140] – noticed this paradox: 'Ah! If the Germans had had a Trulin! What poems, plays, films! Us, we have had, in Lille alone, Trulin, Derain, Jacquet, Deconinck, Maertens, Verhulst, many more. Do you consider that, despite all the monuments, we hold their names in high enough esteem?'[141] Correspondingly, Redier wrote in 1937 that, 'In one hundred years, in two hundred years, the unpleasant […] page that the invaded population has added to our annals will without doubt be inscribed in memories and in hearts. Today it is necessary to say that it is not the case.'[142] Redier's dream was never realised, as the Occupation of the Second World War soon dominated French and local collective memory.

The embers of the largely extinguished memory of the 1914–18 occupation were still occasionally present in post-1945 articles in the local press, usually published on the anniversaries of key occupation events, or upon the death of key occupation personalities. These rare reports continued to concentrate on famous resisters but sometimes contained factual inaccuracies and gave the impression of a lack of familiarity with the occupation among both authors and readers.[143] The commemorations of the centenary of the First World War have, at least at a local level, shifted some focus back on the experience of occupation and potentially

reinvigorated its memory. The occupation has been engaged with in physical and virtual exhibitions,[144] digitisation of archival documents,[145] hundreds of newspaper articles published in *La Voix du Nord*,[146] and a series of articles and videos produced by France 3 Télévision diffused via social media.[147] Yet even for these vectors of memory appearing amid a reinvigorated historiography of the period, while there is some nuance in the topics covered,[148] the focus is disproportionately on the suffering of the occupation or acts of heroism and resistance. There is still a sense of a constant rediscovery of old heroes, both in content and dissemination. For instance, despite having published 320 articles on the occupation from 2014 until the end of 2016, *La Voix du Nord* still referred to 'the forgotten occupation'.[149] This is representative of the overall place of the occupation in local and national collective memory: despite impressive attempts to (re)engage with the experience of the occupied Nord in centenary commemorations, this experience was and remains marginal.

Conclusion: reflections on the occupation

Despite the eventual shift towards forgetting, the experience of military occupation marked *Nordistes* profoundly. Theirs was a different war, set aside from the national experience. Only compatriots from other occupied departments, who had undergone similar hardship, could begin to understand what they had lived through and the choices they had faced. The reality of living under foreign dominance forced these *Nordistes* to interact with the national enemy at the same time as the Allied armies struggled to liberate French territory. Reminders of this ongoing struggle were never far away, from the sights and sounds of bombardment to prisoners of war marched through key towns, or the fabrication of sandbags. Consequently, locals were caught in their own no man's land, neither clearly combatants nor fully non-combatants. Under such cicumstances, the way they behaved took on greater importance, defining their role in the war effort and the way in which they understood this.

Unsurprisingly, occupied *Nordistes* responded to their situation in a variety of ways ranging from forms of complicity, disunity and criminality, to multifarious expressions of patriotism, resistance and opposition to the occupiers. Naturally, other behaviours than the main forms examined here existed, notably those in the grey zone between the extremes of this spectrum; real life was rarely as clear-cut and neatly defined as my categorisations suggest. Individuals could and did engage

simultaneously in misconduct and resistance, criminality, acts of disunity and unity – and also in behaviours that fall under none of these labels. Nevertheless, I believe that these categories are not only useful for analysing and understanding the occupation but also represent the cornerstones of the way in which many *occupés* understood their experience; this was the dominant occupied culture, born of both pre-war social norms and daily wartime experience, comprising a framework informing and guiding what were considered acceptable and unacceptable behaviours. While the largely middle-class notion of respectability was central to this, and while most of those who have left traces in the archives were middle-class, certain working-class locals also bought into this culture. Such a world view was extreme and largely unforgiving, clouding or ignoring the complex realities of occupied life; it called for an idealised standard of behaviour, essentially unattainable in reality, but which set out the wartime narrative which in turn influenced the way many perceived the behaviour around them. Of course, not all locals shared this culture – especially those who breached it, often drawing criticism from compatriots who did buy into this world view. As such, for many *Nordistes*, the experience of occupation was marked by the judgement of compatriots based on perceived conduct, evoking fear, contempt and praise. Separating perceptions from reality is difficult, and in many ways perceptions themselves informed reality. Nevertheless, it is evident that there was more to occupied life – and to *occupés*' understanding of their situation – than just the suffering and resistance that dominated the narrative of occupation soon after the liberation.

In examining both the 'light' and 'dark' side of this occupation, I hope to have demonstrated that there existed a multiplicity of behaviours in the occupied Nord; that occupied *Nordistes* were neither purely victims, heroes nor villains, even though they often thought in such terms. I have proposed a new conceptual vocabulary to help understand this situation, such as notions of 'misconduct' or a dominant 'occupied culture'. These notions may be suggestive for understanding other instances of populations responding to military occupation, although tweaking and contextualisation would be required. Yet whatever the implications, strengths and weaknesses of my approach, it is my hope that this book represents a further step on the path towards a more comprehensive understanding of the oft-forgotten but consistently fascinating occupation of the Nord in the First World War.

Notes

1 AML, 4H/21, Mairie de Lille, notes journalières à Messieurs les Conseillers Municipaux, 1 September–17 October 1918. For bombardment affecting occupied populations, see Jeanne Lefebvre, *Mon journal sous l'occupation dans ma maison occupée par l'ennemi* (Paris: Éditions Jourdan, 2014), 5 October 1916, pp. 110–11.
2 Claudine Wallart, *C'était hier, le département du Nord … Le Nord en Guerre – 1914–1918* (Lille: Archives Départementales du Nord, 2008), p. 65.
3 Wallart, *C'était hier*, p. 67; Philippe Nivet, *La France occupée 1914–1918* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2011), p. 316.
4 Nivet, *La France occupée*, p. 316; BDIC, FΔ112605, dossier B.x006, Académie de Lille, Nord, Réponses au questionnaire sur le territoire occupé par les armées allemandes, Commune de Fourmies, École de garçons V. Hugo, information on Kommandant Schlichteisen, 25 July 1919.
5 William MacDonald, *Reconstruction in France* (New York: Macmillan, 1922), p. 143–4.
6 Nivet, *La France occupée*, p. 314; Wallart, *C'était hier*, pp. 65–6. Nivet states the evacuation date as 6 September; Wallart claims it was 8 September.
7 Nivet, *La France occupée*, p. 314; Wallart, *C'était hier*, pp. 65–6; documents in ADN, 9R815.
8 Wallart, *C'était hier*, p. 65.
9 Wallart, *C'était hier*, p. 67.
10 AML, 4H/21, Mairie de Lille, notes journalières à Messieurs les Conseillers Municipaux, 30 September and 1 October 1918.
11 Notes journalières à Messieurs les Conseillers Municipaux, for example 8 October 1918.
12 Notes journalières à Messieurs les Conseillers Municipaux, 7 October 1918.
13 Lefebvre, *Mon journal sous l'occupation*, 12 October 1918, p. 264.
14 Lefebvre, *Mon journal sous l'occupation*, 16 October 1918, p. 264.
15 ADN, 74J241, personal papers of Pierre Dumont ('répresentant de commerce […] employé comme interprète à la mairie de Lille de 1914 à 1919'), 2 and 10 October 1918.
16 74J225, diary of M. Blin (instituteur en retraite at Auchy-les-Orchies), 18 September 1918; ADN, 74J224, diary of M. Trollin (Directeur de l'École Rollin, Lille), 17 October 1918.
17 Alex Dowdall, 'Civilians in the combat zone: Allied and German evacuation policies at the Western Front, 1914–1918', *First World War Studies*, 6:3 (2015), p. 12.
18 Lefebvre, *Mon journal sous l'occupation*, 17 October 1918, p. 265.
19 Wallart, *C'était hier*, p. 67.
20 ADN, J1950, diary of Pierre Motte (1861–1947, notaire à Lille), 17 October 1918.

21 Nivet, *La France occupée*, pp. 317–18.
22 For British press reporting, see James E. Connolly, 'L'occupation du Nord de la France (1914–1918) vue par les Britanniques', *Revue du Nord*, 404–5:96 (2014), pp. 144–6.
23 Séverine Salome, 'Valenciennes sous l'occupation allemande: 1914–18', master's dissertation (Lille III, 1998), pp. 208–20; Nivet, *La France occupée*, p. 31; AMT, H4A25, Commission Historique du Nord, Questionnaire de la Guerre de 1914, response 76; Georges Dubut-Maison, *Journal d'un bourgeois de Maubeuge, avant, pendant le siècle et l'occupation allemande, 1914–1918* (Tourcoing: J. Duvivier, 1923), 9 November 1918, pp. 269–73.
24 Wallart, *C'était hier*, p. 67.
25 SHD, 17N394, Rapport sur l'aide apportée par les troupes britanniques à la population libérée pendant l'avance du 1er Oct. au 25 Nov. 1918', especially pp. 9 and 13.
26 AML, 4H/305/401, British Army poster, 25 September 1918; AML, 4H/293, documents on relations between British soldiers and locals; Jean-Yves Le Naour, 'Les désillusions de la libération d'après le contrôle postal civil de Lille (octobre 1918–mars 1919)', *Revue du Nord*, 80:325 (1998), pp. 399–401; Nivet, *La France occupée*, pp. 320–8.
27 Stéphane Lembré, *La Guerre des bouches: Ravitaillement et alimentation à Lille (1914–1919)* (Lille: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 2016), p. 149.
28 Nivet, *Les Réfugiés français*, pp. 473–535.
29 MacDonald, *Reconstruction in France*, especially p. 34.
30 Lefebvre, *Mon journal sous l'occupation*, p. 270.
31 Hugh Clout, *After the Ruins: Restoring the Countryside of Northern France after the Great War* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1996), p. 47 cited in Nivet, *La France occupée*, p. 366; Wallart, *C'était hier*, p. 77.
32 MacDonald, *Reconstruction in France*, pp. 108–9.
33 Nivet, *La France occupée*, pp. 365–72; MacDonald, *Reconstruction in France*; Clout, *After the Ruins*; James E. Connolly, '"Alliierte" über den Krieg hinaus: Britische Zeitungen und "Patenschaften" französischer Städte nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg' (working title), in Corine Defrance, Pia Nordblom and Tanja Herrmann (eds.), *Städtepartnerschaften in Europa im 20. Jahrhundert* (Berlin: Wallstein Verlag, forthcoming).
34 Wallart, *C'était hier*, p. 79.
35 Nivet, *La France occupée*, pp. 370–2.
36 Wallart, *C'était hier*, pp. 73–83.
37 Wallart, *C'était hier*, pp. 329–64.
38 Nivet, *La France occupée*, pp. 329–72; Annette Becker, *Les Cicatrices rouges 14–18: France et Belgique occupées* (Paris: Fayard, 2010), pp. 295–313; Annette Becker, 'D'une guerre à l'autre: mémoire de l'occupation et de la résistance: 1914–1940', *Revue du Nord*, 76:306 (1994), 453–65; James

E. Connolly, 'Encountering Germans: The Experience of Occupation in the Nord, 1914–1918', Ph.D. dissertation (King's College London, 2012), pp. 267–92; Matthias Meirlaen, 'Une mémoire difficile: commémorer la Grande Guerre dans le Nord et le Pas-de-Calais occupé', in James Connolly, Emmanuel Debruyne, Élise Julien and Matthias Meirlaen (eds.), *En territoire ennemi: Expériences d'occupation, transferts, héritages (1914–1949)* (Lille: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 2018). See also Lille 3's project mapping war monuments, http://monumentsmorts.univ-lille3.fr (accessed 29 January 2017).

39 *Le Progrès du Nord*, 22 November 1918.
40 *Le Progrès du Nord*, 29 November 1918.
41 *Le Progrès du Nord*, 30 November 1918.
42 *Le Progrès du Nord*, 1 December 1918.
43 *Le Progrès du Nord*, 6 December 1918.
44 SHD, 16N1462, Commission de contrôle postal de Lille, 1 January 1919, extraits, 1 – 'opinions sur la libération des pays envahis et sur l'occupation des pays ennemis', p. 3.
45 'Le traître Hubert', *Le Progrès du Nord*, 18 December 1918, p. 1.
46 *Le Progrès du Nord*, 'La "Gazette des Ardennes" et ses collaborateurs', 19 December 1918, p. 1.
47 *Le Progrès du Nord*, 'La "Gazette des Ardennes" et ses collaborateurs', 22 December 1918, p. 1.
48 *Le Progrès du Nord*, 'Tourcoing: les trafiquants d'or', 21 December 1918, p. 2; 'Tribunal correctionnel de Lille: une affaire de mœurs', 28 December 1918, p. 2.
49 *L'Écho du Nord*, 'La Chasse aux mercantis', 12 December 1918, p. 2; and 'L'Arrestation d'un traître', 21 December 1918, p. 1; *La Dépêche de Lille et de la Région du Nord*, 21 and 23 December 1918; 'Pendant l'occupation', *La Croix du Nord*, 13 December 1918, p. 2.
50 *Le Progrès du Nord*, 'Le procès de la "Gazette des Ardennes"', 20 October 1919, p. 2.
51 *La Croix du Nord*, 21 March 1921.
52 AML, 4H121, clipping, n.a, n.d.
53 Nivet, *La France occupée*, pp. 356–7.
54 Xavier Rousseaux and Laurence Van Ypersele (eds.), *La Patrie crie vengeance! La répression des 'inciviques' belges au sortir de la guerre 1914–1918* (Brussels: Le Cri édition, 2008); Laird Boswell, 'From liberation to purge trials in the "mythic provinces": recasting French identities in Alsace and Lorraine, 1918–1920', *French Historical Studies*, 23:1 (2000), 129–62.
55 Richard Vinen, *The Unfree French: Life under the Occupation* (London: Allen Lane, 2006), p. 342.
56 Renée Martinage, 'Les collaborateurs devant la cour d'assises du Nord après la très Grande Guerre', *Revue du Nord*, 77:309 (1995), 95–115. For original

court documents, see ADN, 3U281/31–78, 2U1/444–8, 2U1/571, 2U2/515, 3U258/564, 3U274/174 and 3U303/6–7.

57 Martinage, 'Les collaborateurs', p. 111.

58 Martinage, 'Les collaborateurs', pp. 109–10.

59 Martinage, 'Les collaborateurs', p. 352.

60 Martinage, 'Les collaborateurs', p. 441.

61 Martinage, 'Les collaborateurs', p. 364.

62 Martinage, 'Les collaborateurs', pp. 350–1.

63 Martinage, 'Les collaborateurs', p. 347.

64 Françoise Thébaud, *La Femme au temps de la guerre de 14* (Paris: Stock, 1986), p. 60.

65 See, for example, Georges Gromaire, *L'Occupation allemande en France (1914–1918)* (Paris: Payot, 1925); Antoinette Tierce, *Between Two Fires: Being a True Account of How the Author Sheltered Four Escaped British Prisoners of War in Her House in Lille during the German Occupation of That City*, trans. J. Lewis May (London: John Lane, 1931), pp. 22–3, 37–8, 274; Maxence van der Meersch, *Invasion '14*, trans. Gerard Hopkins (London: Constable & Co, 1937), pp. 18–19, although on pp. 34–5 he highlights the normality of fraternising with Germans and the abnormality of resistance.

66 See Nivet, *La France occupée*; Annette Becker, *Les Cicatrices rouges 14–18: France et Belgique occupées* (Paris: Fayard, 2010); Helen McPhail, *The Long Silence: Civilian Life under the German Occupation of Northern France, 1914–1918* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1999); Jean-Yves Le Naour, *Misères et tourmentes de la chair durant la Grande Guerre: Les mœurs sexuelles des Français, 1914–1918* (Paris: Aubier, 2002); Philippe Salson, *L'Aisne occupée: Les civils dans la Grande Guerre* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2015).

67 AMT, 4HA26, 'Tourcoing libéré 17 octobre 1918, Proclamation de l'administration municipale, visites du Général commandant des troupes britanniques, de M. le Président du Conseil des Ministres, de M. le Président de la République', 'Discours prononcé par M. Vandevenne, Maire de Tourcoing, à l'adresse de M. Clémenceau, Président du Conseil des Ministres', 19 October 1918.

68 AMT, 4HA26, 'Discours prononcé par M. Vandevenne, Maire de Tourcoing, à l'adresse de Monsieur le Président de la République, lors de son passage en notre ville, le 21 Octobre 1918'.

69 AMT, 4HA26, 'Allocution prononcée dans l'hôtel de ville de Tourcoing, le 21 Octobre 1918, par Monsieur le Président de la République, en réponse au discours de bienvenue de Monsieur Vandevenne, faisant fonctions de Maire de Tourcoing', 21 October 1918.

70 ADN, 9R1187, proclamation of Préfet, Lille, 23 October 1918.

71 See the entirety of AN, F23/377. M. Dubar and M. Willot, key collaborators of *La Patience*, received the *Légion d'honneur* whilst alive. Other confirmed

recipients do not appear in these documents, thus these individuals represent only a fraction of actual recipients.

72 Nivet, *La France occupée*, p. 335.

73 ADN, 3Z140, Médaille de la Reconnaissance française attribuée aux otages, déportés et brassards rouges.

74 AN, BB32/300, newspaper clipping, no title, n.d.: 'En conséquence, par décret du 8 octobre 1923 (Journal Officiel du 12) le délai fixé par le décret du 1er avril 1922 est prolongé au 31 décembre prochain'.

75 AN, BB32/4, Ministre du Travail to M. le Garde des Sceaux, Ministre de la Justice, 25 April 1921, and supporting documentation.

76 AN, BB32/3, Médaille de la Reconnaissance Française application concerning M. Auguste Alloy, 12 March 1923.

77 AN, BB32/3, Mme Allard.

78 See ADN, 6Z39; ADN, 4Z34, République Française, Sous-Préfecture de Douai, Médailles des Victimes de l'Invasion 1914–18 et de la Reconnaissance Française.

79 Nivet, *La France occupée*, p. 335.

80 See files in AN, F23/375, Recompenses aux Otages, Nord. Most were awarded by 1923.

81 Annette Becker, *Oubliés de la Grande Guerre: Humanitaire et culture de guerre* (Paris: Éditions Noêsis, 1998), p. 374.

82 Nivet, *La France occupée*, p. 336.

83 ADN, 4Z34, République Française, Sous-Préfecture de Douai, Médailles des Victimes de l'Invasion 1914–18 et de la Reconnaissance Française.

84 NA, WO106/6192, War Office, Directorate of Military Operations and Military Intelligence, and predecessors, Correspondence and Papers, Honours and awards to named French, Belgian and Dutch Secret Service agents (1919–23). The communes are Trélon, Glageon, Roubaix, Fourmies, Wattrelos, Avesnes, Lille, Tourcoing, Marcoing, Noyelles-sur-Escaut, Villers-en-Cauchies, Cambrai, Anzin, Bermerain, Wallers, Vieux-Condé, Condé-sur-Escaut, Croix, Normain-près-Orchies, Hautmont, Saint-Amand-les-Eaux, Lomme and Valenciennes. The BEO is likely a subsidiary of the Order of the British Empire and a precursor of the British Empire Medal.

85 ADN, 4Z207, *Journal Officiel*, 19 June 1930; Nivet, *La France occupée*, p. 334.

86 ADN, 15J85, Commune de Crèvecœur-sur-l'Escaut, response to the Commission Historique du Nord questionnaire, 27 September 1921.

87 Nivet, *La France occupée*, p. 334. Nivet puts the date as 14 September, but a document in ADN, M127/124 states the date as 13 September 1919.

88 Jean-Claude Lefranc-Florin and Brigitte Lefranc-Florin, *Douai sous l'occupation 1914–1918* (Brussels: SPRL Sodim, 1974), cited in Nivet, *La France occupée*, p. 334.

89 ADN, M127/124, especially Aubigny-au-Bac, *Journal Officiel*, 12 February 1921; Beaucamps, *Journal Officiel*, 18 September 1920; Bois-Grenier, *Journal Officiel*, 18 September 1920; et passim.

90 ADN, M127/124, Avesnes-le-Sec, *Journal Officiel*, 16 June 1922; La Bassée, *Journal Officiel*, 13 August 1920; Boussois, *Journal Officiel*, 22 December 1920; et passim.
91 See, for example, 'Le Châtiment', *L'Écho du Nord*, 24 December 1918, p. 1; *La Dépêche du Nord*, 'Les Dommages de Guerre', 22 December 1918, p. 1.
92 Peace Treaty of Versailles, 28 June 1919, part viii (Reparations), Annexe i, article 3. Online at http://avalon.law.yale.edu/imt/partviii.asp (accessed 29 January 2017).
93 John Maynard Keynes, *The Economic Consequences of the Peace* (London: Labour Research Department, 1920), pp. 125–30.
94 *La Croix du Nord*, 'Beaux gestes', 1 November 1918, p. 1; 'Léon Trulin', 27 November 1918, pp. 1–2.
95 Julian Jackson, *France: The Dark Years, 1940–44* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 268–71. There were Catholic resisters, however: see pp. 418–19.
96 See H. R. Kedward, 'La Résistance, l'histoire et l'anthropologie: quelques domaines de la théorie', in Jean-Marie Guillon and Pierre Laborie (eds.), *Mémoire et histoire: La Résistance* (Toulouse: Privat, 1995), pp. 109–18.
97 See articles in *Le Progrès du Nord*: 4, 9 and 10 November 1918; 2, 5, 9, 13, 17 and 22 December 1918.
98 *Le Progrès du Nord*, 'Un livre d'or du courage pendant l'occupation', 13 December 1918, p. 1.
99 *Le Progrès du Nord*, 'Un livre d'or du courage pendant l'occupation', 22 December 1918, p. 1.
100 'Concours de récits et chansons et sur l'occupation et la guerre', *L'Écho du Nord*, 27 December 1918, p. 2.
101 AML, 4H75, *Les Amis de Lille*, 15 June 1935; 1, 15 and 20 July 1935.
102 *Ibid*.
103 AML, 4H75, *Le Réveil du Nord* and *La Dépêche du Nord*, 9 November 1935.
104 *La Dépêche du Nord*, 9 November 1935.
105 AML, 4H75, single photocopied document entitled *Les Amis de Lille*, 15 June 1935; 1, 15 and 20 July 1935.
106 AML, 4H76, *Les Amis*, 1 February and 1 September 1930; *L'Écho du Nord*, 25 March 1919, 19 May 1919, 28 February 1920; *Le Réveil du Nord*, 20 May 1923; 18 June 1939; *La Croix du Nord*, 18 June 1939.
107 See, for example, most of AML, 4H78, especially *Le Réveil du Nord*, 9 November 1928; 24 September 1932; 9 March 1933; 13 August 1935; 16 January, 18 June, 14 August, 4 September, and 23 September 1936; *La Dépêche du Nord*, 12 December 1928, 23 December 1933, and 13 August 1935; *L'Écho du Nord*, 27 March 1919; 20 February 1927; 11–12 November 1928; 26 December 1933; 13 August 1935; 11 August and 4 October 1936; *La Croix du Nord*, 13 August 1935, 23 August and 18 September 1936.
108 AML, 4H77, *L'Écho du Nord*, 8 January 1920; 3 and 10 November 1927; *Le Progrès du Nord*, 25 August 1934; *Le Grand Hebdomadaire Illustré*, 7 March

1920. For a theory explaining why the memory of de Bettignies was not effectively perpetuated, see Margaret H. Darrow, *French Women and the First World War: War Stories of the Home Front* (New York: Berg, 2000), pp. 281–3.

109 Darrow, *French Women*, p. 282.

110 AML, 4H75, *Les Amis*, 15 October 1932.

111 AML, 4H75, *Les Amis*, 15 October, 1 November and 15 December 1932.

112 AML, 4H75, *Les Amis*, 1–15 September 1932.

113 AML, 4H75, *La Croix du Nord*, 8 December 1932.

114 Becker, *Oubliés de la Grande Guerre*, pp. 365–6; Annette Becker, 'Mémoire et commémoration: les "atrocités" allemandes de la Première Guerre mondiale dans le nord de la France', *Revue du Nord*, 74:295 (1992), 339–54; see also http://monumentsmorts.univ-lille3.fr; and Meirlaen, 'Une mémoire difficile'.

115 Becker, *Oubliés de la Grande Guerre*, p. 342; Becker, 'D'une guerre à l'autre', p. 456. The monument to the Comité Jacquet and Trulin, however, was destroyed in the Second World War and rebuilt afterwards.

116 Becker, 'Mémoire et commémoration', p. 344.

117 Becker, 'D'une guerre à l'autre', p. 456.

118 Becker, 'D'une guerre à l'autre', p. 342; Nivet, *La France occupée*, p. 329 and 331. For instance, the Place Louise de Bettignies in Lille.

119 Becker, 'Mémoire et commémoration', p. 342; Becker, 'D'une guerre à l'autre', p. 457.

120 AML, 4H75, *Nord Matin*, 5 March 1978.

121 AML, 4H75, list, n.d., n.a., entitled 'Madame Trulin à Lille (Nord)'. Trulin received l'Ordre de l'Armée, English Medal of War 1914–1918, a citation to the order of the British Army; in January 1920, his family was presented with an OBE and other medals. See also *La Voix du Nord*, 1 April 1971.

122 AML, 4H75, 'Comité du Commerce et des Fêtes du Vieux-Lille – Programme des 30 Septembre et 1er Octobre 1922 (Lille, 1922)'.

123 AML, 4H75, poster, 'Comité Jacquet: Pose d'un plaque commémorative', Lille, 21 May 1923.

124 See, for example, AML, 4H76, *Le Réveil du Nord*, 20 May 1923. For more information, see ADN, 70J213.

125 Becker, 'Mémoire et commémoration', p. 348.

126 AML, 4H75, *Les Amis de Lille*, 1 November 1928.

127 Becker, 'Mémoire et commémoration', p. 346. Executed resister Deconninck had predicted that such a monument might be erected and in his last letter to his wife asked that his name appear next to that of Jacquet: AML, 4H76, Ernest Deconninck to his wife, 15 September 1915.

128 AML, 4H75, poster, n.d., 'Faites votre devoir – Envoyez votre souscription pour le Monument à Léon Trulin […]'; L'Adjoint Délugé du Maire de Lille, to M. Guy Harnould, 20 December 1962.

129 AML, 4H76, Comité Jacquet to Mayor, 2 April 1920.

130 AML, 4H76, President of Comité Georges Maertens to Préfet, 24 December 1919.
131 AML, 4H76, 'Inauguration du Monument élevé à la Mémoire du héros G. MAERTENS', n.d., n.a.
132 AML, 4H76, *Le Réveil du Nord*, 18 June 1939.
133 AML, 4H76, 'Le Chef de Division délégué' for the Préfet, to Mayor, 6 October 1937.
134 AML, 4H76, President of Comité Jacquet to Mayor, 1 June 1939. Original emphasis.
135 AML, 4H76, *Le Réveil du Nord*, 18 June 1939.
136 AML, 4H76, *La Dépêche du Nord* and *La Croix du Nord*, 18 June 1939.
137 See Becker, 'D'une guerre à l'autre'.
138 See, for example, AML, 4H76, Edouard and Fernard Plouvier de Lille, Chévaliers de la Légion d'Honneur, Souvenir de la Fête du 5 Mai 1921; AML, 4H74, 'Comité Jacquet et des Fusillés du Nord Envahi, Projet d'érection d'un monument en l'honneur du douanier Guénard, Demande de participation de la Ville, Rapport à l'Administration Municipale', 13 October 1933; AML, 4H78, *Le Réveil du Nord*, 24 September 1932.
139 For example, a mass was held on 22 September 1919 by the Bishop of Lille in honour of the *fusillés* and de Bettignies: AML, 4H76, note of the Mayor of Lille, 19 September 1919.
140 See ADN, 70J349, passim.
141 AML, 4H75, *La Dépêche du Nord*, 4 November 1932.
142 Antoine Redier, *Les Allemands dans nos maisons* (Paris: Éditions Cartier, 1945), p. 163.
143 See Connolly, 'Encountering Germans', pp. 289–92.
144 See, for example, the following websites (accessed 29 January 2017): www.cheminsdememoire-nordpasdecalais.fr/; http://archives.lille.fr/Actualites/p270/Exposition-Premiere-Guerre-Mondiale; www.archivesdepartementales.lenord.fr/mini_site/cahiers_pedagogiques/01_lille_envahi/index.html; http://archives.lille.fr/Les-Archives-de-Lille/p277/1914-mobilisee-bombardee-occupee-Lille-entre-dans-la-guerre. *La Voix du Nord* has frequently reported on local exhibitions, such as one in Lille's Place Rihour from 15 July until 18 August 2015 (*La Voix du Nord*, 15 July 2015).
145 See http://archives.lille.fr/search?preset=11&view=list (accessed 29 January 2017).
146 It has published 380 articles touching upon the occupation since 2012; 320 of these were published between January 2014 and December 2016. See www.lavoixdunord.fr.
147 See the documentary *Derrière la muraille d'acier*, produced by Olivier Sarrazin (Les Docs du Nord and Pictanovo, 2014), available at http://archives.lille.fr/Les-Archives-de-Lille/p278/Derriere-la-muraille-d-acier

(accessed 29 January 2017); France 3 Nord-Pas-de-Calais has produced 383 videos and articles on the war, many of which deal with aspects of the occupation: see http://france3-regions.francetvinfo.fr/playlist-histoires-14-18 (accessed 29 January 2017).

148 See, for example, the RFI series *Comme en 14* (2014), notably the episodes 'Les Femmes dans la Grande Guerre' and 'Vivre en zone occupée': see www.rfi.fr/emission/comme-en-1914-guerre-mondiale (accessed 29 January 2017).

149 For example, *La Voix du Nord*, 12 November 2015: www.lavoixdunord.fr/region/seclin-entre-1914-et-1918-un-livret-en-souvenir-de-ia25b50457n3155198 (accessed 29 January 2017).

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