

French publishing in World War Two: A habitus of submission?

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The present article sets out to explore the situation of French publishing between June 1940 and August 1944. Before addressing the main argument, however, it is important to bear in mind that it is difficult to understand this key sector of French cultural life in the period immediately prior to the Nazi occupation without looking back at its development over the preceding decades and even centuries. Similarly, understanding the deeper meaning underlying the attitude of the leading publishers who occupied the higher echelons of the publishing union means bearing in mind their “centuries-old habitus of submission”¹ to authority. Take for example the “voluntary delegation of notables representing Paris's industrial sector” led by the industrialists Emile Menier and Jean-François Cail and the printer Henri Plon to the Elysée Palace on December 19, 1851 to thank Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte for “guaranteeing the defence of order, family, and property” after seizing power in a coup seventeen days earlier.² Though it is important not to overstate the importance of such an event in the contemporary context, it can be seen as symbolic of a craven attitude to power that remained largely unchanged in the summer of 1940. Napoleon I and his successors set up a system to police the book trade, with inspectors whose task it was to keep a close eye not only on ports and borders, but also printers, bookshops, pedlars, second-hand bookshops, and any other premises or itinerant points of sale where books could be acquired. The authorisation that obliged the holder to swear an oath of fealty to the sovereign and obedience to the constitution, witnessed by a court, was abolished as late as September 10, 1870.³ The inspectors carried on their work until 1877 and it was not until the great liberal law of July 29, 1881 that the former system was abolished completely, freeing printing, bookselling, the press, bill-posting, and peddling from the previous highly restrictive regime.⁴

There were a number of attempts to restrict publishing freedom – Louis Desprès, Lucien Descaves and Georges Darien were among those whose literary careers suffered as a result⁵ - but broadly speaking, the *lois scélérates* (villainous laws) of 1893-94 did not stop anarchist authors publishing their works,⁶ while in later decades Communists were able to distribute agit-prop even

1 Jean-Yves Mollier, “Les mutations de l’espace éditorial français du XVIIIe au XXe siècle”, *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* 126-27, March 1999, pp. 29-38; id., *Edition, presse et pouvoir en France au XXe siècle*. Paris: Fayard, 2008.

2 Quoted in Jean-Yves Mollier, *L’Argent et les Lettres : histoire du capitalisme d’édition*. Paris: Fayard, 1988, p. 111.

3 Patricia Sorel and Frédérique Leblanc (eds), *Histoire de la librairie française*. Paris: Cercle de la librairie, 2008.

4 *Ibid.*

5 Yvan Leclerc, *Crimes écrits : la littérature en procès au 19e siècle*. Paris: Plon, 1991.

6 Translator's note: a set of laws restricting the freedom of the press following a wave of terrorist attacks carried out by anarchists. The name comes from a contemporary tract denouncing the laws.

though their newspaper *L'Humanité* was put on trial in 1929.⁷ Likewise, a handful of publishers set out to challenge mainstream opinion, among them Laurent Pagnerre, Pierre Larousse, Maurice Lachâtre and Poulet-Malassis, best known for publishing Baudelaire. However, both during the Commune and the First World War, publishing as a profession could hardly be said to embrace unorthodox opinions. Paradoxically, the new degree of political and authorial freedom did not bring about deep-seated change in the publishing field, which had become powerfully structured after 1860, leaving little room for new companies to emerge as serious rivals for the major players – Hachette, Calmann-Lévy, Plon, Flammarion and Fayard prior to 1914, joined by Grasset, Gallimard and Denoël after 1918. The closure of the Comptoir d'édition de la NRF in 1911, replaced in 1919 by the Librairie Gallimard, reflects the difficulties faced by small-scale independent publishers in distributing authors who set out to challenge the social mores and attitudes of the day.

Research in the archives of the Syndicat des éditeurs (publishers' union), founded in 1891, and the vast archives belonging to Hachette and its various subsidiaries⁸ reveals the fascinating, albeit rather inglorious, history of this dark period, particularly since recent changes in the rules governing access to the World War Two archives have now freed researchers from the obligation to request special dispensation to publish material from them. The documents reveal that a heated debate took place within the purge commissions at the Liberation and that some of the truth about the publishing sector, which played such a key role in shaping public opinion, was uncovered. However, as in other fields, the breakout of the Cold War and discord within the Resistance turned the spotlight away from the directors of the leading publishing companies and what accusations there were against them were quickly dropped. New arrivals on the publishing scene such as Edmond Charlot, Pierre Seghers and Max-Pol Fouchet could not be said to wield much influence after 1947, and while Seuil (founded in 1935) and Minuit (founded in 1941) kept up their publishing activity, they only took on a more central position in the publishing field after 1958. The following study is based on highly sensitive material from these archives, exploring a period for which Pascal Fouché's study *L'édition française sous l'occupation*⁹ provided much of the groundwork, though without access to the sources belonging to the companies in question. Access to this archival material gives a significantly different picture of the attitudes of French publishers during the Occupation.

French publishing on the eve of World War Two

⁷ Christian Delporte *et al* (eds.), *L'Humanité de Jaurès à nos jours*. Paris: Nouveau Monde, 2004.

⁸ The archives were listed as a historical monument in 2002 in recognition of Jean-Luc Lagardère's generosity in entrusting them to the Institut Mémoires de l'édition contemporaine (IMEC). They are available to researchers by appointment.

⁹ Pascal Fouché, *L'Édition française sous l'Occupation*. Paris: Bibliothèque de littérature contemporaine de l'Université Paris-VII, 1987, 2 vols.

The Librairie Hachette, the largest press distribution company since around 1900, continued to grow after the First World War. It became a public limited company in 1919 and amalgamated with the Banque de Paris et des Pays-Bas in 1920, floating its capital (worth forty million euros in today's money) on the Paris stock exchange in 1922. Soon after, its press message service on rue Réaumur was joined by a book distribution service on quai de Grenelle, offering to manage stock for France's leading publishers, taking over every stage of distributing and delivering orders to bookshops in France and abroad. More than seventy publishers signed up, including Gallimard in 1931, seeing the offer as an opportunity to guarantee financing for its own activities.¹⁰ The Librairie Hachette saw this internal restructuring as a means of keeping up to date with modern business practices: after the First World War, several dozen companies, including big names such as the Librairie Larousse and Armand Colin, had joined forces to set up their own distribution system, the Maison du Livre Français (MLF). A decade-long stand-off later, the Syndicat des Libraires (booksellers' union) stepped in to force an agreement between the two competing distribution networks. The Hachette system, referred to in the left-wing press as the “green octopus” – a reference to the publisher's emblematic green book covers and its sprawling, tentacular structure – signed a gentleman's agreement with the Librairie Larousse in July 1933 leaving the dictionary and encyclopaedia sector to Larousse and schoolbooks to the MLF, while other sectors remained in Hachette's control. The Syndicat des Editeurs was pleased with the outcome and the Syndicat des Libraires likewise approved the division of the market, which explains why the Librairie Hachette became a leading target for France's Nazi occupiers in the summer of 1940.¹¹

Hachette's distribution service supplied eighty thousand sales points, 21,000 of which were general press sales outlets, requiring thousands of employees who were organised along military lines into brigades – 6,000 employees at the Javel site in Paris, another 5,000 at the Réaumur premises. To oversee the operation, the directors took on effective managers with a firm hand: Georges Lamirand, a graduate of the prestigious Ecole Centrale who went on to become a minister of the Vichy government, and Jean Filliol, who co-founded the fascist Comité secret d'action révolutionnaire, better known as La Cagoule. Larousse, which had lost much of its clout since the agreement,¹² had no choice but to sever its links with Lucien Moreau, who bankrolled the far right Action française, since its customers were unlikely to appreciate his ongoing presence in the company. This prevailing paternalist attitude was matched by the directors at the Librairie Hachette, who hunted out Communist sympathisers just as eagerly in the firm belief that the only good union

10 Jean- Yves Mollier, *Edition, presse et pouvoir*, *op. cit.*, ch. 1.

11 *Ibid.*

12 *Ibid.*, pp. 52-54.

was an in-house union.¹³ Other companies such as Grasset, Gallimard, Calmann-Lévy, Plon, Tallandier, Fayard, Ferenczi and Rouff chose to reduce their staffing levels. However, Arthème Fayard, who died in 1936, did launch the right-wing weeklies *Candid* and *Je suis partout*, while his widow campaigned for the far right wing politician Charles Maurras to be elected to the Académie française, which he was in 1938. Similarly, Plon's managing director Robert Mainguet was a conservative and a fervent defender of traditional Catholicism and the values that had made France great.

The ideals of the far right were thus overrepresented in the French publishing world, with a clear penchant for order and a refusal to share authority. This is a key point in understanding how Parisian publishers behaved in June 1940. Whether they were monarchists like the heads of Calmann-Lévy, Fayard and Larousse, or conservatives leaning towards the far right like the heads of Hachette, Plon, Tallandier, and Grasset, most publishers shared a broadly similar world view. They were keen to maintain order and only submitted to new laws introducing a forty-hour working week and paid holidays with ill grace. Minutes of meetings held at the Syndicat de l'édition reveal that Robert Mainguet, Robert Talamon and Hervé Delagrave, representing the industry at the Confédération générale du patronat français (General confederation of French employers), supported the confederation's directors in clawing back rights granted to workers in 1936. They would meet for a glass of late-afternoon port in one of their regular clubs or restaurants to discuss their support for right-wing and far-right-wing politicians such as Paul Reynaud, André Tardieu, who enjoyed the strong backing of the Flammarion family, and Pierre Laval, executed for treason in 1945. Their boundless admiration for Marshal Lyautey and Marshal Pétain led them to lend the latter their immediate support when he seized power on June 16, 1940. As the president of the Syndicat wrote in February 1941,

Amidst all our many misfortunes, we have received one stroke of good fortune: seeing France embodied in the leader who now represents her. Marshal Pétain has galvanised our flagging wills, made hope spring anew and proved that France's honour is still whole and standing. All we have to do is follow him to find the right road to take. And on behalf of all of us I assure him of our respectful admiration and our intention to respond to his calls to action.¹⁴

Despite the status imposed on France's Jews in October 1940 and the implementation of a

¹³ Bruno Dubot, "La Librairie Larousse de 1895 à 1952", unpublished PhD thesis, Université de Versailles – Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines, 2009, 3 vols.

¹⁴ *Bibliographie de la France, 28 février-7 mars 1941*, p. 16. All quotations from the SNE archives, to which the author of the present article was the first to be granted free access, are given with their exact references in Mollier, *Edition, presse et pouvoir*, *op. cit.*

programme to Aryanise companies considered Jewish, even Fernand Nathan – himself Jewish – lent his support to René Philippon, only resigning two months later after obtaining guarantees that his publishing company would be protected by notional purchasers brought in by the Librairie Larousse. He ratified the Cercle de la Librairie's expulsion of Léon Moussinac, the manager of the Editions sociales internationales held in a prison camp in Gurs, and of René Hilsum, Moussinac's Jewish production manager: as the flagship organisation for the French book trade, the Cercle could hardly harbour members who were close to the French Communist Party, which was outlawed. Late August 1940 saw Robert Talamon, managing director of the publishers Masson, expressing his delight that the new rules brought in by the German military authorities would create a new union to replace the existing one, offering an opportunity to “clean up the profession” by ridding it of all the suspect individuals who had found their way into it in the 1920s and 1930s.¹⁵

Drawing up the Otto lists and French publishers' habitus of submission

While it has long been known that the first lists of banned books – the so-called Otto lists – were drawn up in Berlin and Leipzig before the Wehrmacht entered Paris on June 14, 1940,¹⁶ the role of French publishers long remained shrouded in secrecy. In fact, they pre-emptively purged their own lists and catalogues as early as July and August 1940. The manager of the Payot bookshop made a rather dignified statement to Henri Filipacchi, head of Hachette's distribution service, and the directors of the Presses Universitaires de France to the effect that though she, like they, had carried out an initial purge of titles, removing anti-Nazi and Jewish books from shop window displays and catalogues to avoid angering the occupying forces was one thing; handing over your own list to the German authorities was quite another. Yet this was what Filipacchi had done for Hachette, as had Louis Rischhoffer at Flammarion, Victor Bassot at Tallandier, Lucien Tisserant at Fayard, Kyriak Stameroff (brother-in-law of the collaborationist journalist Pierre-Antoine Cousteau) at Gallimard, Georges Poupet at Plon, and Bernard Grasset for his own list. Bernard Grasset in fact went even further, seeking press outlets for articles presenting the anti-Semitic, anti-masonic, and anti-Communist opinions he shared with the Nazi occupiers.¹⁷ Other publishers did not quite go so far, but since the directors of the Cercle de la Librairie, including Fernand Nathan, were unanimous in encouraging publishers to draw up lists of banned books for Henri Filipacchi, who would then work with the German censor in his own offices in the Messageries Hachette, the vast majority of the

¹⁵ SNE, minutes of the Publishers' Committee, 27 August 1940.

¹⁶ Gerard Loiseaux, *La Littérature de la défaite et de la collaboration: juin 1940-décembre 1941, d'après 'Phönix oder Asche', 'Phénix ou cendres ?'*. Laon: G. Loiseaux, 1981; Paris: Fayard, 3rd ed. 1995, pp. 71-73.

¹⁷ Mollier, *Edition, presse et pouvoir, op. cit.*, pp. 63-67. See especially the article that Grasset tried to have published, earning him a conviction after the Liberation (reproduced on p. 66).

publishing profession showed no compunction in stripping their catalogues of the authors and titles that were the source of their prestige, thereby destroying France's intellectual and cultural heart. The three Otto lists of October 2, 1940, July 1942 and May 1943 were drawn up as a result of collaboration between the German authorities and the directors of the Cercle de la Librairie with the active assistance of senior management at many of Paris's leading publishers, and as such it reflects their shared intention to carry on with business as usual despite the Occupation and all the difficulties it engendered.¹⁸

The doubts expressed by René Philippon, president of the Publishers' Union, on signing the document reflect his “kalte Füße” (cold feet), as the Nazi representative wrote to his superior¹⁹, over taking responsibility for French publishers' acquiescence to Nazi demands. As early as October 6 that year, he and the other directors at the Cercle agreed on an official version adopted by the Syndicat National des Editeurs (SNE), which replaced the Syndicat des Editeurs in 1947.²⁰ The SNE abided by their official version for the next fifty years, refusing to allow access to its registers and archives: it was the German occupiers who demanded the purge and the French publishers only agreed to it so as not to deprive the reading public of books and to keep their staff in employment. However, this version is not borne out by the newly accessible archival sources, which shed light on the identity of the publishers responsible for crippling France's intellectual and cultural life by banning the likes of Louis Aragon, Georges Duhamel, and André Malraux, not to mention foreign authors such as Thomas Mann and Stefan Zweig. Particularly egregious was the case of Tallandier, which under the management of Victor Bassot – a collaborator who claimed to be a member of the resistance after the Liberation and who succeeded in pulling the wool over the eyes of the leaders of the Grand Orient lodge of which he was a member – immediately started printing the *Crime des évacuations: les horreurs que nous avons vues* [the crime of the evacuations: horrors we have witnessed], a series of articles by Jean de La Hire, a talented author of scouting novels who had boundless admiration for the German army. He described its soldiers, their muscled torsos glistening in the sun as they handed out rations of bread and condensed milk to refugee children along the roads of France.²¹

Jean de La Hire's book encapsulated everything about the case the Vichy leaders made against their predecessors at the Riom trial of 1942-43: full responsibility lay on the shoulders of the leaders of the Third Republic who had allowed France to be despoiled, and only harsh

18 See *Ibid.* for a reading of the documents that demonstrate the extent of the collaboration by intellectuals, one of the major facets of which was craven submission to directives from the authorities.

19 See Archives nationales, AJ40/1005, *Tätigkeitsbericht für die Zeit von 25/9/1940 bis 2/10/1940*.

20 It has since changed names again, becoming the Syndicat national de l'édition in 1971.

21 Jean de La Hire's book was banned by the Vichy government in the unoccupied zone and is rarely referred to by historians of collaboration, though it is a striking record of one First World War veteran's complicit attitude towards the German invaders. See Mollier, *Edition, presse et pouvoir, op. cit.*, pp. 70-74.

chastisement and a complete change of attitude and behaviour would let the country get back on its feet again. A few months later, Jean de La Hire promptly agreed to take over the newly Aryanised publishers Ferenczi, and until August 1944 did all he could to support the Nazi regime in achieving its ideological goal. Similarly, the newly Aryan leadership at the Société parisienne d'édition (SPE), founded by the Jewish Offenstadt brothers, went so far as to print a fake book that claimed to be a Minuit publication to undermine the company's role in the Resistance.²² The German archives prove the extent of Victor Bassot's attempts to distil Nazi values in the French reading public. Tallandier's Livre National series of adventure books for young readers systematically featured German, Austrian, Hungarian, Finnish and Romanian heroes in an attempt to “correct” the French mindset and gradually bring the country round to a positive vision of the new Europe.²³

Collaboration and purges

At the Liberation, the Comité national des écrivains (CNE, national authors' committee) took a close interest in those writers who lent their support to the Third Reich. The CNE focused in particular on leading intellectuals; since its members – including Louis Aragon and Jean-Paul Sartre – were unlikely to have encountered Tallandier's Livre National series and its Aryan heroes, the man behind the plan to diminish France's sense of nationhood escaped suspicion and the prosecution faced by other collaborators. Those who benefited from the Aryanisation of the Jewish publishers Calmann-Lévy, Ferenczi, Gedalge and Offenstadt were put on trial if they had not managed to flee prior to their arrest. Jean de La Hire left France with the complicity of the Catholic networks that had likewise helped Henry Jamet, head of the publishers Balzac (as Calmann-Lévy was renamed), hide under a false identity in the Marist monastery in Marseilles before smuggling him into Switzerland, where he died without renouncing his support for Pétain and Maurras.²⁴ Other figures such as Bernard Grasset were called on to justify their writings, while Robert Denoël was murdered with suspiciously good timing on the eve of his trial in December 1945.²⁵

²² *Ibid.*, p. 109; Anne Simonin, *Les Editions de Minuit : le devoir d'insoumission, 1942-1945*. Paris: IMEC, 1994, p. 192.

²³ For further information on Victor Bassot, who deserves further research as a leading figure in the “soft” dissemination of Nazi ideology in France, see Mollier, *Edition, presse et pouvoir, op. cit.*, pp. 91-92, 172-76 and 178-80.

²⁴ I informed Pascal Fouché of Henry Jamet's experiences, which were recounted to me in 1986 by a former pupil at the school run by the Marists in Marseilles who later became a Catholic newspaper editor. Jamet's identity was an open secret in 1946-46 and senior staff at the school clearly knew who the new arrival was. See Pascal Fouché, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 253.

²⁵ Anne Louise Staman, *With the Stroke of a Pen*. New York: Thomas Dunne, 2002, is a novel based on Denoël's murder, which remains shrouded in mystery, as the voluminous file on the case at the Paris police archives attests: APP, H 55 63 / Robert Denoël. Denoël had passed his share of his company on to his mistress Jeanne Loviton, who wrote under the pseudonym Jean Voilier (she had also been Paul Valéry's muse and was married to a former Fourth Republic president of the council of ministers). She then sold them on to

Others were more fortunate: Gaston Gallimard enjoyed the protection of Jean Paulhan, co-founder of the influential journal *Lettres françaises*, and thus escaped shameful association with Pierre Drieu La Rochelle, director of the *Nouvelle Revue Française* under Nazi control; the directors of Plon were saved by Charles Orenge, a publisher they had belatedly decided to finance in April 1944, who gave his testimony on the condition that his own past as a censor for the Vichy government be quietly forgotten.²⁶ Orenge, who founded the editions du Rocher in Monaco in 1944 with the politician Jean Mistler, managed to dupe the Paris literary scene and salvage Mistler's reputation, threatened by his efforts in favour of the vote granting Marshal Pétain full powers on July 8-10 1940. Mistler continued publishing his weekly *Présent* in Lyon until late August 1944, criticising the Allied bombing campaigns for killing innocent civilians; this did not hinder – or perhaps even actively helped – his later career: he was hired by the MLF in 1947 and became head of the Librairie Hachette in 1958, eventually becoming *secrétaire perpétuel de l'Académie française*.²⁷ His reputation did eventually undergo a reversal of fortune after his death, when veterans' charities fought to stop his name being given to a new multimedia library in Castelnaudary in 1991, the town where, as mayor, he had openly supported Pétain. As a result, his only daughter, the far-right journalist Marie-Dominique Lancelot, withdrew her promise to donate her father's archives – a belated consequence of France's ambivalent wartime history.²⁸

The Librairie Hachette rightly feared that the Resistance would be rigorous in applying the programme drawn up by the Conseil national de la Résistance, and nationalise what was a highly useful institution, much admired by the Nazis, who planned to use it as the basis for a vast Europe-wide company under their control. Its administrators played for time by delaying the signature of the agreements put forward, until they were obliged to give in, at which point they did everything they could to maintain their positions at the top when plans were drawn up to restructure the capital.²⁹ At the Liberation, to be certain of escaping censure, they rewrote part of their own archives, adding, for example, that Pierre Laval had behaved frostily in one interview, when the original record shows he was perfectly amenable; other similar comments are extremely hard for historians to identify in the archives, skilfully doctored in 1945.³⁰ In 1947, help from those banks

Gaston Gallimard. She was a chief suspect in the case but no proof of her involvement was found. See Celia Bertin, *Portrait d'une femme romanesque : Jean Voilier*. Paris: de Fallois, 2008, for a sympathetic portrait of Jeanne Loviton.

26 Mollier, *Edition, presse et pouvoir, op. cit.*, pp. 116-24 and 127-28.

27 *Ibid.*, pp. 124-28.

28 Axel Peytavi, "Castelnaudary et Jean Mistler : le moment supprimé", unpublished MA thesis, Université de Toulouse-Le Mirail, 2004. Interestingly, the reproduction of the document sentencing Jean Mistler for publishing the journal *Présent* has been torn out of the copy of the thesis in the Toulouse university library. Patrick Cabanel, a historian based at the university, tried to identify the culprit at my request but the identity of the individual who tried to suppress this informative piece of historical evidence remains a mystery.

29 Mollier, *Edition, presse et pouvoir, op. cit.*, pp. 195-201.

30 The Hachette archives, doubtless like those of many other French companies, were systematically revised following three guiding principles: documents were labelled "alter", "keep", or "suppress". See IMEC,

that had escaped nationalisation enabled the company to push the Messageries de l'Etat into bankruptcy: the government imposed a last-minute agreement that handed the Librairie Hachette control of the Nouvelles Messageries de la Presse Parisienne (NMPP), which were to become its private source of funding for over twenty years.³¹ The list of Fourth and Fifth Republic politicians who enjoyed the Librairie Hachette's financial backing, from François Mitterrand to René Tomasini,³² sheds light on a cynical comment by the company's then managing director, Robert Meunier du Houssoy, who invited guests onto his balcony overlooking the French parliament and told them “that's my own personal zoo”.³³ While he was undoubtedly exaggerating to a certain extent, the man behind the anonymous³⁴ purchase of *France-Soir* from the *Défense de la France* Resistance movement in 1947 and the 1934 launch of the *Journal de Mickey* under the direction of his right-hand-man Paul Winkler³⁵ was perfectly aware of the extent of his power and gave a clear demonstration of it in the *France-Soir* headline for May 19, 1958, covering eight columns in huge type: “DE GAULLE: 'I CAN BE OF USE AT THE HEAD OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC’”.³⁶ The Librairie Hachette, which had supported Pétain both before and after 1940, was keen to avoid the same mistake at the fall of the Fourth Republic: it backed all the Fifth Republic's presidents and prime ministers until Georges Pompidou's death in April 1974.

Publishers in the Resistance

Fortunately, the preceding account of the French publishing sphere in World War Two is only half

Hachette, archives S 5 C 176 B 5, minutes of board meetings 1940-1945. I was granted unfettered access to the entire archive prior to writing *Edition, presse et pouvoir en France au XXe siècle* but found only one obvious trace of the intention to rewrite the company history after the Liberation, in the minutes of a board meeting dated January 18, 1943, recording a meeting with Pétain's right hand man Pierre Laval: “Add 'M. Laval, whose attitude was hostile throughout the meeting, took his leave of M. Fouret’”. Clearly this was intended to be expunged before the company archives were handed over to IMEC but, as Carlo Ginzburg has often noted, close readings often throw up such traces even when they have been carefully removed, fortunately for historians. See Carlo Ginzburg, *Miti, emblemi, spie : morfologia e storia*. Turin: Einaudi, 1986 / *Myths, Emblems, Clues*, tr. J. and A. Tedeschi. London: Hutchinson Radius, 1990.

31 See Mollier, *Edition, presse et pouvoir*, *op. cit.*, pp. 201-18, for proof of the support by the private banks Crédit Industriel and Banque Ottomane, which granted the Librairie Hachette the equivalent of 23 million euros in today's terms starting in August 1946 to undermine the Messageries de l'Etat. The May 1947 agreement entrusted the management of the Nouvelles Messageries de la presse parisienne to the private group even though it was a minority shareholder with 49% of the capital. It also gave them an annual remuneration of 1% of turnover, which is why French newspapers were constantly rising in price after 1947.

32 In April 1967, François Mitterrand and René Tomasini received fully tax-declared monthly payments equivalent to 4,300 euros and 835 euros respectively for “advertising studies costs”. See Mollier, *Edition, presse et pouvoir*, *op. cit.*, p. 286, drawing on IMEC's Hachette archives S 5 C 190 B4, file “Contacts politiques : Reaumur NMPP”.

33 Mollier, *Edition, presse et pouvoir*, *op. cit.*, p. 287.

34 *Ibid.*, pp. 208-11 and Olivier Wieviorka, *Une certaine idée de la France : Défense de la France (1940-1949)*. Paris: Seuil, 1995.

35 The letter reproduced in Mollier, *op. cit.*, p. 38, is unambiguous on this point.

36 *Ibid.*, pp. 209-11 for the acquisition of *France-Soir* and pp. 283-90 for the advent of the Fifth Republic.

of the story. Not all professional publishers bowed to Nazi demands: the Emile Paul brothers decided to give up their business and Vercors (the writer Jean Bruller's pseudonym) and Pierre de Lescure founded the publishers Minuit as a public demonstration of the support of intellectuals for the Resistance. As Anne Simonin³⁷ has shown, they decided to influence public opinion by founding a company specialising in literature after seeing Jacques Decour and Georges Politzer publishing anti-Nazi and Communist works and giving a new lease of life to the underground journal *La Pensée libre*. The result was an astonishing publishing story, with forty-three books published during the Occupation.³⁸ The publishers Bibliothèque française in the unoccupied southern zone and numerous journals likewise reflect efforts by intellectuals such as Louis Aragon, Max-Pol Fouchet, Pierre Seghers, Jean Blanzat, and René Tavernier to give the public reading matter that was not by collaborators. Journals such as *Fontaine*, *Les Lettres françaises*, and *Les Cahiers du Témoignage Chrétien* [The Christian Witness Register] helped keep France's intellectual life alive, albeit diminished, and played a vital role in reviving the publishing business after the war.

Some companies became major players on the French publishing market, such as Le Seuil, thanks to its journal *Esprit* and its 1951 publication of *Don Camillo* in French translation,³⁹ and Minuit thanks to its influential director Jérôme Lindon (who took over from Vercors in 1947) and the Nouveau Roman.⁴⁰ However, others did not: Edmond Charlot left the industry in 1950,⁴¹ Pierre Seghers moved into distribution and Max-Pol Fouchet limited his role to overseeing literary series.⁴² René Julliard launched the careers of Françoise Sagan and the talented child poet Minou Drouet and lent his support to the Sultan of Morocco and Tunisia's first post-independence president Habib Bourguiba to make up for his hasty 1944 publication of the poet Paul Eluard, itself an attempt to disguise his first steps in publishing in 1942, promoting Pétain's speeches.⁴³ After the war, Robert Laffont's strategy was to translate American best-sellers; however, his reputation was less at risk than Julliard's, as the politician and author Pierre Guillain de Bénouville and the author Louis Parrot, both members of the Resistance, spoke out in favour of his conduct during the Liberation.⁴⁴ Gaston Gallimard had laid the grounds for his temporary exclusion from the Cercle de la Librairie

37 Anne Simonin, *op. cit.*

38 Anne Simonin, *op. cit.*

39 Jean Lacouture, *Paul Flamand, éditeur : la grande aventure des Editions du Seuil*. Paris: Les Arènes, 2010; Hervé Serry, *Les Editions du Seuil : 70 ans d'histoire*. Paris: Seuil/IMEC, 2008.

40 Anne Simonin, *op. cit.*

41 Michel Puche, *Edmond Charlot éditeur*. Pezenas: Domens, 1995.

42 François Vignale, "La revue *Fontaine* : inscription d'une revue littéraire algéroise dans le paysage intellectuel français et mutations du champ littéraire dans la période, 1934-1950", unpublished PhD thesis, Université de Versailles – Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines, 2010, 3 vols. See also François Vignale, *La revue Fontaine, Poésie, Résistance, engagement, Alger 1938-Paris 1947*. Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2012.

43 Jean-Claude Lamy, *René Julliard*. Paris: Julliard, 1972; Mollier, *op. cit.*, pp. 113-15.

44 Robert Laffont, *Editeur*. Paris: Robert Laffont, 1974; *id.*, *Une si longue quête*. Paris: Anne Carrière, 2005; Mollier, *Edition, presse et pouvoir, op. cit.*, pp. 131-33.

by co-opting his brother, son, and nephew to the board in February 1944⁴⁵ but in the end such precautions proved unnecessary as he was not called on to answer for his dinners with Captain Ernst Jünger – already a well-known author in Germany – and the publisher Lieutenant Gerhard Heller, thanks to the protection of Jean-Paul Sartre and Louis Aragon. While René Julliard took over publishing the journal *Les temps modernes* in 1947, the *Nouvelles NRF* began publication in 1953 after Jean Paulhan sensationally distanced himself from the “directors of the Resistance”.

José Corti continued to run his bookshop, which sold good books throughout the occupation: his only son was deported and died in a concentration camp.⁴⁶ Other booksellers worked on the underground market, either to increase profits or to distribute reading materials banned by the regime. Contraband literature was full of puns, allusions, allegories, and other stylistic effects that played a role in keeping up morale; some public libraries also had brave staff who risked providing banned books.⁴⁷ Most resistance movements had their own news-sheets and newspapers and printed pamphlets that writers could use to disseminate their points of view. However, it needs to be borne in mind that the *Mercure de France* had argued in favour of collaboration and that publishers Gilbert Baudinière and Fernand Sorlot were forced out of the *Cercle de la Librairie* in 1945 along with the company's director Jacques Bernard, Jean de La Hire, and the author Louis Thomas: it is clear that collaboration, rather than resistance, was the norm in French publishing circles. The particular context of the Liberation, the time it took for trials to take place, and the challenges facing the purge commissions all combined to maintain those structures that were in place. The courts began to show greater leniency in 1946, and with the outbreak of the Cold War in 1947, the advent of tripartism and the sidelining of Gaullism and Communism completed the process.

The politician and member of the Resistance Jacques Debû-Bridel rightly paid due homage to Minuit's exemplary conduct in his company history.⁴⁸ Similarly, Louis Parrot paid homage to the role France's intellectuals played in the resistance in *L'Intelligence en guerre* (published by Robert Laffont), while Pierre Seghers promoted the work of resistance poets such as Max-Pol Fouchet and Albert Béguin, who published his *Cahiers du Rhône* with Seuil.⁴⁹ More ambiguous cultural enterprises such as *Jeune France*⁵⁰ were carefully overlooked as the gilded myth of widespread resistance, at least after 1942, began to take root: it proved of benefit to publishers, who were less at

45 Gaston Gallimard's co-opting of three close family members is another instructive “trace” hinting at his fears on the eve of the Liberation. See Mollier, *Edition, presse et pouvoir*, *op. cit.*, p. 136, for minutes of the Syndicat d'Édition board meeting of 11 February 1944.

46 José Corti, *Souvenirs désordonnés*. Paris: Jose Corti, 2003.

47 Martine Poulain, *Livres pillés, lectures surveillées : les bibliothèques françaises sous l'Occupation*. Paris: Gallimard, 2008.

48 Jacques Debû-Bridel, *Les Editions de Minuit : historique et bibliographie*. Paris: Minuit, 1945.

49 Olivier Cariguel, *Les Cahiers du Rhône dans la guerre, 1941-1945 : la résistance du “glaive de l'esprit”*. Fribourg: Presses de l'Université, 1996.

50 Veronique Chabrol, “Jeune France : une expérience de recherche et de décentralisation culturelle, novembre 1940- mars 1942”, unpublished PhD thesis, Université Paris-III, 1974.

risk of opprobrium than other professions due to their relatively low public profile. René Philippot, who was managing director of Armand Colin in addition to his role as head of the publishers' union, escaped censure, as did Marcel Rives, the senior civil servant who ran the Comité d'Organisation du Livre and tried to set up a publishers' guild. Robert Mainguet hid behind Charles Orenge, who created himself a whole alternative past as a resistant; Jean Mistler ended up running the MLF, Hachette took over the NMPP, and everything returned to normal – or rather, the power wielded by Hachette due to its vast distribution network meant that no-one dared risk upsetting them. A pseudonymous “Doctor Guillotin” did publish a pamphlet attacking Hachette in 1947⁵¹ but as soon as the NMPP was established under government authority, all critical voices fell silent – or at least quietened to a whisper.

Looking back at this dark period of history, it seems that a habitus of submission to authority generally held true for the French publishing sphere, demonstrating the sociological concept's relevance in shedding light on a situation whose roots go back over four centuries. The behaviour and attitudes of individual publishers working in Paris was shaped by the overall conservatism of publishing, which by and large adhered to the most traditional schools of thought, from support for the Bourbon and Orléans claims to the throne of France to the fascist Action française, and its close links with groups such as the Fédération nationale catholique, the conservative veterans' association Croix-de-Feu, and right-wing political parties that supported Pétain and state collaboration with Germany. There were exceptions, of course, as some publishers whose background might have predisposed them to follow this path in fact opted to join the Resistance; however, on an institutional level, the Cercle de la Librairie and the Syndicat des éditeurs both had a role to play in assisting Germany's attempts to subjugate the country. In 1981, a marketing campaign that enjoyed widespread TV coverage – including the support of France's leading presenter of cultural programmes, Bernard Pivot – shamefully set out to rehabilitate Gerhard Heller as a friend of France and French literature. Similar attempts were made for Otto Abetz, the Nazi ambassador, and Ernst Jünger, who was a member of the German intelligence service when Georges Poupet at the Librairie Plon and Sacha Guitry of the Académie Goncourt gave him rare books and autographs for his private collection.⁵²

It is true that Heller, Abetz, and Jünger all led peaceful lives after the war, but that does not mean that they were not committed Nazis. Jünger's war diaries reveal that he only began to oppose Nazism belatedly and that he never swerved from his thoroughgoing nationalist convictions. Yet all three were regularly invited to top restaurants such as Lapérouse and Prunier, to premieres and dress

51 Dr Guillotin [Andre Wurmser], *Le Scandale du trust vert*. Paris: Curial-Archereau, 1947; Mollier, *Edition, presse et pouvoir*, *op. cit.*, pp. 204-206.

52 Ernst Jünger, *Sämtliche Werke* vol. 3, *Tagebücher III, Strahlungen Zweiter Teil*. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2008; Mollier, *Edition, presse et pouvoir*, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

rehearsals, where they rubbed shoulders with the cream of the French cultural scene and with leading publishers. Contemporary German historiography, which has proved much less indulgent than its French counterpart, has repeatedly underlined Heller and Abetz's ideological support for the NSDAP.⁵³ The Swiss historian Philippe Burrin made perhaps the clearest denunciation of French publishers' complicity: "Overall, a profession whose craven compliance was almost total, underpinned by a substantial degree of ideological collusion".⁵⁴ This fairly sums up the attitude of the majority of publishers, but their compliance and collusion can only truly be understood when read within the longer term, where *habitus* takes on its fullest significance.

The aim of the present article is not to put the publishers on trial retrospectively, as the journalist Pierre Assouline sought to do in 1984 when he published a letter from Gaston Gallimard seeking to take control of Calmann-Lévy⁵⁵ - though Assouline was not aware that Bernard Grasset and Jean Fayard had tried to set up a consortium to get in ahead of the German group Hibbelen.⁵⁶ In the case of the publishers Nathan, it has been shown that there was indeed an agreement between the owner and the placeholders who took over his company, since they handed it back at the Liberation. This indicates that the Aryanisation of Jewish companies was not the general rule in the publishing sector: the only companies affected were Calmann-Lévy, Ferenczi, Gedalge and the Société parisienne d'édition. More typical was the way companies took advantage of the Nazi occupation to improve their own situation: the Alsatia group, for example, grew obscenely fast,⁵⁷ while Plon bought up all the premises and printworks that it did not already own⁵⁸ and Charles Orenge and Jean Mistler took the opportunity to get into a career that had been inaccessible to them before the war. Like Victor Bassot, Henri Filipacchi, Maurice Girodias (founder of the publishers Chêne) and the author Jean-Alexis Néret, they saw the occupation as an opportunity to make money for themselves and their families. The reputations of Gaston Gallimard, Bernard Grasset and Robert Denoël, who were under the most scrutiny due to the prominence of their respective companies, are similarly undermined by their business behaviour. However, Gaston Gallimard, at least, engaged in double, if not triple, dealing, just like his mentor Jean Paulhan, and should by no means be suspected of being a Nazi sympathiser. Grasset and Denoël were led further astray by their ambition to scale the heights of the profession. Then there were men like Robert Mainguet, René Philippon and their ilk, though less prominent, who readily collaborated with the occupying forces. They cannot be said to have been pro-German, let alone pro-Hitler; rather, they simply favoured law and

53 See, for example, Barbara Lambauer, *Otto Abetz et les Français ou l'envers de la Collaboration*. Paris: Fayard, 2001. Kathrin Engel has studied all the surviving activity reports (*Tätigkeitsberichte*): Kathrin Engel, *Deutsche Kulturpolitik im besetzten Paris, 1940-1944 : Film und Theater*. Munich: Oldenbourg, 2003.

54 Philippe Burrin, *La France à l'heure allemande, 1940-1944*. Paris: Seuil, 1995, p. 525.

55 Pierre Assouline, *Gaston Gallimard*. Paris: Balland, 1984, pp. 338-41.

56 Mollier, *Édition, presse et pouvoir, op. cit.*, pp. 90-91.

57 For figures documenting Alsatia's rapid growth during the war, see *ibid.*, pp. 88-89.

58 *Ibid.*, pp. 117-18.

order and supported the authorities, even ones in charge by virtue of an invading army that set out to bring down the Third Republic that they reviled. France under Pétain was more reassuring than the Front Populaire and they were by no means scared of the idea of a guild, which was intended to hinder parvenus from entering the profession. This is the reason behind the submissive attitude shown by the key institutions of the publishing profession, similar in this respect to what Gisèle Sapiro has shown to be the case for French authors during the war.⁵⁹ Publishing, which appeared to have adopted a submissive attitude at the Liberation, acted as a safe house for a number of Pétainists after the war. Jean Mistler's election to the Académie française in 1966 is perhaps the most striking demonstration of this phenomenon: his application was supported by the historians Jacques Chastenet and Jérôme Carcopino, the diplomat André François-Poncet and the journalist Pierre Gaxotte. His subsequent election to the post of *secrétaire perpétuel* reflects the weight of institutions, structures, companies and networks that the efforts of men like Vercors and Edmond Charlot were powerless to counter in the long term. Charlot's withdrawal from the publishing business and departure for Algiers in 1950 similarly reflect the defeat of those publishers who began their careers underground, though Jérôme Lindon's efforts to create an audience for the voices of the opposition and of the oppressed during the Algerian war of independence suggests that the political activity of publishers with a background in the Resistance was far from ineffective in the longer term.

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Translated by Susan Pickford

⁵⁹ Gisèle Sapiro, tr. V. D. Anderson, D. Cohn. *The French Writers' War, 1940-1953*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014.