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**Francia. Forschungen zur Westeuropäischen Geschichte.**

Herausgegeben vom Deutschen Historischen Institut Paris (Institut historique allemand)

Band 44 (2017)

**Introduction: Dealing with the Enemy**

DOI: 10.11588/fr.2017.0.69037

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# Atelier

## OCCUPIED SOCIETIES IN WESTERN EUROPE: CONFLICT AND ENCOUNTER IN THE 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

International Workshop, Essen, 7<sup>th</sup>–8<sup>th</sup> July 2016,  
coordinated by Tatjana Tönsmeier and Krijn Thijs

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### INTRODUCTION: DEALING WITH THE ENEMY

#### Occupation and Occupied Societies in Western Europe

#### I.

In the second volume of her memoirs, entitled »The Prime of Life«, Simone de Beauvoir recalls the beginning of the German occupation of France. She describes German troops marching into the village she had fled to: »A fairly sizeable detachment stayed behind in the village. As evening drew on the peasants crept timidly back to their houses and the cafés opened. The Germans did not cut off children's hands; they paid for their drinks and the eggs they bought on the farms, and spoke politely; all the shopkeepers smiled at them invitingly. They started on their propaganda straight away. As I was reading in a field two soldiers approached me. They spoke a little clumsy French and assured me of their friendly feelings toward the French people: it was the English and the Jews who had brought us to this sorry pass. This little conversation did not surprise me; what *was* disconcerting was to pass these green-uniformed men in the street and find them just like soldiers anywhere the world over.«<sup>1</sup>

Soldiers were in contact with members of the occupied societies elsewhere as well. They told their loved ones at home about it. One such soldier, who was sent for service to the Netherlands, notes in his letter of November 1942: »Everywhere you look you can see this country has not seen war yet; trade and industry are flourishing everywhere. All around there is a sense of wealth and sociability. You still can buy all kinds of things, but the prices are sky-high. [...] The black market is booming. We hardly see any pretty people here, yet they are straight, upright and decent [*grundständig*]. They are more pious than at home, too. Grace before meals is taken very seriously. I really have found nice people in my digs. Yesterday I sat together with them until late at night and told them stories about home [...]. The young woman is very inquisitive; they like Rhinelanders here.«<sup>2</sup>

1 Simone DE BEAUVOIR, *The Prime of Life*, transl. by Peter Green, London 1962, p. 353 f.

2 Cit. In: Dorothee SCHMITZ-KÖSTER, *Der Krieg meines Vaters. Als deutscher Soldat in Norwegen*, Berlin 2004, S. 269 (letter from the 7.11.42). Our Translation.

As these examples show – and they could easily be substituted with those of other occupied countries, especially those in Western Europe that this volume focusses on – men and women who lived through the war years experienced and remembered interaction between the occupier and the occupied. Research though, has until recently focused mostly either on the occupier or the occupied. This is especially true for the historiography regarding Vichy France which has long tended to relatively neglect the German occupiers. This was due to master narratives in France and most European countries that focused on the victory over Nazi Germany in the early postwar years, telling a (hi)story of (self-)liberation with military forces in which resistance movements featured prominently<sup>3</sup>. French historiography was not an exception to this rule: in fact, by writing the history of the Résistance a history of the »good French«, as Robert Gildea put it, was written. The tenor was that they either fought within the resistance movement themselves or wholeheartedly supported it<sup>4</sup>. By the 1950s and 1960s the understanding of resistance had been broadened so much that it encompassed large sections of society, including former protagonists of the Vichy regime. Re-defined in this way, *la Résistance* became the core of French post-war identity<sup>5</sup>.

This is not to say that there were not certain counter tendencies. In fact, since a new generation had begun to make itself heard in academia and through films like »Le chagrin et la pitié« by Marcel Ophuls from 1969, it became clear that there was a broader debate about »collaboration« to be had<sup>6</sup>. The breakthrough though – to some even a revolution<sup>7</sup> – came when the American historian Robert O. Paxton published what was to become a seminal work: »Vichy France. Old Guard and New Order« in the early 1970s<sup>8</sup>. Paxton attributed a high level of initiative to French politics and administration vis-à-vis the German occupier. As a consequence, a more critical view of France started to be accepted and the self-perception of the country as a German victim receded<sup>9</sup>.

Stressing Vichy's agency and the continuities between the wartime years and the pre- and post-war periods proved remarkably fruitful, since it stimulated further research that convincingly demonstrated French origins of many of the Vichy government's policies<sup>10</sup>. Another field of research was the everyday life of the French population with a focus on coming to terms

- 3 Étienne FRANÇOIS, Meistererzählungen und Dammbürche. Die Erinnerung an den Zweiten Weltkrieg zwischen Nationalisierung und Universalisierung, in: Monika FLACKE (ed.), *Mythen der Nationen. 1945 – Arena der Erinnerungen*, Berlin 2004, p. 13–28, esp. p. 15–16.; Pieter LAGROU, *The Legacy of Nazi Occupation. Patriotic Memory and National Recovery in Western Europe, 1945–1965*, Cambridge, 1999.
- 4 Robert GILDEA, *Marianne in Chains. In Search of the German Occupation of France 1940–45*, London 2003, p. 5.
- 5 Henry ROUSSO, *Le syndrome de Vichy 1944–198 ...*, Paris 1987; Maud Anne BRACKE, *From Politics to Nostalgia. The Transformation of War Memories in France during the 1960s–1970s*, in: *European History Quarterly* 41 (2011), p. 5–24.
- 6 See e.g. Pascal ORY, *Les collaborateurs 1940–1945*, Paris 1976; Dominique VEILLON, *La Collaboration. Textes et débats*, Paris 1984.
- 7 Talbot IMLAY, *The German Side of Things. Recent Scholarship on the German Occupation*, in: *French Historical Studies* 39 (2016), p. 183–215, 184.
- 8 Robert O. PAXTON, *Vichy France. Old Guard and New Order*, London 1972. On the importance of this work see Sarah FISHMAN et al. (eds.), *France at War. Vichy and the Historians*, New York, Oxford 2000.
- 9 Rainer HUDEMANN, *Frankreich – Histoire du Temps présent zwischen nationalen Problemstellungen und internationaler Öffnung, Version: 1.0*, in: *Docupedia-Zeitgeschichte*, 19.09.2011 (15.1.2017).
- 10 See e.g. with a focus on syntheses Jean-Pierre AZÉMA, Olivier WIEVIORKA, *Vichy 1940–1944*, Paris 2004; Jean-Paul COINTET, *Histoire de Vichy*, Paris 1996; François-Georges DREYFUS, *Histoire de Vichy*, Paris 1990.

with restrictions and repression<sup>11</sup>, to which the research program of the Institut d'histoire du temps présent (IHTP) made a very substantial contribution<sup>12</sup>.

Without an intent to diminish what was achieved, the results nevertheless could partly be interpreted thusly: what happened in France during the war years were French matters and the presence of German occupiers was a phenomenon of secondary importance. Put pointedly, the history of France under occupation risked being reduced to a history of Vichy. In this reading of its past, the French public was supported by the former French President Giscard d'Estaing who in 1995 argued that between 90 and 95 percent of French people had not even spoken to a German during the years of occupation: »I am telling the French youth of today so that they do not have cause to be ashamed of their parents.«<sup>13</sup>

With sheer contact with Germans still a cause for shame even fifty years after the war – at least for some French men and women – and an imperative to commemorate gaining more and more ground, the IHTP, the German Historical Institute in Paris and the French National Archives decided to explore opportunities to address this incomplete picture in an effort to counter an interpretation of France as an occupied country without occupiers. Based on a joint agreement, these institutions set out to publish the reports of the French prefects and the *Lageberichte* of the German military authorities from 1940 to 1944. What is more, they made archival inventories of essential files available, hoping that this would inspire researchers to pay more attention to sources concerning the German authorities in wartime France<sup>14</sup>.

And indeed, research during the last decade has paid closer attention to the German occupiers, showing them to have been prominent actors in their own right. As a result, the active role of the *Militärbefehlshaber in Frankreich* (MBF) in the growing application of violence has become obvious, especially regarding the initiative to deport Jews. This was calculated to be less shocking for the French public than mass executions of hostages and can be interpreted as a re-

11 See e.g. Richard VINEN, *The Unfree French. Life Under Occupation*, London 2007; Éric ALARY, Bénédicte VERGEZ-CHAIGNON, Gilles GAUVIN, *Les Français au quotidien*, Paris 2006; GILDEA, *Marianne in Chains* (as in n. 4); Julian JACKSON, *France. The Dark Years, 1940–1944*, Oxford 2002; Jean-Pierre AZÉMA (ed.), *La France des années noires*, vol. 2, Paris 1993; Philippe BURRIN: *La France à l'heure allemande, 1940–1944*, Paris 1993; Pierre LABORIE, *L'opinion française sous Vichy*, Paris 1990; Jean-Pierre AZÉMA, *La Collaboration*, Paris 1975.

12 After a decade of research, the IHTP organized a conference to present an academic balance sheet and published its results. Jean-Pierre AZÉMA, François BÉDARIDA (ed.) in cooperation with Denis PESCHANSKI and Henry ROUSSO, *Le régime de Vichy et les Français*, Paris 1992. On memory and representation of Vichy see especially ROUSSO, *Le syndrome de Vichy* (as in n. 5); ID, Éric CONAN, *Vichy, un passé qui ne passe pas*, new and enlarged edition, Paris 1996. Henry ROUSSO, *Vichy. L'Événement, la mémoire, l'histoire*, Paris 2001. ID., *La dernière catastrophe. L'histoire, le présent, le contemporain*, Paris 2012.

13 *Le Monde*, 18 July 1995; cited in GILDEA, *Marianne in Chains* (as in n. 4), p. 7.

14 *Frankreich im Zweiten Weltkrieg. Eine vergleichende systematisch-kritische Edition der Synthesen der französischen Präfektenberichte und der Berichte des deutschen Militärbefehlshabers in Frankreich aus den Jahren 1940–1944. Gemeinschaftsprojekt des Deutschen Historischen Instituts Paris und des Institut d'histoire du temps présent in Zusammenarbeit mit den Archives nationales und dem Bundesarchiv, Unter der wissenschaftlichen Leitung von Marc Olivier Baruch und Stefan Martens, bearbeitet von Florent Brayard, Regina M. Delacor und Vincent Viet, unter Mitarbeit von Jürgen Finger und Peter Lieb. <http://www.ihtp.cnrs.fr/prefets>; *La France et la Belgique sous l'occupation allemande 1940–1944. Les fonds allemands conservés aux Centre historique des Archives nationales, Inventaire de la sous-série AJ40*, Paris 2002; Stefan MARTENS (ed.), *Frankreich und Belgien unter deutscher Besatzung 1940–1944. Die Bestände des Bundesarchiv-Militärarchivs in Freiburg*, Stuttgart 2002.*

straint on the part of German occupiers towards French civilians<sup>15</sup>. This restraint might have helped to create the impression of »no contact« between occupiers and occupied, excluding everyday non-violent aspects of contact as »contact«. Another result of recent research is that German authorities administered France rather by interference than by supervision. As a result, especially regarding anti-Jewish policies, the French side tended to feel and act less and less like it was responsible<sup>16</sup>. But whatever the mode, there were no separate German and French spheres. Even the intent of the SS/SD to transform the French administration into an executive organ of the German side needed interaction – on both sides<sup>17</sup>. Some similar features regarding the need for interaction can also be seen in the economic realm. French business men, such as mine owners, acknowledged the need to cooperate but tried to »use« this cooperation according to their own interests<sup>18</sup>.

The overall picture for the French case is, in other words, that a growing body of literature stresses the importance of also taking the German side into account. Turning to the Netherlands, such a statement at first glance might seem fully superfluous. Here, there was never any doubt that the evil of occupation had come from abroad and outside. Consequently, the post-war master narrative was a story of German (evil) action and Dutch (heroic) reaction. Founded in 1945, the early work of the Amsterdam Rijksinstituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie (RIOD) focussed intensively on the German Reichskommissariat administration<sup>19</sup>. However, it appeared separate from Dutch society and identity as a given framework for the years of occupation. It was only as the murder of the Dutch Jews came to be debated more intensively in the 1960s that direct interactions between occupiers and occupied received more attention. Had administrators in the Netherlands cooperated too readily with Nazi racial policy? Initially, the role of the Jewish Council was most controversial and thus the behaviour of the victims themselves, leaving critical reflections on Dutch national identity, tolerance and passivity for the decades to come<sup>20</sup>.

In the years that followed, challenges to the dominant good-bad dichotomy narrative often came from outside Dutch academia; examples from arts and literature include the work of Wil-

- 15 Gaël EISMANN, *Hôtel Majestic: Ordre et sécurité en France occupée, 1940–1944*, Paris 2010; Peter LIEB, *Konventioneller Krieg oder NS-Weltanschauungskrieg? Kriegführung und Partisanenbekämpfung in Frankreich 1943/44*, München 2007.
- 16 EISMANN, *Hôtel Majestic* (as in n. 15), p. 168.
- 17 Michael MAYER, *Staaten als Täter: Ministerialbürokratie und »Judenpolitik« in NS-Deutschland und Vichy-Frankreich. Ein Vergleich*, München 2010, p. 256.
- 18 Nathalie PRUÉ, *Charbon, travail force, collaboration: Der nordfranzösische und belgische Bergbau unter deutscher Bergbau unter deutscher Besatzung, 1940–1944*, Essen 2008. This is, by the way, not only a logic used by French economic elites, but is well documented as well regarding political elites in states allied with the German Reich during World War II. See Tatjana TÖNSMEYER, *Das Deutsche Reich und die Slowakei. Politischer Alltag zwischen Kooperation und Eigensinn*, Paderborn 2003.
- 19 See the passages in Lou DE JONG, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog*, 12 volumes, The Hague 1969–1994. See also Konrad KWIET, *Reichskommissariat Niederlande – Versuch und Scheitern nationalsozialistischer Neuordnung*, Stuttgart 1968; and recently Johannes KOLL, *Arthur Seyß-Inquart und die deutsche Besatzungspolitik in den Niederlanden (1940–1945)*, Cologne 2015.
- 20 Jacques PRESSER, *Ondergang. De vervolging en verdelging van het Nederlandse Jodendom, 1940–1945*, Den Haag 1965. Translated as: ID, *Ashes in the Wind. The destruction of Dutch Jewry*, London, 1968. See for the debates about this study: Conny KRISTEL, *Geschiedschrijving als opdracht. Abel Herzberg, Jacques Presser en Loe de Jong over de jodenvervolging*, Amsterdam 1998; and for the broader context: Bob MOORE, *Victims and survivors. The Nazi Persecution of the Jews in the Netherland's 1940–1945*, London u. a. 1997.

lem Frederik Hermans<sup>21</sup>, the book on Dutch SS-volunteers by Armando<sup>22</sup> or the 1974 documentary »Vastberaden, maar soepel en met mate« about unheroic everyday life that was produced in direct reaction to the French film »Le chagrin et la pitié« mentioned above<sup>23</sup>. Like Paxton's work about France, the first systematic study on collaboration in the Netherlands was published by a foreign scholar in 1984, the German historian Gerhard Hirschfeld<sup>24</sup>. From the 1990s onwards, many studies concerning Dutch »accommodation« attitudes and behaviour towards the occupiers followed, covering different sectors of society, including local administration<sup>25</sup>, economics and business<sup>26</sup>, Dutch contributions to the persecution of the Jews<sup>27</sup> and the position of women romantically involved with German soldiers<sup>28</sup>. Nevertheless, the »German side of things« was often taken as a given, without equal analysis of both occupied and occupiers<sup>29</sup>. It is only in more recent work, such as Laura Fahnenbruck's work on sexual regulation by Wehrmacht officers or Geraldien Frijtag's study of Dutch colonisers in Eastern Europe, that both worlds are integrated successfully<sup>30</sup>. Moreover, dominant memory in the Netherlands is still organised along national lines. The need to explain the high deportation rates from the Netherlands continues to feed controversy about supposed indifference and passivity among Dutch bystanders<sup>31</sup>. As in France, the debate tends to concentrate solely on Dutch affairs. In reaction to this, recent studies once more point to the primacy of Nazi polices, thus shifting at-

- 21 See the discussion by Ewoud KIEFT, *Oorlogsmythen. Willem Frederik Hermans en de Tweede Wereldoorlog*, Amsterdam 2015.
- 22 Hans SLEUTELAAR, *ARMANDO, De SS-ers*, Amsterdam 1967.
- 23 Frank VAN VREE, *In de schaduw van Auschwitz: Herinneringen, beelden, geschiedenis*, Amsterdam, 1995.
- 24 Gerhard HIRSCHFELD, *Fremdherrschaft und Kollaboration: die Niederlande unter deutscher Besatzung 1940–1945*, Stuttgart 1984.
- 25 Peter ROMIJN, *Bürgermeesters in Oorlogstijd. Besturen onder Duitse bezetting*, Amsterdam 2006.
- 26 Joggli MEIUIZEN, *Noodzakelijk kwaad. De bestraffing van economische collaboratie in Nederland na de Tweede Wereldoorlog*, Boom 2003; Hein A. M. KLEMANN, *Dutch Industrial Companies and the German Occupation, 1940–1945*, in: *Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte* 93/1 (2006), p. 1–22.
- 27 Guus MEERSHOEK, *Dienaren van het gezag: de Amsterdamse politie tijdens de bezetting*, Amsterdam 1999; Ad van LIEMPT, *Kopgeld: Nederlandse premiejagers op zoek naar joden, 1943*, Amsterdam 2002 and the more recent ID., Jan KOMPAGNIE (ed.), *Jodenjacht. De onthutsende rol van de Nederlandse politie in de Tweede Wereldoorlog*, Amsterdam 2011.
- 28 Monika DIEDERICH, »Wie geschoren wordt moet stilzitten«. *De omgang van Nederlandse meisjes met Duitse militairen*, Amsterdam 2006; ID., *Kinderen van Duitse militairen in Nederland 1941–1946. Een verborgen leven*, Amsterdam 2012.
- 29 An exception is the work of N.C.K.A. IN 'T VELD, *De SS en Nederland. Documenten uit SS-Archieven 1935–1945*, 2 vols., The Hague 1976. See: Krijn THIJS, *Holland and the German Point of View. On the Dutch Reactions to German Victimhood*, in: Helmut SCHMITZ, Annette SEIDEL ARPACI (ed.), *Narratives of Trauma. Discourses of German Wartime Suffering in Historical and International Perspective*, Amsterdam/ New York, 2010, p. 181–200.
- 30 Laura FAHNENBRUCK, *Ein(ver)nehmen. Sexualität und Alltag von Wehrmachtssoldaten in den besetzten Niederlanden 1940–1945*, Groningen 2015; Geraldien VON FRIJTAG DRABBE KÜNZEL, *Hitler's Bruderfolk: The Dutch and the Colonization of Occupied Eastern Europe, 1939–194*, London 2015.
- 31 For the controversies about the work of historians Chris van der Heijden and Bart van der Boom, see: Krijn THIJS, *Kontroversen in Grau. Revision und Moralisierung der niederländischen Besatzungszeit*, in: Nicole COLIN et al. (eds.), *Täter und Tabu. Grenzen der Toleranz in deutschen und niederländischen Geschichtsdebatten*, Essen 2011, p. 11–24; Christina MORINA, *The Bystander in Recent Dutch Historiography*, in: *German History* 32/1 (2014), p. 101–111.

tion back from the occupied to the occupiers<sup>32</sup>. The failure to achieve analytical separation means the pendulum keeps swinging back and forth.

## II.

Returning to the quotations at the beginning of this article, it is obvious that German occupation during World War II does not form two clear-cut spheres, i. e. the Germans and the occupied, be this Dutch, Belgian or French (or Polish, Russian or Ukrainian, or anyone else for that matter). As Talbot Imlay has emphasised several times, in the case of France – and the same is true of the Netherlands and Belgium – an exploration of the »intertwined experiences of occupiers and occupied« is needed; it is impossible to confine either of them to separate spheres because their worlds »overlapped in multiple ways«<sup>33</sup>. Researching the numerous and diverse interactions between the occupiers and the occupied can best be achieved with a concept of occupation and what it meant to be a member of an occupied society<sup>34</sup>.

World War II was, in the words of Tony Judt, a »war of occupation« with more than 200 million people living under German dominance between Norway and Greece, and between France and the occupied territory of the Soviet Union<sup>35</sup>. Occupation came in different forms, differing between Eastern and Western Europe as well as between the civil administration led by a *Reichskommissar* in the Netherlands and the military occupation in Belgium and France. There were different levels of violence and different aims, ranging from racial violence in much of Eastern and Southeastern Europe to the control and transformation of large parts of the existing states and societies in Western and Northern Europe. Occupation was always a kind of foreign rule imposed as a result of the war, that entailed a loss of sovereignty on the side of the occupied country<sup>36</sup>. It showed itself in the presence of the occupier, be this by dint of physical force or regulatory means. Therefore, there was no easy way for the occupied to ignore or circumvent the occupiers and their regulations. In fact, the occupiers' measures and regulations interfered with the daily life of the occupied in many ways and put whole societies under severe stress, as was the case with food supply chains where exploitation policies caused severe shortages across occupied Europe<sup>37</sup>. Though the relations between occupier and occupied were al-

32 Frits BOTERMAN, *Duitse daders: de jodenvervolging en de nazificatie van Nederland (1940–1945)*, Amsterdam 2015.

33 IMLAY, *The German Side of Things* (as in n. 7), p. 183, 211.

34 For a detailed account of the concept of occupied societies see Tatjana TÖNSMEIER, *Besatzungsgesellschaften. Begriffliche und konzeptionelle Überlegungen zur Erfahrungsgeschichte des Alltags unter deutscher Besatzung im Zweiten Weltkrieg*, Version: 1.0, in: *Docupedia-Zeitgeschichte*, 18.12.2015. [http://docupedia.de/zg/toensmeyer\\_besatzungsgesellschaften\\_v1\\_de\\_2015](http://docupedia.de/zg/toensmeyer_besatzungsgesellschaften_v1_de_2015) (8.1.2017). See as well Id, *Besatzung als europäische Erfahrungs- und Gesellschaftsgeschichte: Der Holocaust im Kontext des Zweiten Weltkrieges*, in: Frank Bajohr, Andrea Löw (eds.), *Der Holocaust. Ergebnisse und neue Fragen der Forschung*, Frankfurt/Main 2015, p. 281–298 and id, *Raumordnung, Raumschließung und Besatzungsalltag im Zweiten Weltkrieg. Plädoyer für eine erweiterte Besatzungsgeschichte*; in: *Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung* 63 (2014), p. 24–38.

35 Tony JUDT, *Postwar. A History of Europe Since 1945*, London 2005, p. 13. For the numbers see Dieter POHL, *Herrscher und Unterworfenene. Die deutsche Besatzung und die Gesellschaften Europas*, in: Dietmar Süß, Winfried Süß (ed.), *Das »Dritte Reich«. Eine Einführung*, Munich 2008, p. 267–285, 276.

36 Stephan LEIBFRIED, Michael ZÜRN, *Von der nationalen zur post-nationalen Konstellation*, in: Id. (ed.), *Transformationen des Staates?*, Frankfurt/Main 2006, p. 19–65, see p. 47. During World War II this loss of sovereignty came in different forms, depending on the kind of occupation regime that was installed.

37 Tatjana TÖNSMEIER, *Hungerökonomien. Vom Umgang mit der Mangelversorgung im besetzten Europa des Zweiten Weltkrieges*; in: *Historische Zeitschrift* 301 (2015), p. 662–704.

ways asymmetrical, it is important to bear in mind, as stated earlier, that the occupier needed the cooperation of the occupied, especially in issues of local administration<sup>38</sup>, if only because the German side lacked enough personnel to cover all these thousands of positions with their own staff. As Jan Tomas Gross put it, members of occupied societies were therefore in many regards »occupier-driven«<sup>39</sup>. »Driven«, it should be noted, does not mean »determined«.

Given the interference into the everyday life of the members of occupied societies, either physically or through regulations, it is worth taking a closer look at occupied societies. Aside from having to deal with the enemy and from being put under great stress by his presence, occupied societies were societies that locally and regionally could differ greatly from peacetime societies. Of course, these societies did not lose their inner social differentiation drawn along the lines of class, milieu, religion and ethnicity but these differentiations could play out differently. Workers in war-relevant industries could win in status by being provided for better than lower middle-class employees whose jobs were usually endangered if their importance for the war effort seemed questionable<sup>40</sup>.

That is to say that old cleavages remained intact, but might have different effects than they previously did, a factor which deserves further research. Occupied societies can further be characterised by shifts in their age and gender composition. Men, especially if they belonged to the age groups who could be drafted into the army, were often away from home, be this fighting at the fronts, in captivity, killed in action, missing or drafted as forced labourers. In light of this, locally occupied societies consisted to a larger degree of women, children and the elderly than peace-time societies<sup>41</sup>.

Therefore, as a result of the occupation, people were put under severe stress. This has to be taken into account when examining how they tried to navigate everyday life and come to terms with often rough conditions, the loss of loved ones and the absence of routine which had stabilised peace-time life before. In other words, studying occupied societies means researching how foreign rule in its different varieties was experienced, interpreted and dealt with by those who lived through it. This includes Jewish populations who should not be reduced in their reactions to passively enduring repression but be integrated into a history of occupied societies<sup>42</sup>, to which they belonged prior to their deportation, detention and extermination in concentration camps. It goes without saying that their agency was tremendously reduced by occupational repression, but survival was nevertheless impossible without this agency. Such an approach also sheds new light on Jewish – non-Jewish interaction under occupation since repression and deportation of their Jewish neighbours also concerned the non-Jewish populations, even though most of them did not find proper ways to take personal risks for them<sup>43</sup>.

38 ROMIJN, *Burgemeesters in Oorlogstijd* (as in n. 25); Nico WOUTERS, *De Führerstaat. Overheid en collaboratie in België (1940–1944)*, Brussel 2006.

39 According to István Deák the term »occupier-driven« was first used by Jan T. Gross. See István DEÁK, Introduction, in: Id., Jan T. GROSS, Tony JUDT (eds.): *The Politics of Retribution in Europe*, Princeton 2000, p. 3–14, 6.

40 Regarding the Netherlands see e.g. Ralf FUTSELAAR, *Incomes, Class, and Coupons. Black Markets for Food in the Netherlands during the Second World War*, in: *Food & History* 8 (2010), p. 171–198, 189.

41 The Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, established already before the outbreak of the war as an exception to this rule as was Denmark.

42 Most convincingly Saul Friedländer has argued for an integrated history. See Saul FRIEDLÄNDER, *Nazi Germany and the Jews 1939–1945. The Years of Extermination*, New York 2007.

43 See a lot of diary examples in Bart VAN DER BOOM, »Wij weten niets van hun lot«. *Gewone Nederlanders en de Holocaust*, Amsterdam, 2012. Van der Boom's argument that a lack of knowledge about the precise fate of the Jews helps to explain passivity is fiercely contested by many scholars. See the discussion by MORINA, *The Bystander in recent Dutch historiography* (as in n. 31).



Finally, an important benefit of the »occupied societies« concept is that it promises to unite both sides of the conflict – occupier and occupied – in a single analytical field. This enables us to integrate both worlds more intensely than historical research has done before, and to further explore their complex interdependencies. After all, recent studies tend to pay considerable attention to interactions, encounters and transfers between hostile parties, ranging from issues such as »Learning from the Enemy«, »Paris through German eyes« to experiences of Wehrmacht soldiers<sup>44</sup>. These aspects of everyday dealings with the enemy shaped life and the rules in occupied societies to a high degree and contributed to historical realities and arrangements in the Western parts of the Nazi Empire. In many cases, they also defined postwar affairs, providing legacies of entanglement after 1945, sometimes even feeding into later Europeanization projects<sup>45</sup>. Exploring such ambivalent heritage from occupied societies might still contribute to widening historiographical scopes and to overcome national narrowness.

### III.

Of course, the present issue cannot address all of the topics sketched above. The following contributions have in common their interest in complex interrelations and interactions between formal enemies in occupied societies in Western Europe. The chapters are based on papers discussed at the workshop »Occupied Societies in Western Europe: Conflict and Encounter in the 20th Century« at the Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities in Essen in July 2016 (Kulturwissenschaftliches Institut)<sup>46</sup>. The organisers decided to invite PhD students to contribute to the present volume chapters on their current research projects. Their work covers relations between Germans and German institutions, and native populations in France, Belgium and the Netherlands, exploring both interactions in occupied societies and postwar connections resulting from them.

Jakob Müller (Free University, Berlin) starts by analysing the impact of the first German occupation of Belgium (1914–1918) on the events of the second. He shows that both German and Flemish elites, having learnt the lessons of the First World War, were determined to avoid harsh confrontations. As long as a German victory seemed probable and the food situation was good, Müller argues, the atmosphere in occupied Belgium was not hostile towards the Germans. Thus, both sides of the conflict were dealing with one another moderately, thereby shaping reality of an occupied society. After 1940, however, this situation changed, leading to very divergent expectations and new misunderstandings mainly concerning the controversial *Flamen-*

44 Martin AUST, Daniel SCHÖNPFUG (eds.), *Vom Gegner lernen. Feindschaften und Kulturtransfers im Europa des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts*, Frankfurt/Main, New York 2007; Krijn THIJS, *Duitse veldpostbrieven uit ›Holland‹. Hypothesen en bronnen over de ervaringen van Wehrmachtsoldaten*, in: *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 127/ 3 (2014), p. 415–437; Aurélie LUNEAU, Jeanne GUÉROUT, Stefan MARTENS, *Comme und Allemand en France. Lettres inédites sous l'occupation 1940–1944*, Paris 2016. See also the controversies around the 2008 foto exhibition »Parisians Under the Occupation«, seen through German eyes, Jean BARONNET, *Les Parisiens sous l'Occupation: Photographies en couleurs d'André Zucca*, préface de Jean-Pierre AZÉMA, Paris 2008.

45 See examples in: Christine GUNDERMANN, *Die versöhnten Bürger: Der Zweite Weltkrieg in deutsch-niederländischen Begegnungen 1945–2000*, Münster 2014; Rüdiger HAUSE, Krijn THIJS (eds.), *Grenzfälle. Transfer und Konflikt zwischen Deutschland, Belgien und den Niederlanden im 20. Jahrhundert*, Heidelberg 2013.

46 The editors want to thank all the participants as well as the Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities in Essen for hosting the workshop and the Duitsland Instituut Amsterdam, the German Historical Institute in Paris and the Arbeitskreis Deutsch-Niederländische Geschichte for supporting it. We also thank the Francia editorial board and the members of its *Comité de lecture* for valuable comments and suggestions regarding the contributions in this volume.

*politik*. In a second contribution, Rick Tazelaar (Institute for Contemporary History Munich-Berlin) focusses on a prominent member of the occupied society in the Netherlands, the famous conductor Willem Mengelberg. He shows that Mengelberg considered the occupation to be an opportunity for change within the Dutch music scene and at the same time to improve his position as the conductor of the Concertgebouw Orchestra in Amsterdam. He envisaged himself as a mediator between Dutch musical institutions and the German political authorities. In fact, by conducting all over Europe, in countries allied with Nazi Germany or occupied by it, he was instrumental to Nazi cultural politics. In the meantime, in the Netherlands the music scene in its intent to strengthen the fatherland by accepting German domination played more Dutch music than before. The next chapter by Byron Schirbock (Cologne University) zooms in on encounters and interactions within occupied societies, taking an example from the field of labour relations by concentrating on a group which was essential to all German-French communication: male and female interpreters. They were needed in manifold situations, ranging from communication between German and French authorities to conducting interrogations of suspects or addressing craftsmen and cleaners. Since the German side depended on them, interpreters not only shaped communication but to a certain degree, occupation itself. In this regard, Schirbock claims that German executive power was less self-evident than it might seem and depended more on interaction with certain groups of the occupied French society. Raphaël Spina (Aix-en-Marseille) presents his work on French workers active in Germany. Carefully differentiating between volunteers and forced labourers, Spina goes into the hopeful expectations and often depressing experiences of these people working in the country of the enemy. Even if the French workers were more productive and treated better in Nazi Germany than forced labourers from many other occupied countries, the years in Germany were disappointing and frustrating most of them. Promises made in France were not upheld in Germany; the food was bad; workers were not allowed to return to France and forced labourers always feared being lumped together with volunteers. Spina explores the experiences of many subgroups of French workers and mirrors their points of view with those of surrounding German communities in times of war and defeat.

Turning to the end and the aftermath of conflict, Marieke Oprel (Free University Amsterdam/Duitsland Instituut Amsterdam) focuses on the German minority as the largest immigrant community in the Netherlands, thus showing that occupied societies in Western Europe could be heterogeneous in their ethnic composition. She discusses the consequences for them of their collective declaration as enemy citizens. In a period of transitional justice, they were no longer allowed residence or work permits, had their property confiscated and some were even deported. The process of »de-enemization« that Oprel puts centre-stage shows how intricately the war and post-war years were intertwined and thereby sheds light on the often forgotten history in contexts of connectedness, transitional justice, and citizenship. Finally, Felix Bohr (Göttingen University) reconstructs the hidden and uneasy transnational networks surrounding the imprisonment of German war criminals in the Netherlands in the postwar decades. From the 1950s onwards, different German groups lobbied for the liberation of the »Breda Three«, among them former *Kameraden* and even members of the West German Government in Bonn. Thus, transnational ties resulting from war and occupation continued to influence new postwar settings after 1945, encouraging the normalisation of Dutch-German relations after 1945. Time and again the question of how to deal with the prisoners of Breda caused public and political controversy in the Netherlands until they were finally set free and escorted to the German border in 1989.