

**From 'soup-kitchen' Charity to humanitarian Expertise?
France, the United Nations and the Displaced Persons Problem
in post-war Germany**

Submitted by

Laure Andrée Humbert

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Abstract

The collapse of Nazi Germany was accompanied by a humanitarian disaster of staggering proportions. The newly-founded United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) and its successor the International Refugee Organization (IRO) identified repairing the damage that the war had inflicted on Allied displaced populations as one of its foremost humanitarian obligations. These UN agencies cast themselves as pre-eminent agents of 'rehabilitation', facilitating a fast transition from war to peace through scientific methods of refugee management conducted along Rooseveltian lines. Departing from earlier relief efforts, their ambition was to provide more than a mere 'soup kitchen' charity, their aim being to 'rehabilitate' Displaced Persons (DPs). Their methods were, however, vigorously contested in the field by military and occupation authorities, by members of established voluntary societies, and by UNRRA/IRO's own continental recruits.

This thesis explores these confrontations through the lens of French DP administration. Although these UN agencies proclaimed a new era of internationalism, solutions to DP problems were often defined in nationalist terms. DPs were organised by ethnicity and strong ties attached relief workers to their own national groups. For French planners and humanitarian workers, the DP question was much more than a humanitarian problem, and was bound up with issues of domestic reconstruction, culture and identity as much as the provision of medical aid and relief. This thesis demonstrates that distinctive diplomatic constraints, economic requirements and cultural differences influenced the thought and practices of refugee humanitarianism, shaping alternate ways of arranging interim provision and 'rehabilitating' DPs in the French zone of occupation.

Despite the fact that Allied responses to the DP problem mirrored divergent wartime experiences and differing national visions for the post-war future, this thesis argues that the history of UNRRA and the IRO in the French zone cannot be solely understood as a story of inter-Allied confrontation and clashes of political culture. Numerous transfers of expertise and the circulation of ideas and people between the zones belie such a view. New-Deal influenced methods penetrated the French zone and local UNRRA/IRO staff progressively embraced the organizations' declared mission of 'self-help', albeit on terms that reflected their particular interpretation of DPs' best interests. The real impact of UNRRA and the IRO lies in this grey area of subtle processes of imitation and re-interpretation.

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List of Abbreviations

ACCR: American Christian Committee for Refugees
AMGOT: Allied Military Government of Occupied Territories
CFLN: Comité français de la Libération nationale (French Committee of National Liberation)
CFTC: Confédération française des travailleurs chrétiens (French Confederation of Christian Workers)
CGT: Confédération Générale du Travail (General Confederation of Labour)
CPDR: Commissariat des Prisonniers, Déportés et Réfugiés (November 1943-September 1944) (Commissariat for Prisoners, Deportees and Refugees)
COBSRA: Council for British Societies for Relief Abroad
FFI: Forces Françaises de l'Intérieur (French forces of the Interior)
GFCC: Groupe français du Conseil de Contrôle (French group in the Allied Control Council)
GMZFO: Gouvernement Militaire de la Zone Française d'Occupation (Military Government of the Zone)
IGCR: The Inter-governmental Committee for Refugees
ILO: International Labour Organization
INED: Institut National d'Etudes démographiques
IRO: International Refugee Organization
MMLA: Mission Militaire de Liaison Administrative
ONI: Office National d'Immigration
ORT: Organisation Reconstruction Travail
PCIRO: Preparatory Commission of the International Refugee Organization
MPDR: Ministère des Prisonniers, Déportés et Réfugiés (September 1944-November 1945)
MRP: Mouvement républicain populaire (Popular Republican Movement)
RPF: Rassemblement du peuple français (Rally of the French People)
SFIO: Section Française de l'Internationale ouvrière (French Socialist Party)
SHAEF: Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force
SSAE: Service Sociale d'Aide aux Emigrants (Welfare Service for Emigrants)
STO: Service du Travail Obligatoire (Service for Labour Conscripts)
UNRRA: United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration

Note on Translations

All translations are by the author unless otherwise indicated.

Map of Germany and Austria under Allied occupation in 1945

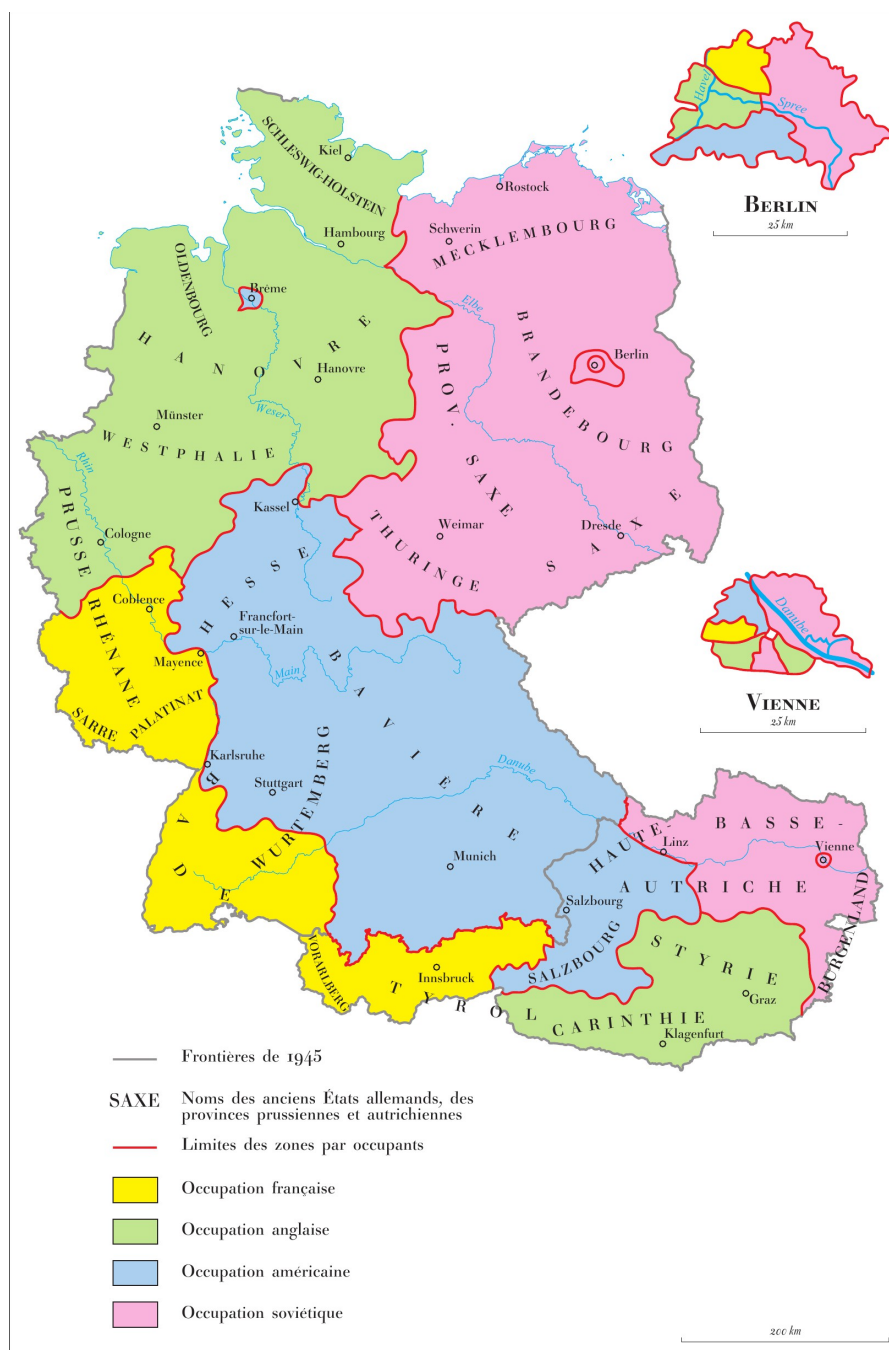


Fig. 1. Germany and Austria under Allied occupation in 1945¹

¹ Cyril Daydé, Zone française d'occupation en Allemagne et en Autriche (ZFO), Archives des administrations françaises et des organismes tripartites, 1945-1955, Notice générale d'orientation et d'aide à la recherche (May 2013), pp. 1-64, p. 50.

Introduction

Several human silhouettes emerge on the corner of each street. They begin to shout with joy. Then, men and women, as if responding to a signal, spring forth from all over the place. Poles, Russians, Czechs, and French as well, all welcome us in their own language, greeting us after the fashion of their homeland. We thought we were entering an enemy town, but it is Babel that receives us as liberators. This war is rich in paradoxes.²

Describing the constant stream of Displaced Persons (DPs) roaming the devastated cities of Germany and acclaiming the French liberating troops in April 1945, French war correspondent James de Coquet evoked the Tower of Babel. This biblical image is a recurring trope in diaries, memoirs and novels of the post-war years.³ The defeated Reich that the victors encountered in spring 1945 was a bewildering patchwork of people belonging to countless nationalities and moving in every conceivable direction. Millions of those uprooted by war - former soldiers and prisoners of war, forced labourers, survivors of death and work camps, alongside Eastern European refugees - were on the move. 'Through a singular paradox, racism has made of Germany the crossroads of all human races,' observed Coquet. 'The war has exploded all the millennial divisions and we are witnessing the most extraordinary human flux that history has ever experienced.'⁴ Poles, Balts, Frenchmen, Italians, Belgians, Dutch, Ukrainians, Russians, Yugoslavs, and others competed with German locals for sparse food and accommodation. Victims lived amidst their former oppressors; deportees cohabited with those who had voluntarily gone to Germany. Former elites shared houses with 'ordinary' peasants, while millions of children wandered around in search of lost family members.

For French observers, the sight of these columns of refugees evoked memories of the French Exodus in 1940.⁵ 'One felt an intense joy retracing the routes of 1940, but [this time] in the opposite direction,' noted Coquet.⁶ Relishing les *voluptés de la revanche*, Coquet nevertheless admitted that the desolation and destruction of Germany, and the human distress accompanying it, were more shockingly tragic than the equivalent scenes in France during

² James de Coquet *Nous sommes les occupants* (Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1945), p. 115.

³ François Cochet 'Des retours "décalés". Les prisonniers de guerre et les requis du travail' Christiane Franck (ed) *La France de 1945. Résistances, retours, renaissances* (Caen: Presses universitaires de Caen, 1996) pp. 141-152, p. 147 ; Henri Neveu *Historique des TMAPC, transports automobiles pour les populations civiles* (Stuttgart: June 1946), p. 152.

⁴ Coquet *Nous sommes les occupants*, p. 141.

⁵ On representations of the Exodus in wartime France see Valerie Holman 'Representing refugees: migration in France, 1940-1944', *Journal of Romance Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (2002), pp. 53-69.

⁶ Coquet *Nous sommes les occupants*, p. 56. Also see Jacques Notin *Les vaincus seront les vainqueurs* (Paris: Perrin, 2004), p. 128.

summer 1940.⁷ He was right: the number of uprooted people struggling to survive in 1945 Germany far outweighed those caught up in the French 'Exodus' five years earlier.⁸ More importantly, the Allied invasion of Germany was accompanied by a monstrous explosion of violence and by the horrific discovery of the Nazi concentration camps. On entering Germany in the spring of 1945, French liberating soldiers, relief workers and repatriation officers had to adjust to a new and strange realm of experiences, which shattered all previous norms.

Sonia Vagliano was only twenty-three when she entered Buchenwald in April 1945. Having followed the invading army ever since the Normandy landings in June 1944, she had witnessed considerable human distress. But, in her memoirs, she described the harrowing experience of confronting Buchenwald. In seeking a way to express her feelings, she turned to metaphor, drawing a comparison between the sight of the camp and Hieronymus Bosch's tormented artwork:

I am not certain about how I feel, but I would never have thought that I could one day wish to find myself again in Verviers in the cold, under the bombs and everything... At least, there, it was normal, human... Here, it is a nightmare, all these people are grotesques, it is Bosch's hell... Perhaps, I'll be woken...and they will all have disappeared up in smoke through the chimney...⁹

The sight of German desolation was not only reminiscent of the Tower of Babel, it also recalled the apocalypse - or, as Vagliano suggested, the dystopian world of a Bosch painting.

Allied planners responded to this humanitarian crisis with the creation in November 1943 of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), an organization devised to bring aid and relief to peoples and countries devastated by the war. But neither the Allied governments, nor their military officials, or UNRRA personnel were prepared for the scope and gravity of the problems they eventually encountered.¹⁰ The presence of nearly eight million DPs in Germany presented the liberators with a colossal logistical challenge. They included nearly six million civilian foreign workers, two million

⁷ Coquet *Nous sommes les occupants*, p. 130.

⁸ Pieter Lagrou *The legacy of Nazi occupation: patriotic memory and national recovery in Western Europe, 1945-1965* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 81; Sharif Gemie et Fiona Reid 'Chaos, Panic and the Historiography of the Exode', *War and Society*, Vol. 26, No. 2, (2007), pp. 73-98, p. 74.

⁹ Sonia Vagliano-Eloy *Les demoiselles De Gaulle, 1943-1945* (Paris: Plon, 1982), p. 227; Also see Marie-Anne Matard Bonucci and Edouard Lynch (eds) *La Libération des camps et le Retour des déportés* (Bruxelles: Complexe, 1995).

¹⁰ Ben Shepard 'Becoming Planning Minded': The Theory and Practice of Relief 1940-1945' *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 43, No. 3 (2008), pp. 405-419; *The Long Road Home. The Aftermath of the Second World War* (London: Bodley Head, 2010), pp. 41-59.

prisoners of war and 700,000 surviving concentration camp prisoners.¹¹ All DPs needed to be registered, dusted with DDT, fed, clothed, housed and, above all, repatriated to their countries of origin. Yet, means of transportation, food and clothing were insufficient. Basic services, such as running water, electricity and heating utilities had ceased to function. The only thing that still seemed to flow was alcohol. 'Madness reigns amongst the soldiers' observed French relief worker Eliane Brault, describing soldiers 'swimming in wine.'¹² The accumulated psychological brutalisation of slave labour, the long years of living in close proximity to extraordinary levels of personal violence, and the sudden and complete collapse of authority structures all came together to produce a brief moment of mad, self-destructive escapism and vengeance. Crimes, including theft, assault, rape and murder proliferated.¹³

While all three Western occupiers faced enormous obstacles to establishing law and order and reassembling DPs to facilitate their repatriation, the French faced especially difficult challenges. France itself was coming out from four years of German occupation. It was invited to join the occupation in February 1945, primarily upon British insistence. It had exerted no influence on the fundamental decisions concerning the international status of Germany and had lacked time to prepare the administrative organization of its zone.¹⁴ Created out of areas formerly allocated to the British and American zones, the French zone was considerably smaller than the other zones and made little political, geographical and economic sense.¹⁵ It bordered France and included the Saar, the Rhineland-Palatinate, the south-western parts of Baden and Württemberg, and the northwest section of Berlin. With the exception of Saarland and the Palatinate region, German administrative districts were separated from their respective historical capitals: Württemberg was assigned to French control but Stuttgart was not; the Baden area excluded Karlsruhe, and the Rhineland state was administratively separated from Köln.

Charged by the Supreme Headquarters of the Allied Expeditionary Forces (SHAEF) with establishing camps, categorising DPs and arranging interim provision for them in what would become their occupation zone, French military

¹¹ [Figures of August 1944] Ulrich Herbert *Hitler's Foreign workers. Enforced Foreign Labor in Germany under the Third Reich*. Translated by William Templer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 1.

¹² Eliane Brault *L'épopée des AFAT* (Paris: Editions Pierre Horay, 1954), p. 209.

¹³ Jean Bradley *Jours Francs* (Paris: R. Julliard, 1948); Richard Bessel 'Establishing Order in Post-war Eastern Germany', *Past and Present* Vol. 210, No. 6 (2011), pp. 139-157.

¹⁴ Geneviève Maelstaf *Que faire de l'Allemagne? Les responsables français, le statut international de l'Allemagne et le problème de l'unité allemande (1945-1955)* (Paris: Direction des Archives, MAE, 1999), XVII. Corine Defrance and Ulrich Pfeil (eds) *Entre guerre froide et intégration européenne. Reconstruction et rapprochement, 1945-1963* (Villeneuve d'Ascq: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 2012), pp. 55-56.

¹⁵ Martial Libera 'Les "lendemains de guerre" en zone française d'occupation (1945-1949). Un temps de ruptures?', François Pernot and Valérie Toureille (eds) *Lendemains de guerre. Réflexions sur « l'après » de l'Antiquité au monde contemporain. Les hommes, l'espace et le récit* (Bruxelles: Peter Lang, 2010), pp. 341-350, p. 344.

authorities also needed to provide assistance for around a million and a half Frenchmen, prisoners of war (POWs), labour conscripts and political and racial deportees, still held in Germany prior to organising their repatriation.¹⁶ In 1944, an UNRRA leaflet made the following prediction: 'There are 1,800,000 Frenchmen in Germany: according to one estimate, to move this number will take twenty-four trains a day, everyday, for nearly three months.'¹⁷ The exact number of these French DPs is difficult to assess, official figures tending to exaggerate figures and iron out differences between volunteers, political and racial deportees, transformed PoWs, workers from the *relève* or the *Service du Travail Obligatoire* (STO).¹⁸ Historians nevertheless concur that there were around 1 million PoWs, 650,000 labour conscripts, 76,000 Jewish deportees and 60,000 political deportees, convicted criminals and hostages held in Germany.¹⁹ Their return put tremendous strain on the French Provisional Government. As Henri Cartier Bresson's film *Le retour* strikingly illustrated, the fast and orderly repatriation of France's *Absents*, as they were commonly called, was a critical domestic challenge for the new republican elite seeking to establish its power in a nation left profoundly divided by the war.²⁰

Comparatively, the French zone accommodated fewer DPs than the other zones.²¹ French military estimates suggest that in the territories, which, in July 1945, became part of the French occupation zone, there were approximately 514,000 DPs before the German capitulation.²² French and Soviet nationals who formed the two largest DP groups were repatriated first. Despite logistical and transport difficulties, repatriation rates were surprisingly high. In July 1945, the number of DPs decreased to 300,000, reassembled in 73 camps. In October of the same year, the number dropped to approximately 80,000 DPs, of which roughly 35% were located in the northern part of the zone (Saar, Rhineland-Palatinate) with the remaining 65% in the Southern part (Baden,

¹⁶ According to Herbert, there was 1.3 million Frenchmen in Germany in August 1944. Herbert *Hitler's Foreign Workers*, p. 1.

¹⁷ *Helping the People to Help Themselves. The Story of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration* (London: Stationary Office, 1944), p.11.

¹⁸ For high estimates see Ministère des prisonniers, déportés et réfugiés *Bilan d'un effort* (Paris: Imprimerie Busson, 1945); Lagrou *The Legacy of the Nazi occupation*, pp. 88-89.

¹⁹ Pieter Lagrou 'Beyond memory and Commemoration: Coming to Terms with war and Occupation in France after 1945', Dominik Geppert (ed) *The postwar challenge, 1945-1958* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 65-80, p. 71; Laurent Joly 'Introduction' in Tal Bruttman, Laurent Joly and Annette Wieviorka *Qu'est ce qu'un déporté? Histoires et mémoires des déportations de la Seconde Guerre mondiale* (Paris: CNRS Editions, 2009), pp. 5-15, p. 9; Françoise Berger 'L'exploitation de la main-d'œuvre française dans l'industrie sidérurgique allemande pendant la Seconde Guerre mondiale', *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, Vol. 3, No. 50-53 (2003), pp. 148-181, p. 180.

²⁰ Megan Koreman 'A Hero's Homecoming: The Return of the Deportees to France, 1945' *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 32, No. 1 (1997), pp. 9-22.

²¹ Malcolm Proudfoot *European Refugees, 1939-1952* (London: Faber and Faber, 1957), p. 192.

²² MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/467, GMZF0, Réponse aux chiffres demandés par Berlin, 18 January 1947; Others estimates are lower. A undated note for M. Rivain maintains that there were 475,000 DPs in the zone in May 1945. PDR6/869, Note pour M. Rivain, Directeur du Cabinet de l'Ambassadeur de France Haut Commissaire de la République Française en Allemagne, [undated].

Württemberg).²³ Of those DPs who remained in both regions, the largest single group was constituted by those claiming Polish citizenship, although a significant minority of DPs hailed from the Baltic States.

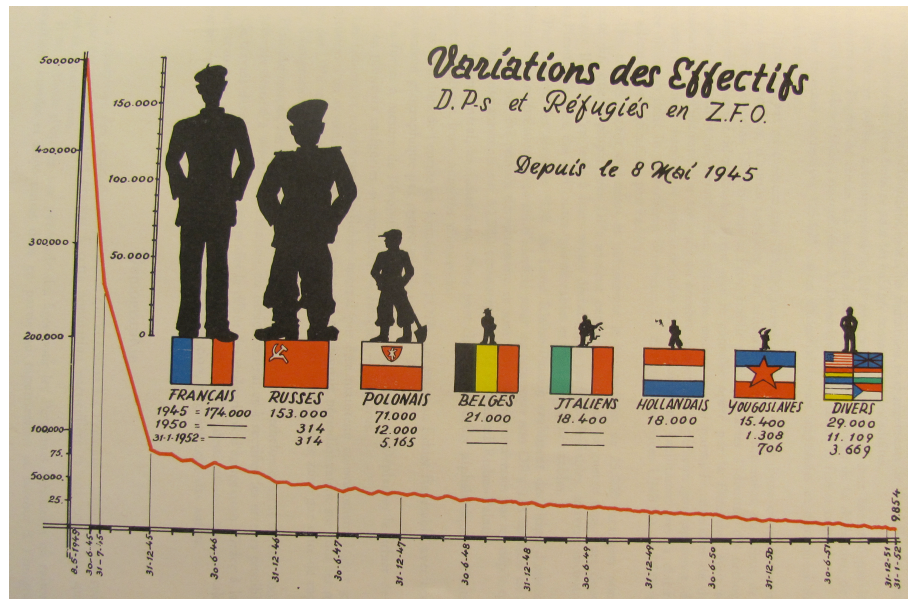


Fig. 2. Proportion of DPs by nationality in the French zone²⁴

DPs' motives for refusing repatriation varied. Some were determined to avoid repatriation at all costs. Others found themselves in a 'wait and see' position. Some feared that they would be tried for collaboration with the Nazis or persecuted by newly-installed Communist regimes. Still others had formed family attachments in Germany or simply sought better economic opportunities abroad. Finally, a few hundred returned to Poland only to decide to return to Germany once more.²⁵ On 31 December 1946, with mass repatriation over, the number of remaining DPs was estimated at 49,804.²⁶ This figure included 28,736 Polish/Ukrainian DPs, 2,666 Lithuanians, 2,561 Latvians, 2,236 stateless persons, 1,647 Yugoslavs, 1,592 Hungarians, 1,427 Austrians, 1,330 Romanians, 914 Jews, 858 Estonians and various other nationalities.²⁷ The presence of this hard core of 'unrepatriable' DPs provoked diplomatic tension between the French/AACS occupying forces and Eastern European countries, in

²³ In 29 November 1945, French authorities estimated that there were 75,282 DPs in the French zone, with 26,026 living in the Northern part of the Zone and 49,256 in the Southern Part. [MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/467, Compte-rendu d'activité de la troisième section pendant le mois de Novembre, 29 November 1945]. But the evidence suggests that the DP population was only exhaustively listed in the spring and summer of 1947, revealing the presence of nearly 5,000 DPs [PDR6/467, Nombre total de DP recensés en ZFO. [undated]; Copie de la Lettre du Général d'armée Koenig à Monsieur le Secrétaire d'Etat aux Affaires Allemandes et Autrichiennes, N.173 CCSG/AACS/PDR 28 July 1948.]

²⁴ Haut Commissariat de la République française en Allemagne, Service des Personnes Déplacées, *Sept ans d'activité en faveur des personnes déplacées en zone française d'occupation, 1945-1952*, rapport dactylographié et illustré, [undated], [Bibliothèque du Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Direction des Archives], p. 32.

²⁵ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0004-12, Visit to the camp at Lebach, 30 September 1945.

²⁶ PDR6/869, Note pour M. Rivain, Directeur du Cabinet de l'Ambassadeur de France Haut Commissaire de la République Française en Allemagne, [undated].

²⁷ Ibid.

addition to constituting a source of social problems and welfare dilemmas within defeated Germany.

Comparatively, the French zone had suffered less war damage, particularly when compared with the Soviet and British zones. France's zone was predominantly rural with only a handful of large towns, which, by German standards, had suffered relatively little physical destruction.²⁸ The sanitary situation was also significantly better with the rates of major infectious diseases consistently either the lowest or the second lowest (rates were consistently highest in the Soviet zone).²⁹ For all that, civilian life in the French zone was still impaired by chaos and disruption. In the autumn of 1946 American Quaker relief worker Carl Welty noted that local conditions remained grim. Describing the situation in Koblenz, he observed '[t]he streets are cleared of rubble, or at least the main ones are. People simply pile enough rocks in the windows and doors to make a wall, and then shovel the rest of the rubble inside the burned-out building. Nothing seems to have been spared by the fires and bombs.'³⁰ Despite being the most rural, the French occupation zone was also far from self-sufficient. Resources were scarce, transportation facilities limited, and French occupation officials, as well as French public, unwilling to meet the additional costs of reconstruction.

In addition to DPs, the zone accommodated between 300,000 and 400,000 German refugees in October 1945. The majority of them lived in the Rhineland (140,000) and Württemberg (131,000), the rest in Baden (84,500), the Palatinate (45,000) and the Saar (2,500).³¹ In November 1945, at a meeting of the *Directoire des Prisonniers de Guerre et Personnes Déplacées*, the French delegation voiced concerns about the transfers of German refugees from other zones, observing that American and British authorities did not understand what it meant to 'to have its country completely invaded by the enemy.'³²

I would like to remind the Delegates that France currently imports food to supply the French zone, that France was occupied for more than four years, that the Germans took everything, and that even today, six months after the Victory, France does not eat sufficiently, that the children of France continue to be undernourished...³³

²⁸ Jessica Reinisch *The Perils of Peace. Public Health Crisis in Occupied Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 271.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 274.

³⁰ Joel Carl Welty *The Hunger Year in the French Zone of Divided Germany* (Beloit: Beloit College, 1993), p. 11.

³¹ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/467, GMZFO, Direction generale des affaires administratives, Direction des Personnes Déplacées, statistiques generales, 30 October 1945.

³² MAE, HCRFA, Ambassade de Bonn 148, Compte-rendu analytique de la neuvième séance du directoire des Prisonniers de guerre et Personnes Déplacées tenue les 10 – 13 novembre 1945, p. 8.

³³ *Ibid.*

Despite marked divergences of view between French occupation officials, one area of consensus appeared to endure: it was imperative to avoid refugees and DPs' from settling permanently in Germany. In pursuit of this goal, the two principal alternatives for DPs were repatriation (to the DPs' home country) or emigration (preferably to France). This was not only driven by anxieties over the economic burden that DPs represented. It was also shaped by fears about France's depopulation and the conviction that German over-population still posed a threat to European security.

From the beginning, the DP question was much more than a humanitarian problem, encompassing issues of politics, culture and identity as much as the provision of medical aid and relief. After the Liberation, Allied policy-makers and humanitarian workers linked their work on behalf of DPs to the reconstruction of European democracy and the repudiation of fascist values.³⁴ But the Allies disagreed about what democratization entailed and whether DPs should be compelled to return to their home countries or not. As UNRRA official historian Georges Woodbridge observed, no issues took up more time in successive Council meetings or caused so much controversy among delegates as 'what, specifically, was [UNRRA's] role to be' in Germany, and which 'displaced persons were to be eligible for help?'³⁵ Throughout the late 1940s the DP question was closely linked to broader questions regarding the legality of forced repatriation, the categorization of wartime collaborators, helpers and allies, the ideology and methods of modern humanitarianism, and the reconstruction of European families and countries.

In this turbulent period of political upheaval in the aftermath of the Nazi regime, the work of French authorities and relief workers was, in turn, shaped by diplomatic considerations, concerns about economic recovery, and domestic political tensions. The study of French policies, priorities, experiences and encounters with DPs thus raises unaddressed historical questions. How did distinctive diplomatic constraints, economic requirements and cultural differences influence the thought and practices of refugee humanitarianism, thereby contributing to the shaping of different approaches to relief in the French zone? To what extent did the DP question defy consensus amongst leading French politicians and relief workers, reviving wartime divisions and exacerbating early Cold War tensions?

³⁴ Tara Zahra *The Lost Children: Reconstructing Europe's Families after World War II*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), p.17.

³⁵ Georges Woodbridge *UNRRA: the history of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950), p. 470.

In the context of the emerging Cold War, as Hannah Arendt pointed out, the DP problem was intrinsically political. For her, DPs were ‘the most symptomatic group in contemporary politics.’³⁶ Debates over the repatriation of DPs exacerbated tensions between the Western Allies and the Soviet Union, hastening the demise of the wartime alliance.³⁷ As explained in this thesis, the history of UNRRA exemplified the difficulties – if not the impossibility – of achieving humanitarian neutrality in peacetime. One of the many paradoxes of the war was the emergence of a new type of refugee. In the 1920s, refugees were often persons, typically from ethnic or religious minority groups, who could not return home because their own governments were unwilling to receive them. In 1945, by contrast, many hundreds of thousands of people were unwilling to return to their native countries, although their governments were anxious to see them return.³⁸

For the Soviet Union and Eastern European governments, DPs constituted elements of anti-communist propaganda. Furthermore, these countries had generally suffered some of the war’s highest casualty rates, adding urgency to the need for replacement manpower to undertake the reconstruction of war-torn territories. The Soviet Union, after all, had lost nearly a tenth of its population during the war, Poland a fifth, and Yugoslavia an eighth.³⁹ The expulsion of ethnic Germans further exacerbated anxieties over depopulation. Factories, farms and mines also required labour.⁴⁰ For newly-established Communist regimes the refusal of displaced persons to return home was deemed to represent an act of treason. In the *West*, on the contrary, as Cohen argues, ‘the loss of citizenship was treated after World War II as a direct consequence of political or racial persecution.’⁴¹ Whereas the pre-war ‘stateless’ person was negatively perceived as an individual deprived of citizenship, the post-war ‘political refugee’ was positively branded as a victim of human rights violations entitled to international protection.⁴²

As Peter Gatrell observes, ‘[i]f the scale and scope of displacement were bewildering, so, too was the plethora of international, governmental and voluntary agencies [...] that became involved in the care of refugees and

³⁶ Hannah Arendt *The origins of Totalitarianism* (1951; rept: New York: Schocken Books, 2004), p. 353. Quoted in Daniel Cohen *In war’s wake: Europe’s Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 4.

³⁷ Cohen *In war’s wake*, p. 19. On the debates at the UN Third Committee in January – February 1946 also see Guy S. Goodwin-Gill ‘Different Types of Forced Migration Movements as an International and National Problem’ in Rystad, G. (ed) *The Uprooted. Forced Migration as an International Problem in the Post-War Era* (Lund: Lund University Press, 1990), pp. 15-45, pp. 22-30.

³⁸ Gil Loescher *Beyond Charity. International Cooperation and the Global Refugee Crisis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 49.

³⁹ Tara Zahra ‘Enfants et purification ethnique dans la Tchécoslovaquie d’après-guerre’ *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, Vol. 66, No. 2 (2011), pp. 449-477, p. 453.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 453.

⁴¹ Cohen *In war’s wake*, 83.

⁴² *Ibid*.

displaced persons. The end of the war witnessed a corresponding efflorescence of governmental, inter-governmental and voluntary organizations to cope with displacement on this scale.⁴³ In departure from the inter-war period, when the *League* functioned mainly as the co-ordinator of relief operations otherwise carried out by private philanthropic organizations, UNRRA supervised the work of these voluntary societies.⁴⁴ One important consequence of this subordinated status of the voluntary agencies was the increased secularization and professionalization of relief work. UNRRA became a forum where new forms of expert knowledge about displacement, reconstruction and 'rehabilitation' emerged.

Created at the mid-point between the United Nations (UN) Declaration of January 1942 and the UN Charter adopted in San Francisco in June 1945, UNRRA has been viewed as 'the initial laboratory for the experiment of post-war cooperation among the United Nations.'⁴⁵ Many of the experts who helped create UNRRA were veterans of the relief efforts undertaken following the First World War, specialists who believed that better coordination and planning would have saved more lives and that humanitarian action should encompass each individuals' personal rehabilitation.⁴⁶ They hoped that UNRRA would be more successful in promoting international cooperation than its predecessor, the League of Nations. UNRRA's first Director General Herbert Lehman maintained, for instance, that 'if UNRRA succeeds, the world will know that international cooperation is possible... If UNRRA should fail, there is grave doubt that any collaboration within the United Nations can survive the test of practical application.'⁴⁷

UNRRA was, to a striking extent, the expression of a distinctively North American ideology of internationalism. It was both directed and predominantly financed by the United States. Americans provided a third of its personnel, the US Treasury, on average, financed seventy-two per cent of UNRRA's operating costs, and an even larger proportion of its supplies.⁴⁸ UNRRA's official language was English and US staff held the leading positions in its internal administration. Both of UNRRA's senior directors (Lehman and his successor

⁴³ Peter Gatrell 'Trajectories of Population Displacement in the Aftermaths of Two World Wars' Jessica Reinisch and Elizabeth White (eds) *The disentanglement of populations. Migration, Expulsion and Displacement in Post-war Europe, 1944-1949* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 3-26, p. 14.

⁴⁴ Daniel Cohen 'Between Relief and Politics: Refugee Humanitarianism in Occupied Germany 1945-1946' *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 43, No. 3 (2008), pp. 437-449, p. 439.

⁴⁵ Philipp Weintraub 'UNRRA: An experiment in international welfare planning' *The journal of politics* Vol.7, No.1 (1945), pp 1-24, p. 18.

⁴⁶ On the rhetoric of a 'second chance' see Jessica Reinisch 'Internationalism in Relief: The Birth (and Death) of UNRRA', *Past and Present*, Supplement 6 (2011), pp. 258-289, p. 267.

⁴⁷ Lehman *Hearings before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs*, quoted in Weintraub 'UNRRA: An Experiment', p. 18.

⁴⁸ George Woodbridge *UNRRA: the history of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration* (New York: Colombia University Press, 1950), volume 3, 416.

Fiorello H. La Guardia) were Americans. As recent studies have demonstrated, UNRRA's project reflected Roosevelt's goal of exporting a 'New Deal for the World', with UNRRA workers disseminating the ideals and values of the New Deal liberalism in Occupied Germany.⁴⁹

The creation of UNRRA also ushered in new forms of refugee humanitarianism, based on an American-style understanding of self-help and a trust in science. In a shift from earlier relief efforts, UNRRA planners aimed to provide more than a mere 'soup kitchen' charity.⁵⁰ Along with filling refugees' stomachs, dispensing clothing, shelter and health care, UNRRA planners intended to provide 'psychological rehabilitation.' UNRRA's proclaimed motto was 'helping the people to help themselves.'⁵¹ This shift bore the imprint of the New Deal. In aiming to 'help DPs to help themselves', UNRRA planners linked the psychological rehabilitation of individual displaced persons to a broader campaign to cultivate democratic values in post-war Europe.⁵² UNRRA's new methods of refugee management, promoted by New-Deal influenced relief workers, were, however, vigorously contested by members of older charitable and religious organizations and by UNRRA's own continental recruits.⁵³ This study analyses these confrontations in the French zone.

To be more specific, the thesis examines UNRRA's aspirations to transform international relief, to provide more than 'bread and butter' material support, before reviewing the obstacles that stood in the way of these aspirations in the French zone. In other words, it seeks to assess whether this shift from 'soup-kitchen' charity to 'psychological rehabilitation' occurred in the French zone and to understand why alternative ways to arrange interim provision and rehabilitate DPs emerged. While the majority of DPs in the British and American zones were reassembled in large camps run by UNRRA, DPs under French control were housed and catered for differently.⁵⁴ In the northern part of the zone, DPs tended to gather in relatively large camps run by UNRRA teams; in its Southern part, French authorities maintained DPs in confiscated

⁴⁹ Elizabeth Borgwardt *A New Deal for the World: America's Vision for Human Rights* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2005), pp. 118-121; Atina Grossmann 'Grams, Calories, and Food: Languages of Victimization, Entitlement, and Human Rights in Occupied Germany, 1945-1949' *Central European History*, Vol. 44, No. 1 (2011), pp. 118-148; Tara Zahra "'The Psychological Marshall Plan": Displacement, Gender and Human Rights after World War II' *Central European History*, Vol. 44, No. 1 (2011), pp. 37-62, p. 45; Cohen *In war's wake*, p. 60.

⁵⁰ *Helping the People to Help Themselves. The Story of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration* (London Stationary Office, 1944), p. 8.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² Zahra *Lost children*, p.93.

⁵³ Jessica Reinisch 'Introduction: Relief in the Aftermath of War', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 43, No. 3 (2008), pp. 371-404, p. 385; Jennifer Carson 'The Friends Relief Service – Faith into Action. Humanitarian Assistance to Displaced Persons Camps in Germany, 1945-1948', PhD in History, The University of Manchester, 2009; Carson 'The Quaker Internationalist Tradition in Displaced Persons Camps, 1945-1948' in Peter Gatrell and Nick Baron (eds) *Warlands. Population Resettlement and State reconstruction in the Soviet-East European Borderlands, 1945-1950* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 67-86.

⁵⁴ It is worth noting that there were also a great variety of 'assembly centres' in the British and American zones. Cohen *In war's wake*, p. 70.

private houses or very small DP centres.⁵⁵ Furthermore, greater emphasis was placed on DPs' employment in the French zone than in the British and American zones.

Why was it that the same, apparently logistical and practical questions concerning the solution to the DP problem were initially answered so differently by French occupation officials when compared with their British and American counterparts? Why despite the presence of UNRRA (and later the International Refugee Organization) did alternative ways of arranging interim provision and 'rehabilitating' DPs emerge in the French zone? Finally, did French relief workers in the field embrace or reject the Americanisation of refugee *management*? How far, in other words, was the French zone affected by the 'humanitarian revolution' occurring in the other western zones?

Assessing the multiple influences that shaped refugee humanitarianism in the zone requires an understanding of the many contexts in which UNRRA (and later the IRO) operated. Methodologically, this thesis draws on a variety of archival documents from the UN archives in New York, reports from the French Occupation zone, and Foreign Ministry materials from the Quai d'Orsay archives at La Courneuve, in addition to records from the French national and military archives (held in Paris, at Fontainebleau and Vincennes). Finally, notes from the International Tracing Service (ITS) have also been consulted. The ITS findings are primarily social and cultural in focus – and so, too, is this thesis. Indeed, the chapters that follow aim to demonstrate that the answer to French *specificities* do not just lie in the field of diplomatic relations and inter-state political conduct, but also in the cultural and ideological settings of the occupation project. In doing so, the thesis shows that a specific focus on DP administration throws a rather different light on the post-war period more generally.

The thesis has two interrelated, yet distinct goals. One is to offer a new narrative of the history of western humanitarianism as seen through the lens of French DP camp administration. Although the French zone only hosted around five per cent of the overall DP population in occupied Germany, the French case offers fascinating insights into the ideology and methods of modern refugee humanitarianism. Assessing UNRRA and the IRO activities in the French zone enables us to contribute to recent debates about whether the war's aftermath was the founding moment of a new era and whether UNRRA's

⁵⁵ 'Les activités de l'UNRRA dans la zone française', *La France en Allemagne*, No. 1 (July 1946), pp. 49-51, p. 49.

machinery contributed to the reaffirmation of national identifications or the promotion of the ‘international idea.’

The second objective is to explore French internal divisions in order to enhance our comprehension of the continuities and ruptures between the discourses and practices of the government of Vichy and of the Republics that preceded and followed it.⁵⁶ This thesis shows that conflicting attitudes towards DPs were not only intertwined with nascent Cold War tensions, but were deeply shaped by competing interpretations of the past. Debates over the recruitment of DPs revived divisions related to the problematic legacies of the STO and the forced enrolment of Alsatian and Mosellans in the Wehrmacht. This, in turn, should improve our understanding of the discrepancies between official policies and local practices in French-occupied Germany.

The historical context

The Allies invented the concept of the ‘DP’ during the war years.⁵⁷ In Allied terminology, ‘Displaced Persons’ were originally defined as all civilians belonging to the United Nations who found themselves ‘outside the national boundaries of their country by reason of the war’ and needing repatriation.⁵⁸ British and American planners, who thought first and foremost about providing for their own citizens, lumped together all civilians who needed to be repatriated under the broad category of DP while, in effect, insisting that POWs held priority over DPs. As Annette Wieviorka observes, ‘[f]or British and Americans, the distinction between Prisoners of War and Displaced Persons would never disappear. Their soil was not invaded, their civilian population was not displaced, the war remained a classical war in which armies fight and take prisoners.’⁵⁹ For French planners, however, this distinction was incongruous.⁶⁰ As a result of it, a French volunteer who arrived in 1942 to replace a Prisoner of War under the “Releve” had priority over a 1944 deportee interned in a

⁵⁶ For an analysis of the ‘politique d’éloignement’ of French civil servants compromised with the Vichy regime see Martial Libéra *Un Rêve de Puissance: La France et le Contrôle de l’économie Allemande (1942-1949)* (Bruxelles : Peter Lang, 2012), pp. 312-313.

⁵⁷ Daniel Cohen ‘Naissance d’une nation : Les personnes déplacées de l’après-guerre, 1945-1951’ in *Genèses*, Vol. 38, No. 1 (2000), pp.56-78.

⁵⁸ The SHAEF Outline Plan of 3 June 1944 was the first Allied document to describe a DP policy. In this Plan, DPs were defined as: ‘civilians outside the national boundaries of their country by reason of the war, who are (1) : desirous but unable to return home, or find homes without assistance; (2) to be returned to enemy or ex-enemy territory’ FO 1052/10, ‘ SHAEF Planning directive : refugees and DPs (DPs)’, 3 June 1944, p 1. This plan was significantly revised in April 1945. The revised SHAEF Plan (known as Administrative Memorandum No. 39) expanded the definition in a number of ways: it introduced the criterion of nationality (distinguishing between United Nations DPs, enemy DPs and ex-enemy DPs) and specified that only UN DP qualified for assistance. ‘Administrative Memorandum No. 39 (Revised-16 April 1945)’ in Proudfoot *European Refugees*, p. 445.

⁵⁹ Annette Wieviorka *Déportation et génocide. Entre la mémoire et l’oubli* (Paris : Hachette, 2003), p. 42.

⁶⁰ Andreas Rinke *Le Grand retour - Die französische Displaced Person-Politik (1944-1951)* (Krankfurt, Peter Lang, 2002), p.26.

concentration camp.’⁶¹ French PDR authorities opposed the principle of prioritizing the repatriation of PoWs over DPs.⁶² It was only after the liberation of Buchenwald in April 1945 that the French secured a relaxation in the American policy of absolute priority for the PoWs.⁶³

For British and American planners, isolated as they were from direct experience of civilian population transfers, the tracing and categorization of DPs was, in many respects, an arid bureaucratic exercise. For French planners, by contrast, repatriating and tracing civilians was not an abstract, dispassionate exercise. This fundamental disjuncture in the perception of the DP problem, on the one hand immediate and personal for the French, on the other hand organisational and theoretical for the British and Americans, was a source of significant conflict between them. As recent studies have demonstrated, the invention of the administrative category ‘DP’ revealed – often in significant ways- the inability of the Allies to think internationally. In April 1945, SHAEF introduced a criterion of nationality (understood as state citizenship). United Nations DPs (nationals of Allied countries) were separated from enemy DPs (nationals of Germany, Austria and Japan) and ex-enemy DPs (nationals of Italy, Finland, Rumania, Bulgaria and Hungary). By establishing this distinction, allied authorities sought to separate winners from losers. As Anna Holian explains, ‘[r]egardless of why individuals had been displaced, their place in the Allied DP program was determined by their nationality. This was the primary organizing principle.’⁶⁴ Significantly, the Allies refused to assist the millions of German expellees. In practice, as will be explained in chapter three, the definition was more opaque, many UNRRA Directors providing assistance to ex-enemy nationals in the French zone.

Despite these lagging problems, repatriation rates were staggeringly high in the first weeks following the capitulation of Germany. By the middle of October 1945, more than 1.5 million Frenchmen had returned home: 895,000 from the American zone, 270,000 from the British zone, 215,000 from the Soviet zone and 170,000 from the French zone.⁶⁵ Somewhere between 200,000 and 250,000 ‘foreign’ DPs were also repatriated from the French Occupation Zone in the same period.⁶⁶ According to French repatriation figures, 18,000 Belgian, 16,000 Dutch and 12,500 Italians had been sent westwards by

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² AN, F/9/3127, ‘Note sur la politique générale du rapatriement’, Henry Frenay, 21 January 1944, p. 4.

⁶³ Wieviorka *Deportation et génocide*, p. 84.

⁶⁴ Holian *Between National Socialism*, p. 44.

⁶⁵ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/467, GMZF0, graphique concernant le rapatriement des Français ; Proudfoot *European Refugees*, p. 192.

⁶⁶ ‘Le problème des “Personnes déplacées” en Allemagne, et particulièrement en zone française vu par un journaliste neutre’ *La Revue de la Zone Française en Allemagne*, No. 5 (1946), pp. 10-11, p. 10. Also see *La France en Allemagne*, No. 4 (1947), p. 57.

15 October 1945; meanwhile, 150,000 Russians, 6,000 Poles, 15,000 Yugoslavs and 1,500 Czechs eastwards.⁶⁷ As mentioned earlier, in September 1945, only around 80,000 DPs remained in the French zone.

The concept of the 'DP' did not make sense for the DPs either, who rejected a term that had little to do with their lived experiences. As Ulrich Herbert points out, 'DPs had little in common except the mere fact that they were foreigners on German soil.'⁶⁸ Describing the situation of Ukrainian women in DP camps, Martha Bohachevsky-Chomiak observes:

Women of different social classes, indeed of different levels of home culture, were thrown into communal living, communal cooking, and communal washing. Women who had never done housework had to fend for themselves and their families, and vie for provisions and facilities with women who were used to communal living, shortages, and hard physical labour. Strangers shared living quarters – privacy was a blanket suspended around a bed – and camp life was conducive to military-style regimentation that was strange to women.⁶⁹

DPs' nationalities, social backgrounds and wartime experiences profoundly differed. In Nazi Germany, working and living conditions were highly contingent 'on whether the labourer was a Jew; male or female; a civilian, prisoner of war, or a ghetto or camp inmate; could or not speak German; [...] had to toil [...] in agriculture, or industry, directly for the SS or the Wehrmacht, in a state-owned or private enterprise, a large or a small one, and in construction or mining or on an assembly line.'⁷⁰ In the French zone, some DPs were certainly survivors of the sub-camps of the Natzweiler concentration camp, located in Alsace. Others were refugees from Eastern Europe who had fled the Red Army during the war. Former collaborators certainly rubbed shoulders with anti-Nazi activists. As an official French leaflet reported, 'with the rare exceptions of famous personalities, it was impossible to find proof of treason or heroism [...] As a matter of fact, no distinction was made between refugees, evacuees and political, racial or work deportees.'⁷¹

In her comparative study of four of the largest DP groups (Poles, Ukrainians, Russians and Jews) in American-occupied Bavaria, Anna Holian

⁶⁷ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/467, GMZFO, Direction generale des affaires administratives, Direction des Personnes Déplacées, statistiques generales, 30 October 1945.

⁶⁸ Herbert *Hitler's foreign workers*, p. 376. On the diversity of experiences also see Christoph Thonfeld 'Memories of former World War Two forced labourers- an international comparison', *Oral history*, Vol. 39, No. 2 (2011), pp. 33-48.

⁶⁹ Martha Bohachevsky-Chomiak 'The Women's Movement in the DP Camps' in Isajiw, W. Wsevolod. and Boshyk, Yury and Roman Senkus (ed) *The Refugee Experience. Ukrainian Displaced Persons after World War Two* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 1992), pp. 201-219, p. 201.

⁷⁰ Peter Hayes 'Forced and Slave Labor: the State of the Field' in Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies (ed) *Forced and Slave Labor in Nazi-Dominated Europe: Symposium Presentations* (Washington, DC: Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2004), pp. 1-7, p. 1.

⁷¹ *Sept-ans en faveur des personnes déplacées*, p. 10.

has demonstrated that DPs did not unite around their shared experiences of persecution or around their refusal of repatriation. Instead, historically grounded mutual distrust split them apart. According to her, central to understanding how Bavaria's DPs viewed themselves, their recent experiences and their future lives, were their competing interpretations of the Second World War and their differing interpretations of National Socialism and Soviet Communism. 'The meanings that displaced persons assigned to their wartime experiences and the hopes they harbored for the future often followed the outlines of pre-existing political ideologies.'⁷² Following Pieter Lagrou's work, she argues that that a 'sharp confrontation between two general interpretations of the last global conflict – between antifascism and anticommunism' – defined the legacy of the Second World War in DP camps.⁷³

The emergence of DP anticommunism posed specific problems in the French zone, notably due to the presence of French citizens in the Soviet Union. At the Liberation, another striking difference between France and its Western Allies was the presence in Soviet-annexed territories of a significant number of French POWs from Alsace-Lorraine who had been forcibly enrolled in the Wehrmacht and subsequently were captured by the Red Army. The majority of the 130,000 *Malgré-nous*, as they were commonly known, fought on the Eastern front. In consequence, they were classified as ex-enemy combatants by the Soviets. They therefore shared the fate of German Prisoners of War and suffered from chronic overcrowding, malnourishment, inadequate housing and forced labour in the Soviet Union.⁷⁴ Aware of the high death rate amongst them, French authorities were anxious to see the *Malgré-nous* return to France as quickly as possible.⁷⁵ Soviet figures indicate that 21,300 French POWs in total were repatriated, the majority coming from Alsace and Moselle and a minority from the openly collaborationist *Légion des Volontaires Français* (division Charlemagne-Waffen SS). In addition, French authorities awaited the return of approximately 300,000 French internees, concentration camp survivors and POWs liberated by the Red Army at the Liberation.⁷⁶ These internees benefited from significantly better treatment.⁷⁷

⁷² Anna Holian *Between National Socialism and Soviet Communism: Displaced Persons in post-war Germany* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2011), p. 269.

⁷³ Ibid, p. 4; On Baltic DPs also see Juliette Denis 'Complices de Hitler ou victimes de Staline? Les déplacés baltes en Allemagne de la sortie de guerre à la guerre froide', *Le Mouvement Social*, Vol. 244, No. 3 (2013), pp. 81-98.

⁷⁴ Catherine Klein-Gousseff (ed) *Retours d'URSS. Les prisonniers de guerre et les internees français dans les archives soviétiques, 1945-1951* (Paris: CNRS Editions, 2001), p. 14.

⁷⁵ Ibid, p. 17.

⁷⁶ Ibid, p. 15.

⁷⁷ Ibid, p. 16.

As French historian Catherine Gousseff has explained, to a large extent France was compelled to comply with a *politique du donnant-donnant* – always making concessions in its dealings with the Soviet Union – in order to guarantee the return of French *Malgré-nous*.⁷⁸ Bowing to Soviet pressure, on 29 June 1945 the Provisional Government concluded an agreement on repatriation that was, in some respects, more radical than the bilateral agreements concluded by the British and American authorities at Yalta.⁷⁹ France committed itself to repatriate all Soviet citizens, including those likely to be prosecuted for their collaboration with the Nazis. As repatriation rates dropped and as arguments over the issue of forced repatriation of citizens of annexed Soviet territories intensified in early 1946, French POWs found themselves held hostage as a result of the non-repatriation of Soviet DPs.⁸⁰ This problem had important domestic repercussions.

The *Malgré-nous* question generated heated argument within the French Parliament, the Constituent Assembly. This was most evident in the summer of 1946 when the Ministry for Ex-Servicemen announced the completion of the repatriation of French citizens from the Soviet Union thereby precipitating virulent criticism from French deputies on the grounds that 30,000 *Malgré-nous* were still missing. As Catherine Klein-Gousseff observed, '[a]lthough the number of French detainees in the Soviet Union probably amounted to less than a hundred, and not thousands as it was claimed at the time, their detention became [in France] one of the living symbol of the emerging Cold War.'⁸¹

The work of French authorities and relief workers with DPs was shaped by these diplomatic considerations. French official DP policy had indeed to accommodate contradictory requirements. On the one hand, French authorities were anxious not to antagonize the Soviet Union due to the problem of the *Malgré-nous* and the general orientation of French foreign diplomacy at the time. Satisfying Moscow's demands was consistent with the main orientation of French foreign policy between 1945 and 1947.⁸² During this three-year period of 'tripartism' – in other words, of centre-left tripartite coalition government - the French Communist Party sustained a central role in government alongside the

⁷⁸ Catherine Gousseff 'Des migrations de sorties de guerre qui reconfigurent la frontière: ouverture et refermeture de l'URSS avant la guerre froide (1944-1946)' in Sophie Coeuré et Sabine Dullin (eds) *Frontières du communisme* (Paris : La Découverte-Recherche, 2007), pp. 428-442, p. 433. Also see Pavel Polian 'Le rapatriement des citoyens soviétiques depuis la France et les zones françaises d'occupation en Allemagne et en Autriche', *Cahiers du Monde russe*, Vol. 41, No. 1 (2000), pp. 165-190 ; G  l Moullec 'Alli  s ou ennemis ? Le GUPVI-NKVD, le Komintern et les « Malgr  s-nous ». Le destin des prisonniers de guerre fran  ais en URSS (1942-1955)', *Cahiers du monde russe* Vol. 42, Nos. 2-4 (2001), pp. 667-678.

⁷⁹ Polian 'Le rapatriement des citoyens sovi  tiques depuis la France et les zones fran  aises d'occupation', p. 170.

⁸⁰ Gousseff 'Des migrations de sorties de guerre', p. 433.

⁸¹ Klein-Gousseff *Retour d'URSS*, p. 12.

⁸² Talbot Imlay 'A Success Story? The Foreign Policies of France's Fourth Republic' *Contemporary European History*, Vol. 18, No. 4 (2009), pp. 499-519.

Socialist Party and the Christian Democrat MRP. Successive tripartite coalition administrations tried to exploit France's December 1944 alliance with the Soviet Union to secure a pivotal role between the 'Anglo-Saxon' powers and the Eastern bloc. On the other hand, some policy-makers saw in DPs a valuable reservoir of manpower in the context of heightened anxieties over depopulation. While publicly affirming their commitment to DPs' prompt repatriation to the various Eastern European repatriation missions, behind-the-scenes French diplomats and military authorities strove to recruit the healthiest DPs for the reconstruction of France.

French policy-makers' efforts to recruit DPs were not solely motivated by French manpower needs however. As explained earlier, there were also driven by the conviction that German over-population posed an inherent security threat to Europe.⁸³ For many French officials, it remained axiomatic that German overpopulation was a root cause of Nazi expansionism. Therefore, neither the *Quai d'Orsay* nor the French military government in Germany wanted to see DPs permanently settled in Germany.⁸⁴ French authorities carefully monitored the entry of DPs and German refugees in the zone.⁸⁵ Yet, from the beginning, French diplomats and occupation officials' efforts to recruit the healthiest DPs were fraught with problems. French Communist leaders opposed the recruitment of 'anti-communist' elements, while population 'experts' expressed doubts about the *assimilability* of these Slavic DPs. From 1945 to 1950, French approaches to the DP problem would continue to evolve in light of this admixture of domestic, international, ideological and ethical concerns.

The historiographical context

As a spate of recent publications in *Journal of Contemporary History*, *Past and Present*, *Central European History* and *Journal of Refugee studies* attest, UNRRA work in relation to Displaced Persons has begun to seize unprecedented scholarly attention.⁸⁶ To an extent, these developments have been cumulative. The last two decades have seen the emergence of a growing body of work both on DP policies and western humanitarianism after 1945 and

⁸³ MAE, Affaires Economiques et financières, Affaires Allemandes et autrichiennes, 1944-1949, 131, Note sur le Problème démographique allemand, Direction générale des affaires administratives et sociales, 8 February 1947.

⁸⁴ NA, FO/945/470, Note of informal discussion in the office of Monsieur Bousquet, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on the subject of German emigration, on 30 April 1947.

⁸⁵ *Sept-ans d'activité en faveur des personnes déplacées*, p. 112.

⁸⁶ See the *Journal of Contemporary History's* special issue on relief in the aftermath of war Vol. 43, No. 3 (2008), *Past and Present's* issues on reconstruction in post-war Europe Vol. 210, supplement 6 (2011) and on Transnationalism and contemporary Global History Vol. 218, supplement 8 (2013), *The Journal of Refugee Studies's* special issue on The Refugee in the Post-war World, 1945-1960 Vol. 25, No. 3 (2012) and the collections of articles on Human Rights, Utopias, and Gender in Twentieth-Century Europe in *Central European History*, Vol. 44, No. 1 (2011).

on the internal politics of DP camps. The richness and variety of the resulting analytical research is remarkable. Notwithstanding their absence from public memory and historical literature over the preceding forty years, DPs are, in Cohen's words, 'manifestly back in force in commemorative practices' and in scholarly inquiry.⁸⁷ While websites dedicated to DP camps' history flourished on the internet, recent publications reveal the breadth of contemporary research on the topic. As Pamela Ballinger recently noted, historical scholarship on the work of international agencies with DPs has 'acquired critical mass.'⁸⁸ The literature on DPs includes both studies that focus on the social and cultural history of DP camps and those that situate their history within broader scholarly frameworks of the diplomatic and political history of European reconstruction, post-war German-Jewish relations and early Cold War narratives. And, to judge from the recent flood of books, documentaries and exhibitions on the subject, this is a trend that is set to continue.⁸⁹ As yet, however, very little attention has been paid to UNRRA and later IRO administration of DP camps in the French occupation zone.⁹⁰

This striking imbalance is hardly surprising. France was a second-rank occupying force, one whose zone was significantly smaller and its wider political influence more limited than those of its Western Allies. It is also true that the largest communities of refugees and DPs were to be found in the British and American zones. At its height, the UNRRA personnel deployed in the French zone numbered less than 500, while the agency deployed over 5,000 staff throughout Germany as a whole. In histories of post-war France, UNRRA is often relegated to a footnote, written off as a failed experiment of internationalist-minded American liberals. Even in the literature on French humanitarianism, specialists often argue that France 'had limited involvement in

⁸⁷ Daniel Cohen 'Remembering Post-War DPs: From Omission to Resurrection', in Mareike König and Rainer Ohliger (eds), *Enlarging European Memory: Migration Movements in Historical Perspective* (Stuttgart: Thorbecke Verlag, 2006), pp. 87–97.

⁸⁸ Several key studies were published even while displacement was still ongoing in Europe. Eugene Kulischer *Europe on the Move: War and Population Changes, 1917–1947* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1948), Proudfoot *European Refugees*. For a recent overview of the historiography Pamela Ballinger 'Impossible Returns, Enduring Legacies: Recent Historiography of Displacement and the Reconstruction of Europe after World War II' *Contemporary European History*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (2013), pp. 127–138, p. 128.

⁸⁹ Among the most recent books Peter Gatrell and Nick Baron (eds) *Warlands. Population Resettlement and State Reconstruction in the Soviet-East European Borderlands, 1945–1950* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Ben Shepard *The Long Road Home*; Jessica Reinisch and Elizabeth White (eds) *The Disentanglement of Populations: Migration, Expulsion and Displacement in Postwar Europe* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Zahra *The Lost Children*; Holian *Between National Socialism and Soviet Communism*; Cohen *In War's Wake*; Peter Gatrell *The Making of the Modern Refugee* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

⁹⁰ Andreas Rinke *Le Grand retour - Die französische Displaced Person-Politik (1944-1951)* (Krankfurt : Peter Lang, 2002) ; Julia Maspero 'Les autorités françaises d'occupation face au problème des personnes déplacées en Allemagne et en Autriche, 1945-1949' *Revue d'Allemagne* Vol. 40, No. 3 (2008), pp. 485-500 ; 'La question des personnes déplacées polonaises dans les zones françaises d'occupation en Allemagne et en Autriche: un aspect méconnu des relations franco-polonaises (1945-1949)' *Relations internationales*, Vol. 138 (2009), pp 59-74.

the early construction of the UN' and in the early phases of NGO growth following the Second World War.⁹¹

While the importance of French involvement in the League of Nations was an uncontested fact, France's involvement in the UN system was much more limited.⁹² The relatively meagre literature on post-war France's involvement in the UN reflects this loss of influence.⁹³ Admittedly, Eric Pateyron has described René Cassin's participation in the drafting of the Universal Declaration of Rights in 1948.⁹⁴ Jay Winter and Antoine Prost have also documented the life of René Cassin, demonstrating how he inspired the Universal Declaration.⁹⁵ More recently, Chloé Maurel and Todd Shepard have examined some aspects of France's contribution to UNESCO.⁹⁶ This latter organization was based in Paris and this, as Shepard has recently pointed out, 'facilitated aggressive attempts to use this forum to reinsert French models and experts into the mainstream of post-1945 intellectual exchange.'⁹⁷ Finally, Jessica Pearson-Patel has recently completed a PhD dissertation on French colonial administration and various UN Agencies in France's territories in Sub-Saharan Africa.⁹⁸ Yet, more research needs to be done on France's overall involvement in the early years of the UN. This might lead us to reassess the (relative) importance of France in the UN. For instance, if France had only very few representatives in the executive level of UNRRA's administration, French personnel were relatively numerous on the ground. Indeed, in December 1945, UNRRA employed 5,169 people in Germany, 16 % hailing from the United States, 31% from Britain and the British colonies, 18% from France, and 30% from other European countries.⁹⁹

This thesis integrates thus the 'French case' into the burgeoning literature on post-1945 Western humanitarianism, drawing on insights from diplomatic, social, cultural and gender history. Several factors account for the booming growth in the history of post-war relief and its increasing integration into the mainstream of war studies. Some are to be found in the end of the Cold War

⁹¹ Eleanor Davey 'Beyond the 'French Doctors' The evolution and interpretation of humanitarian action in France', HPG Working Paper, October 2012, p. 13.

⁹² On France, the League of Nations and refugee related issues see Dzovinar Kevonian *Réfugiés et diplomatie humanitaire: les acteurs européens et la scène proche-orientale* (Paris: Publication de la Sorbonne, 2004).

⁹³ Marie Claude Smouts *La France à l'ONU* (Paris: Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, 1979) ; Michel Marbeau 'La France et les organisations internationales 1939-1946', *Matériaux pour l'histoire de notre temps*, Vol. 65, No. 65-66 (2002), pp. 75-83.

⁹⁴ Eric Pateyron *La contribution française à la rédaction de la Déclaration universelle des droits de l'homme* (Paris: La Documentation française, 1998).

⁹⁵ Jay Winter and Antoine Prost *René Cassin and Human Rights. From the Great War to the Universal Declaration* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

⁹⁶ Todd Shepard 'Algeria, France, Mexico, UNESCO: a transnational history of anti-racism and decolonization, 1932-1962' *Journal of Global History*, Vol.6, No.2 (2011), pp. 273-297 ; Chloé Maurel *Histoire de l'UNESCO. 1945-1974* (Paris : L'harmattan, 2010).

⁹⁷ Shepard 'Algeria, France, Mexico, UNESCO', p. 285.

⁹⁸ Jessica Pearson-Patel 'From the Civilizing Mission to International Development: France, the United Nations, and the Politics of Family Health in Postwar Africa, 1945-1960', PhD Dissertation, University of New York (2013).

⁹⁹ Woodbridge *UNRRA*, Vol. 3, p. 415.

and the opening up of East and Central European archives; others in the commitment of Gerhard Schröder's government to compensation for former Nazi victims and the consequent rise in demands for restitution after 1989.¹⁰⁰ In addition, the 1990s resurgence of ethnic cleansing in former Yugoslavia and in Rwanda placed refugees at the centre of international politics, prompting scholars to inquire more deeply into forced migrations as aspects of previous episodes of genocide in Europe. These events stimulated a wealth of research on diaspora and connection between war and dispossession in diaspora politics.¹⁰¹ Finally, some analysts point to the American invasion and occupation of Iraq beginning in 2003, which generated a renewed interest in 'post-conflict planning' – and its shortcomings.¹⁰² Although hard to measure, all of these factors probably contributed in some way to the growth of historical interest in the fate of Post-war Germany's DP populations.

The dynamics within other sub-fields of history were also decisive in pushing the question of DPs to the foreground of scholarly inquiry. The upsurge of DP studies is intimately bound up with an important paradigm shift in German historiography evident from the late 1980s.¹⁰³ After reunification, the development of German local and regional history, as well as the growth in studies of Nazi persecution and forced migrations, was decisive in shifting DPs to the centre of the post-war German experience. As Atina Grossmann observed, it became increasingly evident to German historians in the late 1980s that 'the history of post-war Germany was neither 'only a story of men' nor 'only a German story.'¹⁰⁴ The 1990s thus saw sustained efforts both to rethink the role of 'outsiders' in post-war Germany and to challenge the reductive meaning of "refugees" in German historical writing hitherto. By integrating DP histories into broader overviews of German post-war history, historians convincingly demonstrated that refugees 'were not only ethnic German expellees but also Slavic and Jewish DPs who transited, lived, worked and, at times, settled in Germany.'¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁰ See for instance the international oral history project 'Documentation of Life Story Interviews with Former Slave and Force Labourers.' Alexander von Plato, Almut Leh and Christoph Thonfeld (eds) *Hitler's Slaves: Life Stories of Forced Labourers in Nazi-Occupied Europe* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010).

¹⁰¹ Michael Marrus *The Unwanted: European Refugees in the Twentieth Century*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Peter Gatrell 'Introduction: World Wars and Population Displacement in Europe in the Twentieth Century', *Contemporary European History*, Vol.16, No. 04 (2007), pp. 415 – 426, pp. 416-417.

¹⁰² Shepard *The Long Road Home*, pp 1-2.

¹⁰³ On the richness and variety of the literature on forced migrations see Eduard Mühle 'Resettled, Expelled and Displaced: the Baltic Experience 1939-1951. Some observations on the Current State of Research' in Nobert Angermann, Michael Garleff and Wilhelm Lenz (ed) *Ostseeprovinzen, Baltische Staaten und das Nationale* (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2005), pp. 565-589, pp. 565-568.

¹⁰⁴ Atina Grossmann 'Trauma, memory and motherhood: Germans and Jewish Displaced Persons in Post-Nazi Germany, 1945-1949', *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte*, Vol. 38 (1998), pp. 215-239, p. 217.

¹⁰⁵ Cohen 'Remembering Post-War DPs', p. 96.

In recent years, the DP literature has also benefited from parallel developments in various sub-fields of military history, which became increasingly receptive to social history approaches, evident, for example, in studies of the daily lives of soldiers, issues of sexuality and desire among military personnel, and in the analysis of patterns of fraternization between armed forces and local communities¹⁰⁶ More recently still, historians have become increasingly attentive to the study of transitions from 'war to peace' and the phenomenon of life after death, scrutinizing how 'ordinary' people survived the war and came to terms with it.¹⁰⁷ Distinctive treatments of this issue of the 'sortie de guerre' as something discrete and worthy of study in its own right have emerged strongly in French historiography over the past few years. Following in the footsteps of John Horne's pioneering work on cultural mobilization and demobilization in wartime and the immediate post-war period, Bruno Cabanes and Guillaume Piketty launched a project on 'les sorties de guerre', examining how societies 'got out of the war' socially and culturally speaking.¹⁰⁸

These studies, essentially social and cultural in focus, have prompted fresh reflection on narratives of return and issues of victimisation and healing. The history of post-war Germany – with its multiplicity of historical actors from various nationalities - provides an especially interesting site for inquiring into the *problématiques* of the return (or impossible return) to 'normality' in the aftermath of war. As Richard Bessel points out, 'Germany's transition in 1945—from war to peace, from extreme violence to the beginning of a long march towards settled conditions—is one of the most remarkable in modern history.'¹⁰⁹ This period of multiple 'encounters' - between occupiers and occupied, former perpetrators and victims - is a vast field of research for those interested in social history and transnational perspectives.¹¹⁰ DP camps constitute an especially interesting site through which to trace issues of contested victimization and national and ethnic rivalries.

The expansion of gender studies has also fuelled the expansion of what could now be justifiably called 'DP studies.' In the tradition of *Alltagsgeschichte*,

¹⁰⁶ On the development of these subfields of military history see Dagmar Herzog (ed) *Brutality and Desire. War and Sexuality in twentieth century Europe* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

¹⁰⁷ Richard Bessel and Dirk Schumann (ed) *Life after death: approaches to a cultural and social history of Europe during the 1940s and 1950s* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

¹⁰⁸ According to these historians, the phrase 'sortie de guerre' reflects more aptly the dynamics of the aftermath of war than the notion of 'après-guerre.' Bruno Cabanes 'Le retour du soldat au XXe siècle. Perspectives de recherche' *Revue historique des Armées*, Vol. 245 (2006), pp. 4-15. Also see Bruno Cabanes et Guillaume Piketty *Retour à l'intime au sortir de la guerre* (Paris: Tallandier, 2009).

¹⁰⁹ Richard Bessel *Germany 1945. From War to Peace* (London: Simon & Schuster, 2009); 'Establishing Order in Post-war Eastern Germany', p. 139.

¹¹⁰ For an interesting discussion on transnational perspectives see Nicolas Beaupré, Anne Duménil et Benoît Majerus 'Expériences d'occupation en Europe, 1914-1949', *Histoire et Sociétés. Revue Européenne d'Histoire Sociale* Vol. 17 (2006).

Atina Grossmann, Margarete Myers and Judith Tydor Baumel have produced in-depth analyses of the remarkable baby-boom that occurred in Jewish DP camps. They have illustrated how these camps became sites for a *Leben aufs neu* (affirmation of life) in obvious counterpoise to the Holocaust.¹¹¹ Drawing on a vast range of sources – including official documents, DPs' letters, films, oral history interviews, newspapers, and photography, these studies have examined Jewish DPs' efforts to reclaim a sense of agency and identity. In contrast to German women, who saw themselves as victims of war and occupation, and who were, on the whole, less willing to bear a child, Jewish women gave birth both to feel 'normal' and to foster a kind of 'productive forgetting' after the horrors of the recent past. As Margarete Myers Feinstein observed, 'despite their nightmares, fears, and uncertain future, Jewish DPs sought to re-imagine themselves not as victims of Nazism but as survivors of the great catastrophe.'¹¹²

These studies have revealed the vast potential of the DP camps as an investigative field for those interested in gender history, providing insight into the complex interplay of continuity and change that marked DPs' lives. Scrutinizing the social and cultural activities flourishing in DP camps and analysing the everyday encounters between defeated Germans and their former victims also enable us to revisit key questions such as the German *Frauenüberschuss* (surplus of women) and the contemporary fears and imagery of the *Trümmerfrauen* ('women of the rubble'). Such approaches open the way to a deeper understanding of what in this period was often referred to as the 'hour of the woman.'¹¹³

The literature on Jewish DPs is by far the most extensive and the most varied.¹¹⁴ Studies attentive to gender issues have focused on Jewish-German encounters, documenting what Frank Stern has aptly called the 'historic triangle' of Germans, Jews and Americans.¹¹⁵ This growing interest in Jewish life in post-war Germany has, of course, been spurred by the growth of

¹¹¹ Judith Baumel 'DPs, Mothers and Pioneers: Women in the She'erit Hapletah' *Jewish History*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (1997), pp. 99-110; Atina Grossmann 'Trauma, memory and motherhood: Germans and Jewish DPs in Post-Nazi Germany, 1945-1949' *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte*, Vol. 38 (1998), pp. 215-239; Grossmann 'Victims, Villains and Survivors: Gendered Perceptions and Self-Perceptions of Jewish DPs in Occupied Postwar Germany', *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, Vol 11, No.1-2 (2002), pp. 291-318; Margarete Myers 'Jewish DPs reconstructing individual and community in the US zone of Occupied Germany' *Leo Baeck institute Yearbook*, Vol. 42, No. 1 (1997), pp. 303-324.

¹¹² Margarete Myers Feinstein *Holocaust Survivors in Postwar Germany, 1945-1957* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 6.

¹¹³ Robert Moeller, *Protecting Motherhood: Women and the family in the politics of postwar West Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), p. 27. For a review on the current state of research see Hester Vaizey 'EmPOWerment or Endurance? War Wives' Experiences of Independence During and After the Second World War, 1939-1948' *German History*, Vol. 29, No.1 (2011), pp. 57-78.

¹¹⁴ On the state of the historiography see Michael Meng 'After the Holocaust: the History of Jewish Life in West Germany', *Contemporary European History*, Vol. 14, No. 3 (2005), pp. 403-413.

¹¹⁵ Frank Stern 'The Historic Triangle: Occupiers, Germans and Jews in Postwar Germany' in Robert Moeller (ed) *West Germany under construction: politics, society and culture in the Adenauer era* (University of Michigan Press, 1997), pp. 199-230.

Holocaust studies.¹¹⁶ This was, in turn, stimulated by the wealth of new sources made available by the opening of former Soviet and Eastern bloc archives in the post-communist period. The emergence of a new generation of Israeli scholars such as Tom Segev, Idith Zertal and Yosef Grodzinsky since the 1990s, all of them eager to pose new questions about familiar topics - from the *Brikha* and the *Alyah Beth* (Jewish illegal immigration) to the role of Holocaust survivors in the founding of the State of Israel - has been central to this process.¹¹⁷ The importance of France and the French zones of occupation of Germany and Austria in the illegal transit of Jewish refugees to France is now a familiar tale. Zionists enjoyed political support in the press and among the new republican elite in their efforts to get to Palestine.¹¹⁸

It bears emphasis, though, that Jewish DPs were considerably less numerous in the French zone, with the notable exception of the French Sector in Berlin. Several factors account for this. The majority of Nazi concentration camps were located in the US and Soviet zones. Perhaps, most importantly, the American zone, where the *Brikha* was better-organized and material resources more abundant, was more attractive to them. In May 1945, the two biggest Jewish DP camps were located in Gaillingen and Biberach.¹¹⁹ In early 1946, 1,000 Jewish DPs were officially registered in the French zone of occupation, representing approximately 2% of the overall Jewish DP in Germany and 1.6% of the overall DP population of the French zone.¹²⁰ But as Andreas Rinke and Julia Maspero have pointed out, many Jewish DPs illegally transited through the French zone.¹²¹ The American Joint and the Jewish Agency for Palestine helped organize illegal immigration in the French zone.¹²²

¹¹⁶ Holocaust studies proliferated after the 1961 trial in Israel of Adolf Eichmann. See for instance Hannah Arendt *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A report on the Banality of Evil* (New York: Viking 1963); Raul Hilberg *The Destruction of the European Jews* (1961; repr. Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1967).

¹¹⁷ For a very thoughtful account on the state of the historiography see Catherine Nicault 'La Shoah et la creation de l'Etat d'Israel: où en est l'historiographie?', *Les Cahiers de la Shoah*, Vol.1, No.6 (2006), pp. 161-204. These unorthodox historians challenged the Zionist narrative of 'rescue', demystifying it by arguing that Zionists manipulated and exploited survivors for their own political purposes and that the survivors were discriminated against by the State of Israel as part of its ideological negation of the diaspora. Tom Segev *The Seventh Million: The Israelis and the Holocaust* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1993); Idith Zertal *From Catastrophe to Power: Holocaust Survivors and the Emergence of Israel* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998). Yosef Grodzinsky *In the Shadow of the Holocaust* (Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press, 2004). Their works have generated intense, sometimes acrimonious, debate and account for much of the impetus behind 'rediscovering' the political, social and cultural activities in Jewish DP camps. Scrutinising the internal politics of the DP community, Zeev Mankowitz has, for example, refuted past presumptions about DP passivity and victimization. Even though DPs were dependent on the occupation forces, international organisations and Jewish welfare groups, Mankowitz persuasively argues that they remained agents of their own fate. Mankowitz *Life between Memory and Hope: the Survivors of the Holocaust in Occupied Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

¹¹⁸ David Lazar *L'opinion française et l'Etat d'Israël, 1945 - 1949* (Paris, Calmann-Lévy, 1972) ; Catherine Nicault *La France et le sionisme, 1897-1948. Une rencontre manquée ?* (Paris, Calmann-Lévy, 1992).

¹¹⁹ HA5-4/5 Report written by Dixi Heim, 15 March 1947 (sent to UNRRA); Object : histoire de l'opération DP en Allemagne.

¹²⁰ Wiener Library, H46A-3/2, Letter from W. Heim, UNRRA SP 50386, BPM 510, Haslach, Germany, 20 May 1946.

¹²¹ Julia Maspero 'La politique française à l'égard de l'émigration juive polonaise de l'immédiat après-guerre', *Bulletin du Centre de recherche français à Jérusalem* [En ligne], 22 | 2011, mis en ligne le 25 mars 2012, Consulté le 10 juillet 2013. URL : <http://bcfrj.revues.org/6513>.

¹²² HA6B-2/1, Detailed report of activities of M. F. Mandelbaum, 4 September 1946.

Contrary to their British equivalents, the French authorities recognized Jewish refugees from Eastern Europe as a 'separate group' very early on. Moreover, as Maspero points out, while British and American authorities refused to grant DP status to refugees who had arrived in their zone before 10 August 1946 (for the British) and 21 April 1947 (for the American authorities), France imposed no such restriction.¹²³ Evidence suggests that there were several *Kibbutzes* in the French zone, notably in Gailingen, Konstanz, Jordanbad. In Jordanbad, DPs even organized a hunger strike in the summer of 1946 to protest against British policies.¹²⁴

Finally, any assessment of recent historical interest in the DP problem would not be complete were one to omit the upsurge in global and transnational history over the last two decades as well as the recent evolution of the literature on 'reconstruction', post-war planning and the United Nations.¹²⁵ 'The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989', observed Mark Mazower, 'had a massive impact on our understanding of the reconstruction effort that reshaped Europe in the years 1945-48.'¹²⁶ It became evident that, for too long, scholars had focused on the construction of two hostile blocs during the period 1945-1948 and had written a 'kind of prehistory of the Iron Curtain.' Moving away from these Cold War binaries, new studies of reconstruction have illuminated the reconfiguration of internationalism as a consequence of the war. '[T]he hopes evident in the 1990s of a new more central role for the United Nations and other international bodies redirected attention to the post-1945 years in the emergence of a new world order, and a redefinition of internationalism.'¹²⁷ This was accompanied by a surge of interest in the history of human rights. Since the 1990s, historians have explored how the universal language of human rights has been negotiated and applied in various local social and political settings.¹²⁸ The proliferation of conferences and publications commemorating the UN's sixtieth anniversary in 2005 further enriched the organization's historiography.¹²⁹

¹²³ For British and American policies see Arieh Kochavi *Post Holocaust Politics Britain, the US and Jewish Refugees 1945-1948* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001); For French policies Julia Maspero, « La politique française à l'égard de l'émigration juive polonaise de l'immédiat après-guerre », *Bulletin du Centre de recherche français à Jérusalem* [En ligne], 22 | 2011, mis en ligne le 25 mars 2012, Consulté le 10 juillet 2013. URL : <http://bcfrj.revues.org/6513>.

¹²⁴ Wiener Library, H46A-3/2, Copy of a letter from/ to (?) D. Heims, UNRRA Team 209, Jordanbad, Biberach/Rise (14b), Wurttemberg, French Zone, 29 July 1946.

¹²⁵ Patricia Clavin, 'Time, Manner, Place: Writing Modern European History in Global, Transnational and International Contexts', *European History Quarterly*, Vol. 40, No. 4 (2010), pp. 624-640.

¹²⁶ Mark Mazower "Reconstruction : the Historiographical issues", *Past and Present*, Vol. 210, Supplement 6, (2011), pp. 17-28.

¹²⁷ Mazower 'Reconstruction: the historiographical issues', p. 21.

¹²⁸ Kenneth Cmiel 'The recent history of Human Rights' in Akira Iriye, Petra Goedde and William Hitchcock (ed) *The Human Rights Revolution. An international History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 27-51; On recent historiographical debates about Human Rights and the still fragmented and fragmentary state of the field see David O. Pendas 'Toward a New Politics ? On the Recent Historiography of Human Rights', *Contemporary European History* Vol. 21, No. 1 (2012), pp. 95-111.

¹²⁹ Sunil Amrith, Glenda Sluga 'New Histories of the United Nations' in *Journal of World History*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (2008), pp. 251-274.

By contrast, little is known about French UNRRA (and later IRO) recruits. Did they implement UNRRA's *scientific* methods in the field? How did they re-interpret UNRRA guidance about DP rehabilitation and psychological health? Did they emulate many of their British counterparts in spurning *New Deal*-inflected ideas about welfare? And finally, did the language of human rights weigh upon France's DP policies, even if only marginally? These are some of the questions we need to answer.

As far as French official DP policies are concerned, German historian Andreas Rinke has perceptively addressed France's repatriation of its own DPs and its policy towards non-French DPs in both France and its occupation zone in *Le Grand retour - Die französische Displaced Person-Politik (1944-1951)*.¹³⁰ Following in the footsteps of Wolfgang Jacobmeyer's pioneering work, Rinke's study emphasizes the critical influence of both the emerging Cold War and lasting French internal divisions.¹³¹ Drawing mainly on the archives of the French Foreign Ministry and the Ministry of Prisoners, Deportees and Refugees [PDR], his work provides the closest thing we have to an archival history of the DPs in the French occupation zone. Rinke contextualises the DP problem within the broader framework of French repatriation efforts. His study offers interesting insights into French internal political tensions and the diplomatic constraints under which the French government operated. It also confirms how the 'experience of deportation' significantly differentiated the French position from those of its Western Allies. But, for all its strengths, the study fails to encompass the cultural and social history of the 'historic triangle' of French, Germans and DPs. Little attention is paid to the management of DP camps or the 'practices' of relief work. As a result, the overall portrait that emerges from his work is that of a 'harsh' and unbending French DP policy towards non-French DPs, particularly if compared to the 'caring' American policy.

Admittedly, there is much truth in Rinke's primarily diplomatic and institutional interpretation. But, in recent years, the emphasis on American 'generosity' has given way to a more nuanced understanding of how American officials became both 'protectors and jailers', sharing 'many of the same prejudices as the Germans.'¹³² More importantly, the study of UNRRA archives and PDR documents reveals that attitudes towards DPs within both the French military administration and its UNRRA counterpart in the French zone were

¹³⁰ Rinke *Le Grand retour*.

¹³¹ Wolfgang Jacobmeyer *Vom Zwangsarbeiter zum heimatlosen Ausländer: Die Displaced Persons in Westdeutschland, 1945-1951* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1985).

¹³² Anna Holian 'The Ambivalent Exception: American Occupation Policy in Postwar Germany and the Formation of Jewish Refugee Spaces', *Journal of Refugee Studies*, Vol. 25, No. 3 *Special Issue: the Refugee in the Postwar World, 1945-1960* (2012), pp. 452-473, p. 462.

never monolithic. The focus on UNRRA and PDR archives unravels a realm of historical contingency overlooked in Rinke's work, which now allows us to pursue a more nuanced understanding of French attitudes towards DPs. Following in Rinke's footsteps, Julia Maspero has written two well-documented articles on the impact of Polish DPs on post-war Franco-Polish relations. She highlights the diplomatic imperatives of the early Cold War and the underlying ambiguities of French high-policy (as explored here in chapter 3). But her focus is not on the social and cultural history of DPs in the French zone.¹³³

From UNRRA and PDR sources contradictory depictions of the DPs and contrasting ideas about how best to rehabilitate, control and feed them tend to emerge. This thesis attempts to reconcile these contradictory impressions in order to reach a fuller, more nuanced interpretation of French DP policy and administration. It probes beneath the formal structure of official instructions to reconstruct the ways in which repatriation, compulsion to work or pressure to consider emigration to France were put into practice. On the one hand, it shows that, for some administrators, relief was primarily a matter of procurement (a logistical problem of matching estimated relief needs with available supplies) while its implementation was viewed essentially as a matter of discipline. On the other hand, it demonstrates that some UNRRA relief workers saw their work very differently - as agents of 'normalization' and psychological 'rehabilitation' after years of wartime disruption.

Did UNRRA's shift from 'bread and butter' relief to 'science based' rehabilitation fundamentally affect French DP administration? Did French relief workers resist the introduction of principles, categories, methods and instruments emanating from across the Atlantic? Was UNRRA a turning point, an experience in refugee management that created something fundamentally new? Were DP camps in the French zone places of 'normalization' and 'psychological rehabilitation' – as advocated by New-Deal influenced relief workers - after wartime disruption? Or did they, on the contrary, bear resemblance with the refugee camps hastily built in 1939 in the South of France to accommodate Spanish Republican soldiers and civilians? These are questions that we need to answer.

¹³³ Maspero 'Les autorités françaises d'occupation face au problème des personnes déplacées en Allemagne et en Autriche, 1945-1949' ; 'La question des personnes déplacées polonaises dans les zones françaises d'occupation en Allemagne et en Autriche.'

Towards a transnational history of DP administration in the French zone

This study is an attempt to begin constructing a social and transnational history of French DP administration. In order to grasp the complexities of French DP administration, the thesis traverses the field of institutional history (particularly in its analysis of the administrative conflict between the PDR service and UNRRA in chapter one), diplomatic and political history (in its examination of the ministerial debates about the recruitment of DPs) and economic history (DP employment policies and the exploitation of the zone).¹³⁴ But, its findings are primarily social and cultural in focus.

There are thus at least three respects in which this history can be defined as 'transnational': in its use of archives of UNRRA and the IRO documenting transnational connections between relief workers from different nations, in its attention to local discrepancies between official policy and universalist claims versus the diversity of practices observable in the field; and in its underlying contention that the distinction between domestic and foreign policy is in many respect an artificial one (an idea pursued most fully in chapter two).¹³⁵ As Talbot Imlay and Dietmar Hüser have argued, any attempt to grasp the complexities of French foreign diplomacy during the early years of the Fourth Republic requires a sound understanding of the domestic context.¹³⁶ The DP question is no exception to that. Furthermore, this thesis is attentive to local discrepancies. It is not only about French diplomats, occupation officials and UNRRA planners' initial assumptions and the ways in which realities on the ground forced them to modify their policies and programmes. It is also about how local administrators and relief workers re-interpreted and shaped *official* policies in response to local factors.

This transnational approach opens up new ways of writing about the history of DPs and French administration in occupied Germany. This thesis brings into the narrative a whole range of international actors, encompasses a comparative dimension, and extends its field of vision from the political and diplomatic to the social. It has, however, its own limitations. Precisely because it draws mainly on relief workers and administrators' reports, it is, in many respects, an asymmetrical history. This thesis is not an 'inside story' of DP life, but an investigation of DP actions and perceptions as filtered through French

¹³⁴ Clavin 'Time, Manner and Place', pp. 628-629.

¹³⁵ Ibid, pp. 624-640.

¹³⁶ Dietmar Hüser *Frankreichs « doppelte Deutschlandpolitik »*. *Dynamik aus der Defensive-Planen, Entscheiden, Umsetzen in gesellschaftlichen und wirtschaftlichen, innen- und aussenpolitischen Krisenzeiten 1944-1950* (Berlin, Duncker und Humblot, 1996); Imlay 'A Success Story?', pp. 499-519.

eyes. Even so, the voices of refugees do emerge from the UNRRA and IRO archives, suggesting that DPs were not only 'passive recipients' but also 'actors' in their own history. For all that, this study does not place these voices at the centre of its inquiry. Furthermore, it pays greater attention to the daily-interactions between French local administrators, UNRRA workers and DPs than to the tense interactions between DPs and their former German oppressors. Admittedly, this thesis acknowledges Germans' perceptions of DPs as 'criminal' and 'black marketeers.' But, notions of contested victimization and symbolic revenge are not central to this investigation.

The thesis is also essentially a history of France and the West, rather than an exploration of France and the East. The history of ethnic cleansing in East-Central Europe, the resurgence of anti-Semitism in Poland and the rivalries between the various DP ethnic groups in the French zone are only addressed insofar as they emerged in French documents. Of the civilians and PoWs who returned to the Soviet Union as of March 1, 1946 an estimated 6.5 per cent were 'referred to the NKVD' and 14.48 per cent were conscripted into forced labour battalions immediately upon arrival, according to Soviet government statistics.¹³⁷

Moreover, this thesis neither covers the *specific* problem of DP children nor those of Jewish DPs. The archives of the French Occupation zone hold 264 boxes emanating from the 'Bureau des enfants' of the service PDR, which have not been consulted.¹³⁸ As far as Jewish DPs are concerned, the *Fondation pour la Mémoire de la Shoah* recently granted a bursary to Julia Maspero to examine their history, which should result in published work. Finally, this thesis restricts its geographical focus to the southern part of Germany, while acknowledging that the French Sector of Berlin accommodated a considerable number of Jewish victims of persecution as well as other, newer Jewish arrivals.¹³⁹

Writing the history of the humanitarian actors who forged these transnational connections in the French zone has posed several methodological challenges. As will be explained in chapter four, UNRRA relief workers did not form 'epistemic communities', with a shared 'set of normative and principled beliefs.'¹⁴⁰ The prosopographical history of French relief workers was further

¹³⁷ Zahra *The Lost children*, p. 199.

¹³⁸ Cyril Daydé, conservateur du Patrimoine, Zone française d'occupation en Allemagne et en Autriche (ZFO) Archives des administrations françaises et des organismes tripartites, MAEE, Direction des Archives, Notice générale d'orientation et d'aide à la recherche (May 2013), pp. 1-64, p. 20.

¹³⁹ In April 1946, their number had been reduced from 2,700 to 400 according to UNRRA figures. UNA, UNRRA, S-1021-0084-10, History of the DP operation in Germany, ERO Technical Instructions No.72, Appendix 3, p. 34.

¹⁴⁰ Peter Haas 'Introduction: Epistemic community and International Policy Coordination' *International Organization*, Vol. 46, No. 1 (1992), pp. 1-35; Daniel Laqua 'Projecting Nationhood? The Nation in Transnational Intellectual Cooperation during the Interwar

complicated by the fact that the UN Archives prohibit researchers from accessing UNRRA's personnel files. Fortunately, many personnel evaluations were found in the boxes of the French zone and these compensate – at least in part – for this gap in the available source base. These documents remain patchy even so. It is conceivable, then, that the hundreds of French UNRRA personnel files would add new dimensions to the story. This limitation in the sources notwithstanding, the thesis not only looks at a unique group of international civil servants, but also at a collection of individuals, whose actions were shaped by their professional, personal and geographical surroundings. It is technically impossible to show all of the different individual experiences within UNRRA in the French zone; however, by extracting individual stories from the collective narrative, it is possible to gain a clearer insight into the subtleties of the French UNRRA milieu.

That being said, the wealth of historical sources presented another methodological challenge. Historical accounts of DP life in the French zone, as in the other western zones, are abundant.¹⁴¹ DP life was methodically and voluminously documented by occupation forces, UNRRA and, later, the IRO, as well as by private voluntary societies and the DP themselves. The UN archives also hold an enormous volume of weekly reports written by field workers. These records are, in turn, complemented by the IRO archives which amount to nearly 2000 boxes in total. The 'series PDR' of the French Occupation Zone archives, as well as the archives of Henri Frenay's Ministry PDR, the archives of the *Comité d'histoire de la Seconde Guerre Mondiale* (deposited in the French national Archives), and the French military archives (in Vincennes) also contain an large quantity of official reports documenting the different aspects of DP life in the French zone. As Iris Borowy notes in her introduction of the history of the League of Nations Health Organisation,

[A]s everyone familiar with archival work knows, findings depend on many factors, including time, money, stamina and often sheer luck. This fact is much regretted, because experience shows that often the unofficial version of events becomes very different from its official image [...] Inevitably, one is left with this nagging doubt about whether this one box, which was not consulted, might not in fact contain this invaluable piece of evidence which would rewrite basic tenets of existing interpretations.¹⁴²

Years', p. 10 (English version of the article 'Internationalisme ou affirmation de la nation? La coopération intellectuelle transnationale dans l'entre-deux-guerres', *Critique Internationale*, No. 52 (2011), pp. 51–67.)

¹⁴¹ Atina Grossmann 'Entangled histories and Lost memories. Jewish Survivors in Occupied Germany, 1945-1949' in Patt Berkowitz (ed) Patt, Avinoam and Berkowitz, Michael (ed) *We are here: New approaches to Jewish Displaced Persons in Postwar Germany* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2010), pp. 14-30, p. 17.

¹⁴² Iris Borowy *Coming to terms with World Health: The League of Nations Health Organisation, 1921-1946* (Bruxelles: Peter Lang, 2009), p. 39.

This bears amplification in the French case, where there were pronounced discrepancies between official policy and practices in the field.

It could finally be objected that by focusing on two marginal groups within the zone (relief workers and DPs), this project loses sight of the bigger picture. The DP question was certainly not at the forefront of French authorities' priorities, the return to France of the two million *Absents* and the broader needs of reconstruction being at the centre of the new republican elite's preoccupations. Unlike issues such as denazification and reeducation, the DP problem was not a central pillar of French attempt to remake German society after the war. Equally, for UNRRA planners, the French zone was a marginal territory, accommodating only five percent of the overall DP population and (at its height in the summer of 1946) less than ten percent of its personnel. This thesis shows, nevertheless, that studying UNRRA and the IRO's activities in the French zone has far broader implications. Firstly, it contributes to a better understanding of the contradictions and ambiguities inherent in French policies in post-war Germany. It shows that the study of French practices towards DPs can help us reassess the core objectives of the French occupation project as a whole. Significantly smaller, the French occupation zone has tended to be the 'forgotten zone.' Historians have tended to characterize the French as a harsh occupant wanting retribution for four years of German occupation in France. Accounts of French soldiers' rape and pillage in the early days of the occupation combined with the pompous feasts and lavish parades organized by the First French military commander-in-chief General De Lattre de Tassigny became 'shorthand for an image of the French as the most revengeful, exploitative, ruthless and aloof of the western occupiers.'¹⁴³ Since the early 1980s, the historical reputation of the French zone has undergone a significant rehabilitation, with historians highlighting the complexities and ambivalences of French policy.¹⁴⁴

While early scholarly work on the French occupation zone tended to focus on the extent of France's political repression and economic exploitation of the zone, the end of the Cold War has witnessed the emergence of more balanced analyses which emphasize that the French occupation programme contained

¹⁴³ Reinisch *The Perils of Peace*, p. 12.

¹⁴⁴ Klaus Manfrass and Jean-Pierre Rioux (eds) *France-Allemagne 1944-1947* (Paris: Cahier de l'IHTP No.13/14, 1990); Rainer Hudemann 'Revanche ou partenariat? A propos des nouvelles orientations de la recherche sur la politique française à l'égard de l'Allemagne après 1945', in Krebs, Gilbert and Schneilin, Gérard (eds) *L'Allemagne 1945-1955. De la capitulation à la division* (Asnières: Publication de l'Institut d'Allemand, 1996), pp. 127-152; Hüser *Frankreichs "Doppelte Deutschlandpolitik"*; Rainer Hudemann 'L'occupation française après 1945 et les relations franco-allemandes' *Vingtième Siècle*, Vol. 55, No. 3 (1997), pp. 58-68; Geneviève Maelstaf *Que faire de l'Allemagne? Les responsables français, le statut international de l'Allemagne et le problème de l'unité allemande (1945-1955)* (Paris: Direction des Archives, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, 1999) ; For a review of the most recent approaches see Constanze Buyken 'France and the German Question, 1945-1990', report on the international conference hosted by the German Historical Institute in Paris (2013), <http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showpdf.php?id=40182>.

important and successful policies for German renewal, reform and democratization. Historians have emphasized differences in approaches and policies between the conservative and militarist Cabinet of Pierre-Marie Koenig and the more socialist inclined *administrateur Général* Emile Laffon. The history of UNRRA in the French zone offers a powerful contribution in that direction. French practices towards DPs are deeply implicated in the mixed record of the French zone: French emphasis on private accommodation and employment led many UNRRA workers believe that they were more successful in *normalizing* DPs' life than their American counterparts. Furthermore, some DPs benefited from the generous support of Raymond Schmittlein and were able to develop a rich cultural life. Yet, for the majority of DPs, French employment policies meant that they were often forced to work in unattractive manual positions under German supervision, making some feel that not enough had changed since the end of the war.

Secondly, this thesis should deepen our understanding of the limits and ambiguities in UNRRA and IRO's global humanitarian crusade. It demonstrates that UNRRA's revolution was only partially fulfilled in the zone. The complex and uneven picture of UNRRA and IRO's activities that emerges here suggests that theories and practices of 'new humanitarianism' launched by the United Nations were not as coherent, innovative and 'modern' as UNRRA planners suggested. On the one hand, UNRRA experts promoted the secularization and internationalization of relief work; on the other hand, they fostered the development of religious and nationalist activities in a belief in their 'therapeutic effects.'

This thesis also complicates narratives regarding the American presence in post-war France and French-occupied Germany.¹⁴⁵ This thesis suggests that the conflict between French occupation officials and UNRRA cannot be interpreted solely in terms of Americanization, imperialism and the unilateral propagation of a cultural model and 'resistance' to that model.¹⁴⁶ Although there was a solid, even messianic ambition on the part of the Americans, the specifics of this ambition were far from self-evident. Furthermore, in the French zone, UNRRA headquarters was French-run and American UNRRA workers were far less numerous. In June 1947, a few weeks before UNRRA's termination, French zone UNRRA Director General Fernand Lenclud sent a note to all his

¹⁴⁵ Laura Hobson-Faure 'Penser l'accueil des immigrants juifs: L'American Joint Distribution Committee et les oeuvres sociales juives françaises après la Shoah' in Colette Zytznicki *Terre dexil, terre d'asile* (Paris : Editions de l'Éclat « Bibliothèque des fondations », 2010), pp. 97-114.

¹⁴⁶ It builds on the work of Ludovic Tournès 'La fondation Rockefeller et la naissance de l'universalisme philanthropique américain', *Critique internationale*, Vol. 35, No. 2 (2007), pp. 173-197.

personnel in which he indicated that they should feel proud to have participated in this international organization. 'Faced with calumny, we will respond by being even more active and on 30 June we will hold our heads up because we are sure that we have been the faithful executors of President Roosevelt's generous thought.'¹⁴⁷ Lenclud's words suggest that his staff embraced the Administration's international (or American) project. Unlike occupation administrators who, according to him, showed no awareness of the need to foster a spirit of self-reliance among those needing relief, Lenclud believed that UNRRA had spearheaded a large-scale programme in the field of 'rehabilitation', through the development of social, recreation and cultural activities. Yet, this thesis will demonstrate that Lenclud's statement cannot be taken at face value. Closer examination of Franco-American UNRRA relations reveal moments of heart-felt cooperation alongside persistent fears and mutual incomprehension of one another's motives.¹⁴⁸

Finally, this thesis offers a new perspective on the question of ruptures and continuities in the administration of refugees. Contemporary observers, including Hannah Arendt, often contended that DP camps were disturbingly reminiscent of Nazi concentration camps and French internment camps.¹⁴⁹ The reality was far more complicated. DP camps departed in philosophy from the refugee camps hastily built in 1939 in the South of France to accommodate Spanish Republican soldiers and civilians.¹⁵⁰ Initially designed as humanitarian shelters, the refugee camps for Spanish Republican exiles blurred the distinction between assistance and incarceration, paving the way for a larger network of internment centres used by the late Third Republic and the Vichy Regime. Unlike these disciplinarian internment camps established in France for Spanish and Central European refugees on the eve of the Second World War that sought to 'control' refugee activities, DP camps (referred at the time as 'assembly centres') were primarily set up to provide temporary relief. As shall be explained, these centres were conceived by UNRRA experts as 'safe havens', as sites of normalization and rehabilitation.

Admittedly, as we shall see, spatial factors and French employment policies significantly limited DPs' freedom of movement (DPs were forbidden to move beyond a five-kilometre radius from their assembly centre) and introduced elements of control and policing reminiscent of the immediate pre-war period.

¹⁴⁷ UNA, UNRRA, S-0432-0005-01, Lettre de Lenclud à tout le personnel de l'UNRRA, 10 June 1947.

¹⁴⁸ On fear of Americanization through sex see Mary Louise Roberts 'The Silver Foxhole: The GIs and Prostitution in Paris, 1944–1945', *French Historical Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 1 (2010), pp. 99–128.

¹⁴⁹ Hannah Arendt *The origins of totalitarianism* (New York: Cleveland, 1958), p. 284 ; p.445; Peter Gatrell 'From 'Homelands' to Warlands': Themes, Approaches, Voices', pp. 1–22, p.6.

¹⁵⁰ Cohen *In war's wake*, p. 68.

But, DPs' lives were not exclusively defined by spatial confinement. Some DPs lived in private accommodation among the German population and benefited from the protection of occupation officials. As will be explained in chapter five, in some areas, a rich DP cultural life emerged. Furthermore, while the League of Nations failed to protect Spanish refugees, UNRRA officials acted – albeit at time insufficiently - as protectors of the DPs.¹⁵¹ Thus, despite widespread criticism of Allied DP policies, DP living conditions were significantly better than those of the Republican refugees in Gurs or Argelès in 1939.

The UNRRA years did not represent an entirely 'new dawn', however. Despite the concerted attempts by post-Liberation governments to present a France made new in 1945, the story of DP administration reveals continuities of thought with the inter-war years. These continuities were particularly evident in the persistence of gender discrimination and ethnic prejudices. Furthermore, attitudes towards DPs within the military government and UNRRA were never monolithic. Depending on their assigned tasks, political orientation, and perhaps also their wartime experiences, French occupation officials and UNRRA humanitarian actors constructed very different interpretations of the DP situation. Old and new methods and practices of relief work coexisted and mingled in the zone. On the one hand, UNRRA fostered the development of recreational activities in an attempt to 'rehabilitate' DPs; on the other hand, it contributed to the persistence of authoritarian and paternalistic visions of relief work.

Summary of chapters

The following chapters begin with the creation of UNRRA in November 1943 assessing the early negotiations between French high-officials and Anglo-American UNRRA planners. At this time, French priorities hinged around the recognition of the Provisional Government and the organization of the return of French *Absents*. French planners were neither aware that they would be granted a zone of occupation, nor that this zone would hold 'foreign' DPs. The thesis ends with the recruitment of DPs for work in France and the transfer of responsibility to the newly established Federal Republic of Germany in July 1950.

During the intervening period, France went through a process of regime change and republican restoration. And, while democracy was restored, French voters' preferences gradually drifted to the political right. As far as international

¹⁵¹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0419-0001-07, P. U. Durand, Team Report No. 5, 5 April 1946.

organizations are concerned, UNRRA disappeared in the summer of 1947 (in post-war Germany) to be replaced by the IRO, heralding a shift in emphasis from repatriation to emigration. In total, 11,081 DPs emigrated from the French zone to the United States, 9,971 to Australia, 7,952 to France, 3,399 to Brazil, 3,312 to Canada, 2,787 to England and 2,448 in various countries.¹⁵² On 1 July 1950, when the DP administration was entrusted to German authorities, from the original 80,000 DPs present in the autumn 1945 only around 8,000 *inémigrable* DPs remained in the zone.¹⁵³

Structurally, the thesis is divided into seven chapters. Although these are organized thematically, they also follow a chronological progression. The underlying chronological narrative helps clarify the evolution of DP policy, which was intertwined with the crystallization of the Cold War and the concomitant transformation of the political and economic situation in metropolitan France and French-occupied Germany. Part one (chapters one, two and three) examines the policies and priorities of French high-officials and UNRRA planners, exploring their many disagreements. As in many other aspects of French occupation policy, these chapters highlight the gap in perceptions between authorities in Paris and Berlin, Baden-Baden and Rastatt. Part two (chapters four, five and six) moves on to the lower level of humanitarian practices, examining how humanitarian actors, DPs and defeated Germans, divided by memory and experience, negotiated daily life. Part three (chapter seven) concentrates on one of the final phases of the DP years in which the recruitment of DPs for France figured largest among policy concerns.

Chapter one opens with a contextualization of the diplomatic and political issues at stake in the DP problem. It demonstrates that French reluctance to participate in the international administration of DPs stemmed largely from an ambiguous diplomatic position. While publicly affirming their commitment to DPs' prompt repatriation to the various Eastern repatriation missions, French diplomats and military authorities strove, behind-the-scenes, to recruit the healthiest DPs for the reconstruction of France. Chapter two explains that the recruitment of DPs defied consensus in France. Although there was widespread agreement over the necessity to repopulate France, Communist decision-makers and their ideological fellow-travellers on the French left - particularly numerous within the Ministry of Labour and the Office National d'Immigration [ONI] - were strongly opposed to the recruitment of what they regarded as *fascist* DPs and 'war collaborators.' In this sense, as will be shown, the

¹⁵² *Sept-ans d'activité en faveur des personnes déplacées*, p. 57.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 129.

bitterness of the debates over the recruitment of DPs for French reconstruction mirrored the nascent Fourth Republic's internal divisions. Chapter three explores official debates over the issue of forced repatriation, demonstrating the impossibility of pursuing a policy of strict 'neutrality.' While these three chapters recognise the importance of diplomats and national politicians in formulating immigration and repatriation policies, they also stress the extent to which emigration and repatriation depended on how French administrators re-interpreted and implemented their instructions within the zone. As we shall see, contradictory instructions from the Foreign Ministry in particular engendered differences in implementation.

Chapter four introduces French UNRRA relief workers to the reader. It explores their background and motivation, their training and their distinctive approaches to the DP problem. In contrast with American social workers, this chapter argues that French UNRRA recruits were neither equipped with professional expertise in case-work nor had a common set of cultural and professional values, which framed their attitudes towards DPs. It was a heterogeneous group, coming from all different regions and social backgrounds. But, despite the lack of harmonized selection procedures and training, it demonstrates the emergence of an inchoate 'professional discourse', based on the necessity to differentiate UNRRA activities from those of the PDR service in the zone. French UNRRA relief workers progressively embrace UNRRA's mission of 'self-help' according to their own understanding of what were in DPs' best interests. Chapter five concentrates on the realities of DP administration in the field and the ways UNRRA staff interpreted UNRRA's *rehabilitation* mandate in the French zone. In the context of the escalating conflict with the PDR service, UNRRA officials progressively asserted their unique humanitarian expertise and 'human sensitivity.' Yet, UNRRA's mission was only partially fulfilled in the zone. Old and new methods and practices of relief work coexisted and mingled in the zone. Chapter six demonstrates the emergence of alternative ways to 'rehabilitate' DPs in the zone. It examines the question of DP employment policies and analyses the cultural trends and values underpinning them. Chapter seven concludes with an assessment of the French recruitment of DPs for the reconstruction of the French economy. First, though, we need to return to 1943.

Chapter One: Unwelcome UNRRA?

French diplomacy and the bureaucracy of relief

Planning for the post-war world began long before hostilities ceased.¹ Memories of the catastrophic after-effects of the First World War, including the Spanish influenza, the Ukrainian famine and the major typhus outbreak in Russia, lent urgency to the advocates of a massive international reconstruction programme for those countries devastated by conflict between 1939 and 1945. UNRRA was one of the products of this Anglo-American 'post-conflict planning.'² Its aim was to supply war-torn countries and displaced populations with the basic resources necessary to begin the process of rehabilitation. Created at the mid-point between the landmark United Nations Declaration of January 1942 and the UN Charter of June 1945, UNRRA departed from its predecessor, the League of Nations, in both scope and organization. In the inter-war years the League of Nations had 'functioned merely as the coordinator of relief operations independently carried out by private philanthropic organizations.'³ After 1945, UNRRA operated instead 'through governments' and 'not by distributing alms to individuals.'⁴ It was hoped that the creation of this inter-governmental relief agency would help to prevent the inter-state competition and widespread inter-ethnic confrontation so evident after 1918.⁵

Integral to this new approach was, of course, the new, more interventionist – and internationalist - turn in American diplomacy.⁶ During 1943 the majority of American policy-makers still believed that 'American aims were best served within a multilateral, international relief organization.'⁷ Things changed, however, as the nascent Cold War unfolded. As Jessica Reinisch has recently argued, UNRRA's brief existence corresponded with a radical re-conceptualization within the American government of its foreign policy parameters.⁸ From 1946 onwards US policy-makers increasingly saw the solution to relief needs in binding bilateral arrangements concluded between those countries in need of help and those willing to provide it. UNRRA's very

¹ On wartime planning see Andrew J. Williams "'Reconstruction' before the Marshall Plan', *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 3 (2005), pp. 541–58; Jessica Reinisch 'Introduction: Relief in the Aftermath of War' *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 43, No. 3 (2008), pp. 371-404; Ben Shepard "'Becoming Planning Minded': The Theory and Practice of Relief 1940-1945' *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (2008), pp. 405-419; Johannes-Dieter Steinert 'British Humanitarian Assistance: Wartime Planning and Postwar Realities' *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 43, No. 3 (2008), pp. 421-435; Jessica Reinisch 'Internationalism in Relief: The Birth (and Death) of UNRRA' *Past and Present*, Supplement 6 (2011), pp. 258-289.

² Jessica Reinisch 'Auntie UNRRA' at the Crossroads' *Past and Present*, supplement 8 (2013), pp. 70-97, p. 70.

³ Daniel Cohen *In war's wake: Europe's Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 60.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Shepard, 'Becoming Planning Minded', p. 408.

⁶ Reinisch 'Internationalism in Relief', pp. 266-274.

⁷ Reinisch 'Auntie UNRRA' at the Crossroads', p. 87.

⁸ Reinisch, *Ibid.*, pp. 70-97.

existence thereby came under threat. In the summer of 1946, after the realisation that the financial contributions for the 1947 budget would not be forthcoming, it was decided that UNRRA would cease operations in 1947.⁹ As stated by Reinisch, the Truman administration 'came to the conclusion that American agendas would only be fulfilled in specific and targeted aid projects. Later that year, those analyses led to the formulation of the Marshall Plan as an entirely new way of distributing aid.'¹⁰ Reflecting on this shift, William Clayton was particularly candid: '[t]he main priority [...] was that we must avoid getting into another UNRRA. *The United States must run this show.*'¹¹

This chapter examines French policy-makers' often-contentious relations with UNRRA, with Anglo-American planners more generally, and, lastly, with the installation of UNRRA's administration in the French occupation zone. During 1943 and the early months of the following year it could be argued that the principal concern of the nascent government-in-waiting, Charles de Gaulle's French Committee of National Liberation, was the independence of Free France. Preoccupied with the necessity of securing aid for a liberated France, supporters of Free France in Algiers judged UNRRA against a basic criterion: its capacity to deliver essential supplies without undermining France's national sovereignty. Their judgement on this score was harsh. Accepting UNRRA's presence on French liberated soil was unlikely to compensate for the attendant loss of sovereign control over relief and rehabilitation. Although UNRRA planners often attempted to present the organization as the solution to purely technical and logistical problems of transporting essential goods into devastated areas, its relief programmes were, in fact, highly politicised.¹² The distinction between so-called 'liberated' and 'defeated' countries and between 'supplying' and 'receiving' countries 'reveal the geopolitics and political geography underpinning UNRRA's relief project.'¹³ One obvious result was that Allied countries held priority over ex-enemy nations in UNRRA planning. This helps explain why, in February 1944, Jean Monnet informed René Mayer and René Massigli that the overriding aim of French UNRRA officials was to ensure that France was not classified as a 'receiving' country:

⁹ The formal decision to terminate UNRRA was taken at the fifth Council meeting in Geneva in August 1946, following the realisation that the financial contributions for the 1947 budget would not be made. The DP Operation was initially to be dissolved in 1946, but its mandate was extended until the 30 June 1947. Reinisch 'Internationalism in Relief', p. 285.

¹⁰ Reinisch 'Auntie UNRRA' at the Crossroads', p. 87.

¹¹ Ibid, p. 90.

¹² Daniel Cohen 'Between Relief and Politics: Refugee Humanitarianism in Occupied Germany 1945-1946' *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 43, No. 3 (2008), pp. 437-449.

¹³ Reinisch 'Auntie UNRRA' at the Crossroads', p. 74.

Our policy was driven by two essential considerations: on the one hand, ensuring that France remains entirely free from the control of an international body such as UNRRA, which lacks the financial and technical means to provide us with supplies and relief but which seeks to restrict our freedom to act; on the other hand, collaborating with this organisation in determined areas for action where it can be useful [...].¹⁴

Repatriation was one such field of action. From the start it was envisaged that UNRRA would play an important role in assisting the repatriation of nationals from allied nations. Committees on repatriation were, therefore, of great interest to France. Perhaps because of this, Monnet deplored the slow progress of the London-based UNRRA committees to whom the work of repatriation planning was assigned.¹⁵

Further disappointment was to follow. UNRRA proved equally sluggish in its deployment of effective and adequately equipped teams to arrange interim provision for DPs after the German capitulation. Because of the military's priority over UNRRA in the receipt of supplies, UNRRA struggled to equip its teams with the most basic of necessities before they entered the field. Returning from Germany after visiting a DP camp, M. Grammont, French delegate to the Standing Technical Sub-committee on Displaced Persons for Europe, bluntly stated in May 1945: 'I merely wish to summarize the impression I had, and which all the delegates of allied nations must have shared, and it is this: the complete inefficiency and futility of UNRRA in the camp we have visited.'¹⁶ Reflecting on UNRRA's delayed and ill-organized response to the DP crisis, Quaker John Corsellis concurred, commenting angrily: '[t]hey have had months of time to make their plans but when supplies started to arrive, there were no preparations made. Their whole sense of urgency is so different to ours.'¹⁷ The belated deployment of UNRRA teams in the field meant that they did not significantly assist in the repatriation of French *Absents*.¹⁸ It was an inauspicious beginning for what was heralded as a new type of international organization. UNRRA's absence from what was, in the eyes of many French people, their paramount domestic challenge significantly undermined the organization's credibility in France.

¹⁴ Archives Nationales [AN], F/9/3116, copie, Washington à DiploFrance Alger, Télégramme de la série special N.95 de la part de Jean Monnet à M. René Mayer pour le Président M. Massigli et les membres du comité, 19 February 1944.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ AN/F/9/3286, M. Grammont, French delegate to the Standing Technical Sub-committee on Displaced Persons for Europe, 25 May 1945. Also see : Statement by the acting chairman of the European Displaced Persons Sub-committee made to the committee of the Council for Europe, 29 May 1945.

¹⁷ Jennifer Carson 'The Friends Relief Service – Faith into Action. Humanitarian Assistance to Displaced Persons Camps in Germany, 1945-1948', PhD in History, The University of Manchester, 2009, p. 117.

¹⁸ Ministère des Affaires Etrangères [MAE], NUOI, 7, Note pour le Ministre, Affaires Economiques, 18 August 1945, p. 5.

Despite widespread disappointment about UNRRA's early performance, in June 1945 the French provisional government nevertheless informed UNRRA planners that they were ready to 'welcome' the organization in France's occupation zone.¹⁹ In the event, it was not until 18 February 1946 that the transfer of responsibilities from French authorities to UNRRA staff was officially agreed. As this delay implies, the transfer proved a difficult, messy affair, occurring at a time when UNRRA's own existence was increasingly questioned internationally. The tetchy relationship between French and Anglo-American UNRRA planners raises a number of unaddressed historical questions that are central to this chapter. Perhaps the most basic is this: at a time when UNRRA was widely criticized as a cumbersome, costly and ineffective international organization, why did the French authorities invite the organization to play a prominent a role in their zone of occupation? Answering this question raises others. Did UNRRA's presence serve ulterior French motives? Was it exploited as an international platform to advance broader French political aims? And, finally, to what extent did UNRRA's presence provoke argument amongst French leaders?

Despite the proliferation of publications about UNRRA, there has been little reflection thus far on France's contribution to this international project. This imbalance, while striking, is unsurprising. It may be imputed to what French scholars sub their country's *spécificité criante*; namely, the ways in which French diplomatic, economic and cultural outlooks differed fundamentally from those of their Anglo-American counterparts as described in the introduction.²⁰ It might also be partly explained by France's second-rank position within UNRRA. This chapter argues that the history of French involvement in UNRRA offers fresh perspectives for the study of post-war international humanitarian projects. Admittedly, the domination of Anglo-American planners in UNRRA's policy-making organs was a fact. The agency was both directed and predominantly financed by the United States. Americans provided a third of its personnel, the US Treasury, on average, financed seventy-two per cent of UNRRA's operating costs, and an even larger proportion of its supplies.²¹ UNRRA's official language was English and US staff held the leading positions in its internal administration. Both of UNRRA's senior directors were Americans. Herbert Lehman, UNRRA director-general from November 1943 to March 1946, was the

¹⁹ George Woodbridge *UNRRA: the history of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration* (New York: Colombia University Press, 1950), p xxviii and vol 2, p. 479. UNA, UNRRA, S-0425-0007-06, Letter W. Stawell, Deputy chief of operations to The Director, US Zone, UNRRA Headquarters, 28 January 1946.

²⁰ Andreas Rinke *Le Grand retour - Die französische Displaced Person-Politik (1944-1951)* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2002), p. 16.

²¹ Woodbridge *UNRRA*, Vol 3, p. 416.

former Governor of New York State. His successor, Fiorello H. La Guardia, was the former Mayor of New York City. But, as Jessica Reinisch points out, many smaller member states managed to negotiate relatively decent deals for themselves within UNRRA's executive structures.²² In many respects, this was the case for France too. Although its financial contribution to UNRRA was relatively limited, on 26 August 1945 France was classified among the organization's contributing countries. With this came a seat on UNRRA's Central Committee, a reward that, for instance a country such as Canada never achieved, despite its generous material contribution.²³ Furthermore, the proportion of French staff deployed in Germany was far from negligible. In December 1945, they represented eighteen per cent of overall UNRRA personnel deployed in Germany, a proportion marginally superior to the American presence (which was sixteen per cent).²⁴

In making its case, this chapter draws on a wide range of untapped material from the French Ministry of Prisoners, Deportees and Refugees (Paris), the French military archives at Vincennes, the ITS Tracing Archives (at Bad Arolsen), the French Foreign Ministry and French occupation zone administration (both held at La Courneuve) and, finally, the UN archives in New York. It first provides a *tour d'horizon* of the dominant French political views of UNRRA soon after its inception. It then moves on to consider what, for French political leaders, were acid tests of UNRRA policy: resolving the issue of repatriations and, linked to this, tracing French civilians in formerly occupied territories. The chapter reveals that, much like their British and American military counterparts, French military and PDR officers were very disappointed by UNRRA's performance during this initial phase of operations. Irritated by its slow and inefficient response, French authorities chose to maintain their own PDR service in France's occupation zone independent of UNRRA structures. The decision to do so caused serious friction between Paris, Baden-Baden and Arolsen, delaying the transfer of responsibility from the military occupation administration to local UNRRA personnel. The third part of this chapter examines the resultant conflict between PDR and UNRRA authorities in the French zone. As explained below, UNRRA Zone Director, General Lenclud only began working in the zone in October 1945. His administration never managed to gain full recognition thereafter. This final phase in the contentious relationship

²² Reinisch 'Auntie UNRRA' at the crossroads', p. 74.

²³ MAE, NUOI, 7 Note pour le Ministre, Affaires Economiques, 18 August 1945, p. 4. Also see Pierre Gerbet *Le relèvement, 1944-1949* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1991), p. 61. Susan Armstrong-Reid and David Murray *Armies of peace: Canada and the UNRRA years* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), p. 60.

²⁴ Woodbridge *UNRRA*, vol. 3, p. 415.

between French administrative agencies and UNRRA acquired a more Franco-French complexion for the simple reason that an aggregate seventy per cent of UNRRA personnel in the zone were French citizens.

The politics of procurement

Over the last two decades the emphasis on French diplomatic failures in the post-war period has given way to a more sympathetic reading of the extent to which French leaders influenced the reconfiguration of post-war Europe.²⁵ So much so that positive assessments of France's political influence on the European continent and of its ability to influence post-war international developments have become something of a new orthodoxy.²⁶ As Mark Lawrence puts it, the argument that smaller powers such as France markedly influenced post-war international developments has become 'old hat.'²⁷ Still, historians remain divided in their assessment of the coherence and effectiveness of the Fourth Republic's foreign policies.²⁸ As Talbot Imlay observes, '[i]n attributing to France a unity of purpose and independence that it did not possess, it overstates the Fourth Republic's influence in the international realm. Similarly, in knocking down what amounts to a straw man (the argument that France was completely dependent on others, most obviously the United States), the emerging orthodoxy risks overlooking not only the various constraints under which the French operated, but also an important dynamic at work in post-war foreign policy: the ability of the French to innovate when compelled to do so by outside pressure, principally from their allies.'²⁹

The study of UNRRA opens a window onto these debates regarding the evolution of relations between French policy-makers and their Anglo-American allies, thereby offering an opportunity to reassess the new 'orthodoxy.' As Jessica Reinisch observes, 'UNRRA's brief existence [...] corresponded precisely with the crucial interlude between the end of the Second World War

²⁵ William Hitchcock *France Restored: Cold War Diplomacy and the Quest for Leadership in Europe, 1944–1954* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), p. 208; Dietmar Hüser, *Frankreichs 'doppelte Deutschlandpolitik.' Dynamik aus der Defensive – Planen, Entscheiden, Umsetzen in gesellschaftlichen und wirtschaftlichen, innen- und außenpolitischen Krisenzeiten 1944–1950* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1996); Michael Creswell *A Question of Balance: How France and the United States Created Cold War Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006); Mark Lawrence's review of Michael Creswell's *A Question of Balance* in *H-France Review*, Vol. 148, No. 7 (2007), available at www.h-france.net/vol17reviews/lawrence2.html; Mark Atwood Lawrence, *Assuming the Burden: Europe and the American Commitment to War in Vietnam* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007). For a review of this emerging orthodoxy see Talbot Imlay 'A success story? The Foreign Policies of France's Fourth Republic' *Contemporary European History*, Vol. 18, No. 4 (2009), pp. 499–519.

²⁶ Imlay 'A success story?', p. 500.

²⁷ Mark Lawrence's review of Michael Creswell's *A Question of Balance*.

²⁸ Some historians questioned whether the Fourth Republic's foreign policy was so effective and coherent. Irwin Wall *The United States and the Making of Postwar France, 1945–1954* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Wall, 'France in the Cold War', *Journal of European Studies*, Vol. 38, N. 2 (2008), pp. 121–39; Martin Thomas, 'France's North African Crisis, 1945–1955: Cold War and Colonial Imperatives', *History*, Vol. 92, No. 306 (2007), pp. 207–34.

²⁹ Imlay 'A success story', p. 519.

and the beginning of the Cold War [...]. On both sides of the Iron Curtain it became a yardstick for how much priorities had shifted between 1943 and 1947, and formed a measure against which policies formulated in its wake were assessed.’³⁰ As we shall see, UNRRA solutions were never unremittingly imposed on Paris by Anglo-American planners. That being said, French policies were far from coherent, the governing coalitions in office after August 1944 failing to reach a consensus about the premises of French DP policy.³¹ Before considering the implications of this, we need to return to 1943.

In the autumn of 1943, whilst Anglo-American planners were delineating post-war relief and defining UNRRA’s internationalist principles in Atlantic City, French diplomats were preoccupied by rather different priorities. The outcome of the war was still far from certain. And the French Committee of National Liberation (*Comité français de la Libération nationale* [CFLN]), at the time embroiled in a bitter imperial confrontation with Britain over Lebanese independence, was striving to be recognized by its Anglo-American Allies as the undisputed government-in-waiting best placed to administer France at the Liberation. For French planners, the overriding concern was to re-establish national sovereignty and to ensure sufficient interim provision of basic supplies in liberated France.³² Whilst for British and American experts, UNRRA was a ‘vessel into which wartime idealism flowed’, few – if any - CFLN planners or French political commentators attached great hopes to what remained an untested international organization.³³ For French diplomats, UNRRA was, in many respects, a footnote to their lobbying for recognition in Washington. As UNRRA planner Goodman observed, ‘[the] attitude of the French National Committee towards UNRRA will, for some time, be almost inextricably bound up with broader political issues.’³⁴ Participation within UNRRA was closely entwined with the matter of Provisional Government recognition by the US and British governments.³⁵

The period of UNRRA’s creation and early deployment coincided with France’s liberation and its turbulent aftermath, events that also redefined the parameters of Franco-American relations and France’s place in the wider world.

³⁰ Reinisch ‘Auntie UNRRA at the crossroads’, pp. 71-72.

³¹ The argument is influenced by Imlay ‘A success story?’, p. 501.

³² Gérard Bossuat *Les aides américaines économiques et militaires à la France, 1938-1960. Une nouvelle image des rapports de puissance* (Paris: Comité pour l’Histoire Economique et Financière de la France, Ministère de l’Économie, des Finances et de l’industrie, 2001), p. 72.

³³ UNRRA is very rarely mentioned in diplomats’ memoirs or autobiographies. As far as French newspapers are concerned, further research needs to be done. But UNRRA public information office reported that French journalists were on the whole hostile to UNRRA. UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0002-13, Rapport de J. Lefranc, Public Information Officer, UNRRA Hqs. French Zone [undated]. For the quotation see Ben Shepard *The Long Road Home. The Aftermath of the Second World War* (London: Bodley Head, 2010), p. 50.

³⁴ UNA, UNRRA, ERO Files, S-0523-0012, France and UNRRA, London, 26 June 1944.

³⁵ Ibid.

In its negotiations with UNRRA, as elsewhere on the international scene, France was forced to confront the reality of its eclipse as a major world power, after the German invasion of 1940 and its quick defeat.³⁶ In stark contrast with the days of Paris-centred peace-making in 1919, between 1943 and 1945 the key decisions concerning the post-war settlement were taken by the United States, Great Britain and the Soviet Union, often to the virtual exclusion of French representatives.³⁷ France's role in the newly established UN system was similarly diminished relative to its influence in the League of Nations during the interwar years.³⁸ Hervé Alphand, member of the French UN Delegation spoke for many when he noted, 'France is weak; it is a negligible country.'³⁹

Whilst De Gaulle was striving to re-establish the machinery of republican government in France through a Provisional Government prior to the full re-establishment of democracy via post-war elections, Anglo-American planners pressed for France to be administered, like Italy, by an Allied Military Government of Occupied Territories (AMGOT).⁴⁰ Echoing President Roosevelt, many American planners found the French fixation on issues of sovereignty and independence deeply wearisome. Even after the abandonment of the AMGOT project, UNRRA planner Brigadier Fraser reported that the 'French [were] trying to manoeuvre UNRRA into the position of working under their control, a quite impossible position for the Administration.'⁴¹ This 'American irritation' was hardly new. Andrew Williams has convincingly demonstrated that 'American irritation with Europe and the French in particular' over questions of relief can be traced back to attitudes developed in the interwar period.⁴²

France would prefer to see its people starve than to have to ask for charity

The resolutions passed at UNRRA's first Council in Atlantic City in November-December 1943 reflected the dominance of the two principal supplier nations, the USA and Britain. UNRRA staff agreed that the Administration would 'help the people to help themselves' by providing relief to those countries that were unable to pay. In a departure from the 'soup-kitchen' relief system used by the American Relief Administration in the Hoover era following World War I, which

³⁶ René Girault 'La France est-elle une grande puissance en 1945?' in Maurice Vaïsse (ed) *8 mai 1945. La victoire en Europe* (Paris: Editions Complexe, third edition, 2005), pp. 89-113.

³⁷ Douglas Johnson 'France's German Question, 1918-1945-1989' in Carl Levy and Mark Roseman (ed) *Three Postwar Eras in Comparison. Western Europe 1918-1945-1989* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), pp. 237-256, p. 243.

³⁸ Michel Marbau 'La France et les organisations internationales 1939-1946', *Matériaux pour l'histoire de notre temps*, Vol. 65, No. 1 (2002), pp. 75-83, pp. 65-66.

³⁹ Hervé Alphand *L'étonnement d'être. Journal (1939-1973)* (Paris: Fayard, 1977), p. 171.

⁴⁰ Charles Cogan and Andrew Knapp 'Washington at the Liberation, 1944-1947', Andrew Knapp (Ed.) *The Uncertain Foundation: France at the Liberation, 1944-47* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2007), pp. 183-206, p. 187.

⁴¹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0523-0650-10, Brigadier Fraser to Sir Hubert Young, 1 November 1944.

⁴² Williams 'Reconstruction' before the Marshall Plan', p. 556.

consisted of distributing only basic supplies under the immediate supervision of the various national Red Cross societies, UNRRA planners assigned responsibility for distribution to the recipient countries.⁴³ Their aim in doing so was to help rebuild normal commercial exchanges and restore national sovereignty. Anxious to 'prevent relief from being used as an instrument of international politics', the declared aim was to distribute supplies on 'an equitable basis irrespective of race, creed, or political belief.'⁴⁴ In fact, UNRRA was soon to be vehemently criticized for being too accommodating of national governments. In Poland, for instance, the experience proved that supplies frequently went 'to the wrong places and were used to the wrong purposes.'⁴⁵

Ironically, for French provisional government specialists, UNRRA's commitment to grant responsibility for the distribution of supplies to national governments in their liberated territories did not go far enough. They were determined to pursue their negotiations on supply matters directly with the allied military authorities, in other words outside UNRRA's jurisdiction, and with the minimum of outside supervision.⁴⁶ It is beyond the scope of this chapter to analyse in detail France's contribution to the work of the six UNRRA Council sessions. One point, however, bears emphasis: during the first two UNRRA council sessions in Atlantic City and Montreal – France's overriding aim was to ensure that it would not simply be designated a 'receiving' country. French planners were adamant that UNRRA should not intervene on French soil, emphasising that the country was in a position of 'total independence' with regards to the administration. Such insistence on national independence was not, however, atypical. The Czechoslovak and Yugoslav Governments, for instance, also strove to obtain full control over the distribution of supplies in the autumn of 1944.⁴⁷ And, as recent studies have demonstrated, despite UNRRA's internationalist ambitions, the machinery of post-war relief tended to reinforce the primacy of the nation-state.⁴⁸

Apart from the necessity of regaining national independence, there was little agreement regarding questions of procurement and post-war relief within provisional government circles.⁴⁹ Following their work in the Inter-Allied

⁴³ Woodbridge *UNRRA*, Vol 2, pp. 40-41.

⁴⁴ Armstrong-Reid and Murray *Armies of peace*, p. 42.

⁴⁵ Reinisch 'We shall rebuild anew a powerful nation', p. 462.

⁴⁶ See for example AN, F/9/3105, Note établie par les Affaires Etrangères, Atlantic City 10 November-2 December 1943, January 1944 and F/9/3116, Lettre de l'ambassadeur de France, Commissaire aux Affaires Etrangères à M. le Commissaire aux Prisonniers, Déportés et Réfugiés, Alger, 16 June 1944.

⁴⁷ Woodbridge *UNRRA*, Vol 2, p. 44.

⁴⁸ Pamela Ballinger 'Impossible Returns, Enduring Legacies: Recent Historiography of Displacement and the Reconstruction of Europe after World War II' *Contemporary European History*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (2013), pp. 127 - 138, p. 132.

⁴⁹ On the tensions between the London Mission and the 'Direction de l'Organisation Internationale du Rapatriement' see the correspondence in AN, F/9/3122.

Committee on Post-war requirements, popularly known as the Leith-Ross Committee and created in September 1941, Free French planners took a similarly active role in the work of UNRRA Technical Committees both in Washington and in London.⁵⁰ But communication and cooperation between Algiers, London and Washington proved problematic. French diplomatic services were chronically understaffed, their personnel severely overstretched and rarely in agreement with one another over policy priorities.⁵¹ On 24 June 1944, UNRRA planner Colonel Delahaye noted that it was rare 'to find a gathering of two or three Frenchmen even when more or less democratically minded [...] prepared to speak with one voice.'⁵² According to him, tensions persisted within the Free French movement between, on the one hand 'a somewhat aggressive slightly embittered national pride' and, on the other hand, an 'intelligible desire to retain the possibility of a maximum scale of relief should this be found actually necessary or politically desirable.'⁵³ These frictions help explain why Gaullist personnel remained so prickly about the 'eradication' of the French language in favour of English in UNRRA's conferences.⁵⁴

Jean Monnet, who signed the UNRRA Constitutive Agreement of 9 November 1943, was often in overt disagreement with de Gaulle.⁵⁵ At the time of the Agreement's signature, Monnet had three different missions: finding supplies for France's immediate needs, preparing a programme of emergency reconstruction, and making plans for France's longer-term economic recovery. Monnet is known for his pioneering ideas about European economic integration. But, as far as UNRRA was concerned, his priority was to restore France's economic sovereignty. In accordance with the CFLN policy, Monnet stated that only a 'national' organization was able to take the necessary measures to ensure provision of food and relief in France.⁵⁶ According to him, 'independent organization, especially at a time of serious confusion and disorder in the country, could only worsen the situation and diminish the French administration's own sense of responsibility.'⁵⁷ After his experience in North Africa, Monnet even questioned UNRRA's ability to provide an efficient and

⁵⁰ UNA, UNRRA, ERO Files, S-0523-0012, Bulletin, UNRRA Plans and Operations France, Series 1, Bureau of Area Operations, 1 April 1945.

⁵¹ Martial Libéra *Un Rêve de Puissance: La France et le Contrôle de l'économie Allemande (1942-1949)* (Bruxelles: Peter Lang, 2012), pp. 52-53.

⁵² UNA, UNRRA, ERO Files, S-0523-0012, Col. Delahaye to Mr. Osborne, 24 June 1944.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ AN, F/9/3116, Note sommaire en vue de la discussion sur les projets de conventions sanitaires internationales proposés par l'UNRRA, Gouvernement Provisoire, Commissariat aux Affaires Sociales, Alger, July 1944.

⁵⁵ Eric Roussel *Jean Monnet* (Paris: Fayard, 1996), p. 409; Cogan and Knapp 'Washington at the Liberation', p. 185.

⁵⁶ Roussel *Jean Monnet*, p. 405.

⁵⁷ UNA, UNRRA, ERO Files, S-0523-0012, Note of meeting between the Director General and M. Monnet, 2 June 1944.

quick response to Europe's humanitarian crisis.⁵⁸ He was angered that many Anglo-American planners directly negotiated with French military officers instead of the 'Comité de la Libération.'⁵⁹ Moreover, he was frustrated by what he viewed as a lack of adequate French representation on the all-important Administration Boards. He had, for instance, tried to negotiate the leadership of UNRRA's European Committee for France only to find it entrusted instead to Leith-Ross.⁶⁰ Arguably, French planners would have been more conciliatory had they been more intimately involved in UNRRA's high-level planning. As it was, throughout 1943 and 1944 French planners had relatively little scope either to determine the relationship with their American counterparts or to shape UNRRA's early development. As Andrew Williams suggests, French planners, leaning towards nationalisation and central control, disliked UNRRA's organisational emphasis: 'The key factor in UNRRA's organisational ability is decentralisation', as UNRRA Director Lehman had put it. But 'Planning' was the order of the day in Britain and France and that implied centralization.'⁶¹

Alice-in-wonderland difficulties

At the level of high-politics, French planners were reluctant to cooperate fully with the new UN relief administration.⁶² At the lower levels of Technical Committees, working relationships did develop. The work of Professor André Mayer on the Standing Technical Committee on Health was, for instance, highly acclaimed.⁶³ Mayer was a strong proponent of technical and scientific cooperation with UNRRA, believing that the Anglo-Americans could bring precious knowledge and experience.⁶⁴ UNRRA's Health Division also valued the cooperation of the Fighting French Medical Authorities, notably General Sicé and his deputy Colonel Vignal, each of whom served on the Expert Commissions on Quarantine.⁶⁵ This medical cooperation certainly drew upon a longer tradition of joint action, the International Office of Public Health having been based in Paris in the interwar years. In London, some French planners also strove to encourage such cooperation in the field. In June 1944, Hervé

⁵⁸ Roussel *Jean Monnet*, p. 405.

⁵⁹ AN, F/9/3127, Copie, Télégramme Monnet to Mayer, 10 January 1944.

⁶⁰ Bossuat *Les aides américaines*, p. 72.

⁶¹ Williams 'Reconstruction' before the Marshall Plan', p. 551. On disagreements between British and American planners see Reid and Murray, *Armies of Peace*, p. 19.

⁶² MAE, NUOI, 7, Affaires Economiques, Note pour le ministre, 18 August 1945, p. 4.

⁶³ UNA, UNRRA, ERO Files, S-0523-0012, Bulletin, UNRRA Plans and Operations France, Series 1, Bureau of Area Operations, Number 1, April 1945.

⁶⁴ AN, F/9/3116, Extrait d'une lettre d'André Mayer à Lt. Jean Mayer - Résumé : Situation de la France dans l'UNRRA - Discussion autour reconnaissance du comité Français - exposé sur activité d'après-guerre, date du doc intercepté : 5/5/44, date de l'interception: 26/5/44 ; Extrait d'une lettre d'André Mayer à Lt. Jean Mayer - Résumé : Commentaires sur l'activité de l'UNRRA - découverte scientifique -, date du doc intercepté : 9/5/44, date de l'interception: 26/5/44.

⁶⁵ UNA, UNRRA, ERO Files, S-0523-0012, N.M. Goodman, 29 June 1944.

Alphand (representative on the Committee of the Council for Europe) and former Minister of State Pierre Vienot advocated the deployment of UNRRA personnel in France.⁶⁶ Vienot even envisaged the creation of a Franco-British Committee ('with practical rather than honorific people on it') to coordinate the work of voluntary societies in France, thereby fulfilling the same function as COBSRA (the Council for British Societies for Relief Abroad) did for British relief organisations.⁶⁷ But the influence of these pro-UNRRA planners should not be overestimated.

The official position of the French government did not change significantly during UNRRA's second council meeting, which convened in Montreal on 16 September 1944. In spite of the extensive war-damage in their country, French representatives insisted that France should not be designated a simple recipient nation. Soon afterwards, in October 1944, an UNRRA mission opened in Paris.⁶⁸ The UNRRA personnel in the French capital were warned that 'if UNRRA was waiting for a formal written invitation from the French Government, UNRRA might well have to wait until the period of UNRRA's usefulness had passed.'⁶⁹ As John Alexander observed, the 'French Govt. [was] in no mood to be beholden to anyone and would prefer to see its people starve than to have to ask for charity.'⁷⁰ As mentioned earlier, this continual emphasis on 'independence' and 'national sovereignty' must be placed within the broader context of growing popular resentment in the autumn of 1944 towards the United States. The American failure to provide adequate food for southern France, added to the length of time it had taken the Americans either to recognize the provisional government or to endorse its new army, worsened Franco-US relations. As Hilary Footitt observes, 'from the French view point, the Allies appeared to be engaged in a deliberate exercise to promise much and deliver little.'⁷¹ In the autumn of 1944, de Gaulle, longing to break free from his country's state of forced dependence on his British and American allies, signed a treaty of alliance with the Soviet Union.⁷² No comparable alliance existed with either Britain or the United States.

⁶⁶ UNA, UNRRA, ERO Files, S-0523-0012, R. Herbert to Mr. Feonov, [June 1944?]. Sir Frederick Leith-Ross to Mr. Lithgow Osborne, 22 June 1944.

⁶⁷ UNA, UNRRA, ERO Files, S-0523-0012, Sir Frederick Leith-Ross to Mr. Lithgow Osborne, 20 June 1944.

⁶⁸ Woodbridge *UNRRA*, Vol 1, xxvi.

⁶⁹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0523-0650-10, John Alexander to Mr. Hoehler, office of the UNRRA Representative to the Ministry for PDR, 18.10.1944.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ Hilary Footitt *War and Liberation in France. Living with the Liberators* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p. 190.

⁷² Cogan and Knapp 'Washington at the Liberation', p. 183; Georges-Henri Soutou 'La France Libre et la place de l'URSS dans le système européen' in Georges-Henri Soutou and Emilia Robin-Hivert (eds) *L'URSS et l'Europe de 1941 à 1957* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de la Sorbonne, 2008), pp. 137-184.

The lack of a coherent policy within UNRRA also impeded the growth of harmonious relations between French and UNRRA staff.⁷³ Planners in Washington, London and Paris often had contradictory priorities and relations between the different UNRRA divisions did not run smoothly.⁷⁴ On 31 October 1944, the Office of the UNRRA representative in Paris reported the following: 'Here we are in the same 'Alice-in-Wonderland difficulties' – as in all our dealing for the French, since I cannot commit UNRRA to do anything for the French and the French claim, with some justice, that they do not know what to ask UNRRA for if UNRRA will not state what UNRRA is prepared to do, if invited.'⁷⁵ This lack of coordination between different UNRRA branches was particularly obvious in the planning of DP operations. DP divisions and committees had been established in Washington and London soon after UNRRA's creation, but communication between them was nugatory. And, as Woodbridge observed, 'they suffered to an even greater degree than the rest of UNRRA from the nebulous nature of the work which they were supposed to supervise.'⁷⁶

During the early phases of planning for DP resettlement, Franco-UNRRA difficulties were compounded by the lack of communication between Henri Frenay's Ministry PDR in Algiers and the Gaullist liaison mission in London.⁷⁷ Frenay's Ministry PDR officials were particularly concerned with the Allied planners' sluggishness in making provision for the rapid repatriation of European DPs. As a result, Frenay largely developed his repatriation plan outside the UNRRA framework.⁷⁸ In London a similar gap opened between relief planners from continental Europe and the Anglo-Americans, the questions of procurement and provisions for DPs becoming bound up with broader arguments about the food and other material entitlements of the German population. In July 1944 the French delegate sided with his Belgian opposite number against Sir Georges Rendel, a proponent of a lenient policy towards the Germans. An exasperated Rendel complained that 'continental European Governments wished to see Germany on its knees.'⁷⁹ As far as the repatriation of DPs was concerned, the main disputes revolved around the following points:

1. The principle of the indivisibility of the repatriation of, on the one hand, PoWs and, on the other hand, the deportees and civilian prisoners
2. The abolition of national sovereignty [...]

⁷³ UNA, UNRRA, S-0523-0650-10, Sir Hubert Young to Sir Frederick Leith-Ross, 1 November 1944.

⁷⁴ Hardy Wickwar 'Relief Supplies and Welfare Distribution UNRRA in Retrospect' *Social Service Review*, Vol 21, No. 3 (1947), pp. 363-374.

⁷⁵ UNA, UNRRA, S-0523-0650-10, Office of the UNRRA Rep've to the Ministere des PDR, Paris, 31.10.44. Desp. No.31.

⁷⁶ Woodbridge *UNRRA*, Vol 2, p. 475.

⁷⁷ AN, F/9/3127, Lettre d'Henri Frenay à Monsieur Forestier, 23 June 1944.

⁷⁸ See notably the documents of the serie SHAT 8 P 18.

⁷⁹ AN, F/9/3127, Annexe, Mission du Commissariat aux Prisonniers Déportés et Réfugiés, Londres, 19 July 1944.

3. The technical confusion and the inextricable interferences resulting from the use of *Regierungsbezirke* and [...] *Wehrkreise*, as administrative circumscriptions
4. [...] The lack of clear instruction about the cooperation of national representatives within the UNRRA administration and the *pleine participation* of the national administrations during the operation period.⁸⁰

During the autumn of 1944 relations between the ministry PDR and G-5 military authorities worsened.⁸¹ Frenay remained critical of the allies for their lack of understanding of the DP situation. To take one instance of this, he vigorously protested against several BBC talks that were broadcast in PoWs camps in an effort to stir soldiers' resistance. These broadcasts, he argued, were prone to provoke the Nazi authorities into retaliation against PoWs and French civilians.⁸² For their part, American and British military authorities reproached the Ministry PDR for its exclusive focus on French nationals, accusing Frenay was neglecting the problem of foreign displaced persons resident in France.⁸³

The 'never ready UNRRA' and the repatriation of French nationals⁸⁴

For French planners, repatriation was not some abstract, dispassionate exercise. Describing the UNRRA Training Centre in Granville (Normandy), Commandant Dissard lamented that UNRRA did not share this outlook but instead considered repatriation as ultimately secondary to international rapprochement.⁸⁵ This took little account of the fact that the overall total of French prisoners of war far outweighed those from Britain or the United States.⁸⁶ An even more urgent priority for France was the repatriation of approximately 650,000 French labour conscripts, 130,000 citizens from Alsace-Lorraine and 136,000 political or racial deportees.⁸⁷ The fast and orderly

⁸⁰ AN, F/9/3127, Note sommaire relative aux documents envoyés par la Mission Française du Commissariat à Londres et reçus le 5 juillet par valise, p. 5.

⁸¹ AN, F/9/3310, Compte-rendu reunion SHAEF, 12 December 1944.

⁸² Rinke *Le grand retour*, 98-99. On French fears about a potential revolution in Germany also see AN, F/9/3127, Rapatriement, Quelques considérations sur le rapatriement des prisonniers et des déportés par A. Duprat et S. Constant.

⁸³ Rinke, *Le grand retour*, p. 95.

⁸⁴ UNA, UNRRA, S-0436-0059-01, J. Westerman, Field Report Number 1, Team 26 and 29 Niederlahnstein, 25 June 1945.

⁸⁵ AN, F/9/3309, Compte-Rendu de la Mission effectuée par le Commandant Merpillat et la Capitaine Dissard, 27 April 1945.

⁸⁶ 172,592 British soldiers were captured during the Second World War, 135,009 by Germany and Italy and 37,583 by the Japanese. Barbara Hatley-Broad 'Coping in Britain and France: A comparison of Family Issues affecting the Homecoming of Prisoners of War following World War II' in Bob Moore and Barbara Hatley-Broad (ed) *Prisoners of war, prisoners of peace* (Oxford: Berg, 2005), pp. 141-162, p. 142. 95, 000 US soldiers were held captive. Arieh J. Kochavi *Confronting captivity: Britain and the United States and their POWs in Nazi Germany* (UNC Press Books, 2005); On French PoWs see Yves Durand, *La captivité. Histoire des prisonniers de guerre français* (Paris: Fédération Nationale des Combattants Prisonniers de Guerre et Combattants d'Algérie, Tunisie, Maroc, Paris, 1980); Lewin, Christophe *Le retour des prisonniers de guerre français: naissance et développement de la F.N.P.G., 1944-1952* (Paris: Publication de la Sorbonne, 1986); François Cochet *Les exclus de la victoire. Histoire des Prisonniers de guerre, déportés et STO 1945-1985* (Paris: Kronos, 1992).

⁸⁷ Ministère des prisonniers, déportés et réfugiés *Bilan d'un effort* (Paris: Imprimerie Busson, 1945), pp. 9-10; Annette Wiewiorka, *Déportation et génocide. Entre la mémoire et l'oubli* (Paris: Plon, 1992), p. 21; On the condition of French labour conscripts see Francoise Berger 'L'exploitation de la main-d'œuvre française dans l'industrie sidérurgique allemande pendant la Seconde Guerre mondiale', *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, Vol. 3, No. 50-53 (2003), pp. 148-181, p. 180; Helga Bories Sawala *Dans la*

repatriation of these *Absents*, as they were commonly called, was a critical domestic challenge for the new republican elite seeking to establish its authority – and prove its legitimacy - to a nation left profoundly divided by the war.⁸⁸ Not surprisingly the government's efficacy in handling the *Absents* was one of the most hotly contested issues of French domestic policies in 1945.⁸⁹ The Communist Party orchestrated a violent campaign against Henri Frenay, dubbing him *l'obligé ou le protégé de Pucheu* (a notorious Vichy collaborator). The former head of the *Combat* resistance movement found himself accused of supporting René Hardy and having betrayed Jean Moulin.⁹⁰ Frenay's historical reputation has since undergone a significant rehabilitation, but we should not lose sight of the fact that, at the time, the repatriation of French nationals was a deeply divisive issue.⁹¹

Relations between the PDR and allied military planners also continued to decline. Anglo-American authorities disapproved of France's intention to conclude a bilateral alliance with the Soviet Union, predictably preferring that the provisional government sign up to a 'multilateral agreement' with UNRRA instead.⁹² But, in many ways, Anglo-American planners were again asking French policy-makers to accept something that they did not want. The repatriation of their PoWs, for instance, was not organized through the multilateral framework of UNRRA, but directly with local military authorities.⁹³ And these basic French concerns over the American military authorities' lack of understanding did not dissipate after the mass repatriation of the summer of 1945.⁹⁴

UNRRA teams arrived once the battle was over (Frenay)

On 25 November 1944, UNRRA had signed an agreement with General Eisenhower, the Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF), providing that it should undertake the care of the DPs under military

gueule du loup: les Français requis du STO (Paris: Presses Universitaires Septantrion, 2010); Patrice Arnaud *Les STO: Histoire des Français Requis en Allemagne Nazie* (Paris: CNRS, 2010).

⁸⁸ Megan Koreman 'A Hero's Homecoming: The Return of the Deportees to France, 1945' *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 32, No.1 (1997), pp. 9-22, p. 21; On the return see Christiane Franck (ed) *La France de 1945. Résistances, retours, renaissances* (Caen: Presses universitaires de Caen, 1996) ; Pieter Lagrou *The legacy of Nazi occupation: patriotic memory and national recovery in Western Europe, 1945-1965* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

⁸⁹ Rinke *Le Grand Retour*, p. 13.

⁹⁰ Wieviorka *Déportation et Génocide*, p. 101 ; Lewin *Le retour des prisonniers*, p. 59 ; Henri Frenay *La nuit finira* (Paris : Robert Laffon, 1973), pp. 511-512 ; Robert Belot 'La résistance française non-communiste et l'image de l'URSS : Henry Frenay et le mouvement Combat', in Georges-Henri Soutou and Emilia Robin-Hivert (ed) *L'URSS et l'Europe de 1941 à 1957* (Paris: Presses Universitaire de la Sorbonne, 2008), pp. 245-285.

⁹¹ Robert Belot *Henri Frenay: De la Résistance à l'Europe* (Paris: Seuil, 2003); Lewin *Le retour des prisonniers*; Rinke *Le grand retour*.

⁹² DDF, Tome 1 (1945), Note du département, Rapatriement des prisonniers, Paris, 23 février 1945, p. 251.

⁹³ Rinke *Le grand retour*, p. 103.

⁹⁴ See for instance: Confidential report on Field Trip to Berlin, Eileen Blackey, Child care consultant, 14 May 1946, p10, 6.1.2, 82488997, ITS Digital Archives.

command.⁹⁵ Yet, as Ben Shepard observes, ‘without a logistic infrastructure of its own, UNRRA was dependent on the military for transport, food and supplies and frequently found itself in the role of the ‘kicked-around stepchild.’⁹⁶ It is beyond the scope of this chapter to examine SHAEF’s unpreparedness for the mantle of relief work that it assumed, not least in relation to the care and return of French PoWs. Suffice to note that this was something that, quite naturally, stirred French resentments towards the predominantly Anglo-American command.⁹⁷ It is perhaps worth recording, in addition, that Andreas Rinke’s *Le grand retour* provides useful contextual information about the repatriation of these French nationals.⁹⁸

If the UNRRA administration and Frenay’s PDR Ministry shared comparable grievances, they nevertheless viewed the practice of DP camp management in very different terms. French PDR staff had misgivings about the international composition of UNRRA teams and advocated the creation of more homogeneous, nationally based relief teams instead.⁹⁹ The more heterogeneous character of UNRRA teams was mandated under the organization’s resolution 37, which stipulated that ‘the staff of the administration should be of an international character, and selected upon the basis of individual competence, character, and integrity, without discrimination on the grounds of sex, race, nationality, or creed, and recruited upon as wide a geographic basis as is possible.’¹⁰⁰ For French planners, the formation of French relief teams with a ‘psychological knowledge of their countrymen’ seemed more appropriate in order to provide the necessary ‘psychological’ support to displaced persons than the constitution of teams whose members often lacked any command of DPs’ languages or even a working knowledge of German.¹⁰¹ The French also came out in favour of more substantial recruitment of female personnel, arguing that women shared inherent nurturing qualities and were more likely to empathize with deportees.¹⁰² And, finally, French authorities deplored the fact that UNRRA failed to make use of the

⁹⁵ Woodbridge *UNRRA*, Vol. 2, p. 483.

⁹⁶ Shepard *The long road home*, p. 137.

⁹⁷ AN, F/9/3153, Procès Verbal de la Conférence tenue le 5 avril 1945 sous la présidence de Monsieur Frenay; Also see PDR6/741, Rapport sur l’activité du service des prisonniers et déportés de la 1ère Armée française, période du 25 mars au 28 juillet 1945, Première armée française, Etat-major 5ème bureau, Service des Prisonniers et Déportés, N.571/5/PWX.DP.

⁹⁸ Annette Wiewiorka ‘Le retour de déportation’ in *La France de 1945. Résistances, retours, renaissances* (Caen: Presses universitaires de Caen, 1996), pp. 135-140, p. 137.

⁹⁹ AN, F/9/3153, Procès Verbal de la Conférence tenue le 5 avril 1945 sous la présidence de Monsieur Frenay. Also F/9/3309, Rapport d’Olivier Gobert à Cl. Pouzadoux, 3 February 1945 and MAE, HCRFA, PDR 3/25, Rapport secret sur la situation d’UNRRA en Rhénanie-Hesse Nassau, Coblenz, 9 July 1946.

¹⁰⁰ Woodbridge *UNRRA*, Vol. 3, p. 74.

¹⁰¹ SHAT, 8 P 22, Letter from C.G. First Army to C.G. Twelfth Army group (lettre remise le 11 février 1945); 8 P 33, Lettre du Commandant P. Sorbac chef de la MMFL G-5 à M. le Lieutenant Colonel, chef de la MMFL, 12th AG, 4 May 1945.

¹⁰² AN, F/9/3286, UNRRA, Standing Technical Sub-Committee on Displaced Persons for Europe, draft report of the 18th meeting, 8 May 1945. And AN, F/9/3110, Note sur le recrutement des équipes féminines françaises, Paris, 6 February 1945. FD/MB 15.

documentation gathered by the 'Deportees' section of the MFRA (*Mission Française de rapatriement en Allemagne* [MFRA]).¹⁰³ Admittedly, UNRRA's European Regional Office (ERO) commissioned a series of reports, which looked into the problem of psychological rehabilitation of DPs, and which included contributions from psychiatrists, sociologists, social workers and doctors primarily from Britain and North America.¹⁰⁴ Yet, according to French officials, several key issues, including the specific psychological problems brought to the surface by repatriation, the different categories of 'displaced', as well as the specific nature of Nazi work policies, remained unanswered.¹⁰⁵

If anything, the late deployment of ill-equipped UNRRA teams in the field (the first UNRRA teams only left England on 17 March 1945), as well as their initial mismanagement of DP camps, proved sceptical French planners right. As an early opportunity to prove SHAEF's administrative competence and its capacity to work effectively with UNRRA, the liberation of Bergen-Belsen was a great disappointment for Frenay's Ministry, the British military having underestimated the incidence of typhus and having failed to take effective measures on time.¹⁰⁶ As many studies have shown, the initial period, in which UNRRA operated under SHAEF left an impression of pervasive chaos, inefficiency and ineptitude. The London office failed either to establish an effective field operation in France and Germany or to institute an effective working relationship with the military.¹⁰⁷ In the summer of 1945, Frenay concluded bitterly that '[o]n the whole, UNRRA teams arrived once the battle was over.'¹⁰⁸

Despite UNRRA's inauspicious beginnings, on 22 June the French government authorized it to continue the supervision of DPs in what would become the French occupation zone of Germany under the UNRRA-SHAEF Agreement.¹⁰⁹ Why did French planners think that it was in France's best interests to sign an agreement with UNRRA, when its early activity had been so disappointing? One should, perhaps, recall firstly that if French repatriation officers often complained about the lack of coordination between various

¹⁰³ AN, F/9/3309, Memorandum des questions de principe qui devraient être traitées avec UNRRA le plus rapidement possible, 9 March 1945.

¹⁰⁴ For further information on these reports see chapters four and five.

¹⁰⁵ MAE, HCRFA, PDR1/18, Lieutenant Wagner, Compte rendu de visite (Granville) du 29 mai 1945, 30 May 1945; ,Compte rendu de la mission effectuée par la Commandant Merpillat et le Capitaine Dissard au Centre d'instruction de Granville, 27 April 1945.

¹⁰⁶ Annette Wieviorka ' French Internees and British Liberators' in Jo Reilly, David Cesarani, Tony Kushner and Colin Richmond (eds) *Belsen in History and Memory* (London: Frank Cass & Co, 2001), pp 125-133; Weidling, Paul. '«Belsenitis»: Liberating Belsen, its hospitals, UNRRA and selection for re-emigration 1945-1948', *Sciences in Context*, Vol 19, No. 3 (2006), pp. 401-418.

¹⁰⁷ Shepard *The long road home*, p. 137; Woodbridge *UNRRA*, Vo.1, xxvii.

¹⁰⁸ MAE, HCRFA, PDR 1/18, Henri Frenay, Note à l'attention de Monsieur Kaeppelin, Paris, 31 July 1945; NUOI, 7, Note pour le Ministre, Affaires Economiques, 18 August 1945, p. 5.

¹⁰⁹ Woodbridge *UNRRA* (vol 1), xxviii and (vol 2), 479. UNA, UNRRA, S-0425-0007-06, Letter W. Stawell, Deputy chief of operations to The Director, US Zone, UNRRA Headquarters, 28 January 1946.

UNRRA services, they were anything but cooperative amongst themselves. Frenay was often in overt disagreement with General Koeltz, while the *Mission Militaire de Liaison Administrative* (MMLA) was frequently at odds with the services of the Ministry *Prisonniers, Déportés et Réfugiés* (MPDR).¹¹⁰ Again, it is beyond this chapter's scope to examine in detail the tensions between the various French authorities in charge of the repatriation of French nationals. But the report quoted below, written by Lieutenant D'Astier de la Vigerie and sent to Frenay on 15 June 1945, underlines the degree of animosity between serving French officials. It also reveals the lines of disagreement between former resisters and erstwhile Petainists:

I have just returned from Schwerin, where I found total ignorance and incomprehension among the English. Regarding the French - 15 officers of the 'Mission Spéciale de rapatriement et de renseignements' – [the] same ignorance, [and the] same incomprehension. The attitude of the latter was, simply put, scandalous. They live in the most incredible opulence, enjoying the highest comforts, possessing the fullest luxuries. They spend their time drinking, throwing parties and screwing [*baiser* – in the text]. They are neglecting relations with the Russians, letting the French die across the other side [of the border]. They are incompetent, and, moreover, Petainist, never ceasing to criticise the actions of the Government of the Republic and in particular those of the Minister of Justice and of you too.¹¹¹

This reminds us of the need for a more nuanced assessment of the lack of organisation and coordination between the various UNRRA services. But it also underscores the need to explain France's rallying to UNRRA – the subject of the next brief sub-section.

UNRRA as a 'diplomatic protection'

Former Quai d'Orsay Political Director René Massigli was a pivotal figure in presenting UNRRA's case. Dubious about the Soviet Union, Massigli was a firm advocate of alliance with Great Britain and of France's wholehearted commitment to what would become the 'Western' bloc.¹¹² To that end, he valued UNRRA as a means to strengthen cultural, economic and political ties amongst the western allies. Aside from Massigli's lobbying, several other factors account for the maintenance of UNRRA in the French zone. Firstly, other

¹¹⁰ See for instance MAE, HCRFA, PDR1/31, Rapport de l'officier de rapatriement de 2^{ème} classe Caillaud Jean sur sa tournée d'inspection en zone américaine d'Allemagne (août 1945). And SHAT, 8 P 22, Rapport du Colonel J. Blum à Monsieur le Lt. Colonel, APO 230, 27 March 1945, ref : 358/AG – 12.

¹¹¹ MAE, HCRFA, PDR1/16, Lettre du Lieutenant d'Astier de la Vigerie à Monsieur le Ministre des Prisonniers de Guerre et des déportés politiques, 15 June 1945.

¹¹² Ulrich-Pier, Raphaële *René Massigli (1888-1988) Une vie de diplomate Tome II* (Paris: Peter Lang, Direction du Ministère des Affaires étrangères, 2006), pp. 882-887; p. 937; p. 974; MAE, NUOI, 7, Note de la Direction des Conventions Administratives, Réunion à Londres du Conseil de l'UNRRA. Problème des personnes déplacées, 16 August 1945.

Foreign Ministry experts shared his view that UNRRA could provide ‘diplomatic protection’ for the recruitment of DPs.¹¹³ As explained in the next chapter, the *discreet* and *fast* recruitment of the youngest and fittest elements among these war victims was an essential objective of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. But, since UNRRA Resolution 71 imposed on the organization an obligation to encourage the repatriation of displaced persons, the administration was not, in fact, well placed to provide this ‘diplomatic protection.’¹¹⁴ So perhaps we should attach greater significance to a second factor: French policy-makers’ eagerness to get hold of surplus supplies. An UNRRA Office for the Procurement of Surplus Military Supplies opened in Paris in August 1945.¹¹⁵ And, when the agreement between French authorities and UNRRA was eventually signed on 18 February 1946, two letters were attached stipulating that UNRRA would ‘within the limits of its resolutions’ assist in furnishing supplementary essential supplies.¹¹⁶ A third, more intangible factor was that French Foreign Ministry staff were particularly sensitive over issues of prestige and the manner in which France was represented internationally. As mentioned earlier, cooperating with UNRRA was only a small aspect of French diplomats’ work to restore France’s international influence. As R. de Varreux explained, the presence of UNRRA in the zone was simply one element of French cultural diplomacy; UNRRA constituting in many parts of the world an essential ‘economic and political observation point’ on France’s work as an occupying power.¹¹⁷ Gratified that, in August 1945 France secured a seat on UNRRA’s Central Committee, the provisional government subsequently ensured that the majority of the personnel working in the French zone were French nationals.¹¹⁸ To cap it all, in October 1945, de Gaulle appointed General Lenclud as UNRRA’s operations director in the French occupation zone.

The politics of disappointment: tracing French victims ¹¹⁹

Despite Massigli’s early announcement that UNRRA was to continue operating in the French zone and the selection of Lenclud, negotiations between French authorities and UNRRA headquarters remained difficult. In the American zone, UNRRA (unofficially) assumed responsibility for the

¹¹³ UNA, UNRRA, ERO Files, S-0523-0625-02, Note of conversation with Monsieur Alphand and Monsieur Bousquet, [undated].

¹¹⁴ UNA, UNRRA, ERO Files, S-0523-0645-03, D. Ward to Brigadier Fraser, 26 September 1945.

¹¹⁵ Woodbridge *UNRRA*, Vol.1, xxix.

¹¹⁶ Woodbridge *UNRRA*, Vol. 2, p. 489 ; the Franco-UNRRA agreement was signed during the period of the Blum-Byrnes talks of February – May 1946. Gerard Bossuat ‘The Modernization of France : a New Economic and Social Order after the Second World War ?’, Dominik Geppert (ed) *The postwar challenge, 1945-1958* (Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 151-178, p. 158.

¹¹⁷ MAE, HCRFA, Bonn 159, R. de Varreux, chef du Cabinet civil, note pour le Général, Baden-Baden, 11 January 1946.

¹¹⁸ MAE, NUOI, 7 Note pour le Ministre, Affaires Economiques, 18 August 1945, 4 ; Gerbet *Le relèvement*, p. 61; Armstrong-Reid and Murray *Armies of Peace*, p. 60.

¹¹⁹ This phrase is borrowed from Footitt *War and Liberation*, Chapter four, p. 95.

administration of DP camps on 1 October 1945. In the British zone, UNRRA assumed full responsibility on 1 November.¹²⁰ However, it was only on 18 February 1946 that an agreement was signed between French authorities and UNRRA in the French zone.¹²¹ While the details of the negotiations lie outside the focus of this chapter, one point bears emphasis: French military and civilian authorities throughout Germany, whether in Berlin, Baden-Baden or in Rastatt, viewed UNRRA's arrival in the zone with a jaundiced eye.¹²² They believed that its presence had been imposed on to them by the all-too Parisian *Quai d'Orsay*.

In order to understand the sharp criticisms that emerged in the field, it is important to recall that France's own repatriation efforts were relatively successful. By the middle of September 1945, more than 1.5 million Frenchmen had returned home.¹²³ In addition, nearly 300,000 'foreign' DPs had been repatriated from the French Occupation Zone. Yet, French fieldworkers continued to resent the constraints imposed on them by the American military authorities. Repatriation rates were patently unequal. In October 1945, for every one train loaded with Polish DPs departing the French zone, twenty-one such trains departed from the American zone.¹²⁴ French authorities eventually obtained more equitable transport allocations, American authorities conceding sufficient rolling stock for the French authorities to organize one train per week beginning on 16 November 1945.¹²⁵ But other frustrations followed.

Inside the Allied Control Council's Directorate of Prisoners of War and Displaced Persons in Berlin, French delegates took UNRRA to task over its failure to take sufficient account of its responsibilities for tracing DPs. The Directorate was largely preoccupied with the question of PoWs, German refugees, ex-Wehrmacht members and German minorities.¹²⁶ As far as civilians were concerned, French prodding compelled the Directorate to raise serious concerns about tracing activities as well. In November 1945 matters came to a head. UNRRA had yet to respond to the Directorate's demand that it should take control of the Central Tracing Bureau (CTB). The absence of any UNRRA

¹²⁰ It was officialised on 27 November in the British zone; on 19 February 1946 in the US zone. Woodbridge *UNRRA*, Vol 1, p xxx.

¹²¹ Prior to this date : UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0001-02, No.5310DGAA/Dir PDR du Général Commandant en Chef Français en Allemagne en date du 30 Novembre 1945 et par lettre No. 5540 DGAA/Dir PDR de l'Administrateur Général pour le Gouvernement militaire de la zone Française en date du 24 décembre 1945 ; Lettre de l'Administrateur Général Laffon à Mr. Le Général de Corps d'Armée F. Lenclud, 12 January 1946.

¹²² UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0001-02, Negotiations for Agreements between UNRRA and the Military Authorities for Displaced Persons Operations in Germany – Part II – Progress during October 1945.

¹²³ Proudfoot, M. *European Refugees, 1939-1952* (London: Faber and Faber,1957), p. 192.

¹²⁴ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/741, Lettre du Général de Corps d'armée Koeltz à Général Laffon, MS N.627 PDR, 8 October 1945. The Directoire was mainly concerned with the question of PoWs, German refugees, ex-Wehrmacht members and German minorities. See MAE, Bonn 148.

¹²⁵ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/741, Lettre du Général Koeltz à Koenig, Berlin, 6 November 1945 ; Also see Bonn 148, Compte-rendu analytique de la neuvième séance du Directoire des Prisonniers de Guerre et personnes déplacées tenue les 10-13 novembre 1945.

¹²⁶ MAE, HCRFA, Bonn 148, Fiche pour Koenig, Activité de la Division "Personnes Déplacées" du Groupe Français du Conseil de Contrôle du 1er aout au 30 décembre 1945.[undated].

representatives at the 7th and 8th Meetings of the Central Tracing Policy Board led French delegates to suggest that another international organization should take over the management of the CTB.¹²⁷

Once again, the job of tracing victims was not some abstract, dispassionate exercise for the French authorities.¹²⁸ In December 1945 the number of missing French was estimated at around 300,000. On top of that, the provisional government hoped to see around 27 000 *absents* return home.¹²⁹ As ‘Director for persons in captivity’ (known as Directeur *captivité*) General Godechevre observed, if tracing PoWs was easy due to the existence of a relatively up-to-date card system (i.e. which ran until July 1944) under the Geneva Convention, tracing deportees from Alsace and Lorraine was far more complicated.¹³⁰ Statistical data on political deportees was non-existent and the Vichy regime had only assembled some scant documentation in regard to forced labourers. For French planners, the problem was urgent: victims’ families were pressing for answers more or less daily. Nor was this solely a matter that concerned the living. On 20 June 1947, in a moving letter to the French authorities, Madame Bezanier, mourning her twenty-year old son’s death in Bergen-Belsen, highlighted the symbolic importance of the return of his body to France; what she called ‘the ultimate consolation’ for grieving French mothers. ‘For how long will this ultimate consolation be refused us?’ she asked.¹³¹

French authorities also feared that German memories would fade as time went by. According to General Kaepplin, the Director of the DP Service in the French zone, Germans showed a pronounced and dangerous ‘tendency to oblivion.’¹³² British and American UNRRA planners, oblivious to the urgency of the matter, failed to understand the specificities of French wartime experiences of displacement. This was particularly clear in the case of Alsace and Lorraine. According to Kaepplin, in their dealings with French nationals forcibly enrolled in the Wehrmacht, they should have understood that France was dealing here with a ‘national act of conscience.’¹³³ General Godechèvre also underlined the issue’s importance from a security screening angle:

¹²⁷ MAE, HCRFA, Bonn 148, Compte-rendu analytique de la neuvième séance du directoire. On UNRRA’s decision to approve the Directorate policy see ‘The International Tracing Service, section I, historical development, the role of UNRRA, [undated], 6.1.1, 82498819, ITS Digital Archives.

¹²⁸ Historical Survey of Central Tracing Activity in Germany 1945-1951, 6.6.1, 82492888, ITS Digital archives.

¹²⁹ Compte-rendu des travaux de la conférence internationale pour la recherche des DP disparus tenue à Bruxelles les 8,9,10 décembre 1945, 1^{ère} journée, 6.1.1, 82516143, ITS Digital Archives. On 30 May 1946, UNRRA estimated that the number of missing French was 200 000. Historical Survey of Central Tracing Activity in Germany 1945-1951, 6.1.1, 82492868, ITS Digital Archives.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Copie Lettre de Madame Bezanier à Mon Colonel, Montesson, 20 juin 1947, 1.1.29.0, 82125851, ITS Digital Archives.

¹³² Compte-rendu des travaux de la conférence internationale pour la recherche des DP disparus tenue à Bruxelles les 8,9,10 décembre 1945, 2^{ème} journée, 6.1.1, 82516191 and ‘Lettre de l’Attaché d’Administration de I. Classe Desvernois chef de la section des Personnes Déplacées du Pays de Bade à Monsieur le Commissaire de la République, 21 septembre 1946, 1.1.29.0, 82125525, ITS Digital Archives.

¹³³ Ibid.

First in Algiers, then during the operation in Italy, the French government was already thinking of the search of the Alsatians and Lorraines who, during the occupation, had been incorporated into the German forces. In general, the enlisting had been compelled; however, amongst these mobilized persons, some were volunteers and even Nazi propagandists. Groups of qualified officers, familiar with the different dialects and acquainted with military security questions, have been formed, in order to examine the situation of all the Alsatians and Lorrains.¹³⁴

Whereas, overall, French planners were opposed to the creation of international teams for the immediate care of DPs, the International Tracing Service (ITS) archives show that they did advocate closer international cooperation in the tracing of war victims. According to French planners, international tracing experts should be deployed to resolve specific problems such as recovering medical records, finding mass graves, and exhuming bodies.¹³⁵ At the most basic level, their experiences in the field revealed, as Godechevre explained, that it was infinitely easier to get the spelling (*orthographe*) of the surnames of its own nationals correct than it was those of other nationalities.¹³⁶ Many simple – but damaging - mistakes had been made in early tracing lists because officers did not have adequate knowledge of German and were not capable of reading manuscript indications in Gothic letters.¹³⁷ French planners believed that these mistakes could be prevented by a better coordination between the different national tracing missions. Therefore, they advocated the creation of an international body, which would centralise enquiries from national tracing missions.¹³⁸

In early discussions about tracing, Anglo-American military authorities and UNRRA planners envisaged entrusting the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) with the task of operating the central service.¹³⁹ The ICRC had extensive experience with PoWs, a large well-trained staff and a sophisticated card index system for the purpose of communications with

¹³⁴ Instruction on the Search of Alsatians and Lorrains, Godechevre, 14 January 1946, 6.1.1, 82517003, ITS Digital Archives.

¹³⁵ Memorandum Français, Berlin, 30 August 1945, 6.1.1, 82500212, ITS Digital archives.

¹³⁶ Compte-rendu des travaux de la conférence internationale pour la recherche des DP disparus tenue à Bruxelles les 8,9,10 décembre 1945, 1^{ère} journée, 6.1.1, 82516147, ITS Digital Archives. Also see : Procès Verbal de l'assemblée des chefs des bureaux nationaux de recherches, Varsovie, 26-27 juin 1946, p 10, 6.1.1, 82516282, Its Digital Archives.

¹³⁷ Translation. Letter from Captain M.A. André Lacoste, FLO G-5 Detachment DP2, 2nd ECAR, APO 658, US Army to Colonel Clemenccon, Senior French Liaison Officer, APO 655, US Army, Buchenwald camp, 10 June 1945, 6.1.1, 82516939, ITS Digital Archives.

¹³⁸ Lettre du Ministère des Prisonniers déportés et réfugiés, Direction de la Captivité au Headquarters United States Forces, European Theater, Mission to France, 20 Septembre 1945. Ref : A.G.383.7 – 1 – GAP – A.P.O. 887 du 6 Septembre 1945, signé Général CODECHEVRE, Directeur de la Captivité, 6.1.1, 82502526-27, ITS Digital Archives.

¹³⁹ Historical Survey of Central Tracing Activity in Germany 1945-1951, 6.6.1, 82492878, ITS Digital archives.

prisoners of war.¹⁴⁰ But, 'because of its national character' and 'owing to the lack of diplomatic relations between Switzerland and the USSR', the ICRC declared itself unable to take control of the operation.¹⁴¹ UNRRA planners were extremely slow to make alternative arrangements. Although it was envisaged that UNRRA would play a role in tracing as early as March 1945, the European Regional Office (ERO) was sluggish. Only five employees had been assigned to the Central Tracing Bureau in July. Overwhelmed with work, the staff rapidly became 'so discouraged that they were seeking release from their duties.'¹⁴² Colonel J.R. Bowring, former director of the tracing service in the British zone was appointed as the director of UNRRA's tracing service in November 1945.¹⁴³ His French opposite number, Director Godechevre approved (at least officially) of this appointment.¹⁴⁴ Yet, Bowring deplored that his mission was handicapped by his superiors' lack of interest in tracing matters.¹⁴⁵ He complained that he was made a scapegoat for the lack of entente between his superiors.¹⁴⁶ Furthermore his relations with French and Soviet representatives did not run smoothly. Commenting on French and Soviet demands for a broad national representation on the staff of the CTB, Bowring confided to General Frederick Morgan that 'their action and attitude [were] both rather silly.'¹⁴⁷

The Central Tracing Bureau was eventually set up in 1946. In October it was entrusted to the *Preparatory Commission for the International Refugee Organization* (PCIRO), which was supposed to replace UNRRA after its termination in June 1947.¹⁴⁸ But despite the enthusiasm and commitment of director Bowring, UNRRA's tracing activities left an impression of chaos and inefficiency:

¹⁴⁰ The International Tracing Service, section I, historical development [undated], 6.1.1, 82498810, ITS Digital Archives. On the question of cooperation between UNRRA and the ICRC see correspondence documents in 6.6.1. Reference code:8323022, ITS Digital Archives.

¹⁴¹ The International Tracing Service, section I, historical development [undated], 6.1.1, 82498817, ITS Digital Archives.

¹⁴² The International Tracing Service, section I, historical development, the role of UNRRA, p 24 [undated], 6.1.1, 82498821, ITS Digital Archives.

¹⁴³ Lettre de Godechevre, Ministre de la Population, Direction de la Captivité à Monsieur le Colonel Bowring, Directeur – Central Tracing Bureau, Paris, 29 December 1945, 6.1.1, 82516998, ITS Digital Archives.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Lettre du Lt. Colonel F. D'Ivernois à Monsieur Weibel, Bureau National des recherches, Arolsen, 26 February 1946, 6.1.1, 82517011, ITS Digital Archives.

¹⁴⁶ 'General Morgan informs me that, whilst in Berlin, he was attacked by Rosen, supported by his British colleague, on the grounds that I had called the Brussels conference without reference to the CTPB and has omitted to invite the Russians. It is not necessary for me to point out to you that: I did not call the Brussels conference. It was arranged without reference to me and I was invited at the last moment. The Russians were invited and represented. You will see for yourself how difficult it would be to operate this Bureau with any degree of efficiency under the conditions envisaged in Berlin.' Letter from Colonel J.R. Bowring, Director – Central Tracing Bureau to General Godechevre, Directeur de la Captivité, 26 December 1945, 6.1.1, 82516994, ITS Digital Archives.

¹⁴⁷ Letter from J.R. Bowring, Director – Central Tracing Bureau to Lt. Gen. Sir. Frederick Morgan, 27 December 1945, 6.1.1, 82516997, ITS Digital Archives.

¹⁴⁸ 'Arolsen: the International Tracing Service' in *International Review of the Red Cross*, Vol. 11, No. 123 (1971), pp. 330-335. Also see Rapport général de la Conférence des Bureaux Nationaux et Missions de recherches de la France, la Belgique, les Pays-Bas avec Monsieur le Directeur du Service International de recherches, La Haye, 8 décembre 1947, discours d'ouverture de M. Posse, 6.1.1, 82516505, ITS Digital Archives.

The legacy from UNRRA was an extremely heavy one, the worst aspect of it being the consequences of the decentralisation UNRRA had been compelled by circumstances to execute in the spring of 1947. Simultaneously to the reduction of the staff from about 400 to 40, the CTB was ordered to send back to the National Tracing Bureaux all the cases still unprocessed as well as all original documents concerning their nationals. Through lack of care and because of the urgency, enormous amounts of paper were created and sent to the National Tracing Bureaux and often the wrong ones. The NTB [were] totally unprepared and unequipped to deal with this avalanche [...].¹⁴⁹

In tracing matters, expertise and international cooperation developed largely outside UNRRA's framework. At the official level at least, the French government shared resources with the Belgian and Dutch governments. On Belgian government initiative a conference between representatives of the three countries was organized in Brussels in December 1945.¹⁵⁰ Six conferences between representatives of National Tracing Bureaus would follow (in Paris, Warsaw, Prague, Brussels, Prague again, and finally, The Hague), during which the exchange of expertise was encouraged.¹⁵¹ In quadripartite meetings about tracing, France acted as a representative of the interests of the Belgian and Dutch governments, the two western countries most severely affected by deportation after France. France thereby had a determining influence in pushing the ITS project.¹⁵² As an undated official history of the ITS explained 'even before it came to life, the ITS was an unwanted child. Those responsible for the setting-up of the PCIRO hoped to have nothing whatever to do with tracing. It was only accepted eventually when the French government in particular made it a condition to their joining IRO.'¹⁵³ In June 1947, Dutch Liaison Officer Captain Van Banning noted that 'it was established that in the French zone the tracing has proceeded further than anywhere else in Germany – When stating this it must however be considered that there were less Death Marches and Concentration Camps in the French zone than in other zones.'¹⁵⁴

The specific problem of missing children or of children brought to Germany from surrounding Eastern countries, lies outside the parameters of this chapter. Yet one point bears emphasis: French authorities saw the legal and social problems connected with the guardianship of unaccompanied

¹⁴⁹ 'History of the International Tracing Service, 1945-1951', 126, 6.6.1, 82493046, ITS Digital Archives.

¹⁵⁰ See for this the reports of the Conferences of Representatives of National Tracing Bureaus, ITS Digital Archives [6.6.1 reference codes: 8323081, 8323082, 8323083].

¹⁵¹ Conference of Representatives of National Tracing Bureaus, 1945-1947, 6.1.1, 82516092, ITS Digital Archives.

¹⁵² Resume of Translation from the French, Conference Inner Committee of National Tracing Bureaux, Prague 3.4.5 March 1947, 2nd day, 6.6.1, 82516474, ITS Digital Archives.

¹⁵³ 'History of the International Tracing Service, 1945-1951', p. 124, 6.6.1, 82493044, ITS Digital Archives.

¹⁵⁴ Report from Capt. AHM Van Banning, Liaison Officer, Neth. Nat. Trac. Bureau c/o Central Tracing Bureau for M. R. Flohr, Director Central Tracing Bureau, PCIRO, Arolsen, 14.6.1947, p 5, 6.1.1, 82511327, ITS Digital Archives.

children in very different terms to their Anglo-American counterparts.¹⁵⁵ This issue became a source of tension between UNRRA child welfare specialists attached to the Central Headquarters and PDR authorities both in the French zone and in Berlin.

In the French zone, UNRRA is in a very difficult position since the PDR has placed definite limits upon child search and documentation, while at the same time National Liaison Officers there look to UNRRA to assist in locating, documenting and removing their children who are in German institutions and in German homes.¹⁵⁶

If UNRRA headquarters might be accused of paying insufficient attention to its tracing mission for adults, it was deeply concerned with the problem of displaced children.¹⁵⁷ As Tara Zahra has compellingly demonstrated, children were at the symbolic heart of efforts to reconstruct Europe in the aftermath of the Second World War.¹⁵⁸ The French implemented a plan to 'repatriate' all children born to French-German couples in wartime and occupied Germany.¹⁵⁹ In reality, as UNRRA child care consultant Eileen Blackey observed, the French were proposing an 'extremely flexible interpretation of national status.' They were anxious to receive all children who were 'of French heritage, although only one quarter French' or 'any other children who might be available for resettlement in France.'¹⁶⁰

In the pro-natalist context of the post-war Liberation (examined in further detail in the next chapter), refugee children came to be seen as 'most valuable immigrants' by virtue of their perceived ability to assimilate.¹⁶¹ As Jacques Tarbe de Saint-Hardouin put it, 'these children of unknown parents represent[ed] a human treasure that a country with low population density [could] not ignore.'¹⁶² French historian Yves Denéchère argues that French authorities established a policy of 'abandon/adoption' in their zone, their goal being to monitor the abandonment by their German mothers of any children with French fathers and to organize their subsequent adoption in France. This

¹⁵⁵ Confidential report on conferences on unaccompanied children held in Berlin March 15 – 22 1946, Eileen Blackey, Child Care Consultant, p 5, 6.1.2, 82489046, ITS Digital Archives; Confidential report on Field Trip to Berlin, Eileen Blackey, Child care consultant, 14 May 1946, p2, 6.1.2, 82488989, ITS Digital Archives.

¹⁵⁶ UNRRA Central Headquarters for Germany, Minutes of Inter-zonal conference on Child Search and repatriation – October 16-17-18 1946, p6, 6.1.2, 82488871, ITS Digital archives.

¹⁵⁷ See for instance General Morgan introductory remarks in the report of inter-zone Child Welfare conference, UNRRA Central Headquarters – Hochst, January 3-4, 1946, p 1, 6.1.2, 82489075, ITS Digital Archives.

¹⁵⁸ Tara Zahra 'A Human Treasure': Europe's Displaced Children between Nationalism and Internationalism', *Past and Present*, Vol. 210, Suppl. 6, (2011), pp. 332-350, p. 332.

¹⁵⁹ Translation, Tracing of Children, Ministry of Prisoners of War, Deportees and Refugees, Direction of Captivity, Paris, 27 September 1945, 82516961/64, ITS Digital Archives.

¹⁶⁰ Confidential report on conferences on unaccompanied children held in Berlin March 15 – 22 1946, Eileen Blackey, Child Care Consultant, p 5 -6, 6.1.2, 82489046 - 47, ITS Digital Archives.

¹⁶¹ Zahra 'A Human Treasure', 340. Fabrice Virgili *Naître ennemi. Les enfants de couples franco-allemands nés pendant la Seconde Guerre mondiale* (Paris: Payot, 2009), chapter IX. 'Récupérer les enfants d'Allemagne.'

¹⁶² Quoted in Zahra 'A Human Treasure', p. 338.

phenomenon constituted the 'first great movement of adoption in France', French authorities having compiled more than 15,680 dossiers relating to children sired by French occupation soldiers and German mothers.¹⁶³ This policy provoked understandable anxieties among UNRRA child welfare specialists. Miss Buch for instance pointed out that 'in addition to French children, or part French children, there is some indication that the French are moving children of other nationalities into France for adoption; Polish and Belgian children were mentioned particularly in this respect.'¹⁶⁴ Eileen Blackey also drew UNRRA Headquarters' attention to the suspicious activities of one Anne Marie de la Morlais, a woman who had served as a welfare officer during the war setting up hostels for the illegitimate children of French deportees. Deported to Ravensbrück, she worked for the PDR service in Berlin after the Liberation.¹⁶⁵

Madame de la Morlais reports that there are 4000 French children in Berlin and approximately 100.000 French children still in Germany. This, of course, is interpreting a French child to be any child with even a small percentage of French blood. Madame de la Morlais has set up what amounts to a flourishing social agency in Berlin. She has 600 cases of German girls, wives of Frenchmen, who are in Berlin with their children. These mothers will be permitted to go to France. [...] She is very active in contacting all German officials and German institutions to determine the whereabouts of any French children. Apparently she has become quite well known in Berlin and not infrequently German girls with illegitimate children come to her to give up the children. If she finds abandoned children on the streets or in parks, or if on a visit to a hospital she finds children who are not getting proper care [...] she removes the child and sees to it that he gets proper care, with the idea, of course, that he will eventually go to France.¹⁶⁶

The chosen children were issued with new French 'certificates of origin' to replace their German birth certificates. These new certificates erased all record of the children's origins and birthplace. The infants were then given new French names and assigned to French adoptive families. Tara Zahra has argued that only 484 such children were actually repatriated to France for adoption.¹⁶⁷ But after the creation of the Federal Republic of Germany, the French authorities' desire to prevent problems from cropping up in the future led to the removal of

¹⁶³ Yves Denéchère 'Des adoptions d'Etat: les enfants de l'occupation française en Allemagne', *Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine*, Vol. 57, No. 2 (2010), pp. 159-179, p. 160.

¹⁶⁴ UNRRA Central Headquarters for Germany, Minutes of Inter-zonal conference on Child Search and repatriation – October 16-17-18 1946, p 10, 6.1.2, 82489967, ITS Digital Archives.

¹⁶⁵ See for example her testimony about Nazi medical practices in Ravensbrück in Dr. François Bayle *Croix gammée contre Caducée, les expériences humaines en Allemagne pendant la Deuxième Guerre mondiale* (Neudstadt: Imprimerie Nationale, 1950), pp. 1009-1010, 4.2, 82230192-93, ITS Digital Archives.

¹⁶⁶ Confidential report on conferences on unaccompanied children held in Berlin March 15 – 22 1946, Eileen Blackey, Child Care Consultant (p 7), 6.1.2, 82489048, ITS Digital Archives.

¹⁶⁷ Zahra 'A Human Treasure', p. 339.

the administrative traces of this policy from German archives. One can therefore easily understand why PDR authorities viewed with a jaundiced eye the venue of UNRRA (and later IRO or ITS) child specialists.¹⁶⁸

Overall, Franco-UNRRA tensions initially boiled down to clashes between French domestic and foreign affairs' interests and Anglo-American priorities. Yet, as France's position within UNRRA's Administration improved, divisions between French policy-makers became more evident. As UNRRA became entrenched in the French zone, these administrative arguments took a more Franco-French turn. Disputes about whether the presence of UNRRA was needed revealed intractable conflicts between Paris and Baden-Baden, Baden-Baden and Rastatt and Rastatt and Haslach.

A Franco-French war?

Reflecting on UNRRA's activities in the French zone, Germaine Loustalot noted in February 1947 that 'the 'French Occupation zone' was only starting to get its house in order' when UNRRA took over the responsibility for DP matters.¹⁶⁹ The installation of French administrative services in the summer of 1945 had indeed been chaotic, France, the *vainqueur de la dernière heure*, not having had much time to make plans for the administration of its zone.¹⁷⁰ The geographic delimitations of the zone were confirmed on 29 June 1945 for the northern part of the zone and on 4 July for its southern part. Many regarded the two distinct territorial blocs assigned to France as a *zone mutilée*, profoundly rural and disorganised, and lacking either geographical integrity or even much shared history.¹⁷¹ On 15 July 1945 General Pierre-Marie Koenig took up his post of 'General Commandant of the Military Government' in Baden-Baden. The very same day, Emile Laffon became its General Administrator. For all that, the administration of the zone only became fully operative ten days later, on 26 July.¹⁷²

In the eyes of most French local administrators the DP question was primarily a matter of procurement. Its essence, in other words, was the logistical problem of matching estimated relief needs with available supplies.

¹⁶⁸ Report of the Child Search Inter-zonal conference, p 5, 21 July 1949, 6.1.2, 82488824, ITS Digital Archives.

¹⁶⁹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0039-06, Report Number 7, Germaine Loustalot, 25 February 1947.

¹⁷⁰ Corine Defrance and Ulrich Pfeil (eds) *Entre guerre froide et integration européenne. Reconstruction et rapprochement, 1945-1963* (Villeneuve d'Ascq: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 2012), pp. 55-56.

¹⁷¹ Lefèvre, Sylvie *Les relations économiques franco-allemandes de 1945 à 1955. De l'occupation à la coopération* (Paris: Comité pour l'histoire économique et financière de la France, 1998), p. 69; Libera, Martial 'Les "lendemains de guerre" en zone française d'occupation (1945-1949). Un temps de ruptures?' in *Lendemains de guerre. Réflexions sur « l'après » de l'Antiquité au monde contemporain. Les hommes, l'espace et le récit* (Bruxelles: Peter Lang, 2010), pp. 341-350, p. 344.

¹⁷² Lefèvre *Les relations économiques franco-allemandes*, p. 68.

Secondarily, dealing with DPs effectively was thought to be a matter of discipline. In this context, the presence of UNRRA, an international organisation completely independent of the French Military Government, was bound to complicate French disciplinary powers, making repatriation less straightforward as a result. Lieutenant-Colonel Gouraud, chief delegate for the Rhineland, articulated these viewpoints nicely:

These camps are centres of indiscipline; Agitators, often coming from other zones, sneak in and foster a spirit hostile to France. In every region, Poles indulge in illegal practices [...]. They often pretend that they are French and their acts produce a detrimental effect on Germans. Placing these camps under the responsibility of an international agency will not ameliorate the situation. The DP question is first and foremost a question of discipline. This discipline is the responsibility of the authorities [of the zone].¹⁷³

The establishment of the PDR service in the summer of 1945 added impetus to French administrators' early criticisms. The PDR service began working in Baden-Baden on 11 August 1945, two months before UNRRA set up its regional headquarters.¹⁷⁴ On 20 September, the PDR service was meanwhile formally installed within a castle in Rastatt.¹⁷⁵ Part of the *Direction Générale des Affaires administratives*, the PDR service came under the authority of General Administrator Laffon.¹⁷⁶ Its responsibilities were far broader than those of UNRRA. PDR officers gathered information about Frenchmen presumed missing or dead; they made provision for the approximately 330,000 German civilians expected to return to the French zone; and they dealt with some 170,000 German PoWs.¹⁷⁷ PDR *sous-director* Alfred Poignant was particularly dismissive of the dozen or so UNRRA international teams, which, he complained, wore khaki military-style uniform but failed to display any insignia of grade or rank, unlike their Red Cross counterparts. According to Poignant, the military government had nothing to gain from the presence of UNRRA, standing only to lose sovereign control in key areas. 'UNRRA has no supplies, no personal files, no transport resources, no means of communications,' he hissed.¹⁷⁸ Echoing Poignant, Military Governor Koenig was equally hostile to the signature of the agreement with UNRRA, given that, in his own words, 'UNRRA

¹⁷³ MAE, HCRFA, ADM 40, Lieutenant-Colonel Gouraud to l'Administrateur Général Adjoint pour le Gouvernement Militaire de la Zone Française d'Occupation, Bad-Ems, 27 October 1945.

¹⁷⁴ MAE, HCRFA, PDR1/33, Note de service, 10 August 1945.

¹⁷⁵ Haut Commissariat de la République française en Allemagne, Service des Personnes Déplacées, *Sept ans d'activité en faveur des personnes déplacées en zone française d'occupation, 1945-1952*, rapport dactylographié et illustré, [undated], p. 6.

¹⁷⁶ UNA, UNRRA, S-1021-0084-11, Histoire de l'UNRRA, relations avec les Autorités Militaires en zone Française, by Mr.G. Sebille.

¹⁷⁷ MAE, HCRFA, Bonn 148, Letter from Général d'armée Koenig to Monsieur Roger Kaepelin, 12 January 1946; Fiche pour le Colonel Vrinat, 10 December 1946. *Sept ans d'activité en faveur des personnes déplacées en zone française d'occupation*, p. 6.

¹⁷⁸ MAE, HCRFA, PDR1/18, Poignant, Note pour le Ministre, 28 July 1945.

provided no material supplies' and that was likely to 'take control of DP centres at a time when the DP problem was expected to have almost ceased to exist in the zone.'¹⁷⁹

UNRRA's belated entrance into the field led many French administrators to question whether its establishment and the deployment of its international teams were necessary at all. In this characterization, UNRRA merely signified another unwanted layer in a policy-making process that was more than complicated enough. From its beginning to its end, the history of PDR-UNRRA relations (at the level of authorities in the zone) was punctuated by innumerable petty administrative and personal quarrels. Moreover, due to the belatedness with which its headquarters were set up - on 24 October 1945 - UNRRA was only 'able to start and develop normally much later (7 or 8 months later) than in the two other zones.'¹⁸⁰ An UNRRA memorandum described the resultant problem: 'Relations with the PDR have always been very difficult due to the fact that the PDR did the job before UNRRA' and 'wanted the whip hand.'¹⁸¹ As explained below, UNRRA's administrative effectiveness in the French zone only really made itself felt in the summer of 1946, by which time its termination was being contemplated in London and Washington. In March 1946 the resignation of Herbert Lehman, during UNRRA 4th Council session in Atlantic City revealed just how serious the threats were to the organization's survival.¹⁸²

The whip hand

As we have seen, before the signature of the Franco-UNRRA agreement on 18 February 1946, jurisdictional boundaries between France and the UN's relief administration remained unclear and contested.¹⁸³ Tensions were particularly acute in the southern part of the Zone, in the Baden-Württemberg area, where DPs remained under PDR control until late 1945. By February 1946 UNRRA had taken responsibility for fourteen DP centres accommodating a total of 44,000 DPs, at which point signature of the agreement with the French government resulted in UNRRA taking over an additional twenty-one DP centres holding another 19,000 inmates.¹⁸⁴ The February 1946 accord also prompted sharp increases in UNRRA staff. In November 1945 UNRRA had a

¹⁷⁹ MAE, HCRFA, Bonn 159, Général de Corps d'Armée à Novateur, [January 1946?].

¹⁸⁰ UNA, UNRRA, S-0432-0005-04, Employment Branch [April 1946 ?].

¹⁸¹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0412-0012-05, Monthly report, French Zone of Occupation for the month of October 1945, 7 November 1945.

¹⁸² Armstrong-Reid and Murray *Armies of peace*, p. 63.

¹⁸³ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0010-09, E.J. Bastiaenen, Historique du centre DP de Fribourg, vingt-deux mois au service de l'UNRRA en Zone Française d'Occupation, 1 June 1947, p. 1.

¹⁸⁴ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0002-09, rapport succinct sur les activités de UNRRA en zone Française depuis le 18 Février 1946.

total of 244 workers in the French zone.¹⁸⁵ In February 1946 the organization counted 321 'class I' personnel, a figure which rose to 579 by July, alongside a further 142 'class II' and 82 'class III' staff.¹⁸⁶

If the 18 February agreement was tardy, it was also profoundly confusing. It granted PDR officers the right to check for fraud and other irregularities in DP camps' administration, but it did not allow them to *intrude* on administrative matters.¹⁸⁷ UNRRA directors were told that they were responsible for the internal organization of their camp, that PDR officers were in charge of external problems (including policing and control) and that Military Government liaison officers retained responsibility for the definitive categorization of DPs by nationality and, therefore, for repatriation.¹⁸⁸ On the one hand, PDR officers derided the February 1946 agreement as a deeply 'unfair bargain', Laffon noting that '[t]he PDR Direction, charged with ensuring the payment of UNRRA's expenses has a very thankless role [...] Held responsible for order and discipline amongst DPs, it is often regarded as a hindrance and an obstacle by UNRRA officers.'¹⁸⁹ On the other hand, UNRRA blamed PDR officers for not fully complying with the agreement's terms.¹⁹⁰

Cumbersome administrative machinery, combined with extremely poor transport and communication facilities also impeded the growth of more harmonious relations between the PDR service and UNRRA's management. As UNRRA tracing officer Linden suggested, French administration was handicapped by extraordinarily complicated machinery.¹⁹¹ To make things worse, UNRRA's administrative structure was similarly incoherent. UNRRA's subdivision into two district sectors was at odds with German administrative practices and with the five administrative divisions recognized by the French.¹⁹²

On 31 January 1946, UNRRA numbered eleven teams in the northern part of the zone (three in Koblenz, and one each in Kaiserslautern, Landstuhl, Homburg, Lebach, Pirmasens, Trier-Kemmel, Trier-Feyen, and Kandel). There were ten more in the southern part of the zone (at Gutach, Emmendingen, Freiburg, Rottweil, Balingen, Biberach, Wangen, Reutlingen, Leutkirch, and

¹⁸⁵ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0001-06, Monthly reports for November, signed Lenclud, Baden-Baden, 4 December 1945.

¹⁸⁶ Class I personnel were those hired internationally, class II personnel was local employees and class III personnel were volunteers attached to private voluntary relief organizations, supervised but not in the paid employ of UNRRA. MMAE, HCRFA, PDR 3/16, Etat numérique du Personnel UNRRA dans la zone française, 28 June 1946; UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0001-03, Rapport succinct sur les activités de UNRRA en Zone Française depuis le 18 février 1946, Haslach, 31 July 1946.

¹⁸⁷ *Sept ans d'activité en faveur des personnes déplacées en zone française d'occupation*, p. 15.

¹⁸⁸ UNA, UNRRA, S-0438-0005-02, R. le Goff, Rapport du service Welfare sur le District Nord de la ZFO, à la date du 31 mars 1946, pp. 1-27, p.3.

¹⁸⁹ MAE, HCRFA, Bonn 159, Copie rapport confidentiel Laffon à Koenig, 7. [July 1946?].

¹⁹⁰ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0001-03, General de Corps d'Armée F. Lenclud, Director UNRRA French Zone, Confidential replies to questionnaire attached to letter 6300/CC/DAC/ADM dated 23.9.1946, Haslach, 4 October 1946, p. 9.

¹⁹¹ Note to Miss de la Pole, M. Linden, 21 September 1945, 6.6.1, 82502529-30, ITS Digital Archives.

¹⁹² MAE, HCRFA, ADM 40, Letter N.5310 (30 November 1945) and N.5540 (24 December 1945) from General Laffon to General Lenclud.

Lindau).¹⁹³ For the PDR, this distribution of UNRRA's teams seemed arbitrary. In February 1946, UNRRA Zone headquarters was moved from Rastatt (also home to the Direction PDR as we saw) to Haslach, some seventy-five kilometres from Baden-Baden. This rendered effective communication between the two services harder still.¹⁹⁴ The UNRRA administrative structure was eventually adapted to the zone on 22 July 1946.¹⁹⁵ The Northern and Southern districts were replaced by three Supervisors' offices, one in Neustadt, one in Freiburg, and one in Tübingen.¹⁹⁶

From the perspective of UNRRA, these administrative difficulties were compounded by the fact that each of the French administrative districts often pursued its own, autonomous policy.¹⁹⁷ Admittedly the administrative structure of the zone was very hierarchical. But, regionally and locally, military and PDR officers retained considerable room for manoeuvre.¹⁹⁸ In fact, as Martial Libera observes, eight decision-making entities existed in the French zone: General Koenig and his Cabinet, Emile Laffon and the GMZFO (*Gouvernement Militaire de la Zone Française d'Occupation*), the GFCC (*Groupe français du Conseil de Contrôle*) in Berlin and the five Superior Delegates.¹⁹⁹ The majority of these Superior Delegates were former *Gaullist* military commanders inclined to assert their jurisdictional rights to the full.²⁰⁰

In June 1946 UNRRA authorities acknowledged that the relations with the military authorities were improving in the northern part of the zone but complained about the pointless lines of partition between the three district administrations. 'A lot of time, diplomacy and travel are necessary to be able to impose a common policy on the three territories' they concluded.²⁰¹ For instance, an UNRRA Employment Officer found 70 DPs residing in a camp in Saarland willing to work for IG-Farben in the Palatinate area. Yet, administrators in the Palatinate refused these DPs access, claiming that the positions in question should be filled by locally available DPs.²⁰² Examples like these and the issues thrown up by them recur throughout this thesis.

¹⁹³ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0004-12, UNRRA Tableau des Teams existants 31 janvier 1946.

¹⁹⁴ UNA, UNRRA, S-0412-0012-05, Monthly report (October 1945), Displaced Persons Operation, French Zone, 7 November 1945.

¹⁹⁵ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0001-03, Rapport succinct sur les activités de UNRRA en Zone Française depuis le 18 février 1946, 31 July 1946.

¹⁹⁶ UNA, S-0417-0001-04, Lenclud à Laffon, réorganisation du dispositif de UNRRA en ZOF, 1 August 1946.

¹⁹⁷ Rinke *Le grand retour*, p. 230.

¹⁹⁸ See for instance, S-0421-0028-05, J. Rozale, Mise au travail obligatoire des DPs à Singen, 3 July 1946.

¹⁹⁹ Martial Libera *Un Rêve de Puissance: La France et le Contrôle de l'économie Allemande (1942-1949)* (Bruxelles: Peter Lang, 2012), p. 302.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁰¹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0029-07, Rapport mensuel, District Nord, mois de juin 1946, p. 1.

²⁰² *Ibid.*

Personal rivalries

Conflicting personalities and leadership styles also impeded the growth of more harmonious relations between French and UNRRA officials. Describing his uphill struggle to gain acceptance within the French zone, Lenclud gloomily noted in October 1946 that, since his appointment as director of the zone a year earlier, UNRRA had developed within a 'poisoned atmosphere', its administrative structure challenged from all sides.²⁰³ To a degree he was right: the administrative war between the PDR service and UNRRA headquarters preceded the signature of the 18 February agreement and was undoubtedly intertwined with the battle between General Koenig and Administrator Emile Laffon.²⁰⁴

This escalating conflict, which rapidly transformed itself into a veritable war between services, is a familiar tale in the history of the French occupation zone.²⁰⁵ Internal rivalries, coupled with a complex decision making-process, fed political and jurisdictional conflicts between the military government headed by Koenig and the Civil Cabinet led by Laffon.²⁰⁶ The argument between them, in many ways, boiled down to questions of form and instances of injured pride between two different leaders with fundamentally different managerial styles. Pierre-Marie Koenig was a career army officer, hero of Bir-Hakeim in 1943, and deeply loyal to General De Gaulle. He attached enormous importance to questions of hierarchy, decorum and *bienséances*. Emile Laffon, on the contrary, was a young and brilliant lawyer who, while admiring De Gaulle, never shared his dogmatic and partisan vision of French grandeur. Driven by resistance ideals, this bright technocrat could be impatient and authoritarian.²⁰⁷ The two men's views on the optimum policy to adopt in Germany also differed.²⁰⁸ Koenig's Cabinet was relatively conservative; Laffon's entourage left-leaning.²⁰⁹ Constituted mainly of young former resisters, this civil

²⁰³ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0001-03, Lenclud, Confidential replies to questionnaire attached to letter 6300/CC/DAC/ADM dated 23.9.1946, 4 October 1946, p. 2.

²⁰⁴ MAE, HCRFA, Bonn 159, Fiche pour le Général, Cabinet civil, 3 October 1946.

²⁰⁵ Alain Lattard 'A propos de l'occupation française en Allemagne 1945-1949: le conflit Laffon – Koenig' in *Sept décennies de relations franco-allemandes 1918-1988* (Paris : Publication de l'Institut d'Allemand, Université de la Sorbonne Nouvelle, 1989), pp. 227-262.

²⁰⁶ Henri Ménudier *L'Allemagne occupée 1945-1949* (Paris : Publication de l'Institut d'Allemand, Sorbonne Nouvelle, 1989) ; Dietmar Hüser *Frankreichs "Doppelte Deutschlandpolitik."* Dynamik aus der Defensive - Planen, Entscheiden, Umsetzen in gesellschaftlichen und wirtschaftlichen, innen- und außenpolitischen Krisenzeiten 1944 – 1950 (Berlin : Duncker & Humblot, 1996) ; Lefèvre *Les relations économiques franco-allemandes de 1945 à 1955*; Geneviève Maelstaf *Que faire de l'Allemagne? Les responsables français, le statut international de l'Allemagne et le problème de l'unité allemande (1945-1955)* (Paris: Direction des Archives, MAE, 1999); Martial Libera *Un rêve de puissance*.

²⁰⁷ Libera *Un rêve de puissance*, p. 322.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid*, p. 321.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid*, p. 323 ; Maurice Grimaud *Je ne suis pas né en mai 68. Souvenirs et carnets 1934-1992* (Paris: Tallendier, 2007), pp. 57-58.

administration was driven by its reformist impulse, an informality of tone, and little respect for military hierarchy.²¹⁰

Koenig enjoyed a much better personal relationship with General Lenclud.²¹¹ Lenclud was another career army officer, a Saint-Cyr graduate whose family had suffered a great deal during the war. One of his sons was killed by the Germans, another had been held hostage.²¹² His appointment, by de Gaulle in October 1945 was largely honorific.²¹³ On amicable terms with Koenig, Lenclud was, by contrast, openly condescending towards both the PDR Director and its Administration: '[The Directeur des Personnes Déplacées]'s local representatives in the main come into that category of persons usually referred to as "poor types" whose only preoccupation is to create as much nuisance as possible to UNRRA teams, in order to justify their existence and please their "Directeur".²¹⁴ Lenclud insisted that the high-ranking French military officers working for UNRRA had far better credentials (and social backgrounds) than those of the PDR: 'If an impartial comparison should be made at each level between the UNRRA officials and the PDR officials it would easily be established that the honour and advantage would go to UNRRA. We have within our ranks: One General de Corps d'Armée (four stars) – one Brigadier General – One General Medical Corps – five senior officers of the General Staff.'²¹⁵ General Lizè de Marguerrites, appointed on 16 May 1946 as UNRRA liaison officer, was also a prestigious General, and a decorated member of the Resistance. Formerly military commander in Baden-Baden, 'he made a name for himself [amongst the French administration] due to his extreme severity, adopting an uncompromising position on [questions of] behaviour and disciplinary issues.'²¹⁶ He was exactly the sort that Lenclud (and Koenig) favoured, and just the type that Laffon's staff held in contempt.²¹⁷ Ever obsessed with questions of prestige and reputation, Lenclud logged a formal complaint against PDR Director Poignant whom he claimed had 'unjustly' criticized three UNRRA team directors of honourable families and impeccable military pedigree. Exasperated, he asked the military government for 'moral

²¹⁰ Grimaud *Je ne suis pas né en mai 68*, p. 55.

²¹¹ See for instance MAE, HCRFA, Bonn 160, Lettre du General Koenig à Général de Corps d'Armée Lenclud, N.4359/CC/CAC/ADM, [undated, June 1947?].

²¹² MAE, HCRFA, Bonn 160, Lettre de Koenig à Monsieur l'Ambassadeur Ponsot, organisation internationale des réfugiés, N.2739/CC/CAC, 6 June 1947.

²¹³ *Ibid.*

²¹⁴ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0001-03, Confidential letter (translation) from Lenclud to Monsieur le General d'Armée Koenig, 4 October 1946, p. 4.

²¹⁵ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0001-03, Lenclud, Confidential replies to questionnaire attached to letter 6300/CC/DAC/ADM dated 23.9.1946, 4 October 1946, 13. Also see MAE, HCRFA, Bonn, 159, undated UNRRA Report.

²¹⁶ UNA, UNRRA, S-1021-0084-11, Histoire de l'UNRRA, Relations avec les autorités militaires en zone française, by Mr.G. Sebille [June 1947?], p. 4

²¹⁷ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0001-08, Lettre de G. Sebille to Lenclud, No.697/11 [undated].

reparation' in February 1947.²¹⁸ UNRRA's archives suggest that Lenclud and his entourage were almost as much preoccupied by questions of prestige, recognition and reputation as by the fate of the DPs.

Unlike Lenclud, Poignant was not a military man but a professor of German, an *Agrégé d'allemand*, who had worked in the interwar years at the *Lycée français* in Algiers.²¹⁹ He joined the international service of the PDR Ministry in July 1944. In December he became 'chef d'Etat-Major de la Mission Française de Rapatriement en Allemagne.'²²⁰ Poignant certainly shared Frenay's contempt for UNRRA's sluggishness and its high administrative costs. He never entirely accepted UNRRA's authority over what he regarded as his private fiefdom.²²¹ According to him, the Foreign Ministry agreed to UNRRA's involvement for 'high political reasons', but DPs did not benefit from its presence. Like General Administrator Laffon, he also thought that UNRRA did not provide any sort of diplomatic protection for DPs recruited to work in France.²²² If anything, it generated diplomatic frictions, UNRRA staff ignoring the *delicate* (diplomatic) nature of their work, as will be explained in chapter three. It would, however, be wrong to think that Poignant was opposed to 'international organisation' as such, a fact confirmed when, in the summer of 1947, he became Director of the International Refugee Organisation in the French Zone.

In order to grasp Poignant's opposition to UNRRA, we need to recall that the DP problem did not rank highly amongst the Military Government's priorities and that the PDR administration also struggled to gain recognition amongst high officials. In January 1946 the *Commissariat Général pour les Affaires Allemandes et Autrichiennes* (CGAA) believed that the PDR mission should be terminated by June 1946.²²³ During the same month Koenig affirmed that the DP problem would soon be solved. 'A great proportion of the Polish DPs will want to be repatriated. The 5,000 Balts will be resettled in Saarland and the Intergovernmental Refugee Committee will transport Baltic DP students into

²¹⁸ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0001-04, Copie, Lenclud à Général d'Armée Koenig, 17 March 1947.

²¹⁹ MAE, HCRFA, PDR3/237, Note pour Monsieur le Directeur de l'Administration Générale, sous-direction du personnel, 27 August 1947. 11376/DGAA/Dir/PDR.

²²⁰ MAE, HCRFA, Bonn 148, Fiche pour le General, No. 113/CC/CAC/Eco, 11 January 1946.

²²¹ UNA, UNRRA, S-1021-0084-11, Histoire de l'UNRRA, Relations avec les autorités militaires en zone française, by Mr.G. Sebille [June 1947?], p. 7.

²²² MAE, HCRFA, Bonn 159, Lettre du Sous-directeur des Personnes Déplacées à Monsieur le Directeur Général des Affaires Administratives, 20 December 1945.

²²³ MAE, HCRFA, Bonn 148, copie, Commandant en chef français en Allemagne, note pour M. l'administrateur Général GMZFO, 25 October 1946; Fiche pour le Général, Baden-Baden, 9 January 1947.

French universities. This will leave a maximum of 35,000 DPs in the zone' he said.²²⁴

An escalating conflict

Examples of petty quarrels between Lenclud and Poignant abound in PDR and UNRRA archives. The evidence suggests that the conflict escalated, minor incidents being increasingly blown out of proportion. The first dispute erupted in June 1946 when Lenclud sent three letters of protest about the PDR Direction to Emile Laffon and to UNRRA Central headquarters. The first letter concerned the threatening methods employed by local officers in the region of Mulheim to coerce DPs into repatriation.²²⁵ The second letter concerned itself with the *unacceptable* behaviour of some PDR officers and the third stemmed from the uncooperative attitude of the French Red Cross after it officially announced the termination of its negotiations with UNRRA in regard to its responsibilities for the welfare of children in the care of the UN. Lenclud's argument was not with the right of the Red Cross to run local crèche facilities but, rather, with its temerity in acting without informing him.²²⁶

According to Lenclud, PDR Director Poignant added fuel to the flames by writing a confidential report damning UNRRA in the summer of 1946. In late June, Paris duly requested a written assessment of UNRRA's activities in the Zone. While UNRRA's headquarters provided a highly positive account of its action, the PDR administration wrote a bluntly unfavourable report which was soon leaked.²²⁷ Things soon escalated further. On 11 August 1946 Lenclud informed Sir Frederick Morgan, overall head of DP operations in Germany, that he had learned 'from a personal source that Mr. Poignant [...] [was] urging General Koenig to allow the agreement which expires on 18 August to lapse.'²²⁸ Meanwhile, officials in Paris tended to side with the PDR 'A priori it is tempting to believe the PDR since their views concur with those of the PDR Division in Berlin, the British and the Americans all of whom considered that UNRRA is in an appalling state.'²²⁹

²²⁴ MAE, HCRFA, Bonn 159, Copie d'un télégramme du Général de Corps d'Armée, à Novateur [January 1946?].

²²⁵ This issue will be discussed in chapter Three.

²²⁶ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0001-01, Translation of the letter of General de Corps d'armée F. Lenclud to Monsieur l'Administrateur General Adjoint du GM, Haslach, 21 June 1946, Letter No. 224/11.

²²⁷ MAE, HCRFA, Bonn 159, Le Général Marguerittes dit Lizé à Chef de la Division des Affaires Civiles, 2 October 1946.

²²⁸ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0001-01, copie, Lenclud to Lt. General Sir Frederick Morgan, 11 August 1946.

²²⁹ MAE, HCRFA, Bonn 159, Note pour Monsieur de Varreux [undated].

In September 1946, Lenclud compiled a thirteen-page report responding point-by-point to the PDR's criticisms concerning the lack of professionalism among UNRRA staff, their alleged involvement in the black-market, the statistical inaccuracies allegedly evident in UNRRA accounting, their inefficient screening and their general tactlessness. He accused the PDR in return of having hired equally unsuitable individuals.²³⁰ He noted that three UNRRA officials from the Pirmasens team were dismissed because of their alleged involvement in the trafficking of goods destined for DPs. Other PDR officials implicated in this affair were still in office. In addition, he recorded somewhat defensively that '[t]he UNRRA field supervisor in the Province of Baden, was arrested, [...] following complaints lodged by the UNRRA Director and this is a most outstanding example of the severity of the UNRRA administration in matters of integrity.'²³¹ Finally, his response to the allegations made about UNRRA's disproportionate cost was that 'it costs France nothing.'²³²

Une entreprise d'oisiveté

In this heated administrative environment, Emile Laffon supported many of Poignant's claims. He believed that the Franco-UNRRA agreement constituted an unfair economic bargain, French authorities providing basic supplies for DPs and UNRRA distributing them: '[This] agreement rests on an *équivoque*: the distribution body [UNRRA] is not accountable to the provider body [France] and can, according to the law, preserve its independence [...].'²³³ Economic considerations played a significant role in the anti-UNRRA tenor of his statements.

A displaced person costs on average 360 marks a month; he would have certainly cost less if UNRRA had implemented a policy of restriction. The figures show that, without UNRRA, a displaced person would cost in average 60 marks less; this means that for 51 000 displaced persons (from January to June) one would have saved 18.360.000 marks for six months.²³⁴

Although, according to UNRRA sources, the French zone had received 500 tons of food, eighteen tons of clothes, eight tons of soaps and 438 trucks in July 1946, administrators believed that UNRRA was costing France more than

²³⁰ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0001-03, Confidential Letter from Lenclud to Koenig, 4 October 1946 [in response to the letter N.6300/CC/DAC/ADM, 27.09.1946], p. 4.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

²³² *Ibid.*

²³³ MAE, HCRFA, ADM 40, Laffon à Général d'Armée Koenig, N.15339, 29 July 1946, p. 5.

²³⁴ MMAE, HCRFA, ADM 40, L'administrateur Général Laffon à Monsieur le Général d'Armée, Commandant en Chef Français en Allemagne, N.15339, 29 July 1946, pp. 4-5.

money than it brought in.²³⁵ In November 1946 Laffon urged Koenig to prevent the French government from signing an agreement with any international organization, liable, like UNRRA, to be 'completely irresponsible and costly' and without any real interest in either 'repatriating, redeploying or putting DPs to work.'²³⁶ In the same report Laffon explained that the DP situation was much better in those regions where UNRRA was not present as the majority of DPs in these areas were working. Speaking from the perspective of Saarland, Gilbert Grandval concurred. He believed that UNRRA workers were too concerned with cultivating their popularity among DPs and insufficiently attentive to restabilising law and order.²³⁷ The Superior Delegate of Württemberg was of the same opinion, claiming that UNRRA was 'une entreprise d'oisiveté', which did not encourage DPs to work.²³⁸

So embittered did this UNRRA-PDR conflict become that, at the end of 1946, the Paris authorities opened a confidential investigation into it. The resultant report signed by Roger Bloch, *Sous-Secrétaire d'Etat, Commissaire Général aux Affaires Allemandes et Autrichiennes*, concluded that it was essentially a trifling argument between incompatible personalities.²³⁹ In accordance with this report, this chapter has demonstrated that the contentious relationship between the service PDR and UNRRA in the French zone was essentially linked to inter-French arguments between rival administrative services and personal rivalries. But, beneath this administrative conflict, were there more profound disputes about relief policies and methods? How were the problems of DP administration framed, discussed and understood by UNRRA humanitarian activists and by PDR officers in the field? Were the tensions between the service PDR and UNRRA merely the product of conflicting personalities, bureaucracies and leadership styles, as Roger Bloch suggested? This is what the next chapters of this thesis investigate.

Conclusion

As we have seen, French planners were at best circumspect, at worst wholly condemnatory in their statements about UNRRA. The sources of French

²³⁵ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0001-03, Rapport succinct sur les activités de UNRRA en Zone Française depuis le 18 février 1946, Haslach, 31 July 1946.

²³⁶ MAE, HCRFA, Ambassade de Bonn 148, Lettre de l'administrateur général Laffon, adjoint pour le Gouvernement Militaire de la Zone d'occupation Française à Monsieur le Général d'Armée Koenig, 25 November 1946.

²³⁷ MAE, HCRFA, ADM 40, Le Colonel Grandval, Gouverneur de la Sarre à l'Administrateur Général, Adjoint pour le Gouvernement Militaire de la Zone Française d'Occupation, Sarrebruck, 13 November 1945.

²³⁸ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0001-04, Lettre confidentielle de G.E.McCandlish, chef de cabinet à Assistant Director, Haslach, 23 janvier 1947.

²³⁹ MAE, Bonn 159, Lettre du Sous-secrétaire d'Etat, Commissaire Général aux Affaires Allemandes et Autrichiennes à Monsieur le MAE, Service des Affaires sociales. N.1708/SOC, Paris, 3 December 1946.

scepticism can be located within two very different genealogies. On the one hand, anti-UNRRA attitudes were certainly linked to anti-American sentiments.²⁴⁰ Within UNRRA, 'the balance sheet indicates an undeniably Anglo-Saxon and American orientation of international relief.'²⁴¹ Criticisms of UNRRA were part of a broader denunciation of America's assumption of leadership in reshaping the post-war world. De Gaulle himself displayed little enthusiasm for the UN system in 1944-1945. Long before famously dubbing it *ce machin* in 1961, De Gaulle expressed misgivings about the United Nations. He recalled in his memoirs that he saw with 'sympathy but not without circumspection the nascent organization', suspecting that the United States would use the organization to garner an enormous political *clientèle* to the detriment of France.²⁴² France only signed the UN Declaration on 1 January 1945 and de Gaulle accepted the invitation to the founding conference of the United Nations in San Francisco in June 1945 begrudgingly.²⁴³ Many other French leaders proved equally unenthusiastic about the creation of this inter-governmental relief agency, due to their memories of the League's alleged failures in the inter-war years. Georges Bidault, although often presented as the ideological heir of Briand, was, for instance, sceptical about the UN system. His biographer Bezas argues that Bidault was profoundly marked by the experience of the failure of collective security in the inter-war years.²⁴⁴ Although Glenda Sluga has recently emphasized the strength of the internationalist spirit in post-war France, there was certainly less optimism in France than in America or Britain that UNRRA would inaugurate an international system 'which enshrined principles of universality, the equality of nations and national sovereignty', becoming thus 'a new and improved League of Nations.'²⁴⁵

This chapter has also argued, however, that there was more at stake than a mere reflex of patriotic frustration against the *imperialist* motives behind *American* humanitarian aid or any lack of enthusiasm for a new and improved

²⁴⁰ As William Hitchcock puts it, France has always presented a fascinating case-study for scholars interested in the history of the Americanization, or more adequately here, the resistance to the Americanization of Europe. William I. Hitchcock review of Brian Angus McKenzie *Remaking France: Americanization, Public Diplomacy and the Marshall Plan* in *H-France Review* No. 6 (2006), p. 85. For a history of French anti-Americanism see Philippe Roger *L'ennemi américain: généalogie de l'antiaméricanisme français* (Paris : Le Seuil, 2002).

²⁴¹ Reinisch 'Internationalism in relief', p. 288.

²⁴² Gerbet *Le relèvement*, p. 73. Marie Claude Smouts *La France à l'ONU* (Paris : Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, 1979), p. 11. Claire Andrieu, Philippe Braud et Guillaume Piketty (eds) *Dictionnaire De Gaulle* (Paris : Robert Laffont, 2006), pp. 835-837.

²⁴³ Smouts *La France à l'ONU*, pp. 32-35.

²⁴⁴ Jean-Rémy Bezas *Georges Bidault et la politique étrangère de la France, Europe, Etats-Unis, Proche-Orient, 1944-1948* (Paris: L'harmattan, 2006), p. 166.

²⁴⁵ Reinisch 'Internationalism in relief', p. 285. Glenda Sluga *Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 79. To a certain extent, René Cassin's trajectory within Free France mirrored this lack of enthusiasm for France's adherence to the ideas of the Atlantic Charter. As Jay Winter and Antoine Prost have recently argued, while Cassin's international profile grew in 1941-1943, its political profile within Free France diminished. Jay Winter and Antoine Prost *René Cassin and Human Rights. From the Great War to the Universal Declaration* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 134-135.

League of Nations. As the issue of tracing shows, French policy-makers did, on occasion, advocate international cooperation. Yet many French policy-makers were dismayed by American and British insensitivity to the cultural impact of occupation on continental Europe. Anglo-American lack of familiarity with the problem of deportation bred enormous differences in perspective, as much concerning relief needs and requirements as future international collaboration more generally. French policy-makers doubted that UNRRA would do much either to help France rebuild itself, to put the legacies of foreign occupation to rest, or to restore its sovereignty. Surrounded by the devastation caused by years of enemy occupation and preoccupied with the question of the repatriation of French *absents*, they feared that Anglo-American *missionary internationalists* were, paradoxically, incapable of providing an adequate response to Europe's humanitarian crisis.²⁴⁶ The late deployment of UNRRA teams, coupled with the lack of assistance provided for the repatriation of France's own nationals, confirmed and often exacerbated these French doubts. This was an inauspicious beginning for what was heralded as a new and improved relief organization.

In Germany, the presence of UNRRA was mainly perceived as being imposed by the *Quai d'Orsay*. Authorities in Baden-Baden and Rastatt only begrudgingly accepted its presence under the condition that the majority of its personnel would be French and that the organisation was likely to bring with it money and basic supplies, including all-important fuel and trucks.²⁴⁷ As this implies, arguments about economic interest played a significant role. In his correspondence with Koenig, Laffon and Poignant, Lenclud insisted that UNRRA would bring expert personnel paid in sterling, bringing crucial foreign currency into the French exchequer.²⁴⁸ Ironically, one could find exactly the same arguments rehearsed in the British zone with regard to US dollar shortages.²⁴⁹ Yet, UNRRA's material and financial provision soon fell short even of French authorities' minimal expectations.

Though Lenclud's military background and his wartime credentials might have been thought an asset in negotiating relationships with French military authorities both at headquarters and in the field, neither he nor his administration gained full recognition in the zone. The overall portrait of UNRRA that emerges in French PDR reports is distinctly unfavorable: French

²⁴⁶ On American 'missionary internationalism' see Reinish 'Internationalism in relief', pp.266-269.

²⁴⁷ MAE, HCRFA, Bonn 159, R. de Varreux, chef du Cabinet civil, note pour le Général, Baden-Baden, 11 January 1946.

²⁴⁸ MAE, HCRFA, Bonn 159, Note relative à la position de l'UNRRA en Zone Française, Général de Corps d'Armée Lenclud, Baden-Baden, 11 January 1946.

²⁴⁹ Shepard *The Long Road Home*, p. 154.

administrators recurrently decried this international agency as a waste of money, they persistently criticized flaws in its personnel and they condemned its cumbersome bureaucracy. Some PDR officers even feared that UNRRA relief workers might harbour more sinister, ulterior motives. 'There is a common tendency in certain circles to consider UNRRA officials as foreign intelligence services' agents' deplored Lenclud.²⁵⁰ Although no evidence was found about the presence of spies amongst French UNRRA recruits, these fears were not completely unfounded. Frederick Morgan and others had 'long claimed that UNRRA was 'honeycombed with spies.'²⁵¹ And in 1947 a number of high profile American UNRRA staff members who had spied for the Soviet Union were unmasked.²⁵² In the French zone, the personal battle between Poignant and Lenclud was only finally resolved in August 1947, when IRO replaced UNRRA. Lenclud was dismissed and Poignant appointed at the head of IRO.

Admittedly, UNRRA was also widely criticized in the British and American zones by military commanders who regarded it as both costly and cumbersome. General Kenchington, Director of the Displaced Persons Division in the British Zone of Occupation, argued that UNRRA was overstaffed with a neglectful, untrained and ineffective personnel and that it pursued policies contrary to British government interests. Profoundly disappointed by UNRRA's performance, he warned Foreign Minister Ernest Bevin that 'no way at all [should] UNRRA be replaced by another international organisation displaying the same level of irresponsibility.'²⁵³ Even more surprising, UNRRA director of Operations in Germany, General Morgan admitted that the organization's administrative machinery was vast and cumbersome. He even deplored his own staff's lack of professionalism: 'no discipline, no hierarchy, no confidentiality.'²⁵⁴ For all that, UNRRA's shortcomings were arguably worst in the French zone. Its administration arrived much later by which time the competing ambition of the PDR service had to be contended with. Furthermore, as explained in the next two chapters, French DP policies were highly contradictory, leaving room for conflicting interpretations and intractable disagreements between the PDR and UNRRA officials.

²⁵⁰ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0001-03, General de Corps d'Armée F. Lenclud, Director UNRRA French Zone, Confidential replies to questionnaire attached to letter 6300/CC/DAC/ADM dated 23.9.1946, Haslach, 4 October 1946, p. 2.

²⁵¹ John Earl Haynes and Harvey Klehr *Venona: Decoding Soviet espionage in America* (Yale, 1999); Reinisch 'Auntie UNRRA', p. 97.

²⁵² Ibid.

²⁵³ MAE, HCRFA, ADM 40, L'Administrateur Général Laffon à Monsieur le Général d'Armée, Commandant en Chef Français en Allemagne, 16 November 1946.

²⁵⁴ Shephard *The long road home*, p. 155.

Chapter Two: Ideal labourers or unwanted fascists?

French debates about the recruitment of Eastern European Displaced Persons (DPs)

But we need to act quickly. We have already wasted precious time. The selection mentioned above would have led to remarkable results if it had been carried out straight after the Armistice; It would have been unnoticed; in any case, it would not have caused international complications at a time when the legal status of most DPs was not clearly determined (ex. Poles).

The more we wait, the harder the operation will be. Already, we won't be able to bring in the Balts, which the Russians will claim in full and that we have committed to return. We are at risk to see the same thing happening tomorrow for the Poles.¹

In the spring of 1945, the fast and orderly repatriation of DPs ranked among the foremost priorities of UNRRA and the Supreme Headquarters of the Allied Expeditionary Forces (SHAEF). Amongst these and other Allied authorities, there was substantial agreement that sending DPs home remained a prerequisite for the reconstruction of devastated European countries and the restoration of national sovereignty. All governments demanded the prompt return of their nationals. French authorities anticipated, however, that some DPs, notably those who had voluntarily collaborated with the Nazis, would refuse to return home for fear of retaliation or legal punishment.² Moreover, for French policy-makers, DPs constituted an enticing demographic opportunity to replenish a French population denuded by war. Indeed, viewed from a demographic and socio-economic stand, DPs constituted an unmatched *reservoir* of white, European, young, healthy and malleable workers.³ Approximately three fifths of the DP population was aged between eighteen and forty-five; men were more numerous than women.⁴ Introducing young and robust elements from Europe into France's flagging population might go a long way to reinvigorating the nation.

Government officials and social observers promoted both the recruitment of single men on short-term contracts and the entry of families of *assimilable* DPs on a more long-term basis. On the one hand, DPs promised a temporary solution to France's growing demand for workers. Reverting to the practice adopted after the First World War, French officials initially focused on attracting

¹ MAE, HCRFA, PDR1/14, Report, 28 August 1945, p. 11.

² CAC, Versement 770623, article 83, Copie, Raymond Bousquet pour le Ministre des Affaires Etrangères à Monsieur le Ministre du Travail et de la Sécurité Sociale, Emploi en France des travailleurs yougoslaves recrutés en Allemagne, 15 June 1945.

³ MAE, HCRFA, DGAP, 116, rapport pour la réunion interministérielle des Affaires Allemandes et Autrichiennes du 7.11.1945, Baden-Baden, No.644/DGEF/TRA.D, 31 October 1945.

⁴ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/869, Note pour M. Rivain, Directeur du Cabinet de l'Ambassadeur de France Haut Commissaire de la République Française en Allemagne, [undated].

single men to work for short periods of time.⁵ On the other hand, deep-seated anxieties about France's demographic decline inspired French-policy makers to begin seeking out those *assimilable* DPs judged capable of producing French offspring and being transformed into French citizens.⁶ Collectively, DPs were thereby constructed in terms of a potentially valuable 'blood transfusion' able to counter the menace of long-term stagnation threatening the French nation.⁷ As we saw in chapter one, DP children were the most valued of all, their youth promising better prospects for seamless integration into French society.⁸

What is clear is that DPs were therefore central to French population politics after World War Two. French officials also concurred that swift action was essential if 'international complications' with the Soviet Union were to be averted. Moreover, they worried that other European countries might act first, picking 'the cream of the crop' in DP camps.⁹ By April 1945, the *Commission Interministérielle de l'immigration* already envisaged the entry of large numbers of DPs to France alongside the recruitment of thousands Polish soldiers of the Anders Army residing in England and the entry of German Prisoners of War.¹⁰ In June Gaston Palewski, the Director of De Gaulle's personal cabinet, initiated a recruitment operation 'in close liaison with the Army and the Secret services.'¹¹ In that same month, military officials approached Lieutenant-Colonel Szymanski to guarantee the emigration of Polish DPs before the termination of SHAEF; in other words, before having to negotiate directly with the Lublin government.¹² A week later Minister of Labour Alexandre Parodi posted a formal request with SHAEF's Major General Lewis for the admission of 20,000 miners, 10,000 agricultural workers and 5,000 builders to France, all to be selected from existing DP workers.¹³

Recruiting DPs on this scale was a risky diplomatic venture, particularly for those hailing from the territories annexed by the Soviet Union after 1939 (as will be explained in the next chapter). Yet, on 20 July 1945, French Foreign Minister

⁵ In the 1920s, France was primarily interested in single men hired for short periods of time. By the mid-1930s, however, its preferences changed entirely. The French government established a new regime privileging immigrants who had settled down and produced families. This change turned the single men recruited a decade earlier into 'pariahs.' Mary Dewhurst Lewis *The Boundaries of the Republic: Migrant Rights and the Limits of Universalism in France, 1918-1940* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), p. 248.

⁶ MAE, HCRFA, PDR1/15, Note sur la main d'oeuvre Balte, 10 July 1945.

⁷ Tara Zahra *Lost Children: reconstructing Europe's families after World War II* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2011), pp. 146-172. On immigration as a blood transfusion, see Elisa Camiscioli *Reproducing the French race: Immigration, Intimacy and Embodiment in the early Twentieth Century* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009), pp. 83-91.

⁸ Zahra *Lost Children*, chapter 5.

⁹ Paul-André Rosental *L'intelligence démographique: sciences et politiques des populations en France (1930-1960)* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 2003), p. 110.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 111.

¹² MAE, HCRFA, DGAP, 116, Lettre du Commandant Domergue à l'ingénieur en chef du génie maritime Ziegel, 27 June 1945 ; Also see Lettre du Cdt Rousselet, chef du détachement de GMI 18 G3 à Monsieur le Général d'Armée, Cdt la 1^{ère} A.F, 11 July 1945.

¹³ CAC, Versement 770623, article 83, Ministre du Travail et de la Sécurité Sociale à Monsieur le Major General Lewis, chef de la mission de SHAEF, 3 July 1945.

Georges Bidault approached both Marshal Montgomery for the recruitment of a further batch of DPs residing in the British zone and General Eisenhower for a similar number to be gleaned from DPs in the American zone. Three days later Bidault followed up his initial requests with a letter to General Fraser, the French UNRRA delegate.¹⁴ He wrote: 'I recall in this respect that the entry of those workers into France is considered as a temporary measure for the duration of their contracts, namely 6, 9 or 12 months. When those contracts are due to end, the workers, will if they so wish, be free to proceed to the country which they will have chosen as their final residence.'¹⁵ Lastly, on 28 August 1945 Bidault enjoined Military Governor General Koenig to comply with a policy in the French zone that he summarized in the following terms:

- 1) Not impeding in any way, and even, insofar as we can, facilitating the repatriation of persons who expressed the desire to do so.
- 2) Taking full account of the economic and demographic necessities of our country in our attitude towards healthy and usable elements that, for some reason, refuse to return home. It is obvious that this second course of action must not appear overtly in the current discussions in Berlin.¹⁶

This official injunction illustrates vividly the ambiguities of French DP policy. Almost from its inception, French diplomats sought ways to balance the demands of the Soviet Union and Eastern countries with France's pressing labour needs. While publicly affirming their commitment to DPs' prompt repatriation to the various Eastern repatriation missions, many members of the *Quai d'Orsay*, the Military government and the *Conseil de Contrôle* in Berlin strove, behind-the-scenes, to recruit the healthiest DPs for the reconstruction of France. As explained in the previous chapter, seen from the French point of view, one of the underlying reasons for maintaining UNRRA in the French zone was the hope that this international organization would in practice facilitate DPs' recruitment.¹⁷

French policy-makers' efforts to recruit DPs were not, however, solely motivated by French manpower needs. They were also shaped by the conviction that German over-population posed an inherent security threat to Europe.¹⁸ For many French officials, it remained axiomatic that German overpopulation was a root cause of Nazi expansionism. Therefore, neither the *Quai d'Orsay* nor the

¹⁴ CAC, Versement 770623, article 83, Lettre du Ministre du Travail et de la Sécurité Sociale à Monsieur le Major General Redman, 1647, 18 octobre 1945 ; Lettre du Ministère des Affaires Etrangères à Monsieur le Brigadier General Fraser, délégué de l'UNRRA en France.

¹⁵ CAC, Versement 770623, article 83, Copie, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, signed Bidault, 20 July 1945.

¹⁶ MAE, HCRFA, ADM 40, Copie Télégramme confidentiel, Ministre des Affaires Etrangères à Général Koenig, 28 August 1945.

¹⁷ CAC, Versement 770623, article 83, Lettre du Ministère des Affaires Etrangères à Monsieur le Ministre du Travail (Directeur Générale de la Main d'Oeuvre), 24 July 1945.

¹⁸ MAE, Affaires Economiques et financières, Affaires Allemandes et autrichiennes, 1944-1949, 131, Note sur le Problème démographique allemand, Direction générale des affaires administratives et sociales, 8 February 1947.

French military government in Germany wanted to see DPs permanently settled in Germany.¹⁹ They further dreaded that the intermingling of various ethnicities in Germany might serve as a breeding ground for rebellion.²⁰ Yet, with the influx of some 12 million German expellees, Germany's own population had grown by 7.5 per cent since 1939 with obvious threatening implications for France's security.²¹ As Tara Zahra puts it, '[b]y strategically draining Germany of its 'excess' population [...] French officials hoped to prevent Germany from rising again to seek *Lebensraum* (living space) in the East and West.'²²

Despite the early high hopes attached to it and intense diplomatic negotiation surrounding it, it was not until April 1947 that a coordinated recruitment scheme was launched in the French zone, quickly followed in the summer of 1947 by equivalent efforts in the British and American zones. These initiatives lagged behind the earlier Belgium's equivalent 'Operation Black Diamond' scheme and the British 'Westward Ho!' scheme by almost a full twelve months.²³ Moreover, as will be explained in chapter Seven, the French programme achieved very meagre results.²⁴ This raises unaddressed historical questions. Why, despite France's early and eager interest, did the recruitment of Eastern European Displaced Persons not start until April 1947? Did difficulties and delays stem essentially from diplomatic considerations in the context of the nascent Cold War? Were they, on the contrary, linked to *domestic* ideological divisions that surfaced in the immediate aftermath of the Liberation? Or was French sluggishness instead more deeply related to abiding prejudices about the inability of *Slavic* populations to assimilate in France? These questions are investigated in this chapter.

Let us begin with UNRRA. To the disappointment of French officials in their occupation zone, the UN agency did not offer the diplomatic framework for rapid DP transfers to France. Indeed, to some degree, it did the opposite, UNRRA Resolution 71 imposing an obligation on its field staff to encourage the repatriation of displaced persons, rather than facilitating DPs' recruitment to third countries.²⁵ This setback was less critical to the delayed implementation of France's recruitment scheme than several other related factors. One was an

¹⁹ NA, FO/945/470, Note of informal discussion in the office of Monsieur Bousquet, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on the subject of German emigration, on 30 April 1947.

²⁰ MAE, HCRFA, PDR3/5, Situation démographique de la Zone Française d'Occupation en rapport avec les transferts de population, le rapatriement des prisonniers de guerre et des réfugiés, le recrutement de main d'oeuvre pour la France. [undated; 1947?]; MAE, Affaires Economiques et financières, Affaires Allemandes et autrichiennes, 1944-1949, 131, Note sur le Problème démographique allemand, Direction générale des affaires administratives et sociales, 8 February 1947.

²¹ Zahra *Lost Children*, p. 152.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 147.

²³ Daniel Cohen *In war's wake: Europe's Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), particularly chapter 5.

²⁴ Louis Chevalier 'Bilan d'une immigration' *Population* Vol. 5, No. 1(1950), pp. 129-140, p. 130.

²⁵ UNRRA, ERO Files, S-0523-0645-03, D. Ward to Brigadier Fraser, 26 September 1945.

overspill from emergent political rivalries in France. In the highly competitive political environment characteristic of the first years of the Provisional Government and the Fourth Republic, the question of the recruitment of DPs provoked deep splits between political parties, population experts, diplomats and occupation authorities. Put simply, the bitterness of the debates over DP recruitment mirrored the nascent Fourth Republic's internal divisions. On one hand, some French planners saw DPs as a rich source of human capital for the economic and social reconstruction of France. As explained earlier, the philosophy behind their approach was strongly nationalist and republican. They were determined to transform young refugees into assimilated immigrants and thus into model citizens of the French national community. On the other hand, communist decision-makers and their ideological fellow travellers on the French Left were strongly opposed to the recruitment of what they regarded as *fascist* DPs. A May 1946 British Foreign Office report picked up this point:

The Minister of Reconstruction, Industrial Production and Labour are all Communists. Moreover, the Communist sympathies of the majority of French trade unions make it necessary for the French government to be very careful of accepting refugees whose political outlook is likely to give rise to conflict with French workers and therefore to industrial trouble. This applies particularly to dissident Poles and Yugoslavs. We have already experienced the reluctance of the French to accept anti-Warsaw Poles, in spite of France's need of manpower.²⁶

Certainly the recruitment of DPs elicited particularly virulent opposition from the Ministry of Labour. From November 1945 to May 1947, with the exception of Daniel Meyer's brief interlude at the Ministry in December 1946-January 1947 during Léon Blum's caretaker government, the Ministry of Labour was solidly directed by Amboise Croizat, a former metal worker, trade unionist, and long-serving communist organiser.²⁷ As explained more fully below, trade unionists also played a significant role in opposing DP recruitment. At the Liberation, union chiefs enjoyed unprecedented access to immigration control by dint of their presence on the Board of Directors of the newly created *Office National d'Immigration* (ONI).

But there was more at stake than this political and ideological opposition emerging from within the Ministry of Labour and the ONI. Beneath the surface of what was an ostensibly political and ideological opposition lay a labyrinth of

²⁶ NA, FO 371/57711/0017, 218/8/46, Letter from Duff Cooper to Sir George Rendel, Paris, 21 May 1946.

²⁷ Alain Chatriot 'L'introuvable démocratie sociale: débats intellectuels, luttes politiques, acteurs sociaux et administratifs, 1944-1950' in Alain Chatriot, Odile Join-Lambert and Vincent Viet (eds) *Les politiques du Travail (1906-2006)* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2006), pp. 385-401, p. 388.

economic fears, a traditional protectionist reflex, as well as a raft of moral and cultural concerns about the 'assimilability' and 'desirability' of DPs. As we shall see, population experts and policy-makers were obsessed with the issue of assimilation.²⁸ They evaluated the cultural and economic desirability of DPs in nationalist, political, gender, class, religious, professional and age-specific terms. And their assessments varied widely. While some judged DPs to be valuable migrants, others believed that they were inassimilable from a cultural, economic, political or biological standpoint. Alongside DPs' ethnic origins, their wartime experiences raised several concerns. Among these, the strength of their national (and religious) sentiments, evidence of collaboration with the Nazis, and the perceived consequences of their moral and sexual degradation in Nazi labour camps stood out. These preoccupations were, in turn, informed by memories of the difficult integration of Polish workers during the interwar years. And they were sharpened by moral fears sparked by more recent French experiences of deportation. Thus, the challenges posed by the recruitment of DPs were far greater than a division between anti-communist and communist arguments might imply. Debates over the recruitment of DPs triggered controversy about how far DPs could or should be assimilated into the nation state, about the presumed superiority or inferiority of races, and about the nature of French national identity itself.

Pursuing some of the themes developed in the recent historiography of France's post-war immigration policies, this chapter follows the approach of historians Dietmar Hüser and Talbot Imlay in demonstrating that one cannot grasp the full ambiguities of French foreign (and here) DP policies without examining the domestic disputes that shaped them.²⁹ It examines the reasons why contradictory *official* instructions about the recruitment of DPs reached the French zone, thereby exacerbating the conflict between the PDR Direction, UNRRA officials and relief workers described in the previous chapter. The argument developed here also engages with new trends in the historiography of immigration control, which emphasise the complexity of institutions involved in the management of immigration and the highly contradictory nature of state practices.³⁰ Its source base draws primarily from government and occupation agency correspondence that reveals French officials' anxieties and perceptions.

²⁸ Robert Debré et Alfred Sauvy *Des Français pour la France. Le problème de la population* (Paris: Gallimard, 1946), p. 123.

²⁹ Dietmar Hüser *Frankreichs "Doppelte Deutschlandpolitik." Dynamik aus der Defensive - Planen, Entscheiden, Umsetzen in gesellschaftlichen und wirtschaftlichen, innen- und außenpolitischen Krisenzeiten 1944 – 1950* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1996); Talbot Imlay 'A success story? The Foreign Policies of France's Fourth Republic' *Contemporary European History*, Vol. 18, No. 4 (2009), p. 499–519.

³⁰ Anne-Sophie Bruno, Philippe Rygiel, Alexis Spire and Claire Zalc 'Judged on their Paperwork: the processing of migrant applications for Residence and Work Permits in France (1917-1984)' *Population* (English edition), Vol. 61, No. 5/6 (2006), pp. 621-643.

The work of social scientists, practitioners of the scientific study of working practices (*science du travail*), jurists, demographers, racial theorists and journalists are also used, albeit not in a systematic matter, to shed light on the cultural context in which official debates unfold. (Chapter Seven returns to this theme, digging deeper into the discrepancy between official instructions, local perceptions and administrative practices.)

With this in view, the aim of the remaining chapter sections is threefold. First is to explain that the diplomatic risk of antagonizing the Soviet Union and Poland played a decreasing role in French calculations. Second is to show that contradictory perceptions of DPs stemmed from conflicted memories of the interwar years and wartime experiences as much as from Cold War tensions. And, third is to demonstrate that, despite concerted calls for increased economic immigration, debates over the recruitment of DPs revealed a France that was neither particularly welcoming nor remotely united in the immediate post-Liberation period.³¹

Facing a demographic emergency

Like many European countries, France faced a huge labour shortage at the Liberation. The Ministry of Reconstruction and Urbanism considered that French reconstruction required twenty billion man-hours, or, more meaningfully, 500,000 supplementary workers.³² Anxious debates about manpower requirements were aggravated in France by a lingering fear of demographic decline dating from the 1880s, an anxiety that was fuelled by the losses France experienced during two world wars.³³ As Paul-André Rosental points out, demographic preoccupations haunted the political culture of France since the late nineteenth-century.³⁴ Yet, in 1945, a sense of emergency exacerbated this long-running demographic obsession.³⁵ As Karen Adler puts it, Liberation was

³¹ Karen Adler 'Nation and Alienation: Retrials of Home in Post-war French film' *History, the Journal of the Historical Association*, Vol. 96, No. 323 (2011), p. 326-353, p. 351.

³² Laure Pitti 'Le Ministère du Travail et les migrations depuis 1945: discours d'acteurs, discours d'experts' in Chatriot, Join-Lambert et Viet (ed) *Les politiques du Travail (1906-2006)*, pp. 329-342, p. 335.

³³ Rosental *L'intelligence démographique*, p. 9. Vincent Viet 'Les politiques de la main-d'oeuvre en Europe à l'heure de la reconstruction' *Les reconstructions en Europe 1945-1949* (Bruxelles: Complexe, 1997), pp. 191-212 ; Also see Viet 'La politique de l'immigration entre main d'oeuvre et population' in Serge Berstein et Pierre Milza (eds) *L'année 1947* (Paris : Presses de Sciences Po, 2000), pp. 461-485, p. 463.

³⁴ France's demographic obsession was mainly the result of the nature of France's demographic transition. Fertility rates declined relatively early in the nineteenth century and mortality rates fell at approximately the same pace, resulting in stagnant population growth. From this time on, an array of reformists (population experts, statisticians, doctors...) mobilized around a common goal: the fight against French depopulation. They believed that vigorous population growth was a necessary precondition for national greatness. These specialists were divided between *populationistes*, who thought that population should be increased by any means including immigration, and *natalistes*, who considered that the only solution was to stimulate French birthrate. Rosental *L'intelligence démographique*, p. 9 ; Also see Hervé Le Bras *Marianne et les lapins. L'obsession démographique* (Paris: Hachette, 1991).

³⁵ Rosental *L'intelligence démographique*, p. 101.

the ‘demographers’ moment.’ Amid all the rivalry and discord intrinsic to the resistance and the Vichy experience, one note of agreement remained: France was under-populated. On this, socialists, communists, Gaullists and Christian republicans all concurred with the disgraced collaborationists of the far right.³⁶ Pétain had indeed associated national weakness with the low birth rates and famously pinned the defeat of 1940 on ‘too few children, too few arms, too few allies.’³⁷

On 3 March 1945, De Gaulle even echoed his former Vichy opponent when he told the Constituent Assembly (*Assemblée Consultative*), the proto-parliament elected to devise the constitution of the Fourth Republic, that France needed ‘12 million babies’ in the next ten years. He went on to identify immigration as a critical policy priority.³⁸ As population experts Robert Debré and Albert Sauvy observed, everyone agreed that France could not rise from the destruction ‘with the weakness of the elderly’; it needed instead the *élan de la jeunesse* to undertake bold reforms.³⁹ This sense of demographic emergency inspired Francis Perrin of the newly-created *Institut National d’Etudes démographiques* (INED) to declare that the millions of DPs crowding Europe’s refugee camps represented an invaluable resource for France. ‘There are currently masses of available candidates for immigration in the world. Now is the moment to choose those who will be the most easily *assimilable*. In two years, it will be too late.’⁴⁰

Memories of the economic crisis of the 1930s also prompted French authorities to consider measures to protect the native workforce. At the end of the war, France faced enormous food and housing shortages. A quarter of the housing stock had been destroyed during the war and post-war reconstruction initially prioritized the rebuilding of ports, railways and roads, rather than new housing stock.⁴¹ Industrial infrastructure was in ruins, production levels had plunged, shortages were fuelling inflation, and factories were out-dated and in urgent need of modernization. Despite the commensurately large reconstruction demands, fears of unemployment shaped immigration debates.⁴² Trade unionists and workers’ representatives feared the arrival of migrant workers. They believed that DPs, like foreign migrants in general, undermined the labour

³⁶ Karen Adler *Jews and Gender in Liberation France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 68; Also see Andrew Shennan *Rethinking France. Plans for Renewal 1940-1946* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), pp. 208-210.

³⁷ Adler *Jews and Gender*, p. 87.

³⁸ Charles de Gaulle *Discours et messages* (Paris: Plon, 1970), p. 530. Quoted in Stéphane Courtois ‘Le PCF et la question de l’immigration, 1936-1948’ in Pierre Milza et Denis Peschanski (eds) *Exils et migration. Italiens et Espagnols en France, 1938-1946* (Paris: L’Harmattan, 1994), pp. 217-232, p. 227.

³⁹ Debré and Sauvy *Des Français pour la France*, p. 9.

⁴⁰ Rosental *L’intelligence démographique*, p. 110 ; Zahra *Lost children*, pp. 148-149.

⁴¹ Robert Gildea *France since 1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 95.

⁴² Chevalier ‘Bilan d’une immigration’, p. 132.

market by accepting inferior wages and more limited social protection.⁴³ Economists, practitioners of work sciences and workers' representatives recalled that unemployment had fostered the rise of Nazism. Full employment was regarded as an 'absolute necessity.'⁴⁴

Debates about the recruitment of DPs must be situated within this extraordinary context of the immediate post-war years when immigration debates were shaped by the contradictory demands of demographic emergency and the necessity to protect the national workforce and guarantee full employment. Successive coalition governments embarked on a radical redefinition of France's immigration policies and an institutional redesign of its mechanisms of immigration control.⁴⁵ Furthermore, the Liberation briefly transformed the balance of power between employers and workers. As Robert Gildea notes, 'employers were weakened and discredited by what amounted to the failure of capitalism in the 1930s and for having profited from the Occupation by producing for the German war economy.'⁴⁶ The 'nationalization' of immigration control gave trade unionists unprecedented access to immigration control mechanisms. Not only did workers' representatives gain unparalleled representation, but their expectations of democratic decision-making and free collective bargaining in the workplace were equally unprecedented.⁴⁷

In order to fully grasp the reasons behind the delays that affected the launch of the DPs' recruitment scheme, we need therefore to return to the institutional and legislative transformation that occurred between April and December 1945.

Institutional rivalries

Debates over the recruitment of DPs occurred in the context of a surfeit of institutions (*surproduction institutionnelle*) in charge of population planning.⁴⁸ This multiplication of administrative agencies exacerbated rivalries between official actors and outside experts who voiced more widespread population concerns. After the Liberation, the provisional government created a new Ministry of Population and Public Health, which replaced the former Ministry of

⁴³ Léon Gani *Syndicats et Travailleurs immigrés* (Paris: Editions sociales, 1972); Paul-André Rosental 'Géopolitique et Etat-providence. Le BIT et la politique mondiale des migrations dans l'entre-deux-guerres' in *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, Vol.61, No.1 (2006), pp. 99-134, p.108.

⁴⁴ Jean-Pierre Le Crom 'Les années "fastes" de la *Revue française du Travail (1946-1948)*', *Revue française des affaires sociales*, Vol. 4, No. 4 (2006), pp. 25-43, p. 33.

⁴⁵ Viet 'La politique de l'immigration entre main d'oeuvre et population', p. 462.

⁴⁶ Gildea *France since 1945*, p. 97.

⁴⁷ Adam Steinhouse *Workers' participation in Post-Liberation France* (London: Lexington books, 2001), p. 200.

⁴⁸ Rosental *L'intelligence démographique*, p. 101.

Health. This was quickly followed by a decree in March 1945 establishing the *Haut Comité Consultatif de la Population et de la Famille*, a Consultative Committee on Population and the Family, which was originally created in 1939, but subsequently suppressed by Vichy. Six months later, in October 1945, the *Institut national d'études démographiques* (INED) was founded. Closely linked to the Ministry of Population, the INED became the key instrument of 'populationist' research and policy, placing scientists and scientific planning at the centre of government thinking.⁴⁹ Just a month later, a 2 November 1945 ordinance equipped France with a comprehensive juridical system to control immigration flows. The *Office National d'Immigration* (ONI) was vested with sole control over the recruitment and entry of foreigners into France. Almost at a stroke, the ONI thus became a *vaste bureau d'embauche nationale* designed to safeguard the French nation, 'through an effective selection process based on considerations of health, employment and moral conduct' as well as protecting foreign workers 'against diverse forms of exploitation' and the abuses that many had previously experienced.⁵⁰ Both employers' organizations and trade unions were represented on the ONI's board of directors. Not until the decree issued on the 26 March 1946 was the ONI firmly placed under the joint supervision of the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Population.

As in many other domains of French planning, this panoply of measures to regulate immigration and population growth did not represent some sort of 'year zero'.⁵¹ Pro-natalist measures were devised by proponents, both official and non-official, in the inter-war years.⁵² State intervention in immigration control took shape in the First World War, was extended in the 1920s, and expanded further under Vichy.⁵³ Even so, the inter-war period saw France

⁴⁹ Adler *Jews and Gender*, p. 73.

⁵⁰ Maxim Silverman *Deconstructing the Nation: immigration, Racism and Citizenship in Modern France* (New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 39; Alexis Spire *Etrangers à la carte. L'administration de l'immigration en France, 1945-1975* (Paris: Grasset, 2005), p. 98; Boris Dänzer-Kantof *Immigrés en France. De l'ONI à l'OFII, histoire d'une institution chargée de l'immigration et de l'intégration des étrangers, 1945-2010* (Paris: Cherche-midi, 2011), p. 11.

⁵¹ Jean-Louis Robert 'Une idée qui vient de loin. Les nationalisations dans l'histoire du mouvement ouvrier français. (1895-1939) in Andrieu, Claire; Levan, Lucette and Prost, Antoine (eds) *Les nationalisations de la Libération. De l'utopie au compromis* (Paris: Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, 1987), pp. 21-39; Herrick Chapman 'France's Liberation Era, 1944-47: a Social and Economic Settlement?' Andrew Knapp (eds) *The Uncertain Foundation, France at the Libération, 1944-1947* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 103-120, p. 103; Gerard Bossuat 'The Modernization of France: a New Economic and Social Order after the Second World War?', Dominik Geppert (ed) *The postwar challenge, 1945-1958* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 151-178; Eric Jabbari *Pierre Laroque and the Welfare State in Post-war France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

⁵² French authorities attempted to establish a National immigration office in inter-war France. Yet, successive governments could not decide to which ministry it should be entrusted. Caroline Douki, David Feldman et Paul-André Rosental 'Pour une histoire relationnelle du ministère du Travail en France, en Italie et au Royaume-Uni dans l'entre-deux-guerres: le transnational, le bilatéral et l'interministériel en matière de politique migratoire', Chatriot, Join-Lambert et Viet (ed) *Les politiques du Travail (1906-2006)*, pp. 143-159, p. 148.

⁵³ Modern immigration control did not emerge in 1945 in France, but appeared in the context of the demobilization that followed the Great War. Witnessing a formidable expansion of immigration to satisfy the economic demands of the mobilization, the First World War gave way to the first immigration regulatory structures. Alexis Spire 'Rethinking the political dimension of migrations' *Contemporary European History*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (2009), pp. 135-144; Clifford Rosenberg *Policing Paris: The Origins of Modern Immigration Control between the Wars* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006); Lewis *The Boundaries of the Republic*.

become the largest recipient of immigrants in the industrialised world.⁵⁴ Nearly three million foreigners arrived in France in these years, and three-quarters of all demographic growth could be attributed to immigration.⁵⁵ Several studies have also drawn attention to the continuities in personnel and ideas between Third Republic institutions and the newly created administrations of the late 1944 and early 1945.⁵⁶ They have demonstrated that ethnic and racial stereotypes continued to shape the logic of immigration in post-war France.

Perhaps in no area have the claims for continuity been more pronounced than in that of the Consultative Committee on Population and the Family.⁵⁷ Georges Mauco was the secretary of the Consultative Committee, charged with advising the provisional government on the proposed new statute on immigration. Mauco's views echoed the scientific racism of the Vichy years. His 'racial hierarchy' typifies the persistence into the Liberation era of the anti-Semitism that had poisoned the late Third Republic.⁵⁸ Like Jews, Eastern European DPs did not rank highly in his hierarchy of desirability. Germans, on the contrary, were rated amongst the most desirable candidates for immigration to France, alongside 'Nordic' migrants such as Scandinavians, Finns, Danes, Irish, English, Belgians and Swiss nationals.⁵⁹

To be sure, some scholars question whether the influence of Mauco was quite so critical. According to Patrick Weil, the role of *Vichy collaborator Mauco* within the remaking of French nationality in 1945 mirrored an ideological division between, on the one hand, 'the more timorous and clearly anti-Semitic approaches' to national revival, and, on the other hand, a more 'egalitarian conception of the French republic' promoted by French *résistants*, such as René Cassin, President of the Legal Committee of the CFLN, and Adrien Tixier, Interior Minister in Charles de Gaulle's provisional government.⁶⁰ More recently, Greg Burgess has argued that historians have paid disproportionate attention to Mauco's views. '[B]y placing him and his racial ideas at the centre of their historical analyses, they in fact attribute him with a disproportional influence on

⁵⁴ France had 515 immigrants for 100,000 inhabitants, while the United States had 192 for 100,000 inhabitants. Debré and Sauvy *Des Français pour la France*, pp. 89-90.

⁵⁵ Camiscioli *Reproducing the French race*, p. 23.

⁵⁶ Patrick Weil, 'Racisme et discrimination dans la politique Française de l'immigration 1938-1945/1974-1995' *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d'histoire*, Vol. 47, No. 47 (1995), pp. 77-102; Patrick *How to Be French: Nationality in the Making since 1789* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), pp. 131-135; Adler *Jews and Gender*; Rosental *L'intelligence démographique*.

⁵⁷ On Georges Mauco and his role in the Consultative Committee see notably Patrick Weil, 'Racisme et discrimination dans la politique Française de l'immigration', pp. 77-102; Weil 'Georges Mauco, expert en immigration: Ethnoracisme pratique et antisémitisme fielleux' in Pierre-André Taguieff (ed) *L'antisémitisme de plume 1940-1944*. (Paris: Berg International, 1999), pp. 267-276; For a recent reappraisal of Mauco's role see Burgess 'The Demographers' moment.'

⁵⁸ Adler *Jews and Gender*, pp. 108-109.

⁵⁹ Burgess 'The Demographers' moment', p. 171.

⁶⁰ Patrick Weil 'The Return of Jews in the nationality of in the Territory of France', *Jews are coming back: the return of the Jews to their countries of origins after WWII*, David Bankier (ed) (New York, Oxford: Bergahn Books, 2005), pp. 58-71, pp. 70-71.

law-making and policy.⁶¹ Certainly, in the debates over the recruitment of DPs, the Consultative Committee exerted limited influence, particularly when compared to that of the Ministry of Labour or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.⁶²

Related to these debates, Alexis Spire's work has prompted fresh reflection on France's enduring institutional culture thanks to his examination of the administrative processing and jurisdictional disputes between the Ministry of Population, the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Interior.⁶³ Scrutinizing the influence of trade-unions in the ONI, he has convincingly demonstrated that 'immigration policy [is] not only the product of legislation, but also the implementation of a set of practices, involving several administrative entities each driven by their own rationale.'⁶⁴ At the level of national government, Spire distinguishes three such 'rationales' at work: the first, a demographic rationale, was promoted by the Ministry of Population. It focused on the search for *assimilable* migrants in order to repopulate France. The second, a 'police rationale', was embodied by the Ministry of Interior, which sought to ensure that migrants posed no threat to public order. Finally a 'manpower rationale' operated within the Ministry of Labour, which tried to reconcile the (often contradictory) needs of the French economy with the necessity to safeguard the interests of the existing French national workforce.⁶⁵ In the case of DPs, as explained in the introduction, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also had its own rationale, which was strongly influenced by France's security needs.

In matters of DP policy, the Ministry of Population felt that its demographic injunctions were progressively swept away, if not completely ignored.⁶⁶ Population Minister Robert Prigent endorsed the recruitment of DPs. After touring Germany, he declared '[H]aving witnessed their clean and skilfully arranged interiors in these ruined barracks [...] we are convinced that they could restore our abandoned villages and revive dying lands.'⁶⁷ Unlike interwar Polish migrants who still hoped to return to their own country one day, Prigent argued that the DPs offered 'long term demographic solutions.'⁶⁸ He believed that the immigration of DPs, 'à caractère permanent' might offset the

⁶¹ Burgess 'The Demographers' moment', p. 168.

⁶² Laure Pitti has highlighted the centrality of the Ministry of Labour in the management of immigration in post-Liberation France. 'Le Ministère du Travail et les migrations depuis 1945: discours d'acteurs, discours d'experts' in Chatriot, Join-Lambert et Viet (ed) *Les politiques du Travail (1906-2006)*, pp. 329-342, p. 331. On the historical debate about the role of the Ministry of Labour within the broader political context at liberation see the introduction to this book.

⁶³ Spire *Etrangers à la carte*. Also see Carliene Kennedy-Brenner *Les Travailleurs étrangers et les politiques d'immigration: le cas de la France* (OECD Publishing, 1979); Silverman *Deconstructing the Nation*, pp. 38-42.

⁶⁴ Bruno, Rygiel, Spire and Zalc 'Judged on their Paperwork', p. 623.

⁶⁵ Spire *Etrangers à la carte*, p. 140.

⁶⁶ Max Silverman *Deconstructing the nation*, pp. 38-42.

⁶⁷ Quoted in Cohen in *War's wake*, p. 104.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, p. 104.

depopulation of the French countryside (*les campagnes françaises*).⁶⁹ His views were reminiscent of interwar theories on agricultural colonisation, notably those advocated by Jean Duhamel in 1927. In contrast with the recruitment of single male workers on temporary work contracts, Duhamel championed the entry of families, which would be settled in rural areas either as tenant farmers or landowners.⁷⁰ He believed that rural life was preferable for the integration and *assimilation* of Polish workers when compared to an urban and industrialized environment.⁷¹

For all the enthusiasm of its Minister, the Ministry of Population had no representative in the Parliamentary information mission, which travelled through the three Western zones between mid February and March 1947. This Parliamentary Mission was charged with assessing the professional aptitudes and ethnic background of DPs. It was originally composed of two representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Bousquet and Perrier), three representatives of the Ministry of Labour (Maillet, Briquet and Guerard), a CGT representative, a *Confédération Générale de l'Agriculture* (agricultural trade-union) representative, an interpreter, and an ONI representative.⁷² They were soon to be joined by a representative of the *charbonnages de France* (National Coal Board), a representative of the French Confederation of Christian Workers (CFT) and a representative of the Ministry of National Economy.⁷³ On 4 June 1947, when plans for the recruitment of DPs were finally implemented, the resulting initiatives were entrusted to an ONI delegation, directed by Mr. Hornez, representative of the Ministry of Labour.⁷⁴ Once again, the Ministry of Population was not represented. In addition, 'the requirement that each entrant possess a work permit from the Ministry of Labour meant that immigration which did take place under the auspices of the ONI would necessarily be tied to the domestic employment scene and not to long-range demographic considerations.'⁷⁵

On 15 April 1947, the Minister of Population sent a letter of protest to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, recalling that, according to the decree of 24 December 1945, 'all the questions regarding immigration and population were

⁶⁹ CAC, Versement 770623, article 83, Le Ministre de l'Agriculture au Ministre du Travail, 23 August 1945.

⁷⁰ Janine Ponty *Polonais méconnus. Histoire des travailleurs immigrés en France dans l'entre-deux-guerres* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1988), p. 241.

⁷¹ Spire *Etrangers à la carte*, p. 140.

⁷² MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/822, Télégramme Roger Bloch pour Baden (Cabinet), 4 February 1947.

⁷³ CAC, Versement 770623, article 172, rapport commun établi par les membres de la mission d'information sur le problème des personnes déplacées des trois zones d'occupation en Allemagne (9 au 23 février 1947), [2 May 1947].

⁷⁴ CAC, Versement 770623, article 172, Décision relative à l'organisation du recrutement des travailleurs en Allemagne et en Autriche, Ministre du Travail et de la Sécurité Sociale, 4 June 1947.

⁷⁵ Quoted in Silverman *Deconstructing the Nation*, p. 39.

within its remit.⁷⁶ Despite this apparently unequivocal statement, he had not been consulted concerning the draft agreement to be signed with the American and British Authorities:

Regarding the content of the problem, I feel I ought to formulate some reservations: 1) It seems that the draft agreement does not take into account demographic considerations regarding the origins of Displaced Persons 2) Some commitments are made concerning the arrival of displaced persons' families without prior enquiry to determine whether there was sufficient housing to accommodate them.⁷⁷

Without doubt, the Ministry of Population was progressively erased from the decision-making process. Yet its demographic considerations were not entirely dismissed. DPs' ethnic origins and the 'assimilation' values attributed to them continued to structure official attempts to regulate their entry.⁷⁸

Admittedly, the ordinance passed on November 2, 1945 officially banned the use of ethnic criteria in the immigrant selection process. The agreement concluded with British and American authorities in June 1947 similarly dismissed DPs' ethnic origins.⁷⁹ But the pressure to take such factors into account persisted informally and a preference for certain ethnicities was undeniably maintained.⁸⁰ The debates over the recruitment of DPs pointed to what Paul-André Rosental has famously termed France's *obsession assimilatrice*. This obsession went hand in hand with an identity-related nationalism, which justified all sorts of ethnic taxonomy.⁸¹ As Karen Adler observes, immigrants 'had to be selected as individuals, but individuals from some categories were less likely to pass muster than others.'⁸² As she concludes, 'To separate profession, health and class from ethnicity is to misconstrue ethnic typologization for sociology.'⁸³

Alexis Spire has demonstrated that Italians topped French charts of probity at the Liberation, while Algerians (apart maybe from North African Berbers) were deemed impossible to assimilate. 'Progressively, at the Liberation, the category of the Italian migrant who intended to settle definitively in France and later on to be joined by his family, is established and institutionalized, in contrast with the Algerian worker, who was seen as a

⁷⁶ CAC, Versement 770623, article 172, Lettre du Ministre de la Santé Publique et de la Population à Monsieur le Ministre des Affaires Etrangères, Direction Générale des Affaires Administratives et Sociales, 15 April 1947.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Rosental *L'intelligence démographique*, p. 112.

⁷⁹ NA, FO/945/470, Telegram from the British Embassy, Duff Cooper, N.523, 12 June 1947.

⁸⁰ Viet La politique de l'immigration entre main d'oeuvre et population', p. 464.

⁸¹ Rosental *L'intelligence démographique*, pp. 111-112.

⁸² Adler *Jews and Gender*, p. 86.

⁸³ Ibid, p. 141.

temporary labour force, expected to return home eventually.⁸⁴ Agricultural trade unionist René Massot argued that the workforce that one could find in DP camps offered, from a professional point of view, more 'guarantees' than those originating from Italy.⁸⁵ But did everyone concur on this? And how did this *obsession assimilatrice* impact on DPs?

Obsession assimilatrice

French policy-makers concurred that DPs had to be ranked alongside foreign workers. French attempts to recruit DPs were not a charitable enterprise: French planners were only interested in good and healthy workers able to work in specific fields, notably in French mines and agriculture. In other words, France was eager to transform Europe's post-war humanitarian crisis into an economic and demographic opportunity. Admittedly, the 1947 Parliamentary Mission recommended encouraging the recruitment of DPs who had been persecuted by the Nazis, arguing that this would both hasten their assimilation and do them a humanitarian service.

The visit to the various camps revealed that a certain amount of individual humanitarian cases seemed interesting in regard to their rapid assimilation: These are

- a) DPs with relatives in France
- b) DPs having particularly suffered under the Nazis (one of them had been held four years in Buchenwald)
- c) DPs who have worked in France
- d) DPs having lost all their families and ties with their countries of origin.⁸⁶

In practice, the French recruitment scheme rarely did justice to the suffering of the war's various victims. The closer scrutiny of DPs' health, professional skills, and ethnic origins shows that DPs were treated above all as a large migrant group upon whom France could call for its own needs. They were to be admitted within the streams of foreign workers and their legal status was fixed to their work and residence permits. By holding them to the same regulatory regime as applied to other foreigners, French authorities diminished the DPs' distinct moral status as persons in flight from oppression.

Experts advocated a selection policy that focused on DPs' professional ability, their health and physical aptitude, their social background and, finally, their behaviour. Only those DPs considered to be physically fit and with the

⁸⁴ Alexis Spire 'Un régime dérogatoire pour une immigration convoitée. Les politiques françaises et italiennes d'immigration/emigration après 1945' in *Studi Emigrazione/Migration Studies*, Vol. 146 (2002), pp. 309-323.

⁸⁵ CAC, Versement 770623, article 172, Rapport sur les possibilités de recrutement parmi les "personnes déplacées" en Allemagne, question vue sous l'angle special agricole [undated].

⁸⁶ CAC, Versement 770623, article 172, rapport commun établi par les membres de la mission d'information sur le problème des personnes déplacées des trois zones d'occupation en Allemagne (9 au 23 février 1947), [2 May 1947], p. 8.

greatest capacity for adjustment were to be selected. By April 1945, the Fifth Bureau of the First Army had already assessed the Polish DP population and established that the majority of Polish workers were in good physical condition.⁸⁷ Various prospecting missions were then sent to Germany in the autumn of 1945. The Ministry of Agriculture, for instance, dispatched a recruitment mission to the American occupation zone in Western Germany. This mission concluded that the mass of DPs constituted the 'only available reservoir' for labour, Belgium, Italy, Spain and North Africa being unable at that time to provide France with the workers it urgently required.⁸⁸ The mission exhorted the French government to launch its recruitment program forthwith.⁸⁹ In the same vein, a report from Monsieur Perrier, technical adviser and *chef du service de repartition de la main d'oeuvre* of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, urged the government to act quickly before DPs were attracted by other host countries offering better working and living conditions, such as Canada, Australia and South Africa.⁹⁰

Immigration discourses about the desirability of certain DPs over others and their relative aptitudes for work and reproduction revealed the persistence of ethnic prejudices in post-Liberation France. Despite hosting several post-war European Zionist organizations and allowing the transit of migrants to Palestine through French territory, French governments showed no interest in Jewish DPs as migrant workers.⁹¹ The official reason – not borne out by any evidence – was that Jewish DPs lacked the professional skills that France required. More pertinent were enduring prejudices. Anne Grynberg has, for example, highlighted the 'anti-Jewish' tone of the Communist party and *L'Humanité's* editorial comment.⁹² France was not the only country to display prejudice and discrimination towards Jewish migrants; New World countries were equally hostile. Suzanne Rutland has, for instance, shown that in Australia 'Jews were seen as undesirable because they were considered 'clannish, aggressive and

⁸⁷ MAE, HCRFA, Direction générale des Affaires politiques, 116, Copie du rapport pour la réunion interministérielle des Affaires Allemandes et Autrichiennes du 7.11.1945, Baden-Baden, No.644/DGEF/TRA.D, 31 October 1945.

⁸⁸ CAC, Versement 770623, article 83, Le Ministre de l'Agriculture à Monsieur le Ministre du Travail, Paris, 23 August 1945.

⁸⁹ CAC, Versement 770623, article 83, Perrier, Recrutement de la main d'œuvre agricole parmi les « Personnes Déplacées », Baden-Baden, 5 October 1945.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Julia Maspero 'La politique française à l'égard de l'émigration juive polonaise de l'immédiat après-guerre' in *Bulletin du Centre de recherche français à Jérusalem*, [en ligne] 22 (2011), mis en ligne le 25 mars 2012, consulté le 3 Octobre 2012. URL: <http://bcfrj.revues.org/6513>.

⁹² Anne Grynberg 'Des signes de resurgence de l'antisémitisme dans la France de l'après-guerre (1945-1953)', *Les cahiers de la Shoah*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (2001), pp 171-223. Also see Pierre Birnbaum *Un mythe politique: 'la République juive' de Léon Blum à Pierre Mendès France* (Paris: Fayard, 1988); Richard C. Vinen 'The End of an Ideology? Right-wing Antisemitism in France, 1944-1970' *The Historical Journal* Vol. 37, No. 2 (1994), pp. 365-388.

cosmopolitan', a group which did not assimilate easily and whose loyalty would always be suspect.⁹³

Some French officials also cast doubts on the assimilation potential of DPs as a whole. In January 1946, a Foreign Ministry memorandum stated this bluntly: 'currently, it does not appear possible to recruit a stable and good quality workforce amongst Displaced Persons [...] Nevertheless, in the case of a rapid demobilization of PoWs and as a consequence of a severe workforce crisis, France could envisage the use of DPs for temporary work.'⁹⁴ In diplomatic negotiation, Raymond Bousquet repeatedly explained to his British counterparts that the Germans were better workers than the Slavs who were difficult to assimilate. Bousquet pointed out that Poles who had been in France since 1920 were now returning in large numbers to Poland.⁹⁵ He even argued that 'from a security point of view' it was preferable to leave badly assimilated Poles in Germany than to transfer them to other western countries:

Monsieur Bousquet added that France would prefer to see Slavs installed in Germany near the French frontier and to see Germans emigrate to France from the point of view of security. It was doubtful whether all 1,5 million displaced persons could be removed from Austria and Germany and it would be preferable to leave Slavs in Germany rather than Germans. Sir George Rendel, reflecting on the ways in which the Volkdeutsche had served before the war as an outpost for Nazi infiltration, doubted whether this proposal would add to European security.⁹⁶

A significant number of Polish workers residing in France did indeed decide to return to Poland between 1945 and 1948. Robert Poignant from the *Ecole Nationale d'Administration* (ENA) noted the trend, commenting that 'it seems that the Liberation has prompted a veritable fever of return in the Polish mining communities.'⁹⁷ France signed three diplomatic agreements with Poland (on 20 February and 28 November 1946 and on 24 February 1948), permitting the return of Polish workers to Poland.⁹⁸ Although it is very difficult to establish the precise numbers involved, official figures varying between 10,000 and 80,000 workers, the movement in question was undoubtedly perceived by many French

⁹³ Suzanne D. Rutland 'The Unwanted.' The Story of Survivor Jewish Migration to Australia, 1945-1954 in Johannes-Dieter Steinert and Inge Weber-Newth (ed) *Beyond Camps and Forced Labour* (Osnabrück: Secolo, 2005), pp. 123-132, p. 129; Cohen *In war's wake*, p. 116.

⁹⁴ MAE, Affaires Economiques et financières, Affaires Allemandes et autrichiennes, 1944-1949, 131, Note pour Monsieur Bousquet, Directeur Général des Affaires Administratives et sociales au MAE, GFCC/N.2613/PDR, 4 January 1946.

⁹⁵ NA, FO/945/470, Note of informal discussion in the office of Monsieur Bousquet, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on the subject of German emigration, on 30 April 1947.

⁹⁶ NA, FO/945/470, Minutes of Anglo-French discussions on the recruitment in the British and French Zones of Austria and Germany of DP for work in France and in the UK, meeting held at the Quay d'Orsay, 28 April 1947.

⁹⁷ CAC, Versement 770623,83, Monsieur R. Poignant, mémoire de stage, L'immigration polonaise dans le Pas-de-Calais, Section Sociale, Mars 1948, ENA, Promotion Nations Unies, 1-107, p. 72.

⁹⁸ Janine Ponty 'Les rapatriements d'ouvriers polonais (1945-1948), *L'impact de la Seconde Guerre mondiale sur les relations franco-polonaises* (Paris : INALCO, 2000), pp. 125-137, p. 128.

officials as a sign that the attempted integration of interwar Polish migrants had failed.⁹⁹

In post-war ethnic taxonomies, the morality of Baltic DPs was also often favourably contrasted with the high criminality and lack of work ethic observed among Polish DP camps. Agricultural trade unionist René Massot considered Baltic people by far the most desirable migrants in terms of the professional standards they upheld. Banatais, Hungarians, Poles, Ukrainians and Yugoslavs' were ranked, in turn, below them.¹⁰⁰ According to Massot, Balts were skilful and educated people, but the majority of them were former farm-owners and rural employers. They therefore aspired to the same position and hoped to re-create 'Baltic communities' in France. Furthermore, their staunch anti-communism foreshadowed other assimilation problems. Unlike others, most notably Poles, many Baltic Displaced Persons were neither forced labourers nor former concentration camp inmates, but had fled westward in 1944 as the Soviet Army advanced.¹⁰¹ Because their countries no longer existed as independent states but only as Soviet republics, 'they behaved more as representatives of their former Baltic states than as DPs' and preserved their nationality, their particularism and their language.¹⁰² According to Massot, this constituted a hindrance to their rapid assimilation. He therefore advocated the recruitment of Poles 'despite a qualitative inferiority':

Given that Poles were very numerous in French agriculture before the war, that, on overall, they were good workers and satisfied [their employers], that, besides this, many employers have some knowledge of the Polish language, the recruitment of those refugees should be the one giving the most tangible numerical results, despite a qualitative inferiority if compared to other nationalities.¹⁰³

Other observers attributed negative psychological characteristics to Poles. This was reminiscent of late-nineteenth century theories that nations were the

⁹⁹ For some estimated numbers see CAC, Versement 770623,83, Monsieur R. Poignant, mémoire de stage, L'immigration polonaise dans le Pas-de-Calais, Section Sociale, Mars 1948, ENA, Promotion Nations Unies, 1-107, 73; Ponty 'Les rapatriements d'ouvriers polonais', p. 130.

¹⁰⁰ CAC, Versement 770623, article 172, Rapport sur les possibilités de recrutement parmi les "personnes déplacées" en Allemagne, question vue sous l'angle special agricole [undated].

¹⁰¹ On Baltic DPs see notably Thomas Lane *Victims of Stalin and Hitler: the Exodus of Poles and Balts to Britain* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); Tomas Balkelis 'Living in the Displaced Persons Camp: Lithuanian War Refugees in the West, 1944-1954' in Peter Gatrell and Nick Baron (ed) *Warlands. Population Resettlement and State reconstruction in the Soviet-East European Borderlands, 1945-1950* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 25-47; Juliette Denis 'Complices de Hitler ou victimes de Staline? Les déplacés baltes en Allemagne de la sortie de guerre à la guerre froide', *Le Mouvement Social*, Vol. 244, No. 3 (2013), pp. 81-98; Angelika Eder 'Perspectives of Displaced Persons in West Germany after 1945. A comparison of Jewish, Baltic and Polish Non-Repatriates' in Johannes-Dieter Steinert and Inge Weber-Newth (ed) *Beyond Camps and Forced Labour* (Osnabrück: Secolo, 2005), pp. 79-89; Laura Hilton 'Cultural Nationalism in Exile: The case of Polish and Latvian Displaced Persons', *The Historian*, Vol. 71, No. 2 (2009), pp. 280-317; Aldis Purs 'How those Brothers in Foreign Lands are Dividing the Fatherland': Latvian National Politics in Displaced Persons Camps after the Second World War' in Gatrell and Baron (ed) *Warlands*, pp. 48-66.

¹⁰² Eder 'Perspectives of Displaced Persons in West Germany after 1945', p. 81.

¹⁰³ CAC, Versement 770623, article 172, Rapport sur les possibilités de recrutement parmi les "personnes déplacées" en Allemagne, question vue sous l'angle special agricole [undated].

'products of a process of heredity that transmits and fixes certain psychological characters in a people as in a family.'¹⁰⁴ *Enarque* Robert Poignant observed that one should not underestimate the *emotional element* in the Polish character 'In the Polish soul, feelings of anger, enthusiasm, attachment and depression reach levels that we [as French] do not know.'¹⁰⁵ If stereotypes of Poles as unreliable and lazy workers were frequent, many reports singled out the commendable traditions, strong work ethic, exemplary hygiene and stronger sense of community amongst the Baltic DPs.¹⁰⁶

The Baltic peasant is strong, energetic, independent [...] Overall, the race is beautiful and healthy; families are not large, two or three children on average, and these children are beautiful and immaculately kept [...] Honest and clean, Baltic people rapidly assimilate foreign languages; there are many interpreters among them. Each one of them has the command as well as his mother tongue, of a second or third languages: Russian, German, English or French (There was a French high school in Riga).¹⁰⁷

French authorities were not alone either in favouring the entry of Baltic DPs or in casting a sceptical eye over the recruitment of Jewish migrants. The British government also favoured the entry of Baltic DPs over Polish DPs.¹⁰⁸ Its first recruitment scheme, tellingly named the 'Balt Cygnet Scheme', was aimed at Baltic women recruited to supply domestic staff for hospitals and sanatoria in Britain. Baltic women were judged as displaying the highest moral standards.¹⁰⁹ As Silvia Salvatici observes, the *whiteness* associated with the name 'Cygnet', coupled with the feminine element, linked racial and gender criteria in order to present the scheme in a favourable light to British employers.¹¹⁰

The report of the French Parliamentary mission reflects these ambiguities. Racial hierarchies were incorporated in a new language of economic productivity, psychological stability and cultural assimilability. From a moral standpoint, according to this report, Baltic DPs topped the scale of probity, ahead of Yugoslavs, Hungarians and Poles:

¹⁰⁴ Glenda Sluga *The Nation, Psychology, and International Politics, 1870–1919* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), p. 66.

¹⁰⁵ CAC, Versement 770623,83, Monsieur R. Poignant, mémoire de stage, L'immigration polonaise dans le Pas-de-Calais, Section Sociale, Mars 1948, ENA, Promotion Nations Unies, 1-107, p. 37.

¹⁰⁶ MAE, HCRFA, Direction générale des Affaires politiques, 116, Direction du Travail, Section Main d'œuvre, PDR, Recrutement pour la France, [10 February 1946].

¹⁰⁷ CAC, Versement 770623, article 172, Note sur les "Personnes Déplacées" Baltes dans les camps de l'UNRRA en Allemagne, 12 February 1947.

¹⁰⁸ Diana Kay and Robert Miles *Refugees or migrant workers? European volunteer workers in Britain 1946-1951* (New York: Routledge, 1992); Linda McDowell 'Workers, migrants, aliens or citizens? State constructions and discourses of identity among post-war European labour migrants in Britain' *Political Geography* Vol. 22, (2003), pp. 863-886; Linda McDowell *Hard Labour. The forgotten voices of Latvian migrant volunteer workers* (New York: Routledge, 2005); Sylvia Salvatici 'Le gouvernement anglais et les femmes réfugiées d'Europe après la Seconde Guerre mondiale' *Le mouvement social*, Vol.225, No.4, (2008), pp. 53-63.

¹⁰⁹ Salvatici 'Le gouvernement anglais et les femmes réfugiées', p. 59.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

If one can make generalization on a question as delicate as this one, the different authorities concurred in admitting that, from a moral point of view, the Baltic people are at the top, followed by the *Banatais*, the Yugoslavs, the Ukrainians and then the Poles. It is nevertheless believed that the former, who in the months following the Liberation proved to be undisciplined, underwent a remarkable recovery. It was also said that reemployment and age play a considerable role in their morality.¹¹¹

Alongside DPs' racial or ethnic traits, attention was paid to their ability to speak French, their professional skills, their age, their wartime experiences and their professed willingness to 'assimilate' in France. Given their supposed *French* origins, the *Banatais* often figured amongst the most desirable DPs. But, if so, why was their recruitment so controversial?

Our cousins, the Banatais¹¹²

The conflicting perceptions of the *Banatais* exemplified the contradictions of French post-war discourses about DPs. The recruitment of the *Banatais* also raises fascinating questions about how the French constructed identities in the post-war years. Having fled the advancing Red Army and found refuge in Germany, *Banatais* (mainly of Romanian, Yugoslav and Hungarian origin) re-claimed their eighteenth-century French roots, their ancestors having been transferred from Alsace-Lorraine to colonize the Banat by Empress Maria Theresa. This reclamation of 'Frenchness' was driven by their efforts to conceal their intensive collaboration with the Nazis. As a result, the recruitment of the *Banatais*, officially presented as a 'return to the motherland' in France, offers a window onto wider French experiences of collaboration and 'forced enrolment' in the Wehrmacht.



Fig. 3. The Banat of Temesvar

The *Banatais* example is particularly interesting as it demonstrates refugees' ability to shape government policy. At the Liberation, *Banatais* groups

¹¹¹ CAC, Versement 770623, article 172, rapport commun établi par les membres de la mission d'information sur le problème des personnes déplacées des trois zones d'occupation en Allemagne (9 au 23 février 1947), [2 mai 1947], p. 14.

¹¹² CAC, Versement 770623, article 83, *L'est républicain*, 31 August 1949.

organised local committees in Germany and Austria, lobbying French authorities and presenting themselves as good migrants of 'French origins'.¹¹³ These committees were particularly active: they printed their own certificates highlighting their French ancestry and demanding to be repatriated to Alsace-Lorraine.¹¹⁴ To support these claims, they sent petitions to various authorities in Alsace-Lorraine¹¹⁵ and they edited memoirs and leaflets emphasizing their French origins, downplaying their Nazi affiliation, and highlighting their agricultural skills.¹¹⁶ As Maranda Vultur points out, the myth of the 'good subject' and of the civilizing role of the colonizer was an integral part of their self-portrayal and presumptive 'French' identity.¹¹⁷

For the American authorities, Banatais' committees were first and foremost constituted by former SS and Nazi-affiliated personalities.¹¹⁸ Some French officials agreed with this view, whereas others regarded them essentially as 'victims of wars', comparable to the Alsatian *Malgré-nous*. Others were less sympathetic. According to former Free French General Koeltz, it was 'a well-known fact that these elements were in previous generations the pioneers of Germanism in the Balkans'.¹¹⁹ His fellow Gaullist General, Pierre Koenig did not hold them in high his esteem either. In a telegram dating from June 1946, he spat out his real opinion: 'These people are *sagouins* [filthy pigs] who only remember France because they are expelled from the Banat. Yet, it is expedient to follow them so I give 5000 marks for the Munich Council'.¹²⁰ Jacques Tarbé de Saint-Hardouin was equally disparaging. He insisted that this German minority distinguished itself during the Nazi occupation of Yugoslavia by their participation in atrocities, thus revealing their real allegiances.¹²¹

Laffon provided a more nuanced judgment. He recognized that the Banatais' political sentiments were profoundly Nazi, but that, their dubious past notwithstanding, they constituted a particularly 'advanced' and skilful population

¹¹³ MAE, Bonn, 152, Lettre secrète du Général de Corps d'Armée Béthouart à Monsieur le Général d'Armée Commandant en chef français en Allemagne, 31 August 1946.

¹¹⁴ MAE, Bonn, 152, Lettre du Général d'Armée Koenig, commandant en chef Français en Allemagne, à Monsieur l'Administrateur Général de la Zone Française d'Occupation, 13 August 1946.

¹¹⁵ MAE, Bonn, 152, United States Forces in Austria, Headquarters, 26 August 1946. Also see CAC, Versement 770623, 83.

¹¹⁶ CAC Fontainebleau, Versement 770623, 83, Mémoire du Dr Emmerich Reitter, ancien Député et Sénateur, 5 juin 1945. Mémoire au sujet de la culture du chanvre et de son élaboration, François Pfeiffer [undated].

¹¹⁷ Maranda Vultur 'De l'Ouest à l'Est et de l'Est à l'Ouest. Les avatares identitaires des Français du Banat' in Dana Diminescu (ed) *Visibles mais peu nombreux. Les circulations migratoires roumaines* (Paris : Editions de la Maison des sciences de l'homme, 2003), pp. 99-105, p. 109.

¹¹⁸ MAE, Bonn, 152, United States Forces in Austria, Headquarters, 26 August 1946; In May 1949, the Banatais lost their 'DPs' status in the French zone. MAE, PDR6/490, Compte-rendu de la visite effectuée le 10 Mai 1949 au centre PDR de Kandel (Palatinat) par l'Attaché d'Administration Gondal et l'Attaché d'Administration Metivier, 12 May 1949.

¹¹⁹ MAE, Bonn, 152, Lettre du Général de Corps d'Armée Koeltz au Général de Corps d'armée Koenig, 3 November 1945.

¹²⁰ MAE, Bonn, 152, Fiche d'instance, population du Banat de Temesvar, 5 June 1946.

¹²¹ CAC Fontainebleau, Versement 770623, 83, Lettre de J. Tarbé de Saint Hardouin à Monsieur Laffon, Baden-Baden, 23 November 1945.

who had transformed the Banat into the granary of central Europe.¹²² Writing in *Le Monde*, Francis Cabour went further in an article tellingly entitled a 'French minority of Central Europe.' Without denying their German influence, he highlighted the Banatais' recent efforts to cultivate their French origins and to teach their children French.¹²³ More importantly, the French PDR Direction in the zone defended Banatais' interests and helped them establish a French school in August 1946 in Kandel, in order to prepare their integration in France.¹²⁴ A French *instituteur* (teacher) thought there around 70 children.¹²⁵

For all that, the strongest appeals in support of the *Banatais* came from Alsace-Lorraine. In October 1946, the Meurthe-et Moselle departmental council expressed an official 'wish' to welcome the *Banatais*.¹²⁶



Fig. 4. *Les Dernières nouvelles du Haut-Rhin*, February 1947.¹²⁷

In February 1947 the *Dernières nouvelles du Haut-Rhin* published a series of articles on the Banatais written by Maxime Fels, comparing their situation to those of the *Malgré-nous* who were forcibly enrolled in the Waffen-SS. 'There were thus 30,000 former compatriots of the Alsatian and the Lorrainers who experienced, despite the distance, the separation and the centuries, the same tragic fate as their brothers in the land. *Dramatique pendant de l'Histoire.*'¹²⁸ The *Banatais*' wartime experience was clearly being used here as a means to rehabilitate the memory of their Alsatian brothers who were also 'forcibly

¹²² CAC Fontainbleau, Versement 770623, 83, Lettre de l'Administrateur Général, adjoint pour le Gouvernement Militaire de la Zone Française d'Occupation à Monsieur le Secrétaire Général du Comité Interministériel pour les Affaires Allemandes et Autrichiennes, 19 November 1945.

¹²³ Francis Cabour 'Une minorité française de l'Europe Orientale', *Le Monde*, 9 May 1946.

¹²⁴ *Sept ans en faveur des personnes déplacées*, p. 44.

¹²⁵ MAE, PDR6/490, Compte-rendu de la visite effectuée le 10 Mai 1949 au centre PDR de Kandel (Palatinat) par l'Attaché d'Administration Gondal et l'Attaché d'Administration Metivier, 12 May 1949.

¹²⁶ MAE, Bonn 152, Le Delegeue Général, chef de la mission de controle à Monsieur le Commissaire Général aux Affaires Allemandes et Autrichiennes, 5 October 1946.

¹²⁷ CAC Fontainbleau, Versement 770623, 83, Tirage à part de l'enquête sur les Alsaciens et Lorrains du Banat, Maxime Fels, publiée dans les 'Dernières Nouvelles du Haut-Rhin', du 8 au 14 février 1947.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

enrolled' by the Germans. In the same vein, in August 1948, *L'est républicain* published an investigation about 'our cousins from the Banat of Temesvar' carried out by Sacha Simon. He presented France as their 'second homeland', the country of their ancestors.¹²⁹

As these examples suggest, perceptions of DPs were closely related to individual and community memories of France's own wartime experiences. As Maxime Fels' studies testified, the Alsacien-Lorrains projected their own memories of 'forced enrolment' onto the *Banatais*. In many respects, the situation of DPs was comparable to those of the French STO. The memory of the STO remains problematic in France. As Adler observes, the 'STO remained a historically and politically sensitive topic, one that no French historian tackled in depth and on a national scale before 2010.'¹³⁰ Yet, as Dominique Veillon notes, 'if many of these men were aware of not having been 'heroes', they refused the label of traitors. Were they not instead victims?'¹³¹ If the distinction between voluntary labour and forced labour did not fundamentally affect their situation during the war, it was charged with moral and patriotic meaning at the Liberation:

With regard to the wartime experience, Ulrich Herbert states that the form of engagement – voluntary or enforced – was disregarded by the German authorities and did not fundamentally affect either the terms of the contracts or the living conditions of the workers. With regard to the post-war experience, the distinction between voluntary labour and forced labour was charged with moral and patriotic meaning and became central to the experience of homecoming and reintegration.¹³²

Following in the footsteps of Pieter Lagrou and Karen Adler's work on the legacy of France's wartime experiences, one can argue that the *Banatais* hold a mirror to the way that the people of Alsace-Lorraine framed their own wartime suffering, revealing, in the process that French memories of the war were not only more fragmented, but more politically divided than historians have previously assumed.¹³³

Whatever the high hopes of some in relation to it, the recruitment of *Banatais* produced very meagre rewards for France.¹³⁴ According to the PDR

¹²⁹ Sacha Simon 'Nos cousins du Banat de Temesvar' in *L'Est Républicain*, 30 - 31 August and 1 September 1948.

¹³⁰ Adler 'Nation and Alienation: Retrievals of Home in Post-war French film', p. 334.

¹³¹ Dominique Veillon 'La vérité sur le STO', *L'histoire* (1985), pp. 105-109, p. 106. Quoted in Rinke *Le Grand Retour*, p. 463.

¹³² Pieter Lagrou *The legacy of Nazi occupation: patriotic memory and national recovery in Western Europe, 1945-1965* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 134.

¹³³ Adler 'Nation and Alienation: Retrievals of Home in Post-war French film', p. 330.

¹³⁴ Noiriél argues that the recruitment of the *Banatais* was a blatant success. My research in the archives of the French occupation zone and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs suggests, on the contrary, that it proved problematic for French authorities. Gérard Noiriél *La tyrannie du national. Le droit d'asile en Europe (1793-1993)* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1991), p. 135.

official history, the recruitment of *Banatais* generated nothing but disappointment:

Disappointment for the Banatais when their representatives [...] suddenly emigrated elsewhere. Disappointment as a result of the impossibility of realising their project of group settlement in France. Disappointment at the way their emigration was carried out; when the head of a household left, other members of the family waited 120 days before being able to join him [...] Disappointment for the PDR Direction which could not obtain from the *metropole* the advantages that the Banatais were expecting. Disappointment for the Banatais themselves who, lulled into unmet promises, abandoned their hope of being one day admitted to France and then refused the offers that were made to them.¹³⁵

Chapter Seven examines how French administrators implemented the recruitment. It shows how the lack of cooperation between the various French administrations and the International Refugee Organisation (IRO) impeded the smooth entry of DPs to France. But, before this, we need to return to the issue of DPs' *alleged* or *real* collaboration with the Nazis.

As the example of the *Banatais* illustrates, the question of DP wartime collaboration exacerbated divisions across the French political spectrum. The issue of collaboration was a particularly efficient political weapon for French communists. The trauma of war and fascism, the sense of guilt deriving from Occupation, the fact that the French Communist Party – *le parti des 75,000 fusillés* – emerged from the war draped in national colours, and the catastrophic post-war financial and economic situation all came together to place *la citadelle communiste* in a paramount position in French intellectual, political and cultural life.¹³⁶ If French communists deliberately exaggerated the extent of DP collaboration, it was perhaps partly because they were themselves trying to erase the memory of the Nazi- Soviet Pact and their *de facto* alliance with Germany in the eighteen months that followed. As Robert Gildea observes, '[s]ince the invasion of the Soviet Union by Germany, they had borne the brunt of repression by the Germans and Vichy, and were now at the forefront of those for whom the Liberation meant the inauguration of a new, purified republic, staffed by a new political class forged by the Resistance and the sweeping-

¹³⁵ *Sept-ans en faveur des personnes déplacées*, p. 45.

¹³⁶ Pierre Milza 'L'année 1947 dans les combats culturels de la guerre froide' in Serge Berstein et Pierre Milza (ed) *L'année 1947* (Paris : Presses de Sciences Po, 2000), pp. 411-436, p. 413 ; Sophie Coeuré 'Communisme et anticommunisme' in Jean-Jacques Becker et Gilles Candar (ed) *Histoire des gauches en France. Volume 2* (Paris: La Découverte, 2005), pp. 488-507 ; François Furet *The passing of an illusion. The idea of Communism in the twentieth century* (Chicago: the University of Chicago Press, 1999), p. 384.

away of discredited elites by administrative purges of the police, army, judiciary, civil service, business and media.¹³⁷

Disputing DPs' value: Collaboration, Anti-communism and Apathy

At the Liberation, the Ministry of Labour and the *Confédération Générale du Travail* (CGT), France's largest trade union confederation, each came under the sway of Communist *syndicalistes*. They were to play a critical role in blocking DP recruitment. Communist participation in the Resistance had given the party an aura of legitimacy that was confirmed in the results of the October 1945 election to the Constituent Assembly. The French Communist Party (PCF) did defend the interests of those foreign migrant workers who had participated in the French resistance. 'By their participation in the Resistance', the Party argued, 'migrant workers have acquired a right to citizenship.'¹³⁸ It supported the *Comité d'action et de défense des immigrés* (CADI) and encouraged the creation of the *Association française pour la défense et l'assimilation des immigrés* (AFDAI).¹³⁹ As Stéphane Courtois argues, in the new 'national' conjuncture of the Liberation, the Party adopted a *Jacobinist* and integrationist discourse.¹⁴⁰ Yet, from a communist point of view, those Eastern Europeans who refused to return to their Soviet-annexed homeland were intrinsically undesirable.¹⁴¹ As explained in the introduction, a strong political and ideological opposition to fascist DPs emerged from within the French Communist-controlled Ministry of Labour and the newly-created ONI. In March 1946 the ONI was entrusted to Bernard Auffray, an ardent defender of Spanish refugees and exiles from Central Europe. Under his leadership, the ONI recruited numerous trade unionists to its staff.¹⁴² As a result, the CGT, closer than ever to the PCF, played a significant role in formulating a discourse hostile to DPs.

In contrast with departments, such as the Ministries of Industry and Agriculture, that were considered to be 'technical', the Ministry of Labour portrayed itself as a primarily *social* institution, one that was particularly committed to developing privileged relations with the trade unions.¹⁴³ The

¹³⁷ Gildea *France since 1945*, p. 68.

¹³⁸ Courtois 'Le PCF et la question de l'immigration, 1936-1948', p. 223.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁴¹ MAE, HCRFA, Ambassade de Bonn, 258, Note du Commandant Domergue, Paris, 28 December 1945.

¹⁴² Gani *Syndicats et Travailleurs immigrés*, p. 28.

¹⁴³ Lucie Tanguy 'Institutionnalisation de la formation syndicale et politique sociale du ministère du Travail (1950-1970)' in Chatriot, Join-Lambert et Viet (ed) *Les politiques du Travail (1906-2006)*, pp. 479-493, p. 483; Alain Chatriot 'L'introuvable démocratie sociale: débats intellectuels, luttes politiques, acteurs sociaux et administratifs, 1944-1950', pp. 385-401, p. 396.

atmosphere within the Labour Ministry was highly politicized.¹⁴⁴ Recent research suggests that the Liberation was regarded by Ministry insiders as an unprecedented 'political opportunity' to replace a discredited ruling elite with a younger, more socially-minded group of republican reformers.¹⁴⁵ As Bruno Béthouart observes, former members of government and prominent figures of the mutualist movement worked together with Church leaders, political and trade union activists and employees trained either in 'Communist schools' or 'departmental CGT unions.'¹⁴⁶ Despite their doctrinal and political differences, most of these politicians had undergone their political initiation in the interwar years.¹⁴⁷ When, in May 1947, socialist Daniel Meyer arrived in the Ministry after the final eviction of the Communists from the tripartite coalition in office since 1944, he decried what he described as a *véritable* 'colonization' of the Ministry by the Communists.¹⁴⁸ To grasp the significance of DPs' alleged collaboration, it is also worth recalling that the Ministry had been severely affected by the *épuration* [purges]. As Jean-Pierre Le Crom observes 'the administrative *épuration* had hit senior members of staff harshly, replacing many [personnel] with *Résistants* [who were] charged with implementing a significantly different policy from those of their Vichy predecessors.'¹⁴⁹

The question of collaboration with the Nazis was often mentioned in public discourse about DPs. This did not apply solely to Eastern European Displaced Persons; it also affected Italian migrants. In a press conference on 27 March 1947, responding to the *Confédération française des travailleurs chrétiens* (CFTC)'s concern that the CGT was carrying out 'political recruitment' in Italy, Ambroise Croizat argued that no 'political selection' should take place and that choices about which migrants to accept should not take into account their political or religious views, with the sole exception of those '*who compromised themselves either in carrying out fascist activities or in voluntarily collaborating with the Nazis.*'¹⁵⁰ In September 1947, Catholic columnist Henri Fesquet used the pages of *Le Monde* to denounce the politicization of DP recruitment. He lamented the fact that trade-unionists presented DPs as des 'troupes de choc

¹⁴⁴ P. Fournier *Quarante ans, place Fontenoy*. Quoted in Chatriot 'L'introuvable démocratie sociale', p. 391.

¹⁴⁵ Jean-Pierre Le Crom 'L'épuration administrative du Ministère du Travail à la Libération', in Chatriot, Join-Lambert et Viet (ed) *Les politiques du Travail (1906-2006)*, pp. 103-120, p. 119 ; Bruno Béthouart 'Le ministère du Travail et l'évolution de la protection sociale de la Libération aux débuts de la Ve République' in Chatriot, Join-Lambert and Viet *Les politiques du Travail*, pp 161-171, p 166.

¹⁴⁶ Béthouart 'Le ministère du Travail et l'évolution de la protection sociale', p. 166.

¹⁴⁷ Chatriot 'L'introuvable démocratie sociale', pp. 385-401.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid*, p. 389.

¹⁴⁹ Jean-Pierre Le Crom 'L'épuration administrative du Ministère du Travail à la Libération' in Chatriot, Join-Lambert et Viet (ed) *Les politiques du Travail*, pp. 103-120, p. 119.

¹⁵⁰ Gani *Syndicats et Travailleurs immigrés*, p. 34.

des ennemis de la République’, to whom France should close its border.¹⁵¹ Julien Racamond, representative of the CGT, retorted that this mass of people could easily find work in their own country if their past activities did not forbid them to do so. For him, most DPs had betrayed their own country and collaborated with the Nazis. In the same vein, the *fédération du sous sol* (a mining federation) published an article condemning the extension of the recruitment to the American zone, and affirming that certain recruits had swastika tattoos.¹⁵²

Inter-war years and wartime legacies

In the autumn of 1945, the Ministry of Labour’s opposition to DP recruitment provoked argument between the various French administrative agencies in Germany. For their part, the French authorities in Berlin reported considerable progress in their negotiations with their American and British counterparts.¹⁵³ On 30 November 1945, Military Governor General Koenig contacted the Provisional Government asking it to accelerate the recruitment of DPs. Koenig noted the significant number of farmers and servants among Polish DPs in particular. These were all potentially useful labourers. ‘Any further delay,’ he noted, ‘would represent a considerable number of working hours lost for our national economy.’¹⁵⁴ Koenig’s plea was echoed twenty-four hours earlier by the Inter-ministerial Committee for German Affairs, a standing commission concerned with the economic burden that DPs imposed on the French occupation zone, which reiterated the necessity to begin recruitment as soon as possible.¹⁵⁵

In both Berlin and Baden-Baden, French Authorities expressed frustration at the fact that, after so much effort spent in negotiating with the Western Allies, the Ministry of Labour could suspend the recruitment of DPs arbitrarily. This seemed all the more absurd since the Ministry was at the time planning direct negotiations with the Warsaw government to launch a recruitment scheme in Poland. On 28 December 1945, Berlin Administrator Commandant Domergue vehemently complained about it. (His report is quoted at length as it clearly illustrates the diplomatic implications of the Ministry of Labour’s decision)

¹⁵¹ Henri Fesquet ‘Une réserve de main d’oeuvre que nous n’avons pas le droit de négliger: “les personnes déplacées”’ [CAC, Versement 770623, article 172]

¹⁵² Gani *Syndicats et Travailleurs immigrés*, pp. 28-29.

¹⁵³ MAE, HCRFA, Ambassade de Bonn, 258, Lettre du Général de Corps d’Armée Koeltz à Monsieur l’Administrateur Général de la Zone Française d’Occupation, Baden-Baden, Berlin, 18 Décembre 1945, LR/MS N.949/PDR.

¹⁵⁴ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/847, Lettre du Général de Corps d’armée Koenig à Monsieur le Président du Gouvernement Provisoire de la République Française, N.2023DGAA/Dir.PDR, 30 November 1945.

¹⁵⁵ MAE, Affaires Economiques et financières, Affaires Allemandes et autrichiennes, 1944-1949, 131, Note relative au recrutement de la main d’oeuvre parmi les ‘personnes déplacées’, Commissariat Général aux Affaires Allemandes et Autrichiennes, 7 March 1946.

A few points should be made about this decision of the Ministry of Labour:

- 1) It is in contradiction with the decision taken by the Inter-ministerial Committee of the German and Austrian Affairs (Comité interministériel des Affaires Allemandes et Autrichiennes), on 27 November, under De Gaulle's presidency, a decision that approved the recruitment in Polish camps...
- 2) It does not take into consideration the demographic *point de vue* and make the assimilation of the workers that will now arrive difficult. We can indeed recall the influence that Polish and Italian priests and schoolteachers had on their fellow workers [...] and the way they combatted very effectively our influence. Tomorrow trade-unionist leaders will replace these priests; admittedly, they will defend the democratic conceptions in place in Eastern Europe, but they will also remain closely tied with their governments.
- 3) Regarding our Anglo-Saxon Allies, this decision of the Ministry of Labour leaves us in a very difficult situation.
 - a) We are asking our Allies to hand over German Prisoners of War but we are refusing to take in Polish workers in DP camps.
 - b) For months, we have been negotiating an agreement with UNRRA concerning these displaced persons and their statute in France. The agreement is signed or will be signed very shortly.
 - c) On 20 July, M. Bidault wrote to Marshall Montgomery and to General Eisenhower to ask them to authorize in their respective zone the recruitment of Poles [...]

A whole range of negotiations have then been conducted by the Labour Division of the GFCC which have led

In the British zone: to the recruitment of 3000 workers that we now refuse to admit in France.

In the American zone to the organization of a recruitment mechanism which is working well [...] (The recruitment has stopped and 600 miners are *en souffrance* in a camp of the 7th Army)¹⁵⁶

As this report makes clear, Communist decision-makers and their ideological fellow-travellers on the French Left feared the excessive influence of Polish priests on Polish DPs. These fears were partly rooted in memories of the interwar years, when Polish communities isolated themselves from French mining communities in Northern France. Supported by Miners' employers, Polish priests established many parishes.¹⁵⁷ Polish migrants' ostentatious demonstration of their Catholic devotion contributed their stigmatization by French miners' groups.¹⁵⁸ While left-leaning French workers saw themselves as anti-clerical and *militant* (political activists), they associated Polish workers with employers and malign clerical influence.¹⁵⁹ Admittedly, some pro-natalists

¹⁵⁶ MAE, HCRFA, Ambassade de Bonn, 258, Note du Commandant Domergue, Paris, 28 December 1945.

¹⁵⁷ CAC, Versement 770623,83, Monsieur R. Poignant, mémoire de stage, L'immigration polonaise dans le Pas-de-Calais, Section Sociale, Mars 1948, ENA, Promotion Nations Unies, 1-107, 39.

¹⁵⁸ Gérard Noiriel, *Le creuset français*, pp. 166-167.

¹⁵⁹ Janine Ponty *Polonais méconnus. Histoire des travailleurs immigrés en France dans l'entre-deux-guerres* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1988), p. 153.

might have valued pious DPs' catholic sentiments and strong sense of family and prolific birth rates.¹⁶⁰ So much so that, for many Communists (as well as some population experts), the main obstacle to Polish assimilation was the presence of Polish priests.¹⁶¹

After the trauma of war, collaboration and fascism, perceptions of Polish Catholic sentiments and their supposed allegiance to right-wing views acquired more sinister undertones. This may be gauged from the draft report of the February 1947 Parliamentary mission.

Upon its arrival, two radically opposed views divided the Delegation.

a) For some, DPs are fascists because the fact that they do not want to be repatriated to their own countries proves that they collaborated with the enemy... that they are fascists.

Hence DPs were asked insidious questions about their wartime activities and about their reasons to refuse repatriation (Ministry of Labour and CGT leanings)

b) For others, there are certainly collaborators among DPs but they are *lampistes* and, beside this, France, given its desperate manpower situation, cannot afford to be fussy (Agriculture – National Economy – *Houillères*).¹⁶²

Clearly, this issue of collaboration revived painfully fresh memories. For those who had been persecuted during the Occupation, the prospect of recruiting 'collaborators' was unacceptable. CGT representative Doutre's bitter opposition to DPs' illustrated the importance of this issue:

As the journey progressed, these opposite tendencies became closer together and an agreement was reached on the following questions:

- a) the recruitment of DP (the common report will be in favour of it)
- b) A very severe security control before the recruitment and the possibility to turn back any DP who would turn out to be opposed to France social and economic order
- c) The guarantee, repeated over and over again, that recruited DPs would not be handed over to the Soviets (MM. Briquet – Guerard – Perier – Colombet – Marrot – Legendre). Every delegation member agreed on this particular point.
- d) The only member of the delegation who remained *irreductible*, that is to say that continued to say that all DPs are fascists, was M. Doutre, a CGT representative. He nevertheless seemed moved every time that he encountered political deportees.

¹⁶⁰ Camiscioli *Reproducing the French race*, p. 30.

¹⁶¹ Girard et Stoetzel, *Français et immigrés. L'attitude française. L'adaptation des Italiens et des Polonais*, p. 467. Quoted in Marion Fontaine 'La Polonité face à la sécularisation dans le monde minier lensois' Patrick Weil (ed.), *Politiques de la laïcité en France au XXe siècle*, (Paris : PUF, 2007) pp. 327-351 ; Also see CAC, Versement 770623,83, Monsieur R. Poignant, mémoire de stage, L'immigration polonaise dans le Pas-de-Calais, Section Sociale, Mars 1948, ENA, Promotion Nations Unies, pp. 1-107, p. 44.

¹⁶² MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/822, Compte-rendu concernant le voyage effectué du 13 février au 2 mars 1947 en zone UK – USA et Française d'Allemagne par la Mission Française de recrutement de travailleurs personnes déplacées, 1 March 1947.

Two of them in Schömberg (French zone) were deported to Dachau like he was.¹⁶³

If the majority of DPs were arguably not former war collaborators at all, there were self-evidently some fascist sympathizers amongst them.¹⁶⁴ For one thing, the leadership cadres of the DP camps included many individuals who had indeed collaborated with the Nazis. For another thing, as will be explained in the next chapter, DP leaders encouraged the revival of folk traditions, traditional literature and religious activities in the camps, fostering a 'long-distance nationalism' with characteristics redolent of the Vichy regime.¹⁶⁵ Contemporary observers and historians alike have demonstrated that the adoption of new social and political roles during prolonged life in the camps, alongside the intrinsic sense of depersonalisation and homelessness of DPs, proved a potent mixture for the development of nationalist activities.¹⁶⁶ Furthermore, DPs camps accommodated a certain number of conservative and authoritarian personalities who had certainly collaborated with the Nazis. As the Cold War unfolded, these DP leaders increasingly sought to identify DPs as principled refugees from communism.



Fig. 5. A DP makeshift chapel in the French zone¹⁶⁷

In France, Communists and their ideological fellow travellers on the French Left were not alone in their wariness towards DPs' nationalism. Government officials and social observers feared that Polish DPs would form

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Anna Holian *Between National Socialism and Soviet Communism: Displaced Persons in post-war Germany* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2011), pp 87-88.

¹⁶⁵ Laura Hilton 'Cultural Nationalism in Exile: The case of Polish and Latvian Displaced Persons', *The Historian*, Vol. 71, No. 2 (2009), pp 280-317.

¹⁶⁶ Balkelis 'Living in the Displaced Persons Camp', p 42.

¹⁶⁷ *Sept ans en faveur des personnes déplacées*, p. 41.

unassimilated pockets within the nation after their arrival in France. The 1947 Parliamentary mission recommended breaking up DP communities, by encouraging their settlement throughout French territory.¹⁶⁸

We noticed the power that certain leaders often exercised [over DPs]. It will be essential to curtail this in order to prevent the formation of communities [...] which represents a security risk and a threat to smooth assimilation. We must not lose sight of the fact that DPs are not voluntary emigrants prepared to accept a foreign civilization with alien habits, but refugees whose gazes remain fixed on their homelands, and therefore try to recreate its *ambiance* while waiting the time to return home.¹⁶⁹

Anxieties about DPs' nationalist sentiments were further aggravated by concerns about the lasting effects of camp-life on the morality of these former slaves of the Nazi regime. As a result of their prolonged life in camps, DPs were regarded as having fallen prey to a variety of social and mental maladies. The most frequent diagnosis was that DP suffered from 'apathy'.¹⁷⁰

Camp life, criminality and idleness

In Germany, French officials raised concerns about DPs' nervousness, their poor hygiene, a prevalent apathy and a general reluctance to work. General Koeltz, for instance, while endorsing negotiations with American authorities for the transfer of 25,000 DPs from the American zone to the French zone, expressed, his doubts about both Polish workers' aptitude to work and their ability to assimilate in France:

It is an unfortunate fact that the majority of these Poles refused to work, using different excuses. The main reason is that they get to like [*doing nothing*] and settle in, little by little, in a life of leisure. Another reason is that there are reluctant to leave the Polish community, which defends their rights... An expert of the Labour Division in the French zone has thus declared that there was a minimum of 20,000 fully capable of working Poles and who refused to work [...] Reports of our Military governors proved that these Poles are often troublemakers and are looting the areas surrounding the camps where they are confined.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁸ CAC, Versement 770623, article 172, Rapport commun établi par les membres de la mission d'information sur le problème des personnes déplacées des trois zones d'occupation en Allemagne, 9-23 février 1947, p 15.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid, p. 14.

¹⁷⁰ Edward A. Shils 'Social and Psychological Aspects of Displacement and Repatriation', *Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 2, No. 3 (1946), pp. 3-18; H.B.M. Murphy (ed) *Personnes déplacées, recueil d'études sur la psychologie des réfugiés, leur santé mentale et les problèmes de leur réinstallation* (Paris : UNESCO, 1955) ; Peter Gatrell *The Making of the Modern Refugee* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 104.

¹⁷¹ MAE, HCRFA, Ambassade de Bonn, 258, Lettre du Général de Corps d'Armée Koeltz à Monsieur l'Administrateur Général de la Zone Française d'Occupation, Baden-Baden, Berlin, LR/MS N.949/PDR, 18 December 1945.

In Germany, rumours about a characteristically Polish lack of discipline and unwillingness to work circulated.¹⁷² Observers singled out DP idleness, drunkenness, loose sexual behaviour, evasion of work and violence. A military official, working in Ravensburg, lamented that there were many criminals among the DP population. According to him, DPs were more inclined to theft and black-marketing than the surrounding German population. 'Thinking only about robbing, committing crime without a moment of hesitation, the transfer of these foreigners to France could cause nothing but an outbreak of criminality.'¹⁷³ These fears were exacerbated by complaints formulated by Belgian authorities that the DP population contained many '*éléments perturbateurs*' and '*indésirables*.'¹⁷⁴

As will be further explained in chapter Six, stereotypes of DPs as morally lax, natural criminals and black marketers were commonplace. Many occupation officials downplayed the productive value of DPs. They insisted that camp life and forced idleness had had devastating moral effects on DPs.¹⁷⁵ René Mayer alleged, for example, that camp-life catalysed the development of an 'appalling mentality.' 'One can say that the majority of Poles have lost the habit of work and that it would be dangerous to introduce them in France prior to their re-education [...].'¹⁷⁶ Such perceptions of lazy and allegedly criminal DPs flourished in the zone.¹⁷⁷ Many reports insisted on worsening aggressiveness and defiance of authority among the remaining Polish DPs.

These anxieties were intrinsically linked to the fears sparked by France's own experience of deportation. In *The Legacy of Nazi Occupation*, Pieter Lagrou provides a fascinating insight into French concerns of the moral decay occurring in Nazi work camps. French authorities were alarmed by the moral state of French labour conscripts and feared that they had been contaminated by the promiscuity and amorality allegedly prevalent within Nazi work camps. Based on an examination of the reports of the *Jeunesse Ouvrière Chrétienne* (JOC), a Catholic workers' youth movement, Lagrou notes a widespread concern that forced economic migration was a form of 'crude

¹⁷² MAE, HCRFA, Direction générale des Affaires politiques, 116, GMZFO, Note pour Monsieur le Directeur du travail, Baden-Baden, 27 March 1946.

¹⁷³ MAE, HCRFA, Direction générale des Affaires politiques, 116, Note du Cabinet et Travail, 15 February 1947.

¹⁷⁴ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/821, Copie, Lettre du Président du Gouvernement Provisoire de la République, Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, à Monsieur le Commissaire Général aux Affaires Allemandes et Autrichiennes, Introduction de travailleurs recrutés parmi les personnes déplacées, 6 September 1946.

¹⁷⁵ MAE, HCRFA, Direction générale des Affaires politiques, 116, Lettre du Général de Corps d'armée, Koenig, à Monsieur le Président du Gouvernement provisoire de la République Française, Baden-Baden, 16 November 1945.

¹⁷⁶ MAE, HCRFA, Direction générale des Affaires politiques, 116, GMZFO, Note pour Monsieur le Directeur du travail, Baden-Baden, 27 March 1946.

¹⁷⁷ MAE, HCRFA, Direction générale des Affaires politiques, 116, Direction du Travail, Section Main d'œuvre, PDR, Recrutement pour la France, [10.2.1946].

proletarianisation.¹⁷⁸ Labour conscripts were described as anti-social, sexually perverted and unstable elements. According to Lagrou, such ideas permeated the thinking of Frenay's ministerial planners for repatriation, something evident in the following Ministry statement:

There is [...] another indication of the incidence of moral panic in the general climate surrounding the repatriation of workers from Germany: the contamination-psychosis. Repatriates were portrayed as carriers of all sorts of disease, from which the physically weakened liberated populations had to be protected by all possible prophylactic and legislative means. The epidemic-psychosis revealed the Malthusian anxieties of defeated, occupied and humiliated societies [...]¹⁷⁹

Analysis of the correspondence between various regional offices and the Ministry of Agriculture also showed how widespread were these anxieties about Polish apathy, lack of work ethic and propensity to theft. As early as February 1945, minutes from the Ministries of Agriculture and Labour reported a hostile attitude towards Polish recruits among rural and industrial employees. On 24 February 1945, during an inter-ministerial meeting held at the Ministry of Labour, the Labour Inspector of Limoges complained about Polish 'lack of will' and their uncooperative 'frame of mind', deploring the Polish workers' refusal to work because they lacked clothes and shoes. He further added that most of them had large families, with too many 'children and pregnant women', or, in other words, *inaptes au travail*.¹⁸⁰ The Polish consul of Périgueux concurred, arguing that Polish workers from his region were very 'hard to please'.¹⁸¹ A month later, the *Commission régionale de la main d'oeuvre* lamented the fact that a substantial number of Polish refugees refused to work in the North of France.¹⁸² In Lorraine, local authorities deplored the involvement of Polish refugees in alcohol trafficking and black-market activities with American soldiers stationed in the Meuse region.¹⁸³ These complaints led the Minister of Agriculture to voice its own concerns about the 'instability of DP manpower' in October 1945. Indeed, he informed the Ministry of Labour that rural employers were reluctant to take on DPs after the 'unfortunate experience of Polish workers coming from the Ardennes.' He explained that most rural employers were not willing to pay for the introduction of DPs, anticipating trouble in placing DPs in suitable employment if the State failed to pay the necessary *frais*

¹⁷⁸ Lagrou *The legacy of Nazi occupation*, pp 148-149.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 155.

¹⁸⁰ CAC, Versement 770623, article 83, Compte-rendu de la reunion interministérielle qui a eu lieu le 24 février 1945.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸² CAC, Versement 770623, article 83, Procès Verbal de la Commission régionale de Main d'Oeuvre du 9 mai 1945.

¹⁸³ CAC, Versement 770623, article 83, Lettre de Monsieur Keller, Contrôleur de la Main d'Oeuvre (en mission à Verdun) à Monsieur le Chef du Bureau de la main-d'oeuvre étrangère, 24 April 1945.

*d'introduction.*¹⁸⁴ According to the Ministry of Agriculture, the problems that these DPs posed were not technical (i.e. due to their lack of training) but, rather, were 'psychological.'¹⁸⁵ In fact, the attitude of the Ministry of Agriculture was at this point highly ambiguous: on the one hand, it urged the Foreign Minister to 'go along' with the recruitment; on the other hand, it cast doubts on the professional value of Polish workers. This hostility persisted throughout 1947 and 1948. In February 1948, the Préfet Roger Gromand observed that 'some even wonder if France really wants labourers.'¹⁸⁶ Certain French employers, particularly in rural areas, were accused of harbouring 'an *état d'esprit* quite hostile to these workers.'¹⁸⁷

Success or failure of the recruitment operation in Germany depends essentially on whether the problems occurring in France itself get solved. If we create, in France, among employees circles and workers' groups, a favourable climate to the labourers coming from Germany, the demand will equal the possibilities.¹⁸⁸

In summary, in the post-war years, the recruitment of DPs elicited opposition from different quarters. The searing memories of collaboration, added to recollections of previous waves of Polish migrants and the alleged influence of their priests, exacerbated negative perceptions of allegedly *fascist* and *conservative* DPs. While many trade unionists feared the arrival of what they regarded as anti-communist reactionaries, many employers were apprehensive with regard to the professional value of DPs, fearing that camp life had had devastating effects on their morality and work ethic. Overall, French public opinion was hostile to the entry of foreign migrants. In 1947, an investigation made by INED revealed that only thirty-three per cent of the French population were in favour of the entry of foreign migrants. Yet, by the beginning of 1947, France desperately needed workers to realise the Monnet Plan.¹⁸⁹ For their part, government officials increasingly realised that France could not afford to *faire la fine bouche* [be fussy].¹⁹⁰ The National Assembly

¹⁸⁴ CAC, Versement 770623, article 83, Le Ministre de l'Agriculture au Ministre du Travail, 1 October 1945.

¹⁸⁵ CAC, Versement 770623, article 83, Le Ministre de l'Agriculture au Ministre du Travail, 23 August 1945.

¹⁸⁶ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/846, Préfet Roger Gromand, Rapport sur le recrutement en Allemagne de main d'oeuvre étrangère pour la France, N.104 CC/Gr, Baden-Baden, 20 février 1948, p 13.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid, pp. 14-15.

¹⁸⁹ MAE, Affaires Economiques et financières, Affaires Allemandes et autrichiennes, 1944-1949, 131, Lettre du Ministre des Affaires Etrangères à Monsieur Henri Bonnet, Ambassadeur de France à Washington, projet du 6 février 1947, p. 8.

¹⁹⁰ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/822, Compte-rendu concernant le voyage effectué du 13 février au 2 mars 1947 en zone UK – USA et Française d'Allemagne par la Mission Française de recrutement de travailleurs personnes déplacées, Rastatt, 1 March 1947.

evidently agreed, particularly having approved the Monnet Plan on 14 January 1947.¹⁹¹

The February 1947 Parliamentary Mission recognized the difficulties in obtaining precise and accurate information about DPs' wartime activities. Its report mentioned the existence of an incomplete 'Fichier Berlin', providing a list of individuals who had voluntarily worked for the Germans. It nevertheless concluded that one should not overestimate the importance of collaborators among DPs:

These elements are a tiny minority. Alongside leaders who exert a massive influence in a *milieu d'oisifs* often gullible, there is a mass of individuals – for the most part young – that French life will be able to mould. [...] This is essentially a safety question that the Ministry of Interior, which is not represented in our Mission, will have to solve.¹⁹²

Furthermore, it offered a more nuanced review of Polish workers' alleged inclination to crime and amorality:

The reputation that some nationalities built for themselves dates back to a period when Germany was in a state of total anarchy at the mercy of gangs [...] The harmfulness of these groups mainly came from individuals who were liberated from common jails in Poland [...] But the different camp directors that we have interviewed concurred that, since last year, order has been restored [...] It is important to acknowledge that camp life damages an individual's personality and potentially reduces their moral values. Gregarious instincts flourish. Forced idleness for individuals used to active life, and in some case, a desire of revenge towards Germans are the main causes of these trouble; they explain – if not justify – the past attitudes of some DPs.¹⁹³

Yet, the Mission still specified that DPs had to be 'rehabilitated' and 'reeducated', pointing to their 'gregarious instinct' and irrational fears of official forms and inquiries.¹⁹⁴ René Massot reached the same *paternalistic* conclusion: DPs were not intrinsically bad, but care was needed in reintegrating them into normal work and family conditions:

Admittedly some objections can be made against DP regarding their willingness to work and certain aspects of their behaviour before and since their integration in camps; but their tragic existence in the last several years should help us to understand and excuse some of the grievances

¹⁹¹ Chadeau, Emmanuel 'Aide étrangère et politique économique' in Bernstein, Serge and Milza, Pierre (eds) *L'année 1947* (Paris: Presse de Sciences Po, 1999), pp. 149-166, p150.

¹⁹² CAC, Versement 770623, article 172, rapport commun établi par les membres de la mission d'information sur le problème des personnes déplacées des trois zones d'occupation en Allemagne (9 au 23 février 1947), [2 mai 1947], p. 13.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

¹⁹⁴ CAC, Versement 770623, article 172, draft report.

and make us firmly believe that, once reintegrated into normal work and family conditions, they will give us satisfaction.¹⁹⁵

Launching the recruitment

In February 1947, France declared itself prepared to take in 50,000 DPs, to help 'rectify [the] serious manpower situation.'¹⁹⁶ By this point the impending liberation of German PoWs (a requirement reiterated by the American authorities on 3 December 1946), coupled with the prospect of a worsening economic crisis due to the severe winter weather, jeopardized the implementation of the Monnet Plan.¹⁹⁷ Although the American authorities accepted the principle of the transformation of PoWs into free workers, 'skilled and untrained volunteer miners [were] most urgently required' for the Monnet Plan.¹⁹⁸ 56,000 German PoWs accounted for fully twenty per cent of French coal production at the time.¹⁹⁹ Their imminent departure was paralleled by a significant reduction of the imported coal supplies from the Ruhr. As the Ministry of National Economy put it, 'the entire economic outlook [was] dominated by the coal problem.'²⁰⁰ Coal impinged on France's entire program of economic and financial development and on its political stability.²⁰¹

Negotiations about the recruitment of DPs with the British and American authorities were therefore resumed. Paris Ambassador Alfred Duff Cooper informed the British government that although Amboise Croizat anticipated 'difficulties with the trade unions', he was disposed to consider the recruitment of DPs.²⁰² Several factors explained this shift. In the spring of 1947, Croizat was becoming increasingly isolated within the government.²⁰³ Given the persistence of restrictions and privations, a growing hiatus between workers and the Communist Party was emerging.²⁰⁴ Furthermore, the attempted recruitment of Italian migrants had produced meagre results. It proved unexpectedly costly as well. As mentioned earlier, Polish workers settled in France were also returning

¹⁹⁵ CAC, Versement 770623, article 172, Rapport sur les possibilités de recrutement parmi les "personnes déplacées" en Allemagne, question vue sous l'angle special agricole [undated].

¹⁹⁶ NA, FO/945/470, Inward telegram from Lubecke to Control Office and 8 other addressees, CCG 02996, 18 February 1947.

¹⁹⁷ MAE, Affaires Economiques et financières, Affaires Allemandes et autrichiennes, 1944-1949, 131, Résumé des propositions continues dans la communication sur les prisonniers de guerre, 4 février 1947. Also see Claude d'Abzac-Epezy 'La France face au rapatriement des prisonniers de guerre allemands', *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains* Vol. 233, No. 1 (2009), pp. 93-108, p. 94.

¹⁹⁸ NA, FO/945/470, Inward telegram from Lubecke to Control Office and 8 other addressees, CCG 02996, 18 February 1947.

¹⁹⁹ MAE, Affaires Economiques et financières, Affaires Allemandes et autrichiennes, 1944-1949, 131, Lettre du Ministre des Affaires Etrangères à Monsieur Henri Bonnet, Ambassadeur de France à Washington, projet du 6 février 1947, p8.

²⁰⁰ Hitchcock *France Restored. Cold War diplomacy and the quest for leadership in Europe, 1944-1954* (Chapell Hill: the University of North Carolina Press, 1998), p. 67.

²⁰¹ Hitchcock *France Restored*, p. 68.

²⁰² NA, FO/945/470, Télégramme from Paris to Foreign Office, 7 February 1947.

²⁰³ Philippe Buton 'L'éviction des ministres communistes' in Serge Bernstein and Pierre Milza (eds) *L'année 1947* (Paris: Presse de Sciences Po, 1999), pp. 339-355, p. 340.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid*, 341.

home under the newly-signed agreements on voluntary repatriation with the Polish government.²⁰⁵ In Germany, France feared losing valuable labourers to Belgium or Britain. Since the spring of 1946 Belgian and British recruitment missions had been prospecting DP camps for robust, young workers. French authorities, particularly interested in young DPs aged between sixteen and twenty-five and willing to work in mines were worried that none would be left.²⁰⁶ Finally, the impending termination of UNRRA also drove France into finding a solution to the DP problem in its zone. For all that, it took until late March 1947 before the *Comité interministérielle économique* (Interministerial Economy committee) finally approved the recruitment scheme.²⁰⁷

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs ultimately played a considerable role in launching the recruitment programme. As explained in the introduction, for French diplomats, the question of the recruitment of DPs was inherently linked with that of German migrants. The launch of the recruitment scheme paralleled France's progressive alignment with the West. In March 1947, the Moscow Conference of Foreign Ministers occasioned, what Maurice Vaïsse terms, an 'agonizing reappraisal' of France's foreign policy, Foreign Minister Bidault gradually realizing that, without Anglo-American support, French German objectives could never be attained.²⁰⁸ At the conference, Bidault nevertheless pressed his views concerning the German population. According to him, 'there should be no transfers of German population beyond those already agreed at Potsdam, [...] transfers specified by Potsdam should now stop, [...] emigration of Germans should be encouraged and [...] the settlement of displaced persons in Germany should be forbidden.'²⁰⁹ Admittedly, there were divergences of views between experts in the *Quai d'Orsay*.²¹⁰ But one area of outright agreement appeared to endure: France needed both to recruit German workers and to avoid the settlement of DPs' in Germany.²¹¹

Procedure came into play here. British and American officials required that France accepted the principle of recruiting DPs before negotiating the

²⁰⁵ Janine Ponty 'Les rapatriements d'ouvriers polonais.'

²⁰⁶ NA, FO/945/470, Inward Telegram from Lubbecke to control office, 18 February 1947.

²⁰⁷ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/849, Lettre de l'administrateur general Laffon à l'adjoint pour le gouvernement Militaire à Monsieur les Gouverneurs, délégués supérieurs pour les Gouvernements militaires du Bade, Wurtemberg, de l'état Rhéno-Palatin, Baden-Baden, 27 March 1947.

²⁰⁸ Quoted in Pierre Gerbet *Le relèvement. Politique étrangère de la France, 1944-1949* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1991), p. 279.

²⁰⁹ NA, FO/945/470, Note of informal discussion in the office of Monsieur Bousquet, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on the subject of German emigration, on 30 April 1947.

²¹⁰ In his memoirs, Massigli has described the moral and organizational crisis of the Department. Pierre Grosser 'L'entrée de la France en guerre froide', Serge Berstein et Pierre Milza (eds) *L'année 1947* (Paris: Presses de Sciences Po, 2000), pp. 167-188, p. 187.

²¹¹ On Bidault's vision see NA, FO/945/470, Note of informal discussion in the office of Monsieur Bousquet, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on the subject of German emigration, on 30 April 1947. MAE, Affaires Economiques et financières, Affaires Allemandes et autrichiennes, 1944-1949, 131, Note sur le Problème démographique allemand, Direction générale des affaires administratives et sociales, 8 February 1947.

recruitment of Germans.²¹² And the Americans in particular lamented the fact that France refused to accept Polish DPs, while striving to recruit Germans.²¹³ As a result of the manpower shortage in the bi-zone, they were reluctant to accept the principles relating to the recruitment of German expellees. French agencies were, on the contrary, eager to get rid of as many Eastern European DPs as they could. During informal negotiations at the *Quai d'Orsay*, an American official observed: 'If the manpower situation in France is so critical, why on earth are you sending back thousands of Polish workers in Poland? [...] And why are you refusing the DPs that we are offering to you?'²¹⁴ Bousquet responded by stating that France considered the recruitment of DPs an 'indispensable supplement' to meet the requirements of the Monnet Plan, and it considered the recruitment of German labour to be a form of compensation for the loss of German PoWs.²¹⁵ American authorities seemed immune to this line of argument. They insisted that the French government placed them in a very difficult situation in relation to their British allies:

I was in Paris, two weeks ago, to participate in the negotiations initiated with the French government on this question. The French delegates refused our offers of DP manpower [...] Purely political considerations have prevailed over the needs of the French economy; at this conference, the delegates of the (communist) Ministry of Labour have refused our offer.

Nonetheless, the attitudes of your representatives place the American military government in a delicate situation: on one hand, the government has committed itself to you to authorize in its zone the recruitment of German migrants for France; on the other hand, it has committed itself to Great Britain, by virtue of the Byrnes-Bevin agreements, to retain all the material and human resources of the American zone for the bi-zonal economy [...] Yet, the exportation of German workers will put a strain on the economic recovery [...] and will aggravate the manpower crisis which is already severely affecting industries in the two zones.'²¹⁶

In June, members of the US Congress even threatened to withdraw Marshall Plan assistance from 'any European nation refusing to open its borders to a reasonable number of DPs.'²¹⁷

²¹² NA, FO/945/470, Minutes of Anglo-French discussions on the recruitment in the British and French Zones of Austria and Germany of DP for work in France and in the UK, meeting held at the Quay d'Orsay, 28 April 1947.

²¹³ CAC, Versement 770623, article 172, Note d'information, Conversation du capitaine Martin-Siegfried avec le commandant Negrie, 18 April 1947.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/822, Secrets notes on Conference held at French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, between US and IGCR representatives and members of the French government on recruitment of labour from Germany for France, 31 March 1947, p. 1.

²¹⁶ CAC, Versement 770623, article 172, Note d'information, Conversation du capitaine Martin-Siegfried avec le commandant Negrie, 18 April 1947.

²¹⁷ Cohen *In war's wake*, p. 106.

French authorities eventually signed agreements for the recruitment of DPs with the American, the British and the Inter-Governmental Committee on Refugees' authorities on 10 June 1947.²¹⁸ These Agreements only concerned non-German Displaced Persons but several letters were exchanged on the same day rendering the terms of this agreement applicable to the recruitment of *Reichsdeutsche* and *Volksdeutsche* in the British and French zones of Austria.²¹⁹ An annex to the British agreement stipulated that 2,000 DPs would be recruited in the French zone by British authorities and 14,000 DPs in the British zone by French authorities.²²⁰ According to the terms of the agreements, American and British authorities had to pay the entire maintenance expenses of the Selection Centres involved. They also had to provide DPs with footwear and clothing. In practice, due to financial difficulties, the British authorities did not follow this requirement to the letter.²²¹ The agreement further stipulated that miners' families could join them after sixty days, and families of other workers after ninety days. Once DPs were in possession of work contracts, they were to receive a residential permit and a temporary labour permit. They were to be paid at the same rate as French workers and were entitled to join the trade union of their choice. The following DPs were to be returned to the American zone: 'DPs who have rescinded their contract for a valid reason, DPs who have not the aptitude to work in France, DPs who by action or propaganda become a danger to public order.'²²²

Conclusion

In Britain, DPs' *love for freedom* and preference to remain in the West was regarded as constituting the 'spirit and stuff of which we can make Britons.'²²³ This was certainly not the case in France. In the philo-communist context of the Liberation, the recruitment of DPs defied consensus. The bitterness of the debates over the recruitment of DPs mirrored the nascent Fourth Republic's internal divisions. On the one hand, Eastern Europeans were often perceived as culturally more *assimilable* than North African colonial migrants. Therefore, Ministry of Population personnel and their representatives in the field advocated the recruitment of young and able-bodied *white* workers. On the other hand, Communist decision-makers and their ideological fellow-travellers on the

²¹⁸ NA, FO/945/470, Telegram from the British Embassy, Duff Cooper, N.523, 12 June 1947.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²²⁰ NA, FO/945/470, Telegram to MacVittie, PW/DP Division, 24 July 1947.

²²¹ NA, FO/945/470, letter to Colonel Logan-Gray, Allied Commission for Austria, 18 June 1947.

²²² NA, FO/945/470, Agreement between the French government and the IGRC regarding the recruitment and the establishment in France of DPs originally in the American zone of Germany and Austria.

²²³ Kay and Miles 'Refugees or Migrant workers?', p. 216.

French Left - particularly numerous in the Ministry of Labour and the ONI - opposed the recruitment of those they regarded as *fascist* DPs and wartime collaborators.

Admittedly, the communist-dominated Ministry of Labour constituted the most vehement opponent of recruitment. But, as this chapter demonstrates, opposition to the recruitment went beyond the limited circles of communist trade-unionists and labour experts. The issues posed by the recruitment of DPs were far greater than this political opposition between the MRP-dominated Ministry of Population and the Communist-dominated Ministry of Labour would suggest. It was also shaped by nagging worries about German overpopulation and the inherent security threat that this posed to Europe. It also triggered wider controversy about how far DPs could or should be assimilated into the nation state and about the relative superiority or inferiority of races. Although the ordinance passed on 2 November 1945 officially banned the use of ethnic criteria in the selection of immigrants, this chapter shows that ethnic prejudices continued to structure French immigration policies. While Baltic and *Banatais* DPs topped the scale of probity, stereotypes of Polish and Ukrainian DPs as morally lax and more inclined to theft remained widespread. Yet, if DPs undoubtedly faced discrimination with *ethnicisant* overtones, the 'ethnic discourse' surrounding them was never entirely coherent. Indeed, the issue of wartime collaboration, as well as the strength of their nationalist sentiments, blurred these ethnic taxonomies still further.

The trauma of war and collaboration weighed heavily in these the debates. Discussion of DPs' alleged collaboration offer a window onto wider French experiences of resistance, collaboration and 'forced enrolment' in the Wehrmacht. As the example of the *Banatais* illustrates, French officials, trade union leaders and other social commentators projected their own wartime experiences onto DPs. While Communists acted with exaggerated ferocity against DPs, perhaps in an attempt to purge the memory of the years 1939-1941, Alsatians projected their own memories of



Fig. 6. The '*Malgré-nous*' of the Balkans, 31 August 1949.

'forced enrolment' onto DPs. To some extent, the *Banatais* mirror, and Lorrainers and Alsatians self-projection onto their 'brothers in suffering' reveal that the memory of the war was more fragmented than historians previously assumed.²²⁴

Despite widespread scepticism, the recruitment scheme was cautiously implemented in April 1947. This was partly the result of an urgent need for manpower to enact the Monnet plan; partly a consequence of wider diplomatic bargaining to secure the entry of German migrants. Although the Ministry of Labour 'officially' rallied to the DP scheme, anti-DPs attitudes persisted at lower administrative tiers within the Ministry and the ONI. As will be explained in chapter Seven, most of the ONI field agents working in Germany were hostile to the entry of what they regarded as *anti-communist* and reactionary migrants. Little wonder that by December 1947 the recruitment scheme had yielded meagre results: 6,625 DPs only had entered France.²²⁵ A month later, an official investigation concluded that Communist ONI agents were *sabotaging* the recruitment programme. Paradoxically, as we shall see in chapter Seven, when France was finally *ready* to recruit DPs - in 1948 - many refused to emigrate to what they regarded as a quasi-*communist* country.

²²⁴ Adler 'Nation and Alienation: Retrievals of Home in Post-war French film', p. 330.

²²⁵ Chevalier 'Bilan d'une immigration', p. 134.

Chapter Three: Between East and West?

Debates over repatriation and the limits of neutrality in the field

At the end of May 1945, in Neustadt, a small town in the north of what would soon become the French occupation zone, Russian DPs spontaneously organized a commemoration of their release from German clutches. During this ceremony, they thanked their American liberators, paying tribute to Roosevelt. In his weekly report, UNRRA Dutch relief worker Van den Bogaert captured the event in rather poor English:

The Russian Commandant had had painted, portraits of the Yalta Big Three group, of Marshal Stalin and of other prominent Russian Officers. These were displayed on buildings round the square.

A large and life-like portrait of President Roosevelt so lately deceased, was mounted the day before which the entire Center parade and the proceedings opened with a General Salute from the Guard [...] At an appropriate moment, early in the speech, the Russian Commandant called for one minute's silence in honour of President Roosevelt. The President's portrait which up to now had been veiled in black crepe, was unveiled. The Russian Commandant then continued his speech thanking the American Army for liberating them [...]¹

Van den Bogaert's story illuminates one aspect of a local American-Russian entente *made in Germany*. Relief workers and Russian DPs were neither aware of the growing tensions between the Great Powers nor could they imagine the speed with which post-war European political realities would transform the stakes of their repatriation from post-war Germany. Although one should neither over-estimate the importance of these international encounters, nor presume their durable impact on the post-war order, it seems clear that experiences of displacement created fleeting opportunities for international cooperation amidst the German rubble.² In Eric Hobsbawm's words, the Second World War generated a brief 'moment of anti-fascist unity'.³ The creation of the Munich DP University exemplified these cross-national solidarities amongst DPs. Dedicated to reviving humanism and internationalism after years of oppression during the Nazi regime, this self-organized DP institution brought together over 2,000

¹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0432-0059-03, Van den Bogaert, Weekly report N.3, 1-15 May 1945, 24 May 1945.

² Anna Holian *Between National Socialism and Soviet Communism: Displaced Persons in post-war Germany* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2011), p. 10. Also see Robert Moeller 'Histories of the Aftermath: the European "Postwar" in Comparative Perspective' *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute* 41 (2007), p. 90; Geoff Eley 'A Disorder of Peoples: the Uncertain Ground of Reconstruction in 1945', Jessica Reinisch and Elizabeth White (ed) *The disentanglement of populations. Migration, Expulsion and Displacement in Post-war Europe, 1944-1949* (London : Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 291-314, 295; Peter Gatrell 'Trajectories of Population Displacement in the Aftermaths of Two World Wars' in Reinisch and White (ed) *The disentanglement of populations*, pp. 3-26.

³ Eric J. Hobsbawm *L'âge des extrêmes. Histoire du Court XXe siècle* (Paris: Editions complexe, 2006), pp. 234-237.

students representing twenty-eight different nationalities, the majority hailing from the Ukraine, Poland, Lithuania, Russia and Latvia.⁴

Alongside these inspiring endeavours, early signs of political divisions were, however, becoming visible. With the common enemy gone, the 'anti-fascist' front was sorely tested in this *DP land* by those who refused repatriation.⁵ While Neustadt's DPs celebrated their US liberators and were eager to return home, others nearby were in hiding; some even threatened to commit suicide rather than face forced repatriation to the Soviet Union.⁶ In Wangen, Principal Welfare Officer Grace Garvey reported that 'there [had] been much agitation in all the camps and villages over the repatriation'.⁷ Evidently, the issue was central to creeping Cold War tensions among the displaced. At the level of high-politics, it caused friction between the Western Allies and the Soviet Union, hastening the demise of the wartime alliance.⁸ For the Soviet and Eastern European governments repatriation represented the denouement of the anti-fascist struggle. In their eyes, any *honest* DPs should be prepared to return home to participate in the reconstruction of their homelands. Those who preferred to stay behind were, according to this logic, *quislings*, *enemies of democracy* and *traitors to the anti-fascist cause*.⁹ On the ground, deep ideological divides also tore political committees apart. As Anna Holian observed, 'a few years before the Cold War brought the era of anti-fascist unity in Europe officially to a close, some of its fault lines were already visible in the concentration camps'.¹⁰ To take one instance, debates about repatriation precipitated the dissolution of the anti-fascist International Prisoners' Committee in Dachau, destroying any vestiges of Hobsbawm's 'anti-fascist unity'.¹¹

The politically charged meanings and contested readings of repatriation lie at the heart of this chapter. Admittedly, there were considerably fewer DPs and political prisoners committees in the French occupation zone. But the French case still offers fascinating insights into the issues at hand. As explained in the previous chapter, French *tripartite* governments sought 'a third way' in international affairs, French diplomacy striving to position itself *between East*

⁴ Anna Holian 'Displacement and the Post-war Reconstruction of Education: Displaced Persons at the UNRRA University of Munich, 1945-1948', *Contemporary European History*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (2008), pp. 167-195.

⁵ This phrase is used by Daniel Cohen in *In war's wake: Europe's Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order* (Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 119.

⁶ Haut Commissariat de la République française en Allemagne, Service des Personnes Déplacées, *Sept ans d'activité en faveur des personnes déplacées en zone française d'occupation, 1945-1952*, rapport dactylographié et illustré, [undated], p.18.

⁷ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0086-01, Narrative welfare report for week ending Aug 31, Principal Welfare Officer, Grace M. Garvey.

⁸ Cohen *In war's wake*, p. 19; Guy S. Goodwin-Gill 'Different Types of Forced Migration Movements as an International and National Problem' in Rystad, G. (ed) *The Uprooted. Forced Migration as an International Problem in the Post-War Era* (Lund: Lund University Press, 1990), pp. 15-45, pp. 22-30.

⁹ Holian *Between National Socialism*, p. 232. Also see her PhD thesis 'Between National Socialism and Soviet Communism: the politics of Self-Representation among Displaced Persons in Munich, 1945-1951', University of Chicago, 2005, pp. 154-157.

¹⁰ Holian 'Between National Socialism and Soviet Communism' (PhD thesis), p. 155.

¹¹ *Ibid*, p. 154.

and West to secure a pivotal role between the *Anglo-Saxon* powers and the Eastern bloc. But was a position *between East and West* sustainable when it came to repatriation? Here several questions remain unaddressed. Was 'forced repatriation' a source of French embarrassment in the United Nations General Assembly comparable to that posed later by decolonization? What, if anything, characterized the French approach to repatriation? Did UNRRA's presence protect DPs refusing repatriation? And finally, how did French military authorities and UNRRA humanitarian workers confront the challenges presented by the emergence of anti-repatriation activities and, more broadly, by DPs' politics in the French zone?

This chapter first examines French debates about repatriation - both at the diplomatic level and within the zone - in the wider contexts of the reinvention of the French Republic and the emergence of new discourses of human rights. It highlights the lack of uniformity within French repatriation policy, tracing deeper connections to French ambiguity toward the Soviet Union. It then focuses on UNRRA's attitude to repatriation in the French zone, exposing the limits to the principle of neutrality and the actual politicization of relief work. It argues that the history of UNRRA in the French zone exemplified the difficulty, if not the impossibility, of sustaining 'impartial' and 'neutral' relief work in peacetime. Moreover, as we shall see, UNRRA's idea of neutrality was not intrinsically 'neutral', a fact made plain by the emergence of DP politics.

The historiographical context

Historians disagree about the significance of the Soviet factor in shaping French repatriation policy. According to Mark Elliot, France was the Soviet Union's most 'pliant Western government', as Soviet repatriation activities in the Camp Beauregard (outside Paris) testified. 'Witnesses [...] attested to abductions undertaken without interference from the French police. The meddling of the Kremlin's officials on French soil became so commonplace that Parisian wags declared that German occupation had been replaced by Russian'.¹² Wolfgang Jacobmeyer and Nikolai Tolstoy concur, suggesting that the French adopted a pro-Soviet position in their zone of occupation, implementing a more Draconian forced repatriation policy than their Western

¹² Mark Elliott 'The Soviet Repatriation campaign' in Wsevolod Isajiw; Yory Boshyk and Roman Senkus (eds) *The Refugee Experience. Ukrainian Displaced Persons after World War Two* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 1992), pp. 341-359, p. 349.

Allies.¹³ According to Jacobmeyer, 'only the French government did not side with her Western Allies (one of many examples of a French post-war *Sonderweg*) and concluded a little known agreement with the Soviet Union [...] on the forcible repatriation of Soviet DPs including Balts.'¹⁴

Other historians place greater emphasis on differences between the policies France adopted at home and in its occupation zones in Germany and Austria. Georges Coudry suggests that the methods employed in the French zone were less brutal than those employed in France.¹⁵ Mark Wyman reaches the same conclusion, arguing that 'France allowed the Soviets to conduct manhunts for Soviet citizens on French soil for months, [but] the French Army of Occupation in Germany was much less cooperative'.¹⁶ In his work on the French occupation zone in Austria, Klaus Eisterer also contends that the French were less cooperative with the Soviets than earlier historical accounts indicate.¹⁷ To be sure, Soviet complaints relating to the French zone in Austria outnumbered those about the French zone in Germany.¹⁸ But, Pavel Polian, who has worked extensively on Soviet archival documents, contest Eisterer's interpretation and largely rehabilitate Tolstoy and Jacobmeyer's views.¹⁹ Polian quotes a report indicating that the Soviet authorities were satisfied with the work carried out by French administrators in regards to the repatriation of Soviet nationals and 'anti-Soviet' elements.²⁰ Polian adds that repatriation persisted far longer in the French occupation zone of Germany (until 1952) than in the other Western zones.²¹

More recently, Andreas Rinke, Adolphe Lesur and Julia Maspero have demonstrated that French DP policy was more complex and ambivalent than earlier accounts allow.²² Satisfying Moscow's demands was certainly consistent with the orientation of French foreign policy between 1945 and 1947. But other interests often superseded these diplomatic necessities. Although Andreas

¹³ Nikolai Tolstoy *Victims of Yalta* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1977); Wolfgang Jacobmeyer *Vom Zwangsarbeiter zum heimatlosen Ausländer: Die Displaced Persons in Westdeutschland, 1945-1951* (Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1985), pp. 142-143. On broader discussions of Soviet Repatriation and Allied policy see Julius Epstein *Operation Keelhaul: the story of forced repatriation from 1944 to the Present* (Old Greenwich, Conn: the Devin-Adair Company, 1973); Nicholas Bethell *The Last secret: Forcible repatriation to Russia, 1944-1947* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1974).

¹⁴ Wolfgang Jacobmeyer 'The 'Displaced Persons' in West Germany, 1945-1951' in Rystad *The Uprooted*, pp. 271-288, p. 276.

¹⁵ Georges Coudry 'Le rapatriement des ressortissants soviétiques de 1945 à 1947, avatars de la réciprocité' *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains* Vol. 178 (1995), pp. 119-140, p. 129.

¹⁶ Mark Wyman *DPs: Europe's Displaced Persons* (New York: Cornell University, 1998), p. 65.

¹⁷ Pavel M. Polian (translated by Christine Colpart) 'Le rapatriement des citoyens soviétiques depuis la France et les zones françaises d'occupation en Allemagne et en Autriche', *Cahiers du Monde russe*, Vol. 41, No. 1 (2000), pp. 165-189, pp. 177-178.

¹⁸ MAE, HCRFA, Bonn 257, *Ministre des Affaires Etrangères à Commissaire Général aux Affaires Allemandes et Autrichiennes*, [24 June 1946?].

¹⁹ Andreas Rinke *Le Grand retour - Die französische Displaced Person-Politik (1944-1951)* (Krankfurt, Peter Lang, 2002), pp. 340-349.

²⁰ Polian 'Le rapatriement des citoyens soviétiques', p. 178.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Rinke *Le Grand retour*; Julia Maspero 'La question des personnes déplacées polonaises dans les zones françaises d'occupation en Allemagne et en Autriche: un aspect méconnu des relations franco-polonaises (1945-1949)' *Relations internationales*, Vol. 138 (2009), pp. 59-74.

Rinke argues that France's overarching aim was to reduce the number of Displaced Persons in its zone, he shows that a consistent plan only took shape in the months between late 1945 and early 1946. Prior to that, decision-making was fractured and bent to changing circumstances.²³ Drawing on a meticulous analysis of French diplomatic archives about Polish citizens originating from the East of the Bug River and established in France, Adolphe Lesur concurred. 'Contrary to common belief, [French] reserves and opposition to Soviet manoeuvring are obvious. This is amply demonstrated in French diplomatic archives for the period of autumn 1944-spring 1946, thus **before** the 12 February 1946 UN Resolution defending DPs' rights'.²⁴ Julia Maspero has also argued, for her part, that French authorities devised a 'double-game policy' when it came to the repatriation of Polish DPs.²⁵

The research in this chapter goes beyond such interpretations, adopting a new approach by focusing on a wide range of untapped archival material originating from the archives of the French occupation zone and UNRRA. While recognizing the importance of diplomats and national politicians in formulating repatriation policies, it argues that repatriation crucially depended on how French administrators first re-interpreted and then implemented these instructions in the zone. Highlighting conflicting perceptions within the zone, the chapter exposes the *vicissitudes of repatriation*, unravelling a realm of historical contingency left largely obscure by previous scholarship.²⁶ This approach allows for a more nuanced understanding of French attitudes towards repatriation. It probes beneath the formal structure of official instructions to reconstruct the ways in which repatriation was put into practice. In doing so, it reveals that attitudes towards repatriation within the military government and UNRRA were not monolithic. As in many other aspects of DP policy, actors in Paris, Berlin, Baden-Baden, Rastatt and Haslach (for UNRRA) had contradictory requirements and therefore pursued divergent policies.²⁷

Internal rivalries, coupled with a complex decision making-process, fed political and jurisdictional conflicts between political planners, military authorities, UNRRA officials and relief workers in the field. As a result, contradictory instructions were often sent out. Encouragement of repatriation

²³ See for instance his analysis of French ministerial debates about forced repatriation, Rinke *Le Grand retour*, pp. 140-159.

²⁴ Adolphe Lesur 'Le droit d'option nationale des citoyens polonaise établis en France, nés à l'est du Bug: les positions méconnues du Gouvernement provisoire de la République française d'après les archives du Quai d'Orsay (octobre 1944-février 1946) *Revue des études slaves* Vol. 75 (2004), pp. 321-332.

²⁵ Maspero 'La question des personnes déplacées'.

²⁶ This elegant phrase is taken from Mary Dewhurst Lewis's book. *The Boundaries of the Republic. Migrant Rights and the Limits of Universalism in France, 1918-1940* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), p. 155.

²⁷ Corine Defrance and Ulrich Pfeil *Entre guerre froide et intégration européenne. Reconstruction et rapprochement, 1945-1963* (Villeneuve d'Ascq: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 2012), p. 58.

varied, depending on where DPs lived, who they knew, whether they worked or not, which French or UNRRA officials they encountered, how hostile to repatriation they were, and what nationality they held. The chapter also shows that despite their coercive restrictions, neither UNRRA nor the military authorities prevented an autonomous DPs politics from emerging. The conflict between the PDR/UNRRA Directions, coupled with the considerable autonomy of local administrators in the various Kreise of the zone, opened critical spaces for DPs' contestation. The chapter thus adds an essential social and cultural dimension to Rinke and Maspero's diplomatic and institutional interpretations.

The threat of repatriation

At the Liberation French officials tried to establish France's place in the post-war order by asserting Resistance values and humanitarian traditions. In a period in which human rights gained unprecedented visibility in international politics, '*resistance* was the language of the small countries facing the Big Three.'²⁸ Reviving asylum rights and individual liberties as core political principles were part of the reaffirmation of core Republican ideals after the erosion of asylum in the late 1930s and under Vichy.²⁹ At UNRRA council meetings French representatives endorsed British and American rhetoric about individual freedom and democratic rights, but they were also anxious not to alienate Eastern delegations. In the summer of 1945, French delegates therefore fashioned the position of a 'disinterested bystander' between East and West, hoping to assume the role of mediator between the United States and the Soviet Union.³⁰ This proved untenable. In July 1946, Eleanor Roosevelt publicly rebuked France for its policy of forced repatriation from its metropolitan territory. A French Foreign Ministry note observed that 'it would be pointless to deny that the French government found itself at the Liberation confronted with a situation for which it was not able to demand a resolution in accordance with international law'.³¹ The next section examines French official attitudes towards forced repatriation, exploring the extent to which France tied its international standing to a defence of human rights.

²⁸ Pieter Lagrou *The Legacy of Nazi occupation. Patriotic Memory and National Recovery in Western Europe, 1945-1965* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 266. Also see Cohen *In War's wake*, p. 16.

²⁹ Greg Burgess 'Remaking Asylum in post-war France', due to appear in a special issue with the working title 'the Nation-State and Refugees' (*Journal of Contemporary History*, July 2014).

³⁰ MAE, NUOI, 7, Note pour le Ministre, Affaires Economiques, 18 August 1945, p. 6; MAE, NUOI, 7, Lettre Direction des Conventions Administratives, 17 August 1945.

³¹ MAE, Europe, URSS (1944-1960), 69, Ambassade France Washington, 17 July 1946.

Repatriation in context

At the war's end the largest single group of displaced persons were Soviet nationals. Unlike other displaced persons in the three western zones, they could be forced to return home. This Soviet exception was agreed at the Yalta Conference, American, British and Soviet authorities having concluded secret agreements for the reciprocal exchange of liberated civilians and PoWs.³² At Yalta, the Allies promised that Soviet citizens would be sent eastwards first.³³ There nevertheless remained considerable confusion regarding DPs hailing from territories annexed by the Soviet Union during the war, notably Eastern Poland and the Baltic States.³⁴ In the initial months following the Liberation, Ukrainians, Byelorussians, Latvians, Lithuanians and Estonians were sometimes compelled to submit to repatriation. In an effort to hide their status, many took cover under an assumed nationality. Polish nationals, however, were not subject to forced repatriation or, at least, were not supposed to be.

Although the United States and Britain never repudiated these elements of the Yalta accords, military officials progressively undermined them, notably by limiting Soviet repatriation officers' access to DP camps. On 18 May 1945 the military command secretly agreed to exclude Baltic DPs from the forced repatriation process.³⁵ On 4 September General Eisenhower went further, confining forced repatriation to three categories of people: Soviet citizens who had been captured in German uniform; those who had been in the Red Army on or after 22 June 1941 and who were not subsequently discharged; and those who had voluntarily rendered aid to the enemy.³⁶ As Juliette Denis observes, this policy stemmed from the peculiar status of Baltic DP citizenship, British and American authorities having recognized *de facto* but not *de jure* the annexation of the Baltic States by the Soviet Union.³⁷

In marked contrast with its Western Allies, French decision-makers had to comply with what was known as a *politique du donnant-donnant* with the USSR in order to guarantee the return of French internees and the repatriation of the *Malgré-nous*: POWs from Alsace-Lorraine who had been forcibly enrolled

³² Holian *Between National Socialism*, p. 38.

³³ Hilton 'Pawns on a Chessboard?' Polish DPs and Repatriation from the US Zone of Occupation of Germany, 1945-1949' in Steinert and Weber-Newth (ed) *Beyond Camps and Forced Labour*, pp. 90-102, p. 91.

³⁴ Juliette Denis 'Complices de Hitler ou victimes de Staline? Les déplacés baltes en Allemagne de la sortie de guerre à la guerre froide', *Le Mouvement Social*, Vol. 244, No. 3 (2013), pp. 81-98.

³⁵ *Ibid*, p. 86.

³⁶ Marta Dyczok *The Grand Alliance and Ukrainian refugees* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), p. 108; In January 1946, this policy was severely modified leading to a vague of individual suicides; MAE, HCRFA, Bonn 150, Y.A. Le Vernoy au Colonel Poignant, 7 May 1946.

³⁷ Denis 'Complices de Hitler ou victimes de Staline?', p. 87.

in the Wehrmacht and captured by the Red Army.³⁸ As Catherine Klein-Gousseff observes, 'quite surprisingly [...] the history of repatriation began with facts rather than official agreements'.³⁹ In the French case repatriation began with the liberation of 1,500 *Alsaciens-Lorrains* held in the Soviet camp at Tambov on 7 July 1944.⁴⁰ A *gentleman's agreement* regarding repatriations was subsequently reached between the French Foreign Ministry and the Soviet ambassador in October 1944, the point at which Moscow officially recognised the GPRF.⁴¹ This was soon supplemented by an official accord on repatriation concluded between Paris and Moscow on 29 June 1945. This agreement was, in some respects, more radical than the bilateral agreements concluded by the British and American authorities at Yalta.⁴² As Polian observes, the main difference between the Anglo-American Yalta decisions and the Franco-Soviet accords lay in the Protocol to the latter. Within it, France committed itself to repatriate all Soviet citizens, including those who were likely to be prosecuted for their collaboration with the Nazis.⁴³ French authorities also signed a treaty of repatriation with Czechoslovakia regarding their respective 'prisoners, deportees and refugees' on 21 November 1944.⁴⁴

These accords quickly led to massive population transfers to the east. From 1 July 1945 to 1 January 1946, an estimated 102,160 Soviet DPs, 14,727 Polish DPs, 13,187 Yugoslavs, 1,788 Czech DPs, 16,000 Dutch DPs and 2,000 Austrian DPs were repatriated from the French zone.⁴⁵ Soviet nationals were repatriated first, followed by Yugoslavs and then Poles.⁴⁶ By December 1945, French PDR authorities estimated that only 600 to 800 Soviet nationals remained in their zone.⁴⁷ Yet, in July 1947, Soviet authorities claimed that 9,805 Soviet DPs were still residing there, including 753 Russians, 2,731 Ukrainians from Galicia, 903 Estonians, 2,666 Latvians and 2,752 Lithuanians.⁴⁸ Despite

³⁸ Catherine Gousseff 'Des migrations de sorties de guerre qui reconfigurent la frontière : ouverture et refermeture de l'URSS avant la guerre froide (1944-1946)' in Sophie Coeuré et Sabine Dullin (eds) *Frontières du communisme* (Paris: La Découverte-Recherche, 2007), pp. 428-442, p. 433. Also see Polian 'Le rapatriement des citoyens soviétiques' ; Catherine Klein-Gousseff *Retour d'URSS. Les prisonniers de guerre et les internés français dans les archives soviétiques, 1945-1951* (Paris: Editions du CNRS, 2001) ; G  l Moule  c 'Alli  s ou ennemis ? Le GUPVI-NKVD, le Komintern et les « Malgr  s-nous ». Le destin des prisonniers de guerre fran  ais en URSS (1942-1955)', *Cahiers du monde russe*, Vol. 42, No. 2-3-4 (2001), pp. 667-678. Jacques Bari  ty, Corine Defrance 'Les missions de la France Libre en Union Sovi  tique et les "Malgr  s-nous" (1942-1944)', *Revue d'Allemagne et des Pays de Langue Allemande* Vol 39, No. 4 (2008), pp. 533-550.

³⁹ Klein-Gousseff (ed) *Retour d'URSS*, p. 18.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, p. 18.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, p. 19.

⁴² Polian 'Le rapatriement des citoyens sovi  tiques', p. 170. Jean-Noel Grandhomme 'Tambov et autres camps. Le lent retour d'URSS des "Malgr  s-nous" d'Alsace-Lorraine (1944-1955)', *Revue d'Allemagne et des Pays de Langue Allemande*, Vol.39 (2008), pp. 551-568.

⁴³ Polian 'Le rapatriement des citoyens sovi  tiques', p. 170.

⁴⁴ MAE, Europe, URSS (1944-1960), 67, Direction des Unions pour la Direction d'Europe, 13 September 1945.

⁴⁵ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/467, R  ponse aux chiffres demand  s par Berlin [18.1.1947?].

⁴⁶ *Sept ans en faveur des refugie  s*, p. 19.

⁴⁷ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/947, Note pour Monsieur le Colonel de Villeneuve, N. 5584 DGAA/Dir PDR, 29 December 1945.

⁴⁸ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/1033, Secret, Gri  fs invoqu  s contre la Zone Fran  aise d'Occupation, Lettre N.1518 du G  n  ral Yourkine, [July 1947?].

their promises, Soviet officials did not grant equivalent access to French repatriation officers in the Soviet territories as the French conceded to Soviet officers in their zone.⁴⁹ On 4 September 1946, General De Villeuneuve, Director of Koenig's Foreign Affairs Service, informed General Davydof that if Soviet officials continued to block the activity of the French Mission in the Soviet zone, as had been the case since August, the Soviet Mission would meet the same fate in the French zone.⁵⁰ Increasingly, the French authorities were coming to resent the supposedly reciprocal protocol.

Admittedly, French repatriation policy originally bore fruit. In October 1945, 294,690 French internees were repatriated from the Soviet Union.⁵¹ As Catherine Klein-Gousseff has shown, the first phase of the repatriation of French nationals (from the spring to the summer of 1945) was carried out swiftly and effectively.⁵² By the end of 1945, however, the Soviet Authorities considered the repatriation of French PoWs almost over. Echoing this, the Communist Ex-Servicemen's Minister Laurent Casanova announced the near completion of the repatriation of French citizens from the Soviet Union in the summer of 1946. A trite, inaccurate statement, it provoked an outcry among Deputies within the French Constituent Assembly.⁵³ In October 1946, at least 13,000 French families still awaited news of their missing relatives.⁵⁴ While a minority of these PoWs certainly did not want to return home, either for fear of retaliation or because of new attachments in the USSR, the majority were, in effect, being held hostage by the Soviets.⁵⁵ This was in retaliation for perceived French reluctance to repatriate Soviet nationals from Germany and Austria.⁵⁶

Drawing on Soviet sources, Catherine Klein-Gousseff argues that from 1946 onwards Soviet policy was determined by the non-return of its nationals located in the French occupation zones. Detention of French PoWs was indeed a retaliatory action against alleged French wrongdoings.⁵⁷ Despite French protests to the contrary, Soviet suspicions were not without grounds. As Adolphe Lesur and Andreas Rinke's research suggests, French attitudes towards forced repatriation were highly ambiguous. In order to avoid confrontation with Moscow French authorities publicly stated that they were complying with the 29 June Franco-Soviet agreement. However, in tandem with

⁴⁹ MAE, HCRFA, Bonn 152, Directeur des Personnes Déplacées à Capitaine de la Portalière, 4 February 1946.

⁵⁰ Polian 'Le rapatriement des citoyens soviétiques', p.180.

⁵¹ MAE, Z – Europe, URSS Z 473 – 3, Vol. 68, Telegram, 6 October 1945 in Burgess 'Remaking Asylum', p. 19.

⁵² Klein-Gousseff *Retour d'URSS*, p. 22; pp. 190-191.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

⁵⁴ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/1033, Lettre de G. Bidault à l'ambassadeur de l'Union Soviétique, Paris, 29 October 1946; Also see Lettre de l'Administrateur Général Laffon à Monsieur le Général de Division, chef du Groupe Français du Conseil de Contrôle, 4 April 1947.

⁵⁵ See for instance MAE, HCRFA, PDR1/14, Alsaciens-Lorrains sous uniforme Allemand, [28 August 1945?].

⁵⁶ Klein-Gousseff *Retour d'URSS*, p. 25.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

these public statements, French officials allowed some Eastern Europeans to enlist in the French Foreign Legion thereby avoiding repatriation.⁵⁸ Others were told that they would soon be able to settle in France.

In this immediate post-war period, French policy was in fact highly fluid. The situation was particularly confused for Eastern European DPs who originated from territories unattached to the Soviet Union, prior to 1 September 1939. Faced with uncertainty regarding their fate, many Baltic DPs fled from the French zone, seeking refuge in the American zone.⁵⁹ In December 1945, there were approximately 6,000 Baltic DPs in the French zone, the overwhelming majority of them residing in the Württemberg area (5,658).⁶⁰ The exact number of Ukrainians is unknown.⁶¹ Ukrainians tended to be registered according to their last known citizenship or were classified as stateless in official records.⁶² Until December 1945, official instructions about whether or not they could be forcibly repatriated were contradictory. Faced with mounting requests from local administrators and unsure of the correct course of action to take, the *Secrétariat Général pour les Affaires Allemandes et Autrichiennes* urged the Foreign Ministry to send more precise instructions in November 1945.⁶³ The next section summarizes the attendant debates in Paris and then examines how these highly contradictory instructions were interpreted in the zone.

French official debates over 'forced repatriation'

To understand the growing confusion over repatriation from the French zone, it is worth recalling that the issue was extensively discussed in France prior to the signature of the 29 June agreement. In November 1944, an estimated 93,918 Soviet citizens were in French territory.⁶⁴ These included soldiers who had fought in the *Wehrmacht's* Vlassov Army and forced labourers of the Todt Organization (both groups principally located in Alsace and Lorraine), plus several escapees who had joined the French Resistance.⁶⁵ Repatriation to the USSR of members of each of these groups began in

⁵⁸ MAE, HCRFA, Bonn, 150, Lettre du Général d'Armée Koenig à Monsieur l'administrateur général adjoint, 4 June 1946.

⁵⁹ Rinke *Le Grand Retour*, pp. 146-147. Some tried to come back to the French zone in October 1946 as the US denied them the status of DPs as they had arrived in Germany after August 1945. UNA, UNRRA, S-0432-0004-01, Lettre de A.J. Pouzenc, Area Employment Officer à Director Field Operations, 7 October 1946.

⁶⁰ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/727, Etat-numérique des Baltes, 26 December 1945.

⁶¹ Bohatiuk argues that there were 19,026 Ukrainians in March 1946. On 1 August 1948, Ukrainians numbered 3,271. Nicholas Bohatiuk 'The Economic Aspects of Camp Life' in Isajiw, Boshyk and Senkus (eds) *The Refugee Experience*, pp. 69-89, p. 85.

⁶² UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0029-03, Directeur du District Nord à Monsieur le Directeur de team, critique rapport 83, 8 July 1946.

⁶³ MAE, Europe, URSS (1944-1960), 68, Lettre du Ministère plénipotentiaire, secrétaire Général pour les Affaires Allemandes et Autrichiennes à Monsieur le Ministre des Affaires Etrangères, 9 November 1945.

⁶⁴ MAE, Europe, URSS (1944-1960), 68, Point de la question des ressortissants soviétiques au 1er Novembre 1945, activité du Ministère de la Guerre au Profit de la Mission Militaire Soviétique pour le Rapatriement des citoyens soviétiques libérés dans les territoires de l'Ouest de l'Europe. [November 1945?]. On repatriation from France see Georges Coudry *Les camps soviétiques en France. Les 'russes' livrés à Staline en 1945* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1997).

⁶⁵ Klein-Gousseff *Retour d'URSS*, p. 20.

November 1944.⁶⁶ Earlier that autumn an inter-ministerial commission was established to coordinate French repatriation plans bringing together representatives from the PDR Ministry, the War Ministry, the Interior Ministry, the Finance Ministry and the Foreign Ministry.⁶⁷ Several ministers wanted to avoid forced repatriation. Three main reasons account for this: respect of French liberal traditions (stressed by the Foreign and PDR Ministries), the desire to recruit healthy DPs (emphasized by the War and Foreign Ministries) and finally the expectation that any war criminals should face trial (crucial for the Ministry of Justice).⁶⁸ The Ministry of Justice focused in particular on former soldiers from the Vlassov Army known to have committed crimes on French soil.⁶⁹ A 29 May 1945 letter from Georges Bidault further suggested that France was inclined to adopt a *sympathique* position in regards to Baltic DPs because of the former warm relations between France and the Baltic States.⁷⁰ However, the necessity to avoid any confrontation with the Soviet Union eventually prevailed in June 1945 and French policy-makers therefore dropped the requirement for consideration of individual cases.⁷¹

French diplomatic archives nevertheless reveal that French diplomats were finding ways around the Agreement as early as August 1945.⁷² As explained in the previous chapter, the very presence of UNRRA in the French zone stemmed in some measure from this desire to recruit DPs and avoid forced repatriation. French diplomats hoped that UNRRA would provide 'diplomatic protection'. The French delegation welcomed the vote of Resolution 71 at UNRRA's council, which stipulated that UNRRA could extend relief to refugees without the prior consent of their respective national governments. It thereby left the door open for emigration to France.⁷³ The delegation even wanted provision for the resettlement of 'non-repatriable' DPs in host countries to be expressly stated (although they did not publicly admit their preference).⁷⁴ A few weeks later, the French Foreign Ministry stated that forced repatriation

⁶⁶ Polian 'Rapatriement des citoyens soviétiques', p. 174.

⁶⁷ MAE, Europe, URSS (1944-1960), 68, Point de la question des ressortissants soviétiques au 1er Novembre 1945, activité du Ministère de la Guerre au Profit de la Mission Militaire Soviétique pour le Rapatriement des citoyens soviétiques libérés dans les territoires de l'Ouest de l'Europe. [November 1945?]. For a broad summary of Soviet DPs in France see Georges Coudry, *Les camps soviétiques en France. Les 'russes' livrés à Staline en 1945* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1997).

⁶⁸ This brief summary of the issues at stakes is based on the foreign diplomatic documents of the series NUOI, Europe as well as the documents of the Ambassade de Bonn. Also see on these discussions among French policy-makers Rinke *Le grand retour*, 140-159. Burgess, *Remaking Asylum in Post-War France*, 14, 18-19.

⁶⁹ MAE, Europe, URSS (1944-1960), 67, Note de la Direction des Unions pour la Direction d'Europe, 13 September 1945.

⁷⁰ Documents Diplomatiques Français (DDF), 1945, tome 1, Lettre de Georges Bidault., MAE, à M. Bonnet, Ambassadeur de France à Washington, pp. 710-711.

⁷¹ MAE, Europe, URSS (1944-1960), 68, Direction des Unions, L'accord de rapatriement franco-soviétique et le droit d'asile, 20 March 1946.

⁷² MAE, Europe, URSS (1944-1960), 67, Lettre du Ministère des Affaires Etrangères à Monsieur Berthelot, Secrétaire Général pour les Affaires allemandes et autrichiennes, 11 September 1945.

⁷³ MAE, NUOI, 7, Lettre Direction des Conventions Administratives, 17 August 1945, pp. 2-3.

⁷⁴ MAE, PDR1/18, Rapport sur le rapatriement ou le non rapatriement des personnes réfractaires, discuté à la 3ème reunion du Conseil de l'UNRRA (Londres, Aout 1945).

should only be applied to those who hailed from territories belonging to the Soviet Union on 3 September 1939.⁷⁵ This was the position of the *Direction d'Europe* within the Quai d'Orsay.⁷⁶ On 15 October 1945, a telegram was sent to the French zone. Referring to the Polish-Soviet border agreement dating of 16 August 1945, it stipulated that Polish DPs, originating from territories attached to the Soviet Union since 3 September 1939, had the right to choose whether or not to be repatriated.⁷⁷

Within the Quai d'Orsay, the *Direction des Unions* disagreed with this interpretation of the 29 June Franco-Soviet Agreement. According to the *Direction des Unions*, France could legitimately oppose the repatriation of Baltic DPs who left their countries at the time of its annexation by the USSR. But this only affected a tiny minority; as for the others, it 'appeared difficult to find irrefutable legal argument'.⁷⁸ Admittedly, jurist Jules Basdevant had convincingly demonstrated that *repatriation* unlike *population transfer* did not entail 'un caractère de contrainte'.⁷⁹ But France's overarching interest, according to the *Direction des Unions*, was to nuance its position about 'individual freedom of choice' in regards to the Soviet Union in order to avoid an open clash.⁸⁰

On 20 December 1945 the Foreign Ministry reached a compromise between these contradictory positions, advising General Laffon that Baltic DPs should not be forcefully repatriated but conceding that Soviet Repatriation Officers should be granted access to DP camps to encourage them to return home.⁸¹ Laffon was already following this policy, as we will see in the next section. As Adolphe Lesur notes, France's official position shifted before the adoption of the 12 February 1946 landmark resolution. This shift was based on the assumption that those who left their countries before annexation to the USSR were not covered by the Agreement and that those who became Soviet citizens after the annexation should not be repatriated because 'repatriation unlike population transfer was optional'.⁸² But this repatriation policy was not uniformly applied. The evidence suggests that disagreement over the question between Berlin and Baden-Baden lasted until April 1946 at least.⁸³

⁷⁵ MAE, Europe, URSS (1944-1960), 67, Lettre du Ministère des Affaires Etrangères à Monsieur Berthelot, Secrétaire Général pour les Affaires allemandes et autrichiennes, 11 September 1945.

⁷⁶ MAE, Europe, URSS (1944-1960), 68, Direction des Unions pour la Direction d'Europe, 6 November 1945.

⁷⁷ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/741, Administrateur Général à Général de Corps d'Armée, N.2765DGAA/PDR, 26 November 1945.

⁷⁸ MAE, Europe, URSS (1944-1960), 67, Direction des Unions, Note, 14 September 1945.

⁷⁹ On a discussion about the concept of population transfer notably see Matthew Frank 'Reconstructing the Nation-State: Population Transfer in Central and Eastern Europe, 1944-1948' in Reinisch and White (ed) *The Disentanglement of Populations*, pp. 27-47.

⁸⁰ MAE, Europe, URSS (1944-1960), 68, note de la Direction des Unions, 28 November 1945.

⁸¹ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/947, Lettre du Ministre Plénipotentiaire, Secrétaire Général pour les Affaires Allemandes et Autrichiennes à Monsieur l'Administrateur Général Laffon, Baden-Baden, N.3824 Pol 5001, 20 December 1945.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ MAE, HCRFA, Bonn 257, Télégramme Novateur à Contrôle Berlin et Cigogne, signé De Leusse, 21 April 1946.

The passage of a 12 February 1946 UN General Assembly resolution provided French authorities with an irrefutable legal argument against forced repatriation. As Daniel Cohen points out, this landmark resolution officially recognized the right of asylum, stating that: 'No refugees or displaced persons who have finally and definitively, in complete freedom and after receiving full knowledge of the facts [...] expressed valid objections to returning to their countries of origin... shall be compelled to return to their countries of origin'.⁸⁴ But, as Cohen also observes, this resolution did not represent utter failure for the Communists: 'Repatriation, even if voluntary, was still being framed... as the only suitable policy to solve the DP crisis.'⁸⁵ Furthermore, direct reference to the resettlement of DPs outside their homeland was avoided. We still need to clarify how French administrators in the zone implemented the contradictory official instructions issued prior to this UN Resolution. Furthermore, to what extent were these instructions altered in the face of local realities?

Daily acts of violence? Dealing with Soviet Repatriation officers in the field

As we have seen, French policy regarding forced repatriations was shaped by a variety of factors in the months following the liberation. Efforts to placate the Soviet authorities were highly significant, motivated by the paramount imperative of securing the release of French Pows held on Soviet territory. Yet this was far from the only influence weighing upon French actions and the French authorities remained uncomfortable with the very idea of forced repatriation, seeking means of adapting, or circumventing, their agreement with Moscow. The contradictory pulls upon official French policy left considerable room for manoeuvre for officials on the ground to develop their own approaches to the repatriation question.

Inside the zone, there was considerable confusion over the summer of 1945: while, as we have seen, repatriation raised serious concerns for some; for others, bombarded with alarming reports concerning rampant DP criminality, repatriation, whether voluntary or forced, appeared an expeditious solution to the DP problem. PDR representative, Captain Vuillemin put it bluntly:

Supplies that we provide to DPs represent a substantial loss that could be otherwise sent to France. On one hand, DPs' looting economically weakened the country: they have for instance stolen 800 sheep since the occupation of the Kreis. On the other hand, they create a general feeling

⁸⁴ Cohen *In war's wake*, p. 26.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

of insecurity harmful to the prestige of France [...] Furthermore, Russians from the Vlassov Army kept the product of their looting in France: watches, jewellery, cars. Are they going to leave with those objects?⁸⁶

For some administrators, memories of the Vlassov Army, coupled with alarming complaints from local Germans, encouraged the belief that they had to get rid of DPs as quickly as possible. But attitudes towards DPs were not monolithic. Contrary to Vuillemin, his boss, Colonel Jacquot, considered it remarkable 'that retaliation was so insignificant and incidents so limited' after the unprecedented and extraordinary level of atrocity and brutality committed against Slavs.⁸⁷ In August 1945, Lieutenant Rétrain noted that repatriation of Soviet citizens should be considered as completed. According to him, Soviet repatriation officers were only staying to kidnap Baltic and Ukrainian DPs and to carry out ideological and political propaganda amongst Germans.⁸⁸ There was some truth to this. Historians have demonstrated that Soviet Repatriation Missions remained in Germany, not only to return the maximum number of DPs to the Soviet Union but also to cover Moscow's espionage activities in the West.⁸⁹

French administrators watched the harsh methods employed by Soviet officials with mounting unease.⁹⁰ In Wangen, an UNRRA relief worker even reported the abduction of a DP chef from an UNRRA canteen.⁹¹ In October 1945, after visiting Tubingen, Commandant Roche reported that all Ukrainians firmly refused to be repatriated. DPs' opposition was 'poignant and dramatic', some shouting 'Shoot us here.'⁹² In the previous month Emile Laffon had issued an instruction for Ukrainian DPs, stipulating,

Ukrainian nationality does not exist. Those who claimed Ukrainian nationality are either of Soviet citizenship (those who held this citizenship on 1 September 1939) of Polish citizenship (those who held that citizenship on 1 September 1939) or Stateless (those who hold a Nansen passport).

- 1) Under SHAEF Administrative Memorandum N.39, UFSET instructions dating from 19 July 1945, the Yalta Agreements and the Franco-Soviet Agreement of 29 July 1945, Soviet citizens must be repatriated, irrespective of their personal desires.

⁸⁶ MAE, HCRFA, PDR 6/1066, Le Capitaine Vuillemin, Note de service, N.304/PDR, Munsingen, 26 July 1945.

⁸⁷ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/1066, Rapport du Colonel Jacquot au sujet du camp russe de Stetten, 2 August 1945, No.3496/EM.

⁸⁸ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/727, Administrateur Général Laffon à Général Délégué supérieur pour le GM du Bade, 12 November 1945.

⁸⁹ Mark Elliott 'The Soviet Repatriation campaign' in Isajiw, Boshy, Senkus (ed) *The Refugee Experience*, pp. 341-359, p. 346.

⁹⁰ MAE, HCRFA, PDR 6/947, Rapport confidentiel, Lieutenant Rétrain, Officier de Liaison auprès de l'E.M. du 2ème C.A. à Monsieur le Capitaine Laugeois, Chef de la MMAA, Délégation des PDR, PC, 21 August 1945; PDR6/727, Administrateur Général Laffon à Monsieur le Général Délégué supérieur pour le GM du Bade, 12 November 1945.

⁹¹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0088-01, Lettre du chef du Détachement UNRRA de Wangen au Directeur UNRRA Kreis Wangen et Lindau, Perquisition des Missions Soviétiques au restaurant UNRRA, 27 December 1945.

⁹² MAE, HCRFA, PDR 6/947, Sous-Directeur des Personnes Déplacées à Administrateur Général, 3 October 1945, N.742DGAA/Dir PDR. On Ukrainians' fears of repatriation see Ivan Z. Holowsky 'DP experience, Personality Structure and Ego Defence Mechanisms: a Psychodynamic Interpretation' in Isajiw, Boshy and Senkus (ed) *The Refugee Experience*, pp. 480-488, pp. 483-84.

- 2) Ukrainians who claim Polish citizenship [...] cannot be repatriated against their will.
- 3) Stateless [persons] enjoy a special status assigned to them by the quality of statelessness.⁹³

In October Laffon affirmed that, while France opposed forced repatriation, it had to resign itself to allowing Soviet officers to *faire le tri* as those DPs formerly residing in the east of the Curzon Line were concerned.⁹⁴ In other words, France had no choice but to grant Soviet officials wide access to - and control over - Soviet nationals. For Laffon, forced repatriation was nevertheless 'an anti-liberal solution that repelled all French men, and, at their head, the Government.'⁹⁵

As Mark Elliott comments, the Soviet Union was 'in no mood to make any concession.' Known Soviet fatalities in World War II numbered close to twenty million, compared to 541,000 for France, some 300,000 for the United States and approximately 330,000 for Britain.⁹⁶ Historians have also demonstrated that the Soviet repatriation campaign was a 'sophisticated operation', employing both legal and illicit practices, including deception, kidnapping, bribery and threats.⁹⁷ In Neustadt, Soviet Officers encouraged French PDR officers to drink using Russian women as 'honey traps' during Franco-Russian dinners, so that the officers would later facilitate repatriation.⁹⁸ Soviet Officers also circulated leaflets, journals and films aimed at cultivating homesickness.⁹⁹ Forged letters allegedly written by relatives were distributed to convince people of safe conditions in the Soviet Union.¹⁰⁰ In 1947 a French administrator reported that DPs gathered in the Repatriation Transit Centre in Immendingen were plied with alcohol until their convoy departed for the USSR.¹⁰¹

Aware of the difficult situation awaiting DPs in their countries of origin and sensitive to the criticisms circulated in the British and American zones about *illiberal* France, Koenig, Laffon and Poignant were loath to let Soviet Repatriation Officers operate in the French zone.¹⁰² But, they were all too aware that the prompt repatriation of French nationals largely depended on the preservation of cordial relations with Soviet officers. They were therefore forced

⁹³ MAE, Europe, URSS (1944-1960), 80, Administrateur Général Laffon à Ministre Plénipotentiaire, Secrétaire Général pour les Affaires Allemandes et Autrichiennes, 1037 DGAA/PDR, 15 September 1945.

⁹⁴ MAE, PDR6/947, Laffon à Koenig, N.850 DGAA/Dir/PDR, 16 October 1945.

⁹⁵ MAE, HCRFA, ADM 40, Administrateur Général Adjoint pr GM de la ZFO à Général de Corps d'Armée, N.1554, 10 October 1945.

⁹⁶ Elliott 'The Soviet Repatriation campaign', p. 342.

⁹⁷ Dyczok *The Grand Alliance*, p. 5; pp. 52-53.

⁹⁸ MAE, HCRFA, PDR 6/947, Le Lieutenant Touzerie à Monsieur le Capitaine Laugeois, 17 September 1945.

⁹⁹ Dyczok *The Grand Alliance*, p. 54.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/984, Rapport concernant la propagande antisoviétique contre le rapatriement, Tuttlingen, 29 December 1947.

¹⁰² MAE, HCRFA, PDR1/14, entretien avec le General Michelsen, [28 August 1945?].

to engage in a delicate diplomatic exercise, striving to maintain a working relationship with Soviet officials, aiming to make small concessions while avoiding handing over any DPs.¹⁰³

In December 1945, for instance, Poignant instructed Commandant Roche to search out DPs resisting repatriation.¹⁰⁴ In February 1946 he reiterated that Soviet officers had the right to ask for the list of Soviet citizens living in the zone, to visit (accompanied with a French officer) Polish and Ukrainian camps and to regroup Soviet DPs in Stetten, Tübingen and Langernargen. Litigious cases were submitted to a *Commission Mixte des Nationalités*.¹⁰⁵ French reports suggest that this commission nevertheless tended towards liberal findings, granting the majority of DPs the 'right to choose' on the basis of the 12 February Resolution.¹⁰⁶ Furthermore, Poignant developed close personal relations with Soviet officers sympathetic to France. In July 1946 he deplored the departure of Miss Ivanova, a Mission interpreter, noting: 'There is every reason to believe that [...] her dismissal is as much due to her liberal views as to her sincere attachment to France.'¹⁰⁷

None of this meant that Soviet intimidation stopped after the adoption of the 12 February 1946 UN resolution, or that French authorities were above using the threat of repatriation themselves. On several occasions, UNRRA Director Lenclud protested against illegal arrests of Ukrainian and Baltic DPs.¹⁰⁸ But these detentions and subsequent expulsions were not the result of PDR instructions; rather they demonstrated the difficulties that the PDR experienced in implementing a centralized plan for regulating repatriation. PDR personnel confronted a zone riddled with differing local arrangements, making the implementation of a coherent policy impossible. In April 1946, disagreement between the PDR Direction and the General Director of Justice over the condemnation of a Baltic DP to forced repatriation after the theft of a bicycle highlighted the lack of uniformity in the zone.¹⁰⁹ The dispute demonstrates that repatriation measures were, on occasion, harnessed to local policing priorities,

¹⁰³ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/789, Visite du Colonel Cherifi au centre de rapatriement soviétique d'Immendingen le 26 juillet 1946, 1 August 1946.

¹⁰⁴ MAE, HCRFA, PDR 6/947, Lettre du Sous-Directeur des Personnes Déplacées à Monsieur l'Administrateur Général, M.5455 DGAA/Dir PDR, 13 December 1945.

¹⁰⁵ MAE, HCRFA, PDR 6/947, Administrateur Général Laffon à Monsieur les Gouverneurs, Délégués Supérieurs pour le Gouvernement Militaire du Württemberg, Bade, Palatinat, Sarre, N. 6002 DGAA/Dir PDR, 22 February 1946.

¹⁰⁶ MAE, HCRFA, Bonn 152, Fiche pour Monsieur Hamonic, N.15199 DGAA/Dir PDR, 10 July 1946.

¹⁰⁷ MAE, HCRFA, Bonn 152, Secret, Directeur des Personnes Déplacées à Directeur Général des Affaires Administratives, N.15317/DGAA/Dir PDR, 25 July 1946.

¹⁰⁸ MAE, Bonn 148, Général de Corps d'Armée Lenclud à Monsieur le Général d'Armée, Commandant en chef Français en Allemagne, 4 January 1947. No 748/11/4099; Also see UNA, UNRRA, S-0420-0001-03, Rapport sur la campagne de propagande en faveur du rapatriement de printemps des DPs de toutes nationalités par Odette Despeigne, Zone Repatriation Officer, p. 10.

¹⁰⁹ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/727, Copie Le Directeur des Personnes Déplacées à Monsieur le Directeur Général de la Justice, N.6586 DGAA/Dir PDR, 29 April 1946.

local officials deploying the threat of repatriation to remove foreigners who posed a security threat.

The zone's internal administrative dynamics thus gave local officials the leeway to use repatriation – and, equally important, the threat of repatriation – to control the DP population. In Horb, for instance, UNRRA's Team 591 Director complained about Commandant Frenot's brutal methods, which consisted of putting 'strong pressure on DPs' by letting them know that those who refused repatriation would lose their nationality and be 'Germanized'.¹¹⁰ In Reutlingen, UNRRA Team Director Fabry also complained about the 'climate of panic created by the local military government against DPs (citing requisitions, arrests, and expulsions).¹¹¹ On 17 June 1946, Laffon instructed his personnel that although the Franco-Soviet agreement remained in force, France would comply with the UN's 12 February Resolution, making compulsory the repatriation of DPs *suivant les frontières antérieures au 1^{er} septembre 1939*.¹¹² But, in July 1946, French UNRRA Director J.J. de Marnhac asked UNRRA Headquarters to intervene to put a stop to a Soviet manhunt in Biberach that, he said, was reminiscent of practices that 'we had hoped would have been ended for ever.'¹¹³ 'These unfortunate people are arrested everywhere, in fields where they have worked as peasants for four years; in DP camps; even in the private home of an UNRRA officer where they worked as a domestic servant.'¹¹⁴

Between policy and practice

In her study of migrant rights in inter-war France, Mary Dewhurst Lewis demonstrated that 'through improvisation and negotiation, local authorities and immigrants established boundaries of inclusion and exclusion along quite different lines than those intended by state policy. Over time, this cycle of confrontation and accommodation led to policy changes at the center.'¹¹⁵ In the French zone, repatriation was similarly negotiated at many levels of social exchanges – in diplomatic affairs, in the frequent encounters between PDR officials and Soviet Repatriation officers, and locally in the ways UNRRA Team directors and local administrators interpreted official instructions and interacted with DPs. This is clearly evident in the repatriation of Polish and Hungarian DPs during which French military and PDR authorities maintained close, albeit ambiguous ties with Polish and Hungarian officials hostile to repatriation.

¹¹⁰ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0037-01, Lettre de E.Begleiter à Monsieur Moreland, Team 591, 2 April 1946.

¹¹¹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0438-0007-02, Fabry à Monsieur le Directeur Général de la Zone Française à Haslach, 3 March 1947.

¹¹² UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0025-07, signé Laffon, Télégramme Nr. 15029 DGAA/Dir. PDR, Baden-Baden, 17 June 1946.

¹¹³ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0003-01, Lettre de J.J. de Marnhac à Général directeur de la zone française, Biberach, 3 July 1946.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ Lewis *The boundaries of the Republic*, p. 14.

In May 1946 there were an estimated 6,400 Hungarian nationals, [plus some 4,600 PoWs and 1,800 civilians in the French zone]. Although Hungarians were not granted DP status in the other zones, they benefited from a privileged status in the French zone.¹¹⁶ Several reasons account for this: Hungarians enjoyed a relatively good reputation among military officials as disciplined and hard-working DPs, and French authorities maintained close ties with Hungarian military leaders hostile to their repatriation as they were grateful for the protection that Hungarian officials had offered to French PoWs during the Nazi years.¹¹⁷ Poignant singled out the contribution of the 'comte André Szechenyi' for its protection of French prisoners.¹¹⁸ Other reports suggest that a Hungarian military chief, one Colonel Sticky, the ex-commandant of an artillery group stationed near Friedrichshafen in Württemberg, had refused to fire his guns when the French First Army arrived.¹¹⁹ In order to avoid confrontation with Hungarian authorities the PDR Director decided to maintain the Hungarian Red Cross as an *unofficial* organization, while, 'for the record', publishing an announcement in the German press that camps were being allocated for the repatriation of Hungarians.¹²⁰

The same ambiguous ties were to be found with Polish officials hostile to repatriation. As mentioned earlier, there was no repatriation agreement for Polish DPs, but a 'good will understanding'.¹²¹ As Julia Maspero shows, this allowed French PDR authorities to pursue a 'double game' in the zone, maintaining representatives of the Polish Exile Government in London in the zone far longer than their British and American Allies in order to promote the recruitment of DPs for France.¹²² On the one hand, PDR officials tried to encourage repatriation by any means possible.¹²³ Locally, this conflicted with UNRRA team directors, who thought that their duty was to protect DPs (as we will see with the Mulheim controversy discussed in the next section below). On the other hand, the PDR directorate continued to work with representatives of the Polish exile Government in London, even organizing a meeting between representatives of the London Government and those of the officially-

¹¹⁶ UNRRA, S-0438-0002-04, Projet de circulaire aux teams relative à la classification des nationalités, Ebingen, 31 March 1946; S-0438-0006-05, E.P. Moreland à Directeur de team Rottweil, 26 March 1946.

¹¹⁷ *Sept-ans d'activité*, p. 12. Also see Gergely Fejérdy 'La place de la Hongrie dans la politique étrangère de la France entre 1944 et 1949' in *öt Kontinens, Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem, Budapest, 2006*, pp. 7-23.

¹¹⁸ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/717, Attestation, N.25542 DGAA/Dir PDR, 13 November 1946.

¹¹⁹ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/717, Compte-rendu de mission, 5 May 1946.

¹²⁰ MAE, Bonn 150, Secret, Directeur des Personnes Déplacées à Administrateur Général, N.6699 DGAA/Dir PDR, 7 May 1946.

¹²¹ MAE, NUOI, 294, Compte-Rendu de la Délégation française au comité spécial des réfugiés et Personnes Déplacées, présidée par M. Fouques DUPARC, 3 April 1946.

¹²² Maspero, J. 'La question des personnes déplacées polonaises', p. 73.

¹²³ MAE, HCRFA, Bonn 150, Note de A. Poignant pour Monsieur l'Administrateur Général. No. 15421 DGAA/Dir PDR.

recognized Warsaw Government in February 1946.¹²⁴ As might be expected, collaboration between the two missions proved impossible. However, while authorities in Paris ostensibly severed diplomatic ties with representatives of the Polish exile Government in June 1945, UNRRA archives reveal that London representatives continued to operate in the zone. In response to a protest from the official Polish Repatriation Mission, Poignant re-affirmed in June 1946 that the London Polish Mission had been dismantled in the zone.¹²⁵ But in October UNRRA Team 20 Director Faucette also reported that former London Liaison Officer Lt. Hornung remained in the Gneisenau camp and exerted a strong influence over the remaining Polish DPs.¹²⁶ As in the earlier case of DPs recruited to the Foreign Legion, the employment of Polish DPs in the *Compagnie de Groupements Auxillaires Etrangers* (GAE) exemplified French ambiguities.¹²⁷ GAE companies were set up in March 1946 to watch over German PoWs.¹²⁸ These groups were themselves composed of former Polish, Hungarian and Yugoslav PoWs and, in August 1946, they employed nearly 2,000 DPs, organized into fourteen separate ‘companies’ whose DP members received the same salaries and social benefits as French soldiers.¹²⁹ According to the PDR service’s official history, the GAE, thanks to their military discipline, enjoyed ‘terrific success’ among DPs.¹³⁰ Yet, they were also a recurrent source of tension with Eastern European Governments, which suspected that these paramilitary units provided cover for former collaborators.¹³¹

To sum up, in November 1945 there were an estimated 59,973 Polish DPs in the various Kreis of the zone.¹³² The first wave of repatriation occurred soon afterwards with 13,700 Polish DPs repatriated between 16 November and 13 December 1945.¹³³ 8,541 Polish DPs subsequently left the zone between 13 December 1945 and 21 March 1946.¹³⁴ Repatriation rates rose substantially in the spring of 1946, with 3,064, 6,107, 8,679 and 2,859 Polish DPs repatriated in March, April, May and June 1946 respectively. On 18 August 1946 it was

¹²⁴ MAE, HCRFA, Bonn 152, Directeur des Personnes Déplacées à Administrateur Général Adjoint, N.95970 DGAA/Dir PDR, 16 February 1946.

¹²⁵ MAE, HCRFA, Bonn 148, Fiche pour le Général, Baden-Baden, 2 August 1946.

¹²⁶ UNA, UNRRA, S-0420-0005-06, Chef de Cabinet G.E. McCandlish à le Commandant G.Sebille, Haslach, 2 October 1946.

¹²⁷ MAE, HRCFA, Bonn 150, Général d’Armée Koenig à Monsieur l’administrateur général adjoint, 4 June 1946 ; Lettre secrete du Général de Division Noiret à Monsieur le Général d’Armée, Commandant en Chef Français, GFCC N.1699/PDR, 16 December 1947.

¹²⁸ MAE, HRCFA, PDR6/799, Le Directeur des Personnes Déplacées à Délégation supérieures de Bade, Palatinat, Sarre, Rhénanie et Wurtemberg, 27 May 1946. [Projet de lettre].

¹²⁹ MAE, HCRFA, Direction générale des Affaires politiques, 117, Fiche pour l’ambassadeur de France, 10 December 1946. N.9.926 CC/CAM/G.

¹³⁰ *Sept-ans d’activité*, p. 28.

¹³¹ MAE, HCRFA, Bonn 152, L. de Rosen, Note pour Monsieur le Général Koenig, 21 April 1947. [Réclamations de la Mission Militaire Yougoslave : 21 novembre 1946, 12 Mars 1947]; PDR3/4, Quatrième conférence des Affaires administratives entre le GFCC et le GMZFO, Berlin, 27 June 1947.

¹³² MAE, PDR6/471, Weekly reports, 8- 15 November 1945.

¹³³ MAE, PDR 6/741, Administrateur général Laffon à Général de Corps d’armée, 19 December 1945.

¹³⁴ MAE, PDR6/809, Lettre de Laffon à Koenig, N.9576 DGAA/Dir PDR, 28 March 1946.

decided that Polish DPs should receive sixty days' rations (2,000 calories per day) if they accepted repatriation.¹³⁵ This contributed to a surge in repatriations that autumn. In total, 41,893 Polish DPs were repatriated from September 1945 to January 1947.¹³⁶ These were the figures for the officially coordinated repatriation; some DPs certainly found their own ways to travel before such repatriation began.¹³⁷ In comparison with the British and American zones, these rates were considerably higher.¹³⁸ But, as this chapter explains, these figures masked a more complex reality. French attitudes towards repatriation were never rigidly inflexible; nor did the zone function as a unitary entity pursuing a single clear objective. As a result, repatriation was highly contingent on where DPs lived, whom they knew and what nationality they held.

Reflecting on the forced repatriation of Soviet nationals in France in the context of the 'reinvention of the Republic', Greg Burgess has recently argued the following.

This historic episode—for its historians, the tragedy—of the Soviet repatriations not only illustrates a transition between war and peace, it also illustrates a transition between wartime expediency and the realisation that humanitarian responsibilities were an integral element of the peace. Asylum emerged again as a principle of rights when confronted with deprivation of individual liberty and the hostility of the Soviet Union to its nationals exposed to western influence. [...] Its conclusion came in the convergence of national concerns about asylum and protection with the developments towards the international refugee regime under the United Nations. On 12 February 1946, the General Assembly adopted a resolution that recognised the urgency of the international problem of refugees and displaced persons and the need to assure their protection under international agreement.¹³⁹

But can the same be said about repatriation from the French occupation zone? Were French authorities' attitudes only shaped by their sense of humanitarian responsibilities?

Without question, forced repatriation was for Koenig, Laffon and Poignant an 'anti-liberal' solution repellent to *free* French men. At the level of Military Government policy-making in the zone, measures against forced repatriation were taken even before the 12 February UN Resolution. But, as far as the implementation of these universal ideals was concerned, the story told here shows that the *threat of repatriation* neither completely disappeared on 12

¹³⁵ MAE, Bonn 150, Note sur propagande pour le rapatriement des DPs Polonais, 17 September 1946.

¹³⁶ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0003-06, Repatriation and Emigration report, DP operations, N.42, 22 January 1947.

¹³⁷ Anna D. Jaroszynska-Kirchmann *The exile mission* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2004), p. 61.

¹³⁸ On 30 September 1945, the British zone accommodated 510,328 Polish DPs and the American zone 253,981 DPs. In total, 318,883 Polish DPs were repatriated from the British zone and 186,102 Polish DPs from the American zone from 1 November 1945 to 30 June 1947. Woodbridge *UNRRA*, Vol 2, p. 518; Proodfoot, *European Refugees*, Table 14, pp. 238-239.

¹³⁹ Burgess 'Remaking Asylum in Post-War France', p. 20.

February nor was equally felt throughout the zone prior to that resolution. In March 1950, DPs from Neuenbürg officially complained to the International Refugee Organization about Soviet Officers' intimidation, unannounced visits to DPs' houses, other methods of 'demoralization and psychological pressure' such as retaliation against family members at home in Eastern Europe.¹⁴⁰ Furthermore, debates about repatriation were strongly influenced by French labour needs and, therefore, dependent on the perceived economic 'productiveness' of particular DP groups. French authorities were by no means uniquely, or indeed primarily, concerned with individual rights and universal humanism. The imperative of production generated a multifaceted racial discourse, which differentially treated useful DPs and *unwanted* ones. As explained in chapter two, many Baltic or *Banatais* DPs were protected against forced repatriation, despite their alleged wartime collaboration, due to their presumed productivity and capacity to integrate with the French population.

UNRRA: the limits of neutrality

The issue of repatriation also exposed the limits of UNRRA's neutrality.¹⁴¹ Although UNRRA's staff were told that they 'constitute[d] a body of truly international servants, who [were] devoted, not to the interests of any one nation, but to the objectives and principles of UNRRA', the organization found itself thrown into the arena of international, Cold War politics.¹⁴² As a result, its policies were ambiguous and inconsistent, sensitive, much like the French authorities' attitudes, to changing circumstances. As mentioned earlier, UNRRA Resolution 71 stipulated that UNRRA's primary task was to promote repatriation. The organisation was itself to exist only as a temporary agency. But UNRRA officials never devised clear instructions about how that policy was to be applied in the field. The result was greater leeway for individual interpretation.¹⁴³ In the spring of 1946, as criticisms of UNRRA mounted and as its end was being contemplated, UNRRA's official position gradually shifted more towards encouragement than forcible repatriation. But, even then, the degree to which these pro-repatriation measures were applied depended

¹⁴⁰ AN, AJ/43/798, Pro-memoria, reçu le 16 Mars 1950, Neueuburg; Also see Lettre du Directeur de l'Organisation Internationale pour les Réfugiés à Monsieur Siroux, No 1034/01, 14 October 1949.

¹⁴¹ Andrew Harder 'The politics of Impartiality: the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration in the Soviet Union, 1946-1947', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 47, No. (2012), pp. 347-369.

¹⁴² AN, 72/AJ/1968, Memorandum of the Provisional Conditions of Employment on Field Service (in the Jacqueline Lesdos field).

¹⁴³ Susan Armstrong-Reid and David Murray *Armies of peace: Canada and the UNRRA years* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), p. 59.

considerably upon individual officials and varied significantly from one camp to another.

As explained earlier, French diplomats hoped that the presence of a *neutral* and *apolitical* organization would facilitate relations between French officials and Eastern European repatriation officers in the French zone. They also believed that UNRRA would serve as a legal justification for the non-application of forced repatriation policies: UNRRA was expected to be the mediator should a conflict occur between French and Eastern European governments. In practice, UNRRA fell short of the French authorities' expectations. Instead of promoting mutual understanding, it created divisions. While UNRRA officials vehemently challenged the PDR Direction over its use of unorthodox methods and for condoning forcible repatriation, the PDR Direction accused UNRRA of preventing repatriation and creating unnecessary conflicts. On 23 May 1946, for instance, Laffon passed on to General Lenclud a protest letter written by twenty-three Polish DPs from the Schiltach (Gutach) centre in which they complained about the difficulties that they encountered over repatriation.¹⁴⁴ UNRRA team Director Durand, who was cited in this affair, argued that this petition was mainly the result of the manoeuvring by a dishonest DP.¹⁴⁵ But, in July 1946, Laffon reiterated his criticism that UNRRA was not putting enough effort into repatriation. '[T]he facts remain that UNRRA's first objective, in accordance with its statutes, was the repatriation of volunteers and that UNRRA teams did not comply eagerly with their mission, despite the instructions that they received from UNRRA headquarters in the French zone.'¹⁴⁶ In less measured terms, a French administrator concluded his report on UNRRA activities in the Rhineland by observing 'UNRRA never made any effort to encourage DPs to return to their homelands. It is very likely that their staff did not want to lose a clientele whose departure would mean the suppression of well-paid and easy jobs.'¹⁴⁷

Eastern European official Repatriation missions repeatedly accused UNRRA of protecting war criminals, particularly those with Stateless status, while also fostering anti-repatriation propaganda.¹⁴⁸ In January 1946, the Polish Government lodged a complaint with UNRRA's European Regional Office

¹⁴⁴ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0033-03, Copie de la lettre de l'administrateur Général Laffon à Monsieur le Général de Corps d'Armée Lenclud, 23 May 1946.

¹⁴⁵ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0033-03, Lettre de Durand à Monsieur A. Thomasset, 14 June 1946.

¹⁴⁶ MAE, HCRFA, ADM 40, Administrateur Général Laffon à Général d'Armée, Commandant en Chef Français en Allemagne, N.15339, 29 July 1946, p. 8; Also see letter N.15243, 16 July 1946; MAE, HCRFA, PDR 3/12 L'Administrateur General Laffon à Monsieur le Général de Corps d'Armée, Directeur Général de l'UNRRA pour la ZFO, N.15086, 25 June 1946.

¹⁴⁷ MAE, HCRFA, PDR 3/25, Rapport secret sur la situation d'UNRRA en Rhénanie-Hesse Nassau, Coblenze, 9 July 1946, p. 2.

¹⁴⁸ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0001-07, Général de Marguerittes dit Lizé, Mission Soviétique, 29 August 1946. For Polish Mission, see for instance, note, Général de Marguerittes dit Lizé, 3 August 1946.

concerning the anti-repatriation activities of London-affiliated representatives at the Trier Camp.¹⁴⁹ Nine months later, Soviet officer General Davydof officially protested against the anti-repatriation attitudes of the Biberach, Pirmasens and Lindau UNRRA teams.¹⁵⁰ Two months after that the Polish Repatriation Mission remonstrated against ‘anti-repatriation’ DP leaders who were allegedly protected by UNRRA in the Landstuhl DP camp.¹⁵¹ For its part, UNRRA reproached the Polish and Soviet repatriation missions for their remoteness from DP camps and their consequent failure to build ‘intimate contacts with their fellow compatriots.’¹⁵² UNRRA Director Lenclud decried such ‘double standards’ responding vigorously to attacks on the organization.¹⁵³

But why did UNRRA fail to maintain its neutral image in the French zone? Did it really protect DPs who refused repatriation? The next section traces the shift towards repatriation at UNRRA headquarters’ level and then examines the discrepancy between policy and practices at the lower level of the zone.

The paradoxes of neutrality

If Eastern European governments increasingly saw UNRRA as an instrument of the West, there was, in fact, minimal agreement within UNRRA’s upper echelons regarding repatriation.¹⁵⁴ Without question, Resolution 71 testified to UNRRA’s efforts to encourage repatriation. But, as UNRRA’s official historian observes,

One deputy director general insisted that no person would return home unless conditions (affecting accommodation, food and recreation) in the camps were clearly worse than conditions in the home countries. Another deputy director general vehemently insisted that the displaced persons having suffered so much would not return until they had been, physically and psychologically, built up so that they would have the strength to face the undoubtedly difficult life that awaited them. Some people felt that vocational training, by instilling confidence and giving an individual a means of supporting himself aided repatriation; others were convinced that such activities held the students away from their home country.¹⁵⁵

In theory, UNRRA teams were only committed to voluntary repatriation. In practice, ‘some UNRRA officials placed more emphasis on pushing repatriation

¹⁴⁹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0420-0001-04, F.E. Morgan to Director French zone, 4 January 1946.

¹⁵⁰ MAE, HCRFA, Bonn 150, Directeur des Personnes Déplacées à Directeur Général des Affaires administratives, N.15878 DGAA/Dir PDR, Baden-Baden, 11 October 1946.

¹⁵¹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0002-03, Chef de la Mission Polonaise de Rapatriement à Monsieur le Général Lenclud, 7 December 1946.

¹⁵² UNA, UNRRA, S-1021-0084-12, Historique, G. Sebillé, 7 May 1947.

¹⁵³ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0001-03, Confidential letter (translation) from General de Corps d’Armée F. Lenclud, Director UNRRA French Zone to Monsieur le General d’Armée, French Commander in Chief, Germany, Haslach, 4 October 1946.

¹⁵⁴ Woodbridge *UNRRA*, Vol 2, p. 470.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid*, p. 514.

than did others. This fact led to confusing changes in directives.¹⁵⁶ UNRRA's first Director General Herbert Lehman (1 January 1944 until 31 March 1946) strongly opposed forced repatriation.¹⁵⁷ His successor Fiorello La Guardia, on the contrary, tended to encourage it.

In the French zone, Lenclud presented himself as committed to encouraging repatriation but opposed to forcibly pursuing it. In fact, he was very slow to send precise instructions to his field-workers. The slowness with which his headquarters was put in place, coupled with the bureaucratic competition between the PDR and UNRRA officers, created a great deal of administrative confusion. Requests about eligibility and repatriation procedures abound in UNRRA archives.¹⁵⁸ In November 1945, the detachment of Wurzach asked for instance:

- 1) Where can DPs find information about emigration to the U.S.[...]
- 2) Can a Yugoslav DP repatriated two months ago (2 September) communicate with [his co-nationals still in] the French zone?
- 3) Does a German woman who has married a Yugoslav become a Yugoslav citizen? Can she join her husband who has been repatriated to Yugoslavia?¹⁵⁹

On 4 March 1946 the French UNRRA section circulated administrative order N29, detailing the different categories of DPs eligible for UNRRA assistance.¹⁶⁰ But not only was this instruction slow to reach individual teams, it also contradicted orders issued by the PDR (notably in relation to Hungarian DPs). This clearly suggests the lack of overarching governmental guidance.

On 29 April 1946 General Bulletin No. 9 established a list regarding the DPs entitled to UNRRA assistance. These included nationals from Allied Nations, Italians, Stateless persons or people with undetermined nationality, and nationals from ex-enemy nations 'forced to leave their country of origin or residency by the enemy in reason of race, religion or activities in favour of the United Nations'.¹⁶¹ (Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary were classified as ex-enemy or enemy nations.) Among the special categories were Stateless persons, Jews refusing repatriation, and DPs who had been persecuted by the enemy. The Ukrainian group was not 'yet' recognized as a nationality: Ukrainians were either Soviet nationals (If they were citizens of the Soviet Union in September 1939), officially stateless, or citizens of other nations such as

¹⁵⁶ Ibid, p. 518.

¹⁵⁷ Dyczok *The Grand Alliance*, p. 51.

¹⁵⁸ See for instance: UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0052-01, J. Gerbier, Note, 23 November 1945.

¹⁵⁹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0086-01, Le Detachement de Wurzach à Mrs Garvey, Principal Welfare Officer, 25 November 1945.

¹⁶⁰ UNA, UNRRA, S-0412-0012-03, Catégorie des Personnes Déplacées, ordre administrative No 29, 4 March 1946.

¹⁶¹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0028-07, Bulletin General No. 9, Note relative à la discrimination des nationalités ou catégories des DPs, 26 April 1946.

Poland.¹⁶² A welcome clarification, but the evidence suggests that UNRRA Directors did not always comply with these instructions. In April 1946, in Biberach, the UNRRA team Director infuriated Soviet Repatriation Officers by recognising Ukrainian DPs as a discrete category.¹⁶³ In Freiburg, a similar problem arose when UNRRA organised a football match between 'Ukrainians-Lemberg' and a German team.¹⁶⁴

UNRRA team directors thereby implemented directives based on their own understanding of what was being asked of them.¹⁶⁵ In May 1945 UNRRA Director Taylor and Welfare Officer Wiley reported placing a Russian family 'threatened' by Russian officers on a farm remote from their DP camp in Kaiserslautern.¹⁶⁶ In Lindau, Jean Gerbier made great efforts to ensure that he was complying with UNRRA directives but in September 1946 he was reprimanded by UNRRA headquarters staff for providing unauthorized assistance to Hungarian DPs. In his response to the complaint, he asked 'Why is one blamed for commendable intentions – a simple intervention of our superiors would have prevented this'.¹⁶⁷ Gerbier's frustrated response demonstrates the difficulties, despite the best of intentions, of maintaining *neutrality*. Confusion and disquiet persisted in the field until 1947. On 17 January UNRRA Team 209 Director De Marnhac in Biberach protested that he had yet to receive basic information about repatriation contained in Resolution 92 of March 1946. He also queried an instruction sent by Laffon on 2 October 1946 mentioning emigration: were DPs to be recruited or to be repatriated?¹⁶⁸

In this context of French UNRRA's escalating conflict with the PDR service (discussed in chapter 1), the issue of repatriation became increasingly politicized. Lenclud recurrently criticized the PDR's unorthodox methods, deploring that the PDR's overarching goal was 'to repatriate the DPs as quickly as possible' by 'stick[ing] bayonets in their behinds.'¹⁶⁹ The first open confrontation between the two services over the issue of repatriation occurred in June 1946. On 7 and 8 June announcements were published in various German newspapers in Mülheim, Münsingen and Baden announcing a new regulation to be applied as from the 20th – and informing DPs that 'all the advantages which they have heretofore enjoyed will no longer be accorded to

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ MAE, HCRFA, Bonn 159, Copie rapport confidentiel Laffon à Koenig, p. 7. [July 1946?].

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0052-01, Lettre de Jean Gerbier à Monsieur Rodie, 24 September 1946.

¹⁶⁶ UNA, UNRRA, S-0436-0059-04, C.J. Taylor and John N. Wiley, Welfare report, Kaiserslautern, 14 May 1945.

¹⁶⁷ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0052-01, Lettre de Jean Gerbier à Monsieur Rodie, 24 September 1946.

¹⁶⁸ UNA, UNRRA, S-0420-0005-05, J.J. de Marnhac, Directeur Team 209 à UNRRA Zone Headquarters, Rapatriement, Biberach, 17 janvier 1947.

¹⁶⁹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0001-03, Confidential letter (translation) from General de Corps d'Armée Lenclud to Monsieur le General d'Armée, 4 October 1946, p. 12.

them'. These notices invited Poles to take the last repatriation trains due to leave on 25 June.¹⁷⁰ UNRRA voiced loud complaints about the threatening character of these notices, an impression enhanced by the fact that they were written in German. 'UNRRA is the sole administration for Centres, and consequently is alone qualified to notify the displaced persons of all decisions concerning them' commented Lenclud.¹⁷¹ He continued:

Whereas the necessity for repatriation has not escaped us, and we have brought all possible aid to this operation, which is one of UNRRA's primary missions, the pressure exerted on the Poles, the threat of depriving them of their status of Displaced Persons and of their nationality, is not in keeping with the neutrality that UNRRA imposed upon itself in this matter. [...] The effect produced on the Poles was deplorable and yet did not have the desired effect, since the train which left Mulheim on 5th June contained only 515 persons, and that which left Munsingen on 7th June 563 persons, despite the threats of the DP officers and the German officials.¹⁷²

The fact that these notices were directed solely at the Poles also created tensions between Poles and DPs of other nationalities, as well as between Poles and Germans.¹⁷³ It seems beyond question that in this instance local officials in Mülheim, Münsingen and Baden went too far and condoned forcible repatriation.¹⁷⁴ But, as explained previously, their attitudes stemmed from the re-interpretation locally of what their instructions actually meant.

As David Forsythe has demonstrated in his analysis of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), neutrality is a matter of constructed image.¹⁷⁵ In directly and doggedly opposing the PDR direction over the issue of repatriation, Lenclud not only failed to understand the subtlety of French policy but also seriously compromised UNRRA's posture of neutrality. This lent weight to criticism that UNRRA itself failed to send clear instructions to its personnel. As a result, Laffon reproached UNRRA officers for failing to understand the 'delicacy' of French policy. For example, French authorities seized upon the fact that UNRRA's Director of the Southern District publicly informed his teams that French authorities intended to recruit Polish personnel as foreign auxiliaries. His actions, the French insisted, proved that tactless and insensitive UNRRA

¹⁷⁰ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0001-01, translation of copy of letter Letter 218/11 from G. Lenclud to Monsieur l'Administrateur General, 19 June 1946.

¹⁷¹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0001-01, Letter 218/11 from F. Lenclud to Monsieur l'Administrateur General, 19 June 1946.

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ It stirred indeed a wide range of protests amongst UNRRA relief workers. See for instance, S-0421-0033-03.

¹⁷⁵ David P. Forsythe 'On Contested concepts: Humanitarianism, Human Rights, and the Notion of Neutrality', *Journal of Human Rights*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (2013), pp. 59-68, p. 66.

workers caused unfortunate diplomatic incidents by leaking confidential information.¹⁷⁶

UNRRA Repatriation Propaganda campaign (autumn 1946 – spring 1947)

Faced with a spate of criticism, the UNRRA Council's policy shifted towards greater emphasis on repatriation in the spring of 1946. On 28 March, after prolonged and acrimonious debate at UNRRA's Fourth Council meeting in Atlantic City, a conciliatory gesture towards Eastern European governments was made in the form of Resolution 92. It, coupled with Resolution 100, required the administration 'to remove any handicaps in the Assembly Centres to the prompt repatriation of displaced persons [...] wishing to be repatriated'.¹⁷⁷ This resolution called for the complete registration of all displaced persons in these assembly centres, accurate information about those displaced nationals willing to return to their homeland being expected to speed up the repatriation process.¹⁷⁸ A series of tough new measures were also sanctioned by the Council to remove obstacles to repatriation and reduce the number of camp inhabitants. These included the removal of camp leaders and UNRRA personnel known to oppose repatriation.¹⁷⁹

These changes reflected newly appointed Director General Fiorello La Guardia's marked inclination to shift UNRRA's focus away from welfare work and towards repatriation.¹⁸⁰ Welfare programmes were increasingly seen as encouraging a sense of 'permanency', DP camps coming under fire within the Administration for being too comfortable. Leisure activities were increasingly transferred to voluntary agencies and DP populations were frequently moved between camps so they did not become too settled. In the summer of 1946, UNRRA adopted the Sixty-Day Ration Scheme (dubbed derisively by the United States Army as 'Operation Grubstake' and by the British as 'Operation Carrot').¹⁸¹ Even so, as Laura Hilton recalls, these policies were unevenly implemented. Messages coming from UNRRA headquarters were still mixed; Director General Frederick Morgan was, for instance, 'a strong anti-Communist who placed little weight behind implementation of Resolutions 71 and 92'.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁶ UNRRA, S-0421-0029-02, R. Schurmans, Acting Director Team 576 à Mr. Moreland, District Director, 14 January 1946.

¹⁷⁷ UNA, UNRRA, S-0420-0006-02, UNRRA, European Regional Office, Order No. 40, Removal of DP Leaders impending repatriation, 12 September 1946.

¹⁷⁸ UNA, UNRRA, S-0412-0012-04, Bulletin Général N.18, application de la Résolution 92, 12 July 1946.

¹⁷⁹ Reid and Armstrong *Armies of peace*, p. 183. For the French zone, UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0025-07, Réunion des Directeurs de Team, 25 September 1946.

¹⁸⁰ Reid and Armstrong *Armies of peace*, p. 183.

¹⁸¹ Woodbridge *UNRRA* Vol 2, p. 515.

¹⁸² Hilton 'Pawns on a chessboard?', p. 93.

UNRRA also provided information in response to questions known to concern Poles within the camps. Practical questions were answered ('How do I get work?', 'Do I have to pay for tools?', 'Can I be sure that my children will have the opportunity to attend school?', 'Is it planned to establish collective farms?')¹⁹² In Freiburg, for instance, despite the fact that most DPs were living in private accommodation, UNRRA organized regular meetings with DP representatives, and translated into Polish information originally sent in French by the headquarters. Several conferences and two permanent exhibitions (one in Freiburg, one in Emmendingen) were also arranged in which maps of Poland were prominently displayed.¹⁹³

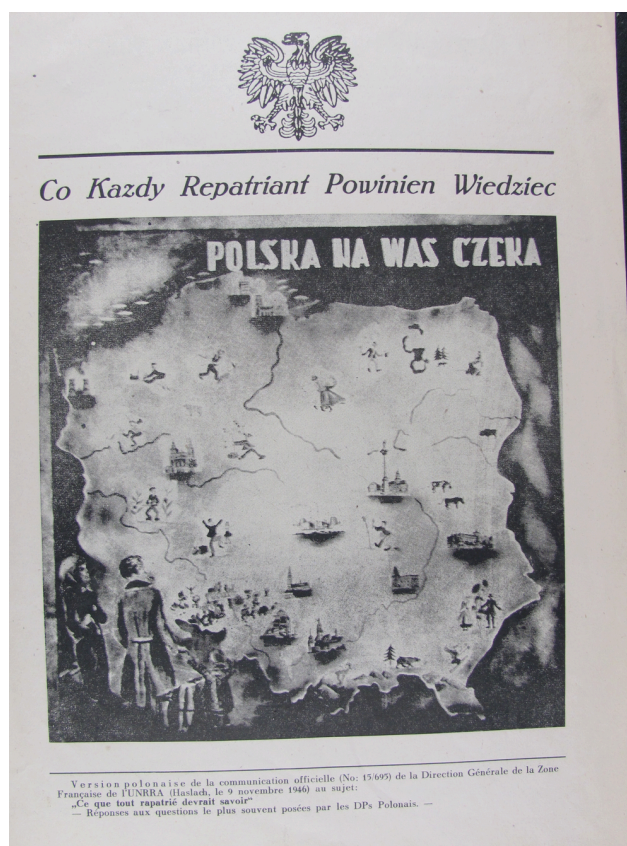


Fig. 9. UNRRA's repatriation speech to Polish DPs, 9 November 1946.¹⁹⁴

But, as Team 572 Director Durand suggested, the involvement in these events of 'committees for repatriation' themselves comprised of DPs who refused to be repatriated suggested that success was always unlikely.¹⁹⁵ Harsh measures were taken against DPs circulating anti-repatriation propaganda, however. In

¹⁹¹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0002-03, Proclamation de F. Lenclud à tous les Polonais, 24 September 1946.

¹⁹² UNA, UNRRA, S-0420-0005-05, 'What every returning should know' sent by Carl Martini, Department of Field Operations to UNRRA Headquarters, French zone – Haslach, 5 November 1946. On UNRRA repatriation campaign in the French zone, also see S-0417-0003-04.

¹⁹³ UNA, UNRRA, S-0420-0005-05, E.J. Bastienen, directeur du team 206 Fribourg à UNRRA CHQ, Fribourg, 7 January 1947.

¹⁹⁴ UNA, UNRRA, S-0420-0005-05, Version polonaise de la communication officielle (No. 15/695) de la Direction Générale de la Zone Française de l'UNRRA au sujet 'Ce que tout rapatrié devrait savoir- Réponses aux questions le plus souvent posées par les DPs Polonais', 9 November 1946.

¹⁹⁵ UNA, UNRRA, S-0420-0005-06, P. U. Durand, Directeur UNRRA Team 572 à Monsieur le Directeur Général, 30 September 1946.

Ehingen, for instance, the Chief of the camp was replaced.¹⁹⁶ At the Polish Lycée of Schwenningen, three Professors were also dismissed by UNRRA authorities for circulating anti-repatriation propaganda.¹⁹⁷ Lastly, in November 1946, the DP committees in Horb were dismantled for engaging in black-market activities and anti-repatriation propaganda.¹⁹⁸

Alongside this intensive repatriation campaign, UNRRA carried out a vast screening operation, the aim being to evict former collaborators and non-eligible DPs from its camps. As a result, by August 1945 a distinction between eligible and non-eligible DPs was made, Resolution 71 stipulating that the 'Administration [would] not assist displaced persons who may be detained [...] on charges of having collaborated with the enemy'.¹⁹⁹ For all that, it was only in August 1946 that screening operations gathered real pace.²⁰⁰

Between protection and exclusion: UNRRA's screening operation

Over the summer of 1946 'screening consulting commissions' were established within each UNRRA field team, their purpose being to make preliminary arrangements for the Zone's Permanent Screening Commission. Studies of screening operations in the British and American zones have highlighted that British and American relief workers knew very little about Eastern European minorities, their languages and dialects, or the animosities between differing ethnic groups. They were thus incapable of understanding the complex issues involved in screening.²⁰¹ The Allies' imperfect knowledge of the complex composition of the DP population was aggravated by the tendency among DPs to lie or withhold information about their wartime activities and their dates of entry to Germany.²⁰² A few examples prove the point.

In Kaiserlautern, Team Director Paul Bayle, Welfare Officer Vatin-Pérignon and representatives of the Latvian, Estonian and Lithuanian communities carried out the screening operations. In total, 229 DPs were screened: 141 obtained the full 'DP status', 23 DPs were excluded and 65 were registered as 'doubtful cases'. Among those excluded, some were Hungarian DPs, others were Stateless who came *voluntarily* to Germany during the war and, finally, some were Baltic *Volkdeutsche*. The 'doubtful cases' included DPs

¹⁹⁶ UNA, UNRRA, S-0412-0012-05, French zone, Zone Director's report – October 1946, No 455.

¹⁹⁷ UNA, UNRRA, S-0420-0004-04, Chef de la Mission Polonaise de Rapatriement à Commandant Sébille, 10 December 1946.

¹⁹⁸ UNA, UNRRA, S-0420-0006-01, Rapport Paul Bayle, Team 588, à Directeur Zone, 3 December 1946.

¹⁹⁹ Cohen *In war's wake*, p. 38.

²⁰⁰ See for instance MAE, HCRFA, Bonn 159, Poignant, Note pour Monsieur Hamonic, 6 July 1946, N.15172 DGAA/Dir PDR.

²⁰¹ Cohen *In war's wake*, pp. 35-57; Denis 'Complices de Hitler ou victimes de Staline?', pp. 88-92.

²⁰² UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0002-03, J. Frans, Rapport sur le contrôle des opérations de screening effectuées par les commissions consultatives des teams institutées et fonctionnant en exécution des paragraphes 25 à 28 du bulletin général, No. 19 du 11 juillet 1946.

enrolled in the Wehrmacht and Baltic DPs who fled the advancing Red Army.²⁰³ These results, at least on paper, conformed to the eligibility regulations laid down by UNRRA. But this was not always the case. In Koblenz, for instance, Polish Commanders conducted the screening operation. According to an UNRRA supervisory report, these DP representatives excluded any DPs they chose to eliminate because of their own prejudices.²⁰⁴ This was not the only case of blatant partiality. In Freiburg, the Director of Team 206 followed 'his personal feelings' rather than strictly applying UNRRA's rule. 'There is every reason to believe that he acted as a dictator', commented one of his supervisors.²⁰⁵ The same occurred in Gutach and in Ravensburg where 'The Director...continued to follow the old ways of a PDR officer; he did not read the General Bulletin N.19 and retained the spirit of a security officer, seeing in each DP who did not share his sympathies a suspect.'²⁰⁶

After these preliminary screening operations, three teams composed of representatives of the Polish Repatriation Mission and UNRRA officials toured individual DP centres.²⁰⁷ During March 1947, the Permanent Commission had visited forty-three teams and twenty-four Detachments, that is to say sixty-seven Centres comprising a total DP population of 37,128. 15.7 per cent of the population screened were judged to be suspicious:

1182 DP's were excluded, that is to say 3.2%.
1217 DP's were put forward for exclusion; and
2826 DP's were submitted as being doubtful cases.²⁰⁸

For some UNRRA field workers, UNRRA's rigid policy meant that it came to be regarded as 'an administration, which no longer wishes to do anything for the DPs'.²⁰⁹ It is nevertheless worth noting that the number of DPs excluded in the French zone was considerably lower than in the British and American zones.

Admittedly, screening operations were eventually abandoned in the American zone due to widespread criticism.²¹⁰ By then, of some 320,000 DPs screened by the US army in cooperation with UNRRA, 12.3 per cent were declared ineligible for DP status. In the British zone, 10.4 per cent were

²⁰³ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-00038-02, Directeur du team UNRRA 675 à Directeur de la Direction Générale UNRRA pour la ZFOA, Triage DPs au camp de Kaiserslautern, 26 August 1946.

²⁰⁴ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0002-03, J. Frans, Rapport sur le contrôle des opérations de screening effectuées par les commissions consultatives des teams institutées et fonctionnant en exécution des paragraphes 25 à 28 du bulletin général, No. 19 du 11 juillet 1946.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0001-06, Translation, Zone Director's monthly narrative report to the chief of operations, February 1947, 7 March 1947, p. 3; S-0417-0003-05, Translation, screening, 4 March 1947.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

²¹⁰ Cohen 'Between Relief and Politics', p. 446.

disqualified. By contrast, only 2.8 per cent of those screened were deprived of their DP status by UNRRA officials working in the French zone.²¹¹ Furthermore, considerably more DPs were included in the 'persecutee' category in the French zone (including Berlin): in December 1946, 1,127 were categorized this way within the French zone compared to 742 in the US Zone and none at all in the British. The reason was simple: the French applied this category to those who were persecuted by the Nazis even if they were not displaced by war.²¹²

So did UNRRA's presence stimulate or discourage repatriation? The answer to this question is superficially simple: if we look solely at UNRRA Council policy the need to encourage repatriation was strongly emphasized. Beneath the surface, the realities were more complex. Firstly, the French UNRRA Administration was slow to send clear instructions to its field workers. As a result, some team directors believed that they were entitled to mention emigration opportunities to DPs, thereby creating conflicts with Eastern European Repatriation Missions.²¹³ Secondly, due to the personal and administrative conflict between the PDR and UNRRA's management, Lenclud did not offer unqualified support to French repatriation efforts. Perhaps more importantly, Lenclud broke the 'neutrality' principle by publicly denouncing the French authorities' 'double-game' policy. As a result, the French PDR service and Laffon's civil cabinet concluded that 'repatriation was carried out without UNRRA's help'.²¹⁴

Lack of coordination between the two competing administrations was particularly glaring in the organization of the Polish repatriation centre in Villingen. In September 1946, Lenclud opposed Laffon's decision to install the transit centre in a former stalag in the town.²¹⁵ According to him, French authorities were transporting DPs in conditions 'often inferior to those of animals'.²¹⁶ In September 1946 Welfare Officer Rozale observed that the sight of the camp provoked a physical revulsion in her. 'I arrived in Buchenwald in April 1945; apart from the corpses on the floor, the camp was clean and *fleuri* [dressed with flowerbeds]. Here, I did not know where to start.'²¹⁷ The camp rapidly acquired a terrible reputation, although evidence suggests that

²¹¹ Cohen *In war's wake*, p. 40.

²¹² UNRRA, S-0417-0003-06, Mercier, Eligibility, 9 April 1947.

²¹³ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0003-05, Translation, screening, 4 March 1947.

²¹⁴ MAE, HCRFA, Bonn 159, Général d'Armée Koenig à Commissaire Général aux Affaires Allemandes et Autrichiennes, 16 August 1946.

²¹⁵ UNA, UNRRA, S-0420-0004-02, Copie, Général de Corps d'armée Lenclud à Adiministrateur general adjoint, 2 September 1946.

²¹⁶ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0001-03, Confidential letter (translation) from General de Corps d'Armée Lenclud to Monsieur le General d'Armée, 4 October 1946, p. 11. On this issue also see : MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/741, Rapport du Lieutenant Brunet relatif au départ d'1 train de rapatriement à destination de la Pologne et de la Tchecoslovaquie en date du 31 aout 1946, 2 September 1946 ; S-0420-0006-03, Médecin Général des Cilleuls, Zone Medical Officer à Monsieur l'Assistant Director, Haslach, 14 January 1947.

²¹⁷ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0028-08, Rapport Loustalot N.1, 25 October 1946.

conditions within it progressively improved.²¹⁸ The lack of UNRRA support for these repatriation efforts not only angered French authorities; it also exasperated UNRRA's field workers themselves. In March 1947, Team 777 Director Dalichampt reported:

The problem [...] is the following: disembarking living beings, gathering them, taking them on board, and during these operations, maintaining adequate living conditions. The way in which these different categories of civilized people are crammed together in barracks and cattle trains is absolutely disgusting; one cannot help but wonder if it was necessary to go to so much effort to rehabilitate these uprooted people if all such efforts finally ended with such an appalling conclusion. It is outrageous to see young soldiers travelling in luxurious carriages while elderly, pregnant women and babies are pitifully set up.²¹⁹

The challenge of DPs' politics

Following in the footsteps of Hannah Arendt's work on national sentiment among refugee communities, historians have illuminated the central role that nationalism played in post-war Germany. They have demonstrated that camp life catalysed the development of a 'long-distance nationalism' among DPs, who conserved strong affective ties with their home countries and strove to influence politics there.²²⁰ DP nationalism provided a communal means to overcome the test of displacement and to cope with the sense of depersonalisation, homelessness and social downgrading that was exacerbated by life in the camps.²²¹ Recently, Anna Holian has highlighted the rightist and anti-communist tenor of these various DP nationalist movements, demonstrating the central role that authoritarian and fascist personalities played in the shaping of DP politics.²²² Like the German expellees, Holian argues the DPs 'were an avant-garde of anticommunism'.²²³

Even so, remarkably little attention has been paid to these issues within the French zone. This last section is not an inside story of DP nationalist activities in the French zone but, rather, an account of DP nationalist and anti-communist activities as seen through French eyes. Despite the strict official ban

²¹⁸ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0003-07, Lettre de Seville, Assistant Director à Messieurs les Field Supervisors, 29 October 1946.

²¹⁹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0420-0006-03, Dalichampt, Directeur du team 577 à Monsieur le Directeur UNRRA – Zone Française, Villingen, 26 March 1947.

²²⁰ Tara Zahra 'Lost Children: Displacement, Family and Nation in Postwar Europe, *Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 81, No. 2(2009), pp. 45-81, p. 50.

²²¹ Tomas Balkelis 'Living in the Displaced Persons Camp: Lithuanian War Refugees in the West, 1944-1954' in Peter Gatrell and Nick Baron (eds) *Warlands. Population Resettlement and State reconstruction in the Soviet-East European Borderlands, 1945-1950* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 25-47, p. 42.

²²² Anna Holian 'Anticommunism in the Streets: Refugee politics in Cold War Germany' *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 45, No. 1 (2010), pp. 134-161.

²²³ *Ibid*, p. 136.

on anti-repatriation propaganda and the various restrictions imposed on DP committees by French authorities, evidence suggests that anti-repatriation activities flourished in the zone, indicating that far from being passive recipients, DPs were active participants in the shaping of French repatriation policies. What did UNRRA and the PDR service know about DP anti-communist activities in the zone? And to what extent were French attitudes' marked by ambiguity, despite their official commitment to curtail DPs' anti-repatriation activities?

Anti-communist protests

DPs never formed a homogeneous group. They were rigorously separated by nationality. They had experienced the war in sharply different ways. And they displayed varying degrees of political consciousness. Their *anticommunism* also varied, DP elites being divided along inherited pre-war and wartime political and ideological lines.²²⁴ Reflecting on the Ukrainian Women's movement, Martha Bohachevsky-Chomiak argues:

Like much of DP politics, the story of the organization of women in the camps is not very pretty. What happened, essentially, was that the women's movement – which despite signs of strain before World War II, had nevertheless remained united outside the Soviet Union – split. The most outspoken feminists, such as Milena Rudnytska, Olena Sheparovych, and Mariia Strutynska, who also happened to be politically moderate and opposed to the rhetoric of the nationalists, were pointedly excluded from the new organization of women that was created in the camps.²²⁵

In short, most Polish DPs opposed returning to a 'Poland occupied by the Russians and dominated by communists.'²²⁶ Ukrainian DPs were hostile both to Russian *and* Polish occupation and expressed their desire for an independent Ukrainian state.²²⁷ Russian DPs in turn opposed what they regarded as the 'un-Russian' Bolshevik leadership of the Soviet Union.²²⁸ And Baltic DPs opposed the Soviet occupation of their countries. As Holian observes, a common thread linked these various anti-communist movements nevertheless: essentially, they were 'anti-ideologies', creating a sense of coherence by emphasizing what was to be rejected.

²²⁴ Purs 'How those Brothers in Foreign Lands are Dividing the Fatherland', pp. 61-62.

²²⁵ Martha Bohachevsky-Chomiak 'The Women's Movement in the DP Camps' in Isajiw, Boshy, Senkus (ed) *The Refugee Experience*, pp. 201-219, p. 204.

²²⁶ Holian *Between National Socialism*, pp. 82-83.

²²⁷ On Ukrainian politics see Vasyl Markus 'Political Parties in the DP Camps', Myroslav Yurkevich 'Ukrainian Nationalists and DP Politics, 1945-1950', Yury Boshyk 'Repatriation: Ukrainian DPs and Political Refugees in Germany and Austria, 1945-1948' in Isajiw, Boshy, Senkus (eds) *The Refugee Experience*, pp. 111-124, pp. 125-143, pp. 360-382.

²²⁸ Holian *Between National Socialism*, p. 83.

[DP] Anticommunism was synonymous with anti-Bolshevism and anti-Sovietism. At issue was the system of rule in the Soviet bloc in all its aspects – political, economic, social and cultural – and especially the extent to which the Soviet Union suppressed or permitted national self-determination. [Anti-Communist DPs] had little interest in formulating a broader critique of communism as an ideology.²²⁹

Admittedly, the French zone was not the centre of gravity of DPs' politics. In marked contrast with the American zone, and to a lesser extent with the British zone, DPs had minimal room to engage in associational life or to develop cultural activities in the French zone. Their freedom of movement was strictly limited, a circular dating from 27 September 1945 preventing them from moving more than five kilometres from their place of residence.²³⁰ Furthermore, Laffon and Poignant were mistrustful of elected DP committees.²³¹ Rejecting the UNRRA proposal to place decision-making in the hands of elected committees, Laffon suggested that aid workers should instead entrust authority to an elected '*homme de confiance*', a practice that was previously used in PoW camps.²³² Furthermore, the French zone lacked large urban centres, it had fewer major DP camps and its authorities offered DPs considerably less material support.

None of this prevented DPs from beginning to organize self-help committees even before the formal end of hostilities.²³³ The *Comité Polonais de Ravensburg* was, for example, created on 16 May 1945.²³⁴ In Freiburg a DP Committee was established the same month.²³⁵ National bank holidays were celebrated throughout the zone.²³⁶ In Freiburg, Baltic DPs set up a popular university to present and enhance Baltic *art, literature and folklore*.²³⁷ In Wangen, the Ukrainian group 'Kalyna' organised regular concerts playing traditional Ukrainian songs. At first glance, French authorities seemed to have taken an unequivocally hard line against DP anti-communist leaders. On 2 October 1945, the dissolution of all DP Committees that had not received an official recognition was ordered.²³⁸ And on 1 February 1946 the War Ministry issued an order banning all 'Polish groups'.²³⁹ On 27 December 1946 it refused

²²⁹ Holian 'Anti-communism in the Streets', p. 136; Dyczok *The Grand Alliance*, p. 9.

²³⁰ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0062-02, Groupements Nationaux à Monsieur le Directeur de l'UNRRA, Ravensburg.

²³¹ MAE, HCRFA, ADM 40, L'administrateur Général, Adjoint pour le GM de la ZOF à Monsieur le Gouverneur, Délégué supérieur pour le GM de Wurtemberg, 11 December 1945.

²³² *Ibid.*

²³³ UNA, UNRRA, S-0412-0012-05, Lenclud, 'Displaced Persons operation French Zone of Occupation for the month of November 1945', 4 December 1945.

²³⁴ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0061-07, Lettre de Ing. Emanuel Jasiuk à Colonel Caude, 29 January 1946.

²³⁵ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0023-01, Président du Comité à Directeur Team 206, 28 February 1946.

²³⁶ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0031-09, Rapport sur la fête du 16-12-1945, ref 2104, 19 March 1946.

²³⁷ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0031-09, Quelques notes sur l'activité du team 206, Freiburg, 20 March 1946.

²³⁸ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0001-07, Compte-rendu d'inspection, Field Supervisor N.3, Haslach, 13 December 1946.

²³⁹ MAE, HCRFA, Bonn 148, Fiche pour le Général, Baden-Baden, 2 August 1946.

to certify the National Yugoslav Committee.²⁴⁰ And the *Association des Combattants Polonais* was only formally recognized in August 1947. In addition, French authorities refused to authorize the publication of DP newspapers. As a result, an active DP press was almost non-existent in the zone.²⁴¹ Polish DPs were not alone in lamenting the fact that they could not publish their own newspapers. In 1946, *l'United* the Lithuanian Relief Fund of America mourned the fact that there was no Lithuanian newspaper in the French zone.²⁴² French authorities also restrained DPs entrepreneurial initiatives.²⁴³ Significant disparities were, however, to be found between localities.

In Ravensburg the PDR authorities largely relied on DP committees. In Freiburg UNRRA's administration required DP committees to be set up. So these committees were simply asked to change their titles and to avoid directly contacting the French military or German authorities in case of any disputes.²⁴⁴ Moreover, although the *Association des anciens combattants polonais* was not officially recognized until 1947, Laffon *unofficially* gave them material help, long before that.²⁴⁵ The evidence also suggests that some Baltic officials benefited from the support of some French officials, building on personal contacts developed in the interwar years.²⁴⁶ Baltic DPs found, for instance, an enthusiastic supporter in the military government in the person of Raymond Schmittlein, an early Gaullist who had lived in Lithuania and Latvia between 1934 and 1940 working as a professor and as foreign correspondent for the Havas news-agency.²⁴⁷ Furthermore, as explained in the previous section, French administrators maintained cordial relations with Polish and Hungarian military officials hostile to repatriation.

In June 1946, UNRRA Director De Fos reported that Captain Lipski from the Polish Mission of the Vatican, 'apotre du non-retour en Pologne', distributed shoes, clothes and soap drawn from the supplies of the Sanders Army.²⁴⁸ From late 1946 further evidence of anti-communist activities mounted in the French

²⁴⁰ MAE, HCRFA, Bonn 148, Général Laffon à Général Koenig, N.27389/DGAA/PD, 27 December 1946.

²⁴¹ Ignacy Walczewski *Destin tragique des polonais déportés en Allemagne. La crise de la famille polonaise dans les camps de personnes déplacées en Allemagne. Causes, conséquences, espoirs.* (Paris : Hosianum, 1951), p. 80.

²⁴² CAC, Versement 770623, article 172, Dr. J.B. Koncius, Mémoire de l'United Lithuanian Relief Fund of America, concernant la situation des DPs ressortissants des Pays Baltes, en particulier des Lithuaniens, 26 August 1946.

²⁴³ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0062-01, Lettre du Comité des Apatrides, Ravensburg, 23 January 1946.

²⁴⁴ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0023-11, E.J.Bastiaenen, Dissolution des Comités Nationaux, 18 November 1946.

²⁴⁵ MAE, HCRFA, Ambassade de Bonn, 148, Général Laffon to Général Koenig, Etude d'un appel de l'Association des Combattants Polonais aux autorités de la ZFO, relatifs aux anciens prisonniers de guerre Polonais, 22 July 1946. Also see : Ministre des Anciens Combattants à Monsieur le Ministre des Affaires Etrangères, Paris, 23 May 1946.

²⁴⁶ See for instance MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/727, J. Tarbé de Saint-Hardouin à l'Administrateur Général Laffon, 25 April 1946; Lettre de Monsieur de la Tournelle à Monsieur de Saint-Hardouin, 4 December 1945.

²⁴⁷ UNRRA, S-0438-0009-01, World Student Relief, Report on visit to French zone from Yngve Frykholm, Franlgen, 8 June 1946; Corine Defrance Raymond Schmittlein (1904-1974): médiateur entre la France et la Lituanie *Cahiers Lituanien*, No. 9 (2009).

²⁴⁸ UNA, UNRRA, S-0438-0003-03, Lettre de De Fos à Directeur de District, Visite du capitaine Lipski, 5 June 1946. Also see Lettre du Directeur du District à Monsieur le General Directeur General d'UNRRA en zone Française d'Occupation, Mission Polonaise du Vatican, 13 June 1946.

zone. In Rottweil, the Polish Committee was dissolved *pour des raisons diplomatiques* after publishing a political note in September 1946.²⁴⁹ Posters and proclamations encouraging DPs to accept repatriation offers were torn down in Balingen, Rotweil and Villingen in December.²⁵⁰ Political leaflets and anti-repatriation newspapers, often originating in the American zone, circulated widely within the French.²⁵¹ Letters emanating from deportees in Siberia were distributed.²⁵² In Mulheim, nine Polish DPs previously repatriated to Poland but now back in the French zone were found, for instance, promulgating anti-repatriation propaganda.²⁵³

More significantly, a firestorm of protest erupted among Baltic DPs on 10 March 1947 at the opening of the Moscow Conference.²⁵⁴ In several camps, Latvian, Lithuanian and Estonian DP Committees announced the start of a hunger strike to protest against the Soviet occupation of their countries. Various Baltic committees issued letters in which they argued that all totalitarian regimes and, more precisely, the Nazi and Communist ones, were similar. In a letter infused with human rights rhetoric, the Reutlingen Lithuanian committee lamented that their tragedy was their *holocauste à l'hôtel de la liberté*.²⁵⁵ They compared their victimhood condition to that of the Jewish Displaced Persons.²⁵⁶

It was hardly surprising that the most visible protests were organized by Baltic DPs.²⁵⁷ Unlike other DP groups, and notably Poles, many Baltic Displaced Persons were neither forced labourers nor former concentration camp inmates. Many had instead fled westward in 1944 as the Soviet Army advanced.²⁵⁸ The overwhelming majority of them lived in the Württemberg area and were intellectuals who came into Germany after June 1940.²⁵⁹ As Eder observes, because their countries no longer existed as independent states but only as Soviet Republics, 'they behaved more as representatives of their former

²⁴⁹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0072-05, Lettre du chef de Bataillon Garnier Dupre à Monsieur Thery, 2 September 1946.

²⁵⁰ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0001-07, Field Inspection, Haslach, 6 December 1946.

²⁵¹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0003-02, Lettre R.Y Rodie à Chef du détachement de Kisslegg, Waldsee, 16 October 1946.

²⁵² UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0041-05, Lettre ouverte à Monsieur La Guardia d'un déporté Polonais dans le camp de concentration No. 285 à Borowicz dans l'URSS!

²⁵³ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0001-07, Compte-rendu d'inspection, Haslach, 13 December 1946.

²⁵⁴ United Nations Archives (UNA), UNRRA, S-0419-0003-02, Lettre du Président du Comité Lithuanien à Tübingen à la Direction de l'UNRRA, team 589, 10 March 1947; Lettre des Délégués de la Colonie Lithuanienne de Ravensburg à Monsieur le Capitaine Massip, Directeur de l'UNRRA Team 579, 10 March 1947.

²⁵⁵ UNA, UNRRA, S-0419-0003-02, Lettre du président du Comité Lithuanien de Reutlingen, Silverstras Balciunas à Monsieur le Directeur de l'UNRRA, Team 589, 10 March 1947.

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

²⁵⁷ Juliette Denis 'Identifier les "éléments ennemis" en Lettonie. Une priorité dans le processus de resoviétisation (1942-1945)' *Cahiers du monde russe*, Vol. 49, No. 2-3 (2008), pp. 297-318.

²⁵⁸ On Baltic DPs see notably Thomas Lane *Victims of Stalin and Hitler: the Exodus of Poles and Balts to Britain* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); Balkelis 'Living in the Displaced Persons Camp'; Angelika Eder 'Perspectives of Displaced Persons in West Germany after 1945. A comparison of Jewish, Baltic and Polish Non-Repatriates' in Johannes-Dieter Steinert and Inge Weber-Newth (ed) *Beyond Camps and Forced Labour* (Osnabrück: Secolo, 2005), pp. 79-89; Laura Hilton 'Cultural Nationalism in Exile: The case of Polish and Latvian Displaced Persons', *The Historian*, Vol. 71, No. 2 (2009), pp. 280-317; Purs 'How those Brothers in Foreign Lands are Dividing the Fatherland'.

²⁵⁹ MAE, PDR 6/727, Baltes dans les cercles de Ravensbourg, Friedrichshaffen, Saulgau, Wangen, 1 December 1945.

Baltic states than as DPs' and preserved their nationality, their particularism and their language.²⁶⁰ On 4 June 1947, during a meeting between the PDR Administration and Soviet Repatriation Officers, Soviet General Bassilov stated that Baltic war criminals had organized numerous committees – described as 'veritable laboratories of anti-repatriation propaganda' - notably in Ravensburg, in Freiburg, and in Tübingen.²⁶¹ All of this was taking place while such political activities technically remained forbidden in the French zone (as in the other zones), something that the Council of Foreign Ministers reiterated in April 1947 when an agreement was signed prohibiting all committees 'which may be found to be engaged in activities hostile to the interests of any of the Allied Powers'.²⁶²

An elitist movement

The description of these anti-repatriation protests should not, however, lead us to conclude that DP anticommunism was a 'mass movement', nor that all DPs were infused with strong anti-communist sentiments. Historians are divided in their assessments of the importance of the *political explanation* (or in other words the 'anti-communist explanation') for non-Jewish DPs' refusal to accept repatriation offers.²⁶³ Wolfgang Jacobmeyer argues that many Poles lacked the ability to make politically-informed decisions, suggesting that they were primarily driven by concerns about material security and fear of punishment.²⁶⁴ Dyczok estimates that thirty to forty per cent of Ukrainian DPs were political refugees who took a conscious decision to leave their home and that sixty to seventy per cent were forced labourers.²⁶⁵ Other historians, on the contrary, maintain that Poles, Ukrainians and Russians were categorically opposed to communism.²⁶⁶ Holian is more nuanced. According to her, the DP *political explanation* reflected DP elites' efforts to build a consensus against repatriation. They created a 'global framework for individual concerns, one that edited out "merely" personal or economic considerations as well as politically problematic ones such as fear of retaliation for collaboration'.²⁶⁷ According to Holian, conservative and authoritarian leaders played a significant role in the shaping of this 'broad consensus' and in the formulation of this *political explanation*.

²⁶⁰ Eder 'Perspectives of Displaced Persons in West Germany after 1945', p. 81.

²⁶¹ MAE, HCRFA, Bonn 150, Rapport de l'administrateur Général Laffon sur la conférence du 4 juin relative au rapatriement des ressortissants soviétiques se trouvant dans la zone française d'occupation en Allemagne, N.10887, 6 June 1947.

²⁶² Holian *Between National Socialism*, p. 52.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 86.

²⁶⁴ Jacobmeyer *Vom Zwangsarbeiter zum heimatlosen Ausländer*.

²⁶⁵ Dyczok, *The Grand Alliance*, p. 77.

²⁶⁶ Jaroszynska-Kirchmann *The exile mission*; Mark Wyman *DPs: Europe's Displaced Persons, 1945–1951* (New York: Ithaca, 1998); Holian *Between National Socialism*, p. 86.

²⁶⁷ Holian *Between National Socialism*, pp. 87-88.

The leadership cadres of the anti-communist DP movement certainly included numerous individuals who had collaborated with the Nazis. Reflecting on Lithuanian DP politics, Tomas Balkelis concurs, arguing that Lithuanian DP elites made 'a strenuous effort to forge 'a single national community' from a mass of disorganised and socially stratified refugees.'²⁶⁸ In doing so, they attempted to create a positive image of themselves in the West and 'to preserve (or construct) a sense of collective worth'. Aldis Purs comes to the same conclusion in his analysis of Latvian National Politics: 'Latvian DP identity became cemented and 'packaged' as national identity for Allied consumption.'²⁶⁹ This was also arguably the case in the French zone. Political prisoners and former prisoners of war played a significant role in the development of DP anti-communism. PoWs had organized themselves during the Nazi period and had accumulated greater amount of savings, as *L'Association des Combattants Polonais* in the French zone testified.²⁷⁰

This is all the more interesting since, according to Holian, the *political explanation* was less prominent in the French zone. She cites the result of the UNRRA repatriation poll of May 1946 in support of her claim. Conducted in the three western zones, the poll was the first (and last) systematic sounding of the DP population. It asked DP three questions. 'What was their nationality? Did they want to return home? And if not, why not?' Answers were submitted anonymously. The results revealed not only a 'broad popular opposition to repatriation' but also the extent to which opposition had come to be defined in political terms.²⁷¹ While the poll does not present comprehensive picture of DP opinion regarding repatriation, it provides insight into the differences between the three Western zones in relation to DPs' commitment to remain in exile. In the French zone, out of 31,232 DPs from the major groups (Balts, Polish, Russian, Yugoslav and Jewish) interrogated, 3,845 said yes to repatriation, 19,210 no and 8,177 refused to participate. In total, 61.5 % of the population interrogated said no, a figure considerably lower than in the British zone (79.3%) and in the American zone (88%).²⁷² Abstention was considerably higher in the French zone. Furthermore, if one examines only the figures relating to Polish DPs (without a strong anti-repatriation drive akin to the Balts or Jews) one finds that they were even lower. Out of 26,154 interrogated, 7,276

²⁶⁸ Balkelis 'Living in the Displaced Persons Camp', p. 42.

²⁶⁹ Purs "How those Brothers in Foreign Lands are Dividing the Fatherland", p. 55.

²⁷⁰ MAE, HCRFA, PDR 6/780, E. Hemmerling, *Compte-rendu de la Section de l'Association des Combattants Polonais dans la Zone d'Occupation Française en Allemagne pour la période de 1945 jusqu'à 1950*.

²⁷¹ Holian *Between National Socialism*, p. 84.

²⁷² UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0002-03, Confidential, Results of repatriation poll of Displaced Persons in UNRRA Centers, Annex V, 1-14 May 1946.

did not participate, 3,768 said yes and 15,110 said no. In total, 57.8% refused repatriation, unlike 76.2 % in the British zone and 84.4% in the American zone.²⁷³

From an UNRRA perspective, these results tended to suggest that collective resistance to repatriation was weaker in the French occupation zone, Polish DPs placing greater emphasis on economic factors than on political motives. For UNRRA officials, this difference stemmed from the fact that many Poles in the French zone worked in the German economy. 'They therefore enjoyed greater economic security'.²⁷⁴ In May 1947, thirty per cent of the DPs worked for UNRRA, twenty-one per cent for the military government or the French economy, and thirty-nine per cent within the German economy.²⁷⁵ The greater proportional integration of DPs within the German economy was paralleled by a greater integration of students into German universities.²⁷⁶ But, the relative weakness of the *political explanation* can also be traced back to three other factors: DP elite awareness that French authorities were more hostile to their *constructed* 'anti-communist' and 'national' identities (DPs were less likely to be seen as 'Cold War heroes' in the French zone); the (relative) absence of activists and political leaders able to construct this 'broad consensus' among the mass of DPs in the French zone; and DP leaders' appreciation that they needed to remain discreet if they wanted to preserve the unofficial protection that PDR officials granted them.

In sum, reasons for refusing repatriation greatly varied among individuals and over time. They were shaped by DPs' past experiences and by the post-war context: by political and economic conditions in their home countries, by conditions of DP life in the zone and, later on, by opportunities (or supposed opportunities) for emigration.

Conclusion

This chapter supplements the multiple historiographies with which it intersects, including the history of forced repatriation of Soviet nationals, the history of the remaking of French asylum in post-war France, the history of the French occupation zone and the history of UNRRA. Amid the vast literature on DPs in post-war Germany, numerous studies examine forced and voluntary repatriation to the Soviet Union and Poland as well as DPs' strategies to avoid

²⁷³ Ibid.

²⁷⁴ Holian *Between National Socialism*, pp. 84-85.

²⁷⁵ UNA, UNRRA, S-0432-0005-04, J. de Saint-Priest, *Aperçu sur la situation de l'emploi en zone française*, 8 May 1947.

²⁷⁶ UNA, UNRRA, S-0438-0009-01, 'World Student Relief', *Visit to French zone from Yngve Frykholm, Franlgen*, 8 June 1946.

it. But, as Polian observes, most of the English-language histories have focused on the British and American zones. The French case has been less well researched. Following in the footsteps of Coudry, Polian and, more recently, Rinke's work, this chapter has highlighted the complexities of French attitudes towards repatriation. It has demonstrated the vicissitudes of repatriation, repatriation incentives being highly contingent on changing circumstances, institutional rivalries, local realities and DPs' nationality. Contrary to widespread historical presumptions about French insensitivity, supposedly exemplified by the handing over of Baltic and Ukrainian DPs in the autumn of 1945, French positions changed in Paris (and in the zone) well before the adoption of the UN landmark resolution of 12 February 1946.

The chapter's originality lies in its uses of UNRRA and PDR archives. These allow us to move below the level of national government and policy. While it recognises the importance of diplomats and national politicians in formulating repatriation policies, the chapter has revealed how repatriation also crucially depended on how French administrators re-interpreted and implemented these instructions in the zone. Contradictory instructions from the Foreign Ministry engendered differences in implementation. As in many other aspects of French occupation policy, this chapter has also highlighted the gap in perceptions between authorities in Paris and authorities in Berlin, Baden-Baden, Rastatt and Haslach. It suggests that although a policy *between East and West* (consistent with the main orientation of French foreign policy at the time) was difficult to implement as far as repatriation was concerned, the PDR Direction nevertheless attempted to balance French labour needs with the requirements of the Soviet/Polish Repatriation Missions. Their double-game policy was a delicate diplomatic exercise, hampered by the presence of UNRRA.

But, the zone was not monolithic, nor should it be analysed as such. The PDR service's difficulties were compounded by the lack of coordination between different administrative agencies and by the autonomy of local administrators. In this respect, this chapter reveals as much as it obscures. Indeed, more research needs to be done at the local level of daily encounters in order to know exactly where and when DPs were more likely to avoid forced repatriation and to engage in anti-repatriation activities. This would allow us to better understand why in Mulheim PDR officers believed that they had the right to use the threat of repatriation to exclude Poles, while (in the same period) in Ravensburg, local authorities allowed the development of anti-repatriation activities. This problem had important domestic repercussions. In the Soviet

Union, several French POWs found themselves held hostage as a result of the non-repatriation of Soviet DPs. This generated acrimonious conflicts within the French Parliament. As Catherine Klein-Gousseff observed, '[a]lthough the number of French detainees in the Soviet Union probably amounted to less than a hundred, and not thousands as it was claimed at the time, their detention became [in France] one of the living symbol of the emerging Cold War'.²⁷⁷

While this chapter shows that French diplomats signed an agreement with UNRRA in the hope that it would facilitate French administrators' work with Eastern European Missions, it reveals that the presence of UNRRA largely complicated French PDR actions in the zone. Several reasons account for this: the lack of a clear and consistent message from UNRRA's central headquarters and the subsequent delays in implementing a pro-repatriation policy, the bitter personal and administrative conflict between the PDR/UNRRA Directions, and, finally, the lack of relief workers' training in Eastern European politics and history. In doing so, this chapter raises interesting questions about the limits of 'neutral' and 'impartial' humanitarian aid. It is in many respects paradoxical that UNRRA personnel succeeded in providing neutral humanitarian aid in the Soviet Union, but substantially failed to do the same in the French zone. Beyond what this history says about UNRRA and the French occupation zone, it thereby offers an opportunity to raise questions regarding the legitimacy and effectiveness of humanitarian action. Were young and largely untrained relief workers able to make informed decisions about who should be repatriated and who should not, who was a 'good' or a 'bad' DP, who deserved assistance and who did not? Were they really able to detect dishonest stories and to resolve possible conflicting statements? What were the perverse effects of this 'justice d'intuition'?²⁷⁸

Following the massive misuse of humanitarian aid in the Rwanda refugee camps between 1994 and 1996, humanitarianism has undergone 'a painful introspection' since the late 1990s. Humanitarian theoreticians and practitioners have questioned the fundamental principles of humanitarian aid and exposed its sometimes perverse effects, showing that humanitarian organizations are often motivated by the same un-altruistic incentives that affect other organizations.²⁷⁹ Without question, the gravity and scope of the problem in the French zone is

²⁷⁷ Klein-Gousseff *Retour d'URSS*, p. 12.

²⁷⁸ Cohen 'The West and the Displaced', p. 132.

²⁷⁹ Fiona Terry *Condemned to repeat? The Paradox of Humanitarian Action* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002); Arthur C. Helton *The Price of Indifference. Refugees and Humanitarian Action in the New Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Sarah Kenyon Lisher 'Collateral Damage. Humanitarian Assistance as a cause of conflict' *International Security* 28 (2003), pp. 79-109; *Dangerous Sanctuaries: Refugee camps, civil war and the dilemmas of humanitarian aid* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005).

not comparable to what happened in Congo-Zaire: UNRRA did not become a tool of war, nor did DPs spread civil war. But the example of UNRRA in the French zone reveals that the organization sometimes lent assistance to authoritarian and fascist DP leaders (who were sometimes more literate and better placed to develop strategies against repatriation) while excluding other, more deserving DPs. Instead of discrediting UNRRA's administration as a whole, this chapter has therefore stressed the organizational difficulties experienced, despite the best original intentions to uphold neutrality: most relief workers lacked adequate training, few spoke the languages they needed, and many did not know the reality of Soviet and Nazi methods. In so doing, the chapter adds to wider discussion about the moral dilemmas of humanitarian aid, the most emblematic examples of the time being the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)'s tilt towards Mussolini's Italy and its guilty silence during the Nazi period. As Rainer Baudendistel has demonstrated, the ICRC's neutrality was distorted in the late 1930s by conservatism and racism, its committee being inclined to see Ethiopia as an uncivilized region that should never had been admitted to the League of Nations.²⁸⁰ During World War Two, as we know, the International Committee knew about the concentration camp system but said nothing due to its policy of confidentiality, in order to pursue its work on behalf of the Prisoners of War held by Nazi Germany.²⁸¹ Seen in this light, UNRRA emerges with rather more credit.

²⁸⁰ Rainer Baudendistel *Between Bombs and Good Intentions: The Red Cross and the Italo-Ethiopian War, 1935-1936* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006). For a broader contextualization see Forsythe 'On Contested concepts', pp. 59-68.

²⁸¹ Jean Claude Favez *Une mission impossible? Le CICR, les deportations et les camps de concentration Nazis* (Lausanne : Payot, 1998).

Chapter Four: When most relief workers had never heard of Freud **French UNRRA humanitarian actors**

In June 1947, American UNRRA welfare officer Elise Zach was stationed in the French zone, where she had helped organize relief for almost two years. Contemplating the end of her service with UNRRA, she identified three main obstacles that hampered the UN administration's activities in the French zone. One was the scarcity of material and financial resources. Another was the shortage of personnel trained in what she called the 'modern concept of welfare.'¹ Third was the lack of agreement between relief workers of differing cultures and nationalities about the objectives sought. Despite UNRRA's internationalist ambitions, French staff predominated among its staff in the French zone. The wartime experiences and educational backgrounds of French recruits were markedly different from those of their American co-workers. 'A considerable percentage of welfare personnel had nurses' training, very little knowledge of sociology and even less of psychology. American methods of casework and group-work were, on the whole, quite unknown.'² In Zach's eyes, '[t]he difference in the approach to welfare may perhaps [be] most strikingly [...] illustrated by the fact that a French welfare worker in one of the most responsible positions had never heard of Freud.'³ According to her, French relief workers were uninterested in the psychological dimensions of relief work, preferring to focus on providing material assistance to DPs. Zach's observation reflects the discrepancy between differing allied visions of relief work, some of which drew on current psychological and psychoanalytic theories while others remained more traditionally oriented to short-term welfare. 'The main emphasis was upon concrete services and material help, the distribution of supplies. I met welfare workers who with an empty warehouse saw their main field of activity disappear. This stemmed no doubt from different training in the Western European countries where the emphasis seems to [have been] placed on physical care and tangible services.'⁴

As we have seen, UNRRA's creation ushered in new forms of refugee humanitarianism, based on an American-style understanding of self-help and a trust in science. Like Zach, many American UNRRA recruits saw themselves as 'professionals of rehabilitation', concerned not only with material assistance but also with DPs' emotional and psychological needs. Admittedly, few of them

¹ UN Archives, UNRRA, S-1021-0085-02, Elise Zach, Informal welfare report, Fribourg, 16 June 1947.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

were trained psychologists or psychoanalysts, but most did have cognate educational qualifications and psychoanalytic theories informed their work.⁵ In a shift from earlier relief efforts, UNRRA planners aimed to provide more than a mere 'soup kitchen' charity.⁶ Along with filling refugees' stomachs, dispensing clothing, shelter and health care, they intended to meet DPs' emotional requirements. In the summer of 1944, UNRRA's Welfare Division commissioned an international committee of psychiatrists, psychologists and sociologists to prepare a report on the psychological problems to be confronted in the field.⁷ Submitted in June 1945, this report maintained that '[t]he United Nations Administration is concerned not only with Relief – that is with making provision for material needs – but also with Rehabilitation - that is with the amelioration of psychological and social suffering and dislocation. For man does not live by bread alone.'⁸ In aiming to 'help DPs to help themselves', UNRRA planners linked the psychological rehabilitation of individual displaced persons to a broader campaign to cultivate democratic values in post-war Europe.⁹

This shift from providing bread and butter to psychological rehabilitation was initiated two decades earlier during the humanitarian campaigns that followed the First World War.¹⁰ Many of the experts who helped create UNRRA were veterans of the relief efforts following the earlier global conflict. Many among them believed that better coordination and planning would have saved more lives and that humanitarian action was, in part, an effort to 'reconstruct' the individual. This transformation also paralleled the rapidity with which psychiatry and psychoanalysis developed in the early twentieth-century United States. In the inter-war period, US social workers began to organize as a profession, divorcing themselves from their philanthropic origins. 'Psychoanalysis was attractive at this moment because it offered a set of scientific methods and theories that justified social workers' claims to possess professional, scientific expertise.'¹¹ Finally, UNRRA's project bore the imprint of the New Deal.¹² For American UNRRA planners, with the creation of the new organization, 'the transition from the private to the public realm in relief and

⁵ Tara Zahra "The psychological Marshall Plan": Displacement, Gender and Human Rights after World War II', *Central European History*, Vol. 44, No. 1 (2011), pp. 37-62, p. 45.

⁶ *Helping the People to Help Themselves. The Story of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration* (London: Stationary Office, 1944), p. 8.

⁷ Mary Kinnear *Woman of the world. Mary McGeachy and International Cooperation* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2004), p. 164.

⁸ Wiener Library [WL], HA5-4/3, Welfare Division, *Report on Psychological Problems of Displaced Persons*, 1 June 1945, p. 1-41, p. 1.

⁹ Tara Zahra *The Lost Children: Reconstructing Europe's Families after World War II*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), p.93.

¹⁰ Keith David Watenpaugh 'The League of Nations' Rescue of Armenian Genocide Survivors and the Making of Modern Humanitarianism, 1920-1927' *American Historical review*, Vol. 115, No.5, (2010), pp. 1315-39.

¹¹ Zahra *Lost children*, p. 71.

¹² Elizabeth Borgwardt *A New Deal for the World: America's Vision for Human Rights* (Harvard : Harvard University Press, 2005), p. 119.

rehabilitation marked a further internalization of New Deal-style problem-solving.¹³

If American social workers descended on the European continent armed with the psychoanalytic theories and practices of social work that dominated the United States at mid-century, most French relief workers remained unfamiliar with the new concepts and approaches involved.¹⁴ Zach was not alone in lamenting both that French social workers ‘had never heard of Freud’ and were unacquainted with wider ‘case-work’ principles. Case-work entailed focusing on DPs’ emotional problems, on their individual backgrounds and circumstances. In France, Charles Joy, the director of the American branch of the Unitarian Service Committee (USC), which took charge of a colony for Spanish refugee Children, also maintained that French social workers were incapable of addressing the perceived psychological consequences of war and displacement. ‘The problem of neurotic and psychotic children is a serious one’ he noted. ‘France’, he concluded, ‘has not made in the field of psychiatry the progress she has made in other fields.’¹⁵ Little wonder, then, that most of UNRRA’s French recruits had never heard of Freud.¹⁶ By 1945 the professionalization of the position of *assistante sociale* (female social worker) was far from complete. Indeed, the legislation governing this new professional corps was only implemented in April 1946. Faced with a severe shortage of social workers during the war, French authorities had recruited many staff lacking proper training. Even among those with specialist qualifications, there was a rift between those with ‘medico-social’ backgrounds and those who had been trained in ‘pure social work.’¹⁷

But may we infer from all this, as Zach’s observation rather invites us to do, that French UNRRA relief workers rejected the Administration’s rehabilitation project? Did *unprofessional* and inexperienced French relief workers disregard UNRRA planners’ injunction to ‘help DPs to help themselves’? Or, did they try, on the contrary, to meet DPs’ emotional needs in the process of rehabilitating them? In other words, what were the consequences of UNRRA’s shift from providing bread and butter to psychological rehabilitation in the French zone? This question raises another,

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Zahra *Lost children*, p. 19.

¹⁵ Charles Joy, A preliminary Study of Post-War Work in France for the Unitarian Service Committee, 24 June 1944, quoted in Zahra *Lost children*, p. 26.

¹⁶ Freud’s influence on French psychiatry was relatively limited. Elisabeth Roudinesco *La bataille de cent ans: Histoire de la psychoanalyse en France*, Vol 1, 1885-1939 (Paris: Seuil, 1986); Gregory M. Thomas *Treating the Trauma of the Great War. Soldiers, Civilians and Psychiatry in France, 1914-1940* (Louisiana State University Press, 2009), p. 159.

¹⁷ Henri Pascal *La construction de l’identité professionnelle des assistantes sociales. L’association nationale des assistantes sociales (1944-1050)* (Paris: Presses de l’EHESP, 2012), pp. 23-24.

more basic one: did UNRRA's 'humanitarian revolution' affect the French zone? These questions are what the next three chapters investigate. But, first, this chapter examines French relief workers' backgrounds, their previous experiences, and their mental baggage.

The historiographical context

The creation of UNRRA is often described as a crucial moment in the professionalization and modernization of global humanitarianism.¹⁸ By contrast, this thesis argues for a more nuanced assessment of UNRRA's humanitarian revolution.¹⁹ According to Daniel Cohen, the DP experience transformed the ideology and practice of modern humanitarianism in at least three respects: it attracted a new generation of aid workers dedicated to liberal internationalism and modern welfare techniques; it standardized the use of refugee camps as humanitarian enclaves and sites of stabilization; and it inaugurated an era of humanitarian 'governmentality.'²⁰ According to Cohen, an abundance of statistics, reports, and censuses, along with the enforcement of uniform nutritional, medical, and housing standards strove to fashion what were heterogeneous DP groups into a cohesive 'refugee nation.'²¹ In the French zone, however, these transformations were only partially fulfilled. To be sure, much as elsewhere, UNRRA relief workers were required to fill in a plethora of scientific reports about calories, sanitary conditions and DPs' medical status. Yet, as will be explained in the next chapter, the use of camps as humanitarian enclaves was more limited. Furthermore, the majority of French UNRRA relief workers were neither wholly committed to liberal internationalism, nor to modern welfare techniques.

While UNRRA was presented as an exercise in international cooperation, the majority of its personnel in the zone were of French origin. In October 1945, for instance, sixty-six per cent of UNRRA personnel were French.²² In February

¹⁸ See for instance Philipp Weintraub 'UNRRA: An experiment in international welfare planning' *The journal of politics* Vol.7, No.1 (1945), pp 1-24; Liisa Malkki 'Refugees and Exile: from 'Refugee Studies' to the National Order of Things', *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol. 24 (1995), pp. 495-523; Michael Barnett *Empire of Humanity: A history of Humanitarianism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011), pp. 110-111.

¹⁹ This argument sits alongside the new strand of historiography, keen to question the efficiency of Allied wartime planning. Susan Armstrong-Reid and David Murray. *Armies of peace: Canada and the UNRRA years* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008); Ben Shephard *The Long Road Home: The Aftermath of the Second World War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011); Silvia Salvatici 'Help the People to Help Themselves': UNRRA Relief workers and European Displaced Persons', *Journal of Refugee Studies*, Vol. 25, No. 3 (2012), pp. 452-473.

²⁰ Daniel Cohen *In war's wake: Europe's Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 62.

²¹ Daniel Cohen 'Naissance d'une nation : Les personnes déplacées de l'après-guerre, 1945-1951', *Genèses*, Vol. 38 (2000), pp.56-78.

²² UNA, UNRRA, S-0412-0012-05, C. Mercier, Monthly report (October 1945) Displaced Persons operation French Zone, 7 November 1945.

1946, the proportion rose to sixty-eight per cent for the southern district.²³ These figures were themselves indicative of the limits to international cooperation in the field. While recent studies have highlighted the rift separating American professional approaches from British *Bountiful Ladies'* non-professional, un-theoretical and old-fashioned approach to welfare, very little attention has been paid to French UNRRA recruits.²⁴ Most American recruits had high-level qualifications, substantial records of service with the Department of Social Welfare, but no direct experience of displacement. On the contrary, most British recruits - particularly women – arrived with prior experience of relief work during the war years, whether as civil servants or on behalf of voluntary agencies. Educational attainment among the British personnel was, by contrast, highly variable.²⁵ This chapter will demonstrate that French relief workers' backgrounds were even more heterogeneous. It will be suggested that, in contrast with American social workers, French UNRRA recruits neither had substantial professional expertise in case-work nor a common set of cultural and professional values, which might have helped frame their attitudes towards DPs. Heterogeneity was, instead, the defining feature. Regional and social differences were extremely pronounced among the demobilized soldiers, nurses, former wartime volunteers and out-of-work businessmen who comprised the French relief cohort.

Disciplining this workforce was a serious matter for French UNRRA headquarters.²⁶ Authorities expressed their shock about the immorality of young female welfare officers, who allegedly slept with Germans and indulged enthusiastically in black market activities. Imposing norms of personal and professional morality proved very difficult. On the one hand, UNRRA offered extremely high wages to people who had just experienced four years of hardship and privation, making low-price black market luxury goods understandably tempting. On the other hand, employment with UNRRA was meant to be temporary.²⁷ Transfers from one team to another were frequent. UNRRA personnel thereby lived in a state of 'perpetual instability', this uncertain status creating frustration and discouragement.²⁸

Without doubt, UNRRA authorities had neither the time nor the necessary incentives to turn this entire heterogeneous group into committed, professional

²³ UNRRA, S-0417-0010-09, Nominal Role, Southern French zone, District Headquarters, 28 February 1946.

²⁴ Armstrong-Reid and Murray *Armies of peace*, pp. 106-110; Salvatici 'Help the people to help themselves', p. 433.

²⁵ Salvatici 'Help the people to help themselves', pp. 430-433.

²⁶ UNA, UNRRA, S-1021-0084-10, General Marchal, History of the DP Operation in Germany, ERO Technical Instructions No.72 [1947?].

²⁷ UNA, UNRRA, S-1021-0031-07, History of UNRRA, Personnel Division.[undated].

²⁸ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0024-05, Compte-rendu d'inspection du team 573 de Müllheim, 547/FS/SR, 8 August 1946.

social workers. Ill-equipped to cope with the pressures brought to bear on them in the field, some young UNRRA recruits either resigned or succumbed to the temptation of black-marketing or, even worse in UNRRA official's eyes, *immoral* sexual behaviour. Others, however, gradually adopted the administration's expected professional norms. Faced with growing criticism from within official occupation circles, many UNRRA recruits became increasingly eager to demonstrate their capabilities as social workers. The French zone therefore witnessed the emergence of an inchoate 'professional discourse', which grew out of the necessity to differentiate UNRRA activities from those of the PDR service in the zone. French UNRRA relief workers progressively embraced the organization's declared mission of 'self-help' albeit adapted to their interpretation of what DPs' best interests were.

An extremely heterogeneous group

In October 1946 an article in *Ici-Paris* examined worsening suicide rates following the French defeat in 1940. It detailed the story of a beautiful young Parisian woman, of Iranian origin, who, after several suicide attempts, decided to join UNRRA. 'Out of desperation, she just signed up to be an UNRRA interpreter. She is going to Germany, fully contented, as she was told that she is sixty-five times more likely to be the victim of a terrorist attack.'²⁹ Without doubt, this story was anecdotal. Yet the evidence suggests that French workers' enrolment with UNRRA was not always driven by the most laudable intentions. While some former Resistance recruits were driven by patriotic duty and the need to alleviate the suffering of their brothers in arms, others were attracted by what was perceived at the time to be a 'fashionable profession.' Indeed, as Cyril Le Tallec shows, being an *assistante sociale* was considered to be *chic* and *à la mode* among young French bourgeois women.³⁰ The profession of '*assistante sociale*' was nonetheless in crisis, Catholic organizations expressing the fear that the role attracted women for the wrong reasons, among which, the desire for independence, the job's snobbish *caché*, and heightened (and, it was implied, undeserved) standing in the adult world.³¹ Other UNRRA recruits were simply motivated by UNRRA's pay scales - UNRRA offered extremely high wages paid in sterling at a time when both shortages and inflation plagued the

²⁹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0002-01, Médecin Général des Cilleuls à General de Corps d'Armée Lenclud, 17 October 1946; *Ici-Paris*, 1-8 October 1946.

³⁰ Cyril Le Tallec *Les assistantes sociales dans la tourmente, 1939-1946* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2003), p. 19, p. 207. On the crisis of the profession also see Armelle Mabon-Fall *Les assistantes sociales au temps de Vichy* (Paris: L'harmattan, 1995), pp. 23-29.

³¹ See for instance UNRRA, S-0438-0005-01, O. Despeigne, Report Reutlingen, Team 589, 23 June 1946.

economy in France. Finally, and for a smaller minority, working in the zone conferred the possibility of escape from a shady past.

American relief workers were particularly critical, or even contemptuous, of French recruits. Many Americans were skilled workers, who had a relatively idealistic understanding of the task ahead of them prior to deployment. American relief worker Susan Pettiss recalled, for instance, that many of her colleagues were driven by a 'pervasive idealism.' They hoped that a 'world community with new social systems and international relations' would emerge from the unprecedented magnitude of wartime devastation.³² For them, UNRRA's humanitarian mission represented dedication, a 'sacred flame burning inside men and women wearing the organization's uniform.'³³ French recruits, however, did not seem to share their enthusiasm, 'sense of sacrifice' and commitment to UNRRA's mission. In October 1945, Susan Pettiss confided to her aunt that 'UNRRA did a very poor job of recruiting on the continent. There are good personnel from Belgium, Holland, and a few good English. The French are notoriously bad. A few UNRRA personnel can do more harm as far as prestige is concerned than a dozen good people.'³⁴ Like Zach and Pettiss, many Americans believed that the French were incompetent.³⁵ Official UNRRA historian Woodbridge noted that their employment was often a 'reward for wartime services in the underground movements.' According to him, '[i]t was only in its recruitment of French nationals [...] that the Administration was injured by the employment of a large proportion of unsuitable individuals.'³⁶

At the organization's highest levels, as explained in chapter One, employment with UNRRA undoubtedly did constitute a reward for wartime service. General Lenclud, for instance, was appointed by De Gaulle in recognition of his wartime credentials and the fact that he had lost a son. His close collaborator, General Lizé de Marguerrittes, was also a well-respected resister. These Generals were more devoted to the restoration of French national honour than to the necessity to foster an internationalist spirit in the German ruins. But was this the situation for all French recruits?

The lack of harmonized selection and training

The UNRRA administration had to recruit a very large number of individuals in a very short period of time. In December 1945 the organization employed 5,169

³² Susan Pettiss and Lynne Taylor *After the Shooting Stopped: The Story of an UNRRA Welfare Worker in Germany 1945-1947* (Victoria, BC: Trafford, 2004), pp. 4-7.

³³ Salvatici 'Help the people to help themselves', p. 432.

³⁴ Pettiss *After the shooting stopped*, p. 123.

³⁵ UNRRA, S-0527-0505, Letter from K. M. Barr to Mr Patterson, Director UNRRA mobilisation Centre, Jullouville, 19 July 1945.

³⁶ Woodbridge *UNRRA*, Vol 1, pp. 251-252.

people in Germany alone. Sixteen per cent of them hailed from the United States, thirty-one per cent from Britain and the Commonwealth, eighteen per cent from France, and thirty per cent from other European countries.³⁷ Although the professionalization of international relief work was among its main objectives, UNRRA largely disregarded the question of standard qualifications during the recruitment of French workers. While it imposed rigorous entry requirements on American recruits (candidates had to be between 30 and 55 years of age with a minimum of five years' experience in social work in government or voluntary agencies as well as having the required professional qualifications), many French recruits had neither impressive educational backgrounds nor professional experience.³⁸ What lay behind this was the high demands for social workers in France, which forced UNRRA to ease its requirements regarding age and professional experience. Furthermore, French UNRRA workers were usually selected by Anglo-American recruiters unfamiliar with the French academic system.³⁹ Welfare supervisor Germaine Loustalot, who had participated to the recruitment, recalled:

The atmosphere in which this recruitment was carried out was very unusual. People with goodwill and zealous people came to us. They belonged to the Resistance. Many of their former companions in arms were in Germany, in the concentration camps. They wanted to join them, to alleviate their pain and, in some way, to finish the struggle that they had started together. The war was at its height. There were also people coming to us, whose main motivation was to go, to go anywhere, to do anything, at any price. Above all, they wanted to go. And, finally, there was the mass of those who did not know what to do, Business and Industry were not working, and were attracted by UNRRA's high wages [...].⁴⁰

Loustalot explained that former tramway conductors, attracted by UNRRA's relatively well-paid posts, were recruited as 'cooks' while young untrained women were recruited as nurses.⁴¹ Not only was the recruitment system haphazard, but salaries and grades arbitrarily varied.⁴² 'We have recruited in haste' observed Loustalot. 'This haste was completely uncalled for; In three case out of four [...] the recruits remained during long and tedious weeks in

³⁷ A year later, the number of French recruits dropped to 436, French amounting to 14% of the overall personnel (34 % British and 17% Americans). Woodbridge *UNRRA*, Vol 3, pp. 415-417.

³⁸ Laura Megan Greaves 'Concerned not only with relief': UNRRA's work rehabilitating the Displaced Persons in the American zone of occupation in Germany, 1945-1947, PhD dissertation, University of Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, 2013, p. 91.

³⁹ UNA, UNRRA, S-1021-0031-07, History of UNRRA, Personnel Division.[undated].

⁴⁰ UNA, UNRRA, S-1021-0084-14, Germaine Loustalot, Training Center Director, 'Rapport sur la partie psychologique des questions personnel', 20 May 1947.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² UNA, UNRRA, S-1021-0031-07, Draft, History of UNRRA, Personnel Division [undated], p. 15.

transfer centres in France or Germany; some have waited up to four or five months before being deployed with their teams!!!⁴³

French authorities soon became aware that many unsuitable candidates were being recruited by the administration.⁴⁴ In early April 1945, French Commandant Merpillat and Captain Dissard warned that some of the French welfare recruits were too young and inexperienced compared to their counterparts from Belgium and Holland.⁴⁵ Several reasons account for this. PDR Ministry archives reveal that few French social workers matched UNRRA's ideal type.⁴⁶ As we have seen, the agency's initial criteria for appointment were a university degree in social work and from two to five years of professional experience.⁴⁷ Fluency in English was often stipulated as well. French authorities responded that UNRRA's rigid job specifications excluded suitable candidates. While France lacked fully-qualified nurses and social workers, it possessed a large cohort of young women with field experience, who had assisted refugees and other war victims while working in the Resistance. It was believed that UNRRA should make the most of this reservoir of experienced women. In the boastful words of a French observer,

France is one of the countries which has experienced the most important population movements in the last five years; it has faced several DP problems (exodus, evacuation of devastated towns, displacement of population during Allied landings and Allied bombings, relations with the *maquis*); It has gained an experience that one needs to take into account and possessed local teams particularly trained and working effectively.⁴⁸

Evidence suggests that requirements were indeed adjusted and that large numbers of doctors and social workers were transferred to UNRRA bypassing formal interview selection.⁴⁹ Some, such as the female members of the MMLA had relevant experience and the necessary 'sense of sacrifice.' Others, however, were neither committed nor sensitive to the DP problem. For instance, between eighty-five and ninety per cent of the French UNRRA doctors were compelled to work for the organization because they were still on Army active service. Some resented this position, not least because, as a result of their mobilization, they earned less than an internationally-recruited UNRRA nurse.⁵⁰

In the French zone, UNRRA authorities often complained about the lack of

⁴³ UNA, UNRRA, S-1021-0084-14, Loustalot, 'Rapport sur la partie psychologique.'

⁴⁴ MAE, HCRFA, PDR1/18, Lieutenant Wagner, Compte rendu de visite (Granville) du 29 mai 1945, 30 May 1945.

⁴⁵ MAE, HCRFA, PDR1/18, Compte rendu mission Commandant Merpillat/Capitaine Dissard, Centre d'instruction de Granville, 27 April 1945.

⁴⁶ AN, F/9/3309, Note pour Monsieur le Ministre: Liaison avec UNRRA, bulletin N.18, Paris, 12 March 1945.

⁴⁷ AN, F/9/3309, Compte-rendu de la réunion UNRRA du 23 mars 1945.

⁴⁸ AN, F/9/3110, Note sur le recrutement des équipes féminines françaises, Paris, le 6 February 1945. FD/MB 15.

⁴⁹ AN, F/9/3309, Compte-rendu de la réunion UNRRA du 23 mars 1945.

⁵⁰ MAE, HCRFA, PDR 1/18, Compte-rendu de Mission du Capitaine Mussinger, 27 June 1945.

sufficient experienced personnel.⁵¹ It remains impossible to gather systematic information about UNRRA recruits in post in the zone, UNRRA staff personal files being closed for historical research. Some team reports and personal evaluations nonetheless offer clues about the diversity of French men and women's backgrounds. Some French recruits had exceptional language skills and educational backgrounds. For instance, Suzanne Balasko-Moreau was forty-three when she joined UNRRA in January 1946. Hired to be a 'translator', she was then re-designated as a Welfare Assistant. *Agrégé*, she spoke fluent French, Spanish, English, Italian and Portuguese, her language skills refined during 1941 to 1944, when she had worked in a camp for British women and children in Troyes.⁵² Other evidence suggests she was untypical. The backgrounds of French UNRRA welfare or assistant welfare officers working in the Southern District is, in this respect, revealing. In January 1946, the welfare department only numbered nineteen welfare women officers, two Belgian, one American and sixteen French. Among the French, three were qualified nurses, three had a 'baccalauréat', three were *assistante sociale*, three held no qualifications, one was a *surintendante*, one had a Red Cross diploma and two failed to provide information about their educational backgrounds.⁵³ Their field supervisor often complained about their casualness and lack of conscientiousness, lamenting that they were exasperatingly over-confident for their ages.⁵⁴ Yvonne Florence Renée Blaise was a typical example. She joined UNRRA in April 1946 at the age of twenty-six as an Assistant Welfare Officer, receiving £600 a year. She had no social work background, just a *baccalauréat* in History and Philosophy.⁵⁵ In her personal evaluation, her supervisor noted that she was good but 'a little bit too self-confident.'⁵⁶ Her colleague Miss Boute 'placed the interest of her love affairs above the interest of her work, and for that she [was] criticized by everyone.'⁵⁷

UNRRA male workers' backgrounds were equally diverse. Some were former POWs. UNRRA Director Marcel Dalichamp was, for instance, forty when he joined UNRRA. According to his immediate superior, captivity had left him very 'mature' in attitude, and thus better equipped to understand DPs' emotional needs.⁵⁸ His colleague, fellow UNRRA Director Gadras, was a former social worker previously responsible for a large-scale wartime relief

⁵¹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0419-0004-04, Rapport sur les activités et réalisations du Relief service, N. 229/11, 20 June 1946.

⁵² UNA, UNRRA, S-0438-0004-05, Fiche de renseignements, Suzanne Balasko-Moreau.

⁵³ UNA, UNRRA, S-0420-0001-02, Liste du Personnel Welfare District Sud de la Zone française, 2 January 1946.

⁵⁴ UNA, UNRRA, S-0438-0004-05, Confidentiel, Problèmes courants rangés par teams, 23 July 1946.

⁵⁵ UNA, UNRRA, S-0438-0004-05, Fiche de renseignements, Yvonne Florence Renée Blaise [undated].

⁵⁶ UNA, UNRRA, S-0438-0004-05, Confidentiel, Problèmes courants rangés par teams, 23 July 1946.

⁵⁷ UNA, UNRRA, S-0438-0004-05, R. le Goff, District Welfare Officer to Mademoiselle Muller, 11 May 1946.

⁵⁸ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0029-04, Germaine Loustalot, Personnel Evaluation of Marcel Dalichamp, 28 February 1947.

scheme for French DPs that involved supervising twenty-three 'departments' in the South of France, totalling nearly seventy social workers.⁵⁹ Captain Raymond and UNRRA Team Director Vincent had also worked for the Foreign Refugees Service in France.⁶⁰ Another UNRRA Director, Jacques Bauche, was awarded the prestigious 'compagnon de la Libération' in recognition of his resistance work.⁶¹ Others had backgrounds in business, industry or state administration. In Lindau, Jean Gerbier organized his team along commercial managerial lines, his aim being to obtain 'a peak efficiency in the [...] customers' (the DPs) satisfaction.'⁶²



Fig. 10. Jean Gerbier's team, Lindau.⁶³

Finally, some French UNRRA recruits were demobilized soldiers.⁶⁴ In early 1946, as UNRRA authorities recalled, the demobilizing French Army regarded UNRRA as 'a dumping-ground for their surplus personnel.'⁶⁵ 'We were inundated with a stream of officers, boasting numerous honours and years' experience, to whom it was always difficult to explain that our regulations absolutely prohibited our accepting their offer of services. (It is, though, hard to explain the age limit to a dapper Cavalry colonel of fifty-three; and I would suggest that in future organisations more latitude be given).⁶⁶ The employment of demobilized soldiers was not a specifically French phenomenon.⁶⁷ But it certainly created intractable problems of integration that were nicely

⁵⁹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0425-0007-05, Mr. J. M. Gadras, Director UNRRA team 96 Karlsruhe to Mr. Alex. E. Squadrilli, 19 October 1945.

⁶⁰ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0018-08, Lettre du Team 583 UNRRA C.J. Vincent à Monsieur Poignant, [25 April 1946?].

⁶¹ Vladimir Trouplin *Dictionnaire des compagnons de la Libération* (Paris : Elytis, 2010), pp. 82-83.

⁶² UNA, UNRRA, S-1021-0085-08, Jean Gerbier, 'rapport sur les activités de l'UNRRA dans le cercle de Lindau...', 8 May 1947, p.6.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ See for instance the case of Army officer Massip who had worked previously with the service PDR. UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0004-12, From Mr. E.P.Moreland, District Director to General Lenclud, Directeur de la Zone Française d'occupation, 7 January 1946.

⁶⁵ UNA, UNRRA, S-1021-0031-07, History of UNRRA, Personnel Division.[undated].

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Salvatici 'Help the people to help themselves', p. 434.

summarized by Czech refugee Frank Munk, Director of UNRRA's training programme. He was, he said, dubious about the conversion of 'a soldier, strongly imbued with nationalism, into a good international civil servant.'⁶⁸

In sum, the French personnel recruited by UNRRA had strikingly different backgrounds, work experience and motivations. Most attended a short training program organized in Granville, a small town in north-western France. There, enthusiastic instructors attempted to kindle the 'sacred flame' of UNRRA's mission.⁶⁹ UNRRA recruits were given a 'Memorandum of the Provisional Conditions of Employment on Field Service', explaining the organization's purpose and the scope of its activities. Recruits were told that they constituted a 'body of truly international servants' devoted to the interests of the forty-four nations that had created it. Their aim was to help people to help themselves 'without discrimination as to race, creed or political belief.'⁷⁰ As French UNRRA relief worker Jacqueline Lesdos observed in her memoirs, this training was undoubtedly idealistic and *grandiloquent*. 'But weren't we in the period of the *grands enthousiasmes nécessaires*?'⁷¹ In practice, training activities were vague and 'confusing.' The lack of guidance about field conditions made the stress laid on theory seem out of place.⁷² The lack of harmonized selection, combined with this insufficient training, left French recruits poorly prepared for the challenges they confronted in the field. Upon entering Germany, the majority of them had neither clear ideas about the organization's principles nor about how to articulate them in practice. As Elise Zach observed 'circumstances became the teacher.'⁷³ While some learned how to adapt to the field's requirements, others became rapidly disillusioned with the Administration. By December 1945, a series of resignations, defections and purges brought home just how hasty the first phase of recruitment had been.⁷⁴

Professionalization and humanitarian wage hierarchy

UNRRA introduced perceived status differences that were not based upon training, ability, or experience, but rather on the relative position of particular personnel within the organization's pay grades.⁷⁵ These ranged from three to

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ See for example Captain Laveissiere eagerness to instill a 'flame of enthusiasm.' According to him, repatriation was an 'act of good faith requiring a lot of love.' MAE, HCRFA, PDR 1/18, Adieu à Mr. Arnold-Forster par E. Laveissiere, 30 June 1945.

⁷⁰ AN 72/AJ/1968.

⁷¹ AN 72/AJ/1968, Jacqueline Lesdos, *Mais qu'est ce que l'UNRRA*, p. 3.

⁷² Woodbridge *UNRRA*, Vol 2, p. 484; Shephard *the Long Road Home*, pp. 139-142; Murray and Reid *Armies of Peace*, pp. 163-165; Salvatici 'Help the People to help themselves', p. 431.

⁷³ UNA, UNRRA, S-1021-0085-02, Elise Zach, Informal welfare report, Fribourg, 16 June 1947.

⁷⁴ UNA, UNRRA, S-1021-0031-07, History of UNRRA, Personnel Division.[undated].

⁷⁵ Jennifer Carson 'The Friends Relief Service – Faith into Action. Humanitarian Assistance to Displaced Persons Camps in Germany, 1945-1948', PhD in History, The University of Manchester, 2009, p. 17.

twelve, a Team Director normally holding a grade ten, an Assistant Administrator a grade six, and a typist a grade three. In the French zone, grades three to six were said to be 'non-commissioned officers' and grades seven to twelve 'officers.'⁷⁶ The Administration also imposed the same khaki uniform on its entire staff from directors to drivers. In the 'intermingled mix of races' present in the German ruins, wearing the Allied uniform proved to be of vital importance, as young French doctor Henri Mora recalled.⁷⁷



Fig. 11. UNRRA Doctor and Nurse, Ravensburg⁷⁸

Yet, although all French recruits received this khaki uniform, French men felt that their American and British counterparts were better 'dressed', either because they were given more than one uniform or because their uniform looked more stylish.⁷⁹ More importantly, French recruits resented the fact that their wages were considerably lower than those of their American, and to a lesser extent, British co-workers.⁸⁰

In the spring of 1945, for instance, a French UNRRA Deputy Director bitterly complained about the fact that his 'subordinates' earned more than him 'I received a English Welfare officer who earned £900 a year, that is £200 more than me.'⁸¹ His sense of injustice was intensified by the fact that most of the British and Northern American recruits could not speak German. Pierre Durand,

⁷⁶ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0001-04, Lettre de Lenclud au Général Commandant en Chef Français en Allemagne, crimes et délits des agents de l'UNRRA, 16 July 1946.

⁷⁷ Henri Mora, *Dix sept mois de travail médico-social dans l'UNRRA en Allemagne occupée*, thèse pour le doctorat en médecine, Université de Bordeaux, 1947. [8- TH BORDEAUX- 2913], p. 14.

⁷⁸ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0063-05, team 579, Medical service, Ravensburg.

⁷⁹ MAE, HCRFA, PDR 1/18, Compte-rendu de Mission du Capitaine Mussinger, annexe III, 27 June 1945; Malcolm Proudfoot *European Refugees, 1939-1952*. (London: Faber and Faber, 1957), p. 146.

⁸⁰ UNA, UNRRA, S-1021-0031-07, History of UNRRA, Personnel Division.[undated].

⁸¹ AN, F/9/3289, Copie d'une lettre de Jacques Franck [undated].

Director of the team in Gutach, was also unpleasantly surprised by his wage packet. He was recruited by the Champs Elysées' bureau in Paris as a Mess Officer with an annual salary of £400. He only accepted the position because he was told that he would be promoted. At the time, he 'ignored what the UNRRA hierarchy meant.' In Granville, his appointment was renegotiated and he was appointed Team Director, which saw his salary rise from £400 to £850. But months after this promotion he was still waiting for the money to be transferred to his account.⁸² Complaints like these alongside reports of consequent resignations abound in French and UNRRA archives.⁸³ Reflecting on UNRRA's humanitarian wage hierarchy, an UNRRA supervisor highlighted the necessity to adopt standardized wages: 'I do not personally believe that any international organization will achieve good international relationships amongst its own staff unless the pay and conditions for all are equal and unless the staff itself is picked in such a way to ensure that the individual members of it can comprehend the meaning and substance of international work.'⁸⁴

If French UNRRA recruits did not necessarily and systematically earn less than their British counterparts, it is nevertheless true that there were glaring inconsistencies in UNRRA's wage levels.

UNRRA RECRUITMENT					UNRRA	Position	SALARY	Act. Position	Current
NAME	D.L.N. Position held	Nat.	SEA	HOME STATION	ID. Card	Off. appointed to		held	
BAYLE	Director	French	M	Paris	30014	Dep. Dir. 10	L 850	Act. Dir. 10	On Duty
TRUPIGNORI	Med. Officer	Dutch	M	the Hague	20514	Med. Officer 10	L 850	Med. Officer 10	"
VARIN-PERIGNON	Princ. Self. Officer	French	F	Paris	20504	Princ. Self. Off. 10	L 850	Princ. Self. 10	"
CELLIERIS	Supply Off.	French	M	Paris	20551	Supply Off. 8	L 600	Supply Off. 8	"
UNRRA TEAM 15, LISBON									
KOUCMAN	Director	USA	M	Washington	162	Director 11	\$ 6350	Director 11	"
POURCEP	D. Dir.	Can.	M	Washington	2064	Dep. Dir. 10	\$ 4900	Dep. Dir. 10	"
RYCLOUSKI	Med. Officer	Polish	M	London	2347	Med. Off. 11	L 1150	Med. Off. 11	"
DIGNE	Self. Off.	British	F	London	1664	Self. Off. 10	L 1000	Self. Off. 10	"
LE SPAFF	Adm. Asst.	French	M	Paris	6955	Adm. Asst. 6	L 430	Adm. Asst. 6	"
GILLISSE DIT LEB	Adm. Asst.	French	M	Paris	20205	Adm. Asst. 7	L 500	Adm. Asst. 7	"
VERGUES	Messing Off.	French	M	Paris	20139	Messing Off. 8	L 600	Messing Off. 8	"
VOUJER	Supply Officer	French	M	Paris	6962	Supply Off. 8	L 600	Supply Off. 8	"
DOFFERAI	Warehouse Off.	French	M	Paris	6958	Warehouse Off. 7	L 500	Warehouse Off. 7	"
COLLIOT	Nurse	French	F	Paris	6956	Nurse 7	L 300	Nurse 7	"
DE GANDRAL	Driver 4	French	M	Paris	6955	Driver 4	L 300	Driver 4	"
MARTIN	Driver 4	French	M	Paris	6955	Driver 4	L 300	Driver 4	"
UNRRA TEAM 26, ROBBURG									
EVANS	Director	British	M	London	2501	Adm. Off. 7	L 750	Act. Dir. 7	"
BOULEANT	Med. Off.	Belgian	M	Brussels	7032	Med. Off. 9	L 900	Med. Officer 9	"
FOURLEY	Welfare Off.	British	F	London	234	Self. Off. 10	L 1000	Self. Off. 10	"
CHVALLIER	Supply Off.	French	M	Paris	6794	Supply Off. 8	L 600	Supply Off. 8	"
RICHMOND	Stores Off.	French	M	Paris	20368	Store Off. 7	L 500	Store Off. 7	"
RAINEY	Nurse	British	F	London	2391	Nurse 6	L 300	Nurse 6	"
BERREYN	Driver	Belgian	M	Brussels	7024	Driver 4	L 300	Driver 4	"
WYBRACE	Driver	French	M	Paris	6642	Driver 4	L 300	Driver 4	"
BOURNE	Driver	French	M	Paris	6642	Driver 4	L 300	Driver 4	"
UNRRA TEAM 19, TRIER FRENCH									
DUPRESSE	Director	French	M	Paris	30215	Dep. Dir. 10	L 850	Act. Dir. 10	"
PATRI DE SAULECOURT	D. Director	French	M	Paris	6640	Dep. Dir. 10	L 850	Dep. Dir. 10	"
STOER	Med. Officer	French	M	Paris	2396	Med. Off. 9	L 700	Med. Off. 9	"
CLERBOUC	Supply Officer	French	M	Paris	20186	Supply Off. 8	L 600	Supply Off. 8	"
KUDELJA	Nurse	Dutch	F	the Hague	20341	Nurse 7	L 500	Nurse 7	"
RIYER	Driver	French	M	Paris	30005	Driver 4	L 300	Driver 4	"
DE HECHE	Driver	French	M	Paris	6642	Driver 4	L 300	Driver 4	"
CHALCOU	Driver	French	M	Paris	6641	Driver 4	L 300	Driver 4	"
UNRRA TEAM 61, TRIER FRENCH									
BERGARD	Director	British	M	London	1770	Director 11	L 1150	Director	"
ESTEL	Med. Off.	Czech	M	London	2280	Med. Off. 11	L 1150	Med. Off. 11	"
VONBIELOFF	A. Self. Off.	French	M	Paris	20507	A. Self. Off. 8	L 600	A. Self. Off. 8	"
BOUCQUET	Adm. Asst.	French	M	Paris	20567	Adm. Asst. 8	L 600	Adm. Asst. 8	"
WAGNER	Supply Off.	French	M	Paris	20184	Supply Off. 8	L 600	Supply Off. 8	"
ORU	Nurse	Sov.	F	Oslo	5934	Nurse 5	L 360	Nurse 5	"
CHLACZKA	Driver	Polish	M	Paris	6793	Skilled Mech. 5	L 360	Sk. Mech. 5	"
L. LUTHERS	Driver	French	M	Paris	6796	Driver 4	L 300	Driver 4	"

Fig. 12. Nominal roll – District Headquarters French Zone North⁸⁵

⁸² UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0034-05, Lettre de Durand à Monsieur de Saint-Maur, Offenbourg, 13 October 1945.

⁸³ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0027-01, Lettre de R. Schurmans à Directeur du Team 206, Freiburg, 26 June 1946.

⁸⁴ UNA, UNRRA, S-1021-0031-07, History of UNRRA, Personnel Division. [undated].

⁸⁵ UNRRA, S-0417-0010-09, Nominal Role, Northern District, French Zone. [undated; February 1946?].

As the pay roll above shows, French UNRRA Director Dufresne (Trier-Kemmel) earned £300 less than British Director Edwards (Trier Feyen) but £100 more than British Director Evans (Homburg). He earned the same salary as French Principal Welfare Officer Vatin-Perignon (Kaiserslautern) and £150 less than British Welfare Officer Dingle (Lebach).⁸⁶ Yet Vatin-Perignon had neither social work experience nor relevant qualifications. Furthermore, she was, according to her supervisor, 'charming' but incompetent.⁸⁷ Dingle was not a professional social worker either; but according to her supervisor she had extensive relief work experience and was highly capable.⁸⁸

UNRRA's wage rates were particularly iniquitous for nurses who received considerably less money and were assigned lower UNRRA grade levels (which, in turn, determined eligibility for housing, transportation, and other social amenities) than less-qualified Welfare Officers and Deputy Directors.⁸⁹ In Freiburg, for instance, satisfied by the work of his nurse, the UNRRA team Director asked if she could be appointed Welfare Officer. Welfare Supervisors refused, arguing that they had 'always been strict on this issue of promotion when those concerned did not have professional social training.'⁹⁰ That said, many welfare officers, as explained earlier, lacked relevant professional experience or qualifications. A comparison between the salary of UNRRA assistant welfare officers Simone Quenet and Yvonne Florence Renée Blaise illustrated plainly the administration's inconsistencies. Simone Quenet was a typical former resistance recruit with extensive experience of social work and, in January 1945, she was made Assistant sub-lieutenant FFI.⁹¹ She duly entered UNRRA at the age of thirty-five as assistant Welfare Officer with an initial salary of £450.⁹² Yvonne Florence Renée Blaise, on the contrary, had no social work background. She joined UNRRA in April 1946 as an Assistant Welfare Officer with an initial salary of £600.⁹³ Nor was this an isolated anomaly.⁹⁴

The fact remains that by 1946 forty-four per cent of UNRRA employees were women. Some French male UNRRA recruits resented the grade and power conferred on women appointed as Welfare Officers. But, despite what would today be called UNRRA's claims of gender blindness, the positions

⁸⁶ UNRRA, S-0417-0010-09, Nominal Role, Northern District, French Zone. [undated; February 1946?].

⁸⁷ UNA, UNRRA, S-0438-0006-02, O. Despeigne à General Lenclud, rapport d'inspection des services sociaux, District Nord.[undated].

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Armstrong-Reid and Murray *Armies of Peace*, p. 230.

⁹⁰ UNA, UNRRA, S-0438-0004-05, Confidential, Problemes courants rangés par teams, 23 July 1946.

⁹¹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0027-01, Fiche de renseignements.[undated]

⁹² Ibid

⁹³ UNA, UNRRA, S-0438-0004-05, Fiche de renseignements, Yvonne Florence Renée Blaise [undated].

⁹⁴ See for instance UNRRA, S-0438-0004-05, S-0438-0004-06, S-0425-0007-04, S-0421-0027-01, S-0421-0027-02, S-0421-0027-03, S-0421-0027-04, S-0421-0029-04, S-0421-0026-01.

allocated in the field were, in large measure, ranked along gender lines: most camp directors were men, while the majority of the welfare officers were women. Admittedly, women could progress rapidly through UNRRA's career structure, positions in the field affording them a certain sense of empowerment.⁹⁵ In Koblenz, English Welfare Officer Housley recalled that Italian DPs preferred to be 'bossed by the women members of the team, who could get anything done without any difficulties, including the most dirty jobs in the camp.'⁹⁶ Describing her relationship with other UNRRA services, she maintained that it was difficult to be recognized as a department within their own right. '[T]here is still a slight tendency on the part of some people to look upon us as a 'bun and orange' outfit, and to use us as "maids of all work" to do all the odds and ends of work.'⁹⁷ Conflicts between male team directors and female welfare officers or nurses were numerous in the French zone, male directors apparently feeling threatened by women's sense of empowerment. In Biberach, Miss de Witt was, for example, forced to leave by Team Director de Marnhac after having complained about shortcomings in the local administrative team.⁹⁸ In Gutach, UNRRA Team Director Pierre Durand issued Miss Menereul a letter of reprimand for disobeying his instructions: 'you seem to forget that, until proved otherwise, you have to obey your Director.'⁹⁹ This problem was neither specific to the French zone nor to French recruits. Francesca Wilson, who served with Quaker missions after World War I and with UNRRA, warned that all the 'unaccustomed power' of women in the field could easily intoxicate relief workers, transforming them into dictators overnight.¹⁰⁰ 'Obscure women in their hometowns, they exact obedience from their subjects once they are the Queens of Distressed Ruritians.'¹⁰¹

In sum, in spite of UNRRA's clear professionalization and internationalist ambitions, its wage rates were profoundly unfair, tending to reinforce national and gender inequalities. In the French zone untrained relief workers were often attributed better grades than fully qualified social workers. This not only exacerbated tensions between French nationals and their British and American co-workers but also caused friction between French men and women, revealing the persistence of old gender prejudices.

⁹⁵ Armstrong-Reid and Murray *Armies of Peace*, pp. 357–58.

⁹⁶ UNA, UNRRA, S-1021-0085-02, Notes on Welfare Activities period April 1945 – March 1947, ref.2185/12/6540, 19 March 1947.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ UNA, UNRRA, S-0419-0004-04, Lettre De Witt à Général, 19 March 1947; Lettre confidentielle Général des Cilleuls à Assistant Director, 19 March 1947.

⁹⁹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0034-05, Lettre de Pierre Durand à Mademoiselle Menereul, 21 March 1947; Also see S-0421-0042-04, Lettre de Vatin-Pérignon to Major Edney, 31 January 1946.

¹⁰⁰ Zahra 'A Psychological Marshall Plan', p. 45.

¹⁰¹ Francesca Wilson, In the Margins of Chaos: Recollections of Relief Work in and Between Three Wars (New York: Macmillan, 1945), 304. Quoted in Zahra 'A Psychological Marshall Plan', p. 45.

Employment in UNRRA: 'a reward for wartime services'?

Perhaps, as Woodbridge suggests, the experience of defeat and national humiliation exacerbated French recruits' resentment towards any sign of unfair treatment. Defeat, collaboration, economic plunder, worker deportations and unprecedented persecution threw France into a profound crisis of confidence.¹⁰² As a result, for many French officials in 1945 the chief value of relief work was not material but symbolic.¹⁰³ French military reports stressed the importance of the presence of French relief worker' teams in Germany for reasons of national prestige.¹⁰⁴ In May 1945, Commandant Sorbac, deplored the integration of French female MMLA (Mission Militaire de Liaison Administrative), teams into UNRRA. 'It is essential, in my opinion, that French female teams, who have until now done almost all the work for DPs, continue to operate independently from UNRRA and in French uniform because it constitutes the best of all propaganda for our country.'¹⁰⁵

It is, of course, impossible to provide a collective analysis of the impact that the defeat and the occupation had on individual UNRRA French relief workers whose wartime experiences were so different. Some had participated in the French anti-Nazi resistance, while others had compromised themselves with the Vichy regime and the Nazi occupiers. In the winter of 1944-1945 many French collaborationists sought refuge in Germany, Petain's administration having fled to Sigmaringen castle.¹⁰⁶ As Jacques Audiard's fictional film a *Self-made hero* illustrates, some of these former *collabos* remained in Germany after the war, 're-inventing' their past to conceal their erstwhile collaboration. Ironically, the sight of Baden-Baden's bath and thermal spas and the richness of its *mondaine life* brought back memories of Vichy to many contemporaries.¹⁰⁷ Communist leaders declared that 'Vichyites' had 'created a little Vichy' in Baden-Baden. Their claims were not completely unfounded as the Commission of Inquiry sent to investigate conditions in the French zone reported in April 1946 that thirteen of the zone's highest-ranking officials were implicated in the

¹⁰² Pieter Lagrou *The legacy of Nazi occupation: patriotic memory and national recovery in Western Europe, 1945-1965* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 2.

¹⁰³ Matthew Frank 'Working for the Germans: British voluntary societies and the German refugee crisis, 1945-50' *Historical Research*, Vol. 82, No. 215 (2009), pp. 157-175, p. 174.

¹⁰⁴ SHAT, 8 P 23, Rapport secret du capitaine P. Gerbault, chef de la Section G-5 de la MFL, 22 April 1945.

¹⁰⁵ SHAT, 8 P 23, Lettre du Commandant P. Sorbac chef de la MMFL G-5 à M. le Lieutenant Colonel, chef de la MMFL, 12th AG, 4 May 1945.

¹⁰⁶ Henry Rouso *Un château en Allemagne: La France de Pétain en exil, Sigmaringen 1944-1945* (Paris: Fayard, 2012). Also see Martial Libéra *Un Rêve de Puissance: La France et le Contrôle de l'économie Allemande (1942-1949)* (Bruxelles: Peter Lang, 2012), pp. 311-314.

¹⁰⁷ Jacques Tarbé de Saint-Hardouin *Quatre années de politique française en Allemagne (8 mai 1945-12 août 1949)*, p. 54.

Vichy regime.¹⁰⁸ Some of these officials had deliberately been placed in Germany in conformity with a '*politique d'éloignement*' (policy of removal) for upper-echelon civil servants who were particularly competent but had 'compromised themselves with the Vichy Regime.'¹⁰⁹ The evidence suggests that some UNRRA officials had similarly shady pasts or had tried to reinvent their war credentials.¹¹⁰ Others saw UNRRA as an escape from retaliation at home.¹¹¹ Such was the scale of this problem that the French PDR service accused UNRRA of having re-employed 'dubious staff members demobilized by the French Military Government', 'whereas, by contrast, reliable French candidates, either former prisoners or deportees, were removed from UNRRA teams.'¹¹² Meanwhile, among the UNRRA workers who had actively participated in the anti-Nazi struggle, some had worked in London, mixing with British and American Army officers, while others had been isolated in the French countryside. This chapter is not only looking at unique professional groups, but also at a collection of individuals, whose attitudes towards DPs were shaped by their personal histories and political orientations. By extracting individual stories from the collective narrative, it is possible to gain a clearer insight into the complexities of the French UNRRA milieu.

Here, we will examine three particular cases, the aim being to demonstrate how French experiences of the war affected French UNRRA recruits often in diametrically opposite ways. First, we will look at the history of the MMLA, a cohort of young female auxiliary relief workers, trained in London with the Auxiliary Territorial Service [ATS]. They saw their work with DPs as a 'patriotic mission' and their entry into Germany as a continuation of their wartime struggle for 'liberty, anti-fascism and the motherland.' Then, we will look at the peculiar story of Jacqueline Lesdos, a nurse from the movement *Combat*, who decided to join UNRRA in order to find her brother who had been deported by the Nazis. Her story is marked by profound distress, bereavement and over-identification with the DPs. Finally, we will look at the grievances of some UNRRA recruits (particularly male ones) about their inability to wear military insignia or carry a gun. Framed in the broader context of the crisis of 'French manhood' following the defeat of 1940, French men might have suffered from what we could term a 'complex of the civilian'; French UNRRA men finding it

¹⁰⁸ Frank Roy Willis *France, Germany and the New Europe 1945-1967* (Stanford: Stanford University Press), p. 35.

¹⁰⁹ Libéra *Un rêve de puissance*, p. 312.

¹¹⁰ For instance, dossier of officer Pourchet examined by the Commission d'Épuration et de Réintégration des Personnels militaires. MAE, Bonn 160, Fiche pour le Général de Marguerittes, 13 September 1947.

¹¹¹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0432-0002-04, Lettre confidentielle et personnelle de C.J. Vincent Team 583 à Monsieur Sebillé, 28 February 1947.

¹¹² MAE, HCRFA, ADM 40, Administrateur Général Laffon à Général d'Armée, Comdt en Chef Français en Allemagne, 29 July 1946, p.2.

difficult to adjust to their status of non-combatants, their uniform without *galons* and their low status within both UNRRA's wage hierarchy and the administrative structures of the military government in the French zone.

The MMLA, les demoiselles De Gaulle

Created in August 1943 and led by Claude Hettier de Boislambert, the first MMLA teams were trained during the war with the British ATS in Camberley and Wimbledon.¹¹³ Under the command of Claude de Rothschild, they were initially expected to serve as a sort of advance guard for Repatriation Officers, liaising with the British and American forces in their dealings with French civilian and military authorities. By the time that UNRRA took charge of these groups in May 1945 they had extensive experience both in providing relief and working alongside British and American troops, an expertise that made them stand out.¹¹⁴

Sent to France in June 1944, they assisted the invading armies with refugee relief and epidemic control from the initial allied landings in Normandy through to the Ardennes counter-offensive in the winter of 1944-45. Even so, by 3 October 1944 the MMLA still numbered only 231 volunteers.¹¹⁵ Working in the immediate vicinity of the frontline, they performed impressively, arranging for the evacuation, feeding and billeting of French civilians in northern France.¹¹⁶ As Rothschild's account below explains, particularly colossal challenges were presented by Soviet DPs for whom MMLA teams in the Verdun region sought to organize repatriation convoys:

It is rare that convoys pass off without incidents; thefts, suicide and murder attempts, revolts; During one of the last missions, all the refugees, led by a Russian Commandant, refused to detrain; we had to wait for a formal instruction from the Russian Embassy before executing the disembarkation. Following this incident, fourteen Russians were shot in public 'as an example.' Another time, the train was shelled along the way; a severely brain-damaged eight-month-old baby had to be operated on there and then. To top it all, in a subsequent trip, Russians stole around thirty wine barrels during a break in Angouleme; nearly all of them were drunk when they arrived in the camp.¹¹⁷

Despite their devotion to duty and their extraordinary achievements, the female MMLA teams struggled to gain official recognition. Debate about whether they

¹¹³ Claude Hettier de Boislambert *Les fers de l'espoir* (Paris: Plon, 1978), p. 457 ; Also see AN, F/1a/3835.

¹¹⁴ SHAT 8 P 23, Lettre du Commandant P. Sorbac chef de la MMFL G-5 à M. le Lieutenant Colonel, chef de la MMFL, 12th AG, 4 mai 1945 ; Sonia Vagliano-Eloy *Les demoiselles De Gaulle, 1943-1945*. (Paris: Plon, 1982), p. 218.

¹¹⁵ De Boislambert *Les fers de l'espoir*, p. 457.

¹¹⁶ SHAT, 8 P 17, Rapport du Capitaine de Rothschild, chef de la section féminine au Colonel Rotival, chef de la Mission Militaire Française Liaison au G-5 aux Armées, 5 March 1945.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

should be sent on into Belgium and Germany raged throughout the winter 1944-45.¹¹⁸ In her memoirs, Vagliano recounted that she moved heaven and earth with Claude de Rothschild to secure permission to continue their work outside France. 'Quite frankly, the military administration think that we are absolutely superfluous – we do not belong to its world – and it does not understand why we do not want to keep calm and stand idly by in Paris.'¹¹⁹ Although they finally managed to convince the military administration to deploy them abroad, arguments about their status and role persisted. French PDR Minister Henri Frenay was, for instance, overtly critical about the deployment of MMLA officers to Germany.¹²⁰

This lack of official recognition must be placed within the broader context of the difficult integration of French women into French resistance movements. Historians of the French female resistance have compellingly demonstrated that women's integration in military formations was difficult and that military officers tended to confine women to social work.¹²¹ The terms given to them (*Merlinettes, Marinettes, Rochambelles...*) reflected half condescending half affectionate, or in other words, paternalistic attitudes.¹²² This was even more the case in Free France than in the *resistance intérieure*. Officers within the French army and the Ministry PDR – each bastions of conservatism - valued female auxiliary social workers primarily for their putative 'nurturing' and 'motherly instincts.'¹²³ Since the seventeenth and eighteenth century, even in paternalistic society in which the public sphere was often restricted to men, missionary philanthropy and charitable organizations had created spaces and significant social roles for women.¹²⁴ Women's aid was also appreciated because it eased the strains put on soldiers and freed men for combat. As Jean François Muracciole has shown, in the end, the situation of French women in Free France remained paradoxical. 'On one hand, the Gaullist movement gave them, albeit reluctantly, an official status [...] and they participated to the Victory Parade on 18 June 1945. But, on the other hand, their promotion within the

¹¹⁸ SHAT, 8 P 18, Memorandum concernant les déportés, prisonniers et réfugiés [undated].

¹¹⁹ Vagliano-Eloy, *Les demoiselles De Gaulle*, p. 143.

¹²⁰ SHAT, 8 P 18, Lettre du Ministre des PDR Frenay, à Monsieur le Lieutenant Colonel Rotival, chef de la Mission Militaire Française de Liaison Administrative aux Armées, 19 December 1944 ; SHAT 8 P 25, Copie d'1 lettre du général de Corps d'Armée KOELTZ, chef de la Mission Militaire pour les Affaires Allemandes à Gal Commandant suprême des forces expéditionnaires Alliées, No 25/CAB/MMAA, 9 February 1945.

¹²¹ Rita Thalmann 'L'oubli des femmes dans l'historiographie de la Résistance' *Clio, Histoire, Femmes et Sociétés*, No. 1 (1995), pp. 21-35 ; Jean François Dominé *Les femmes au combat. L'armée féminine de la France pendant la Seconde Guerre mondiale* (Paris: Service Historique de la Défense, 2008), p. 52 ; Margaret Collins Weitz 'Soldiers in the Shadows: Women of the French Resistance' in Gerard De Groot, C. M. Peniston-Bird (eds) *A soldier and a woman: sexual integration in the military* (Essex : Pearson Education, 2000), pp. 135 – 151; Dominique Veillon and Hanna Diamond *Women and the Second World War in France, 1939-48* (London: Longman, 1999) and Jean François Muracciole *Les Français libres – L'autre Résistance* (Paris: Tallandier, 2009), p. 48.

¹²² Dominé *Les femmes au combat*, p. 52.

¹²³ De Boislambert *Les fers de l'espoir*, p. 449.

¹²⁴ Adam J. Davis and Bertrand Taithe 'From the Purse and the Heart: Exploring Charity, Humanitarianism and Human Rights in France' *French Historical Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 3 (2011), pp. 413-432, p. 422.

movement's hierarchy remained very limited [...] Aspiring since its foundation to incarnate French legitimacy; the Gaullist movement reproduced *les ostracismes de sexe* of the Third Republic.¹²⁵ For many French male officers, the end of the war implied that women resisters, if they did not return to the household, would at least confine themselves to a professional sphere deemed suitable for their sex.¹²⁶

It was against this background of residual prejudice that the first MMLA teams entered Germany at the end of February 1945, six weeks earlier than the first UNRRA teams, making them 'the first Allied women in uniform authorized to enter Germany.'¹²⁷ In March 1945 Captain de Rothschild reported that thirty-six teams were deployed. In the American sector, three teams were working with the First Army, three with the Ninth Army, eleven with the Third Army, four teams with the Seventh Army, and three with Com. Z. Twenty volunteers were employed on a sanitary train. In the British sector, twelve teams were following the Twenty-First Army Group.¹²⁸ DPs bombarded MMLA women with difficult, often unexpected problems. Law and order was often non-existent at this point. Many DPs committed crimes including theft, assault, rapes and murders against the German civilian population. In Zella-Mehlis, Captain Cambournac reported that anarchy and theft were the norm. 'In a thirst for vengeance, a group of foreigners led by the French destroyed a significant part of the Mercedes factory, while others set fire to the town hall.'¹²⁹ Frequently, MMLA women ran camps without a security guard, and sometimes were assaulted by those they were trying to help.¹³⁰ Even when a police force was established it was an insubstantial, mostly unarmed, and ineffective force. Commanding the female team IX in Hanau, Sub-Lieutenant Chalufour catalogued the insoluble disciplinary problems facing them:

- a) *Gendarmerie* inexistent; as a result, plunders conducted by DPs [...] a murder in the Russian community.
- b) Fifteen Security guards in principle in charge of keeping a watch on the entrance of the camp; but, in fact, deployed to protect warehouses

¹²⁵ Murraciale *Les Français Libres*, p. 49.

¹²⁶ Élodie Jauneau 'Des femmes dans la France combattante pendant la Deuxième Guerre mondiale : Le Corps des Volontaires Françaises et le Groupe Rochambeau', *Genre & Histoire* [En ligne], 3(2008), mis en ligne le 02 janvier 2009, Consulté le 20 octobre 2010. URL : <http://genrehistoire.revues.org/index373.html>. For a more nuanced account of this argument see Hilary Footitt 'The Politics of Political women: reassessing the first Députées' in Knapp (ed) *France: the long Liberation* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 87-102.

¹²⁷ SHAT, 8 P 27, Compt-Rendu succinct sur les aspects du Rapatriement, Le Colonel Troullier, 16 April 1945.

¹²⁸ SHAT, 8 P 17, Capitaine de Rothschild, au Colonel Rotival, chef de la Mission Militaire Française Liaison au G-5 aux Armées, 5 March 1945. According to Davis, by November 1944, the MMLA numbered 272 and had 39 teams in the field. George W. Davis 'Handling of Refugees and Displaced Persons by the French M.M.L.A. (Section Féminine)' *The Social Service Review*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (Mar., 1948), pp. 34-39, p. 37.

¹²⁹ SHAT, 8 P 23, Lettre du Capitaine Cambournac (9th Inf. Div.) au Capitaine Hazard (Chef de la Mission Militaire française auprès du XII Corps), Allemagne, 12 April 1945.

¹³⁰ SHAT, 8 P 25, Copie Letter Commandant Sorbac, Chied MMFL G-5 Third Army to AC of S G5, Ref 532/TUBA. 21 March 1945.

against looting. Example of a wine cellar where the only way to stop wine smuggling and drunkenness was to bore holes into all the wine vats...

- c) Successive order and counter-orders given by the Police 1) Complete ban on freedom of movement [at night]; this was impossible to implement because of the many entrances of the camp and the difficulties in differentiating DPs from Germans 2) Permission to circulate from 7am to 7pm which led to greater confusion and a rise in looting.¹³¹

Administrative confusion did, however, offer these young women greater autonomy in the field and the MMLA 'girls' seized the opportunity to exercise authority over daily operations. Their duties frequently provided leadership and supervisory opportunities. Vagliano recounted in her memoirs that before the arrival of Captain Ball in the G-5 department, she did things her own way ('n'en faire qu'à sa tête').¹³² She clearly drew satisfaction from her enhanced authority. 'Until early December, there were only three French Liaison Officers: for us, it was still three officers too many, we did not want them to encroach on our territory so we gave them a cold reception [...] Given our ages, we viewed them as war veterans from 1939-40.'¹³³ Vagliano's memoirs point to the frustration felt by many young MMLA women for whom it was extremely difficult to obtain instructions or essential materials.¹³⁴ George W. Davis, a Displaced Persons and Refugee Officer with the Third Army, noted that it proved very difficult for MMLA staff to be accepted among their male counterparts.¹³⁵ Claude Hettier de Boislambert also explained in his memoirs that the MMLA women faced a barrage of criticism and tasteless jokes.¹³⁶ Their resourcefulness, sense of initiative and courage nevertheless drew the admiration of their US commanders. As this report testifies, American military authorities pressed for the MMLA female teams to be allowed to follow them into Germany:

As to the MMLA Teams, some of their O[fficers] and other ranks have been in the field with this G-5 Section, since the battle of Normandy. In many perilous circumstances, in France and in Belgium, the coolness and the gallantry of these girls has been appreciated, and in every circumstance, the work of these teams has been efficient and trustworthy. The training of the MMLA female teams for relief duties, their skill at nursing, their psychological knowledge of their fellow countrymen and country women, their motherly instinct towards women and children of all allied nations would certainly be a great help to this G-5 section, when

¹³¹ SHAT, 8 P 27, Extraits rapport St. Lieutenant Chalufour, 10 April 1945.

¹³² Vagliano-Eloy *Les demoiselles De Gaulle*, p. 166.

¹³³ *Ibid*, p. 169.

¹³⁴ *Ibid*, p. 164.

¹³⁵ Davis 'Handling of Refugees and Displaced Persons', p. 35.

¹³⁶ De Boislambert *Les fers de l'espoir*, p. 449.

large numbers of French and other allied PW and DP (male and female) shall be met.¹³⁷

How might we reconcile American praise for MMLA female workers' work and the widespread hostility towards them among French officers?

One reason for this dichotomy lies in the MMLA women's inclination to rebelliousness. As French historian Muracciole points out, *engagement* in Free France was a more difficult choice for a young woman than a young man because of the moral and cultural constraints of French society in the late 1930s. It implied leaving everything behind: country, work, studies and family.¹³⁸ As a result, MMLA women developed a certain sense of independence and empowerment. In the preface of Vagliano's memoirs, former resister Maurice Schumann recounts that when he met MMLA women for the first time in Bayeux they stuck their tongues out at him 'as young boarders would mimic an old dormitory supervisor' because he had asked them 'to tone down their laughter out of consideration for the suffering that surrounded them.'¹³⁹ In her autobiographic novel *l'épopée des AFAT*, Eliane Brault provides numerous examples of disobedience, provocation (young women singing bawdy songs) and rule-breaking such as, for instance, claiming ('stealing' might be more accurate) staff cars that would otherwise have gone to senior (male) officers.¹⁴⁰ Official reports frequently referred to the MMLA women's resourcefulness and their peculiar talent for scrounging. Vagliano herself requisitioned ten trucks in Cologne to evacuate a camp in April 1945.¹⁴¹

More was at stake than their inclination to rebelliousness, however. MMLA girls frequented the officers' mess, they drank, they gambled, and they danced with American soldiers. Vagliano recalled that romances flourished between MMLA girls and American GI's, some of which soon went awry.¹⁴² These encounters between American soldiers and young French MMLA teams certainly stirred anxieties among French men about the potential risk of *Americanization* through sex. When the MMLA teams arrived in Verviers, rumours spread that the American army had installed a 'brothel for its troops and had hired military women in uniform.'¹⁴³ As Mary Louise Roberts has recently argued, many feared that Americans with their cigarettes, chewing gum

¹³⁷ SHAT, 8 P 22, copy of a letter from C.G. First Army to C.G. Twelfth Army group [received by the French authorities on 11 February 1945].

¹³⁸ Muracciole *Les Français Libres*, p. 46.

¹³⁹ Maurice Schumann in Vagliano-Eloy *Les demoiselles De Gaulle*, p. 9.

¹⁴⁰ Eliane Brault *L'épopée des AFAT* (Paris: Editions Pierre Horay, 1954), p. 216.

¹⁴¹ SHAT, 8 P 25, Visite au DP camp de Brauweiller, 3 April 1945, HQ First US Army G-5, French liaison. (signé J. Blum)

¹⁴² Vagliano-Eloy *Les demoiselles De Gaulle*, p. 159.

¹⁴³ *Ibid*, p. 157.

and chocolate would give 'even the daughters of good families the illusion of an easier life.'¹⁴⁴

Charles-Henry-Guy Bazin summed up the problem as it was perceived by Frenchmen at the time: 'France, for Americans, like Germans, means Paris and girls.'¹⁴⁵ While French authorities fretted that the lure of American commodities might lead a new class of women into prostitution, sexual encounters between American soldiers and French girls came to symbolize a loss of French respectability and honour, as well as the suppression of French culture by American wealth and power. As Roberts puts it, '[a]t first symbol of liberation, sex ultimately became a sign of French subservience to American power.'¹⁴⁶ The mythical British popular complaint against 'over-sexed, over-paid and over-here' Americans in uniform encapsulated many of the tensions surrounding the presence of GI's on the home front, but the expression was equally applicable to American relief workers in devastated Europe. As David Ellwood has recently argued, the widely-anticipated resentments created by the spate of relationships between liberators and liberated was exacerbated in 1944-45 by the gap between the opulence of American lifestyle and the starvation of the people that they were liberating, the ideology that the liberators brought with them and, more importantly, by their lack of (historical, cultural or mental) preparation for all the responsibilities awaiting a liberation force in modern times.¹⁴⁷

Jacqueline Lesdos, a nurse from *Combat*

In many respects, the first French MMLA female teams' backgrounds and experiences were atypical. They spoke fluent English. The majority of them certainly came from relatively wealthy families and boasted advanced education.¹⁴⁸ They formed young and homogeneous teams and got along with their American co-workers with whom they had worked for months. This was, however, not the case for the great majority of other French relief work recruits. Encounters between French relief workers who had spent over four years under enemy occupation in France and freshly disembarked, confident and 'over-fed'

¹⁴⁴ Mary Louise Roberts 'The Silver Foxhole: The GIs and Prostitution in Paris, 1944-1945', *French Historical Studies* Vol. 33, No. 1 (2010), pp. 99-128, p. 127.

¹⁴⁵ Patrice Arnaud "Les femmes de l'ennemi" Représentations et réalités des liaisons amoureuses franco-allemandes des travailleurs civils français en Allemagne Durant la Seconde guerre mondiale' in Régis Revenin (ed) *Hommes et masculinités de 1789 à nos jours* (Paris: Autrement, 2007), pp. 163-177, p. 176.

¹⁴⁶ Roberts 'The Silver Foxhole', pp. 127-128.

¹⁴⁷ David Ellwood *The Shock of America. Europe and the Challenge of the Century* (Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 277-278.

¹⁴⁸ Muracciole *Les Français libres*, p. 49, p. 95.

Americans were less cosy.¹⁴⁹ Jacqueline Lesdos, a nurse from the *Combat* movement, found it extremely difficult to forge strong bonds with her American co-workers. For many resisters, who had lived for months hidden in the forest, American soldiers' armament and food supplies seemed almost obscene. 'They had everything and we had nothing.'¹⁵⁰ Lesdos' account conveyed a similar impression of envy and, perhaps, bewilderment. The world of UNRRA and the world of the Resistance were, for her, opposites:

At UNRRA, I was still an Officer, but... a civilian Officer in uniform, attached to the American Army [...] *Je ne portais donc plus de galon.*

We all wore trousers, shirts and battle dresses, in the pocket of which I found a curious object, unknown to me: a "*préservatif*", the army called it a "condom".

Aware that the intermingling of population exposed their "boys" to various risks (venereal diseases, paternity...), the Anglo-Saxons had pragmatically provided condoms to all their troops, women and men, without any sense of shame...

The hard *combats de l'ombre* were over, the harshness and *rapacity* of the Feldgrau soldiers had disappeared [...] But, for me, the chaos and... pleasant "*laisser-aller*" of certain spheres of Liberated France was also gone. [...] On top of the uniform, they gave us the PX cart which allowed us to benefit from the many advantages of the famous "Post Exchange" ...we could get everything at incredible prices: from cigarettes and beauty accessorizes to condoms, but also luxury goods, from everywhere, Swiss clocks and Scandinavian silverware...

The American Army was the richest in the world... and this was obvious to everyone...¹⁵¹

Lesdos' account constitutes an especially interesting site through which to trace issues of revenge, mourning and national rivalries. With their condoms, healthy bodies and fat wallets, American soldiers' priorities and visions of the future were diametrically opposite to hers.¹⁵² Not surprisingly, she struggled to integrate into her UNRRA team. While she forged powerful emotional bounds with the DPs, she did not connect with her US co-workers.¹⁵³ Lesdos did not share their idealistic visions of the task ahead of them. In July 1945 she also discovered that the Nazis had killed her brother. While she could not help but hating Germans, she was horrified at the sight of young American soldiers 'fraternizing' with German women. In a very moving letter written to her mother,

¹⁴⁹ On French civilians' encounters with their British and American Liberators see Hilary Footitt *War and Liberation in France. Living with the Liberators* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); Olivier Wieviorka *Normandy: the Landings to the Liberation of Paris* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), pp. 323-355.

¹⁵⁰ Collin 'L'attitude des résistants face aux "Libérateurs" américains: un mélange d'admiration et de méfiance' in *Les Américains en Lorraine, septembre 1944-mai 1945. Actes du colloque historique franco-américain* (1989), p. 102 quoted in Mary Louise Roberts 'La photo du GI viril: Genre et Photojournalisme en France à la Libération', *Le Mouvement social*, Vol. 219-220, No. 2-3 (2007), pp. 35-56, p. 49.

¹⁵¹ AN 72/AJ/1968, Jacqueline Lesdos, *Souvenirs personnels*, pp 14-15.

¹⁵² *Ibid*, p. 16.

¹⁵³ *Ibid*, p. 16.

she related her visit in April 1946 to Neuengamme camp where her brother was murdered: 'Standing next to the grave, I have hated, and hated so fiercely. Instead of this banal inscription, I would have wanted to read on the cross 'to the victims of the German people who have left all these horrors occurring on their soil.' No one people deemed civilized would have accepted the effects of a dictatorship so abominable had this people not been characterized by their attachment to discipline...'¹⁵⁴

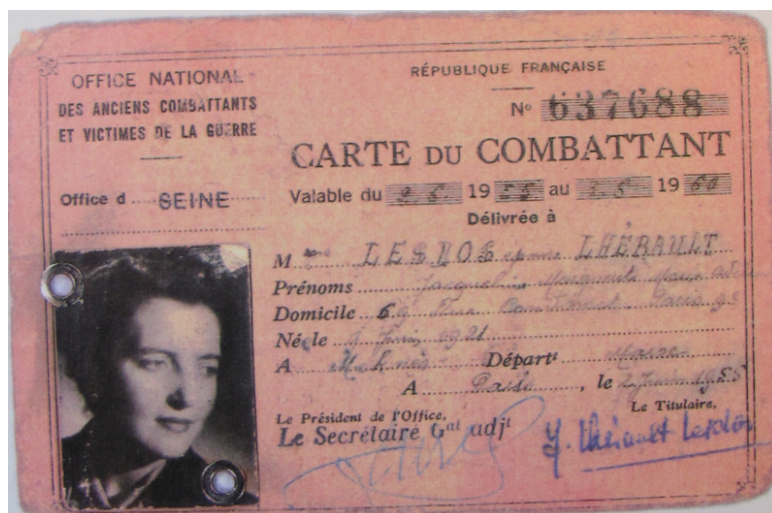


Fig.13. Jacqueline Lesdos, Carte du combattant, 3 May 1950. ¹⁵⁵

According to her, American soldiers could not fathom the reality of Nazi barbarism. Working in the American zone, she stated:

From the end of 1945, rare among them were the real combatants. The great majority [...] had returned to the US. The first recruits, who had liberated the death camps, had a clear idea of Nazi barbarism... For the latter recruits, nice "boys" coming from another planet, with the minimum of briefing, we had the impression that without wanting to admit it [se *l'avouer*] they felt closer to their very organized enemies [...] than to the poor soul of Central Europe and even than us French, far too Latin for their taste. ¹⁵⁶

Historical research has since confirmed that romances flourished between GIs and *frauleins*, American soldiers being 'unable to conceive women as the enemy' and increasingly seeing themselves 'as providers and protectors of the starving, impoverished enemy population.'¹⁵⁷ Indeed, fraternization was

¹⁵⁴ AN 72/AJ/1968, Jacqueline Lesdos, Lettre explicative pour maman, Darmstadt, 19 April 1946.

¹⁵⁵ AN, 72/AJ/1968, Jacqueline Lesdos, Carte du combattant, 3 May 1950.

¹⁵⁶ AN 72/AJ/1968, Jacqueline Lesdos, *Observations personnelles et conclusions*, p. 27.

¹⁵⁷ Petra Goedde 'From Villains to Victims: Fraternization and the Feminization of Germany, 1945-1947' *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 23, No.1 (1999), pp. 1-20, p. 2. Also see Perry Biddiscombe 'Dangerous Liaisons: the Anti-Fraternization Movement in the US Occupation Zones of Germany and Austria, 1945-1948' *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 34, No. 3 (2001), pp. 611-47, Maria Höhn *GIs and Fräuleins: the German-American Encounter in 1950s West Germany* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002) ; and Goedde *GIs and Germans: Culture, Gender and Foreign Relations, 1945-1949* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003); David Ellwood 'The American challenge in uniform: the arrival of America's armies in World War II and European women'

sufficiently widespread for the non-fraternization order to be abandoned in October 1945. American soldiers were not the only fraternizers, however. All too aware that French soldiers had a 'natural tendency towards familiarity, a taste for conversation and a weakness for women,' the French High Command distinguished itself from its Allied counterparts by not even trying to forbid fraternization.¹⁵⁸ As the presence of several hundred *Besatzungskinder* testifies, sexual encounters between French men and German women were numerous. In 1952, André François-Poncet reckoned that 10,000 *Besatzungskinder* had French fathers.¹⁵⁹

Meanwhile, Jacqueline Lesdos resigned in July 1946, convinced that she could not 'rehabilitate DPs' as she was so devastated by her brother's death. She strongly empathized with the DPs. 'In every one of them, I could see my suffering brother... They could feel it.'¹⁶⁰ In the absence of a body to bury, she seemed to have invested DPs' bodies with her own pain.¹⁶¹ Commenting on the DDT powder sprayed by healthy American soldiers on dishevelled DPs, she noted 'the sight of these unfortunate people waiting in queues resignedly in a sorry state... while these young boys, full of life, were joking around and laughing, which, although they meant no harm, upset me profoundly.'¹⁶² Evidence suggests that she forged powerful emotional bonds with the DPs. She wrote '[t]he Polish camp in itself justified my presence here [...] Poles expected a lot from me, and very quickly, we got along, so much so that I learned their language.'¹⁶³ In December 1945, she received a letter from a Polish DP who had returned home. Commenting on the death of his parents and brother, he expressed his thirst for revenge and signed 'Votre ami polonais.'¹⁶⁴ For her, the fact that DPs remained in camps, behind barbed wire, a year after the Liberation was simply unbearable.

Building on the research findings of psychologists and experts in contemporary humanitarian work, Jennifer Carson underscores the psychological impact of traumatic witnessing in her work about the Quakers' in post-war Germany.¹⁶⁵ Reflecting on the effects of experiencing the liberation of Belsen, Carson argues that in listening 'emphatically' to disaster victims, relief

European Journal of American studies [Online], special issue /2012, document 8, online since 29 March 2012, connection on 21 February 2013. URL : <http://ejas.revue.org/9577>.

¹⁵⁸ Fabrice Virgili *Naître ennemi. Les enfants de couples franco-allemands nés pendant la Seconde Guerre mondiale* (Paris: Payot, 2009), pp. 245-246.

¹⁵⁹ Virgili *Naître ennemi*, p. 247.

¹⁶⁰ AN 72/AJ/1968, Jacqueline Lesdos, *Souvenirs personnels*, p. 22.

¹⁶¹ Bruno Cabanes et Guillaume Piketty 'Introduction' in Bruno Cabanes et Guillaume Piketty (eds) *Retour à l'intime au sortir de la guerre* (Paris: Tallandier, 2009), pp. 11-33, p. 24.

¹⁶² AN 72/AJ/1968, Jacqueline Lesdos, *Souvenirs personnels*, pp. 23-24.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁴ AN 72/AJ/1968, lettre 20 December 1945.

¹⁶⁵ Hodgkinson, Stewart, *Coping with Catastrophe*, p. 218 in Carson 'Faith into action', p. 162.

workers can themselves become 'immersed in the trauma material', increasing the possibility of the trauma becoming 'so real' that it feels like the relief worker's own experience.¹⁶⁶ In the case of Lesdos, the negative effects of this over-identification were aggravated by her family bereavement. As Pat Jalland observed in her work on loss and grief in England, 'we need to bear in mind that individual bereaved people had no guidelines during the Second World War to help them understand their grief or cope with it [...] they faced their loss before psychiatrists had constructed theories of grief which impacted on the broader culture.'¹⁶⁷

It is possible that Jacqueline Lesdos modified her original account before depositing it in the National Archives in 1995. But the original letter that she received from her Polish DP friend, as well as her original letter of resignation, reveal a personal story of suffering, loss and thirst for revenge. In the absence of other primary texts written by former resisters, it is difficult to reconstruct these hidden, but profoundly important effects of the war. Her testimony still remains a powerful reminder that mass death was experienced, as Piketty points out, locally and intensely, amongst 'communities of the bereaved.'¹⁶⁸ It is, in this respect, worth noting that the death rate amongst resisters was particularly high: one out of fifteen resisters died, and nearly thirty per cent were deported to concentration camps.¹⁶⁹

The complex of the civilian

Although Lesdos' account sheds light on the tensions between French and American workers, one could oppose her personal history with that of American relief worker Pettiss to illustrate the gaps between French and Americans' *emotional baggage* and their attitudes towards relief work. Pettiss, who recently published her memoirs, was a middle-aged woman with extensive social work experience, while Lesdos was a young nurse in her early twenties. Pettiss went to Germany driven by a spirit of adventure and eager to escape a disastrous marriage; Lesdos was, on the contrary, preoccupied by the fate of her missing brother. Whereas UNRRA's internationalist ambitions appealed to Pettiss' idealism, Lesdos disdained the *grandiloquent* rhetorical air of the period.¹⁷⁰ And, finally, while Pettiss found the constant availability of male companions a help

¹⁶⁶ Thomas Wilson *Empathy in the Treatment of Trauma*, p. 34 in Carson 'Faith into action', p. 187.

¹⁶⁷ Pat Jalland *Death in war and peace. Loss and grief in England, 1914-1970* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 159.

¹⁶⁸ Cabanes Piketty *Retour à l'intime au sortir de la guerre*, p. 13. Stéphane Audouin-Rouzeau 'Qu'est ce qu'un deuil de guerre?' *Revue historique des armées* Vol. 259 (2010), pp. 3-12.

¹⁶⁹ Piketty 'De l'ombre au grand jour: l'identité résistante en question' in Cabanes and Piketty (eds.), *Retour à l'intime au sortir de la guerre*, pp. 149-163, p. 153.

¹⁷⁰ Pettiss *After the Shooting Stopped*, pp. 4-7.

'in the healing process of a failed marriage, a restoration of [her] self-confidence and a reassurance of [her] feminine attractiveness', bereaved Lesdos was angered by the same young, healthy, cheerful and naïve American soldiers.¹⁷¹ The only thing they had in common was money. As Petiss observed, '[f]or once in my life I seem to have enough money.'¹⁷² And yet to seem these two women as personifying opposite tendencies amongst French relief workers would be simplistic and, in many ways, misleading.

First, French relief workers were anything but united amongst themselves. Recalling the encounters between her *Liaison-Secours* teams (auxiliaries from a resistance movement) and the freshly-hired women in Paris in autumn 1944, Eliane Brault depicted their contempt for these *arrivist* 'Parisian military', newly recruited by the Ministry PDR.¹⁷³ Unlike the MMLA teams, the *Liaison-Secours* teams were sent to Germany, but not systematically assimilated into UNRRA. Brault's account also reveals another feature of French relief work: the importance attributed to military insignia and wartime credentials. For her colleagues and herself, those who had not fought in the Resistance did not deserve the status of 'rescuers.' Her account offers an interesting example of a certain convergence between the language of the army and that of humanitarianism.¹⁷⁴ For many former participants in anti-Nazi resistance, their work with DPs marked a continuation of their wartime struggle. But for those without resistance backgrounds, it was perhaps a way to do a military service and compensate for having played no direct part in fighting the war.

French recruits, and perhaps more importantly, male recruits seemed to have been especially pained by their non-combatant status. Unlike the Quakers, who strove to ensure that they were not identified with the military, some French UNRRA recruits longed to adopt military 'grades.'¹⁷⁵ As many historians have shown, the experiences of defeat and captivity threatened masculine authority, exacerbating soldiers' feeling of de-masculinization, fears of adultery, and anxieties that war had reversed gender hierarchies, women taking advantage of the exceptional circumstances of war to free themselves from traditional morality.¹⁷⁶ In the context of national humiliation following the

¹⁷¹ Ibid, p. 197.

¹⁷² Ibid, p. 26.

¹⁷³ Brault *L'épopée des AFAT*, pp. 202-203.

¹⁷⁴ Salvatici 'Help the people to help themselves', p.442; Nils Gilman 'Preface: Militarism and Humanitarianism' in *Humanity: an International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism and Development*, Vol. 3 (2012), pp. 173-178.

¹⁷⁵ Carson 'Faith into action', p. 48.

¹⁷⁶ Piketty Cabanes *Retour à l'intime*, p. 19; Mary Louise Roberts *Civilization without sexes: reconstructing gender in postwar France, 1917-1927* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994); Laura Lee Downs *Writing Gender History* (London/New York: Bloomsbury, 2010), pp. 97-99; Christopher E. Forth and Bertrand Taithe (eds) *French masculinities: History, Culture and Politics*

defeat of 1940, French men attempted to reassert their presumed lost authority.¹⁷⁷ In *Shorn Women*, Fabrice Virgili has, for instance, shown that the 20,000 *tontes* carried out in Liberation France to punish women who had *horizontally* collaborated with the Germans illustrated the attempts of French men to *re-virilize* France after the defeat of 1940.¹⁷⁸ Some of the tensions between UNRRA's male and female French recruits exposed similar attempts to regain power and virility.

Epitomizing these frustrations among French male UNRRA staff was their inability to carry a gun or wear military insignia. As early as February 1945 French Liaison Officers raised this issue 'It seems utterly impossible for them to go to Germany without carrying a firearm.'¹⁷⁹ In Landstuhl, American Director Bryce Ryan concurred: 'the ability to carry a gun and a military symbol is significant in dealing both with other military units and with German supply sources.'¹⁸⁰ As Ryan's statement implies, this problem was neither specific to the French zone nor to French recruits. Malcolm J. Proudfoot, an army officer in charge of refugee relief operations and the author of a detailed study on the topic published in 1957, noted indeed that in the three Western zones 'the civilian and the soldier were as oil and water, and dependence on the military was resented to the end.'¹⁸¹ It remains a feature of modern humanitarian intervention, UN field workers sometimes showing signs of an inferiority complex towards military actors. As Sandra Whithworth shows, the UN *Blue berets* 'who seem to derive real satisfaction from peace operations might find that the military they have joined views peacekeeping as a less honourable activity than traditional military concerns, and they may express their own disappointment in missing the *main show* – armed conflict and welfare.'¹⁸²

The institutional rivalry between the PDR administration and UNRRA, when combined with gender anxieties deriving from the war, significantly aggravated these problems of status among relief workers in the French zone. French officials frequently complained that UNRRA Directors were assigning themselves military grades without authorization. On 12 January 1946 Lenclud formally informed all the District Directors that this would be severely

(London: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2007); recent special issue in *Modern and Contemporary France* 'Gender, Politics and the Social in Historical Perspective: Essays in the Honour of Siân Reynolds', Vol. 20 (2012).

¹⁷⁷ Michael Kelly 'the reconstruction of masculinity at the Liberation' in Harry Kedward and Nancy Wood (eds) *The Liberation of France: image and event* (Oxford/Washington: Berg, 1995), pp. 117-129; Luc Capdevila 'The quest for masculinity in a defeated France 1940-1945' *Contemporary European History*, Vol. 10, No. 3 (2001), pp. 423-445.

¹⁷⁸ Fabrice Virgili *Shorn Women. Gender and Punishment in Liberation France* (Oxford/New York: Nerg, 2002).

¹⁷⁹ AN, F/9/3309, L'officier de rapatriement Olivier Gobert à l'officier de rapatriement Pouzadoux, 3 February 1945.

¹⁸⁰ UNA, UNRRA, S-0436-0059-08, report from Bryce Ryan, Director Team 17 to Guy Drake-Brockman, Landstuhl, 17 June 1945.

¹⁸¹ Proudfoot *European refugees*, p. 236.

¹⁸² Sandra Whitworth *Men, militarism and UN peacekeeping. A gendered analysis* (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2004), p. 151.

punished.¹⁸³ As discussed in chapter one, French civilian administrators, among them PDR officers, also accorded themselves military ranks. In the secluded and *mondain* French community of occupied Germany, material entitlements became intertwined with this contestation over recognition of authority. As Karen Adler has recently demonstrated, '[t]he French military in post-war Germany was very different from the army which had just helped to win the war – or believed it had.'¹⁸⁴

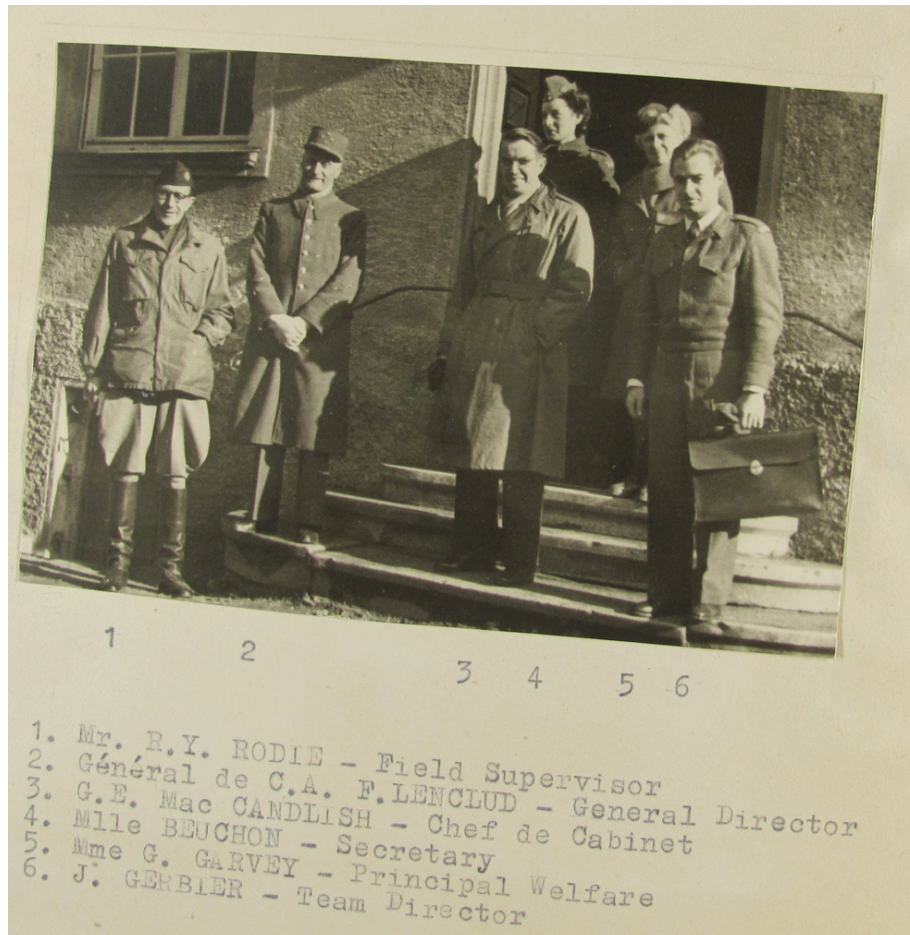


Fig. 14. General Lenclud visits Lindau, 15 November 1946.¹⁸⁵

In his study of French male civilian workers' encounters with German women during their captivity in Germany, Patrice Arnaud has highlighted a French Liberation inferiority complex towards British and American military personnel 'crowned' with glory and money.¹⁸⁶ Material assistance was often central to the intimate Franco-German relationships during the war, German women not only having 'made the first move' but also having 'bought'

¹⁸³ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0042-04, Lettre de l'Etat Major Zone Française à Messieurs les Directeurs de District, Baden-Baden, 12 January 1946. Also see S-0421-0033-03, A. Thomasset à Messieurs les Directeurs des Teams 572 – 576, 13 February 1946.

¹⁸⁴ Karen Adler 'Selling France to the French: the French Zone of Occupation in Western Germany, 1945-c.1955', *Contemporary European History*, Vol. 21, No. 4 (2012), pp. 575-595, p. 576.

¹⁸⁵ UNA, UNRRA, S-1021-0085-08, Visit of the General Lenclud, 15 November 1946.

¹⁸⁶ Arnaud "Les femmes de l'ennemi", p. 176. Also see 'The Anglo-American Troops as seen by French Labor Conscripts: Forms of Ambivalent Critical Support' in Patricia M. E. Lorcin and Daniel Brewer *France and its spaces of war. Experience, memory, Image* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 73-86.

Frenchmen's love.'¹⁸⁷This was not specific to Franco-German intimate relations, the majority of relationships between American troops and German women also revolving around the exchange of goods for sex, companionship, or services.¹⁸⁸ Material goods, as much as military insignia, were symbols of virility. Admittedly the majority of UNRRA male recruits were not former captives. But their ability to 'buy', if not love, at least recognition still seemed to matter to the majority of them. In Lörrach, UNRRA staffer P.J. Wegmann wrote to a senior official explaining the confusion of the quasi-civilian status he and his peers held: 'At the mercy of the good or bad will of an officer of the Military Government (either favourable or enemy of UNRRA) we can either obtain adequate housing or being relegated with our families in an attic. Depending on the weather conditions, we can be allocated one or four persons for our Mess. We cannot raise any objection – except perhaps – the plea that you give us some clarification about the equivalence between our grades 7, 8, 9, and 10 and the military ranks of the French Army.'¹⁸⁹

To be sure, one must be cautious in assessing the war's effects on male integration into UNRRA due to the scarcity of eyewitness accounts and the diversity of French wartime experiences. In reading documents in French and UN archives, one cannot but be struck by both the recurrence of *male* complaints about UNRRA's hierarchy and unfair wages and by the frequency of grievances about men's inability to wear military insignia and carry a gun. Although this may seem peripheral to larger issues, notably those of the recruitment, training and practices of French UNRRA recruits, it reveals the complexities of French sentiments. For some UNRRA recruits, joining the organization was less about aiding DPs and applying 'scientific methods' to alleviate their suffering than about their own personal sense of having missed out in the war years, something that fired their efforts to regain authority and prestige. Gender tensions were, in this sense, bound up with broader questions of national identity and efforts to come to terms with the recent past.¹⁹⁰

'Not ready to live the mixed life that was offered to them'

UNRRA's planners sought to create a cohort of professional social workers devoted to liberal internationalism and modern methods of

¹⁸⁷ Ibid, p. 172.

¹⁸⁸ Laura Hilton 'The Black Market in History and Memory: German Perceptions of Victimhood from 1945 to 1948' in *German History*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (2010), pp. 479-497, p. 488.

¹⁸⁹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0025-05, Lettre de Wegmann Pourchet, Lörrach, 31 August 1946.

¹⁹⁰ Karen Adler 'Reading national identity: Gender and 'prostitution' during the occupation' *Modern and Contemporary France*, Vol.7, No.1 (1999), pp. 47-57.

humanitarianism. Barring the achievement of this objective were the plethora of different motivations and backgrounds of the personnel employed in the field. Demobilized soldiers rubbed shoulders with committed social workers, inexperienced recruits worked alongside well-trained anti-Nazi resisters. In the French zone, the employment of a cohort of young and undisciplined recruits posed severe problems to French UNRRA and occupation authorities. Disciplining this workforce was a serious matter for French UNRRA headquarters.

Professional misconduct

UNRRA authorities often complained about the lack of discipline and obedience of their fieldworkers.¹⁹¹ Cases of professional misconduct were frequent in the French zone. Numerous complaints were made the lack of respect for their superiors shown by these personnel. UNRRA Assistant Director R. Schurmans bemoaned the 'poor quality' of some recruits and the 'anarchy' that prevailed in some areas.¹⁹² A local observer in the Rhineland captured the mood: 'Overall, UNRRA staffs do not work to death. Their work is not monitored; everyone does what they fancy doing.'¹⁹³ Complaints ranged from accusations of smuggling family members into DP camps, absence without leave, and the failure to apply UNRRA's own directives to serious misdemeanours such as black-marketing and theft.¹⁹⁴ In January 1946, General Lenclud enjoined Moreland, the Southern District Director, to bring his staff into line: 'it is no longer permissible for orders not to be followed or for reports not be sent.'¹⁹⁵ Cases of professional misconduct were not, however, confined to lower-level staff. In September 1946 a scandal broke out after a Field Supervisor was discovered using envelopes emblazoned with a swastika for his daily correspondence.¹⁹⁶ Similarly reprehensible, Schurmans deplored that his immediate superior Colonel Marlier had postponed a meeting to go 'hunting wild boar.'¹⁹⁷

Even worse, pillaging, theft and black-marketing flourished in the zone. In January 1946 UNRRA fieldworkers were arrested in Freiburg for trafficking cigarettes.¹⁹⁸ French occupation officials and UNRRA authorities certainly tried

¹⁹¹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0042-04, G. Drake-Brockman, District Director to Field Supervisor Koblenz Area, All teams, Lack of discipline UNRRA personnel, 15 January 1946.

¹⁹² UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0004-09, Lettre de Schurmans à Monsieur Moreland, 3 June 1946.

¹⁹³ MAE, HCRFA, PDR 3/25, Rapport secret sur la situation d'UNRRA en Rhénanie-Hesse Nassau, Coblenze, 9 July 1946, p. 2.

¹⁹⁴ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0042-04, G. Drake-Brockman, District Director to Field Supervisor Koblenz Area, All teams, Lack of discipline UNRRA personnel, 15 January 1946; UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0038-01, Lt. Col. Mercier, à Monsieur les Field supervisors et Directeurs du District Nord, 15 February 1946.

¹⁹⁵ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0004-09, General Lenclud to Mr. E.P. Moreland, District Director, Ebingen, 18 January 1946.

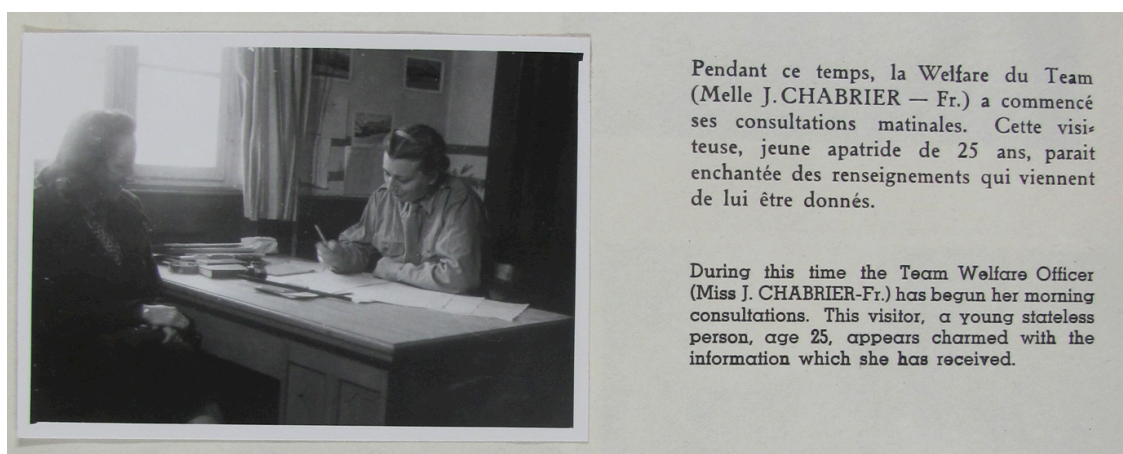
¹⁹⁶ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0001-07, Général de Marguerittes dit Lizé à Bureau du Directeur, 27 September 1946.

¹⁹⁷ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0004-09, Lettre de Schurmans à Monsieur Moreland, 3 June 1946.

¹⁹⁸ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/560, Procès Verbal, Compagnie de Fribourg, Section de Baden-Baden, Brigade de Rastatt, 28 January 1946.

to curb such black-market activities but imposing norms of professional conduct took time.¹⁹⁹ Furthermore, high-officials were sometimes involved. For instance, Field Supervisor Thomasset was arrested in the summer of 1946 for trafficking and purloining a variety of goods for which he eventually received a six-month conditional sentence.²⁰⁰ The evidence suggests that black-marketing activities continued regardless. In March 1947 UNRRA Protective Officer Lefebvre reported seventeen 'new cases' involving organization staff, including four thefts and two whole fieldwork teams placed under investigation. Moreover, a substantial wine trafficking operation was also discovered in the North of the zone in which several UNRRA officers were implicated.²⁰¹ Consequent arrests tarnished UNRRA's reputation. As PDR Officer Muller observed, criminal proceedings revealed 'the emptiness that existed behind the great UNRRA façade,' the anarchic and self-interested behaviour of UNRRA staff conflicting with the occupation administration's ideals.²⁰²

The misbehaviour of young women aroused still greater concern, confirming Catholic fears that members of the *assistante sociale* would transgress traditional morality and be exposed to the 'horror and vice' of DP life.²⁰³ Cases of fraternization with German men were, as we have seen, commonplace, but the results could wreck careers. In the summer of 1946, one such scandal broke in Gutach. UNRRA Welfare Officer Jacqueline Chabrier was found guilty of having an affair with a former SS member disguised as a DP.²⁰⁴



Pendant ce temps, la Welfare du Team (Melle J. CHABRIER — Fr.) a commencé ses consultations matinales. Cette visiteuse, jeune apatriote de 25 ans, paraît enchantée des renseignements qui viennent de lui être donnés.

During this time the Team Welfare Officer (Miss J. CHABRIER-Fr.) has begun her morning consultations. This visitor, a young stateless person, age 25, appears charmed with the information which she has received.

Fig. 15. Miss Chabrier, Welfare Officer, Gutach, April 1946.²⁰⁵

¹⁹⁹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0042-04, Koenig, Note de Service, 1 February 1946.

²⁰⁰ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0002-10, Lettre de Lefebvre à General de C.A. Lenclud, 24 March 1947.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² MAE, HCRFA, PDR3/237, Lettre de l'Administrateur de 4ème classe Muller (PDR) à Administrateur Général, 1 October 1946.

²⁰³ Le Tallec *Les assistantes sociales dans la tourmente*, p. 18.

²⁰⁴ UN, UNRRA, S-0421-0034-06, Fiche de renseignement.

²⁰⁵ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0023-09, La journée du 18 Avril 1946 au team 572, Gutach [undated].

Team director Durand reported that the ex-SS man 'was seen at Miss Chabrier's place at hours when he was not supposed to be there, or in other words, at hours when a DP *n'avait rien à faire* at a Welfare Office.'²⁰⁶ As a result of this scandal, the team Director received an official reprimand for failure to screen the supposed DP properly. Miss Chabrier was reassigned to another team.²⁰⁷ Another of her team colleagues, welfare officer Jeanine Crappier, meanwhile became pregnant and married a DP.²⁰⁸

Over the spring of 1946 several more '*scandalous*' pregnancies were unearthed in the French zone. In Landstuhl, Welfare Field Supervisor Le Goff found a young member of the team four months pregnant and in floods of tears. The father of her child was a member of the team who had a German mistress. Le Goff's solution was pretty straightforward: 'For her, for UNRRA, for the profession of *assistante sociale* she must leave us.'²⁰⁹ But much the same thing happened in nearby Kandel. Le Goff therefore urged UNRRA headquarters to devise a series of rules for women in the field: 'These women should neither be allowed to live in the camp nor in private accommodation near the camp. Furthermore, they should be absolutely forbidden to have anything to do with the Mess [...] They do a few favours, gain some sense of authority and soon no one in the team dares utter *un mot de blame*.'²¹⁰ UNRRA authorities were acutely concerned about the attitudes of young French women. Southern District Welfare Officer Miss Roberts recalled that the consequent difficulties were so widespread that she spent more time 'on the problems of UNRRA [women staff] than on those of the Displaced Persons properly so-called.'²¹¹

Welfare supervisor Loustalot believed that 'unlike their Anglo-American sisters, [the] girls from France were not ready to live the mixed life that was offered to them.' Employment with UNRRA afforded them access to an unbelievable bounty of goods:

We have to remember that these women found themselves alone in teams of more than fifteen persons; they were in a hostile land, withdrawn, without intellectual resources and they did not necessarily speak the common language of the community. Working hours were long, very long. Mental fatigue, physical exhaustion and loneliness were their daily lot. We should not forget another important factor: we had just experienced four years of severe rationing, with almost complete suppression of alcohol, tea, coffee; Overnight, we had access to a rich and abundant food with coffee.

²⁰⁶ UN, UNRRA, S-0421-0025-07, Lettre confidentielle de Durand à Monsieur le Général Lenclud, 9 September 1946.

²⁰⁷ UN, UNRRA, S-0421-0026-01, A.L. Weicheldinger, Zone Personnel Officer à Field Supervisor NO.2, 9 December 1946.

²⁰⁸ UN, UNRRA, S-0421-0034-06, Fiche de renseignement [undated].

²⁰⁹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0438-0003-03, R. Le Goff, lettre manuscrite, 18 February 1946.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹¹ UNRRA, S-1021-0085-02, Miss Roberts, Southern District Welfare Officer, report [undated].

Admittedly, this was very pleasant. But, it created an overheated and nervous atmosphere. The sum of all these factors, combined together, meant that many of the young recruits, some were not even twenty one years old, did not cope, the consequences of this being at times tragic.²¹²

Not equipped to cope with the pressures brought to bear on them in the field, some resigned while others succumbed to the temptation of black-marketing or, even worse, *immoral* sexual behaviour. As the statements of Le Goff and Loustalot suggested, it was not merely the US workers that these women angered. They also profoundly worried their French superiors who feared that their actions threatened France's prestige.

The emergence of a professional ethos?

So far, this chapter has insisted on the discrepancy between UNRRA planners' aspirations to transform international humanitarianism into a modern profession and their inability to exercise effective control over field workers to realize UNRRA policy goals. Dogged by its transitional status, UNRRA failed to put in place the necessary prerequisites to the modernization and professionalization of humanitarianism. But is this negative portrait the whole story? Did UNRRA's call for professionalism have no impact whatsoever in the French zone? Was the French UNRRA milieu completely impervious to the organization's overarching ambitions, whose New Deal origins seemed alien to them? In other words, is the history of UNRRA in the French zone to be understood only as history of differences? Or were there more fruitful transfers of expertise between French, British and American relief workers?

Faced with increasingly acrimonious criticisms emerging from within PDR official circles, UNRRA authorities and some field workers progressively adopted the language of the Administration. They strove to defend their capacity as social workers and to demonstrate that they were providing a better service than the PDR. Arguing that PDR administrators had no awareness of the need to foster a spirit of self-reliance among those needing relief, UNRRA workers prided themselves on developing social and cultural activities in DP centres and on facilitating DPs' *rehabilitation*.²¹³ While PDR administrators were wholly preoccupied with questions of discipline and repatriation, UNRRA workers increasingly presented themselves as agents of re-education and rehabilitation. They argued that their mission was to 'help the people to help themselves', echoing UNRRA's famous motto, which was supposed to

²¹² UNA, UNRRA, S-1021-0084-14, Germaine Loustalot, 'Rapport sur la partie psychologique des questions personnel', 20 May 1947.

²¹³ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0001-03, Rapport succinct sur les activités de l'UNRRA en ZFO depuis le 18 février 1946, 31 July 1946, p. 6.

summarize the programme that UNRRA aimed to implement.²¹⁴ Reflecting on UNRRA's activities over preceding months, General Lenclud reminded his staff in a June 1947 circular that, 'faced with calumny, we will respond by being even more active and on 30 June we will hold our heads up because we are sure that we have been the faithful executors of President Roosevelt's generous thought.'²¹⁵ Was this merely a 'façade'?

As will be explained in the next chapter, several obstacles blocked the achievement of UNRRA's mission in the zone. First, there was no consensus at the highest level of the administration about what this mission actually entailed. As recent studies have highlighted, there was little agreement upon goals or priorities in matters of welfare.²¹⁶ These tensions had a knock-on effect on UNRRA authorities in the zone. The history of the Welfare Section in the French zone exemplified the tensions between a still inchoate notion of refugee management and older humanitarian traditions. In the French zone, a traditional vision of relief work (seen as a matter of discipline, procurement and work) came up against newer approaches to relief work influenced by American understandings of self-help. Second, there was a discrepancy between the number of 'scientific reports' that UNRRA relief workers were required to complete (detailing DPs' calorific intake, their living conditions, and the services provided by each teams) and the limited means at their disposal to put these actions into practice. As a result, some teams produced detailed reports on welfare activities in their camps but were unable to provide accurate figures about the number of DPs under their management, essential information for the Military Government's monitoring of the DP population. Not surprisingly, French authorities were often at loggerheads with UNRRA team directors over questions of numbers and the filing of reports.²¹⁷ Frequently one encounters criticisms of poor accounting standards in UNRRA camps; sometimes even complaints of non-existent financial scrutiny. After visiting all UNRRA camps within the French Occupation Zone, Administrator Léon concluded in September 1946, 'from all my inspections, it emerges that UNRRA headquarters has never given precise instructions about the management of camps. Your instruction about the administration of DP camps has been circulated tardily and no order has been given to follow it. In all the centres

²¹⁴ Salvatici 'Help the people to help themselves', p. 436.

²¹⁵ UNA, UNRRA, S-0432-0005-01, Lettre de Lenclud à tout le personnel de l'UNRRA, 10 June 1947.

²¹⁶ Armstrong-Reid and Murray *Armies of peace*, pp. 107-115.

²¹⁷ MAE, HCRFA, PDR 3/25, 'Tableau comparatif des extraits des rapports faits par Monsieur Léon, chargé de Mission ...au sujet des irrégularités constatées', Baden-Baden, 26 September 1946.

visited, I have not found a single healthy administration or instances of accurate accounting.²¹⁸

Finally, as explained in the previous chapter, UNRRA authorities failed to issue clear instructions about repatriation and whether it should take priority over all other activities. The French military government and UNRRA headquarters sent contradictory instructions about which nationalities were eligible for protection and whether DPs would ultimately be eligible for emigration. As Welfare Officer Travis observed:

In the beginning the personnel without a background in this type of work had no clear understanding of its individual functions and duties, and were not thoroughly familiar with UNRRA policies and procedures. Personnel at all levels were often called upon, in the course of duties, to interpret broad UNRRA policies which they felt ill-equipped to do because the basic broad policies and their effects upon individuals could only be interpreted with a thorough knowledge of UNRRA Council Resolutions.²¹⁹

Although every team should have been supplied with copies of UNRRA resolutions, even when such directives were supplied, they were poorly adapted for the French zone. As Travis concluded, 'Directives from Central Headquarters were usually intended for administration in camps and more often than not were inapplicable in our dispersed communities. Therefore it was necessary for us to adapt these directives to our conditions, which made some of the organizational work possible only in more populated communities.'²²⁰

In sum, faced with growing criticism, some UNRRA workers tried to defend their skills as social workers. As we shall see, they made efforts to foster international entente, to educate DPs and to entertain them. In addition to encouraging DPs into work, they helped them set up theatres, sports clubs, drama and musical activities. In doing so, they attempted to show that they were providing more than the PDR administrators. They reinterpreted UNRRA's mission of 'helping DPs to help themselves' according to what they understood as being in DP's best interests, albeit with limited success.

Conclusion

The majority of French UNRRA relief workers were neither fully committed to liberal internationalism nor to modern welfare techniques. They

²¹⁸ MAE, HCRFA, PDR 3/25, Lettre de Lucien Léon, Administrateur de 4ème classe à Directeur des PDR, 26 September 1946.

²¹⁹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0438-0007-17, Princ. Welfare Officer Travis, Welfare Services from 25 April - 1 November 1946, UNRRA Team 582, p. 9.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

had never heard of Freud, they were not experts, nor were they members of an *epistemic* community, 'with a shared set of normative and principled beliefs.'²²¹ Upon entering Germany, the majority of them had neither clear ideas about the organization's principles nor about its objectives and ideals. Few shared the belief too apparent among American's relief workers that wearing the organization's uniform entailed a special vocation and a 'sacred flame.' Furthermore, unlike the French *Missions Vaticanes* for instance, UNRRA teams were not confessional.²²² French UNRRA recruits did not seem to be driven by religious aspirations. That said, the absence of religion from UNRRA's largely secular narrative can be questioned. First, recent studies of avowedly-secular contemporary NGOs, such as *Médecins sans Frontières*, have proved that religious beliefs strongly motivated many volunteers even though these individuals were rarely explicit about their faith or spiritual needs.²²³ Furthermore, as will be explained in the next chapter, most UNRRA relief workers deemed religion to be an asset in DPs' rehabilitation's process.²²⁴

French UNRRA workers formed a heterogeneous and, to some extent, divided group. Some had been active resisters, while others had compromised themselves with the Vichy regime and the Nazi occupiers. Tensions existed between these ex-resisters and those who were derisively labelled the *Parisian soldiers*, between snobbish and wealthy daughters of good families and *democratic* relief workers, between trained social workers and inexperienced young recruits, between *despotic* directors and empathetic nurses. Many of those who had participated in the fight against the Nazis regarded their work with DPs as a continuation of their wartime struggle. By contrast, for some of those who had missed out on resistance glory, enrolment with UNRRA offered a way to compensate for past inaction. For some UNRRA recruits, particularly men, wearing the UN uniform seems to have been accompanied by a distinctive inferiority complex relative to fully-fledged military personnel. Far from sharing the ideals and principles of UNRRA planners, they were mainly concerned with questions of prestige, with official recognition of their status as occupation officials, and with the material entitlements they felt should come with it, itself part of a wider crisis of national identity in immediate post-war France.

²²¹ Peter Haas 'Introduction: Epistemic community and International Policy Coordination' *International Organization*, Vol. 46, No.1, (1992), pp. 1-35; Daniel Laqua 'Projecting Nationhood? The Nation in Transnational Intellectual Cooperation during the Interwar Years', p. 10.

²²² On the *Missions vaticanes* see Jean Colson/Charles Klein *Jean Rodhain, prêtre. D'une enfance timide aux audaces de la Charité, 1900-1946* (Paris: SOS, 1981), pp. 265-270.

²²³ Davis and Taithe 'From the Purse and the Heart', p. 421.

²²⁴ Salvatici 'Help the people to help themselves', p. 438.

The lack of a harmonized selection process, when added to the insufficiency of training failed to prepare French recruits for the challenges they confronted in the field. While some learned quickly on the spot, others became rapidly disillusioned with the Administration or, worse, got involved in black-market activities, thefts or what was perceived at the time as immoral sexual behaviour. Disciplining this workforce was a serious matter for French UNRRA headquarters. But imposing norms of personal and professional morality proved difficult. In part this was circumstantial. UNRRA offered extremely high wages (although with a pronounced gender bias towards men) to people who had just experienced four years of hardship and privation. Luxury goods were accessible at very low price on the black-market. In part it was contingent on UNRRA's temporary mandate.

Without doubt, UNRRA authorities lacked the time or the incentives necessary to turn this heterogeneous group into professional social workers. The fact that UNRRA's general instructions were poorly adapted to the situation in the zone, and sometimes not wholly relayed to fieldworkers in the first place, further contributed to uneven performance. Yet there were cases of successful adaptation, some fieldworkers progressively adopting the professional language of the administration and embracing, albeit sometimes idiosyncratically, the humanitarian shift from mere provision of material relief to deeper 'psychological rehabilitation.' They strove to defend their capacity as social workers and to demonstrate that they were providing a better service than the PDR. In doing so, they helped implant the tenets of UNRRA's humanitarian revolution within the French zone. This is what the next chapter investigates.

Chapter Five: By the DPs, for the DPs?

UNRRA's welfare work in the French zone

In June 1945, American UNRRA Officer Bryce Ryan was stationed in Landstuhl, a small town under American occupation, which was soon to be transferred to French occupation authorities. There, the American military authorities, working in combination with the DP themselves had the local DP camp fully under control.¹ So much so that Bryce Ryan and his co-workers were becoming bored:

Surely on a continent said to have something like fifteen million displaced persons, there are places where an UNRRA team can be utilized. [...] In our present location, where we have been for more than two months, it would be mild to say that we are under-employed. With the exception of the welfare officer, we are simply excess baggage [...] After two months of watchful waiting in Washington, nearly four months of the same in London, even a most patient man must near vomit to have the same conditions thrust upon him in the field. Do you think that it is too much to ask for an assignment in a place that is not so constantly reminding us of our high degree of dispensability?²

When Ryan signed up for relief work, he did not imagine being so comfortable or so inactive. 'We have excellent food, superb beds, plenty of service, and very fine friends among the Poles and the military. And I personally at least am paid a good salary. But quite a number of us didn't come to Europe with the idea of being the United Nations first pensioners.'³ Profoundly disappointed, Ryan begged UNRRA authorities to reassign him: 'Give me, and I hope my team, an assignment or tell me plainly that UNRRA has no place for me, so it won't be necessary to waste more of my time and UNRRA's money.'⁴

Bryce Ryan's account vividly illustrates the discrepancy between relief workers' expectations and the situation that they confronted in the field. Upon arrival in Germany, many UNRRA teams encountered suspicion and hostility. The majority of military officers and DPs knew little about UNRRA team workers, nor did they hold them in high esteem.⁵ They viewed UNRRA entirely as a supply and transport agency.⁶ Establishing good relationships with the military authorities and obtaining supplies often demanded far more political

¹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0436-0059-02, Notes on discussion with Miss Heise (Team N.17) and Mr. Wiley (Team 2), 6 June 1945.

² UNA, UNRRA, S-0436-0059-08, report from Bryce Ryan, Director Team 17 to Guy Drake-Brockman, Landstuhl, 17 June 1945.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Pamela Ballinger 'Impossible Returns, Enduring Legacies: Recent Historiography of Displacement and the Reconstruction of Europe after World War II' *Contemporary European History*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (2013), pp. 127 - 138, p. 128.

⁶ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0001-02, G. Drake-Brockman, Suggested basis for an agreement for UNRRA operations in the French zone, 18 September 1945.

acumen than traditional social work. As Bryce Ryan noted, '[t]he plain fact is that we have been confronted with the job of working out individually in the field a system of relationships with the army which London and Washington planners could never even agree upon on paper.'⁷ While some military commanders accorded UNRRA teams 'fairly liberal scope' to operate, others curtailed their activities or simply ignored them.⁸ Moreover, UNRRA's dependence on the military for basic food supplies, shelter, and transport often hampered relief workers' efforts. As UNRRA Director Bastiaenen observed, 'where we expected to have considerable supplies to cover all DPs' necessities, we had to be content with only providing few essential services and making vague promises for all the rest.'⁹

Bryan's frustrating experience was not atypical.¹⁰ In June 1945, UNRRA Field Supervisor Drake-Brockman expressed his anxiety over the emergence of a 'spirit of disgruntlement' in the field.¹¹ Often isolated, many UNRRA workers felt neglected and had the 'unfortunate impression' 'that nobody [was] interested in their work.'¹² In September, Wangen's UNRRA Director commented that 'our chief problem at the moment seems to be WAITING. Waiting is worse than working; but for the sake of the DPs we must try to be patient.'¹³ Three months later, UNRRA Team Director Schurmans threatened to resign if an agreement between French and UNRRA authorities was not signed. According to him, UNRRA was a *vaste organisation d'escroquerie*.¹⁴ While frustration mounted among UNRRA staff, French military commanders and occupation officials had criticisms of their own. UNRRA was accused of failing to get to grips with urgent DP relief tasks for which, as we saw in chapter one, the service PDR was judged better equipped.

These reciprocal disappointments rose in inverse proportion to the original hopes that UNRRA had inspired. UNRRA planners were determined to avoid the errors of 1919. The organization's Director-General Herbert Lehman declared, '[w]e have been called upon twice within a span of a lifetime to devise a peace in which all men can live in freedom from fear and from want. We failed once. We dare not fail again.'¹⁵ The creation of UNRRA certainly ignited hopes

⁷ UNA, UNRRA, S-0436-0059-08, report from Bryce Ryan, Director Team 17 to Guy Drake-Brockman, Landstuhl, 17 June 1945.

⁸ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0010-09, Confidential, Field Report No.2, District Director, 12 June 1945.

⁹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0010-09, Bastiaenen, Historique du centre DP de Fribourg, vingt-deux mois au service de l'UNRRA en Zone française d'occupation, 1 June 1947, p.1.

¹⁰ UNA, UNRRA, S-0436-0059-01, J. Westerman, Field Report Number 1, Team 26 and 29 Niederlahnstein, 25 June 1945.

¹¹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0010-09, Confidential, Field Report No.2, District Director, 12 June 1945.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0086-02, A. Aley, Weekly report No. 2, week ending 8 September 1945.

¹⁴ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0029-06, Lettre de Thomasset à Moreland, Ref. 1565/Dir./AC, 25 December 1945.

¹⁵ Quoted in Donald Howard 'UNRRA: A new venture in international relief and welfare services', *The Social Service Review*, Vol 18, No. 1 (1944), pp 1-11, p. 11.

that better coordination and what Veteran Quaker relief worker Francesca Wilson famously dubbed 'planning-mindedness' would facilitate an orderly transition from war to peace, in contrast to what had occurred in 1918.¹⁶ In practice, however, the Administration failed either to send consistent administrative orders or to establish effective communications with its field workers.¹⁷ Quarrels within these higher levels of the administrative hierarchy produced confusion in the field.¹⁸ As a result of these disagreements, relief operations were frequently marked by improvisation and inefficiency.

Over the last two decades, historians have highlighted the discrepancy between UNRRA's aspirations to transform refugee humanitarianism and its inability to exercise effective control over its field operations.¹⁹ They have also demonstrated that UNRRA's response to the DP crisis was less coherent than earlier studies suggested. In the field, there was little agreement about the meaning of 'relief', 'rehabilitation' or 'welfare.'²⁰ UNRRA's new methods of refugee management, promoted by New-Deal influenced relief workers, were vigorously contested by members of older charitable and religious organizations and by UNRRA's own continental recruits.²¹ Yet, for all its shortcomings, historians tend to agree that UNRRA transformed the methods and ideology of refugee humanitarianism by placing *rehabilitation* at the forefront of its work.²² UNRRA wanted the DPs to acquire habits of self-reliance after their prolonged exposure to Nazi brutality. Although the Administration was never entirely successful in its rehabilitation programmes, it did promote new forms of expert knowledge about displaced persons. As a result, UNRRA represents a foundational moment in the development of modern techniques of refugee management.²³

Building on this already dense scholarship on UNRRA and DPs in post-war Germany, this chapter explores two phenomena: the extent to which these

¹⁶ Ben Shepard 'Becoming Planning Minded': The Theory and Practice of Relief 1940-1945' *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 43, No.3 (2008), pp. 405-419.

¹⁷ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0010-09, Bastienen, Historique du centre DP de Fribourg, 1 June 1947, p.1.

¹⁸ Ben Shepard *The Long Road Home. The Aftermath of the Second World War* (London: Bodley Head, 2010), pp. 41-59.

¹⁹ Susan Armstrong-Reid and David Murray *Armies of peace: Canada and the UNRRA years* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008); Shepard *The Long Road Home*.

²⁰ Silvia Salvatici 'Help the People to Help Themselves': UNRRA Relief workers and European Displaced Persons', *Journal of Refugee Studies*, Vol. 25, No. 3 (2012), pp. 452-473, p. 436; Tara Zahra 'Lost Children: Displacement, Family, and Nation in Postwar Europe', *Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 81, No. 1 (2009), pp. 45-86; 'The psychological Marshall Plan': Displacement, Gender and Human Rights after World War II', *Central European History*, Vol. 44, No. 1 (2011), pp. 37-62; 'A Human Treasure': Europe's Displaced Children Between Nationalism and Internationalism', *Past and Present*, Vol. 210, Supplement 6 (2011), pp. 332-350; *The Lost Children: Reconstructing Europe's Families after World War II*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011).

²¹ Jessica Reinisch 'Introduction: Relief in the Aftermath of War', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 43, No. 3 (2008), pp. 371-404, p. 385; Jennifer Carson 'The Friends Relief Service – Faith into Action. Humanitarian Assistance to Displaced Persons Camps in Germany, 1945-1948', PhD in History, The University of Manchester, 2009; 'The Quaker Internationalist Tradition in Displaced Persons Camps, 1945-1948', Peter Gatrell and Nick Baron (eds) *Warlands. Population Resettlement and State reconstruction in the Soviet-East European Borderlands, 1945-1950* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 67-86.

²² Daniel Cohen *In war's wake: Europe's Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 58-78.

²³ *Ibid*, p. 78; Also see Liisa Malkki 'Refugees and Exile: from 'Refugee Studies' to the National Order of Things', *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol. 24 (1995), pp. 495-523.

new 'methods' penetrated the French zone and the ways in which the organization's local staff interpreted UNRRA's *rehabilitation* mandate. To do so, it first examines UNRRA's aspirations to transform international relief and provide more than 'bread and butter' relief before considering the obstacles confronted. Particular attention is given to UNRRA relief workers' efforts to 'rehabilitate' and entertain DPs. As explained in the previous chapter, the majority of UNRRA relief workers were French, untrained in 'modern techniques' of welfare. While British and American relief workers approached the DP problem armed with the psychoanalytic theories and practices of social work prevalent in the USA and the UK at mid-century, the overwhelming majority of French relief workers embraced their own normative standards and were subject to quite different influences.²⁴ In the context of the escalating conflict with the PDR service, UNRRA officials progressively asserted their unique humanitarian expertise. They justified their presence in the zone on the grounds that they were providing welfare activities and expanding the boundaries of refugee welfare. Their motto was to encourage activities 'by the DPs, for the DPs.'²⁵ While PDR agents were, according to UNRRA officials, solely interested in disciplining and repatriating DPs, UNRRA authorities encouraged the development of theatrical shows and dance events; they provided welfare services to DPs with special needs; and they represented both recreation and entertainment as crucial elements of DPs' rehabilitative processes.

This chapter nevertheless tempers the assessment – argued most forcefully by its officials – that UNRRA contributed to the democratization and modernization of relief work in the French zone. Instead, it demonstrates the absence of clarity or consensus about what 'rehabilitation' actually entailed. Thus, while many UNRRA relief workers encouraged the development of recreation and entertainment activities, others condemned them; while some UNRRA Directors allowed DPs to elect their own representatives, others opposed such measures. This chapter argues, therefore, that UNRRA's mission was only partially fulfilled in the zone, where, in practice, old-style paternalism and newer methods of relief work co-existed uneasily.

We therefore need to dwell on the complicated process of confrontation, imitation and compromise that defined relations between French, British and American relief workers. Doing so demonstrates how specific contextual, cultural and ideological factors drove the emergence of alternative ways of

²⁴ Zahra *Lost children*, p. 19.

²⁵ UNA, UNRRA, S-0438-0009-05, Première réunion des Welfare Officers du District Nord les 20 et 21 novembre 1945.

arranging interim provision and ‘rehabilitating’ DPs in the French occupation zone (a point more fully explained in the next chapter). The complex and uneven picture of UNRRA’s activities that emerges in this chapter suggests that theories and practices of ‘new humanitarianism’ launched by the United Nations were less coherent, innovative and ‘modern’ than UNRRA planners suggested. Ambiguity was everywhere. To give one example, UNRRA experts promoted the secularization and internationalization of relief work while, at the same time, fostering the development of religious and nationalist activities proclaiming their ‘therapeutic effects.’

Responding to chaos

Throughout its brief five-year existence UNRRA faced criticism from across the globe. International lawyers, political scientists, social policy experts and politicians scrutinized and debated every aspect of its operations. They lamented the chaos that was engulfing the UNRRA China programme.²⁶ They raised concerns about UNRRA’s relief programmes in Eastern Europe, maintaining that UNRRA supplies were ‘going to the wrong places and were used for the wrong purposes.’²⁷ Yet, according to UNRRA official historian George Woodbridge, no operation caused so much controversy as the DP operation.²⁸ One of the most cogent arguments against UNRRA was that it neither fed and clothed, nor housed, repatriated and resettled the DPs. Military commanders argued that they could have run DP camps better. Army men wondered why they had been replaced by more numerous and highly paid international civil servants and pondered whether this represented a wise use of aid funding.²⁹

According to Woodbridge, UNRRA’s *raison d’être* lay in the field of ‘human rehabilitation.’ Certainly, military commanders could run DP camps efficiently, but – and this was the crucial point - they could not ‘rehabilitate’ DPs:

UNRRA, however, while anxious for efficiency, also wanted to rehabilitate the individuals in the camps; it wanted to achieve the objective so often and so sincerely expressed by its first Director General – to help people to help themselves; it did not want to run the camps, it wanted the residents

²⁶ Rana Mitter ‘Imperialism, Transnationalism and the Reconstruction of Post-war China: UNRRA in China, 1944-1947’, *Past and Present*, Supplement 8 (2013), pp. 51-69.

²⁷ Jessica Reinisch ‘We shall rebuild anew a powerful Nation’: UNRRA, Internationalism and National Reconstruction in Poland’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 43, No.3 (2008), pp. 451-476, p. 460.

²⁸ Georges Woodbridge *UNRRA: the history of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration* (New York: Colombia University Press, 1950), Vol 2, p. 470.

²⁹ *Ibid*, p. 522.

to run them. Any mother who has tried knows that, when she first teaches her children how to perform simple household tasks (bed-making, dishwashing, cleaning), it requires far more time to teach the children to do such work and to supervise their doing it than to do the work herself. That was precisely the situation that confronted the Administration.³⁰

Such words reflected a widespread belief that the war had damaged human minds as surely as it had destroyed Germany's industrial infrastructure.³¹ According to Woodbridge, UNRRA relief workers contributed to this human rehabilitation by fostering camp self-government, supervising educational and vocational training, developing welfare and recreational activities and providing specialized childcare.³²

Malcolm Proudfoot, an army officer in charge of refugee relief operations and the author of a detailed study on the topic published in 1957, concurred. UNRRA's distinctive contribution to the DPs lay in helping them to 'restore a normal life', preparing them to 'make a new start as happy, well-adjusted human beings.'³³ In the 1950s, UNRRA's emphasis on 'rehabilitation' and on the democratization of camp organization ('by the DPs, for the DPs') was presented as one of the distinctive features of new-style humanitarianism. Admittedly, the use of large refugee camps to assuage post-war chaos was not a novelty. But relief workers' aspiration to 'regenerate' and 'rehabilitate' DPs on such a large scale was unprecedented.³⁴ Woodbridge and Proudfoot's positive assessments raise several questions. Was 'rehabilitation' an equal priority for all UNRRA field workers? What did 'rehabilitation' mean to them? And was UNRRA's rehabilitation programme as successful as these two experts suggest?

Since the 1950s publication of Woodbridge and Proudfoot's books historical research has deepened our understanding of UNRRA's activities in the field of 'rehabilitation.' First, historians have shown that UNRRA's practices were less innovative than the two authors indicated.³⁵ During the 1920s, for instance, the League of Nations advocated investment in Greece to assist the integration of refugees from Turkey. The League's programmes included a technocratic agenda of 'rehabilitation' meant to transform refugees into fully-fledged members of society once they had been helped to get over the trauma of displacement.³⁶ Second, scholars have demonstrated that there was little

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Zahra 'The Psychological Marshall Plan', p. 44.

³² Woodbridge *UNRRA*, Vol. 2, p. 525.

³³ Malcolm Proudfoot *European Refugees, 1939-1952*. (London: Faber and Faber, 1957), p. 302.

³⁴ Daniel Cohen 'Un espace domestique d'après-guerre: les camps de personnes déplacées dans l'Allemagne occupée' in Bruno Cabanes and Guillaume Piketty (eds) *Retour à l'intime au sortir de la guerre* (Paris: Tallandier, 2009), pp. 117-131, p. 126.

³⁵ Keith David Watenpaugh 'The League of Nations' Rescue of Armenian Genocide Survivors and the Making of Modern Humanitarianism, 1920-1927' *American Historical review*, Vol. 115, No.5, (2010), pp. 1315-39, p. 1319.

³⁶ Peter Gatrell *The Making of the Modern Refugee* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 201.

agreement within the organisation as to what UNRRA's three buzzwords: 'relief', 'rehabilitation' and 'welfare' actually meant.³⁷ George Woodbridge admitted himself that the term 'rehabilitation' was never precisely defined.³⁸ As a result, DP camps became 'laboratories' in which expert knowledge was acquired, debated and contested.

Dean Acheson, who was present at UNRRA's creation, recalled that the word 'rehabilitation' was hastily added to the body's title without being clearly defined.³⁹ 'Rehabilitation' was sometimes used to refer to entire nations, sometimes to the psychological reconstruction of the individual. According to Woodbridge, several attempts were made to define the term. Experts concurred that 'it was to be coterminous with relief' and that it 'was to be limited to assistance to agricultural production, to those industries which produced 'relief goods' and to the restoration of essential public utilities'.⁴⁰ In other words, at the macro level, rehabilitation occupied the middle-ground between short-term 'relief' and long-term 'reconstruction'.⁴¹ As far as DPs were concerned, the term was often associated with re-educating and improving DPs' psychological well-being.⁴² It was typically equated with returning DPs to normality. But what constituted 'normal life'? For French UNRRA nurse Jacqueline Lesdos rehabilitating meant reconstructing both 'nations' and 'individuals.' It meant 'healing bodies and spirits', restoring DPs' dignity and their faith in life (*foi dans la vie retrouvée*).⁴³ For many American social workers, it meant reinstating pre-war social norms that they believed DPs had forgotten during the war.⁴⁴ Rehabilitation often implied that DPs were not behaving completely normally and were suffering from various *pathologies* resulting from wartime and displacement trauma.⁴⁵ If the definition of 'rehabilitation' remained vague, the practical meaning ascribed to it changed over time. In the first weeks following the Liberation, UNRRA's rehabilitation efforts had three aspects: hygiene, housing and discipline.⁴⁶ Once the immediate challenges of cleaning, housing

³⁷ Salvatici 'Help the people to help themselves', p. 436.

³⁸ Woodbridge UNRRA, Vol.2, p. 535.

³⁹ David Ekbladh *The Great American Mission: Modernization and the Construction of an American World Order* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), p. 87.

⁴⁰ Woodbridge UNRRA, Vol.2, p. 535.

⁴¹ *Helping the People to Help Themselves: The Story of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration* (London: Stationary office, 1944), pp. 8-9 ; Jessica Reinisch 'Auntie UNRRA' at the Crossroads' *Past and Present*, supplement 8 (2013), pp. 70-97, p.70.

⁴² Wiener Library [WL], HA5-4/3, Welfare Division, *Report on Psychological Problems of Displaced Persons*, 1 June 1945, p. 1-41, p. 1.

⁴³ AN, 72/AJ/1968, Jacqueline Lesdos *memoires*, p. 3.

⁴⁴ Laura Megan Greaves "Concerned not only with relief": UNRRA's work rehabilitating the Displaced Persons in the American zone of occupation in Germany, 1945-1947', University of Waterloo, Canada, 2013, p. 284.

⁴⁵ UNA, UNRRA, S-0438-0009-05, Conference sur l'éducation, Baden-Baden, 25-26 January 1946, pp. 1-18, p. 2.

⁴⁶ Greaves "Concerned not only with relief", p. 167.

and disciplining DPs had been met, UNRRA relief workers focused on developing activities designed to prevent idleness.

A 'North and South' divide: UNRRA teams under US and French control

UNRRA was established later in the French zone than in the British and American zones.⁴⁷ In August 1945, there were fewer than a hundred UNRRA relief workers in the zone.⁴⁸ Prior to the creation of the French UNRRA Headquarters in October 1945, most UNRRA teams were located in the Northern part of the zone (Rhineland-Palatinate; Saar), regions liberated by the US army. The first teams arrived there in April 1945 and were situated in Landstuhl, Lebach, Kaiserslautern, Homburg, Pirmasens, Neustadt, Pfaffendorf, Baumholder and Trier.⁴⁹ Only four UNRRA teams (Freiburg, Biberach, Wangen and Rottweil) operated in the South, the territory of Württemberg being controlled by the First French Army.⁵⁰

Other factors contributed to this sharp North-South divide in the French zone: first, UNRRA teams were simply more numerous in the North where predominantly Anglophone personnel

were more readily available; second, the

management of DPs was contingent on the availability of suitable camps. In the Southern territory under French control, DPs were largely confined to smaller camps, even to private accommodation.⁵¹ How exactly were DPs assigned to particular camps in the North and South? And how were the daily routines within these DP camps organized?

Upon arrival in the field, relief workers encountered markedly contrasting

12th ARMY GROUP UNRRA TEAMS - 15TH ARMY 33RD CORPS June 22, 1945					
Team No.	Name of Director	Nationality	Male	Female	Location
1	Van den Bogaert	^ Dutch	7	1	Neustadt
2	Taylor	^ British	5	2	Kaiserslautern
14	Thomas	^ British			Wittlich
15	XXXX Koughan	^ USA			Saarbrücken
17	Ryan	^ USA	4	XXX 3	Landstuhl
18	Ballantyne	^ British	5	1	Baumholder
19	Edwards	^ British	5	1	Trier (Kemmel)
20	Faucette	^ USA	4	2	Pfaffendorf
30	Hicks	^ British	4	2	Pfaffendorf
32	Harrison	^ British	5	2	Trier (Feyen)
37	Rosenthal	^ USA	4		Zweibrücken
48	Roquet	^ French	5	1	Homburg
61	Nevins	^ British	4	2	Pirmasens
178	Truchet	^ French	6	2	Baumholder

Fig. 16. UNRRA Teams under American Control, 22 June 1945.

UNA, UNRRA, S-0425-0007-07, 12th Army Group, UNRRA Teams, 22 June 1945.

⁴⁷ UNA, UNRRA, S-0432-0005-04, Report, Employment Branch [April 1946 ?].

⁴⁸ UNA, UNRRA, S-0425-0007-04, Confidential report, UNRRA II French corps area, Situation report August 8th 1945, p. 4.

⁴⁹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0436-0059-02, Field Report No. 2, District Director UNRRA, XXIII Corps Area, 12 June 1945; S-0436-0059-08, Bryce Ryan, Director Team 17 to Mr. Guy Drake-Brockman, UNRRA Team 17, 17 June 1945.

⁵⁰ UNA, UNRRA, S-0425-0007-09, List of teams in the First French area, Field Supervisor : Mr. Moreland, 5 August 1945.

⁵¹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0425-0007-07, 12th Army Group, UNRRA Teams - 15th Army, 22 June 1945; S-0425-0007-09, List of teams in the First French area, Field Supervisor : Mr. Moreland, 5 August 1945.

situations. To be sure, the French zone had suffered considerably less damage than the others, particularly the Soviet and British zones.⁵² But life in what would become the French zone was not without its difficulties. Money and staff were short, transports were disrupted, communications with UNRRA headquarters were difficult and relations with the Army could be strenuous. Cleaning and dusting DP camps with DDT powder, repairing camp facilities and registering DPs were among the most pressing issues.⁵³ In some areas, DP camps were entirely controlled by the military and UNRRA activities were relegated to registration and welfare.⁵⁴ At Baumholder, for instance, the UNRRA Director proudly reported the team's record of 952 registrations in one day.⁵⁵ Elsewhere, UNRRA teams were charged with running transit camps, distributing supplies, preparing repatriation and disciplining DPs.⁵⁶ Establishing order was particularly important: DP camps were regarded by many military commanders as potential sources of social and political unrest quite apart from being seen as breeding grounds for infectious diseases.⁵⁷

The focus on reducing the threat of epidemics and facilitating repatriation often meant that there was little room for concerns of individual welfare in the first weeks following the Liberation.⁵⁸ Shortages of housing, food and drugs, in combination with DPs' weakened immune systems, presented a scenario in which it was believed that epidemics would flourish if left unchecked. Welfare workers were always concerned about how the DPs took care of themselves and their living spaces. Instilling a sense of personal hygiene was a crucial part of the rehabilitative process. Very often, cleanliness was associated with morality and self-respect; lack of cleanliness was, on the contrary, regarded as a sign of deviancy.⁵⁹ Neustadt camp was in a poor condition when the UNRRA team deployed there in April 1945.⁶⁰ With the help of the DPs, the camp was efficiently dusted and cleaned and, by June, the director reported:

We were fortunate in that we had little infectious disease to contend with. The camp kept completely free from Typhus fever although the camp was overcrowded and congested. The good luck we enjoyed was I think due to several factors: good weather with abundant sunshine, the Russian liking

⁵² Jessica Reinisch *The Perils of Peace. Public Health Crisis in Occupied Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 271.

⁵³ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0010-09, H. N. Nevins, Director Team 61 to Colonel G.P.L Drake-Brockman, 9 June 1945.

⁵⁴ UNA, UNRRA, S-0436-0059-09, Confidential, Field report on team 18 UNRRA, Baumholder, 23 June 1945.

⁵⁵ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0010-09, Team No. 18, Report on Registration of DPs at Baumholder, Director H.B.S. Ballantyne, 19 June 1945.

⁵⁶ UNA, UNRRA, S-0436-0059-10, Confidential, Field report No. 2, UNRRA Team No. 19, Director Mr. G. Edwards, 9 June 1945.

⁵⁷ Lisa Haushofer 'The 'contaminating agent': UNRRA, Displaced Persons and Venereal Disease in Germany, 1945-1947', *American Journal of Public Health*, Vol. 100, No. 6 (2010), pp. 993-1003.

⁵⁸ UNRRA, S-0436-0059-07, Miss Dingle, Lebach Assembly Centre Welfare, 17 June 1945.

⁵⁹ Greaves 'Not only concern with relief', p. 183.

⁶⁰ UNA, UNRRA, S-0436-0059-03, Van den Bogaert, Field Report No. 2, Neustadt, 2 May 1945.

for clean clothes and clean bodies, and the liberal use of DDT powder.⁶¹

In Niederlahnstein, by contrast, no comparable improvements were made. Its UNRRA Field supervisor expressed his frustration over the camp's low hygiene standards:

Sanitary arrangements are entirely inadequate and no proper attention is being paid to this problem. There is no proper sanitary control or inspection and dumps of garbage, trash and dirt were discovered in front and even within the living quarters. In some cases the conditions were considered intolerable.⁶²

Admittedly, poor sanitation did not necessarily imply that DPs' rejected the values and hygiene standards imparted by UNRRA welfare workers. It might simply stem from a lack of soap, hot water and other hygiene supplies. It is, however, obvious that some DPs considered the intimate physical inspections and X-ray examinations they were forced to undergo deeply humiliating.⁶³

Like military officers, UNRRA relief workers paid particular attention to the problem of venereal disease. Many believed that DPs were more prone to contracting VD than the rest of the German population. As Lisa Haushofer demonstrates, DP women were perceived as 'contaminating agents' and became a preferred target for VD control measures.⁶⁴ UNRRA's chief medical officer in the Pirmasens camp noted, for instance, that 'the DPs have a very active sexual life which is favoured by the fact that they live in communities and gather frequently, by the lack of occupation, the consumption of alcohol, the lack of hygiene education and of any knowledge of the consequences of these kind of diseases [...], factors which facilitate their spread.'⁶⁵ In some camps, compulsory examination of all DP women took place and scenes of public humiliation occurred when a camp nurse announced positive results in the presence of large numbers of inmates.⁶⁶ These processes reveal the persistence of prejudices against DPs, the assumption of DPs' *contamination* leading to various coercive and humiliating measures, such as tighter restrictions on freedom of movement. This, in turn, fostered tensions between UNRRA relief workers and DPs.

These tensions were often exacerbated by language difficulties. The great majority of UNRRA relief workers neither spoke DPs' languages, nor German.

⁶¹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0436-0059-03, Van den Bogaert, Field Report No. 5, Neustadt, 2 July 1945.

⁶² UNA, UNRRA, S-0436-0059-01, Field Supervisor report, team 26-team 29, Neiderlahnstein, 25 June 1945.

⁶³ See chapter Seven. Also see Gatrell *The Making of the Modern Refugee*, p. 99.

⁶⁴ Haushofer 'The contaminating agent.'

⁶⁵ Rapport du médecin chef du team 575 de Pirmasens, 11 February 1946, quoted in Haushofer 'The 'contaminating agent'', pp. 993-1003.

⁶⁶ This occurred for instance in the Kaiserslautern camp. Haushofer 'The 'contaminating agent.'

As Bryce Ryan noted, UNRRA's Administration should have paid greater attention to language skills. He, for instance, operated in a Polish DP camp in which no team member spoke Polish.⁶⁷ Even worse, some team members could not even communicate amongst themselves. The first teams deployed in the French zone were set up in the UK, giving their members an opportunity to get to know one another before they entered the field. They were, however, soon joined by other, hastily-formed teams, 'thrown together' at the last minute at the Granville training centre. These new teams lacked homogeneity.⁶⁸ Team 15, located in the Saar, was such disparate team. Its doctor was Polish, while its nurse was French. Unsurprisingly, the problem of language was *real*.⁶⁹ Its English welfare officer recalled:

This did not work out very well – in the first place we could not get an interpreter, and I had to do my best, in my limited German, to help. By the time he had asked, in French, what was the matter, and I had repeated it in German, and the nurse had repeated it in Russian, and a reply had come back by the same route, much time had elapsed, and the result was of questionable value.⁷⁰

Furthermore, as Ryan observes, UNRRA relief workers should have been given basic information about DPs' political attitudes and history. 'In this camp an understanding of the relationships between 'True Poles' and Ukrainian Poles would have been most helpful – and the relations of each to Russia.'⁷¹ In other words, the aspiration to transform international humanitarianism into a modern profession clashed in the field with basic problems of communication and ignorance about DPs' history, their wartime experiences and their political sensitivities.

Alongside the promotion of personal cleanliness, disciplining DPs was another urgent task. Its importance was amplified because German and Allied military officers alike tended to see DPs as natural 'criminals' and delinquents. As Jacobmeyer and Rinke have demonstrated, public perceptions of DPs were particularly negative among the German population.⁷² Following well-established anti-Semitic and racist stereotypes, Germans associated DPs with rampant criminality.⁷³ These perceptions bore little resemblance with reality. Admittedly, crimes and theft were committed in the French zone, as elsewhere.

⁶⁷ UNA, UNRRA, S-0436-0059-08, General Comments and Suggestions on Operations, UNRRA Team 17, Polish Caserne, 6 May 1945.

⁶⁸ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0010-09, Confidential, Field Report No.2, District Director, 12 June 1945.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ UNA, UNRRA, S-1021-0085-02, Report signed by Miss Roberts, 2. [undated]

⁷¹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0436-0059-08, General Comments and Suggestions on Operations, UNRRA Team 17, Polish Caserne, 6 May 1945.

⁷² Andreas Rinke observes that the criminality rate was lower in the French zone than in the other Western zones. He speculates that this stemmed from France's 'harshness' and the strict attitude of French occupation officials. *Le Grand retour - Die französische Displaced Person-Politik (1944-1951)* (Krankfurt: Peter Lang, 2002), p. 298.

⁷³ Gatrell *The Making of the Modern Refugee*, pp. 103-104.

In Lebach, for instance, the UNRRA team director reported that ‘the Russian portion of the camp contains a bad element which has access to a number of arms and has been responsible for a number of murders and other unsavoury incidents.’⁷⁴ Stocks of food, cigarettes, medical materials and drugs were being looted. Relief workers also complained about alcohol abuse amongst Russian DPs.⁷⁵ Yet, the great majority of DPs were neither as ‘apathetic’ nor as promiscuous as UNRRA experts predicted. They were, in many ways, better organized, more demanding and more independent than anticipated. Relief workers’ first impressions often remarked on how unexpectedly resourceful DPs actually were. Far from being ‘children’ unable to organize themselves, as Woodbridge portrayed them, DPs frequently proved themselves able to manage their everyday lives and rebuild their communities.

DPs’ resourcefulness

As explained in the previous chapter, the prevailing view among UNRRA experts constructed an image of DPs as broken individuals suffering from various pathologies of displacement. According to the June 1945 report on the *Psychological Problems of Displaced Persons*, DPs could be expected to be troublesome, defiant, apathetic and backward. The authors of this report warned that ‘however great the physical devastation caused by German policy, the moral and psychological disturbance is probably greater.’⁷⁶

If we define ‘morale’, for our present purpose, as ‘the possession of a sense of ‘belonging’, of an agreed sense of purpose and of satisfaction over achieving one’s purpose’, then we can see that forced workers are a group in which morale, in this sense, is low. In these circumstances, [...] various inevitable human reactions tend to occur. Alcoholism, delinquency and promiscuity, for example, are common; for they are usually the most easily available ways of mitigating the painful emotional tension of low morale situations, the sense of isolation from a friendly community, and the sense of futility of these circumstances [...].⁷⁷

For these specialists, ‘alcohol thirst’ and ‘sexual desire’ were natural consequences of DPs’ wartime traumas. ‘[It] is as foolish to consider alcoholism as a specific form of ‘thirst’ as it is to consider promiscuity as a specific form of ‘sexual’ interest. In both cases the ‘psychological need’ is very much secondary to the need to deal with what is felt to be an intolerable mental pain.’⁷⁸ Over

⁷⁴ UNRRA, S-0436-0059-02, Field Report No.1, Lebach, Team 15 [undated].

⁷⁵ UNA, UNRRA, S-0436-0059-04, C.J. Taylor and John N. Wiley, Welfare report, Kaiserslautern, 14 May 1945.

⁷⁶ WL, HA5-4/3, Welfare Division, *Report on Psychological Problems of Displaced Persons*, 1 June 1945, p. 1-41, p. 14.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

time these statements about DPs' amorality and disruptive behaviour gave way to a more durable concept of helplessness and apathy, a 'psychosis which expresses itself in reluctance to face the responsibilities of a normal community life.'⁷⁹

In recent years, many scholars have debunked this myth of 'DP apathy.'⁸⁰ Countering contemporary claims about DPs' various *illnesses*, they have highlighted DPs' ability to reconstruct their lives, to organize themselves and rebuild a sense of community. In the French zone, as elsewhere, DPs rapidly proved able to run their own camps.⁸¹ In Pirmasens, for instance, British UNRRA Officer Nevins, noted '[t]he Poles and especially the Yugoslavs are exceedingly well organized and the Centre taken as a whole has developed into a typical village community in which the various elements, to all outward appearances at any rate, live together amicably enough.'⁸² According to him, '[o]nce free from Nazi domination, their immediate and, one might say, innate reaction was to rebuild [...] their communal life just as their forefathers had done before them throughout the troubled centuries of their national history.'⁸³ Kaiserslautern's UNRRA welfare officer concurred, noting that Russians' attitudes could be summarized by the statement of one of their leaders: 'Give us the necessary materials and we will do the rest.'⁸⁴

The fact remained that relief workers had mixed feelings about DPs' organizational capacities. In part, the ability to delegate tasks to DPs' leaders made relief work easier.⁸⁵ Conversely, well-organized DPs tended to be more demanding than UNRRA relief workers had imagined.⁸⁶ DPs mainly turned to UNRRA for practical assistance and material support. For British UNRRA Director Nevins, welfare problems were 'in almost all cases' first and foremost 'either legal or marital.' 'Such problems can only be dealt with by a person having a certain amount of legal training and a very complete knowledge of the

⁷⁹ UNHCR *Final Report on the Ford Foundation Program for Refugees Primarily in Europe* (Geneva: UNHCR, 1958), p. 31. Quoted in Gatrell *The Making of the Modern Refugee*, p. 104.

⁸⁰ On Jewish DPs' resourcefulness see Zeev Mankowitz *Life between Memory and Hope: the Survivors of the Holocaust in Occupied Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), Atina Grossmann *Jews, Germans and Allies: Close Encounters in Occupied Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), Avinoam Patt *Finding Home and Homeland: Jewish Youth and Zionism in the Aftermath of the Holocaust* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2009). For a comparative study of four of the largest groups in the US zone see Anna Holian *Between National Socialism and Soviet Communism: Displaced Persons in post-war Germany* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2011).

⁸¹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0436-0059-04, C.J. Taylor and John N. Wiley, Welfare report, Kaiserslautern, 14 May 1945; Also see S-0432-0059-03, Field report N.4, Report from Van Den Bogaert, period 16 to 31 May 1945, 8 June 1945, p. 4.

⁸² UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0010-09, H.N. Nevins, Director Team 61, Preliminary Draft scheme for the organization and staffing of the Displaced Persons Centre at Pirmasens, 26 June 1945.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ UNA, UNRRA, S-0436-0059-04, Welfare Report, UNRRA Team 2, 14 May 1945.

⁸⁵ UNA, UNRRA, S-1021-0085-02, Report signed by Miss Roberts, p. 2. [undated].

⁸⁶ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0010-09, Confidential, Field Report No.2, District Director, 12 June 1945.

legislation in force in the Displaced Person's country of origin.⁸⁷ DPs demanded information about registering births and deaths, legalizing marriages and divorces, recognizing paternity and sorting out questions concerning illegitimacy.⁸⁸ Relief workers often complained that they lacked the information or legal competence necessary to respond to the various DP demands.⁸⁹

UNRRA had not anticipated the high numbers of DP marriages that took place. In many areas, DPs were in a rush and UNRRA relief workers had to get civil marriages arranged with the local *Bürgermeister*.⁹⁰ In some areas, German authorities were reluctant to register marriages performed by a DP priest, while DPs refused to have marriages performed by a German civil administrator.⁹¹ In these circumstances, UNRRA officers served as middlemen. Eliane Brault recalled in her memoirs a typical problem facing relief workers. In April 1945, an American officer came to see her:

He speaks a little French and I speak a little English. He explains to me that the zone under American control is thirty kilometres away and that he is returning to our zone two 'displaced' whom he refuses to keep. She, Lithuanian, round faced and light-coloured eyes, He, Spanish Republican. Neither of them wants to return to their homelands. America and England do not want to take them. The woman is pregnant. I think the best would be to send them to Mexico, and we are searching for the best route. Belgium is willing to grant them right of passage if they are married. Finally, we find in the camp a pastor who consents to marry this Orthodox with this Catholic. The American officer takes one of my Algerian girls as a witness along with an English officer and myself, and officiates over the wedding on German soil.⁹²

This episode, and Eliane Brault's response to it, is illustrative of the fantasies of liberation common to DPs and relief workers. Nor was it unusual: weddings were celebrated throughout Germany.⁹³ The re-creation of a family life, of a real or imagined normality after the war, was as important in DP camps as it was in other European countries.⁹⁴

⁸⁷ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0010-09, H.N. Nevins, Director Team 61, Preliminary Draft scheme for the organization and staffing of the Displaced Persons Centre at Pirmasens, 26 June 1945.

⁸⁸ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0004-12, Lettre du Comité de Secours des Apatrides déplacées auprès du Gouvernement Militaire Française à UNRRA, Quartier Général, 3 December 1945.

⁸⁹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0086-11, A. Baugnée, Report, Isny im Allgau, 30 August 1945.

⁹⁰ UNA, UNRRA, S-0438-0006-06, Welfare Officer report, July 1945.

⁹¹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0436-0059-02, Note on discussion with Miss Heise (Team No. 17) and Mr. Wiley (team No.2), 6 June 1945.

⁹² Eliane Brault *L'épopée des AFAT* (Paris: Editions Pierre Horay, 1954), p. 211.

⁹³ Mark Wyman *DPs: Europe's Displaced Persons, 1945-1951* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), p.111.

⁹⁴ On the place of the family in the reconstruction of post-war Europe Robert Moeller *Protecting Motherhood. Women and the Politics of Postwar West Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Dagmar Herzog 'Desperately Seeking Normality', Richard Bessel and Dirk Schumann (eds) *Life after death* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 161-192; Pat Thane 'Family Life and 'Normality' in Postwar British Culture' in Bessel, Schuman (ed) *Life after death*, pp. 193-210; On the importance of 'motherhood' in DP camps see Judith Tydor Baumel 'DPs, Mothers and Pioneers: Women in the She'erit Hapletah' *Jewish History*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (1997), pp 99-110; Atina Grossmann 'Trauma, memory and motherhood: Germans and Jewish Displaced Persons in Post-Nazi Germany, 1945-1949' *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte*, Vol. 38 (1998), pp. 215-239; Zahra *Lost children*.

In Lebach, for instance, on 30 April 1945 alone, seventeen couples were married. According to UNRRA welfare officer, 'there would have been more marriages but almost immediately after this date the Russians were instructed that there must be no more marriages except in special circumstances.'⁹⁵ In Kaiserslautern, similar problems arose, 'five Russian girls who wished to marry Italian men were refused permission by the Russian Liaison Officers and they were taken to Homburg to be returned to Russia against their wishes.'⁹⁶ In a very real sense, this rash of marriages, pregnancies and births symbolized an affirmation of life after years of deprivation and fears. As a young Jewish survivor wrote, people wanted to live, to taste the pleasures of youth long denied: 'Our young bodies and souls yearned to live.'⁹⁷

A Frenchified UNRRA? French and Belgian UNRRA recruits arrive

On 2 July 1945 the American-controlled Northern District was transferred to the French authorities.⁹⁸ By then the majority of French, Russian and Italian DPs had been repatriated. But solutions had to be found for Polish and Baltic DPs and camps prepared for the coming winter. This transfer of responsibility aroused great anxieties among UNRRA relief workers and DPs, who feared that standards of living would drop amidst continuing administrative chaos.⁹⁹ These fears had some foundation.¹⁰⁰ Relief workers eagerly reported the French authorities' shortcomings. On 30 July 1945 UNRRA representatives were told that all questions affecting DPs were controlled by the French Service de Rapatriement and that 'a certain General Kappelaen would shortly arrive at Baden-Baden.' Unfortunately, in practice, at least two other organizations held some responsibility for DPs, namely the General Staff in the four military districts and the military government.¹⁰¹ This left UNRRA personnel exasperated, facing what one described as 'order and counter-order, especially in the matter of supplies,' something that resulted in 'constant disappointments, friction and waste of time and effort.'¹⁰² Based in Wangen, Grace Garvey reported '[w]e are racing now against the coming of winter in this zone. The mornings and evening are cold and our DPs are suffering without coats and blankets to say nothing of paneless windows. We are facing a very desperate

⁹⁵ UNRRA, S-0436-0059-07, Lebach Assembly Centre welfare, Miss Dingle, 17 June 1945.

⁹⁶ UNRRA, S-0436-0059-04, C.J.taylor, Director, John N. Wiley, Welfare Officer, Report UNRRA Team 2, Kaiserlautern, 8 July 1945.

⁹⁷ Grossmann 'Trauma, memory and Motherhood', p. 116.

⁹⁸ UNA, UNRRA, S-0425-0007-04, Letter from R.B. Patterson to Commanding General, First French Army, 7 July 1945.

⁹⁹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0425-0007-04, Drake-Brockman, Field Report No.3, June 12 – July 12, 1945.

¹⁰⁰ UNA, UNRRA, S-0425-0007-04, Confidential report, UNRRA II French corps area, Situation report August 8th 1945, p 3.

¹⁰¹ Ibid, p 2.

¹⁰² Ibid, p 3.

situation here in regard to those people who are placed in our care.’¹⁰³ Garvey lamented the fact that the French military government had requisitioned all of their supplies. She urged the UNRRA administration to act immediately: ‘We cannot afford to wait until the long strings of red tape are slowly unfolded to possibly obtain some of these things in many weeks. We need them now.’¹⁰⁴

In October 1945, French UNRRA headquarters was at last set up in the zone. With this, UNRRA administration was reformed and expanded, British and American personnel being progressively replaced by French and Belgian staff.¹⁰⁵ In the Southern District, the deployment of UNRRA teams had been astonishingly late. In November 1945 ten UNRRA teams were deployed in the zone’s Northern District, catering to twelve DP centres and approximately 26,000 DPs. In the South, by contrast, there were only five UNRRA teams to provide for twenty-six DP centres and an estimated 52,000 DPs.¹⁰⁶

Matters did begin to change following the signature of the 18 February 1946 Franco-UNRRA Agreement.¹⁰⁷ As Roberts noted, ‘the work had developed late [t]here, and was expanding at a time when elsewhere there was contraction.’¹⁰⁸ The number of UNRRA Assembly centres

rose from fifteen in November 1945 to thirty-six by June 1946 and to seventy-eight by December.¹⁰⁹

Districts	N°	Siège	Population	Nature
N O R D	80	(CHEISENAU)	2.729	Caserne
	30	COELENCE) AUGUSTA	1.400	"
	48	(NIEDERLAHNSTEIN	2632	"
	675	KAISERSLAUTERN	-	-
	2	LANDSTUHL	4.683	"
	26	HOLMBURG	1.585	"
	15	LEBACH	3.179	Caserne & Baraques
	575	PIRMASENS	3.024	Caserne
	19	TREVES KEMMEL	309	Baraques
	61	" FEYEN	2.326	Caserne
	62	KANDEL	450	Baraques
	S U D	572	GUTACH	550
576		EMMENDINGEN	849	Camps et dispersés
306		FRIEBOURG	2.283	Dispersés
211		ROTTWEIL	2.867	Camps et dispersés
574		BALINGEN	1.321	4 Camps
309		SIBERACH	2.655	Baraques et cant.
210		WANGEN	3.314	4 Camps
589		REUTLINGEN	1.700 env.	
581	LEUT KIRSCH			
578	LINDAU			

Fig. 17. UNRRA Teams in January 1946.
UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0004-12, Tableau des teams existants, 31 January 1946.

French occupation policy and the formation of DP spaces

When UNRRA teams arrived in the Württemberg area over winter 1945 and into spring 1946 they often had to prospect villages to find DPs. As UNRRA Team Director Jean Gerbier observed ‘DPs were unaware of their rights - and their

¹⁰³ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0086-01, Grace M. Garvey, Narrative welfare report, Wangen, 9 September 1945.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ UNA, UNRRA, S-0425-0007-04, Letter from Rhatigan to Stallabrass, Neustadt, 25 August 1945.

¹⁰⁶ UNA, UNRRA, S-0438-0005-02, Letter from Mr. S.M. Chabanne to General Lenclud, 6 November 1945.

¹⁰⁷ UNA, UNRRA, S-0438-0005-02, report of welfare officer, Southern district, 8 June 1946.

¹⁰⁸ UNA, UNRRA, S-1021-0085-02, Report signed by Miss Roberts, p. 3. [undated]

¹⁰⁹ Woodbridge UNRRA, Vol 2, p. 502.

duties – nearly all of them were DPs without even knowing it.’¹¹⁰ DPs in Lindau were scattered across twenty-nine villages. There was no DP camp as such. The UNRRA team was instead installed in several town-centre buildings.



Fig. 18/19. The UNRRA Bureaux in Lindau¹¹¹

If, as Jean Gerbier observed, ‘for the last seven months UNRRA’s activities revolved around the word “camp” [elsewhere in Germany], most UNRRA teams in his region had no camps.’¹¹² Before the arrival of the UNRRA team, the majority of DPs were economically integrated into the available German space. UNRRA Team Director Pierre Durand arrived in Gutach in December 1945. He found around 500 DPs scattered in twenty villages in the surrounding area.¹¹³



¹¹⁰ UNA, UNRRA, S-1021-0085-08, Jean Gerbier, Rapport sur les activités de l’UNRRA dans le cercle de Lindau (Bavière) 30 octobre 1945 – 30 avril 1947, 8 May 1947, p 3 bis.

¹¹¹ UNA, UNRRA, S-1021-0085-08, Jean Gerbier, Rapport sur les activités de l’UNRRA, 8 May 1947.

¹¹² UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0053-04, Le chef du détachement UNRRA à Direction UNRRA Wangen, 13 November 1945.

¹¹³ UNA, UNRRA, S-0419-0001-07, UNRRA Team report No.5, Pierre Durand, 5 April 1946.



Fig.20/21/22/23. UNRRA buildings under the direction of UNRRA Team 572, Gutach area.¹¹⁴

Fed by the local German authorities, they lived either 'chez l'habitant' or in requisitioned hotels. He organized a mess and a medical service in Gutach village. He also established a small school and a transit camp to host DPs coming from Haslach.¹¹⁵ The rest of his DPs lived in requisitioned hotels and private lodgings:

In spite of great difficulties, it is my opinion that the organisation of centres such as ours is very interesting, and that the results approach more closely the aims of UNRRA than those achieved in a camp. A camp is much easier to run, but the overcrowded condition in which the DPs are forced to live is not to be recommended either from the point of view of health or morale.¹¹⁶

UNRRA had no control over the allocation of housing; the military authorities were responsible for it. As these examples indicate, the French zone is particularly interesting as it presents two very different systems, one based on the use of camp, the other on DP dispersal within the community. As Colonel Pourchet observed, according to their density of concentration, there were three kinds of DPs' centres in the French zone:

- a) Persons living privately, scattered and working particularly in agriculture
In these cases, their dispersion is often excessive and in practice hinders most of the means of contact between UNRRA and DPs. [...] Such dispersal is incompatible with the means at UNRRA's disposal for carrying out frequent and regular distributions. [...] [O]wing to these circumstances, this category remains nearly entirely in the German economy, including a ration system, which operates by means of German ration cards.

¹¹⁴ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0023-09, 'La journée du jeudi 18 avril 1946 au team 572', par Mr. P. U. Durand, Gutach.

¹¹⁵ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0035-01, Pierre Durand, Notice sur l'organisation du centre de Gutach, 9 March 1946.

¹¹⁶ UNA, UNRRA, S-0412-0012-05, Pierre Durand, 'Report on the organization of the Centre of Gutach', 9 March 1946.

- b) Persons living privately, but constituting groups of considerable size in urban centres or belonging to such large groups of workers that they justify the installation of UNRRA detachments [...]
- c) Persons living in an Assembly Centre - managed and cared for entirely by UNRRA.

Such as: Team 573 at Mulheim in the Southern Area, and the majority of UNRRA Teams in the Northern Area.¹¹⁷

In the American zone, efforts to manage the post-war disruption hinged on the use of DP camps. As a result, DPs had also been regrouped in large DP camps in the Northern District. Called 'assembly centres', these were run like military installations. The buildings chosen were typically large institutional structures. The majority of DPs lived in barracks (at Landstuhl, Lebach, Gneisenau, Hombourg, Augusta, Niederlahnstein, Feyen, and Pirmasens).¹¹⁸ Some of the barracks were in relatively good condition (Hombourg, and Landstuhl) while others, such as Pirmasens, were not.¹¹⁹ The SHAEF *Guide to the Care of Displaced Persons in Germany* had prescribed that national groups should be housed together, families maintained intact, and single men and single women separated.¹²⁰ UNRRA relief workers complained that this stipulation was rarely fulfilled. DP camps were overcrowded, men and women were mixed together, and, as a result of this promiscuity, venereal diseases, it was believed, were widespread.¹²¹ As Peter Gatrell puts it, 'few reception centres and DP camps conformed to the bureaucratic ideal of a well-ordered institution.'¹²² In theory, '[t]he basic standard of accommodation was thirty square feet of sleeping space per person, that is, an area six feet by five. In practice, however, [...] the space available for sleeping quarters was smaller, and inevitably very crowded.'¹²³

The camp served several purposes: it facilitated the screening, repatriation and provision of basic supplies such as food, housing and medical care and it made it easier to maintain law and order by segregating the DP population from the German population.¹²⁴ Liisa Malki suggests that the model elaborated in the DP camps informed the subsequent development of contemporary UNHCR camps. 'It was toward the end of World War II that the refugee camp became emplaced as a standardized, generalizable technology of power in the

¹¹⁷ UNA, UNRRA, S-1021-0085-01, Colonel Pourchet, Camp provisioning, extract from a report on distribution of basic food supplies for displaced persons in the French zone of occupation [undated], pp. 1-9, pp. 2-3.

¹¹⁸ UNA, UNRRA, S-0438-0005-02, R. le Goff, Rapport du service 'Welfare' sur le district Nord de la zone d'occupation française, 31 March 1946, p.5.

¹¹⁹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0004-12, Visite au camp de Homburg, 1 October 1945; Visite au camp de Pirmasens, 2 October 1945.

¹²⁰ Proudfoot *European refugees*, p. 163.

¹²¹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0438-0008-04, Rapport Welfare Officer Vatin-Pérignon à Mr. Drake-Brockmann and Melle Despeigne, camp polonais de Landstuhl [undated; December 1945?].

¹²² Gatrell *The Making of the Modern Refugee*, p. 98.

¹²³ Woodbridge *UNRRA*, Vol.2, p. 500.

¹²⁴ 'The Ambivalent Exception: American Occupation Policy in Postwar Germany and the Formation of Jewish Refugee Spaces', *Journal of Refugee Studies*, Vol. 25, No. 3 *Special Issue : the Refugee in the Postwar World, 1945-1960* (2012), pp. 452-473, p. 458.

management of mass displacement.’¹²⁵

The spatial concentration and ordering of people that it enabled, as well as the administrative and bureaucratic processes it facilitated within its boundaries, had far reaching consequences. The segregation of nationalities; the orderly organization of repatriation or third-country resettlement; medical and hygienic programs and quarantining; ‘perpetual screening’ and the accumulation of documentation on the inhabitants of the camps; the control of movement and black-marketing; law enforcement and public discipline; and schooling and rehabilitation were some of the operations that the spatial concentration and ordering of people enabled or facilitated. Through these processes, the modern, post-war refugee emerged as a knowable, nameable figure and as an object of social-scientific knowledge.¹²⁶

Holian notes that, aside from these practical functions, the camp also served a political purpose, separating ‘those who belonged in Germany from those who belonged ‘elsewhere.’¹²⁷

American authorities developed a policy of ‘divided jurisdiction’ that established DP camps as spaces of exception. As Proudfoot observes, it was believed that ‘after years of forced labour these people had developed a profound hatred and contempt for all things German and a desire for revenge.’¹²⁸ Segregation from the wider population was thus regarded as a necessity, although the borders between the camp and German civilian space were porous. ‘The policy worked as follows: the US Army, assisted by UNRRA, was responsible for what went on inside the camp, while the German authorities and the US military government were responsible for what went on outside.’¹²⁹ Holian argues that this US policy of ‘divided jurisdiction’ found broad support among Jewish refugees, who were instrumental in its development.¹³⁰ In the French zone, the evidence suggests that DPs had mixed feelings towards camps. Some DPs were reluctant to be moved from the small, more informal camps they had occupied prior to the arrival of the Allies.¹³¹

The camp as ‘space of exception’ was only partially institutionalised in post-war Germany. In the Southern part of the French zone, DPs cohabited with Germans, or lived in close proximity to them.¹³² In fact, as mentioned above, most DPs resided in individual lodgings or in small groups of fifty to one

¹²⁵ Liisa Malkki ‘Refugees and Exile: from ‘Refugee Studies’ to the National Order of Things’, *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol. 24 (1995), pp. 495-523, p. 498.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.* p. 498.

¹²⁷ Holian ‘The Ambivalent Exception’, p. 458.

¹²⁸ Proudfoot *European refugees*, p. 175.

¹²⁹ Holian ‘The Ambivalent Exception’, p. 458.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 459.

¹³¹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0436-0059-04, Welfare Report, UNRRA Team 2, Landstuhl, 14 May 1945.

¹³² UNA, UNRRA, S-0438-0009-05, Conference sur l’éducation, Baden-Baden, 25-26 January 1946, pp. 1-18, p. 4.

hundred in large houses, hotels or inns.¹³³ What camps there were tended to be smaller and more varied. DPs were reassembled in a former Hitler Youth school (Calw), a prison camp (Schömberg), in monasteries (Reute, Blönried, Weingarten, and Inzigkofen), local chateaus (Isny, Wurzach), requisitioned hotels (Konstanz), a former internment camp (Villingen), large stone buildings (Ebingen, Tuttlingen), requisitioned private houses (Freiburg, Rottweil, Emmendingen), and clusters of wooden huts (Tübingen, Freudenstadt and Kisslegg).¹³⁴

Conditions varied accordingly. In Schömberg they were dire. DPs lived in a prisoners' camp in the vicinity of a factory devoted to the extraction of shale oil. They suffered from cold, muddy surroundings and air pollution.¹³⁵ In Inzigkofen, by contrast, 148 DPs lived 'relatively comfortably' in a monastery dating from the twelfth century.¹³⁶ In the town of Ravensburg the majority of DPs lived in private houses and a further 200 in a former Abbey. The Ravensburg DP centre consisted of a building, located in the town centre, in which the team had organized an UNRRA store and several workshops.¹³⁷ The small town of Konstanz was particularly over-crowded and UNRRA Director Jacques Bauche frequently had to intervene to protect DPs.¹³⁸ In larger towns (such as Freiburg and Tübingen), there was greater competition over accommodation between the DP population, local students, the claims of the Regional Military Governments and their families, and the German administration.¹³⁹

From the perspective of the administrators the fact that many DPs lived in private accommodation complicated the maintenance of law and order, the screening and repatriation of DPs and the provision of basic services such as food, housing and medical care. Transport was a nightmare. Vehicles in the French zone were in short supply, petrol even more so. Roberts observed that, 'the roads were atrocious – there were no autobahn, and after the winter frost, the country roads, were a succession of deep potholes. It was amazing that there were not more accidents, but there were one or two serious ones, though no-one [was] killed.'¹⁴⁰ Dispersal also hampered the development of recreational activities and the organization of cultural events. Some welfare officers were

¹³³ UNA, UNRRA, S-0438-0005-02, Report of welfare officer, Southern district, 8 June 1946.

¹³⁴ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0001-08, UNRRA Headquarters – French zone, Reply to Questionnaire dated 23 April 1946, No. 98/06, Secret, pp. 7-10.

¹³⁵ UNA, UNRRA, S-1021-0085-02, Evacuation du camp de Schömberg [undated].

¹³⁶ UNA, UNRRA, S-0438-0002-04, Southern District, rapport de la visite faite au camp de Inzigkofen, à Sigmaringen, 1 April 1946.

¹³⁷ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0004-14, Dorothea Greene, Ravensburg, Team UNRRA 579, [August 1946?].

¹³⁸ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0040-04, Lettre de J. Bauche à M. le Directeur de l'Organisation YMCA, 10 September 1946.

¹³⁹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0438-0005-02, Report, welfare officer, Southern district, 8 June 1946.

¹⁴⁰ UNA, UNRRA, S-1021-0085-02, Report signed by Miss Roberts, 3. [undated]

disappointed to be marooned in rural areas having imagined being in charge of social activities within a large camp. In Emmendingen, UNRRA Team 576 Director Dalichamp reported that most new welfare employees attached to his team were unhappy. As he conceded, being a part of his team, 'entails the major inconvenience of being a *travail de détail* of rural social work, admittedly interesting but rather unrewarding and not producing impressive results,' when compared to the cultural events organized in huge camps.¹⁴¹ He urged UNRRA authorities to inform all new recruits that the French zone did not have 'model camps with between 5,000 and 10 000 DPs, like they were told [was the case] in the theoretical training classes.'¹⁴² According to UNRRA Director Jean Gerbier, DPs living in private accommodation were uninterested in communal recreational activities anyway. 'The reason behind this is not only transport and communication difficulties. It stems from the fact that private life is a much more normal way of life than camp life. Hence, DPs behave as free and independent men, that is to say, if we dare say it, in a more selfish manner.'¹⁴³

Seen from the DP perspective, after wartime years deprived of privacy, living in private accommodation offered a return to some sense of psychological normality.¹⁴⁴ Admittedly, DPs did not benefit from the protection that refugee camps afforded. But, they enjoyed easier access to economic opportunities and better integration into German civilian life. Germaine Loustalot acknowledged these trends after visiting Konstanz: 'we are progressively moving DPs towards a normal life. In fact, they are fed by the German economy and we have to ensure that, through a system of vouchers, the DP housewife could get her milk from the dairyman, her bread from the baker and the rest of her provisions in an UNRRA store.'¹⁴⁵ UNRRA relief worker Chabanne concurred, arguing that conditions in the Southern District were more comfortable for DPs who enjoyed greater independence than in the Northern District where camp life was the norm.¹⁴⁶

French authorities' willingness to maintain DPs in small camps and private lodging needs further elucidation, however. As Holian has demonstrated, the American policy of divided jurisdiction was intended to create a clear distinction between inside and outside, German space and DP space, although in reality such distinctions did not exist. Germans penetrated DP space and DP entered German space. Why was such separation not envisaged

¹⁴¹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0015-06, Marcel Dalichamppt à Germaine Loustalot, 12 February 1946.

¹⁴² UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0015-06, Marcel Dalichamppt à Germaine Loustalot, 12 March 1946.

¹⁴³ UNA, UNRRA, S-1021-0085-08, Jean Gerbier, Rapport sur les activités de l'UNRRA...', p. 15.

¹⁴⁴ UNA, UNRRA, S-0412-0012-05, Mr. Durand, 'Report on the organization of the Centre of Gutach', 9 March 1946.

¹⁴⁵ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0031-12, G. Loustalot, Rapport mensuel sur le centre de rassemblement de Constance, 25 August 1946.

¹⁴⁶ UNA, UNRRA, S-0438-0005-02, Rapport de Mr. S.M.Chabanne à General Lencud, 6 novembre 1945.

in the French zone? Several hypotheses may be advanced. Firstly, French authorities expected DPs to work in return for the protection that France was offering them. As explained in the next chapter, this was easier if DPs were housed close to their place of employment. Secondly, home-grown experiences of deportation led French authorities to fear the effects of camp life. In wartime France, large-scale deportation had spawned anxieties about the effects of camp-life on the morality of individuals. As explained in chapter two, French authorities were alarmed by the lax moral standards of French labour conscripts and feared that they had been contaminated by the promiscuity in Nazi work camps.¹⁴⁷ In post-war France, these fears persisted. René Mayer, for one, warned that camp-life catalysed the development of an appalling mentality, the overwhelming majority of Polish DPs having lost the habit of work.¹⁴⁸ Thirdly, the relatively small number of DPs (when compared with the British and American zones) made recourse to small camps and private housing easier.

There was no such consensus about the use of DP camps in the American zone. Although preferred for the efficiencies and control they offered, '[t]he term 'concentration camp' was not a popular epithet and comparison between concentration camps and DP camps made the American look bad.'¹⁴⁹ Some relief workers believed that placing DPs in private accommodation facilitated the rehabilitative process. As Laura Greaves has recently highlighted, many American UNRRA officials believed DPs should be placed in housing that allowed a high level of privacy and the maintenance of family units in their own quarters. American military officers, on the contrary, focused on housing that would provide for the easiest management of the large DP population. DPs had to be regrouped in camps located on communications routes near food supply sources.¹⁵⁰

So, why were French spatial policies so distinctive? It is easier to pinpoint contextual differences than ideological ones. Historians have emphasized the central place occupied by home and domesticity in the imagination and experiences of post-war Europeans. As Betts and Crowley put it, 'after 1945 the home attracted a remarkable amount of public attention, ranging from national governments to municipal policy-makers, welfare workers to women's organizations, architecture and design circles to advertisers and consumer activists. It was the centre of social policy in every European country

¹⁴⁷ Pieter Lagrou *The legacy of Nazi occupation: patriotic memory and national recovery in Western Europe, 1945-1965* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 148-149.

¹⁴⁸ MAE, HCRFA, DGAP, 116, Note pour Monsieur le Directeur du travail, Baden-Baden, 27 March 1946.

¹⁴⁹ Holian 'The Ambivalent exception', p. 462.

¹⁵⁰ Greaves 'Not only concern with relief', p. 173.

after the war, despite extremely divergent experiences of material decimation, housing shortages, social dislocation and refugee crises.’¹⁵¹ After the experience of the defeat and exodus of 1940, this longing for shelter, security and normality was particularly acute in France. In her study about the return of Jews to post-war Paris, Leora Auslander has demonstrated that the provisional government made an extraordinary, albeit short-lived, effort to reunite returnees with their possessions, ‘offering those who would recuperate nothing the opportunity to mourn by narrating their losses.’¹⁵²

‘For man does not live by bread alone’¹⁵³

So far this chapter has underlined the specificities of the French zone: the delayed deployment of UNRRA teams, the replacement of British and American relief workers by French and Belgian staff, and the distinctiveness of French housing policies. These specificities gave rise, in turn, to alternative ways of arranging interim provision and ‘rehabilitating’ DPs. The next section focuses not only on the similarities and differences between French management of DP camps and those of its Western Allies, but also emphasizes their interdependence by pointing out the transfers of expertise between the three Western zones.

In the French zone a wide variety of interpretations persisted in regard to what rehabilitating a refugee amounted to in practice. At a welfare officers’ meeting in August 1946, Zone medical Officer General des Cilleuls described the welfare service as a benevolent and feminine addition to the Health Service, which was usually entrusted to men. His imagery was telling: ‘[t]he Welfare Service was born out of the Health service as Eve was created out of Adam’s rib and from this couple emerged a spiritual guardian called Relief.’¹⁵⁴ According to him, Welfare Officers had to perform stereotypically feminine tasks such as working with children, assisting male doctors and distributing clothing. Little reference was made to instilling a sense of self-worth amongst DPs. For American relief worker Elize Zach, this viewpoint reaffirmed a *traditional* and

¹⁵¹ Paul Betts and David Crowley ‘Introduction’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 40, No.2, *Domestic Dreamlands: Notions of Home in Post-1945 Europe* (2005), pp. 213-236, p. 215.

¹⁵² Leora Auslander ‘Coming Home? Jews in Postwar Paris’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 40, No.2 (2005), pp. 237-259, p. 256.

¹⁵³ WL, HA5-4/3, Welfare Division, *Report on Psychological Problems of Displaced Persons*, 1 June 1945, pp. 1-41, p.1.

¹⁵⁴ UNA, UNRRA, S-0438-0009-04, Conférence des Welfare Officers de la Zone Nord, 9 et 10 aout 1946, programme du samedi 10 aout, p.18.

conservative vision of the relief worker role. According to her, few French UNRRA male Directors understood the concept of welfare.¹⁵⁵

The majority of the personnel in the teams was composed of persons who had never before been connected with any type of social service and whose concept of a welfare was vaguely of someone distributing clothing – preferably baby’s – as well as chocolates and bonbons, invariably, of course in too generous quantity. Unfortunately, some of the welfare did not have the training to successfully counteract this notion [word missing]. On the other hand, a welfare with a broad concept of her duties was more often than not considered a nuisance as she did not remain in her proper box, as understood by other members of the team.¹⁵⁶

Despite different interpretations of what ‘welfare’ activities entailed, one area of *relative* agreement appeared to endure. As Silvia Salvatici suggests, entertainment and recreation were perhaps ‘the lowest common denominator’ that everyone could accept when defining ‘rehabilitation’ because it drew on Western culture and humanitarianism as traditionally understood.¹⁵⁷

Aside from contributing to DPs’ rehabilitation, this insistence on recreation and entertainment served a more instrumental juridical purpose in the French zone. In the context of the escalating rivalry between the PDR service and UNRRA headquarters, UNRRA’s ideology of welfare and rehabilitation enabled its officials to demonstrate that they were doing *more* than the PDR administration. UNRRA officials often congratulated themselves on establishing international *foyers*, organizing painting and art exhibitions, developing workshops and providing counselling to DPs in need.¹⁵⁸ This social/rehabilitation ethos helped them to defend themselves in a context of intense jurisdictional competition with the PDR service. According to UNRRA officials, while PDR administrators were content with minimal relief services, UNRRA relief workers were more ambitious. In hindsight, the practical consequences of this self-declared mandate of ‘rehabilitation’ seem less clear-cut.

Entertaining and Educating DPs

On 20-21 November 1945, during the first welfare officers’ meeting in the zone, UNRRA recruits were told: ‘Do not make everything by yourself but

¹⁵⁵ UNA, UNRRA, S-0438-0005-02, B. Roberts ‘Raport de ma visite à Constance le 6 juin 1946’ and ‘Rapport sur ma visite au team de Ravensburg’ 13 May 1946; S-0438-0009-04, Conférence des Welfare Officers de la Zone Nord, 9 -10 August 1946, p. 16.

¹⁵⁶ UNRRA, S-1021-0085-02, Elise Zach, Informal welfare report, Fribourg, 16 June 1947, p. 2.

¹⁵⁷ Salvatici ‘Help the people’, p.429; Proudfoot *European Refugees*, p. 257.

¹⁵⁸ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0001-03, Rapport succinct sur les activités de l’UNRRA en ZFO depuis le 18 février 1946, 31 July 1946, p. 5.

stimulate DPs' personal initiative. 'By the DPs, for the DPs.'¹⁵⁹ In January 1946 Zone Chief Welfare Officer Despeigne urged District Welfare Officers to organize in each camp a theatrical, musical or comedy event that could be 'understood by every nationality.'¹⁶⁰ A month later the first Welfare Bulletin was circulated in the zone. Welfare Officers were asked to oversee DP committees, to organize weekly meeting with these committees, to facilitate worship, to encourage employment, and to organize recreational activities. In cooperation with the Employment Service, UNRRA authorities recommended that each assembly centre organize workshops in order to teach or refresh vocational skills. Particular attention was to be paid to children and young mothers through early detection of pregnant women and the organization of kindergartens.¹⁶¹ These rehabilitation programs were highly gendered. As Zahra explains, they aimed at cultivating domesticity among refugee girls and women, reflecting the widespread belief that women's wartime experiences 'were not simply dehumanizing – they were profoundly defeminizing.'¹⁶² Courses in practical nursing, homemaking, cooking and sewing were set up in the zone.

Despite the UNRRA welfare service's late start in the French zone, its impact was soon felt. In each camp efforts were made to provide activities that kept the DPs from sitting idle, including cinema screenings, sports groups, dances and work projects. In the spring of 1946, nine out of ten DP camps in the Northern District had a theatre and a dance class, seven out of ten a choir and a public display area, four a band, and three a cinema.¹⁶³ In the Southern District, the welfare picture was more varied, most welfare teams having deployed later.¹⁶⁴ Still UNRRA could boast DP training courses for welfare assistants and youth camp leaders.



Fig 24. DP band in Gutach, April 1946.

UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0023-09, 'La journée du jeudi 18 avril 1946 au team 572', par P. Durand, Gutach.

¹⁵⁹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0438-0009-05, Première réunion des Welfare Officers du District Nord les 20 et 21 novembre 1945.

¹⁶⁰ UNA, UNRRA, S-0438-0002-04, Chief Welfare Officer to District Welfare Officers, Baden-Baden, 16 January 1946.

¹⁶¹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0438-0001-01, Welfare Bulletin No.1, 5 February 1946.

¹⁶² Zahra 'The psychological Marshall plan', p. 56.

¹⁶³ UNA, UNRRA, S-0438-0005-02, R. le Goff, Service Welfare sur le District Nord de la ZFO au 31 mars 1946, pp. 1-27, p. 20.

¹⁶⁴ UNA, UNRRA, S-0438-0005-02, welfare officer, Report, Southern district, 8 June 1946.

As preparation for UNRRA's anticipated withdrawal at the end of 1946, sixty-one DPs were trained to become welfare assistants in Gutach. According to UNRRA's training outline, the programme (taught in French, Polish and German) was relatively comprehensive. Lectures dealt with a wide range of topics, such as laws in the zone, the duty of confidentiality, DP employment, screening and food allocation. External partners were brought in for specialist classes such as Miss Grunewald from the *Service Social d'Aide aux Emigrants* (SSAE) and Mr. Hebert from the YMCA. Unlike the training provided at Granville for class I recruits, the Gutach course was delivered by tutors familiar with DP fieldwork.¹⁶⁵ In collaboration with the YMCA, a training centre was also established in Hinterzarten to prepare monitors for children's vacation camps.¹⁶⁶

Recreation was not envisaged solely in terms of entertainment; DPs had to be re-educated too. It was UNRRA's stated policy 'to provide schools and educational opportunity to all displaced persons under UNRRA care, including those residing outside of Assembly Centres.'¹⁶⁷ Having been deprived of the opportunity to attend school in wartime, DPs were hungry for education and eager to make up for lost time.



Fig. 25/26. Drawings made by Latvian DP children, UNRRA Team 211, Schwenningen¹⁶⁸

For all this reservoir of enthusiasm, UNRRA efforts to educate DP children were hampered by the absence of books, inadequate facilities, teacher shortages

¹⁶⁵ UNA, UNRRA, S-0438-0005-05, Legoff, Rapport sur l'école de formation sociale de Gutach, 13 November 1946.

¹⁶⁶ UNA, UNRRA, S-0438-0006-02, Relief Services, Welfare Division, Rapport mensuel de juillet 1946; also see S-0430-0002-05, L.B.Herbert, World's YMCA/YMCA, Zone Française d'occupation, rapport mensuel (septembre 1946), 1 October 1946; S-0421-0064-01, Ecole des Cadres YMCA/YMCA de Hinterzarten, 9 November 1946.

¹⁶⁷ UNA, UNRRA, S-0438-0009-05, Agenda, Conference on Educational and Community Activities UNRRA French zone, Baden-Baden, 25-26 January 1946.

¹⁶⁸ UNA, UNRRA, S-0418-0005-04, Colonie Lettone, Team 211, Centre de Schwenningen, [undated].

and the dispersal of DPs throughout the territory. As a result, schooling facilities varied greatly from one area to another.¹⁶⁹ In some camps the *Mission scolaire Polonaise* established Polish national schools, while in other areas DP children had to attend German schools. According to UNRRA's figures, by November 1946 995 children (aged 6-10) and 1,655 (aged 10-18) were enrolled in schools across the French zone.¹⁷⁰

Aside from educating DPs, reconstructing their bodies was seen as another crucial aspect of the 'rehabilitation' process. In this context, DPs' rehabilitation focused, not just on improving hygiene standards, but also on developing physical and outdoor activities. Scouting figured prominently. UNRRA Welfare Bulletin No. 6 explained that scouting was aimed at cultivating young boys' sense of duty, self-confidence, courage and self-respect. Scouting, it was averred, was 'about the individual, not the mass.'¹⁷¹ It encouraged *entente* between DP children.¹⁷² In the summer of 1946 DP scouts from Tübingen even joined a French scout troop camping around Lake Constance.¹⁷³ Rest and holiday homes (*Maisons d'enfants*) were also opened in the Black Forest (at Schweigmatt, in Überlingen and Gutach) to improve the health of sick, unaccompanied or disabled children.¹⁷⁴ In the summer of 1946, a dedicated hostel, *Air et soleil* (Fresh air and sun), in the Black Forest hills welcomed DP children (aged 6-13) living in Northern District DP camps.¹⁷⁵ But a scandal erupted when some children were found sleeping together in the same bed.¹⁷⁶ Although the Director attempted to smooth ruffled feathers with reassuring words, this scandal fed fears about the alleged promiscuity of young, traumatized DPs, which, as Tara Zahra indicates, were widespread among Allied relief workers.¹⁷⁷

UNRRA's recreational operations were supported by voluntary societies and DP committees. In Hinterzarten, the YMCA organized summer colonies for young DP boys who were introduced to a rigorously healthy routine. Children were expected to walk in the forest daily, to practice gymnastics, to paint, to sing and play music and all with only two hours' nap between the various

¹⁶⁹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0438-0006-02, E. Zach, Assistant Eligibility and Care Officer, Monthly Report November 1946, 30 November 1946.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁷¹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0420-0001-01, Welfare Bulletin No. 6, Direction Générale UNRRA, 8 July 1946.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*

¹⁷³ UNA, UNRRA, S-0438-0006-02, Rapport mensuel d'août 1946, relief service. [August 1946].

¹⁷⁴ UNA, UNRRA, S-0438-0006-02, Elise Zach, Relief services, Welfare Division, Monthly report, August 1946; Relief service, Welfare Division, Rapport mensuel de juillet 1946.

¹⁷⁵ UNA, UNRRA, S-0438-0006-01, R. Le Goff, District Welfare Officer à Monsieur Roquet, Field Supervisor, 22/163/208, 3 May 1946.

¹⁷⁶ UNA, UNRRA, S-0419-0003-01, Lettre P. U. Durand à Monsieur le Directeur Général de la Zone Française, rapport relatif à la conduit de certains enfants envoyés à Air et Soleil, 2 January 1947.

¹⁷⁷ Zahra *Lost Children*, pp. 110-111.

sessions.¹⁷⁸ Although UNRRA Zone Medical Officer De Cilleuls complained about inadequate discipline and poor diet within this particular colony, UNRRA welfare officer Lau believed it was successful.¹⁷⁹ The YMCA also helped create rest and relaxation huts for DP adults in the zone. In April 1946 Welfare Officers were invited for a two-day workshop on 'leisure activities' organized by UNRRA Welfare Officer Roberts and YMCA representative Herbert.¹⁸⁰ During this workshop, YMCA representative William Frey explained to Welfare Officers how to build a *foyer*, based on his experience with French soldiers installed in Switzerland after the defeat of 1940. In order to enable DPs' minds to rest, welfare workers were encouraged to ban 'politics' or 'chauvinism.' They also had to ensure that no nationality dominated. Each *foyer* had to hold a library, a canteen, a radio and a room for concerts, conferences and talks. Moreover, 'to be attractive, the *foyer* [had to] be adequately decorated.'¹⁸¹

Welfare manuals produced by UNRRA headquarters were meanwhile distributed in the field. UNRRA Central Welfare Division distributed pamphlets explaining how to use scrap metal in arts and crafts.¹⁸² The British Nursery School Association and the Friends Relief service distributed a leaflet on 'improvised toys for nurseries and refugee camps.'¹⁸³

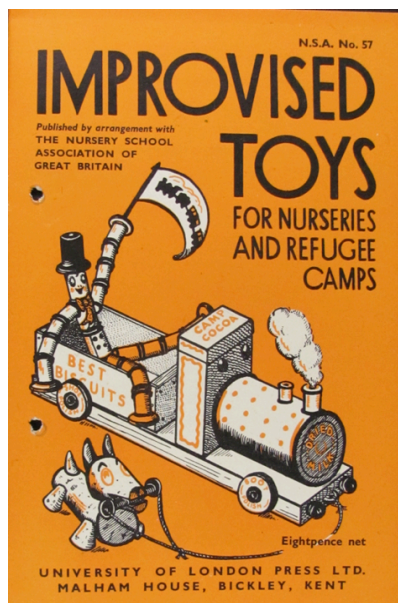


Fig. 27. Leaflet 'Improvised Toys'¹⁸⁴
Fig. 28. Lindau's toy-making workshop¹⁸⁵

¹⁷⁸ UNA, UNRRA, S-0438-0006-01, S. Lau, Welfare Officer, rapport, Hintergarten, La Maison des Enfants, 27 September 1946.

¹⁷⁹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0438-0006-01, Le Médecin Général des Cilleuls à Général de Corps d'Armée F. Lenclud, 26 July 1946.

¹⁸⁰ UNA, S-0421-0078-03, Lettre de Mrs. G.M. Garvey, Principal Welfare Officer à tous les Welfare Officers du District du Sud Est du Wurtemberg, 10 April 1946.

¹⁸¹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0438-0007-05, Résumé d'une causerie faite à Wurzach le 17 avril 1946 au cours de la réunion de Welfare UNRRA/YMCA, William Frey.

¹⁸² UNA, UNRRA, S-0420-0001-02, Welfare Division –ERO, Leaflets on improvisation for welfare officers (Leisure time activities).

¹⁸³ UNA, UNRRA, S-0420-0001-02, Improvised Toys, NSA No.57, published by arrangement with the Nursery School Association of Great Britain.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ UNA, UNRRA, S-1021-0085-08, UNRRA Team News, Vol. 1, No. 13, 15 June 1946.

Understandably, results tended to reflect the ingenuity of UNRRA welfare personnel and the DPs' particular skills. A DP handicraft exhibition was, for instance, organised in the Polish DP camp at Landstuhl, in which, according to its UNRRA welfare officer, DPs fashioned 'marvels' ranging from wood sculpture to fine embroidery.¹⁸⁶ By July 1946 many DP camps, including Wangen, Lörrach, Reutlingen, Freiburg and Lindau, incorporated toy-making workshops.¹⁸⁷

Over Christmas 1946, according to Elise Zach, all DP children in the zone received toys made by UNRRA or YMCA workshops. 'Each child received at least one article of clothing, as well as chocolate and candies. A number of the smaller teams were able to provide a gift for each adult DP as well.'¹⁸⁸ In Saulgau the Welfare Officer reported that after a Christmas dinner cooked with Russian, Polish and Baltic specialties, a polyglot Father Christmas distributed presents to all the guests. 'In our Foyer-Restaurant, lit with candles [...] we felt that our people were fulfilled and perfectly happy.'¹⁸⁹ UNRRA also supported numerous other art exhibitions and cultural fairs. In Freiburg, for instance, the welfare service organized a 'charity fair' on 16 December 1945 in conjunction with the Latvian and Lithuanian DP committees, the event making a 4,000 mark profit.¹⁹⁰ Lithuanian children sang popular French songs such as *Sur le Pont d'Avignon* alongside Baltic folk ballads.¹⁹¹ An exhibition of DP artwork was organized in Rottweil camp.¹⁹² In Wangen, an Art History conference and an exhibition of Hungarian art was scheduled in the spring of 1946.¹⁹³ UNRRA Central Headquarters also envisaged collecting work made by DPs for inclusion in a permanent exhibition at the Archives of the United Nations, but this project never came to fruition.¹⁹⁴ Concerts were organized, however. DPs established theatre groups and orchestras in the French zone, reviving traditional plays, folk songs and dances. For instance, the Lithuanian Orchestra of Freiburg played a programme of folk songs and anthems, together with classical pieces written by Claude Debussy, Mozart, Frédéric Chopin or the French composer Jules

¹⁸⁶ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0066-03, G. Rouss, Principal Welfare Officer à J.J. Bernard, Field Supervisor, Team No.2 Landstuhl, 15 April 1946.

¹⁸⁷ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0028-04, G. Seville, Assistant Director, à M. Directeur de District, 1 July 1946, N.224/16.

¹⁸⁸ UNA, UNRRA, S-0438-0006-02, Elise Zach, Care and Eligibility officer, Monthly report, 6 January 1947.

¹⁸⁹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0438-0007-10, B.J.Haydar, Rapport activité Team 585 Saulgau, semaine du 20-26 Décembre 1946, 30 December 1946.

¹⁹⁰ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0031-09, Rapport sur la fête du 16 Décembre 1945, 19 March 1946.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² UNA, UNRRA, S-0438-0008-02, Rapport de la conférence des welfare officers du district sud, 22 and 23 January 1946.

¹⁹³ UNA, UNRRA, S-0438-0007-05, Herm. I. Buch, Officier Welfare, Welfare report, 23 April – 4 May 1946.

¹⁹⁴ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0025-04, Cyrus Greenslade, Deputy Chief of Operations, transl. M. Lardon, 6 June 1947, Headquarters DP Operations UNRRA, Instruction Technique No.3, disposition des archives, rassemblement et conservation des échantillons des travaux faits par des personnes déplacées.

Massenet in August 1946.¹⁹⁵ Baltic DPs found an enthusiastic supporter in the military government in the person of Raymond Schmittlein, an early Gaullist who was put in charge of educational reforms in the French zone.¹⁹⁶ Schmittlein had lived in Lithuania and Latvia between 1934 and 1940 working as a professor and as foreign correspondent for the Havas news-agency. He became a staunch defender of Baltic DPs.¹⁹⁷ He helped establish the Baltic Fine Art school in Freiburg, entrusting it to his friend Jonynas, a Lithuanian artist who had exhibited in Paris in the interwar years.¹⁹⁸

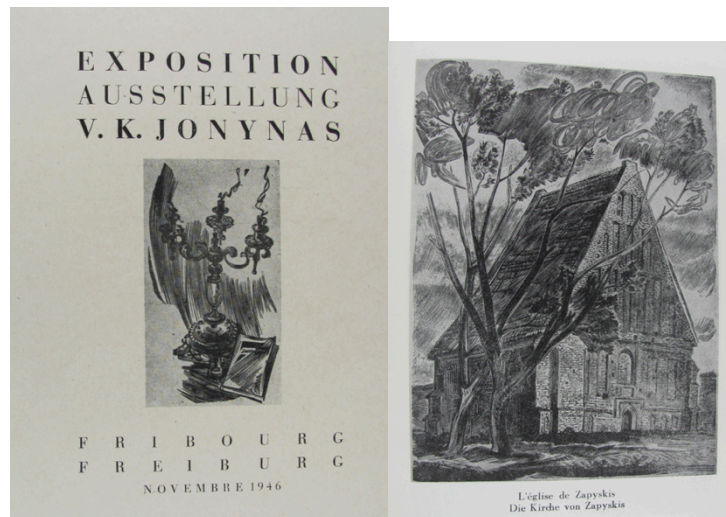


Fig. 29. Jonynas exhibition programme, November 1946.¹⁹⁹

Schmittlein also supported the admission of DPs into German universities.²⁰⁰ So much so that the publication *World Student Relief* noted that ‘a somewhat specific feature of the DP student programme in the French zone is that it became a more or less established fact long before UNRRA had anything to do with it.’²⁰¹

Even before the basic directive was issued in Berlin in November 1945, laying down the general rules for 10% admission of DP students to universities in the three Western Zones, a large number of DP students were already studying at Tübingen. As a matter of fact, not so few of them had been studying there even before the German collapse and thanks to the existence of several organised national groups (especially Baltic) they quickly managed to reach a kind of accepted modus vivendi with the French occupying authorities [...]²⁰²

¹⁹⁵ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0031-01, Invitation, comité d'entraide lithuanien de Fribourg, 10 August 1946.

¹⁹⁶ UNRRA, S-0438-0009-01, World Student Relief, Report on visit to French zone from Yngve Frykholm, Franlgen, 8 June 1946; Corine Defrance Raymond Schmittlein (1904-1974): médiateur entre la France et la Lituanie *Cahiers Litvaniens*, No. 9 (2009).

¹⁹⁷ Robert Marquant ‘Raymond Schmittlein 19 juin 1904–29 septembre 1974’ in: Manfred Heinemann (éd.), *Hochschuloffiziere und Wiederaufbau des Hochschulwesens in Westdeutschland 1945–1952, die französische Zone* (Hildesheim, 1991) quoted in Corine Defrance Raymond Schmittlein (1904-1974).’

¹⁹⁸ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0031-02, Fribourg, Exposition, V.K. Jonynas, November 1946.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ UNRRA, S-0438-0009-01, World Student Relief, Report on visit to French zone from Yngve Frykholm, Franlgen, 8 June 1946.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² Ibid.

In the Southern District, there were two Universities, in Freiburg and Tübingen, with around between 350 and 500 in Tübingen plus 150 students enlisted in Freiburg, despite the major bomb damage to its university buildings.²⁰³ The majority were Baltic DPs.²⁰⁴ German academics were often hostile to them.²⁰⁵ And, despite UNRRA efforts, DP registration at Mainz University remained impossible owing to housing shortages.²⁰⁶

Admittedly, not all UNRRA initiatives were successful. In Reutlingen, for instance, Mrs Pujos du Coudray noted that it proved difficult to encourage DPs to cultivate individual garden plots or take up language courses:

Story of a Failure. We tried to organize language classes: English and Spanish, in view of emigration to USA, British colonies or to Spanish-speaking South America, but without success. It is difficult to get school-books: we are still waiting for Hugo's Spanish, ordered a month ago in England. Very few adult DPs are interested, and those all want private and individual tuition. People do not want to leave their camps and homes in the evening, which is the only time when the welfare officer is free.²⁰⁷

But the evidence suggests that in many cases close relations were established between UNRRA welfare Officers and DPs, many of whom petitioned over the spring of 1947 to protest against the cutting of welfare posts.²⁰⁸

An ambivalent 'rehabilitation' programme

What, then, of the ambivalence intrinsic to these rehabilitation programmes? As recent studies have highlighted, while UNRRA tried to foster internationalism, its programme actually stimulated nationalist sentiments. In encouraging DPs to engage in cultural activities, UNRRA relief workers helped revive national religions, languages, crafts and cultural festivals. For DP leaders, DP schools also became a medium for the transmission of national values. As Anna Jaroszynska-Kirchmann has shown, schooling rebuilt ties to the past, helping, for instance, to teach 'Poland's history, her national patriotic tradition and heritage, religion and language.'²⁰⁹ Scouting instructors also stressed particular Christian and national values. Thus, whether purposely or unintentionally, UNRRA relief workers fostered national pride and religious revivalism. In

²⁰³ UNA, UNRRA, S-0438-0005-02, report of welfare officer, Southern district, 8 June 1946.

²⁰⁴ UNA, UNRRA, S-0438-0009-05, Conference sur l'éducation, Baden-Baden, 25-26 January 1946, pp. 1-18, p. 9.

²⁰⁵ UNRRA, S-0438-0009-01, World Student Relief, Report on visit to French zone from Yngve Frykholm, Franlgen, 8 June 1946.

²⁰⁶ UNA, UNRRA, S-0438-0006-02, Elise Zach, Monthly report for October 1946.

²⁰⁷ UNA, UNRRA, S-1021-0085-02, Welfare Division Pr. W.O. Mme Pujos de Coudray to Mrs Zach, 2185/12/6540 [undated, 1947?].

²⁰⁸ UNRRA, S-0421-0087-07, Lettre du General de Corps d'Armée Lenclud à Personnes Déplacées, 13 May 1947.

²⁰⁹ Anna Jaroszynska-Kirchmann 'Patriotism, Responsibility, and the Cold War: Polish Schools in DP Camps in Germany, 1945-1951', *The Polish Review*, Vol. 47, No. 1 (2002), pp 35-66, p. 36.

Koblenz, for example, the UNRRA welfare supervisor worried that local youth movements were promoting not just discipline but militarism.²¹⁰ In Landstuhl, UNRRA helped the DPs to rebuild a church, the camp's woodworkers crafting its altar.²¹¹

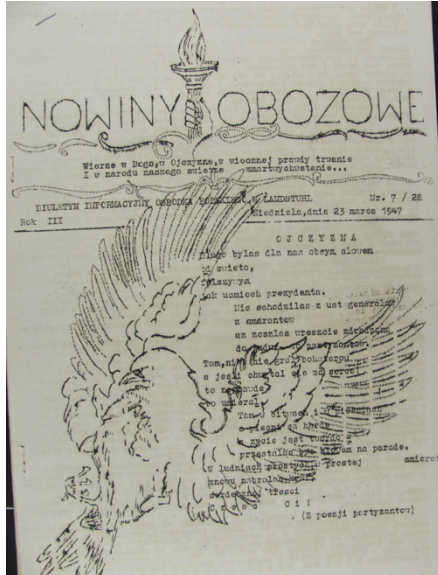


Fig. 30. DP camp newspaper, poem 'Homeland', Landstuhl, March 1947²¹²
Fig. 31. Altar in DP camp, Landstuhl²¹³

While in principle 'international' and 'neutral to religion', UNRRA was in practice anything but internationalist, for the simple reason that rekindling national traditions became integral to the 'rehabilitation' of DPs. Some UNRRA personnel clearly thought this circle could be squared. In Eningen, for instance, UNRRA Welfare Officer Veronika Beekman attempted to promote reconciliation between DPs and their former German antagonists by organizing common religious ceremonies and inviting German priests to attend DP celebrations.²¹⁴ As Salvatici puts it, 'the confidence that officials had in the therapeutic effects of nurturing national identities was an expression of their own inability to 'think internationally.''²¹⁵ While promoting international collaboration, UNRRA therefore reinforced national affiliation, its humanitarian workers following a vision of reconstruction centered on the reassertion of national sovereignty.²¹⁶ Aside from fostering DPs' own nationalist sentiments, UNRRA relief workers

²¹⁰ UNA, UNRRA, S-0438-0003-03, Lettre O. Despeigne à Colonel Mercier, 12 February 1946.

²¹¹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0438-0008-04, Rapport du Service Social, Team UNRRA 2, Mme Rous, 1 October 1946 ; S-0420-0004-03, Journal du camp de Landstuhl, avec traduction française, March 1947.

²¹² UNA, UNRRA, S-0420-0004-03, DP camp newspaper, Landstuhl, avec traduction française, 23 March 1947.

²¹³ UNA, UNRRA, S-0438-0008-04, Rapport du Service Social, Team UNRRA 2, Mme Rous, 1 October 1946 ; S-0420-0004-03, Journal du camp de Landstuhl, avec traduction française, March 1947.

²¹⁴ UNA, UNRRA, S-0438-0006-07, Veronika Beekman, Rapport du service social, Team UNRRA 583, période du 30 juin au 31 juillet 1946, 1 August 1946.

²¹⁵ Salvatici 'Help the people to help themselves', p. 439.

²¹⁶ Zahra *Lost children*, p. 122.

often attempted to promote their own country's values. Miss Roberts recalled that she attempted to counteract DPs' misleading images of England. 'I regretted their curious ideas about England, which seemed the most foreign of all places to them, and did my best to cure them of beliefs that 'all English women are thin', 'England is a very diplomatic country' and 'England is full of mi-ladies.'²¹⁷ As explained in chapter seven, French relief workers also attempted to promote France's image in Germany. DPs were invited to participate in French national celebrations such as Bastille Day or the commemoration of De Gaulle's Appeal of 18 June 1940.²¹⁸

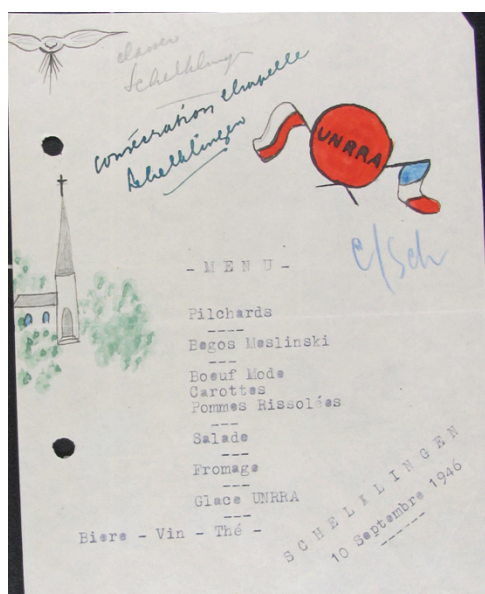


Fig 32. Celebration in Schelklingen, Polish and French National anthem, September 1946.²¹⁹

In December 1946, UNRRA Director General Lenclud stipulated that DP children were to be integrated in French schools where they would be initiated into 'the spirit of French culture.'²²⁰ This formed part of wider French efforts to disseminate French culture. In German schools, French culture and history, for example, were taught in French, as were teacher-training courses. Not only was German culture de-emphasized, but American textbooks were kept out of the French zone as well.²²¹ However - and perhaps understandably - the evidence suggests that DPs proved reluctant to send their children to French schools.²²²

²¹⁷ UNA, UNRRA, S-1021-0085-02, Report signed by Miss Roberts, 2. [undated]

²¹⁸ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0061-08, Le Capitaine Tiquet, Manifestation du 18 Juin 1946, Place d'Aulendorf.

²¹⁹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0019-06, Fête du camp Polonais, Schelklingen, September 1946.

²²⁰ UNA, UNRRA, S-0438-0003-04, General Lenclud à Monsieur l'Administrateur Général, N.1983/12, 11 December 1946.

²²¹ Bertram M. Gordon review of Stefan Zauner. *Erziehung und Kulturmission: Frankreichs Bildungs-Politik in Deutschland, 1945-1949*. Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1994. 351 pp. published on H-German (February, 1996).

²²² UNA, UNRRA, S-0438-0003-04, Stregels, Directeur du Team 581 à Direction Générale de la Zone Française, No.420/LO/GI, 15 November 1946.

Towards a 'democratized' organization of refugee welfare?

The rehabilitation programme was never universally followed in the French zone. UNRRA Field Supervisor Pourchet remained opposed to what he decried as a policy of 'spectacular events', considering that it favoured an aristocracy of DPs while neglecting the poorest, who only received 'scraps of it and *echos* of concerts.'²²³ In Lindau, UNRRA Director Jean Gerbier concurred, considering that UNRRA paid too much attention to welfare and not enough to practicalities.²²⁴ According to Gerbier, the administrative service was by far the most important service: it was charged with establishing DPs' nationality, determining their eligibility status, filling out their registration cards and giving them information about repatriation and employment. The democratization of refugee administration divided UNRRA relief workers even more. UNRRA planners promoted 'active' welfare over 'passive' charity.²²⁵ Self-government in DP camps was, according to UNRRA's official historian, the cornerstone of rehabilitation, 'the goal toward which all activities were pointed.'²²⁶ While some relief workers allowed elected leaders to represent DPs, others saw with jaundiced eyes DPs' empowerment in the French zone. Before UNRRA came into existence, military authorities had indicated that DPs should be encouraged to organize themselves, mainly because this would facilitate camp control. The essential difference between SHAEF recommendations and UNRRA policy lay in the fact that SHAEF wanted to *select* DPs' representatives while UNRRA planners preferred them to be *elected*.²²⁷ For UNRRA planners, DPs' self-organisation gave them a renewed sense of purpose after years of extreme dehumanization. It reduced the number of military and civilian personnel needed to run the camps, and, most importantly, it prepared DPs for life in democratic society.²²⁸

In the French zone, many French occupation officials still held to the view that it was preferable to *select* DPs' representatives. Reflecting on UNRRA's advocacy of democratic governance in camps, Laffon argued that this system of organization would create a 'state within a state' and would promote activities with a clear '*orientation revendicative*.'²²⁹ Rejecting the UNRRA proposal to place decision-making in the hands of elected committees, he suggested that aid workers entrust authority to an elected '*homme de*

²²³ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0026-01, Lettre de Ch. Pourchet à Monsieur le Colonel Pichot, 16 October 1946.

²²⁴ UNA, UNRRA, S-1021-0085-08, Jean Gerbier, Rapport sur les activités de l'UNRRA dans le cercle de Lindau', 8 May 1947, p. 12.

²²⁵ Shepard *The Long road home*, p. 304.

²²⁶ Woodbridge *UNRRA*, Vol 2, p. 522.

²²⁷ *Ibid*, p. 523.

²²⁸ Holian *Between National Socialism and Soviet communism*, p. 49.

²²⁹ MAE, HCRFA, ADM 40, L'administrateur Général, Adjoint pour le GM à Monsieur le Gouverneur, Délégué supérieur pour le GM de Wurtemberg, 11 December 1945.

confiance', a practice that was used in POW camps.²³⁰ French occupation officials cautioned that self-organization facilitated the development of political activities and the circulation of anti-repatriation propaganda.²³¹ Furthermore, as was explained in chapter two, it undermined the transformation of DPs into assimilated immigrants, model citizens of the French national community. Even so, as in the rest of Germany, many UNRRA team directors relied on DP committees in the French zone.²³² These committees supervised numerous activities, ranging from camp policing to the distribution of food. As we saw in chapter three, some of these DP committees were highly efficient. The Lithuanian committee of Ravensburg was particularly well structured with an overarching policy the implementation of which was supported by a series of subcommittees handling particular problems, such as relief distribution, education policies, vocational training, employment, and press relations.

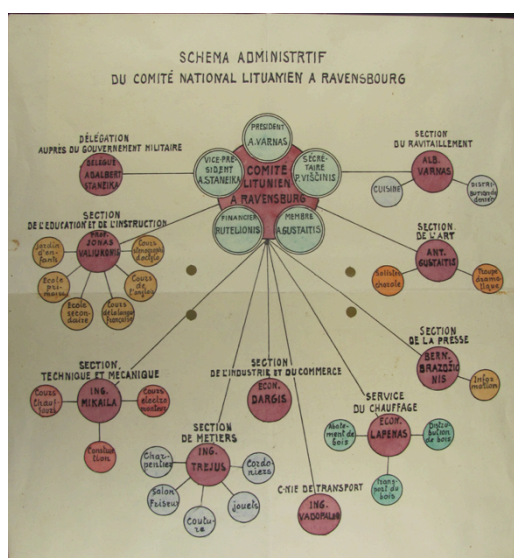


Fig 33. Chart outlining Lithuanian DP committee organization, Ravensburg.²³³

Some Directors enjoyed good relations with these committees.²³⁴ In August 1945 the Camp Director of the Kemmel-Kaserne in Trier reported that 'the leaders have always been found to be most willing and helpful and pass on all requests ensuring that they are carried out as far as possible.'²³⁵ In other places relations were more contentious. In Freiburg, for instance, the DP committees wrote a letter to Sir General Morgan, chief of UNRRA operations in Germany, to protest against their living conditions. For Lenclud, their letter was

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0420-0001-04, Lettre F.W. Leith Ross to Topping, 20 November 1945.

²³² MAE, HCRFA, PDR 3/25, 'Tableau comparatif des extraits des rapports faits par Monsieur Léon', 26 September 1946.

²³³ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0061-06, Schéma administratif du comité national Lituanien, Ravensburg [undated].

²³⁴ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0086-11, Assistante Welfare J. Burger, rapport du welfare service, Wangen, 1 November 1945.

²³⁵ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0081-01, UNRRA Team report, Major G.E. Edwards, team 19, Trier, Kemmel-Kaserne, 29 August 1945.

a 'tissue of lies.'²³⁶ Lenclud concluded that the DP committees should be progressively reduced to the role of mere 'auxiliaries' to the administration.²³⁷

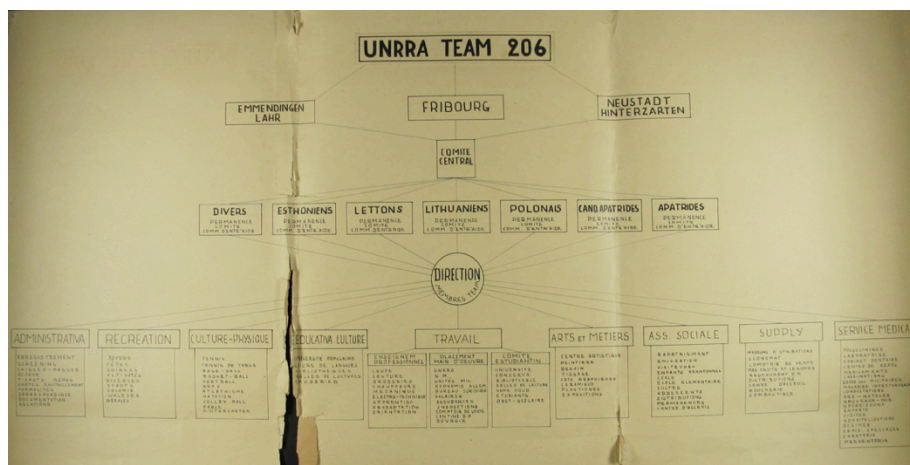


Fig. 34. UNRRA Team 206, Freiburg²³⁸

Faced with growing protests emerging from the DP committees at Landstuhl, UNRRA Field Supervisor Sebille similarly recommended that DPs should be pre-selected before being put forward for election.²³⁹ At camp level, some UNRRA Directors, feeling threatened, tried to marginalize their DP leaders, something evident from the following comments: 'In Freiburg, the Director, intelligent man, but rather stubborn [...] acted as a Dictator that rode roughshod over the rules.'²⁴⁰ Similarly, in Gutach, the Director was described as an 'active man, intelligent and brutal' who rejected DPs that did not please him.²⁴¹

Recent studies have highlighted the ambiguities within UNRRA's democratic governance. On one hand, UNRRA relief workers fostered a spirit of self-reliance and a sense of responsibility. On the other hand, its policies reinforced the inequalities between UNRRA relief providers and DP 'recipients.' Indeed, the methods of refugee management promoted by New Deal-influenced relief workers contributed to the process of refugee depersonalization and to their presentation as passive and apathetic.²⁴² As will be more fully explained in the next chapter, like many other humanitarian institutions, UNRRA's camp system institutionalized an unequal relationship between 'the compassionate and the suffering' that contradicted the presumed universalism of its

²³⁶ UNA, UNRRA, S-0420-0001-04, General Lenclud à Field Supervisor No. 2 Freiburg, Comités Nationaux, 19 August 1946.

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0031-11, UNRRA Team 206, Freiburg [undated].

²³⁹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0420-0001-04, G. Sebille, Assistant Director, à Mr. le Field Supervisor, Relief Services, 9 Septembre 1946.

²⁴⁰ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0002-03, J. Frans, Rapport sur le contrôle des opérations de screening effectuées par les commissions consultatives des teams institutées et fonctionnant en exécution des paragraphes 25 à 28 du bulletin général, No. 19 du 11 juillet 1946.

²⁴¹ Ibid.

²⁴² From 'Homelands' to 'Warlands': Themes, Approaches, Voices' in Peter Gatrell and Nick Baron (eds) *Warlands. Population Resettlement and State reconstruction in the Soviet-East European Borderlands, 1945-1950* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 1-22, p. 10.

discourse.²⁴³ As Salvatici has pointed out, Woodbridge's description of UNRRA's distinct, emancipatory and innovative approach to humanitarian aid reflected a widespread and stereotypical image of DPs 'as children, they were deemed to be in the conditions of minors and therefore regarded as eligible for assistance, but not entitled to rights.'²⁴⁴

Furthermore, although American relief workers were drawn to notions of cultural relativism, their practices contributed to the reinforcement of ethnic prejudices.²⁴⁵ Some groups were, for instance, singled out as more democratic-minded than others. Woodbridge noted that 'in general, it was among the Balts, who were usually the most economically advanced group and the most capable of democratic action, and the Jews, who by virtue of the existence of strongly organized *kibbutzim* and for other reasons, had the strongest leaders, that camp self-government developed most rapidly.'²⁴⁶ In Gailingen, UNRRA director Bauche argued, in marked contrast to this view, that administration was impeded by the independent spirit of his Jewish charges eager to run their own affairs.²⁴⁷ Jewish DPs were particularly reluctant to submit themselves to the supervision of any administrative body. According to UNRRA's Deputy Director this attitude was easily understandable in light of their past experiences under the Nazi regime.²⁴⁸

In sum, while contemporary observers presented UNRRA as an experiment in international welfare planning based on secularization and the application of scientific methods, the evidence suggests that the effects of UNRRA practices were more subtle and ambiguous. The argument developed in this chapter (and in the next chapter) sits alongside an emerging strand of historiography sensitive to UNRRA's paradoxes and 'dilemmas.' UNRRA was both innovative and drew on longer traditions of humanitarianism. It both undermined and advanced the 'international' idea. Finally, its project sought both to satisfy the needs of DPs and to meet relief workers' own needs.²⁴⁹

UNRRA Reconsidered: ruptures and continuities

As historians have probed more deeply into UNRRA's post-war efforts, the degree of continuity or disjuncture in relief policies and humanitarian

²⁴³ Zahra 'Psychological Marshall Plan', p. 38.

²⁴⁴ Salvatici 'Help the people to help themselves', p. 445.

²⁴⁵ On 'cultural relativism' within UNRRA see Reinish 'Auntie UNRRA at the crossroads', pp. 77-78.

²⁴⁶ Woodbridge *UNRRA*, Vol 2, p. 525.

²⁴⁷ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0038-05, J. Bauche à M. Godwin, Deputy Directeur du Détachement de Gailingen, 6 June 1946.

²⁴⁸ UNA, S-0421-0039-03, D.P. Godwin to General Lenclud, 272/DG, 28 August 1946.

²⁴⁹ In many respects, these are enduring tensions of humanitarianism. See Michael Barnett *Empire of Humanity: a history of humanitarianism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011), pp. 9-18.

assistance in the aftermath of the First and Second World War arises.²⁵⁰ While UNRRA was widely heralded as a clear break with the past, recent studies have highlighted deeper continuities in ideas, personnel and practices with the League of Nations. Admittedly, the post-1945 relief operations were, not least in medical terms, far more successful than the League's post-1918 operations. As opposed to the devastating influenza plague of 1918-1919, no major epidemic occurred in 1945, despite fears of typhus, diphtheria and tuberculosis.²⁵¹ Furthermore, UNRRA promoted an ideology of welfare and 'psychological rehabilitation', which departed from earlier relief efforts. Yet, as this chapter has made clear, UNRRA's aspiration to transform humanitarianism into a modern profession was hampered by its subordination to the military, its lack of uniformly-trained personnel and the absence of clear definitions of what 'rehabilitation' and 'welfare' meant.

Scholars have recently argued that we need a more nuanced periodization of the history of contemporary humanitarianism, urging a reassessment of whether the war's aftermath was the founding moment of a new era.²⁵² Rather than seeing 1945 as a caesura 'for the chronology of the twentieth century', historians interested in transnational histories are increasingly presenting 1945 as the 'mid-point of a transitional period in which certain ideas and institutions endured, from international institutions that sought to deal with hunger and legal rights, to ideas of global social welfarism that were not interrupted by war, but rather stimulated and expanded by it.'²⁵³ In highlighting both the profoundly innovative and the old-fashioned aspects of UNRRA's work in the French zone, this chapter contributes to this debate while adding to our understanding of the *Americanization* of relief work in 1945.²⁵⁴

For Daniel Cohen, 'DP humanitarianism bore little resemblance to the assistance provided after 1918 to the European civilian battered by World War One.'²⁵⁵ Reflecting on the bureaucratic, regimented and quasi-scientific management of DP camps by UNRRA and IRO experts, Cohen argues that DP humanitarian assistance signified a midway point between old forms of charity

²⁵⁰ Jessica Reinisch, 'Comparing Europe's Post-war Reconstructions: First Balzan Workshop, Birkbeck College, London, 28 October 2005', *History Workshop Journal*, Vol. 61 (2006), pp. 299-304; Daniel Cohen 'Between Relief and Politics: Refugee Humanitarianism in Occupied Germany 1945-1946' *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 43, No. 3 (2008), pp. 437-449, p. 437; Mark Mazower 'Reconstruction: the Historiographical issues', *Past and Present*, Vol. 210, Supplement 6, (2011), pp. 17-28.

²⁵¹ Wilbur A Sawyer 'Achievements of UNRRA as an International Health Organisation' *American Journal of Public Health*, Vol. 37, No. 1 (1947), pp 41-58.

²⁵² Mark Mazower *No enchanted palace: The end of empire and the ideological origins of the United Nations*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009); Samuel Moyn *The Last Utopian: Human Rights in History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010); Watenpaugh 'The League of Nations' Rescue of Armenian Genocide Survivors'; Salvatici 'Help the people to help themselves.'

²⁵³ Matthew Hilton and Rana Mitter 'Introduction' *Past and Present*, supplement 8, *Transnationalism and Contemporary Global History* (2013), pp. 7-28, p. 9.

²⁵⁴ Hobson-Faure Laura, 'Penser l'accueil des immigrés juifs : L'American Joint Distribution Committee et les oeuvres sociales juives françaises après la Shoah' in Colette Zytnecki, *Terre dexil, terre d'asile* (Paris : Editions de l'Éclat, 2010), pp. 97-114.

²⁵⁵ Cohen *In war's wake*, p. 66.

and the current role played by the United Nations as the 'West's mercy mission.'²⁵⁶ According to him, 'international assistance provided to DPs after 1945 marked the transition, under heavy American influence between two dramatically different types of humanitarian regimes.'²⁵⁷ Other scholars insist instead on the continuities and ambiguities in UNRRA's *rehabilitation* programmes. In mapping out the varied set of debates and practices aimed at rehabilitating war-damaged DPs within UNRRA's sphere of operations, Tara Zahra and Silvia Salvatici highlight, for instance, the tensions between a new emphasis on the psychological dimensions of dislocation (blueprints 'for theories and practices of the 'new humanitarianism' launched by the United Nations') and traditionalist views of the 'family' and 'nation.' These contradictory tendencies clashed in arguments about what constituted DPs' best interests in the aftermath of war.²⁵⁸ As Pamela Ballinger observes, '[i]n the end, humanitarian actors actively participated in a variety of nationalisation and renationalisation projects, ironically reinforcing the homogenising logics of the state-sponsored ethnic cleansings and genocides that reconfigured Europe during and after World War II.'²⁵⁹

The history of UNRRA's revolution in the French zone adds another dimension to these interpretations. Although General Lenclud maintained that UNRRA relief workers had been 'faithful executors of Roosevelt's generous thought,' the story told here reveals some of the limits to the *Americanization* and *modernization* of relief work. French authorities and relief workers rejected, at least partially, the standardized bureaucratic model of the DP camp. Furthermore, they looked on the emergence of DP municipalities with profound scepticism. Even the lowest 'common denominator' of rehabilitation, entertainment and recreation, aroused some criticism, even though these activities were widely adopted throughout the zone. Furthermore, the effects of UNRRA's ideas were not uniformly benign. Equated with the democratization of relief work, it contributed to the nationalization of refugees. Avowedly secular, it also fed the religious revivalism occurring in post-war Germany.

Yet, for all its shortcomings, UNRRA mattered. First, it articulated norms about the importance of psychological rehabilitation that, although only partially observed at the time in the French zone, have gained widespread acceptance today. Perhaps, more importantly, it acted as a protector of DPs and a guarantor of certain fundamental rights in the zone. UNRRA officials recurrently

²⁵⁶ Ibid, p. 77.

²⁵⁷ Ibid p. 78.

²⁵⁸ Salvatici 'Help the people to help themselves', p. 446.

²⁵⁹ Ballinger 'Enduring Legacy', p. 132.

denounced abuses committed by xenophobic German and French local administrators against DPs, defending the 'values of the United Nations' in the zone.

What did this mean in practice? For some local French administrators, fighting DP criminality and black-market activity was paramount, even if it meant having some Germans working for them. Raids were conducted in DP camps by military authorities, often with the assistance of local German police, usually on the pretext of uncovering black market trading. On 7 March 1946, during one such raid, a *spahi* regiment (North African colonial cavalry), backed up by armed French and German policemen, surrounded a DP camp in Pirmasens. Tanks and jeeps entered the camp at 6.30 in the morning while most of the residents were asleep. DPs were roughly manhandled and searched, their personal belongings confiscated. According to the DPs, women were forced to line up in front of male soldiers without being allowed to dress properly first. The shoe repair and woodworking studios were destroyed. Polish national symbols were stamped on by the troops.²⁶⁰ In DPs' eyes, the presence of German soldiers working alongside of French occupation forces was unacceptable.²⁶¹ French authorities could hardly have been surprised after such incidents if Polish DPs refused to work for them. The PDR Director vigorously condemned such attitudes and the military officers involved were reprimanded.²⁶² French authorities nonetheless resorted to troops again after a July 1946 DP demonstration in the same camp over delayed food rations.²⁶³

In many occasions, UNRRA officials and team directors complained about abuses committed by French or German police and intervened against anti-Semitic acts.²⁶⁴ In Biberach, for example, UNRRA Director De Marnhac protested against the policy of systematic arrests of DP suspects pursued by the French police.²⁶⁵ In Freudenstadt the UNRRA Welfare Officer reported that the antagonism of the local Governor towards DPs made her lose sleep: 'I am so distressed by DPs' misery that I dream about it at night [...] the Governor here is not only indifferent but hostile to DPs. He is of Austrian origin and was naturalized French in 1936. He lives with the wife of a famous Nazi official in prison.'²⁶⁶ In the Tübingen area, UNRRA lamented that 126 DPs were convicted

²⁶⁰ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0059-02, J. Castillo, UNRRA Director team 575 to M. le Colonel Mercier, Pirmasens, 7 March 1946.

²⁶¹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0059-02, Rapport of Polish Officer Liaison Ludwinski, Pirmasens, 8 March 1946.

²⁶² MAE, HCRFA, PDR 6/ 558, Lettre du Directeur des Personnes Déplacées (A. Poignant) à Monsieur l'administrateur général, 13 March 1946.

²⁶³ MAE, HCRFA, PDR 6/ 558, Rapport du lieutenant Caquant, Pirmasens, 4 July 1946.

²⁶⁴ UNA, UNRRA, S-0419-0001-07, Lettre du Commissaire de la Sureté de Singen à Secrétaire Général pour la Police, 3 April 1947.

²⁶⁵ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0012-03, J.J. de Marnhac à Monsieur le Délégué du Gouvernement Militaire de Biberach, 28 February 1947.

²⁶⁶ UNA, UNRRA, S-0438-0007-11, Madame Lau à Miss Roberts, 23 March 1946.

for various offences in 1946 alone.²⁶⁷ In February 1947, they protested against a harsh police search conducted at six am in the Hindenburg Kaserne in Tübingen.²⁶⁸ The cigarettes distributed by UNRRA were confiscated and several DPs arrested for illegal possession of clothes, photographic film, bikes and tyres.²⁶⁹ According to the UNRRA Director, these search operations were conducted with the 'usual brutality of Germans' who hated foreigners.²⁷⁰ From General Lenclud down, many UNRRA officials expressed concern about such incidents, fretting that cases of brutal treatment were jeopardizing France's image in Germany.²⁷¹ In March 1947, the combined pressure from UNRRA and the desire to prevent ugly confrontations between DPs and Germans pushed Laffon to issue an order forbidding German police to intervene in DP camps.²⁷²

It would be wrong, though, to oppose systematically hostile local governors and PDR administrators with sympathetic and supportive UNRRA relief workers. Chapters three and six reveal indeed that UNRRA relief workers' attitudes towards DPs were not monolithic. UNRRA was an association of people with very different backgrounds and political orientations. The evidence suggests, nevertheless, that many UNRRA workers saw the protection of DPs as their duty and denounced unfairness and brutality whenever they encountered it.

The significance of UNRRA's contribution lies in this grey area of subtle processes of protection and adaptation of UNRRA's mandate rather than in any fixed rejection or adoption of its directives. UNRRA's project was partly innovative and empowering, partly reactionary and coercive. UNRRA activities both facilitated (employment) and hindered (repatriation) the implementation of French official directives. Yet, for all that, UNRRA's presence made a real difference. It articulated norms that have today gained in authority. As Didier Fassin and Richard Rechtman note 'contemporary society now accepts without question the notion that psychologists and psychiatrists intervene in situations of war and disaster, case of exceptional or even everyday violence. No one seems astonished when mental health professionals leave their care centres and consulting rooms to attend to the 'psychically wounded' in debriefing

²⁶⁷ UNA, UNRRA, S-0419-0001-06, Délégué de Cercle à Monsieur Roquet Field Supervisor, No. 1758/PDR/RD/MS, 18 February 1947.

²⁶⁸ UNA, UNRRA, S-0419-0001-07, Similar police search in Niederlahnstein in May 1947 [Report by J. Casier].

²⁶⁹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0419-0001-06, Délégué de Cercle à Monsieur Roquet Field Supervisor, No. 1758/PDR/RD/MS, 18 February 1947.

²⁷⁰ UNA, UNRRA, S-0419-0001-06, Fabry à directeur Général de la ZFO à Haslach, Team 589 Reutlingen, 5 February 1947.

²⁷¹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0419-0001-07, R. Lavigne, Area Team Director à Directeur Général d'UNRRA en ZFO, fouille au camp de Niederlahnstein, 21 May 1947.

²⁷² MAE, HCRFA, PDR 6/556, L'administrateur Laffon à Délégué Général pour le GM du Land Rhéno-Palatin, Section des PD, 5 March 1947.

spaces.²⁷³ Fifty years ago this was not self-evident practice and notions of 'psychic wounds', 'trauma', and 'emotional memories' were poorly understood. This 'psychological turn' was rooted in the techniques developed after the First World War but gained real traction in the aftermath of the Second World War before gaining still greater significance in more recent years.

Conclusion

In conclusion, let's return to Bryce Ryan's account quoted in the introduction. His narrative contrasts with the more common tale of sacrifice and heroic rescues. As Silvia Salvatici has recently suggested, UNRRA relief worker diaries, memoirs and narrative reports tend to stress their bravery and prowess in Germany.²⁷⁴ After describing their perilous work amidst the German ruins, they narrate the self-control and ingenuity they displayed in such abnormal conditions. Even Woodbridge glorified their work in his official history of UNRRA.²⁷⁵ In 1957, Proudfoot concurred, by concluding his chapter on UNRRA and the military:

It is easy, in retrospect, to point out the shortcomings of the organization, for they are obvious for all to see. UNRRA's real achievement lay in the rehabilitation work carried out by her anonymous workers in the centres. This kind of work is not susceptible of statistical analysis. No reports could be drawn up showing so many people in this, that, or the other centre restored to normal life, and ready to make a new start as happy, well-adjusted human beings. Yet, there can be no doubt that this was UNRRA's real contribution.²⁷⁶

Bryce Ryan's account reveals a different story, one marked by powerlessness, waste and boredom. His narrative could be linked to Jacqueline Lesdos' testimony described in the previous chapter. Feeling at odds with her UNRRA team, Lesdos resigned in the summer of 1946 believing that she could not *rehabilitate* DPs as she was herself devastated by the death of her brother.

Since the publication of Woodbridge and Proudfoot's books in the 1950s, historical research has deepened our understanding of UNRRA's activities in the field of 'rehabilitation.' But historians remain divided in their assessment of the 'regenerative' value of DP camps. For some, DP camps were, first and foremost, places of protection and self-realisation. Scholars such as Daniel

²⁷³ Didier Fassin and Richard Rechtman *The Empire of Trauma. An inquiry into the condition of Victimhood* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), pp. 4-5.

²⁷⁴ Salvatici 'Help the people to help themselves', p. 441.

²⁷⁵ Woodbridge *UNRRA*, Vol. 2, p. 470.

²⁷⁶ Proudfoot *European refugees*, p. 302.

Cohen and Atina Grossmann maintain that DP camps offered a supportive environment for the psychological, physical and sentimental reconstruction of DPs.²⁷⁷ For others, DP camps signified a withdrawal of rights and loss of identity.²⁷⁸ Admittedly, the emergence of politics (described in the previous chapter) as well as the flood of marriages and the camp 'baby boom' occurring in the French zone are clearly signs of life after death. DPs, in the French zone, as elsewhere, felt sufficiently protected to set about reconstructing their family lives. Yet, the effects of UNRRA relief workers' *rehabilitative* activities remain difficult to assess, not least because the psychological scars of wartime experiences - as well as the psychological impact of post-war pedagogy - often only surfaced years after the war.²⁷⁹ As Tara Zahra observes, the efforts to rehabilitate DPs 'simultaneously reflected dystopian fears about the total collapse of European civilization and utopian visions of regeneration. As they assessed their own impact, [...] welfare experts themselves lurched between optimism and despair.'²⁸⁰

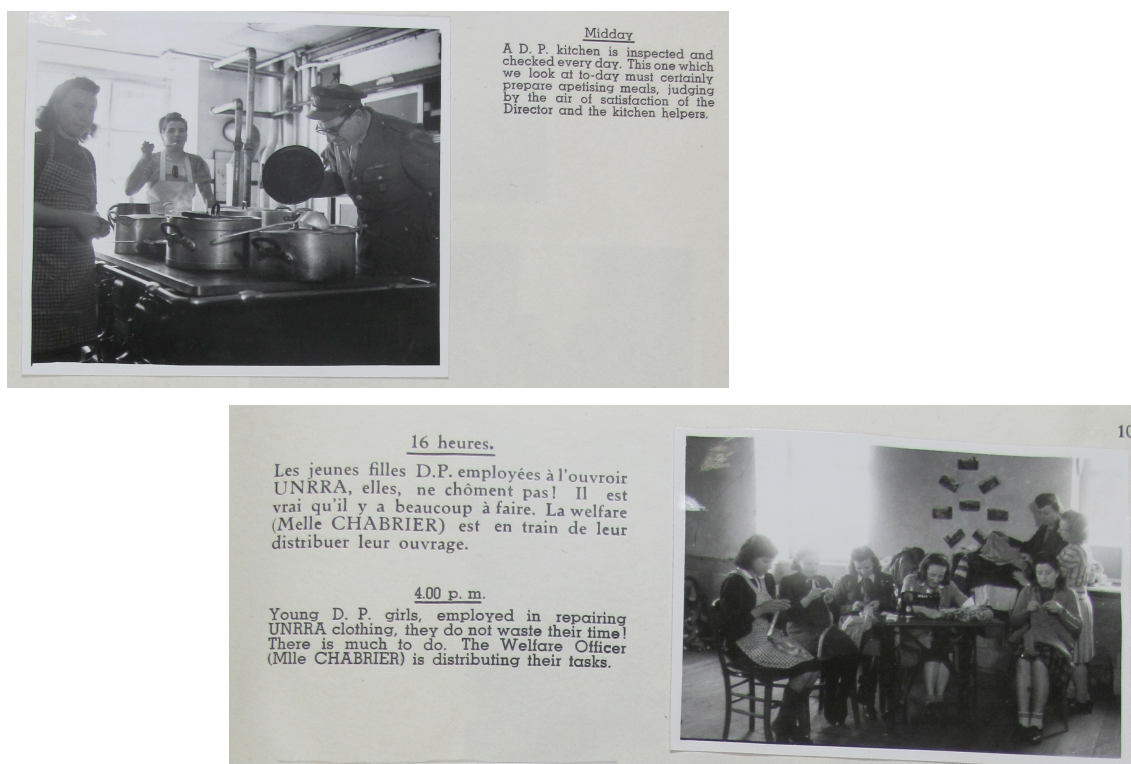


Fig. 35/36. DP kitchen and sewing room in Gutach²⁸¹

²⁷⁷ Cohen 'Un espace domestique d'après-guerre', p. 118 ; Grossmann 'La reconstruction individuelle comme projet collectif', pp. 291-305.

²⁷⁸ On the ambivalence of DP camps see Holian 'The Ambivalent exception', pp. 454-456.

²⁷⁹ Zahra *Lost children*, p. 234.

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 233.

²⁸¹ UNRRA, S-0421-0023-09, 'La journée du jeudi 18 avril 1946 au team 572', par Durand, Gutach.

Chapter Six: Between economic exploitation and psychological rehabilitation: Employment policies in the French zone

A congratulatory illustrated story with the headline, 'UNRRA's activities in the French zone' in the summer 1946 issue of *La France en Allemagne*, a magazine edited by the Military Government's Information Service, detailed UNRRA's efforts to instil a work ethic amongst DPs. It drew the reader's attention to the central role that employment played not only in the French zone's economy, but also in the reconstruction of each individual DP. The author of this article unequivocally maintained that DPs' conditions were unlike those of Germans, UNRRA recognizing the DPs' victim status by granting them an (allegedly) daily food ration of 2,300 calories. The author went on to insist that DPs were not really *forced* to work. 'Some measures, for that matter benign - as compulsion to work [...] is against UNRRA's principles - are taken against those able-bodied [DPs] who refuse employment. They are deprived of amenity supplies, in other words treats, such as chocolate or supplementary cigarette rations.'¹ The author assured readers that the overwhelming majority of DPs themselves were in fact extremely anxious to find employment, omitting that some of them were reluctant to work for their former German oppressors.² According to him, DPs organized a multitude of small workshops, including shoemaking and repairing, tailoring, dressmaking and carpentry.

Small craft workshops were the most popular amongst DPs; here, one knits strips using the paper of cigarette' packets, with which one makes solid and beautiful belts; there, one finds an embroidery workshop, somewhere else a workshop full of wooden toys... Often there are exhibitions [...] these are opportunities for them to compare their artworks; they are great stimulants to work. Recently, we saw an exhibition of embroidery in Baden-Baden [...] it was a roaring success.³

UNRRA archival documents concur: the June 1946 UNRRA's exhibition *Art and Work* was indeed a success, at least for UNRRA officials. It had been so 'widely acclaimed' that the UNRRA Paris Mission negotiated with the French Foreign Ministry and the Ministry PDR over the possibility of transporting it to Paris.⁴

¹ 'Les activités de l'UNRRA dans la zone française' in *La France en Allemagne*, No. 1, July 1946, pp. 49-51, p. 50.

² See, for instance, UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0029-03, Lettre de O. Gobert à Mr. Bohn, District Employment Officer, 1 July 1946 ; Haut Commissariat de la République française en Allemagne, Service des Personnes Déplacées, *Sept ans d'activité en faveur des personnes déplacées en zone française d'occupation, 1945-1952, rapport dactylographié et illustré*, [undated], p. 24.

³ 'Les activités de l'UNRRA dans la zone française', pp. 50-51.

⁴ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0002-02, Ph. De Vomécourt à Brigadier General W. Fraser, 18 June 1946. This project was, however, later abandoned. S-0421-0031-05, Bastiaenen, Compte-rendu de la réunion du 22 Aout, Freiburg in Brigsau, Ref.3821/Bir/Ac.

Of course, this had clear political and ideological dimensions. Whilst, during the inter-war years, Paris provided the venue for exhibitions of France's *humanitarian achievements* in its colonies, at the Liberation French governments strove to celebrate their country's good deeds in the German ruins with the victims of Nazism. DP Employment rates became a measure by which their success was measured. Indeed, French authorities prided themselves in having succeeded in placing DPs in employment whereas their Western Allies had largely failed.⁵ In February 1947, for example, the parliamentary mission, which toured DP camps in Germany reported that French employment figures were eloquent proof of this achievement, as in the other Western zones they did not reach more than thirty per cent of the employable DP population.⁶ In marked contrast, out of the 19,990 employable DPs in the French zone, 17,366 DPs were registered as being in work in January 1947, representing nearly eighty-seven per cent of the employable population.⁷ Highly satisfied with this result, French UNRRA and PDR relief workers congratulated themselves on their advancement of more individualistic and effective solutions for the DPs, in marked contrast with American methods, which, they inferred, catalysed the development of a 'begging complex' amongst DPs.⁸ Yet, as this chapter explains, the reality behind DP employment was far more grim than this self-congratulatory account suggested.

Firstly, whilst UNRRA Central Administration might have rejected the compulsion to work, French authorities did not. On 5 December 1945, Koenig issued an order stipulating that DPs who refused work would be deprived of the privileges associated with their DP status.⁹ In other words, they would lose their access to food and accommodation. Work thus became more a duty than a

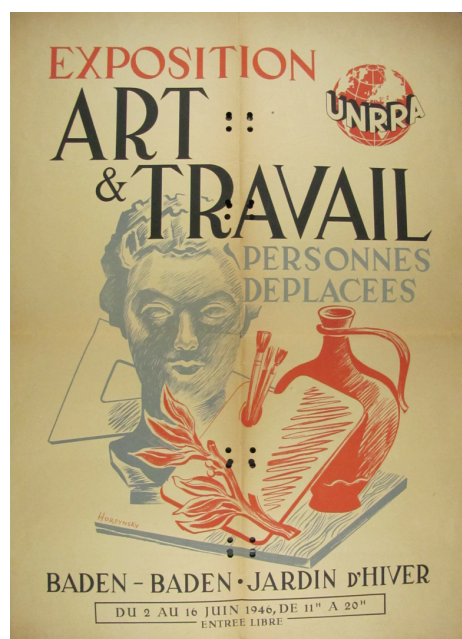


Fig. 37. Exhibition 'Art and Work'

UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0031-01, Exhibition Poster, Imprimerie Nationale Lahr (Schauenburg), J.O.334.

⁵ According to Malcolm Proudfoot's estimates, approximately one half of employable DPs worked in the three Western zones. *European Refugees, 1939-1952*. (London: Faber and Faber, 1957), p. 255.

⁶ CAC, Fontainebleau, 770623, article 172, Rapport commun établi par les membres de la mission d'information sur le problème des personnes déplacées des trois zones d'occupation en Allemagne, 9-23 February 1947, pp. 6-7.

⁷ UNA, UNRRA, S-1021-0085-03, Ateliers et programmes d'éducation professionnelle, Zone Française, [May 1947], p. 6.

⁸ *Sept ans d'activité en faveur des personnes déplacées en zone française d'occupation*, p. 27.

⁹ MAE, HCRFA, ADM 40, L'Administrateur Général Laffon à Monsieur le Président du Gouvernement Provisoire de la République, N.5831, 30 January 1946. Also see Letter N.5773 from Laffon to Général de Corps d'Armées, Adjoint pour le Commandement Supérieur des Troupes d'Occupation, 19 January 1946.

right in the French zone. Secondly, although Emile Laffon introduced safeguards in February 1946 to protect DPs working under German supervision, intense friction between DPs and their former oppressors persisted. As UNRRA employment officer Rozale observed, some Germans offered DPs ‘the work they did not want to do.’¹⁰ In Württemberg, ‘[t]he situation of our workers is essentially the same as that during the war, when they were forced by Germans to do the hardest work. Coercion has stopped, but the jobs offered to them are exactly the same.’¹¹ While many DPs had little choice other than to accept these unattractive jobs, many Germans were disinclined to work alongside them.¹² In October 1946, for example, a DP strike broke out in the Zelstoffabrik factory in Ehingen. Amongst DPs’ grievances were the brutal management methods of their German Director, an ex-Nazi official. One of the DP representatives pinpointed their resentment: ‘People who wore the swastika during the war, [...] who shouted ‘Heil Hitler’ and who [...] mistreated foreign workers are now the direct supervisors of DPs.’¹³

As this quotation indicates, highly ambiguous French employment policies lie at the heart of this chapter. The discrepancy between French official self-congratulatory accounts and the methods employed to handpick and coerce fit and able-bodied DPs to work raise unaddressed historical questions. Did UNRRA relief workers act as ‘protectors’ of DPs against labour abuses? Were DP employment policies only driven by the demands of French economic reconstruction? Or were they, on the contrary, motivated by a genuine belief in the ‘therapeutic’ and emancipatory virtues of work? What were the cultural factors shaping DP employment? Was it a form of economic exploitation masquerading as humanitarian action, something closer to colonial-style ideas of *mise en valeur* (‘development’)? Did these employment practices bear traces of the artisanal craftsmanship idealized by Petain’s National Revolution? Or by contrast, were they simply another variant of post-1945 ideology of productivism? And, finally, to what extent did such practices contribute to the reinforcement of *ethnic* and *gender* differences amongst DPs?

Coercing DPs to work, according to Andreas Rinke, was part of a series of measures intended to make DPs’ life conditions harder, the aim being to

¹⁰ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0029-05, J. Rozale à Mr. E.P. Moreland et Monsieur le Gouverneur Délégué Supérieur pour le Gouvernement Militaire du Wurtemberg, Tubigen, N.22/290, 25 June 1946.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Laura Megan Greaves ‘Concerned not only with relief’: UNRRA’s work rehabilitating the Displaced Persons in the American zone of occupation in Germany, 1945-1947’, PhD Dissertation, University of Waterloo (2013), p. 204.

¹³ UNA, UNRRA, S-0432-0004-01, Dunst, Chef des camps du cercle de Ehingen, 7 September 1946.

encourage them to return home.¹⁴ In marked contrast with the American zone, Rinke argues that there was little acknowledgement of DPs' war victim status in the French zone.¹⁵ Instead of being a safe, recuperative haven, the French zone was a hostile and unwelcoming place, DPs being the indirect victims of harsh French policies towards Germans. In some ways, this interpretation fits within a wider historiographical trend, keen to emphasize the exploitative and vindictive nature of French economic and social occupation policies. Until the mid-1980s, historians, particularly German historians, tended to present the French as harsh occupants, 'industrial cannibals' who exaggeratedly requisitioned German clothes and raw materials, undertook excessive, frenzied industrial removals and imposed a draconian food policy on the German population under their control.¹⁶ In recent decades, the historical reputation of the French zone has undergone a significant rehabilitation, with scholars highlighting the complexities and ambivalence of French policy.¹⁷ The emphasis on exploitation has given way to a more nuanced understanding that illustrates the considerable regional variation in French policies and their contingency in relation to wider political goals. Admittedly, French economic policy in Germany had two main purposes: maintaining a positive trade balance in order not to require financial support from the French economy and resuming production in industries 'useful for the French economy.'¹⁸ But, Dietmar Hüser has developed the concept of a 'double-game French policy', French authorities officially defending a severe policy, while, in practice, implementing a more nuanced one.¹⁹ More recently, Martial Libera has shown that French policy tended to be constructive in the Saarland, relatively constructive in the Rhineland-Palatinate and, on the contrary, revengeful and exploitative in the Württemberg. He has also argued that policy initiatives were highly contradictory, with French occupation officials often at loggerheads on issues of economic policy in particular. On the one hand, French policy was marked by a notable push

¹⁴ Andreas Rinke *Le Grand retour - Die französische Displaced Person-Politik (1944-1951)* (Krankfurt, Peter Lang, 2002), pp. 295-296.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 296.

¹⁶ 'Industrial cannibalism' is a phrase used by Abelshäuser Wemer in 'Wirtschaft und Besatzungspolitik in der französischen Zone 1945 - 1949,' in Claus Scharf and Hans-Jürgen Schröder (eds.), *Die Deutschlandpolitik Frankreichs und die Französische Zone 1945 - 1949*, quoted in Martial Libéra *Un Rêve de Puissance: La France et le Contrôle de l'économie Allemande (1942-1949)* (Bruxelles : Peter Lang, 2012), p. 27.

¹⁷ Rainer Hudemann 'Revanche ou partenariat' A propos des nouvelles orientations de la recherche sur la politique française à l'égard de l'Allemagne après 1945', in Gilbert Krebs and Gérard Schneilin (eds) *L'Allemagne 1945-1955. De la capitulation à la division* (Asnières: Publication de l'Institut d'Allemand, 1996), pp. 127-152; 'L'occupation française après 1945 et les relations franco-allemandes' *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d'histoire*, (1997), Vol. 55, No. 3 (1997), pp. 58-68.

¹⁸ Sylvie Lefèvre *Les relations économiques franco-allemandes de 1945 à 1955. De l'occupation à la coopération* (Paris: Comité pour l'histoire économique et financière de la France, 1998), p. XIV.

¹⁹ Dietmar Hüser *Frankreichs "Doppelte Deutschlandpolitik." Dynamik aus der Defensive - Planen, Entscheiden, Umsetzen in gesellschaftlichen und wirtschaftlichen, innen- und außenpolitischen Krisenzeiten 1944 - 1950* (Berlin : Duncker & Humblot, 1996).

towards democratisation; on the other, it was an exploitative policy resembling 'colonial trade.'²⁰

The history of DP employment offers powerful evidence in this regard, employment policies being deeply implicated in the mixed record of the zone: the emphasis on DP employment made possible the development of DPs' initiatives and sense of responsibility, in enabling them to run independent workshops and giving them the opportunity to live in private accommodation. In this sense, it contributed to normalizing DPs' life conditions. At the same time, actual implementation of employment policies reveals disturbing indications of brutality, unjustifiable in their cruelty and arbitrariness, as the example of the Zelstoffabrik confirms.

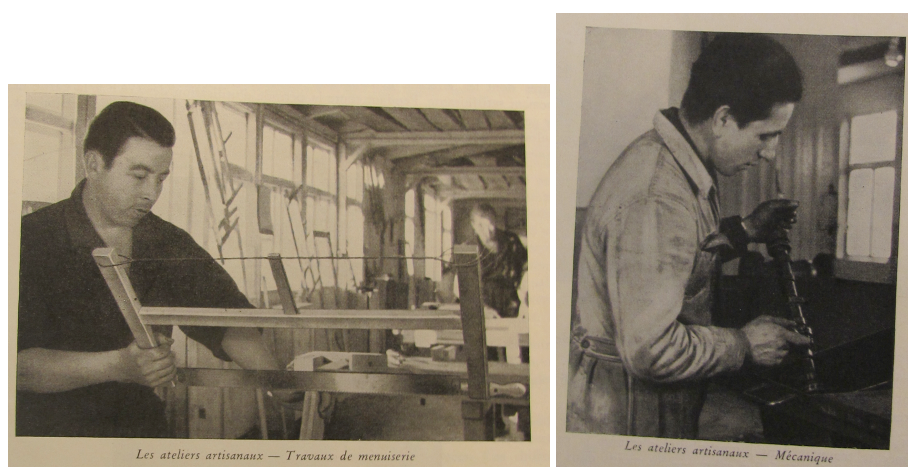


Fig. 38/39. Photographs of DPs working in a wood and mechanical workshops.²¹

Pursuing these themes, the chapter disentangles the different concerns of French official actors involved in DP employment policy, focusing on the issue of coercion. It shows that attitudes towards DP employment within the military government and UNRRA were not monolithic. As in many other aspects of DP policy, various political and humanitarian actors had contradictory requirements and divergent policies. Furthermore, employment conditions crucially depended on where DPs lived, for whom they worked and their nationality and gender.²² The chapter next explores the question of material entitlements and salaries in order to demonstrate the contradictions that shaped employment practices. It examines the extent to which DPs' grievances about food, clothing and salaries were perceived by many UNRRA field relief workers as both legitimate and the inevitable by-product of deeper resentments that not enough had changed since the end of the war, the accusation being that DPs

²⁰ Libéra *Un Rêve de Puissance*, p. 242.

²¹ *Sept-ans au service des personnes déplacées*, pp. 25-26.

²² UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0031-04, Rapport spécial sur le ravitaillement des Personnes Déplacées, Bastiaenen, Directeur du team 206, Freiburg, 12 July 1946.

remained vassals to whom fundamental rights – such as access to decent food - were denied. Bringing these issues together, finally, the chapter analyses the extent to which employment discourses reaffirmed a hierarchical taxonomy in which productivity and desirability were explicitly linked to ethnic and gender differences.

Rehabilitation through coercion?²³

Amid all the conflict and discord between the PDR Direction and French UNRRA Headquarters, one area of outright agreement appeared to endure: DPs were expected to work in return for the protection that France was granting them.²⁴ On this, UNRRA relief workers and local PDR officials concurred with occupation officials. For French administrators, it was unthinkable to support a ‘group of idle people incapable of participating in the reconstruction of their homeland’ in Germany, while French workers at home were asked to participate to the ‘battle of production’ and roll up their sleeves for the reconstruction of France.²⁵ Without doubt, DP employment policies were driven by French reconstruction imperatives and deeply intertwined with the post-1945 rhetoric of the ‘battle of production’ in France.²⁶ As Charles de Gaulle maintained in 1945, “[y]esterday there was no national duty that had precedence over the duty to fight. But today there is none that can take precedence over that to produce.”²⁷ Leaders from the Communist Party, the MRP and the SFIO, all presented production as the highest duty of the French workers. ‘Soldiers of the Reconstruction, let us try to equal our elders, those of the Revolution, who, in rags and tatters, led France on the path of greatness’ urged a typical propaganda pamphlet of the time.²⁸

Beyond the economic demands of reconstruction, the advocacy of employment was prompted by several other factors. On the one hand, as mentioned earlier, employment was, for some occupation officials and Army commanders, part of a series of measures aimed at hardening DPs’ life

²³ The title is a reference to Alice Conklin’s phrase ‘civilization through coercion.’ Alice Conklin *A mission to civilize. The Republican idea of Empire in France and West Africa, 1895-1930* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), pp. 212-245. Also see Gary Wilder *The French imperial Nation-State. Negritude and Colonial Humanism between the Two World Wars* (Chicago: the University of Chicago Press, 2005), pp. 84-89.

²⁴ On the specificities of French employment policies see Julia Maspero ‘Les autorités françaises d’occupation face au problème des personnes déplacées en Allemagne et Autriche (1945-1949)’, *Revue d’Allemagne et des Pays de langue allemande*, Vol. 40, No. 3 (2008), pp. 485-500, pp. 491-496.

²⁵ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0031-09, Lettre de Bastiaenen à Thomasset, 11 February 1946.

²⁶ Jean-Pierre Rioux ‘France, 1945: L’ambition Allemande et ses moyens’ Klaus Manfrass and Jean-Pierre Rioux (ed) *France-Allemagne 1944-1947* (Paris: Cahier de l’IHTP No.13/14, 1990), pp. 37-46.

²⁷ Quoted in Rebecca Pulju *Women and Mass Consumer Society in Postwar France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 8 ; Also see Gerard Bossuat ‘The Modernization of France : a New Economic and Social Order after the Second World War ?’, Dominik Geppert (ed) *The postwar challenge, 1945-1958* (Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 151-178.

²⁸ Jean-Pierre Rioux (trans. by Rogers Godfrey) *The Fourth Republic, 1944-1958* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 63.

conditions in order to encourage them to return home.²⁹ UNRRA Zone Employment Officer Gobert complained that, too often, French Army officers forgot ‘that DPs [were] our Allies, that most of them were deported or ‘displaced’ for several years’ and that not all of them were ‘black sheep.’³⁰ Indeed, some occupation officials saw DPs as a reservoir of young, able-bodied, cheap and docile workers: they could be placed in any job, and could be reasonably expected to put up with poor wages, unregulated working hours and discrimination. The policy of compulsion to work thus included a marked repressive aspect. General Pierre-Marie Koenig’s Military Cabinet, a socially and politically conservative group mainly constituted of experienced military officers, craved order, stability and the rule of law.³¹ Reflecting their views, on 4 December 1945, Koenig announced the creation of three disciplinary camps for male DPs, located in Nonnenhof (Württemberg), Kemmel (Rhineland) and Lörrach (Baden).³² In January 1946, as anxieties about DPs’ lack of discipline mounted, the Cabinet Director Henri Navarre called for vigilant policing of the DP population. He maintained that French authorities might achieve better results ‘by shooting several culprits in each camp.’³³ For these officers, if DPs were not happy, they could return home, as the Military Governor of Württemberg’s attested: ‘[T]hose who did not want to go home need[ed] to understand that they [could] not be stakeholders, but that they need[ed] to contribute to the economy of the Nation that protect[ed] and fe[d] them.’³⁴ In Niederlahnstein, Commandant Truchet concurred ‘[o]ne needs to understand that young and idle people, fed and housed in the camps, even if modestly, must in return serve the French authorities’ mission through the work they perform. It is not a question of compulsory work, it is a matter of moral obligation.’³⁵

Relevant here is the extent to which manual work was widely praised at the Liberation for its healing and therapeutic virtues. PDR Director Poignant noted, for example, that ‘among the normal activities of an individual, work is one of the most noble and commendable.’³⁶ As Daniel Cohen has compellingly demonstrated, ‘many virtues aside from economic one were ascribed to productive and manual work in post-war France: re-generation, morality,

²⁹ Rinke *Le grand retour*, p. 295.

³⁰ UNRRA, S-0421-0029-02, Zone Employment Officer à General de Marguerite dit “Lize”, 27 mai 1946; Also see S-0432-0003-01, Note de service, Travailleurs PDR employés par le centre de recuperation veterinaire de Nierderauerbach, 21 March 1947.

³¹ Libera *Un rêve de puissance*, p. 323.

³² UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0059-03, Note de Service, No.6290 DGAA Dir PDR, transmis le 1 Avril 1946 par Laffon à Général Délégué Supérieur pour le Gouvernement militaire du Palatinat; refered to letter No.1611,CAB-CC dating from 4 December 1945.

³³ MAE, HCRFA, Ambassade de Bonn 148, Direction du Cabinet, Fiche pour le Général Koenig signée Navarre, 11 January 1946.

³⁴ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0029-03, Le Gouverneur à Directeur de l’UNRRA Zone Sud, M.2387 SAA/PDR/RC/JP, 9 July 1946.

³⁵ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0021-01, Cdt. J. Truchet, Note de service, 7 March 1947.

³⁶ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0024-05, Directeur PDR à Monsieur le Général de Corps d’armée, No,6229DGAA/Dir PDR, 23 March 1946.

patriotism, and humanism.’³⁷ Employment was perceived as the best remedy against DP apathy and idleness, traits that were deemed to be typical illnesses of uprooted people.’³⁸ Daniel Louis Chantal, head of the *Centre de Reclassement Professionnel* in France, observed that ‘the acquisition of a manual trade, when rationally conducted, allows the most impaired (deportees, internees) to escape their moral suffering and restores the psychological balance taken from them by adversity.’³⁹ It was argued that employment promoted a sense of dignity, freeing DPs from their ‘dependency syndrome’ and enhancing their sense of morality. In the post-war years, the *Service Sociale d’Aide aux Emigrants* (SSAE) argued that its main mission was to find constructive solutions to free the uprooted from the pitiful condition of *assisté*.⁴⁰ Jewish philanthropic organisations concurred. While professional reintegration had always been an important component of Jewish philanthropic activities in France, its importance rose in Liberation France, marking a pronounced shift in French Jewish humanitarian practices. Indeed, Laure Fourtage points out that charity work, particularly when it lasted over long periods, was negatively perceived in post-war France, allegedly reinforcing its recipients’ feelings of humiliation, loss of self-confidence and demoralisation.⁴¹ This prevailing discourse explained why nobody in the French zone opposed the idea of encouraging DPs to work, even if this entailed *forcing* them to accept work.

Indeed, even Laffon’s more progressive Cabinet staff endorsed the need to encourage DPs to work. Laffon did, however, set himself against abusive labour practices. On 1 February 1946, he transmitted Koenig’s order dating from 5 December 1945 to the Delegates of the various military governments. But he insisted that on ‘no account, unless they expressly desired it’, should DPs be directly employed by Germans. If DPs were to work under German supervision, ‘an employment contract or a written statement of the worker stating his desire to be employed by a German employer’ was required.⁴² Moreover, Laffon required that DPs’ employment corresponded, as far as it was possible, to their particular skills. And, finally, he exhorted local administrators to

³⁷ Daniel Cohen ‘Regeneration through Labor: Vocational Training and the Reintegration of Deportees and Refugees, 1945-1950’, *Proceedings of the Western Society for French history*, Vol. 32 (2004), pp. 368-385, p. 384. [URL: <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.0642292.0032.021>]

³⁸ UNA, UNRRA, S-1021-0085-02, Team 585, Historique du Service Welfare, 24 March 1947; Silvia Salvatici ‘From Displaced Persons to Labourers: Allied Employment Policies in Post-War West Germany’ in Jessica Reinisch and Elizabeth White (ed) *The Disentanglement of Populations: Migration, Expulsion and Displacement in Postwar Europe* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 210-228, p. 215.

³⁹ Cohen ‘Regeneration through Labor.’

⁴⁰ AN, AJ/43/1141, Rapport sur l’activité du SSAE en 1950 présenté à l’Assemblée Générale du 7 mars 1951, p. 3.

⁴¹ Laure Fourtage ‘Les organisations juives d’aide sociale et l’insertion professionnelle dans l’immédiat après-guerre’ *Archives Juives*, Vol. 45, No. 1 (2012), pp. 10-26, p. 13.

⁴² MAE, HCRFA, Bade-Sud, Délégation cercles vrac, 39, Administrateur Général Laffon à Général Délégué Supérieur pour le GM de Bade, 1 February 1946; Also see PDR6/811, Laffon’s letter to the Governor of Wurttemberg, 4 April 1946.

grant the DPs preferential treatment over Germans. Their food rations were to be 'equal to those of heavy workers', and in no circumstances 'inferior to those of the German workers in the same category.'⁴³ As far as disciplinary camps were concerned, their role was more to 're-educate rather than punish', these DPs having been 'during five years *des épaves*, separated by force from their homeland and thereby, being entitled to indulgence.'⁴⁴

This emphasis on DP employment was not, in itself, specific to French humanitarian discourse. As Silvia Salvatici has recently demonstrated, American and British humanitarian actors were also convinced about the necessity to instil a work ethic amongst DPs.⁴⁵ In May 1945, the issue of DP employment was introduced in the *Guide to the Care of the Displaced Persons in Germany* circulated by SHAEF. This guide provided for four different types of DP labour, 'inside and outside the camps, at the service of the military forces but also in the German economy.'⁴⁶ The report on *Psychological Problems of Displaced Persons* issued in June 1945 by the Welfare Division of the European Regional Office also emphasized the necessity of DPs' employment. The authors of this report argued that working gave DPs a sense of purpose, restored their self-respect and transformed them from 'passive recipients' of relief into 'active participating members of a hopeful and integrated community.'⁴⁷ The fundamental difference between French and Anglo-American employment policies lay in the compulsory nature of the work performed.

Although British and American employment policies were not without their share of ambiguities, regulations stipulating requirements for compulsory employment were only approved in January 1947 in the British zone and none were ever issued in the American zone.⁴⁸ Compulsion to work was certainly contrary to UNRRA's principles.⁴⁹ For the UNRRA administration, employment should be encouraged and stimulated by every possible means, provided, of course, that it did not interfere with repatriation, but it should be voluntary and paid.⁵⁰ The authors of *Psychological problems* warned that compulsion to work in sectors that did not correspond to DPs' skills and in conditions that resembled their wartime situation were unlikely to restore DPs' sense of self-respect. On

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0059-03, Note de Service, No.6290 DGAA Dir PDR, transmis le 1 Avril 1946 par Laffon à Général Délégué Supérieur pour le Gouvernement militaire du Palatinat; referred to letter No.1611,CAB-CC dating from 4 December 1945.

⁴⁵ Salvatici insists on Allied efforts to encourage DPs employment, Nicholas Bohatiuk, on the contrary, understates them. 'The Economic Aspects of Camp life' in Isajiw, Boshyk and Senkus (eds) *The Refugee Experience. Ukrainian Displaced Persons after World War Two* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 1992), pp. 69-89, p. 72.

⁴⁶ Salvatici 'From Displaced Persons to Labourers', p. 211.

⁴⁷ WL, HA5-4/3, Welfare Division, *Report on Psychological Problems of Displaced Persons*, 1 June 1945, pp. 1-41, p. 26.

⁴⁸ Salvatici 'From Displaced Persons to Labourers', pp. 210-228.

⁴⁹ Woodbridge *UNRRA*, Vol. 2, p. 519.

⁵⁰ Central Headquarters, Germany Administrative Order 18, 'Employment Program', 24 November 1945; S-0417-0004-09, Ordre Administratif No. 28, Programme d'Emploi, signé F.E.Morgan, 26 November 1945.

the contrary, they would exacerbate their ‘feelings of being unloved and isolated in strange communities.’⁵¹ In the inter-war years, ILO experts had already condemned compulsory employment, maintaining that ‘forced labour leads to a disgust for work and to hatred of all forms of labour.’⁵² Compulsory employment was clearly opposite to the concept of ‘rehabilitation’ as understood by New Deal-influenced relief workers:

The main processes involved in ‘rehabilitation’ are recovery from losses – of health, skills, of valued personal relationships and of social connections. As a planned process, ‘rehabilitation’ in practice means the provision of an atmosphere and opportunities where the careful and graduated use of incentives leads to graded satisfactions over efforts. These satisfactions arise from the redevelopment of initiative and the realisation that satisfaction, contentment or even happiness are in fact inevitably bound up with use of initiative and with the acceptance of responsibility.⁵³

Compulsion to work thereby tested the language of human rights repeatedly enunciated by UN planners. Admittedly, historians have demonstrated that human rights were far from universally agreed concepts in the mid-twentieth century.⁵⁴ But, the *Psychological problems*’ report, as well as UNRRA high-officials’ response to French policies of compulsion to work, reveal that the language of human rights weighed upon DP policies, even if only marginally. ‘Rights like freedom of worship, freedom of speech, of assembly, of choice of work are now urgent to the restoration of human dignity, and delay may lead to anxious protests and turbulent attempts at assertion, in much the same way as the pre-war unemployed fought against despairing feelings that society had no use for them.’⁵⁵

In sum, in early SHAEF and UNRRA memorandums employment was first presented as a right, DPs being assigned priority in employment over Germans. Even if it was later constructed as a duty, forcing DPs to work was still widely regarded as a morally and legally unacceptable practice. On several occasions throughout 1946 and 1947, UNRRA’s Administration called for an end to the French policy of employment compulsion and the imprisonment of those DPs unwilling to work, claiming that these measures violated international norms regarding forced labour.⁵⁶ For all that, many French occupation and UNRRA officials condoned the practice, believing that certain conditions

⁵¹ WL, HA5-4/3, Welfare Division, *Report on Psychological Problems of Displaced Persons*, 1 June 1945, pp. 1-41, p. 34.

⁵² James Daughton ‘ILO expertise and Colonial Violence in the Interwar Years’ in Sandrine Kott and Joëlle Droux (eds) *Globalizing Social Rights. The International Labour Organisation and Beyond* (Basingtoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp. 85-97, p. 89.

⁵³ WL, HA5-4/3, Welfare Division, *Report on Psychological Problems of Displaced Persons*, 1 June 1945, pp. 1-41, p. 22.

⁵⁴ Samuel Moyn *The last utopia: Human Rights in History* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2010).

⁵⁵ WL, HA5-4/3, Welfare Division, *Report on Psychological Problems of Displaced Persons*, 1 June 1945, pp. 1-41, p. 40.

⁵⁶ UNA, UNRRA, S-0432-0004-03, Traduction, Lettre de Myer Cohen à Général Lenclud, 21 March 1947.

legitimated coercion. During UNRRA council sessions in May 1946, the French delegation proposed a resolution that would have introduced the compulsion to work throughout Germany, claiming that DP idleness was both a 'breach of morale' and a source of 'physical and professional inaptitude.'⁵⁷ Behind this insistence on the obligation to work lay, perhaps, some traces of a colonialist mind-set. Indeed, in some significant ways, French humanitarian discourse contained elements of domination that resemble colonialism.

Indeed, the advocacy of compulsion to work stemmed, in part, from the conviction that the French knew better what served *apathetic* DPs' best interests than the DPs did themselves. This contemptuous assumption resembled the inter-war belief that the French knew what was in the interest of *indolent* indigenous people in the colonies, especially those reluctant to accept the regimens of waged labour. As Alice Conklin has demonstrated, colonial administrators believed that by forcing the colonized to work they were protecting them against their own 'lazy' inclinations, and that compulsion was, therefore, justifiable as long as it was 'explained' and did not exceed colonized 'capacity' for understanding.⁵⁸ Similarly, some occupation and UNRRA officials believed that they, too, were saving DPs from themselves, by compelling them to combat their 'apathetic' illness. In practice, DPs had very little say over the terms under which such 'humanitarian aid' was given. To be sure, DPs were not forced to work in desperate conditions comparable to those of the colonies. Labour abuses and related hardships in post-war Germany were neither in scope, nor scale comparable to those in the colonial world during the inter-war years. In total, as will be explained later, probably only around forty per cent of the DPs worked in jobs widely seen as unappealing or involving heavy manual labour. Perhaps, as Michael Barnett suggests, rather than colonialism, one should use the concept of 'paternalism', defined as 'the interference with a person's liberty on the grounds that it is in his or her best interests' to better understand the underlying dynamics of French humanitarian discourse and the animosities it aroused.⁵⁹

Gestapo methods? Forceful recruitment, unattractive jobs

Criticized by UNRRA Central headquarters for complying with this French doctrine of coercion, French UNRRA headquarters argued that sanctions 'were

⁵⁷ NUOI, 294, Télégramme No. 1785, Bousquet, 17 May 1946.

⁵⁸ Conklin *A mission to civilize*, p. 227 ; Daughton 'ILO expertise and Colonial Violence in the Interwar Years', p. 88.

⁵⁹ Michael Barnett 'Humanitarianism, Paternalism and the UNHCR' in Alexander Betts and Gil Loescher (eds) *Refugees in International Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 105-132, p. 105 ; Michael Barnett *Empire of Humanity : A history of Humanitarianism* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2011), pp. 11-12.

applied with great moderation', observing that 'only about a hundred DPs were sent to disciplinary camps during the year 1946.'⁶⁰ Opposed to compulsory employment and to the imprisonment of those who refused to work, a British Welfare Officer identified only as Miss Roberts visited a disciplinary camp in June 1946. She reported that the overwhelming majority of internees were either German *Wehrwölfes* (former members of guerrilla movement formed by the Nazi party), or DPs accused of black market activities and thefts.⁶¹ On 29 March 1947, UNRRA Director Lenclud maintained that coercion was never fully implemented. The insignificant minority of DPs imprisoned were incarcerated without 'the help of UNRRA.'⁶² According to Commandant Seville, UNRRA succeeded in protecting DPs against the PDR's inclination to impose forced labour without consideration for DPs' skills.⁶³ But was this really the case? Or did it stem from an attempt by French UNRRA high-officials to justify UNRRA's presence in the context of the escalating PDR/UNRRA conflict? As we shall see, the evidence is actually more varied and contradictory than Seville's statement suggests.

The number of DPs imprisoned in disciplinary camps may have been limited, but the evidence suggests that some local officials used the threat of detention (followed by repatriation), as well as deprivation of food, to cajole DPs into accepting unattractive job offers. On the ground, sympathetic UNRRA relief workers insisted on the painful inadequacies and ironies of the DPs' situation. Germans continued to live a fairly normal life while DPs were subjected to compulsory employment and restrictions on their freedom of movement. In Rottweil, for instance, PDR Officer Lieutenant de Chanterac sent two Baltic DPs to the disciplinary camp of Nonnenhof for a month after they refused to go to Saarland to work as drivers. One of them was a medical student, the other one an accountant.⁶⁴ Not surprisingly, these DPs felt aggrieved and unfairly treated. Similarly, in Friedrichshafen, DPs' placement in the *Haybach-Dernier's* firm was carried out 'quite brutally under the threat of food deprivation.'⁶⁵ Central to this process was the fact that DPs were often expected to fulfil unskilled, menial jobs. The dismantlement of German factories, coupled with the disorganization of the French zone's economy, meant that there were very few possibilities to

⁶⁰ UNA, UNRRA, S-1021-0085-03, Report, O. Gobert, French Zone Employment Officer March 1946-March 1947, 17 April 1947, p. 2.

⁶¹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0438-0005-01, B. Roberts, Rapport d'une visite au camp disciplinaire de Nonnenhof, 21 June 1946. On the *Wehrwölfes*, Perry Biddiscombe *The Last Nazis: SS Werewolf Guerilla Resistance in Europe, 1944-1947* (London: Tempus, 2004).

⁶² UNA, UNRRA, S-0432-0004-04, Lettre de Lenclud à Acting Chief, Displaced Persons Operations, 29 March 1947.

⁶³ UNA, UNRRA, S-1021-0084-11, Histoire de l'UNRRA, Relations avec les Autorités Militaires en Zone Française, by Seville, p. 49.

⁶⁴ UNA, UNRRA, S-0432-0004-02, Lettre de Lavau, Field supervisor à Moreland, District Director, 19 February 1946.

⁶⁵ UNA, UNRRA, S-0432-0005-04, J. Rozale, rapport de base sur le service Employment du District Sud, March 1946.

work in skilled positions, while there was great demand for manual and unskilled workers.⁶⁶

UNRRA Team Director Sapin observed, for example, that in Sigmaringen the situation was particularly difficult due to the 'excessive requisitions' operated by occupation officials.⁶⁷ According to Libera, France requisitioned around 40,000 machines, representing 50 per cent of the 80,000 machines spoiled by the Germans in France between 1940 and 1944.⁶⁸ In Emmendingen, an UNRRA Employment officer admitted that '[i]n her two Kreis, sedentary or *soft* jobs [were] inaccessible to DPs. Very few DPs work[ed] in their specialities; the majority employed in agriculture and railways, a few in German industry.'⁶⁹

In June 1946, UNRRA relief services complained about Lieutenant Jous and Fritch's brutal and arbitrary recruitment methods for the textile industries.⁷⁰ Student DPs had no choice but to accept their work offers. In the eyes of these officers, 'studying was not working and DPs therefore could not be students.'⁷¹ For UNRRA Director (and former resistant) Jacques Bauche these 'unfair practices towards nationals from Allied countries pertained more to Gestapo methods than to the practices of representatives of an Allied Nation.'⁷² Just as they perceived compulsory employment as insulting, some UNRRA relief workers interpreted their lack of freedom of movement and the obligation to work as both a sign of disrespect and a lack of compassion or understanding for the trauma they had endured. Particularly resented was the order dating from 27 September 1945, which restricted DPs from going further than 5 kilometres from their residence. In May 1946, the Ravensburg national committees observed that it was 'all the more humiliating to be treated this way, since the Germans could circulate freely.'⁷³ In Biberach, Dixi Heim, a relief worker from the Jewish Relief Unit concurred: '[t]he reasons why people are complaining [...] are the following: the small food rations, the impossibility of moving about for more than 5 kilometres without an official laissez-passer, the hopelessness of the emigration situation, still being forced to live in a camp fourteen months after the liberation.'⁷⁴ In Gailingen, UNRRA Director vehemently remonstrated against the ban imposed on Jewish DPs for crossing the Swiss border to celebrate *Purim* with the Jewish community of Diessenhofen: 'Our DPs, are not

⁶⁶ Frank Roy Willis *The French in Germany, 1945-1949* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1962), p. 116.

⁶⁷ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0004-06, Lettre de Sapin, Directeur du team 587 à Rodie, 22 March 1946.

⁶⁸ Libera *Un rêve de puissance*, p. 286.

⁶⁹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0031-03, Detachement d'Emmendingen, rapport narratif sur la main d'oeuvre, 18 January 1947.

⁷⁰ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0028-05, Rozale, Employment officer, à Moreland, Zone Assistant Director for Relief, 3 July 1946.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0040-05, Bauche (Directeur Team 676) à Moreland, 12 June 1946.

⁷³ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0062-02, Pétition, Groupements Nationaux de Ravensburg à Directeur de l'UNRRA, 27 May 1946.

⁷⁴ WL, HA6 B-2/1, Report Nr. 2 Jewish Relief Unit, Biberach, July 30 1946, Dixi Heim.

Germans, but the victims and survivors of German savagery. Isn't it, thereby, at least shocking, if not scandalous to refuse to them what one permits to the others?'⁷⁵

The DP committees of Ravensburg also protested against the fact that DPs were forced to work in Baienfurt's textile industries. They did not challenge the principle that labour should be performed, even if it meant working with Germans. Work was, according to them, a material, moral and psychological necessity. What they objected to was the type of employment being offered to them. In their words, these were 'the hardest and dirtiest' jobs. According to them, it was morally 'unacceptable and economically illogical' to force intellectual DPs to work as heavy labourers.⁷⁶ These DPs believed that they were entitled to educational and vocational training. Having lost the 'best years of their lives', they believed that learning a trade should be seen as a sort of moral reparation for their losses.⁷⁷ For them, it seemed only proper that the Germans who had destroyed their youth should now at least fund their training for a future that most of them intended to pursue outside Germany.⁷⁸

On 12 July 1946, in response to the numerous protests against brutal recruitment methods the PDR Direction issued a letter inviting local administrators to be more selective in their employment of intellectual DPs, notably those originating from the Baltic countries. French tradition, it was said, 'requires us to act with more *discernement* in the use of DPs' capacities.'⁷⁹ For its part, French UNRRA headquarters stipulated that work should be encouraged by 'increases in food ration, the distribution of basic supplies, clothing and shoes.'⁸⁰ Under no circumstances were UNRRA staff to take steps to imprison DPs who refused to work.⁸¹ Decisions about imprisoning DPs were strictly reserved for PDR or military officials. But, as with the instructions on repatriation and eligibility, major discrepancies persisted between official policy and local practices. Repressive mechanisms endured at lower level, after they had been condemned by those higher up in the policy-making chain. For instance, the Director of the *Economats* in Balingen sent a female Estonian DP to prison after she complained about the bad working conditions in the 'vegetable section' of his shop.⁸² UNRRA's Area Employment Officer

⁷⁵ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0038-06, Schutterle, chef détachement UNRRA (Team 676) Gailingen à Field Supervisor, 12 March 1947.

⁷⁶ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0062-02, Comités nationaux des personnes déplacées à Directeur UNRRA Team 579, 27 May 1946.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ UNA, UNRRA, S-0432-0004-01, Dunst, Chef des camps du cercle de Ehingen, 7 September 1946.

⁷⁹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0024-05, Employment program, documents de base provenant des autorités françaises, Lettre de la Direction PDR, 12 Juillet 1946, 284/16. Also see S-0421-0047-03, Sebille à Directeurs de Teams, 9 August 1946.

⁸⁰ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0003-03, Lettre de G. Sebille à tous les directeurs de Teams, 9 April 1947, N.1088/16.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² UNA, UNRRA, S-0432-0002-07, Sawitzky Employment Officer (Team 574) à Pouzenc, Area Employment Officer, 16 January 1947.

condemned this action, highlighting that ‘the method employed towards Miss Oja was unbecoming of a French man.’⁸³ Rumours about bad working conditions under French supervision reached the American zone. In November 1946, at a meeting of UNRRA employment officers, Mrs Green, the chief employment and work training officer from UNRRA central headquarters, recalled that employment officers were expected to protect DP against employment abuses. She deplored the case of a DP pianist compelled to leave his camp after being assigned to forestry work by the French Army, and a DP surgeon who was told to join a team charged with digging a ditch.⁸⁴

In early 1947, UNRRA relief workers also raised concern about the transfers of DPs from the North to the South of the French zone. By the end of 1946, almost all employable DPs were employed in the southern region, but UNRRA and local authorities experienced greater difficulties putting DPs to work in the North as the local job market was saturated.⁸⁵ In the Württemberg area, on the contrary, demand for manpower in agriculture, paper industries and forestry was huge.⁸⁶ DPs were therefore subject to compulsory transfers, often causing further trauma to individuals who had already been uprooted from their homes. It seemed unfair that Germans could remain in their usual surroundings, while DPs were forcibly relocated once again. These transfers were perceived as a punishment by DPs who were thus deprived of easy contact with networks of friends and family, arguably reinforcing feelings of humiliation and uprooted-ness.⁸⁷ Furthermore, the conditions under which these transfers took place were shameful. For instance, woodcutters were sent from Lanstuhl to Alpirsbach in terrible transport conditions, travelling fifty-one hours with insufficient food or water.⁸⁸ Once they reached their destination, some found out that their potential employers were no longer willing to employ DPs at all.⁸⁹ PDR Directors attributed the responsibility for this problem to the administrative service ‘Eaux et Forêts’, the forestry service already being notorious for its toleration of bad working conditions.⁹⁰

In principle, French forestry enterprises were not supposed to employ German manpower, but, rather, were expected to employ French workers paid in francs. As DPs could not be paid in francs, their salaries were inscribed on

⁸³ UNA, UNRRA, S-0432-0002-07, Pouzenc, Area Employment Officer à Director Team 574, Balingen, 26 January 1947.

⁸⁴ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0003-03, Réunion des Employment Officers 25, 26, 27 Novembre 1946 à Gutach, p. 6.

⁸⁵ UNA, UNRRA, S-0432-0005-03, J. de Saint Priest, Zone Employment Officer, Compte-rendu visite Zone Nord (17-18 avril 1947), N.1134/16, 23 April 1947.

⁸⁶ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0028-05, Lettre de J. Rozale à Commandant Sébille, 19 January 1946; S-0421-0029-05, Relief Services à Monsieur le Gouverneur Délégué Supérieur pour le GM de Wurtemberg, N.353/16, 13 August 1946.

⁸⁷ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0047-02, Lettre de Daniel de Fos à Field Supervisor No 1, 30 October 1946.

⁸⁸ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0047-01, Rapport du chef de Transport, Jozef Bonkowski, Caserne Marceau, 28 March 1947.

⁸⁹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0047-01, Directeur Team 2 à Détachement de Calw, 15 April 1947.

⁹⁰ UNA, UNRRA, S-0432-0005-02, Visite à la Direction PDR, 26 April 1947, N.1143/16.

accounts in the General Treasury of the zone.⁹¹ Numerous DPs felt that they were being cheated and – as the official history of the PDR service observed – rightly so, for the majority of them were never paid.⁹² Complaints about working conditions in forestry enterprises abound in UNRRA and PDR archives. While DPs were allegedly granted the same food rations as their French colleagues, they often received considerably less.⁹³ Nor were they provided with adequate shoes or clothes.⁹⁴ Meagre benefits and lower (if any) wages translated into low productivity and mounting hostility between DP workers and their bosses. French forestry employers were particularly hostile to DPs. They often complained that DPs did not have the required skills that their productivity was low and their inclination to laziness was overwhelming.⁹⁵

German supervision and DPs' discontents

As we have seen, contrary to official policy, some DPs were assigned to work under German supervision without consenting to do so. For some DPs, working under German supervision revived traumatic memories of wartime abuses.⁹⁶ On 2 October 1946, the DP workers of the Zelstoffabrik in Ehingen went on strike to protest against an increase in their daily working hours from eight to ten and the methods employed by their German supervisor. This supervisor used the threat of repatriation to force them to increase production over the longer time spent at the factory.⁹⁷ On 2 October ten men were arrested and imprisoned.⁹⁸ Thanks to the intervention of UNRRA Director Vincent, they were released the next day. Vincent admitted that a minority of DPs experienced problems bending to work discipline. But he condemned the methods used by their German director, which reminded them of the oppressive atmosphere of the Nazi period. He further believed that working hours should be reduced from sixty to fifty-five per week, due to the hard nature of the work itself.⁹⁹ Area Employment Officer A.J Pouzenc asked the French Director Labbé-Laurent to take measures against Birkelhaudt, a former Nazi official.¹⁰⁰ Yet the evidence suggests that the problem persisted in the Zelstoffabrik. In

⁹¹ *Sept ans en faveur des personnes déplacées*, p. 27.

⁹² *Sept ans en faveur des personnes déplacées*, p. 27. Also see MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/814, Lettre du Commissaire pour le Land Bade à Monsieur le Ht Commissaire de la République Française en Allemagne – service des Personnes Déplacées, 24 January 1950.

⁹³ MAE, HCRFA, PDR 6/813, Directeur des Personnes Déplacées à Directeur Général des Affaires Administratives, 21 May 1947.

⁹⁴ UNA, UNRRA, S-0432-0004-02, Chef Secteur Forestier du Württemberg Sud à Inspecteur des Eaux et Forêts, 2 December 1946.

⁹⁵ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6 /814, Exposé du point de vue des exploitants forestiers – instruction 20 juillet 1948.

⁹⁶ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0018-08, Officier PDR situation des PDR (anciens Prisonniers, déportés et réfugiés) cercle d'Ehingen.

⁹⁷ UNA, UNRRA, S-0432-0004-01, Pétition Ouvriers de la Verladungskolonnie et du Holzplatz de la Zelstoffabrik, 4 October 1946.

⁹⁸ UNA, UNRRA, S-0432-0004-01, Report Pouzenc attention to Zone Employment Officer, A.J.P/EJ./267, 7 October 1946.

⁹⁹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0432-0001-02, Vincent (Team 583) à Roquet, Field Supervisor du Württemberg, 10 October 1946.

¹⁰⁰ UNA, UNRRA, S-0432-0004-01, Report Pouzenc attention to Zone Employment Officer, A.J.P/EJ./267, 7 October 1946.

March 1947 Vincent warned UNRRA officials that the factory's management was gradually wearing down the DP manpower by attrition.¹⁰¹

Professional encounters between German employers and DP workers were not always so adversarial. Some DPs continued to work in the same farms or factories as they had done during the war.¹⁰² As Jill Stephenson has demonstrated, some Catholic Polish workers developed 'reasonably cordial' relationships with their host families during the war.¹⁰³ Building on Ulrich Herbert's work, Stephenson argues that foreign workers living and working in rural households generally experienced better conditions and less regimentation than those in factories and town during the war.¹⁰⁴ In many areas, UNRRA relief workers reported mutually beneficial and relatively harmonious working relations. In the Kreis of Überlingen and Stockach, for instance, satisfying relationships between German employers and DP workers were established.¹⁰⁵ The majority of DPs lived scattered in private German homes in 125 villages and worked for the same farmers 'to whom they were assigned as deported labourers.'¹⁰⁶ A healthy attitude towards work prevailed. In Lindau, before the arrival of the UNRRA team, the majority of DPs were economically integrated into German life. Gerbier reported that 'DPs were unaware of their rights - and their duties - nearly all of them were DPs without even knowing that they were.'¹⁰⁷ In some cases, DPs even demanded to work with Germans. In Waldsee, for instance, Polish DP Streshenko wanted to be employed as a railway worker. He had worked from February 1944 to 15 June 1945 as a *manoeuvre* and then a driver's assistant on German railways. But the German Director of the railway in Karlsruhe only hired German personnel. According to UNRRA Employment Officer, Streshenko was very disappointed by this refusal.¹⁰⁸

DPs working in the German economy comprised the majority of DPs in full-time employment. In the autumn of 1946, according to *La France en Allemagne*, 22,000 DPs were employed out of a total population numbering 40,000. Among these employed DPs, 2,000 DPs worked in agriculture, 6,000 DPs in small industries, 4,000 in the administration of DP centres, 5,000 DPs were artisans, 2,500 DPs were members of the GAE and 2,500 DPs occupied

¹⁰¹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0432-0002-04, Directeur (Team 583) Vincent à Directeur Général UNRRA, 11 March 1947; S-0432-0002-07, J.R.Thuraine à Director Field Operations, 14 March 1947, JRT/EJ/456.

¹⁰² UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0081-02, Mr. Caude, UNRRA Team 30 report, 1 October 1945.

¹⁰³ Jill Stephenson *Hitler's Home Front. Württemberg under the Nazis* (London : Hambledon Continuum, 2006), p. 290.

¹⁰⁴ Stephenson *Hitler's Home Front*, p. 279.

¹⁰⁵ UNA, UNRRA, S-0438-0007-17, Princ. Welfare Officer Travis (Team 582) 25 April 1946 to 1 November 1946.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ UNA, UNRRA, S-1021-0085-08, Gerbier, Rapport sur les activités de l'UNRRA (Lindau) 30 octobre 1945 - 30 avril 1947, 8 mai 1947, p. 3 bis.

¹⁰⁸ UNA, UNRRA, s-0432-0001-02, Guilbot, Area Employment Officer à Sebillé, Waldsee, 21 August 1946.

various miscellaneous positions.¹⁰⁹ A word of caution here. Employment figures varied considerably from one source to another. Tracking DP employment was difficult as some of them slipped in and out of work; others did not live in camps at all. The DP population was only exhaustively listed in the spring and summer of 1947, revealing the presence of an additional 5,000 DPs who had probably been in situ for a long time, maybe since the end of the conflict.¹¹⁰ Furthermore, as explained in chapter One, French authorities were very often at loggerheads with UNRRA team directors over questions of numbers.¹¹¹

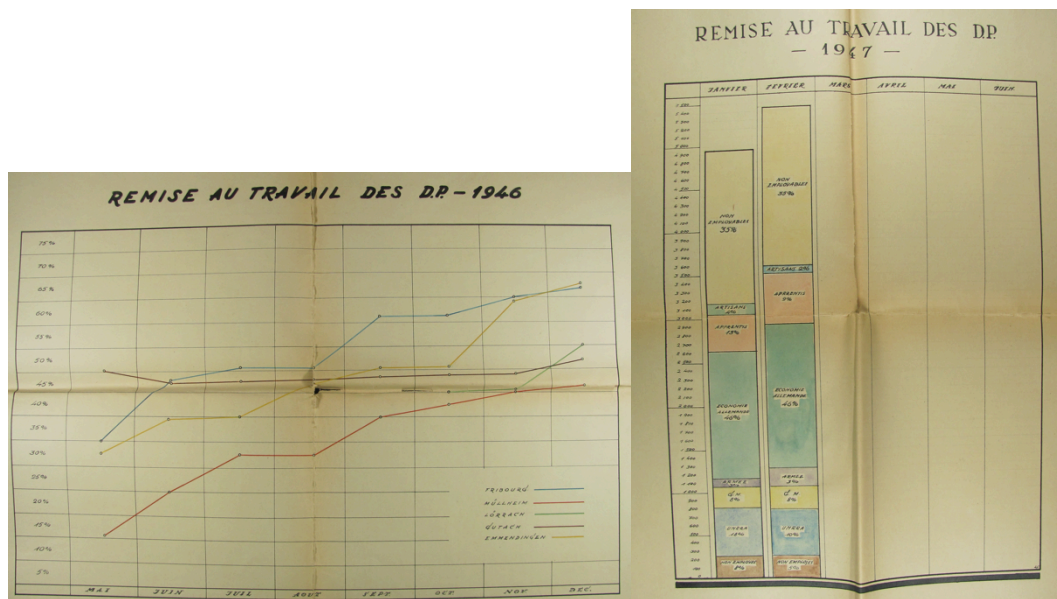


Fig. 40. DP employment in 1946 and 1947 (Freiburg, Müllheim, Lörrach, Gutach, Emmendingen).

UNRRA employment officers complained that they were overwhelmed by reports to fill out and did not have time to complete DPs' labour cards.¹¹² Evidence also suggests that UNRRA's registration operation was significantly delayed. Despite their inconsistencies, figures nevertheless indicate that the largest sources of employment were the German economy followed by UNRRA. In mid-January 1947, according to UNRRA, 17,273 DPs were in employment. 4,999 DPs were employed by UNRRA (29%), 1,948 DPs by the Military Government (11,2%), 1,891 DPs by the French Army (10,9%), 6,053 DPs within the German economy (35%). Another 1,614 were described as apprentices (9,3%) and 768 as artisans (4,4%).¹¹³ In fact, among those working in UNRRA camps, some worked in small workshops and DP-run businesses. So, in total,

¹⁰⁹ *La France en Allemagne*, No.3, October – December 1946, p. 61.

¹¹⁰ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/467, Nombre total de DP recensés en ZFO. [undated]; Copie de la Lettre du Général d'armée Koenig à Monsieur le Secrétaire d'Etat aux Affaires Allemandes et Autrichiennes, N.173 CCSG/AACS/PDR 28 July 1948.

¹¹¹ MAE, HCRFA, PDR 3/25, 'Tableau comparatif des extraits des rapports faits par Monsieur Léon', 26 September 1946.

¹¹² UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0028-05, Rozale, District Employment Officer à Gobert, Zone Employment Officer, 19 June 1946.

¹¹³ UNA, UNRRA, S-0432-0005-03, Monthly General Statistical report for January 1947 (16 January), Ref 07-192. For May 1947, see S-0432-0005-04, J.De Saint-Priest, Aperçu sur la situation de l'emploi en zone française, 8 May 1947. For October 1947, AN, AJ/43/594, Personnes Déplacées mises au travail et disponibles, 18 October 1947.

between 10 and 30% were offered the opportunity to acquire the means to learn a trade.

This brief overview has revealed the highly ambiguous nature of French employment policy. It has shown that there was neither geographic uniformity nor official consistency, and that employment conditions greatly varied according to where DPs lived and for whom they worked. As we will see in the third section, working conditions also varied according to DPs' gender, national affiliation, linguistic abilities and levels of education. For some relief workers this highly ambiguous policy did not sufficiently protect the mass of young, unskilled and vulnerable (mainly Polish and Ukrainian) DP workers. In their eyes, not enough had changed since the end of the war for this majority of DPs. They were free but they could not move further than five kilometres from their house. Although liberated, many were forced to work for still contemptuous and racist German employers. This question of the perceived continuities and ruptures between the wartime and liberation period will be examined in the next section through the lens of two contested issues: DP food rations and salaries.

(Dis)continuities with the wartime period

In the French zone, much of the DPs' sense of bitterness coalesced around material entitlements and food rations.¹¹⁴ Complaints about the insufficient quantity, inadequate composition or simply bad quality of the rations distributed were numerous. Bare essentials, such as sugar and flour were missing; bread was of notoriously bad quality; essential nutrients such as vitamins were deficient.¹¹⁵ The calorie counting inscribed into ration levels was deceptive. As UNRRA Director Jacques Bauche observed, '[o]ne can indeed absorb a significant amount of calories in a single teaspoon, the fact remains that one is still hungry.'¹¹⁶ In August 1946, UNRRA DP staff went on strike in Gutach. They brought their daily food rations to UNRRA's Warehouse officer: it included 22 gr sugar, 23gr butter, 12gr cheese, 25gr Macaroni, 30gr meat and ¼ litre of wine. The cheese and macaroni were unfit for consumption. UNRRA Welfare Officer reported to his superiors '[i]f you want to see it, just come to my office. I think it is a great shame that people who had a terrible life in Germany

¹¹⁴ See for instance the numerous complaints of the Polish Committee of Ravensburg in UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0061-07; the complaint of Edmond Szente Gutch in S-0432-0001-05, Edmond Szente Gutch à Monsieur Durand, Directeur du Team 572, 28 October 1946; S-0421-0031-07, Compte-rendu de la reunion des Employment Officers (Gutach), 25-26-27 November 1946; MAE, HCRFA, 2Bad/39, [A2.301/1], Rapport Affaires administratives, partie personnes déplacées, 24 July 1946 .

¹¹⁵ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0031-04, Rapport special sur le ravitaillement des Personnes Déplacées, Bastiaenen (team 206), Freiburg, 12 July 1946. Also see S-0421-0040-05, Lettre de M.J. Bauche à M.E.P. Moreland, 12 July 1946.

¹¹⁶ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0039-02, Bauche, Rapport mensuel (Team 676), Constance, 28 August 1946.

during the war and who are now working for UNRRA are fed so badly. I can well imagine that they refuse to work having received these rations. I would do the same.'¹¹⁷



Fig. 41. UNRRA Store, Gutach DP camp (April 1946)¹¹⁸

Many UNRRA relief workers understood DPs' grievances about food, clothing and salaries as both legitimate and the product of a deeper sense of resentment that not enough had changed since the end of the war with DPs remaining vassals to whom fundamental rights – such as access to decent food – were denied. American training specialist Dorothea Greene strongly disapproved of the food given to DPs. She noted: '[i]n several camps, I saw rotten potatoes [...] dirty sugar containing wood residues, dirty and unusable lard. In one of the camps, an analysis of the bread was made: the bread contained a high proportion of dust, and was of so poor quality that it was unfit for human consumption.'¹¹⁹ In Aulendorf, '[t]he food situation [...] was nothing less than tragic. I saw a large quantity of potatoes with at least 80% spoiled, a large quantity of salt extremely dirty, and Ersatz coffee with huge solidified lumps in it. The DPs around the food store were all sullen and angry-looking.'¹²⁰ After their experience of forced labour and precarious living, DPs were not automatically entitled to better working conditions, housing and food benefits than Germans.¹²¹

¹¹⁷ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0003-03, Letter from D.A. Jansen, Chief Warehouse Officer to Mr. Paulis, Adm. Officer, 13 August 1946.

¹¹⁸ UNRRA, S-0421-0023-09, 'La journée du jeudi 18 avril 1946 au team 572', par Durand, Gutach. The leaflet reads: 'the Supply Officer (Mr. G. Devaud) inspect food supplies already shelved in the Warehouse. Here as everywhere reigns order and method.'

¹¹⁹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0432-0005-04, Translation, Greene à Lenclud, 'Les operations en Zone Française', 10 August 1946.

¹²⁰ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0004-14, Rapport Greene, UNRRA Team 677, 10 August 1946.

¹²¹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0432-0005-02, Lettre de J. de Saint Priest à Assistant Director, visite team de Ravensburg, 17 June 1947.

Many DPs were in fact on German card rations. But these cards did not guarantee that they would actually receive the ration in question. In Freiburg, for instance, DPs living in town depended on French military supply corps (*Intendance*) while their counterparts in the villages nearby received German food rations (*cartes de ravitaillement allemandes*).¹²² Yet, in shops, German suppliers withheld products under quota and kept many products for themselves.¹²³ Furthermore, as natives, Germans could more easily resort to relatives in the countryside. As Paul Steege has demonstrated, legal rationing was only one part of a multifaceted supply system, its allocation bearing little connection with the reality of what people actually consumed.¹²⁴ In May 1946, the DP national committees of Ravensburg voiced grave concerns about the food situation in their areas, pointing out that children lacked vitamins, milk and bread. They argued that their daily allocation was smaller than that of the Germans, while Germans had easier access to non-rationed and fresh food. 'They have the advantage of being in their homeland; many of them have familial connections with people living in the countryside who help them; finally some have made savings during the war.'¹²⁵ DP representatives looked with envy to the American zone and wondered why *locally* DPs were not benefiting from the Allied regime in place in the other Western zones.¹²⁶

The politics of rationing¹²⁷

As Atina Grossmann has highlighted, 'food was much more than a – necessary – matter of calories and physical survival.'¹²⁸ Its calorific content and quality were deeply intertwined with highly contested recognition of suffering, entitlement to human rights and issues of social justice.¹²⁹ As the anthropologist Margaret Mead has stressed, food 'crucially defined people's sense of how fully they were recognized and valued as human beings rather than, as DPs were frequently labelled, the miserable and unwelcome "human debris" of war and genocide.'¹³⁰ For Germans and DPs, food 'calibrated new (and constantly

¹²² UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0031-04, Bastiaenen(Team 206), Rapport spécial sur le ravitaillement Personnes Déplacées, 12 July 1946.

¹²³ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0031-04, Thomasset (Team 206) à Chabannes, Acting Director, Freiburg, 8 November 1945.

¹²⁴ Paul Steege *Black-Market, Cold War. Everyday Life in Berlin, 1946-1949* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 40-44.

¹²⁵ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0062-02, Comités Nationaux de personnes déplacées à Ravensburg à Directeur de l'UNRRA (Team 579), 27 May 1946. On 'hoarding as a national habit' Richard Bessel *Germany 1945. From war to peace* (London: Simon&Schuster, 2009), pp. 347-348.

¹²⁶ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0062-02, Comités Nationaux à Ravensburg à Directeur de l'UNRRA (Team 579), 27 May 1946.

¹²⁷ Title from Atina Grossmann 'Grams, Calories, and Food: Languages of Victimization, Entitlement, and Human Rights in Occupied Germany, 1945–1949', *Central European History*, Vol. 44, No. 1 (2011), pp. 118-148, p. 120.

¹²⁸ Grossmann 'Grams, Calories and Food', p. 135.

¹²⁹ Also see for the situation in France Megan Koreman *The Expectation of Justice: France, 1944-1946* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), pp. 148-188.

¹³⁰ Grossmann 'Grams, Calories, and Food', p. 139 ; The authors of the *Report on Psychological problems* also noted 'ffirst things first – Food is the primal token of security. In childhood, the most potent source of reassurance that we are loved, lovable

shifting) standards of victimization, entitlement, and – very importantly – recognition among the many different groups.¹³¹ Many Germans used their own post-war experience of hunger to present themselves as helpless and innocent victims of brutal and unfair occupation policies, adopting ‘a language originally created for the victims of Nazi oppression to fit their own situation.’¹³² This construction of a ‘victim mentality’ was not just a political tactic; it was also a means to ascribe meaning to the dire circumstances of the post-war period and a mechanism to cope with the recent past.¹³³

British and American authorities were receptive to this *hunger* discourse.¹³⁴ As the occupation went by, they slowly came to view the Germans as hungry people ‘not because of medical evidence, which in fact did not support German claims of widespread starvation, but because of concerns over the political consequences of German hunger for the future of the post-war world.’¹³⁵ While in 1945 they were determined to impose punitive measures on the Germans, their resolve to do so significantly altered as the severity of the Communist threat intensified, and food-aid allocations markedly increased. This was not the case in the French zone. As Alice Weinreb observed, ‘France was little involved in the waves of international aid directed at hungry post-war Germans.’¹³⁶ An article published in the Rhineland in 1948 compared rations in Buchenwald to those of the French Zone (purportedly 1675 calories versus 805), leading a local politician to claim that Germans have “for three years been forced to bear a level of hunger such as that known in no concentration camp in the world.”¹³⁷ Without question, as Weinreb noted, these comparisons between concentration camps and the civilian rationing program had little basis in physiological fact, the living conditions of post-war Germans and camp inmates being incomparable. It remains true, however, that France imposed a drastic food rationing policy on Germans.

Although French authorities maintained that they were committed to comply with the 1,550 minimum calorific ration determined by the Control Commission, in autumn 1945 Emile Laffon was aware that some Germans

and worthwhile, is regular and friendly satisfaction of our hunger by familiar food and drink.’ HA5-4/3, Welfare Division, *Report on Psychological Problems of Displaced Persons*, 1 June 1945, pp. 1-41, pp. 34-35.

¹³¹ Grossmann ‘Grams, Calories, and Food’, p. 123.

¹³² Alice Weinreb ‘Matters of Taste: the Politics of Food in Divided Germany, 1945-1971’, PhD dissertation, University of Michigan, 2009, p. 28.

¹³³ Laura Hilton ‘The Black Market in History and Memory: German Perceptions of Victimhood from 1945 to 1948’, *German History* Vol. 28, No. 4 (2010), pp. 479-497.

¹³⁴ On food relief planning during the war UNA, UNRRA, S-1021-0013-05, Memorandum Julian Wadleigh, ‘Report to prepare for Food relief before the establishment of UNRRA’ [August 1947].

¹³⁵ Alice Weinreb “For the Hungry Have No Past nor Do They Belong to a Political Party”: Debates over German Hunger after World War II’ *Central European History*, Vol. 45, No.1 (2012), pp. 50-78, p. 52.

¹³⁶ Weinreb ‘Matters of Taste’, p. 83.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

received barely 1000 calories.¹³⁸ Between 1945 and 1946, depending on the provinces, the size of the town and the categories of the population, some Germans received between 950 and 1300 calories.¹³⁹ The inhabitants of Saarland were privileged, as were industrial workers.¹⁴⁰ Rations progressively rose in the spring of 1946, but declined once more in the summer. Flour was in short supply everywhere; sugar and meat very severely rationed. Germans looked with envy at the food situation in the American zone, convinced that French authorities were feeding themselves at their expense.¹⁴¹

German resentment was exacerbated by the fact that French administrators allowed themselves a generous and varied diet.¹⁴² In some significant ways, as Dietmar Hüser and Karen Adler argue, 'this excessively ambitious diet, beyond the expectations of any demographic sector in France' was a way to express national strength and symbolic revenge.¹⁴³ But beyond the symbolic demands of revenge and re-affirmation of national strength, this drastic food policy was also prompted by other, purely economic concerns. The French zone was struggling to provide its own food. Despite its rural profile, the zone was unable to supply basic goods such as cereals, meat and milk.¹⁴⁴ Its economy was constituted of many small size family farms, producing little or no marketable surplus.¹⁴⁵ Yet the Control Commission had established that each occupant was responsible for the budget balance in their zone: in France, the idea that the French might be required to pay for Germans' food was still unthinkable.¹⁴⁶

This sentiment had a direct impact of DPs' food rations because so many DPs were reliant on German food ration cards. In theory, DPs were entitled to better food rations than Germans, as the table below suggests. That being said, as mentioned earlier, there was no uniformity in the zone. In early 1946, some DPs seemed satisfied with their situation. For instance, the Estonian committee of Ravensburg reported that food rations were not only in sufficient quantity but also of *excellent* quality.¹⁴⁷ UNRRA Director Dalichamp also maintained that in

¹³⁸ Libera *Un rêve de puissance*, p. 210.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 288.

¹⁴⁰ UNA, UNRRA, S-0432-0004-01, Pouzenc to Zone Employment Officer, A.J.P/EJ./267, 7 October 1946.

¹⁴¹ Libera *Un rêve de puissance*, p. 294 ; Weinreb 'Matters of Taste', p. 123.

¹⁴² This was a very divisive issue for French occupation officials ; Libera *Un rêve de puissance*, pp. 235-236.

¹⁴³ Karen Adler 'Selling France to the French: the French Zone of Occupation in Western Germany, 1945-c.1955', *Contemporary European History*, Vol. 21, No. 4 (2012), pp. 575-595', p. 584. Dietmar Hüser 'Ventres creux, mentalités collectives et relations internationales – la faim dans les rapports franco-allemands d'après guerre' in Francine-Dominique Liechtenhan, Brad Abrams (ed) *Europe 1946: Entre le deuil et l'espoir* (Bruxelles: Editions Complexe, 1996), pp. 142 – 164.

¹⁴⁴ Libera 'Un rêve de puissance', p. 210.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 216-217. Persistent food deprivation reinforced French popular resentments against Germans. Hüser 'Ventres creux, mentalités collectives', pp. 142 – 164.

¹⁴⁷ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0062-02, President du Comité Estonien à Monsieur le Colonel Caude, Ravensbourg, 31 January 1946.

his Kreis DPs living in the countryside enjoyed a relatively abundant and varied diet:

I have noticed that the solution adopted to go back to a normal life by themselves and get a living from their work was by far the best solution both from a nutritional and social standpoints, since the rural German population as a diet far superior, despite the card rations, to that of the *Intendance's* rations. This is obvious when one looks at the farms where chicken, rabbits and pigs... are reared. ¹⁴⁸

Dalichamp's statement reflected a widespread assumption among French relief workers and occupation officials: the fact that Germans, especially those living in the countryside, still seemed relatively well fed and prosperous. According to some officials, DPs were bound to benefit from this situation as well. ¹⁴⁹

ANNEXE IV
TAUX DE LA RATION ALLEMANDE DE TRAVAILLEUR DE FORCE
2^{me} CATEGORIE
et comparaison en faveur de la ration Personnes Deplacées

DENRÉES	Ration allemande	Ration Personnes Deplacées	Différence		Observations
			en plus	en moins	
PAIN	375	600	225		par jour
VIN		8 l.	8 l.		par mois
VIANDE	660	1600	940		"
CAFÉ		250	250		"
PÂTES		1000	1000		"
SUCRE	400	900	500		"
POMMES DE TERRE	19.800	30.000	10.200		"
MATIÈRES GRASSES	550	900	350		"
FROMAGE	235	400	175		"
LÉGUMES FRAIS		6.000	6.000		"
FRUITS		3.000	3.000		"
TABAC		240	240		"

- Les attributions en légumes frais et fruits sont occasionnelles.

Fig. 42. Food provision, German heavy workers and DPs, April 1947¹⁵⁰

Yet, even in the countryside, DPs rations in the French zone were far below UNRRA's recommended daily intake of between 2,500 and 2,650 calories, the amount that the International Labour Organization had set as the global standard for the working adult in 1935. ¹⁵¹ Admittedly, nowhere was this achieved, not even in the American zone. ¹⁵² According to UNRRA official historian Woodbridge, a daily ration of 1,685 calories was established in

¹⁴⁸ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0015-01, Lettre de M. Dalichamp, Directeur Team 576, à Monsieur E.P. Moreland, 12 April 1946.

¹⁴⁹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0432-0004-05, Gouverneur Délégué Supérieur GM Wurtemberg à Officier de Liaison UNRRA, 26 March 1947.

¹⁵⁰ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0010-06, Rapport sur l'approvisionnement des camps, prévu par l'Instruction régionale Européenne No. 72, Classification E. 22, 25 April 1947.

¹⁵¹ Grossmann 'Grams, Calories and Food', p. 122; Cullather 'The Foreign Policy of the Calorie', p. 339.

¹⁵² Woodbridge *UNRRA*, Vol. 2, p. 503.

October 1946 for DPs in the French zone.¹⁵³ My research in the PDR and UN archives reveals nevertheless that this official and theoretical ration was rarely applied, and that instead of improving in the course of 1946, food rations tended to deteriorate. Before 1 August 1946, the French military supply corps was responsible for the provision of UNRRA stores: food ration rates might fluctuate but at least the distribution was regular. After August 1946, each military government assumed responsibility for providing UNRRA with 'release vouchers' (*bons de déblocages*); UNRRA authorities then directly negotiated with German producers to obtain essential foodstuffs.¹⁵⁴ Intractable transport problems, combined with the lack of administrative flexibility, severely hampered the smooth functioning of the system.¹⁵⁵ As a result, the question of food allocation created many disputes between UNRRA relief workers and occupation officials.¹⁵⁶ Some authorities accused UNRRA directors of augmenting the number of *rationnaires*.¹⁵⁷ In October 1946, Laffon officially asked the *Sous-secrétaire d'Etat aux Affaires Etrangères* to re-establish the previous system. He argued that if, in theory, the food ration had risen from 1565 calories to 1686 calories, in practice DPs were receiving far less:

- 1) In the Württemberg, for instance, spoiled meat was delivered to the DP centres
- 2) In the Baden Area, in Gutach, it was not possible to give potatoes to the DPs – despite the fact that the camp Director had a *bon de déblocage* for 12 tons [...]
- 5) In all the provinces, the order that priority should be given to DPs rather than Germans is not respected; it is no less true that one often give to DP centres what Germans do not consume or want.¹⁵⁸

Laffon argued that if they wanted DPs to stop stealing from Germans to feed themselves then French authorities should give them the minimal vital rations.¹⁵⁹ Evidence suggests that, in several aspects, the problem persisted, and that it was almost impossible to get access to fresh vegetables.¹⁶⁰ In February 1947 Bauche noted 'the supply situation is such that the packaging of goods is becoming as rare in the zone as the goods themselves.'¹⁶¹

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0010-06, Rapport sur l'approvisionnement des camps, 25 avril 1947.

¹⁵⁵ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0038-05, Etude d'un nouveau système de ravitaillement des DPs, 17 January 1947.

¹⁵⁶ See for instance in Landstuhl: UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0044-05, Daniel de Fos to Field Supervisor, 20 September 1946; In Freiburg: S-1021-0085-06, Bastiaenen, Historique du Centre DP de Fribourg, p. 29.

¹⁵⁷ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0056-01, CH. Pourchet, Field Supervisor Bade-Ouest, Note de service, 10 January 1947.

¹⁵⁸ MAE, HCRFA, Bonn 150, Administrateur Général Laffon à Monsieur le Général d'Armée Koenig, 1 October 1946.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ See for instance: UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0061-04, Lettre de J.A. Lageix, chef du détachement d'Aulendorf à Monsieur F. Massip, Directeur Team 579, 31 January 1947; MAE, HCRFA, 2Bad/39, [A2.301/1], Rapport Partie Personnes Déplacées, 26 August 1947.

¹⁶¹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0039-02, Jacques Bauche, Note de service, 15 février 1947.

Like Germans, DPs resented the food rations that the French granted themselves.¹⁶² In May 1946, UNRRA team director Daniel de Fos pointed out that DPs working in I.G. Farben Industrie in Ludwigshafen were not receiving their allocated French Army food rations. He threatened to stop the recruitment of DPs unless and until French administrative services got their act together.¹⁶³ UNRRA relief workers also complained about conditions of employment in the French Army. The same month in Balingen some DPs were sent from Balingen to Rastatt. When they arrived, they were not fed and no sleeping arrangements had been made for them. According to one of their number, Pietraczyk Konstanty, they were better treated in a Nazi concentration camp.¹⁶⁴ In May 1947, General Lenclud lodged an official complaint to the Direction PDR, highlighting DP workers' natural resentment when seeing the French rewarded with much more abundant food for performing the same work.¹⁶⁵ According to the Polish chief, DPs reported that they received forty cigarettes a month while French soldiers got 480.¹⁶⁶

In summary, French food policy was profoundly ambiguous and contradictory. On the one hand, French occupiers and UNRRA relief workers enjoyed a comfortable material situation, often combining abundant diet with easy access to wine and luxury goods (as this menu suggests). DPs and Germans meanwhile bemoaned their losses and miserable living conditions. The majority of DPs not only lacked adequate food but also clothes and shoes. Unlike Germans, their access to non-rationed food was severely restricted. And despite preferential treatment in official policy, Laffon's alarm confirms that, very often, DPs did not take precedence over Germans. On the other hand, numerous French UNRRA team directors and local administrators took up the defence of their DP populations and strove to increase their access to food. As mentioned earlier, some DPs living in the countryside established fairly cordial relations with Germans and

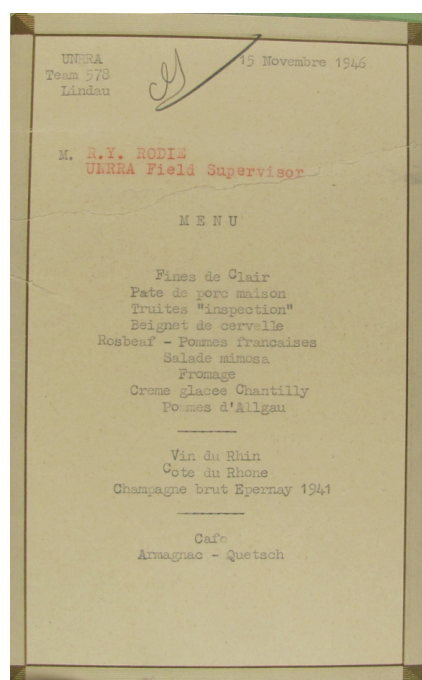


Fig.43. Menu for the visit of the General Lenclud in Lindau, November 1946.
 UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0052-01, Visit of the General Lenclud in Lindau. 15 November 1946.

¹⁶² MAE, HCRFA, 2Bad/39, , [A2.301/1], Rapport Affaires administratives, partie personnes déplacées, 26 June 1947.

¹⁶³ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0047-03, Lettre de De Fos à Direction de District UNRRA, 29 May 1946.

¹⁶⁴ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0029-05, Rapport de Bohn, Employment Officer Team 574 à Mlle J. Rozale, 9 May 1946.

¹⁶⁵ UNA, UNRRA, S-0432-0006-01, Lenclud à Monsieur le Délégué du GMZFO, 13 May 1947, N.1.185/16.

¹⁶⁶ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0047-01, Lettre de De Fos à Direction Générale de la Zone Française, 28 February 1947.

enjoyed relatively decent access to food; finally, the severity of the food situation should not be overestimated, as the level of DP health was relatively high during the period. (Set against this point, one could argue that only the most robust DPs survived the war).

DPs' salary: fundamental economic right or invitation to the *Black-market*?

As far as DPs' salaries were concerned, three principles governed French official policy: DPs should not receive less than Germans in equivalent positions; their salaries should be determined according to local salary scales, and they should be funded by the German economy.¹⁶⁷ French occupation and UNRRA authorities agreed on this; they were only divided over the issue of DPs' taxes and social insurance.¹⁶⁸ According to the circular of 1 February 1946, DPs had to be affiliated to German social insurance (covering sickness, industrial injury, and old age pensions) under the same conditions as German civilian workers.¹⁶⁹ Yet, these contributions largely benefited German social insurance recipients, most DPs still being fed and housed by UNRRA. Moreover, they were not supposed to remain indefinitely in Germany.¹⁷⁰ In September 1946, it was decided that DPs would only pay twenty-five per cent of the taxes due.¹⁷¹ In February 1947, DPs were wholly exempted from pensions insurance, leaving them to pay only social insurance for sickness and accident benefits.¹⁷²

As these changes indicate, French policy could be flexible and sensitive to changing circumstances.¹⁷³ But it was also fractured. UNRRA team directors raised countless complaints about the delayed or non-payment of DPs' wages.¹⁷⁴ Within the same *Kreis* salaries varied markedly.¹⁷⁵ In the area of Ebingen, for instance, German pay scales were applied in Tübingen and

¹⁶⁷ This policy coincided with the SHAEF memorandum N.39 which, stipulated that the Germany economy was responsible of the costs generated by DPs. MAE, HCRFA, Bade-Sud, Délégation cercles vrac, 39, L'Administrateur Général Laffon à Monsieur le Général, Délégué Supérieur pour le Gouvernement Militaire de Bade, 1 February 1946; PDR6/811, Lettre du Sous-Directeur des 'Personnes Déplacées' à Monsieur le Chef de Section des 'Personnes Déplacées' [undated]. UNA, UNRRA, S-0432-0006-01, Lettre du Général de Corps d'armée Lenclud à Monsieur l'Administrateur Général Adjoint, N.1174/16, Barème des salaires, 9 May 1947.

¹⁶⁸ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0003-03, Réunion des Employment Officers 25, 26, 27 Novembre 1946 à Gutach.

¹⁶⁹ UNA, UNRRA, S-1021-0085-03, Report O. Gobert, Zone Employment Officer March 1946 to March 1947, 17 April 1947, p. 3.

¹⁷⁰ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/487, Agent contractuel de 2ème catégorie à Directeur des Personnes Déplacées, 22 March 1946.

¹⁷¹ UNRRA, S-0417-0003-03, Réunion des Employment Officers 25, 26, 27 Novembre 1946 à Gutach.

¹⁷² UNA, UNRRA, S-1021-0085-03, Report O. Gobert, Zone Employment Officer March 1946 to March 1947, 17 April 1947, p. 3.

¹⁷³ See for instance the variations in Freiburg: UNA, UNRRA, S-0432-0002-06, Salaires (Fribourg, Lorrach, Mulheim). [undated].

¹⁷⁴ UNA, UNRRA, S-0432-0001-01, Lettre de E. Begleiter (Team 591 à Horb) à M. Schurmans, 27 June 1946; S-1021-0085-03, Ateliers et Programmes d'éducation professionnelle, Zone Française, [May 1947], 4; S-0417-0002-02, Directeur de Team 579 à Général de Corps d'Armée Lenclud, 31 August 1946; S-0417-0003-05, Général de Corps d'Armée Lenclud à l'Administrateur Général Adjoint pour le GM, N.940.16.6484, 25 February 1947; S-0432-0001-01, Directeur Team 591 à M. Schurmans, 27 June 1946; S-0432-0001-02, Isert (team 581) à Délégué GM du Kreis de Wangen, 20 February 1946; Complaints about the fact that DPs were receiving less than Germans. S-0432-0005-02, J. de Saint Priest à Assistant Director, 17 June 1947.

¹⁷⁵ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0003-03, Réunion des Employment Officers 25, 26, 27 Novembre 1946 à Gutach.

Reutlingen but not in Rottweil and Balingen.¹⁷⁶ In Ravensburg, salaries were calculated on the basis of local German pay rates until May 1946. After May these tariffs were replaced by a significantly lower *Arbeitsamt* rate on the grounds that DPs should pay for their food rations.¹⁷⁷ In some areas DPs were simply not paid at all.¹⁷⁸ In others, they were asked to pay rent.¹⁷⁹ Delays and irregular payment caused serious disruption in DP camps' centres and undermined the credibility of UNRRA team directors.¹⁸⁰ In response to countless protests, the PDR Direction asked local administrators to set about, by will or by force, the full implementation of German authorities' obligations.¹⁸¹

German reluctance to honour the payment of DPs' salaries is hardly surprising. Germans had to meet the costs of French occupation at a time when their national economy was at rock bottom.¹⁸² The French zone is often presented in the historiography as the region, which, out of the four zones, suffered the least war damage.¹⁸³ But its economy was severely deregulated and its finances plagued by the shortcomings of French economic policies; in order to avoid inflation, French authorities had held German prices and salaries down.¹⁸⁴ In the context of a severe lack of financial resources, it is little wonder that some local administrators were disinclined to pay for those perceived as 'privileged' and unwelcome guests. Historians have also highlighted a continuation of the racist mentalities, which had underpinned the Nazi regime.¹⁸⁵ Many Germans were feeling envious of the DP population lodged and fed for 'free.' As Grossmann points out, Germans viewed the DP camps 'as a kind of *Schlaraffenland* (wonderland) of sugar and spam, margarine and jam, plus cigarettes and vitamized chocolate bars' ready for lucrative sale on the black-market.¹⁸⁶

Perhaps, more surprisingly, UNRRA relief workers and occupation officials were divided over the question of DP salaries. On the one hand, some maintained that the payment of a wage was an essential economic right and a pre-condition for DPs' individual rehabilitation.¹⁸⁷ This view coincided with the emerging human rights discourses and the notions that political and civil rights

¹⁷⁶ UNA, UNRRA, S-0432-0006-01, Visite à l'area team N.1, Ebingen, 3 June 1947. N.1234/16.

¹⁷⁷ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0002-02, Directeur (Team 579) Massip à Monsieur le Général de Corps d'Armée Lenclud, 31 August 1946.

¹⁷⁸ UNRRA, S-0432-0001-02, Lettre de Islerl (Team 581) à Délégué pour le GM du Kreis de Wangen, 20 février 1946.

¹⁷⁹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0001-07, Lt. Col Mercier, Compte-rendu d'inspection, Field Supervisor N.3, 10 January 1947.

¹⁸⁰ See for instance Daniel De Fos' complaints: UNRRA, S-0421-0047-02, Daniel de Fos à Field Operations, 6 November 1946.

¹⁸¹ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/811, Sous Directeur des Personnes Déplacées à Chef de Section des "Personnes Déplacées", GM Rhénanie, Ref. N.572 OB/MV, [December 1945?].

¹⁸² Bessel *Germany 1945*, p. 343.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 346.

¹⁸⁴ Libera *Un rêve de puissance*, p. 214.

¹⁸⁵ Bessel *Germany 1945*, pp. 262-263.

¹⁸⁶ Grossmann 'Grams, Calories and Food', p. 136 ; Also see Weinreb 'Matters of Taste', p. 129.

¹⁸⁷ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0024-05, Copie circulaire d'application au bulletin N. 51, signé Lenclud. [March 1946?].

were inextricably linked to material entitlements. During the war, Roosevelt had indeed claimed that '[a] man in need is not a free man.'¹⁸⁸ On the other hand, some believed that, in the dire immediate post-war conditions, the fact that DPs were fed and lodged for 'free' was sufficient. French local administrators and UNRRA relief workers often insisted that DPs' food and housing conditions were similar to that of most French workers, if not better.¹⁸⁹ UNRRA Assistant Director Marchal noted, for instance, that DPs had to understand that 'France [was] shar[ing] generously with them, the little it ha[d] left' and that they were receiving 'superior rations (in meat, fat content and bread) [relative] to the inhabitants of [French] towns, and even of the [French] countryside.'¹⁹⁰ According to him, DPs were more likely to get industrial workers' food allocations than were their French counterparts.¹⁹¹ It is worth noting that this argument still informs some contemporary humanitarian discourses. Guglielmo Verdirame and Barbara Harrell-Bond have indeed demonstrated that refugees working for the UNHCR and NGOs in the 1990s in Uganda and Kenya were not paid. They received incentives lower than the salaries paid to nationals for the same work, the UNHCR arguing that this was legitimate as refugees were already getting assistance in kind, namely food and building materials.¹⁹²

In post-war Germany, a supplementary factor justified French reluctance to honour the payment of DPs' salaries. As the Military Governor of Wangen observed at an UNRRA meeting of Welfare Officers, an official salary where there was little possibility to spend it was simply an invitation to black market activities.¹⁹³ In Biberach, UNRRA team director Levy-Duplat powerfully formulated the challenges that relief workers faced in a note entitled 'the problem of deportees':

There is only one problem, which consists of helping deportees to restore their normal life habits. Yet, the current conditions do not facilitate our tasks. We are telling them:

- Live according to moral standards; and we put fifteen of them in a room.
- Be clean; and we give them 2gr of soap a day.
- Work; yet, not only their wage has almost no interest as there is nothing to purchase but it constitutes an indirect invitation to black-market, as there are no other ways to use the money at the moment.¹⁹⁴

¹⁸⁸ Grossmann 'Grams, Calories and Food', p. 120.

¹⁸⁹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0018-08, Officier PDR situation des PDR (anciens Prisonniers, déportés et réfugiés) cercle d'Ehingen; Also see UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0031-04, Bastiaenen, Directeur (Team 206) à l'attention du Comité Lithuanien, 18 November 1946.

¹⁹⁰ UNA, UNRRA, S-0432-0004-04, Colonel Marchal à Messieurs les Directeurs de Districts, 41/16, 14 February 1946.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² Guglielmo Verdirame and Barbara Harrell-Bond *Rights in Exile. Janus-faced humanitarianism* (New York: Berghahn, 2005), pp. 218-221.

¹⁹³ UNA, UNRRA, S-0438-0007-05, Réunion des Welfare Officers du District Sud des Teams de l'Est, 15-16 janvier à Wangen, p. 8.

¹⁹⁴ UNA, UNRRA, S-0432-0003-02, UNRRA Team Director (209) Levy-Duplat 'le problème des déportés', Biberach, 12 March 1946.

Fears of black-market involvement were also held to justify scant distribution of cigarettes. Many relief workers protested against irregular and at time non-existent distribution of tobacco.¹⁹⁵ As in the other western zones, cigarettes often replaced money, performing 'all the functions of a metallic currency as a unit of account, as a measure of value and as a store of value', in addition to being homogeneous, durable and movable.¹⁹⁶ Wyman has even argued that there was a 'cigarette economy' in Germany, cigarettes serving as 'gold ever did as a base for the economy.'¹⁹⁷

It is beyond this chapter's scope to analyse in detail the problem of DPs' involvement in the black-market. But two points bear emphasis: firstly, the black market was a 'natural phenomenon.'¹⁹⁸ DPs who engaged in illicit trade did not necessarily do so to gain money; some simply did it to obtain essential goods. As Laura Hilton points out, the term 'black market' referred to a 'wide variety of types of economic exchanges outside the legal distribution and rationing systems', encompassing a wide myriad of gradation of trading, some more illegal and/or immoral than others.¹⁹⁹ In her recent reappraisal of the black market, Hilton argues that whereas the Germans engaged in illicit trade most commonly for food or cigarettes, and occupation personnel for luxury items, DPs needed a much wider range of items, such as clothing and fresh food.²⁰⁰ Secondly, there was a great discrepancy between perception and reality. Hilton has convincingly demonstrated that, contrary to popular legend, Germans participated in illicit trading in larger numbers and higher percentages than either DPs or occupation personnel.²⁰¹ For all that, the black-market provided a framework for maintaining the categories of racial enemies that had framed the Nazi years. In particular, it buttressed the development of the post-war German sense of victimhood.²⁰² In the French zone, the evidence suggests that, like elsewhere, rumours about DPs' involvement in the black-market were widespread.²⁰³

In summary, although regulations explicitly aimed at prioritizing DPs over Germans and at treating DPs uniformly without distinction of race, nationality or religion, the evidence reveals that, in practice, French policies protected some

¹⁹⁵ UNA, UNRRA, S-0432-0002-01, Allan à Moreland, 16 July 1946; S-0421-0047-01, De Fos à Direction Générale, 28 February 1947.

¹⁹⁶ Hilton 'The Black market in history and memory', p. 486.

¹⁹⁷ Mark Wyman *DPs: Europe's Displaced Persons, 1945-1951* (New York: Ithaca, 1998), pp. 114-116.

¹⁹⁸ Steege *Black Market, Cold War*; Bessel *Germany 1945*.

¹⁹⁹ Hilton 'The Black market in history and memory', p. 483.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid*, p. 488.

²⁰¹ *Ibid*, p. 490.

²⁰² *Ibid*, p. 496 ; Also see Grossmann *Jews, Germans and Allies*, pp. 37-46. Robert Moeller 'Germans as Victims? Thoughts on a Post-Cold War History of World War II's Legacies' *History and Memory*, Vol. 17, No. 1-2 (2005), pp. 147-194.

²⁰³ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/487, Administrateur Lucien Léon à Directeur des Personnes Déplacées, 28 April 1947; S-0421-0004-05, Rodie à Moreland, Dir.RR/GF.No 848, 12 July 1946; S-0432-0001-01, Begleiter (UNRRA team 591 Horb) à Sebillé, 12 August 1946.

DPs, yet discriminated against others. DPs' social entitlements depended on local budgets, policing methods, the degree of cooperation between various occupation services, and DPs' own ability to establish cordial relationships with Germans. As we shall see, DPs' working conditions were also highly contingent on their gender, national affiliations and educational backgrounds. As mentioned earlier, it was in response to the forceful employment of *intellectual* and *Baltic* DPs that the PDR Direction asked local administrators to act with more *discernment*. Indeed, UNRRA relief workers and occupation administrators tended to think more highly of Baltic and Banatais DPs than they did of Poles. Intellectual Baltic DPs and *Banatais* farmers were often described as more productive and highly skilled, whether because of superior training or innate ability, than lazy Polish and Ukrainian DPs. As a result, 'privileged' Baltic and *Banatais* tended to secure easier access to work in camps' administration or workshops; this, in turn, gave them easier access to food, money and cigarettes. Polish and Ukrainian DPs, on the contrary, faced widespread prejudice and were more likely to be forced to work outside camps. The last section of this chapter examines this calculus of privilege and prejudice, highlighting the profound ambiguities not only evident in French occupation official attitudes but also intrinsic to Central UNRRA Headquarters' guidance.

Privilege and Prejudice: national and gender divides²⁰⁴

In the conclusion of his book on *Hitler's Foreign Workers*, Ulrich Herbert points out that those who suffered the most after the Liberation were often, quite paradoxically, 'the very same persons who had suffered most in Germany during the war.'²⁰⁵ Under Nazi rules, Eastern Europeans worked longer hours and survived on poorer diets, lower wages, and less adequate housing than *Westarbeiter*.²⁰⁶ At the Liberation these very same unskilled workers were more likely to experience labour discrimination and abuses. Where they had formally been discriminated against relative to the *Westarbeiter*, after the war that discrimination persisted in new guise - relative to Baltic and *Banatais* DPs, both groups considered as more competent, productive and educated. In Singen, for instance, Poles were forced to work in the same factories as they had done during the war, while Latvian DP were better placed to refuse such job offers if

²⁰⁴ The subtitle 'Privilege and Prejudice' refers to Mary Dewhurst Lewis's chapter four *The Boundaries of the Republic: Migrant Rights and the Limits of the Republic*, p. 118.

²⁰⁵ Ulrich Herbert *Hitler's Foreign Workers. Enforced Foreign Labor in Germany under the Third Reich*, translated by William Templer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 376-377.

²⁰⁶ Herbert *Hitler's Foreign Workers*, p. 391 ; Stephenson *Hitler's Home Front*, p. 268.

they did not correspond to their skills. Moreover, Poles were only allocated German food rations, while Latvians typically received those of the *Intendance*. The UNRRA Employment Officer Rozale reported that '[t]he totality of the Polish DPs of the Singen camp are simple-minded people, ill equipped to defend their interests; they did not obtain any of the advantages granted to the Latvian DPs. They suffer[ed] and protest[ed] against a striking difference in their treatment.'²⁰⁷ In Ravensburg the Baltic population was composed of relatively 'wealthy' individuals, according to UNRRA welfare officer Roberts. And, paradoxically, the wealthier DPs often received the most aid.²⁰⁸ Without doubt, discrimination was not overall as striking as it was in the particular cases of Singen or Ravensburg. Yet UNRRA employment statistics show that the majority of Polish and Ukrainian DPs worked in factories, farms and forestry enterprises, while a significant number of intellectual Baltic DPs (civil servants, teachers, doctors, lawyers, entrepreneurs, students...) were either unemployed or reliant on their own workshops.²⁰⁹

National and Gender Divides

In the wake of France's full-blooded collaboration with the Nazi regime, many if not most French occupation officials and relief workers understood that it was no longer appropriate to refer to foreigners in the xenophobic terms that were ubiquitous in the late thirties and Vichy period. This did not mean, however, that well-entrenched stereotypes disappeared. In Feyen, for instance, a Captain Pohl labelled DPs as a 'group of gangsters', and he singled out the Polish race being 'dirty.'²¹⁰ More frequently, one finds contemptuous or condescending remarks. In Isny in Allgäu a welfare officer suggested that relief workers had to understand the *intrinsically* simple-minded character of Ukrainians. In her camp DPs were characterised as being 'old and *primaires* [simple-minded].'²¹¹ In Neudstadt, UNRRA employment officer Bohn reported that everyone around him was striving to get rid of uninteresting, unproductive and pitiful Poles.²¹² Stereotypes of Polish DPs as morally lax, bad workers and unproductive were, it seems, endemic.²¹³

²⁰⁷ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0028-05, J. Rozale, Employment officer, à Moreland, Zone Assistant Director, 3 July 1946; S-0438-0005-01, O. Despeigne, Situation au 15 mars 1946, Freiburg.

²⁰⁸ UNA, S-0438-0005-01, M. Roberts, Rapport sur ma visite au team de Ravensburg, Welfare Service, 13 May 1946.

²⁰⁹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0432-0005-04, Rapport Ateliers et programmes d'éducation professionnelle, 7 May 1947.

²¹⁰ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/493, Rapport du capitaine Duvillaret, Commandant la Subdivision de Trèves, à Monsieur le Lieutenant-Colonel Griollet, Délégué Régional Rhénanie-Hesse, Section des Personnes Déplacées, Trèves, 4 January 1946.

²¹¹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0086-01, A. Bagnée, Welfare report, Isny im Allgäu, 5 February [1946?].

²¹² UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0029-03, Lettre manuscrite de Bohn à Gobert, Neustadt, 15 June 1946.

²¹³ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0018-08, Officier PDR situation des PDR cercle d'Ehingen,4; S-0421-0029-05, Lettre du Gouverneur, Délégué Supérieur pour GM du Württemberg à Directeur de l'UNRRA pour la Zone Sud, N.1995 SAA/PDR/RC/GJ, 6 June 1946.

As Elisa Camiscioli argues, '[s]kills, productivity and even brute strength have always been ideologically inflected categories, subject to the perceived influence of gender, race, and nation.'²¹⁴ In her work on labour power and the racial economy in interwar France, she demonstrates how labour experts and government officials devalued the productive capacity of colonial workers in comparison to the normative model of French workers. 'By the interwar years the language of labour had successfully incorporated both productivism and racial hierarchy.'²¹⁵ Admittedly, Nazism and fascism largely discredited such overtly racial idioms after 1945.²¹⁶ But, the practices of flattening individuals into hermetic and hierarchical groups continued. In *Sept-ans en faveur des personnes déplacées*, one can indeed read that the *Banatais*' uprightness, dedication to hard work, as well as their singular organisational and pioneering gifts were only affirmed by their actions in the French zone.²¹⁷ French authorities had a similarly high opinion of hard-working and well-mannered Baltic DPs.²¹⁸ This hierarchy was not specific to the French zone. In fact, Salvatici has demonstrated that Anglo-American policies also 'introduced and/or enforced inequalities in displacement status on the basis of gender and national affiliation.'²¹⁹ According to her, 'this hierarchy was constructed according to the suitability shown by each group in removing the constituent elements of displacement (indiscipline, idleness, apathy) and matching the Western model of 'good labourer'.²²⁰

Labour practices were also highly gendered. Female employment rates and salaries were considerably lower than male ones.²²¹ When Dorothea Greene arrived in Reutlingen, she noted 'here we found the DP stores (food, supplies, clothing and amenity supplies) run by a DP woman. This is the first place that we had found a woman in such a position.'²²² In March 1947 employed women represented sixty-two per cent of the overall total of employable women, while eighty-three per cent of employable men were in employment.²²³ Moreover, as Salvatici has rightly pointed out, men's work was

²¹⁴ Elisa Camiscioli *Reproducing the French race. Immigration, Intimacy and Embodiment in the Early Twentieth Century* (Durham/London: Duke University Press, 2009), p. 52 ; Laura Levine Frader 'From Muscles to Nerves: Gender, "race" and the body at Work in France 1919-1939', *International Review of Social History*, Vol. 44, Supplement 7, (1999), pp. 123-147.

²¹⁵ Camiscioli *Reproducing the French race*, pp. 69-70.

²¹⁶ Michael Meng 'Democratic (In)Equalities: Immigration in Twentieth-Century Western Europe', *Contemporary European History*, Vol. 22, No. 01 (2013), pp. 139 - 151, p. 145.

²¹⁷ *Sept ans en faveur des personnes déplacées*, p. 45.

²¹⁸ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/811, Compte-rendu de la conférence qui s'est tenue le samedi 19 janvier 1945, Direction des PDR, 26 January 1946, N.5812 DGAA/Dir PDR ; MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/799, Compte-rendu d'une conférence tenue à Baden-Baden dans les bureaux du commandant Alix au Brenner, 9 May 1946. SEA/III, N.2329JD/SB.rap

²¹⁹ Salvatici 'From Displaced Persons to Labourers', p. 211.

²²⁰ *Ibid*, p. 221.

²²¹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0432-0006-01, Pourchet à Monsieur le Directeur, Area Team N.1 – Coblenz, N.1223/16, 30 May 1947.

²²² UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0004-14, Dorothea Greene, Reutlingen, UNRRA Team 589, [August 1946].

²²³ UNA, UNRRA, S-0432-0006-01, J. De Saint-Priest, Rapport mensuel Mars 1947, 1 April 1947.

mainly directed outside camps, while women's work tended primarily to be inside camps.²²⁴ In the summer of 1947, throughout Germany as a whole, women constituted some forty per cent of the DPs working in the camps, but they amounted to no more than ten per cent of those working in the German economy.²²⁵ In the French zone alone, the proportion of women working outside camps was higher than in the rest of Germany: women represented thirty-seven per cent of the DPs working in camps and twenty-eight per cent of those working for the German economy.²²⁶ Some French occupation officials defended the male breadwinner model. The Governor of Württemberg argued for instance that it was *normal* that most women did not work, as their role was to perform traditional occupations in the household.²²⁷ For these administrators, women should remain confined to stereotypically feminine occupations such as providing care in the kitchen, nursery, or cleaning services within their camp.²²⁸ At a time when citizenship rights and greater access to the paid labour force were becoming available to French women in France, DP employment reveals continuities of thought with the inter-war years and the persistence of some of the tenets of the male breadwinner ideology described by Laura Frader.²²⁹ As Hanna Diamond has demonstrated, 'the battle of coal' marked a crucial moment in the celebration of working-class masculinity, the virile male industrial worker becoming an iconic manly figure in French men's attempt to recoup some self-esteem after the humiliation of the wartime period.²³⁰

Janus-faced humanitarianism

As the preceding comments indicate, UNRRA did not always protect DPs against discrimination. On the contrary, the organization's employment policies sometimes reinforced inequalities amongst DPs. In some cases, jobs inside camps offered better food allocations and housing conditions than work outside.²³¹ In these cases, rather than levelling social differences by preventing the 'lower socio-economic categories from feeling the burden of material or

²²⁴ Salvatici 'From Displaced Persons to Labourers', p. 221.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*

²²⁶ UNA, UNRRA, S-0432-0005-03, Employment of DPs, monthly general statistics report for January 1947 (16 January).

²²⁷ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0029-05, Gouverneur, Délégué Supérieur pour le GM du Wurtemberg à Directeur de l'UNRRA pour la Zone Sud, 6 June 1946; On DP women employment also see S-0432-0005-03, J.de Saint-Priest, Coblenz, 26 April 1947.

²²⁸ Salvatici 'From Displaced Persons to Labourers', p. 221.

²²⁹ Laura Levine Frader *Breadwinners and Citizens: Gender in the Making of the French Social Model* (Durham/London: Duke University Press, 2008); Hilary Footitt 'The Politics of Political Women': Reassessing the First Députées', pp. 87-101.

²³⁰ Hanna Diamond 'Miners, Masculinity and the 'Bataille du Charbon' in France 1944-1948', *Modern and Contemporary France*, Vol. 19, No. 01 (2011), pp. 69-84.

²³¹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0047-02, Commandant du camp Kiewlicz à Directeur de l'UNRRA, 20 November 1946; MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/487, Lettre du Délégué Supérieur pour le GM du Wurtemberg à Monsieur l'Officier de Liaison de UNRRA [April 1947?].

social deprivation', as Ihor Zielyk suggests, camp employment policies contributed to social stratification.²³²



Fig. 44. The Polish Guard, Gutach DP camp, April 1946²³³

Many DP strikes were due to unequal pay and unfair advantages amongst DPs. On 12 September 1946, for instance, twenty female DP workers from a textile factory near Lorräch went on strike. Having worked in this factory since July, they resented the fact that their comrades from the DP camp in nearby Mülheim received better food rations (including chocolate), than them. The UNRRA Employment Officer pledged to rectify the situation.²³⁴ But, the evidence suggests that discontent persisted.²³⁵ A few months later, a violent strike broke out in the DP camp of Gneisenau (near Koblenz), DPs begrudging that those employed by UNRRA (team-workers) received fifteen packets of US cigarettes while everyone else were only allocated six. In similar fashion, the food rations, clothes and children's materials were unequally distributed among the camp's inhabitants.²³⁶ This strike was particularly violent, the Polish chief of the UNRRA shop having been beaten-up and severely wounded.²³⁷

In other cases, as mentioned earlier, UNRRA directors could not pay their class II personnel. These administrators appear to have resented the marked disparities in treatment between them and class I personnel. 'Our class II personnel proved far more valuable to the Administration than the Administration did to them' commented Jean Gerbier in Lindau. 'It is unfortunate

²³² UNRRA, S-0432-0004-05, Lettre de G. Loustalot à Mr. le Directeur Général de l'UNRRA en ZFO, 11 February 1947 ; Ihor V. Zielyk 'the DP camp as a social system' Isajiw, Boshy and Senkus (eds) *The Refugee Experience*, pp. 461-470, p. 463.

²³³ UNRRA, S-0421-0026-05, Lettre de Bourguignon à Sebille, 13 September 1946.

²³⁴ UNRRA, S-0421-0023-09, 'La journée du jeudi 18 avril 1946 au team 572', par Durand, Gutach.

²³⁵ UNRRA, S-0421-0026-05, Lettre de Mlle Y. Bourguignon à Monsieur Sebille, 13 September 1946.

²³⁶ UNRRA, S-0421-0026-05, Ch. Pourchet à Monsieur Desvernois, chef de la Section des Personnes Déplacées, 26 February 1947.

²³⁷ MAE, HCRFA, Service de Liaison [SL], 52, Procès-Verbal, No.868, Brigade de Coblenz, 24 June 1947.

²³⁸ UNRRA, S-0419-0001-07, Lettre de A.J.Pouzenc à Lenclud, 'emeute dans le camp de Gniezno', 24 June 1947.

that numerous solemn promises made to them were broken. [...] Hope being the most precious property of our DPs, it was important not to use it wrongly.²³⁸ The UNRRA Personnel Division in Paris meanwhile made recommendations based on their own perceptions of fairness. The Division's anonymous official historian records that '[t]he principle of equal pay for equal work is strong throughout Europe, and I believe that any future organization should reject with the greatest firmness any attempt whatever to make differentiated wage scales.'²³⁹ It was a different story in the field, however, where attitudes of class I personnel towards class II personnel varied greatly within the zone. While some directors considered class II staffers as their equals and complained about UNRRA's official policy, others saw absolutely no contradiction between the rhetoric of human rights and the persistence of these economic and national inequalities.²⁴⁰

Like many other contemporary humanitarian institutions, UNRRA's employment policies and its camp system institutionalized an unequal relationship between 'the compassionate and the suffering' that contradicts the presumed universalism of its discourse.²⁴¹ Not only did UNRRA employment policies entrench certain forms of social differentiation, notably between those working for UNRRA (who generally profited from more food, prestige and power) and those having to work outside; but, more importantly, it hardened differences in economic status between relief workers and DP 'recipients.'²⁴² That being said, some UNRRA directors encouraged DPs' sense of initiative, combatted discrimination and organized vocational training. Generalization is commensurately difficult. While as explained in chapter Three, some UNRRA relief workers acted as despots, others were inspired by a democratic spirit and by notions of 'cultural relativism.'²⁴³

Near Koblenz, for instance, UNRRA's American director Faucette strove to help DPs to become 'self-respecting citizens who work in harmony together' in the Gneisenau Kasern, renamed 'Gniezno' in reference to the first capital of Poland.²⁴⁴ His comments are worth quoting at length. 'Our people are inspired with the desire to disprove the 'Herrenvolk' ideas of their former masters by living a more exemplary life and doing better work than the Germans. We have therefore a community which is predominantly church going, very strong in its

²³⁸ UNA, UNRRA, S-1021-0085-08, Gerbier, 'rapport sur les activités de l'UNRRA', 8 mai 1947, p. 26.

²³⁹ UNA, UNRRA, S-1021-0031-07, History of UNRRA, Personnel Division.[undated].

²⁴⁰ UNRRA, S-0417-0003-03, Réunion des Employment Officers 25, 26, 27 Novembre 1946 à Gutach.

²⁴¹ Zahra 'Psychological Marshall Plan', p. 38.

²⁴² Gatrell 'From 'Homelands' to 'Warlands': Themes, Approaches, Voices' in Gatrell and Baron (eds) *Warlands*, pp. 1-22, p. 10.

²⁴³ Reinisch 'Auntie UNRRA at the crossroads', p. 77.

²⁴⁴ UNA, UNRRA, S-1021-0085-05, Faucette, History of UNRRA, report No.E.26, 31 March 1947, p. 5.

insistence on morality and normal living.²⁴⁵ 'We were somewhat amazed and very gratified in December when the Oberpostdirektion of Koblenz petitioned the French Military Government to allow the Polish group of workers to accept the contract for reconstruction of the Koblenz Post Office (a contract involving between 1.250.000 and 1.500.000 RM) on the basis of a study they had made which indicated that the Poles were producing approximately 20% more per man per day than German workers in similar occupations in and around Koblenz.'²⁴⁶

Disproving the Herrenvolk idea? Workshops and vocational trainings

The UNRRA employment Section recommended that each UNRRA team organized agricultural projects and workshops in order to teach or re-teach DP skills. For UNRRA Employment specialists, vocational training was an important factor in 'helping people to help themselves', by developing their skills and self-confidence.²⁴⁷ In February 1946, American UNRRA employment training taught employment officers how to create workshops from scratch.²⁴⁸ Despite the difficulties in obtaining tools and raw materials in the context of French industrial removals and requisition policies, and despite the shortage of DP trained instructors, workshops and training courses flourished in many DP centres.²⁴⁹ As explained in chapter five, these ranged from sewing, knitting and embroidery workshops to repair, carpentry, mechanics, electricity and toy-making workshops.²⁵⁰ Some UNRRA directors also made sure that DPs were given the opportunity to become apprentices in German factories.²⁵¹

In Landstuhl, for instance, Daniel de Fos launched a 'crusade for DPs' reemployment.²⁵² Convinced that allied nationals should not be forced to work in unwanted jobs in enemy country, he made considerable efforts to find tools and materials for DPs.²⁵³ 'Without official help', he organised a forestry worksite,

²⁴⁵ Ibid, p. 4.

²⁴⁶ Ibid, p. 4.

²⁴⁷ HAS-4/3, *Report on Psychological Problems of Displaced Persons*, 1 June 1945, pp. 1-41, p. 14 ; AN, AJ/43/1141, Jacques Bloch *Problèmes de l'orientation professionnelle des enfants juifs victimes de la guerre* (Genève: OSE, 1947), p. 4.

²⁴⁸ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0028-05, Rozale, compte-rendu de la conference Employment à Hoest, 1,2,3 Février 1946, 14 February 1946 ; UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0031-07, Réunion des Teams Employment Officers, Freiburg, 20 February 1947.

²⁴⁹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0029-03, Sebille à O. Gobert, N,236/11, 4 July 1946.

²⁵⁰ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0028-05, Mémo sur la situation actuelle du District Sud pour la reeducation professionnelle des DPs [February 1946?]. Also see In Gutach, S-0432-0002-01, Report Employment Officer to Rozale, 15 March 1946; In Ravensburg, S-0432-0002-03, UNRRA Team 579 à Zone Employment Officer, 22 January 1947; In Calw and Horb, S-0432-0002-04, Lettre de Bajars Janis à Direction Générale de la ZFO, 24 March 1947; In Mullheim, S-0432-0002-06, Rapport activité des ateliers de Rousselle à Directeur de l'area Team 2, 23 April 1947; In Lebach, UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0029-03, Directeur du District à Monsieur le Général, Directeur Général de UNRRA en Zone Française d'Occupation, 25 June 1946, N.23/2021.

²⁵¹ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/487, Rapport N.15 Officier Léon à Directeur des Personnes Déplacées, 19 March 1946.

²⁵² UNA, UNRRA, S-0438-0003-03, De Fos à Lavigne, Field-Supervisor, 5 June 1946.

²⁵³ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0047-02, De Fos à Field Supervisor, 18 October 1946; S-0421-0047-03, De Fos à Gobert, 29 May 1946.

cabinet-work and embroidery workshops.²⁵⁴ In July 1946, UNRRA's American training specialist Dorothea Greene lauded De Fos' success, noting that Landstuhl had very good carpenters and a machine workshop that was 'magnificently equipped.'²⁵⁵ Yet, UNRRA Zone headquarters accused De Fos of employing too many DPs in the camps, notably in the police services.²⁵⁶ Greene was undeterred, and also applauded the efforts made in Biberach. According to her, Biberach was 'one of the camps ranking at the top of the list', with its very fine sewing shop, its first rate tie-making workshop (which used salvaged materials from American used clothing), excellent carpentry workshop and an auto-mechanics theoretical training course.²⁵⁷ In addition to the lack of materials, UNRRA employment officers confronted rivalries between groups of DPs. In Niederlahnstein, for instance, the welfare officer reported the difficulties experienced in running 'combined Jewish and Polish shops, owing to friction between the workers. Therefore the main camp work was done in the Polish shops, and the Jewish Committee was given a sewing machine for the express use of the Jewish community.'²⁵⁸

Some French occupation officials were reluctant to encourage activities that might slow the pace of repatriation. Others, aware that France needed skilled workers, encouraged it. As Daniel Cohen has shown, France launched a veritable 'bataille du reclassement' [professional reassignment] at the Liberation.²⁵⁹ Aimed at war veterans, repatriated prisoners and deportees, this post-war *reclassement* battle drew substantially on Vichy precedent. As Cohen points out, '[t]he National Revolution had in a recent past bestowed upon manual labor a function of social harmony.'²⁶⁰ DPs themselves were also keen to learn new trades. Contrary to the widespread assumption that DPs were 'apathetic', evidence suggests a high degree of personal initiative amongst them.²⁶¹ In June 1946, for instance, the Dr Karvelis, former Finance Ministry of Lithuania and President of the Lithuanian Red Cross contacted UNRRA to buy a factory, which he hoped to entrust to Lithuanians who would run it 'for the profit of the French Army and France.'²⁶² In Lorräch, many self-employed craftsmen (tailors, dressmakers, cobblers, electricians...) became wholly

²⁵⁴ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0047-03, Directeur du District à De Fos, 18 July 1946; De fos à Capitaine Malgrat, 2 August 1946; S-0421-0041-03, De Fos à Field Supervisor N.1, 25 January 1947.

²⁵⁵ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0003-03, translation, raport Dorothea Greene, Landstuhl, 30 July 1946.

²⁵⁶ UNA, UNRRA, S-0432-0005-04, Raymond, Rapport sur l'emploi (Palatinat), District Employment Officer, 13 April 1946.

²⁵⁷ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0004-14, Rapport Dorothea Greene, 10 August 1946.

²⁵⁸ UNA, UNRRA, S-0438-0008-07, Welfare report (25 November 1946 to 14 January 1947), 14 January 1947.

²⁵⁹ Cohen 'The West and the Displaced', p. 218.

²⁶⁰ Ibid, p. 221.

²⁶¹ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0029-05, Rozale, District Employment Officer à Moreland, District Director, 1 April 1946. 'Projet des Ingenieurs Apatrides de Ravensburg.'

²⁶² UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0029-03, Bouchez à Bohn, 12 June 1946.

integrated in the German economy.²⁶³ In total, according to UNRRA official figures, there were 190 UNRRA workshops in May 1947 employing 1,500 DPs.²⁶⁴ In the spring of 1947 some of these workshops became self-sufficient and progressively freed themselves from UNRRA supervision.²⁶⁵

UNRRA doctors and nurses also provided refresher courses for DP doctors and assistant nurses. UNRRA medical courses started in the French zone in February 1946 and were held in eleven centres (Landstuhl, Lebach, Pirmasens, Hombourg, Trier, Nierdelahnstein, Ravensburg, Reutlingen, Freiburg, Müllheim and Rottweil).²⁶⁶ 304 DP aid nurses passed their exams in the French zone.²⁶⁷ According to many health specialists, UNRRA training courses ranked among one of the 'the most successful undertaking of the UNRRA health division.'²⁶⁸

UNRRA official historian concurred '[t]he remarkably high health levels of the displaced persons, in spite of inadequate food and accommodation, represent a real achievement of the military health authorities, the UNRRA doctors and nurses, and the displaced persons themselves. No epidemic caught hold; the infant



Fig. 45. The training of DP aid nurses, Ravensburg.
UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0063-05, Service Medical Team 579, Ravensburg, [June-July 1946?].

mortality rate was low; the venereal disease rate was lower than that among the German population or the armies of occupation.²⁶⁹ DPs health in the French zone was also generally satisfactory (apart from DP mental health which was worrying). 'There was no case of typhus or smallpox; the number of typhoid-paratyphoid or dysenteric infections was very limited.'²⁷⁰ General De Cilleuls argued that the training provided to feminine staff significantly contributed to high level of individual and collective hygiene.²⁷¹

²⁶³ UNA, UNRRA, S-0432-0001-05, Rapport Field Supervisor Bade-Sud, 26 December 1946.

²⁶⁴ UNA, UNRRA, S-1021-0085-03, Ateliers et programmes d'éducation professionnelle, May 1947, p. 6.

²⁶⁵ UNA, S-0432-0005-02, Compte-rendu de visite à l'area team de Ravensburg, 16 June 1947.

²⁶⁶ UNA, S-1021-0085-04, Medecin General des Cilleuls, Exposé Général de l'organisation et du fonctionnement du service medical en Zone Française du 1er Décembre 1945 au 1er mars 1947, p. 16.

²⁶⁷ UNA, S-1021-0085-04, Medecin General des Cilleuls, Exposé Général ... 1er Décembre 1945 au 1er mars 1947, p. 16.

²⁶⁸ AN, AJ/43/594, Letter of R.L. Coigny, Director of Health to Mr. Myer Cohen, Health division, 24 October 1947.

²⁶⁹ Woodbridge *UNRRA*, Vol. 2, p. 528.

²⁷⁰ UNA, S-1021-0085-04, Medecin General des Cilleuls, Exposé Général ... 1er Décembre 1945 au 1er mars 1947, p. 22.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*

In the field of vocational training, UNRRA's efforts were assisted by several voluntary agencies, which provided materials, machines and instructors. In Freiburg, the American Christian Committee for Refugees (ACCR) helped to establish a sewing and knitting school.²⁷² The YMCA meanwhile organized a training centre in Hinterzarten, which offered correspondence courses and established a workshop in Shramberg.²⁷³ In the spring of 1946 thirty-eight DPs studied mechanics, twenty DPs trained as electricians, thirty more learned aspects of the building trade and a handful more trained in industrial design at Shramberg's professional workshop.²⁷⁴ UNRRA district employment officer Rozale nevertheless lamented that YMCA training courses remained too theoretical and insufficiently practical.²⁷⁵ The Inter-governmental Committee for Refugees (IGCR) contributed to the creation of an experimental centre in Ravensburg.²⁷⁶ In the summer of 1947 nearly 100 DPs were trained in this professional centre, taking classes in electrical engineering, radio-telephony, the job of assistant topographer, civil engineering and industrial design. Finally, the Jewish ORT (Organisation Reconstruction Travail) played a significant role in the French zone for Jewish DPs, creating a knitting and sewing workshop in Gailingen.²⁷⁷ The ORT was inspired by the philosophy of *productivization* of Jews set forth by socialist Zionist Russian thinkers at the end of the 19th Century, aiming at the regeneration through manual labour and their *deghettoization* through their integration in the working-class.²⁷⁸ Although the Jewish population was relatively small in the French zone, it is also worth recording that there were several Kibboutz in Gailingen and Biberach.²⁷⁹

From the summer of 1947 French efforts to set up vocational training and professional centres intensified. The 6 September 1947 Agreement signed by French authorities and the Preparatory Commission of the International Refugee Organisation explicitly referred to the question of professional training. In fact, the subsection 10, section 3 stipulated that IRO should set a program of re-education and professional training for DPs.²⁸⁰ Recognizing that 'most countries required specific work skills from their prospective resettles', the IRO

²⁷² UNA, UNRRA, S-1021-0085-06, Bastiaenen, Historique du Centre DP de Fribourg; AN, AJ/43/759, PCIRO French Zone headquarters, Rapport mensuel narratif du directeur de zone au chef des operations Juillet 1947, p. 13.

²⁷³ UNA, UNRRA, S-1021-0084-13, Le Service aux Personnes Déplacées de l'Alliance Universelle YMCA/YWCA en Zone Française d'Occupation; S-0419-0003-05, Lettre de L.H. Hebert, Directeur YMCA, à Relief Services – Welfare Division, 27 June 1946.

²⁷⁴ UNA, UNRRA, S-0421-0028-05, Rozale à Moreland, Visite aux ateliers professionnels YMCA à Shramberg, 15 February 1946.

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

²⁷⁶ AN, AJ/43/594, Lettre de A. Poignant (PCIRO) à Monsieur P. Jacobsen, 4 June 1948.

²⁷⁷ UNA, UNRRA, S-0432-0002-05, D. Schutterle, Detachement UNRRA de Gailingen, Atelier ORT de Gailingen, 17 January 1947.

²⁷⁸ Cohen 'The West and the Displaced', p. 229; For an overview of the ORT work in Paris see Sophie Enos-Attali et Emmanuelle Polack 'La contribution de l'ORT à la reconstruction de l'artisanat juif parisien dans l'immédiat après-guerre: l'exemple des métiers du textile', *Archives Juives* Vol. 39, No. 2 (2006), pp. 64-71.

²⁷⁹ HA6B-2/1, Report Nr. 1 Jewish Relief Unit, Biberach, 10 June 1946, Dixi Heim.

²⁸⁰ AN, AJ/43/798, Compte-rendu d'une mission confiée par le Directeur des Affaires Economiques et Sociales à Guyoton, 2 November 1948.

tested DPs and encouraged them to learn a profession.²⁸¹ From the summer of 1948 DPs were no longer *forced* to work but they were obliged to learn a profession.²⁸² In October 1948, a discrete service of *Formation Professionnelle Accélérée* was entrusted to M. Guyoton.²⁸³ In total, eighteen vocational centres were created in the French zone training DPs for twenty-six different professions, although some of these training centres were notoriously inefficient.²⁸⁴

Conclusion

French official employment policies were a product of the interplay between various economic considerations and cultural influences, from nineteenth century socialist utopias to the French *civilizing mission*; the ideology of the National Revolution and the post-1945 rhetoric of production. In purely arithmetical terms, there were resounding successes. As many contemporary reports highlighted, employment rates were notably higher in the French zone than elsewhere. The official PDR leaflet proudly insisted: 'In July 1947, at the time of UNRRA's disbandment, out of 18,934 employable DPs 18,520 were employed. This success speaks for itself; when in 1951, German authorities complained that the employment of *inémigrables* DPs is not possible; one should remember these results [...].'²⁸⁵ Given these successful employment rates, French officials often prided themselves in having devised a more individualist and suitable solution for the DPs in their care and, thereby, hastening their return to some sense of 'normality.' Yet beneath this official self-congratulatory discourse, the reality was more complex. As a matter of fact, when French authorities entrusted the DP question to German authorities in 1950, a significant number of DPs were still not 'integrated' into the German economy. Amongst the approximate 8,000 DPs who then remained in the French zone still unable to emigrate to a third country, the majority of those living in the Baden and Rhineland-Palatinate were working; yet, for those living in Württemberg-Hohenzollern, the situation was more critical. Many of them

²⁸¹ AN, AJ/43/594, Special Report from the Employment and Vocational training Division, (to PCIRO Headquarters Geneva), 3 November 1947, signed A.C. Dunn (Chief, Department of care and maintenance).

²⁸² AN, AJ/43/798, copie de la Lettre du Général d'Armée Koenig à Monsieur le Directeur de la CPOIR, 16 September 1948.

²⁸³ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/869, Note pour M. Rivain, Directeur du Cabinet de l'Ambassadeur de France Haut Commissaire de la République Française en Allemagne, [undated]. AN, AJ/43/798, Lettre du Directeur de l'Organisation Internationale pour les Réfugiés à Général d'Armée, Commandant en chef Français en Allemagne, organisation de la formation professionnelle des réfugiés et personnes déplacées [December 1948].

²⁸⁴ AN, AJ/43/594, Lettre de A. Poignant (PCIRO) à Monsieur P. Jacobsen, Rééducation professionnelle, 4 June 1948 ; PDR6/842, Compte-rendu de l'Attaché Rebiere à l'attention de M. le Directeur, Chef du service des Personnes Déplacées, 16 January 1951.

²⁸⁵ *Sept-ans en faveur des personnes déplacées*, p. 28.

continued to live in poor accommodation and camps; they experienced discrimination from their German employers.²⁸⁶

Whilst official instructions stipulated that DPs should enjoy priority over local Germans, this chapter has revealed that their situation vis-à-vis their German neighbours crucially depended on local conditions and varied markedly according to DPs' nationality and gender. The revival of gender and ethnic prejudices within a climate of persistent economic difficulties translated into very different treatment for particular categories of DPs. Intellectual Baltic DPs and *Banatais* farmers were often 'privileged.' They tended to have easier access to work in camps' administration or workshops, and therefore received better rations of food and cigarettes. Polish and Ukrainian DPs, on the contrary, faced prejudice and were more likely to be forced to work outside camps. Over time, some UNRRA relief workers protested against these blatant inequalities and helped to improve DPs' working situation and material entitlements. But, in other cases, these relief workers contributed to the very inequalities that certain DPs confronted.

In the context of the intensifying PDR/UNRRA conflict, UNRRA officials presented themselves as 'protectors' of the DPs. Yet, once again, beneath the surface of UNRRA's humanitarian discourse, the reality was more nuanced. French UNRRA relief workers' attitudes were framed by competing demands, between attempts to satisfy the demands of the French economy while responding to the needs of DPs. Depending on their assigned tasks, political orientation, and perhaps also their wartime experiences, French relief workers presented very different interpretations of DPs' circumstances. Whilst many relief workers backed up DPs' complaints about food rations and salaries, arguing that not enough had changed since the Liberation, others showed little interest in improving DPs' situation. On the one hand, this probably suggests that French UNRRA relief workers did not uniformly recognize DPs as war victims. On the other hand, it reveals the limits of the impact of the rhetoric of the Resistance and the emerging Human Right discourses.

So, taken as a whole, were French employment policies more a form of economic exploitation than an attempt to rehabilitate DPs? Without doubt, some aspects of French employment practices resembled economic exploitation more than humanitarian rehabilitation. DPs' occasional exposure to arbitrary violence, combined with shortage of soap, clothes and fresh food, contributed, in some significant ways, to confine DPs to a perceived inferior status relative to

²⁸⁶ *Sept-ans en faveur des personnes déplacées*, pp. 130-131 ; AN, AJ/43/797, chef du service IRO pour la Zone Sud à Directeur de l'IRO pour la ZFOA, Dir/JB/HH/2111, 13 June 1950.

Germans.²⁸⁷ Many relief workers insisted that DPs' appearance were often miserable, their clothes being 'either completely worn out or too small and their shoes without soles.'²⁸⁸ Yet, the overall portrait of DP employment is not entirely negative. Significant efforts were made to help DPs acquire the means to learn a trade. Perhaps more importantly, the majority of DPs felt 'protected' enough to start re-building families and raising children in the French zone, as the extremely high birth rates testified. 'In 1946 and 1947, a monthly average of 120 births were registered for a overall population of 40,000 DPs, including 26,000 adults between the age of 20 and 45 years old [...] This rate is higher than that of any country in the world.'²⁸⁹



Fig.46. Visit for young mothers, medical center, Freiburg.²⁹⁰

So, if it remains questionable whether employment policies helped heal the deep psychic wounds created by Nazi terror, it seems reasonable to conclude that they did not prevent the majority of DPs from feeling secure enough to take the first steps in their return to civilian normality.

²⁸⁷ UNA, UNRRA, S-0432-0004-04, Lettre de Marchal à Chief of Operations in Germany, 13 February 1946, N.32/11; MAE, HCRFA, Bonn 150, Administrateur Général Laffon à Monsieur le Général d'Armée Koenig, 1 October 1946 ; AN, AJ/43/594, CPOIR et Direction des Personnes Déplacées, Rapport Général de fin d'installation du centre technique de Ravensburg, 1 August 1947, p. 3.

²⁸⁸ UNA, UNRRA, S-1021-0085-06, Bastiaenen, Historique du Centre DP de Fribourg... N.6, p. 24.

²⁸⁹ *Sept ans en faveur des personnes déplacées*, p. 35 ; On the demographic vitality of the DP population PDR6/869, Note pour M. Rivain, Directeur du Cabinet de l'Ambassadeur de France Haut Commissaire de la République Française en Allemagne, [undated].

²⁹⁰ UNA, UNRRA, S-1021-0085-04, consultation de nourrissons, Centre médical de Fribourg.

Chapter Seven: Historical Land of liberty or impoverished Communist enclave? The IRO and the resettlement of DPs in France (1947-1950)

Over the last two decades, the alleged ‘crisis of asylum’, the rise of Jean-Marie Le Pen’s extreme right National Front and the creation of the Ministry of Immigration, Integration and National Identity in 2007 have generated renewed scholarly interest in state nationalism and ‘governmental xenophobia’ in France.¹ The increased ability of the state to monitor foreigners, by taking fingerprints and retinal scans, has corroborated the idea of an irreversible ‘nationalization’ and ‘bureaucratization’ of migration control, representing the culmination of a trend that started in the late nineteenth century.² In many respects, the DP recruitment chapter can be inscribed within this narrative that emphasizes the pessimistic and dark sides of the Leviathan state. The philosophy behind the recruitment augured the logic behind contemporary policy of ‘chosen immigration’³; the anti-Semitic and xenophobic practices of ONI bureaucrats foreshadowed the professional culture of arrogance and condescension of today’s *asylum counters* [guichet d’asile].⁴

At the Liberation, French political leaders and journalists attempted, after the failure of asylum in the late thirties and the Vichy regime’s suppression of elementary democratic rights, to restore their country’s place as the historical haven of political refugees. Meanwhile, in contrary fashion, the harsh selection methods adopted towards healthy workers in the German ruins recalled aspects of Nazi practices. As former Resistant leader Claude Bourdet observed in January 1948: ‘[a]re responsible, individually, the various governments and, among them, the French government which, waste time and money to hand pick, one by one, the best workers amongst the Displaced Persons [...] dividing needlessly and inhumanly family, victims amongst victims, [...] and differentiating pernickety the ‘able to work’ and the ‘with no market value’, doing exactly what Hitler did.’⁵

In *La Tyrannie du National*, Gérard Noiriel presents this episode as a blatant example of state hypocrisy. Highlighting the discrepancy between the rhetorical airs with which French government figures proclaimed human rights

¹ Jérôme Valluy ‘Quelles sont les origines du ministère de l’Identité nationale et de l’Immigration’, *Cultures et Conflits*, No. 69 (2008), pp. 7-18.

² Paul André Rosental ‘Migrations, souveraineté, droits sociaux. Protéger et expulser les étrangers en Europe du XIXe siècle à nos jours’, *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, Vol. 66, No. 2 (2011), pp. 335-373, p. 335.

³ Contrary to the 2006 Sarkozy Law on ‘chosen immigration’, which aimed at ‘highly qualified migrants’, DP recruitment policy was, however, designed for low-wage low skill migrants. Georg Menz *The political economy of Managed Migration: Nonstate actors, Europeanization, and the Politics of Designing Migration Policies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 148-149.

⁴ Alexis Spire ‘L’asile au guichet. La dépolitisation du droit des étrangers par le travail bureaucratique’ *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, Vol. 169, No. 4 (2007), pp. 4-21.

⁵ Claude Bourdet ‘Le grand scandale’, *Personnes déplacées* (Paris : Editions de Clermont, 1948), pp. 15-18, p. 18.

and the methods it employed to handpick fit and able-bodied workers in Germany, Noiriél argues that the recruitment of DPs embodied the victors' disregard for the humanitarian values that they so recently enunciated in the Universal Declaration.⁶ Despite the trauma of war and fascism, Noiriél maintains, western Governments were inconsistent, ritually mouthing slogans they ignored when convenient. To be sure, not only were the majority of DPs required to work in menial and strenuous occupations, but unmarried mothers, elderly and sick DPs were left in Germany in the hands of their former oppressors.⁷ A simple medical history of TB - a common illness among DPs resulting from wartime working and living conditions - was enough to exclude them from resettlement.⁸

Noiriél's argument sits alongside the new strand of 'disenchanted' historiography, keen to challenge the morality-tale version of internationalism and emphasize the 'inauspicious beginnings' of the establishment of Human Rights.⁹ This growing literature has highlighted the elements of cynicism and state interests intrinsic to the establishment of the human-rights regime, highlighting that the noble proclamation of human rights was devoid of enforcement mechanisms and that the 'human rights' revolution did not challenge state sovereignty.¹⁰ While article 14 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaimed that 'everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution' and the constitution of the Fourth Republic which announced that all 'who are persecuted for the cause of liberty have a right of asylum in the territories of the Republic', The 'France of René Cassin' unscrupulously took part in a 'slave's market' in Germany, leaving behind the elderly, the sick and the unproductive.

This contradiction requires explanation. Why did Western governments' recruitment schemes fail to acknowledge the suffering of Hitler's war victims? Did the presence of the International Refugee Organization (IRO) compel changes to otherwise narrow state interest to better serve the DPs' interests? Were French recruitment schemes progressively amended in favour of DPs' 'unproductive' dependants? And, perhaps most pertinent to us here, did France

⁶ Noiriél *La tyrannie du national. Le droit d'asile en Europe (1793-1993)* (Paris: Calmann-Levy, 1991), p. 135.

⁷ Daniel Cohen *In war's wake: Europe's Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 105.

⁸ Wolfgang Jacobmeyer 'The Displaced Persons in West Germany, 1945-1951', Goran Rystad (ed) *The Uprooted. Forced Migration as an International Problem in the Post-War Era* (Lund: Lund University Press, 1990), pp. 271-288, 279.

⁹ Glenda Sluga's review of Mark Mazower's *No Enchanted Palace: the End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations*, *The English Historical Review*, Vol. CXXV, No. 516 (2010), pp. 1280-1282, p. 1280.

¹⁰ Mark Mazower *No enchanted palace: The end of empire and the ideological origins of the United Nations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).

represent a safe haven for anti-communist DPs? Were DPs that eager anyway to come to France after the strikes of the winter of 1947?

Drawing mainly on primary sources from the French occupation zone's archives (La Courneuve) and the IRO's archives (Paris), this chapter examines the final act of the DP episode for the French authorities, which took place between July 1947 and July 1950. To that end it focuses on the installation of the IRO in the French zone and the resettlement of DPs around the world. Particular attention is paid to French authorities' race for DPs. According to French official figures, between 1 July 1947 and 31 December 1951, 4,441 DPs residing in the French zone were repatriated and 39,497 emigrated under the aegis of the IRO.¹¹ Amongst these DPs, between 6,000 and 8,000 DPs immigrated to France and 200 to French Guiana, 125 to Morocco, 102 to Tunisia and 12 to Algeria.¹² The majority of the remaining DPs were resettled in the USA, Australia, Canada, Brazil and the United Kingdom. Taking into account the additional immigrants recruited in the British and American zones of Germany and Austria, France attracted a total of 38,000 DP workers.¹³ In numerical terms, the recruitment was disappointing. Its figures fell short of the French government's minimal expectations. Moreover, significant numbers of them re-emigrated shortly after their arrival.

This chapter juxtaposes the initial working assumptions of French authorities and IRO officials with the way in which realities on the ground forced them to modify their practices. It begins with the installation of the IRO in the French zone in the summer of 1947, and the transfer of responsibilities of DP administration from UNRRA to the French PDR administration. It ends at the end of June 1950, when, barely a year after the establishment of the Federal Republic of Germany, French authorities handed responsibility for DP administration to the German authorities.¹⁴ Germans became responsible for the 'hard Core' of DPs, consisting mainly of the elderly and infirm, widows and unmarried mothers, groups that stood little chance of finding a country willing to

¹¹ Haut Commissariat de la République française en Allemagne, Service des Personnes Déplacées, *Sept ans d'activité en faveur des personnes déplacées en zone française d'occupation, 1945-1952*, rapport dactylographié et illustré, [undated], p. 53.

¹² *Sept-ans en faveur d'activité en faveur des personnes déplacées*, p. 56. The figures provided by Louise Holborn are lower. According to Holborn, 8,115 DPs emigrated from the British zone, 6,330 from the French zone and 8,941 from the American zone. Resettlement annex 40, Louise W. Holborn *The International Refugee Organisation. A specialised agency of the United Nations, its history and work, 1946-1952*. (London: Oxford University Press, 1956), p. 434.

¹³ Cohen *In War's Wake*, pp. 106-107.

¹⁴ The signature of the administrative agreement between French authorities and German authorities was signed on 28 June 1950 for the Rhineland-Palatinate Land and on 30 June 1950 for the Württemberg-Hohenzollern Land. AN, AJ/43/797, Confidentiel, Haute Commission Alliée, Comité des Affaires politiques, sous-comité des réfugiés et personnes déplacées, rapport sur la remise aux autorités allemandes des camps de personnes déplacées en zone française d'occupation, Pol/RDP/P(50)BJ, 4 August 1950.

accept them.¹⁵ As IRO official historian Louise Holborn observes, the chief deterrents to immigration had been 'adverse health conditions, advance age (i.e. unattached men over 45 or unattached women over 40), family composition (i.e widows and unmarried mothers with young children, or other family groups with little prospect of supporting themselves), difficulty [...] of procuring adequate documents regarding nationality, birth, marriage, divorce, unsolved personal problems (e.g. criminal record [...]) and finally membership of people over 35 in a professional or intellectual class.'¹⁶ The number of 'hard core' DPs handed over to Germans was, however, relatively limited in the French zone when compared to the two other Western zones. In total, the French left 1,738 'hard-core' DPs in German hands.¹⁷ Between 100,000 and 200,000 DPs remained in the rest of western Germany (the former British and American zones) by early 1950 of which approximately thirteen per cent constituted the so-called 'institutional hard core.'¹⁸ The IRO officially terminated on 31 January 1952 in the French zone, although several IRO-financed resettlements continued until June of that year.¹⁹

The Historiographical context

The failure of the French recruitment operations is, in some significant ways, paradoxical. Compared to countries belonging to the New World, France's geographic position was advantageous. It confronted DPs with a much shorter journey than either the USA or Australia.²⁰ Furthermore, owing to the number of Polish and White Russian migrants that had settled in France in the inter-war years, France hosted significant numbers of Polish associations, churches and welfare groups able to facilitate DPs' resettlement.²¹ Some associations such as the *Comité d'action pour la liquidation des camps de personnes déplacées*, linked to Jewish associations and the CGT, actively

¹⁵ AN, AJ/43/797, Convention relative à la prise en charge par les autorités allemandes des Personnes Déplacées et Réfugiés inémigrables ; MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/869, OIR, Minute de la conférence trizonale pour le rétablissement des cas DP du 'hard core' dans l'économie locale, tenue les 17 et 18 juin 1949 à Baden-Baden.

¹⁶ Holborn *The International Refugee Organisation*, p. 481.

¹⁷ *Sept ans en faveur des personnes déplacées*, p. 77. The figure given by the Haute Commission Alliée is slightly higher. AN, AJ/43/797, Confidentiel, Haute Commission Alliée, Comité des Affaires politiques, sous-comité des réfugiés et personnes déplacées, rapport sur la remise aux autorités allemandes des camps de personnes déplacées en zone française d'occupation, Pol/RDP/P(50)BJ, 4 August 1950.

¹⁸ Jacobmeyer 'The 'Displaced Persons' in West Germany', p. 280.

¹⁹ *Sept ans en faveur des personnes déplacées*, p. 57.

²⁰ AN, AJ/43/628, compte-rendu de la réunion tenue le 18 décembre 1948 à Auxerre, à l'occasion de la venue en France d'une délégation de Personnes Déplacées, venue étudier les possibilités d'immigration.

²¹ AN, AJ/43/628, Procès Verbal de la conférence sur le plan français 'culture famille', entre les délégué IRO, ONI et les délégués ethniques à Neuenburg, 26 October 1948.

defended DPs' interests in France.²² It is also true that a considerable amount of financial resources and international expertise were invested in DPs' preparation for emigration to France. As explained in the previous chapter, schools and DP training centres were established in the French zone to train DPs in various trades thereby facilitating their smooth assimilation in France. Finally, every effort was made by French PDR authorities to stimulate interest among potential recruits.²³ On 13 January 1948, the French government signed an agreement with the PCIRO [Preparatory Commission of the International Refugee Organization], which provided for the payment of a bonus of sixteen dollars to those DPs willing to emigrate to France.²⁴ Later that autumn, France launched the 'Plan Culture Famille', which made provision for the entry of DPs and their families.²⁵ As an American IRO expert noted, '[t]he nature of the scheme meant that many semi-skilled agricultural workers for whom other resettlement opportunities had not been found could emigrate to France together with their families.'²⁶ Finally, in December 1948, a DP delegation was invited to visit France and see conditions there at first hand.²⁷ By then, according to Holborn, 'considerable improvement in reception arrangements was noticeable, and the delegation on its return agreed to publicize the scheme in conjunction with the French publicity team.'²⁸

Explanations of this paradoxical failure tend to fall into three broad strands. Andreas Rinke insists on its political character, highlighting the roles played by communist recruiters and the strikes of 1947 in France both in slowing down the process and in sullyng France's reputation among anti-communist DPs.²⁹ In addition to the communist threat, French employment offers were generally unattractive.³⁰ Daniel Cohen argues that DPs' reluctance to immigrate to France mainly accounts for the failure of the scheme. France's particularly high medical and professional selection criteria, its limited employment opportunities, and the presence of 'card-carrying Communists in the selection teams' further depressed DPs' scant interest in choosing a country severely damaged by war.³¹ Examining the situation from a French perspective, Alexis Spire stresses the economic factors that hindered recruitment and, more

²² CAC, Versement 770623, article 172, Lettre du Comité d'action pour la liquidation des camps de personnes déplacées au Ministère du Travail, Paris, 11 mars 1947.

²³ AN, AJ/43/628, Procès Verbal de la conférence sur le plan français 'culture famille', 26 October 1948.

²⁴ It never however proved possible to distribute this grant. Holborn *The IRO*, p. 383.

²⁵ CAC, Versement 770623, 173.

²⁶ AN, AJ/43/628, Philip E. Ryan, chief of operations, to Mr. Tuck, 21 December 1948.

²⁷ AN, AJ/43/628, compte-rendu de la réunion tenue le 18 décembre 1948 à Auxerre, à l'occasion de la venue en France d'une délégation de Personnes Déplacées, venue étudier les possibilités d'immigration.

²⁸ Holborn *The International Refugee Organization*, p. 384.

²⁹ Rinke *Le grand retour*, pp. 391-397.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 394.

³¹ Cohen *In war's wake*, p. 107.

particularly, emphasises French farmers' reluctance to employ DPs in a context of worsening French unemployment.³²

This chapter draws on the work of these historians, but takes a new approach by focusing on untapped archival documents originating from the archives of the French occupation zone and the IRO. By adopting a more resolutely local approach, it allows for more nuanced understanding of French attitudes towards the recruitment of DPs. While recognizing the importance of macro-economic factors and national politics in shaping French recruitment operations, this chapter demonstrates that they also crucially depended on how ONI agents, IRO officials and PDR administrators re-interpreted and implemented official instructions in the German field.³³ In contrast with the UNRRA period, more effective collaboration was established between French IRO officials and PDR administrators despite recurrent financial disagreements between the two administrations.³⁴ French operations suffered, however, from the outset because Belgium had already intensively recruited miners, leaving few suitable recruits who either wanted to go into mining or had the necessary experience in it.³⁵ Furthermore, while the IRO and PDR authorities made every effort to encourage DP recruitment, the National Immigration Office (ONI) was much more circumspect (if not hostile) in its approach to DPs. Indeed, the first French ONI Selection Missions were unnecessarily harsh with DPs, rapidly gaining a reputation as arbitrary and communist-tinged. Combined with the negative effects of the strikes of the winter of 1947, in the eyes of many DPs, American authorities and foreign IRO officials alike, France was not a land of liberty with a long tradition of asylum and hospitality to refugees but an impoverished and communist-dominated country.

In probing beneath the formal structure of official instructions and macro-economic imperatives to reconstruct the ways in which recruitment was put into practice, it becomes apparent that attitudes towards the recruitment within the military government, the service PDR, the ONI and employee organizations in France were never so monolithic. As in many other aspects of DP policy, French actors had contradictory requirements and divergent policies. Their

³² Alexis Spire 'Les réfugiés, une main d'œuvre à part ? Conditions de séjour et d'emploi, France, 1945-1975', *Revue Européenne des Migrations Internationales*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (2004), pp. 13-38.

³³ Michael Lipsky *Street-level Bureaucracy. Dilemmas of the Individual in Public Services* (New York, Russell Sage Foundation, 1980); Vincent Dubois *La vie au guichet* (Paris, Belin, 1999); Alexis Spire, *Accueillir ou reconduire* (Paris, Raisons d'Agir, 2008) Danièle Lochack *Etrangers, de quel droit?* (Paris : PUF, 1985); Alexis Spire *Etrangers à la carte. L'administration de l'immigration en France (1945-1975)* (Paris: Grasset, 2005); Sylvain Laurens 'Les agents de l'Etat face à leur propre pouvoir. Elements pour une micro-analyse des mots griffonnés en marge des décisions officielles' *Genèses*, No. 72 (2008), pp. 26-41, p. 28.

³⁴ *Sept ans en faveur des personnes déplacées*, p. 49; René Ristelhueber *Au secours des réfugiés. L'oeuvre de l'Organisation Internationale pour les Réfugiés* (Paris: Plon, 1951), p. 116; AN, AJ/43/760, Health, Care and Maintenance, rapport pour le mois de juillet 1948.

³⁵ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/822, l'Attaché d'administration Marzon à l'attaché d'administration Vincent, Francfort, 9 September 1947.

approach was also as cultural in focus as economically determined. French occupation officials, many of whom were Gaullists, were particularly concerned about the image of France that circulated in DP camps and IRO official circles. They often associated the encouragement of immigration with French patriotism. Thus, the issues posed by the recruitment of DPs were far greater than a problem of satisfying manpower needs. As explained below, anxieties about DPs' reluctance to come to France were tied to the reformulation of French identity and the restoration of French prestige in post-war Germany.

As *Enarque* Robert Poignant observed in 1948, although state intervention was significantly extended at the Liberation, administrative practices were not unified and the various services in charge of immigration control remained ill-equipped to manage incoming foreign workers.³⁶ Furthermore, in contrast with the interwar years, during which national immigration laws predominantly regulated the movement of migrants, the IRO employed selective procedures on a multilateral basis.³⁷ Admittedly, the IRO never superseded national immigration policies but it pressed governments to accept DPs and played a decisive role in shaping emigration policies. Furthermore, it provided DPs with a platform to raise concern about national selection missions and, in so doing, transformed them, albeit in a limited way, from 'passive recipients' to 'actors' in their resettlement. Before examining this further, we need to return to the installation of the IRO in the French zone.

The IRO, the 'largest travel agency in the world'³⁸

In early July 1947 the IRO's installation in post-war Germany marked a turning point in the governance of Europe's displaced persons.³⁹ Allied policy shifted from an emphasis on repatriation to a focus on resettlement. The Soviet Union and its satellites withdrew from the organization; indeed, only eighteen of the UN's fifty-four member states participated.⁴⁰ The IRO was rapidly dubbed

³⁶ CAC, Versement 770623,83, Monsieur R. Poignant, mémoire de stage, L'immigration polonaise dans le Pas-de-Calais, Section Sociale, Mars 1948, ENA, Promotion Nations Unies, pp. 1-107, p. 96.

³⁷ Cohen *In war's wake*, p. 101. In his study of the ILO and the inter-war global migration policy, Paul-André Rosental argues that historians (and contemporary observers alike) tend to over-emphasize the role of States in migration control and to neglect the 'complexity of institutions involved in the management of migrations' and the importance of intergovernmental actors, non-governmental actors and private companies. Paul-André Rosental 'Géopolitique et Etat-providence. Le BIT et la politique mondiale des migrations dans l'entre-deux-guerres' in *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, Vol. 61, No.1 (2006), pp. 99-134, p. 124.

³⁸ Akira Irye and Pierre-Yves Saunier (ed) *The Palgrave Dictionary of Transnational History* (Basingtoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 876.

³⁹ Theoretically, the agency still gave priority to repatriation but, as Daniel Cohen observes, this 'was mostly lip service to Soviet-bloc countries resentful of an international organization dedicated to the emigration of their national overseas.' Cohen *In war's wake*, p. 108.

⁴⁰ Jacobmeyer 'The 'Displaced Persons' in West Germany, 1945-1951', p. 278.

'the largest travel agency in the world.'⁴¹ The re-establishment of DPs supervised by the IRO represented 'an unprecedented instance of planned population redistribution', marking the peak of centralized international migration.⁴² In total, the IRO repatriated around 70,000 DPs and resettled over a million in foreign countries.⁴³ Huge sums were involved. Between July 1947 and December 1951, the IRO spent some \$430 million on resettlement alone.⁴⁴ The IRO provided support for three types of emigration: first, emigration conducted under government selection schemes (mass settlement); second, emigration through personal nomination by known sponsors in resettlement countries (individual emigration); and, thirdly, the placement of individuals with prospective employers on the basis of specific qualifications and needs (Placement Service).⁴⁵

In the spring of 1947, the French government began selecting refugees without making any formal agreement with the IRO. It later signed two agreements with the IGCR on 10 June. The French scheme was then covered retroactively by a further agreement concluded on 15 January 1948, which provided for recruitment in mining, farming, factory and domestic work.⁴⁶ The French scheme posed several challenges throughout the three western zones. These problems stemmed from the fact that the French government was, at first, principally interested in miners. In addition, ONI agents were notoriously severe. Finally were the logistical difficulties presented by dispersed DPs lacking adequate transport.⁴⁷ In the French zone, where fewer DPs were living than in the British and American zones and where a higher proportion of the refugee population was working and living outside assembly centres, the IRO therefore had to adapt its organisation to the requirements of individual casework.⁴⁸

The IRO in the French zone

In the French zone, as elsewhere, UNRRA's relief operations terminated at the end of June 1947. UNRRA was replaced by the PCIRO, which officially became

⁴¹ Irye and Saunier (eds) *The Palgrave Dictionary of Transnational History*, p. 876.

⁴² Cohen *In war's wake*, p. 11; p. 101.

⁴³ Holborn *The International Refugee Organisation*, p. 365.

⁴⁴ Peter Gatrell and Nick Baron 'Violent Peacetime: Reconceptualising Displacement and Resettlement in the Soviet–East European Borderlands after the Second World War' in Gatrell and Baron (eds) *Warlands. Population Resettlement and State reconstruction in the Soviet-East European Borderlands, 1945-1950* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 255-268, p. 258.

⁴⁵ Jacobmeyer 'The 'Displaced Persons' in West Germany', p. 278. The individual emigration proved particularly difficult in the French zone, due to the small number of consular representatives. AN, AJ/43/760, IRO, Rapport Mensuel du mois de octobre 1948, 6 novembre 1948.

⁴⁶ Holborn *The International Refugee Organization*, p. 383.

⁴⁷ AN, AJ/43/760, IRO, Rapport Mensuel du mois de octobre 1948, 6 November 1948.

⁴⁸ Holborn *The International Refugee Organization*, p. 78.

the IRO on 20 August 1948.⁴⁹ While the PCIRO employed considerably less international staff than UNRRA, the administration of DP camps did not fall within its remit.⁵⁰ Camp management instead fell to the French military authorities.⁵¹ Overnight, a single PDR agent was typically expected to replace a large UNRRA team in each DP centre. As explained in chapter one, former PDR Director Alfred Poignant became the French zone's PCIRO Director. His appointment heralded closer cooperation between international IRO staff and PDR officials.

On 6 September 1947, an official agreement was signed between the PCIRO and the French government.⁵² It stipulated that the PCIRO would support the cost of DP administration and resettlement. PCIRO personnel were charged with ensuring that their agency's policies were enforced, meaning, in practice, the requirement to determine DP eligibility, to collect statistical data, to promote repatriation and, finally, to support DP resettlement.⁵³ In contrast with UNRRA, the PCIRO introduced a distinction between those DPs eligible for 'care and maintenance' (receiving food provision, health care, clothes and accommodations) or those to whom only 'legal and political protection' applied. Between 1 July and 31 December 1947, the IRO provided for 33,756 *rationnaires complets* and 11,310 *rationnaires incomplets*.⁵⁴ Initially, the financial terms of the 6 September 1947 Agreement seemed favourable to the French authorities.⁵⁵ However, the IRO and French authorities disagreed about the numbers of eligible DPs. After a fortnight-long conference in Paris during January 1948, it was decided that the French authorities would receive 25-centime US dollar for those DPs residing in camps, and 15-centime US dollars for those living privately.⁵⁶ Within months, the monetary reform of 21 June 1948 aggravated the financial situation in the zone.⁵⁷ From October 1948, employed DPs were required to make reimbursement for the cost of their care. The payments required ranged from twenty-five to seventy DM per month for

⁴⁹ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/791, Lettre de l'Administrateur Général Laffon, Adjoint pour le Gouvernement Militaire de la zone française d'occupation à Monsieur le Commissaire de la République, Délégué Supérieur pour le Gouvernement Militaire du Bade, N.10995 DGAA/Dir PDR, 28 June 1947.

⁵⁰ In total, the IRO employed 137 international staff in the French zone. AN, AJ/43/799, Liste du personnel international ayant été en fonction à l'OIR, Zone française d'Allemagne; In May 1950, the IRO employed 79 IRO staff, AN, AJ/43/797, Compte-rendu de la reunion OIR-PDR tenu à Neuenbürg, 25 May 1950. This was similar in the British zone where the operation of all centres was the responsibility of the occupation authorities. Holborn *The IRO*, p. 221.

⁵¹ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/791, Administrateur Général Laffon, à Monsieur le Commissaire de la République, Délégué Supérieur pour le GM du Bade, N.10995 DGAA/Dir PDR, 28 June 1947; On 20 April 1948, the 'Direction des Personnes Déplacées' became the 'Service des Personnes Déplacées.' *Sept ans d'activité en faveur des personnes déplacées*, p. 50.

⁵² AN, AJ/43/799, CPIRO-GMZFO, Organisation et fonctionnement de la commission préparatoire de l'organisation internationale pour les réfugiés dans la zone française d'occupation en Allemagne, Signé A. Poignant; Cherifi, 29 October 1947.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ MAE, HCRFA, PDR3/35, copie, avenant à l'accord du 6 septembre 1947 relatif à la zone française d'Allemagne.

⁵⁵ MAE, HCRFA, Ambassade de Bonn, 148, M. Cherifi, Compte-rendu d'activité de la Direction des Personnes Déplacées pour le mois de Septembre 1947, N.11.548 DGAA/DP, 9 October 1947, p. 1.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

⁵⁷ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/556, Note de service, Frais d'entretien des Centres, No. 20.285/PR/MB, 19 August 1948.

displaced persons with free lodging, and between fifteen and fifty DM for those who paid for their lodgings.⁵⁸

It is worth recalling that the IRO had been established 'to bring about a rapid and positive solution of the problem of *bona fide* refugees and displaced persons.'⁵⁹ In addition to encouraging DPs' repatriation or emigration, the IRO carried out screening operations to expunge unworthy DPs from the wider refugee community. Just as German citizens filled out much despised questionnaires designed by Allied occupiers to uncover active Nazi supporters, as Daniel Cohen observes, their DP neighbours were handed 'eligibility questionnaires' to verify their nationalities, dates of displacement and wartime personal histories.⁶⁰ Admittedly, UNRRA workers had already carried out screening operations, but it was slapdash and chaotic. Under the IRO, screening turned into a professional and 'complex bureaucratic venture', conducted by personnel who claimed 'high moral standards' as well as 'extensive knowledge of European history, politics and law.'⁶¹ The IRO eligibility process had clear procedural guidelines that (allegedly) made it easier for IRO screeners to recognise lies.⁶² Although IRO's eligibility procedures were understandably loathed at the time by some of the excluded persons and groups, Cohen argues that, overall, the practices remained relatively liberal.⁶³ The Prague Coup of February 25, 1948 marked a turning point in IRO eligibility policy, the organization progressively liberalizing its conception of refugee.⁶⁴ From then onwards, one could be found to have collaborated with the Germans, and yet still be recognized as a refugee needing resettlement in a third country.

As the issue of DP eligibility testified, the IRO marked a further step towards the bureaucratization and standardization of refugee administration. In theory, IRO 'care and maintenance' policies transformed DPs into objects of precise social-scientific knowledge: specific policies regulated DPs' living space, their cleanliness and their nutritional standards. IRO nutritionists, child specialists and health experts toured the zone to verify that PCIRO standards of welfare, health and care were adequately upheld. In addition to calorific measurements, IRO experts compiled a multitude of statistical data on various aspects of DP life. After visiting several DP camps, Janet Flanner reported '[t]he displaced persons are willing to go anywhere on earth except home. In the

⁵⁸ Similar regulations were established in the British and American zones. Holborn *The International Refugee Organization*, p. 120.

⁵⁹ Holborn *The International Refugee Organization*, p. 203.

⁶⁰ Cohen *In war's wake*, p. 37.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 42.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

course of this suspended period of time, these people have turned into statistics and initials.’⁶⁵ Detailed information on sex, family status, age, nationality, previous occupation were systematically passed on to IRO headquarters, contributing to the construction of what Daniel Cohen has famously termed a ‘refugee nation’, an abstract group of dispossessed people united by a need for special care.⁶⁶

This quasi-scientific management of displaced persons sought to transform DPs into ‘emigrated-minded’ people and suitable candidates for resettlement countries. The IRO became a formidable marketing enterprise working on behalf of DPs, drawing recruitment missions’ attention to their wide range of skills and professional experiences. It compiled information on the occupational skills of DPs between sixteen and sixty-five years of age and then circulated this information to the various Selection Missions. In the French zone, the IRO established that 26.6% of the employable DPs were skilled workers, 39.1% agricultural workers, and a further 10.1% suitable for liberal professions.⁶⁷ French authorities nevertheless criticized the categories used by IRO experts, noting that the proportion of skilled or semi-skilled workers did not correspond to reality.⁶⁸ The evaluation of female DPs’ credentials was equally misleading: in some areas, women with children were classified as non-employable.⁶⁹ Furthermore, by the end of 1948, only 1,700 DPs had been tested by practical aptitude tests in the zone.⁷⁰

In its efforts to increase acceptance rates by governmental missions, the IRO developed training courses for DPs that were notionally adapted to the resettlement countries’ needs. For instance, during the preliminary selection for emigration to Brazil, Dr. Utaba of the Brazilian Mission expressed an interest in DPs’ trained as bee-keepers. As a result, IRO authorities placed greater emphasis on training in bee-keeping at the Nonnenhof Centre.⁷¹ In close collaboration with the Service the *Formation Professionnelle accélérée* (FPA), IRO experts compiled lists of professions and skills required by resettlement countries, progressively diversifying their courses and exams to respond to

⁶⁵ Genêt ‘Letter from Wurzburg’, Quoted in Cohen *In war’s wake*, p. 76.

⁶⁶ Daniel Cohen ‘Naissance d’une nation: Les personnes déplacées de l’après-guerre, 1945-1951’, *Genèses*, Vol. 38 (2000), pp.56-78.

⁶⁷ In January 1948, IRO divulged information about DPs, based on studies made in May 1947 in the American zone and November-December 1947 in the British and French zones. MAE, HCRFA, Ambassade de Bonn 148, Le Général d’Armée Koenig à Monsieur le Secrétaire d’Etat des Affaires Allemandes et Autrichiennes, Etude d’ensemble sur les Personnes Déplacées, secret, GFCC, No.1.017/PDR, 14 April 1948.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Holborn *The International Refugee Organization*, p. 276.

⁷¹ AN, AJ/43/760, IRO French zone, narrative report, November 1948, p. 3.

them.⁷² In total, fourteen DP training centres were organised and twenty-five trades were taught by the FPA with the support of the IRO.⁷³ These courses did not all achieve the desired results. Hastily established, they lacked trained instructors, adequate resources and material.⁷⁴

Aware that high levels of illiteracy increased the risk of rejection, the FPA also organised adult education and language training in Münsingen and Bad Kreuznach.⁷⁵ In addition to routine trade testing skills, IRO medical officers searched for cases of tuberculosis, as many recruitment missions rejected DPs' families even if a sole member was ill.⁷⁶ As IRO official Holborn observed, 'the strict medical criteria employed by missions engaged in the selection of emigrants rendered maintenance of a high standard of health essential in refugee communities. As well as detection and treatment of incipient disease, the importance of the symptomless hernia, varicosities, orthopaedic troubles and dental defects as handicaps to resettlement had to be stressed.'⁷⁷ In the French zone, IRO authorities lamented that rejection on medical grounds were more numerous in the North, where DPs lived in camps and standards of hygiene were poorer than in the South.⁷⁸ According to IRO Director Poignant, camp life was detrimental to emigration. Not only were DPs in poorer health, but DPs were more likely to be influenced by DP leaders and changed their minds quickly about resettlement.⁷⁹

Just as the IRO authorities lobbied recruitment missions in favour of DPs, so they tried to transform DPs into 'emigrated-minded' individuals. Often, IRO experts complained that DPs showed insufficient enthusiasm for emigration.⁸⁰ According to IRO Counselling officer Steel, this was the natural result of their living conditions, the lack of information they received, and the relative comfort of DP life, which encouraged them to postpone critical decisions.⁸¹ To remedy the situation, the IRO started publishing a monthly bulletin containing practical information about the various emigration schemes.⁸² In April 1949 Bulletin No.9

⁷² AN, AJ/43/798, *Compte rendu d'une mission, confiée par Monsieur le Directeur des Affaires Economiques et Sociales à Guyoton, André, Administrateur, ayant trait à l'organisation de la Formation Professionnelle des Personnes Déplacées et Réfugiés de la ZFOA*, 2 November 1948.

⁷³ *Sept ans en faveur des personnes déplacées*, p. 65.

⁷⁴ See for instance PDR6/842, *Compte-rendu de l'Attaché Rebiere à l'attention de M. le Directeur, Chef du service des Personnes Déplacées*, 16 janvier 1951. Enquête effectuée à l'école de NONNENHOF au sujet de la lettre adressée par le moniteur PRZEWLOCKI à l'IRO.

⁷⁵ *Sept ans en faveur des personnes déplacées*, p. 73.

⁷⁶ AN, AJ/43/799, *Lettre du W. Hallan Tuck, Directeur Général à Monsieur le Ministre des Affaires étrangères*, N.534/8 GFZ, 22 March 1949.

⁷⁷ Holborn *The International Refugee Organization*, p. 240.

⁷⁸ AN, AJ/43/760, IRO, A. Poignant, *rapport mensuel du mois de avril 1948*, 4 May 1948.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ AN, AJ/43/799, *Directeur de l'Organisation Internationale pour les Réfugiés à Chef de Service IRO pour le Land Rhéno-Palatin (Coblence), le Wurtemberg (Ebingen), le Bade (Haslach)*, 2 November 1948.

⁸¹ AN, AJ/43/760, *Counselling service, E.W.D Steel, rapport du mois de juin 1948*, 12 July 1948.

⁸² AN, AJ/43/799.

published an official complaint about DPs refusing resettlement after having signed up for a recruitment scheme. 'Do they realise that [...] their enrolment to a recruitment scheme generated many costs (involving several travels, costly medical examinations and a waste of time for the IRO personnel) and, far worst, that it prevented the IRO to examine more serious candidates, due to quota reached?'⁸³ Exasperated, Counselling officer Steel noted that it was about time that DPs learned to become individuals 'able to think and reason with themselves.'⁸⁴ IRO officials were not alone in despairing at DPs' lack of enthusiasm for resettlement. PDR officials also wished that DPs showed greater eagerness to re-emigrate, particularly to France.

The PDR service: Selling France to the DPs

Despite these complaints, the French recruitment scheme seemed, at least initially, relatively popular. In October 1947 the PDR authorities reported that nearly twenty per cent of the DP population, accounting for nearly half of the able-bodied male population, had presented themselves to French recruiters.⁸⁵ Yet, as rumours about ONI *communist* recruiters and strikes in France circulated, DPs' enthusiasm fell away. The French PDR executive was bedevilled by this rapid deterioration in France's reputation. It informed local PDR agents that creating a 'pro-French movement' in Germany was more than an economic necessity; it was a 'national duty.'⁸⁶ PDR Administrators were asked to work in close collaboration with DP priests to propagate Francophile sentiments in the zone. French language courses were to be provided whenever possible.⁸⁷ And, finally, in order to increase DPs' pro-French affinities, PDR administrators were required to live inside DP camps. 'Live [with DPs], think with them, get to know each of them personally, pay them loving attention.'⁸⁸ '[The French PDR Director] must be assisted, if not by a French doctor or social worker, at least by a DP with Francophile sentiments. The priests [...] will also be devoted to the cause of France. The teachers (*instituteurs*), the physical trainer, the French teacher will be the emanation of France and its spirit.'⁸⁹

⁸³ AN, AJ/43/799, Bulletin de l'Organisation Internationale pour les Réfugiés, ZFOA, Neueubürg, April 1949, No. 9.

⁸⁴ AN, AJ/43/760, IRO, EWD Steel, Counselling service, rapport du mois de juillet 1948, 11 August 1948.

⁸⁵ MAE, HCRFA, Ambassade de Bonn, 148, M. Cherifi, Compte-rendu d'activité de la Direction des Personnes Déplacées pour le mois de Septembre 1947, N.11.548 DGAA/DP, 9 October 1947, p. 4.

⁸⁶ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/556, Extrait du proces verbal de la reunion de Section 'Personnes Déplacées' du 13 juillet 1948, No. 2876/h.

⁸⁷ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/556, Note de l'Administrateur Reclus, chef de section des personnes déplacées, Land Rhéno-Palatin à les chefs de camp de Niederlahnstein, Gniezno, Feyen, Bad Kreuznach, 19 February 1948.

⁸⁸ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/556, Extrait du process verbal de la reunion de Section 'Personnes Déplacées' du 13 juillet 1948, No. 2876/h.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

The analysis of the PDR archives unveils the cultural – as well as the economic – aspect of DP emigration to France. The symbolic linkage between encouragement to emigrate and the post-war recasting of French patriotism reveals how anxieties about DP reluctance to emigrate in France were tied to the reformulation of French identity and the restoration of French prestige in post-war Germany. PDR efforts to sell France to the DPs must be placed in the broader context of French occupation authorities' attempts to promote French culture in post-war Germany. As Corinne Defrance argues, these efforts were not only driven by deep-rooted cultural reflex; there were also motivated by a more circumstantial and urgent need for the political re-affirmation of basic French' values in the aftermath of a divisive and traumatic war experience.⁹⁰ The exhibition of French cultural richness was not only aimed at impressing DPs and Germans; it also served to reinforce France's prestige in its allies' eyes. In practice, however, PDR efforts to sell France were undermined by the deterioration of DP living conditions in the zone.⁹¹ As the overall number of DP camps decreased and overcrowding rose, so food rations diminished.⁹²

While military authorities continuously pressed PDR officials to focus on clearing the German barracks occupied by DPs, German religious congregations urged them to concentrate on convents arguing that their occupants had also been persecuted under the Nazis.⁹³ In the winter of 1948 the well-organized and maintained DP camp of Landstuhl was closed, its remaining DPs relocated to the Niederlahnstein DP camp.⁹⁴ There, up to five families were accommodated in the same room. In February 1948 the IRO Director lamented the state of other remaining DP camps, noting that the barracks of the Münsingen camp was suffering from bug infestation and that hygiene at the Tuttlingen transit centre was in a 'repulsive state.'⁹⁵ As a result of the reduction in available camp accommodation, ethnic groups were increasingly mixed together. DPs were accused of living increasingly promiscuously, transgressing what General Koenig termed, 'the most

⁹⁰ Corinne Defrance *La politique culturelle de la France sur la rive gauche du Rhin* (Strasbourg: Presses Universitaires, 1994), p. 126.

⁹¹ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/869, Rapport confidentiel d'EDWARD KORCZYNSKI, 17 November 1948.

⁹² AJ/43/326, Lettre du Directeur de l'Organisation Internationale pour les Réfugiés à Monsieur le Général d'Armée, rations alimentaires des personnes déplacées et des réfugiés, 21 December 1948.

⁹³ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/556, Lettre du Général d'Armée Koenig, Commandant en chef Français en Allemagne à Monsieur le Délégué Général pour le Gouvernement Militaire du Land Rhéno-Palatin à Coblenze, No.7509/DGAA/DP, 19 February 1948; MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/483, Lettre de l'Administrateur Reclus, chef de Section des Personnes Déplacées à Monsieur le Gouverneur, Délégué Général pour le Gouvernement Militaire de l'Etat Rhéno-Palatin, No. 24.062/PDR/19PR/HT, Coblenze, 18 September 1948.

⁹⁴ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/792, Lettre du Directeur de la CPOIR (A. Poignant) à Monsieur le Directeur Général des Affaires Administratives, 13 February 1948.

⁹⁵ MAE, HCRFA, PDR3/35, Lettre du Directeur de la CPOIR à Monsieur le Général d'Armée Commandant en chef Français en Allemagne, Cabinet Civil, Direction des Personnes Déplacées, 19 February 1948.

elementary rules of decency and morale.’⁹⁶ Other factors contributed to making the DPs’ situation appear unacceptable.⁹⁷ The transformation of the Saar province into an autonomous territory economically linked to France resulted in its 1,280 DP residents facing the choice between ‘definitive establishment’ in Germany or transfer to the French zone.⁹⁸ Tellingly, nearly eighty per cent chose the German option, even though they lost IRO protection as a consequence.⁹⁹ Another indicators of France’s unpopularity were the hostile reaction to the communist recruiters amongst the first ONI selection missions deployed in Germany. In October 1947 a local administrator from Freiburg lamented the atmosphere in which the recruitment was carried out. ‘It is disheartening to see people full of eagerness to start a new life and willing to accept hard and unpopular labour, who sacrificing their current situation and considering France as their last hope to live freely, are brutally condemned to remain in a country where they have suffered so much, either as prisoners of war or as deportees.’¹⁰⁰

The ONI selection: a communist sabotage?

In June 1947, an ONI delegation, headed by Labour Inspector Hornez, arrived in Baden-Baden to take charge of the recruitment process. It was made up of two ONI representatives and a delegate of the International Labour Organization (ILO) who, in turn, oversaw nearly 200 agents.¹⁰¹ Three recruitment centres were created, one in each zone (in Freiburg for the French zone, Paderborn for the British zone, and Karlsruhe for the American zone).¹⁰² DPs were supposed to be registered and carefully selected in each of these three centres. Only those aged between eighteen and forty-five who passed medical, safety and professional tests were sent to France.¹⁰³ For all that, ONI selection remained slapdash and arbitrary: as explained below, the simple fact

⁹⁶ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/556, Lettre du Général d’Armée Koenig à Monsieur le Délégué Général pour le Gouvernement Militaire du Land Rhéno-Palatin, No. 7509/DGAA/DP, 19 February 1948.

⁹⁷ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/792, Note pour Monsieur le Secrétaire Général du CCF, signé de Rosen, 25 June 1948.

⁹⁸ AN, AJ/43/799, Lettre du Ministère des Affaires Etrangères à Monsieur le Haut Commissaire de la République Française en Sarre, 14 June 1948; MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/485, Lettre de l’administrateur Griolet, chef du Service de l’IRO Zone Nord à Monsieur l’Administrateur, chef de Section des Personnes Déplacées, No.3.303, 22 March 1949. The same occurred for DPs living in Berlin. *Sept ans en faveur des personnes déplacées*, p. 58.

⁹⁹ *Sept ans en faveur des personnes déplacées*, p. 49. Also see AN, AJ/43/799, Note à l’attention de Monsieur le délégué secrétaire général sous couvert de Monsieur le chef du service intérieur, 30 January 1948.

¹⁰⁰ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/818, Lettre de l’attaché de 2ème classe Ponty à Monsieur le Commissaire de la République, Délégué Supérieur pour le Gouvernement Militaire de Bade, Fribourg, le 2 octobre 1947; MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/846, Fiche secrète pour Monsieur le Colonel, chef du Cabinet Militaire du Commandement en chef Français en Allemagne, 30 juin 1948. Signé Meillon [criticisms of the French Legion methods]

¹⁰¹ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/821, Fiche d’information, 6 June 1947; PDR6/846, Report from Préfet Roger Gromand, p 4.

¹⁰² MAE, Bonn 148, Compte-rendu d’activité de la Direction des Personnes Déplacées pour le mois d’aout 1947, Le Directeur des Personnes Déplacées à Monsieur le Directeur Général des Affaires Administratives, No. 11421/DGAA/Dir PDR.

¹⁰³ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/846, Report from Préfet Roger Gromand, p. 9.

of having well-manicured hands or not knowing how many teeth a cow had could result in rejection. The fear that poor vetting had excluded many suitable candidates prompted PDR and IRO officials to urge the French government to bring ONI personnel to heel. These recruiters were accused of ideologically-motivated 'political sabotage.' On 15 February 1948 Henri Fesquet used the pages of *Le Monde* to exhort the French government to rid the ONI of its political and syndicalist influences.¹⁰⁴ Was this a fair criticism?

Communist recruiters

General Koenig informed the Foreign Ministry in November 1947 that the *direction des Personnes Déplacées* was being 'bombarded' with complaints originating from local authorities (*délégués de cercle*) about arbitrary selection processes at the Freiburg centre. 'Almost all these complaints,' he noted, 'are about professional examinations; most of the time, these examinations take a political turn.'¹⁰⁵ Koenig claimed that ONI agents considered any 'Polish or Yugoslav citizen who expresses a wish to work in France' to be politically suspicious and rejected them due to 'unfitness.'¹⁰⁶ Failed candidates far outnumbered successful applicants, a fact confirmed by the most recent statistics. Over 700 candidates had been turned down in under three weeks.¹⁰⁷ By the end of December 1947 only 5,309 DPs had been recruited from the French zone, alongside 525 dependents, figures that fell well short of the government's minimum expectations.¹⁰⁸

Admittedly, the French recruitment mission was not the only one to be disproportionately harsh with DPs. The PDR official history recalled that the IRO recorded a thirty per cent rejection rate for Canada, thirty-three per cent for the United States and up to forty per cent for Australia.¹⁰⁹ Even so, some ONI agents distinguished themselves by their discourteous, condescending attitudes towards DPs. To take a few examples, in Karlsruhe, Josef Sarachman was dismissed on these grounds.¹¹⁰ In Freiburg, a Polish worker was rejected on the grounds that he could not harness a horse *à la mode française*.¹¹¹ Elsewhere,

¹⁰⁴ AN, AJ/43/628, Extrait, Henri Fesquet 'L'immigration individuelle donne de meilleurs résultats que l'immigration collective', 15 February 1948.

¹⁰⁵ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/818, Rapport confidentiel sur le fonctionnement du Centre de Fribourg pour le recrutement de main d'oeuvre à destination de la France et certaines conditions du travail en France, 19 Novembre 1947. Transmis par Koenig aux Ministères des Affaires Etrangères, 26 November 1947.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ AN, AJ/43/628, Statistiques des DPR introduits en France comme travailleurs, Paris, 19 January 1948 [Gouverneur V. Valentin-Smith]

¹⁰⁹ *Sept ans en faveur des personnes déplacées*, p. 55.

¹¹⁰ AN, AJ/43/628, Statement, Sarachman Josef, Munich, 20 November 1947.

¹¹¹ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/491, Monsieur Berge à Monsieur le Colonel, Directeur des Personnes Déplacées, Baden-Baden, 17 November 1947.

DPs were faulted for not knowing how many teeth a cow had or that tractors usually ran on diesel.¹¹² The Münsigen area delegate raised the case of Stefan Mazur, ‘best of all the Poles of Münsingen.’ ‘Strong, calm, intelligent and meticulous at work’, he failed his professional test, despite his determination to work in France.¹¹³ The reason? Mazur was told that he was a ‘*fumiste* [shirker] who only wanted to go to France in order to be with his family.’¹¹⁴ In Reutlingen, a Hungarian DP was failed because his hands were too well-kept, an observation taken to prove that he was *lazy and a bad worker*.¹¹⁵ PDR administrator Estrade went further, lamenting that ‘certain nationalities’ – by which he meant Hungarians and Yugoslavs - were systematically turned away.¹¹⁶ Latvians, with SS tattoos were not just rejected, they were also ill-treated.¹¹⁷ Arbitrary rejections were sometimes tied with outright racial discrimination and anti-Semitism. On 19 November 1947, for instance, General Koenig passed on to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs a letter from the Director of the American Joint Distribution Committee, Lauter. This letter described the case of three Jewish families that had been sent from Berlin to the Freiburg’s recruitment centre. ‘After having abandoned everything, these families were denied entry in France having learned that the fact of being Jews [allegedly] prevented them from performing manual work.’¹¹⁸

US authorities in the American zone also became increasingly frustrated at the costs of the French scheme, the disproportionate number of ONI agents involved, and their archaic administrative methods.¹¹⁹ In Karlsruhe, Polish DPs formally complained about the ONI recruiters’ bad behaviour. According to them, they were treated as cattle and not as ‘allied and voluntary workers.’¹²⁰ They quoted the case of a Polish DP, called Midler, originating from a village near the German border. Arriving equipped with his DP Identity papers and evidence of prior IRO screening, he was nonetheless rejected because he had a

¹¹² MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/822, Lettre de l’attaché H.L.Chaplain à Monsieur le Chef de Mission, Frankfurt/Main, 3 December 1947.

¹¹³ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/818, lettre du Délégué de cercle de Münsingen à Monsieur le Gouverneur, Délégué Supérieur pour le Gouverneur Militaire Régional du Wurtemberg, signé Blanc.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/818, Rapport confidentiel sur le fonctionnement du Centre de Fribourg pour le recrutement de main d’oeuvre à destination de la France et certaines conditions du travail en France, 19 Novembre 1947. Transmis par Koenig aux Ministères des Affaires Etrangères, 26 November 1947.

¹¹⁶ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/818, l’administrateur Estrade, Rapport concernant l’immigration en France de Travailleurs DPs volontaires, Tuttlingen, 31 December 1947.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/818, Rapport confidentiel sur le fonctionnement du Centre de Fribourg pour le recrutement de main d’oeuvre à destination de la France et certaines conditions du travail en France, 19 Novembre 1947. Transmis par Koenig aux Ministères des Affaires Etrangères, 26 November 1947.

¹¹⁹ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/803, Gouverneur V. Valentin-Smith to M. le Ministre des Affaires Etrangères, Paris, 30 December 1947.

¹²⁰ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/822, Lettre de l’attaché H.L.Chaplain à Monsieur le Chef de Mission, Frankfurt/Main, 3 December 1947.

German-sounding name.¹²¹ In the same camp, another DP was turned away on the grounds that he was 'a bigmouth.'¹²²

DPs' newspapers meanwhile continued to circulate stories about French *communist* recruiters. On 25 January 1948, the *Ukrainian gazette*, related the story of a former soldier who was asked to answer political questions by a French bureaucrat after undergoing a demanding medical test: 'The employee, who was busy reading *L'Humanité* (the French communist party newspaper), refused my return to France, where I had been a soldier for several years. And yet I presented him my certificates.'¹²³ Not without reason, French occupation officials fretted about the presence of these ONI *communist* in the three Western zones, worrying that they adversely affected recruitment rates while tarnishing the reputation of France.

Rumours that ONI agents were Soviet fifth-columnists also spread. On 2 October 1947, Officer Ponty bemoaned that the *Commission de classement professionnel* comprised '50% naturalized agents.' He pleaded for the hiring of 'agents *pensant Français* and putting the interest of France above party politics.'¹²⁴ On 15 November 1947, Officer Berge concurred:

The secretary of the Baden Central Service, previously expelled from Canada for espionage for the Russians, had also to be thrown out from the French zone. Nemeth and Korzec are in contacts with Russian agents, Lecourtois is a press correspondent for *L'Humanité*, Hervieu is an active communist, he has apparently been sentenced to several months' imprisonment for subversive activities. A man called Bajinsky, currently in the ONI of Karlsruhe, is allegedly the chief of this crew. By all accounts, their tactic originates from a certain Mr. Du Villaret in the ONI of Paris.¹²⁵

Finally, in January 1948, the State Secretariat for German and Austrian affairs ordered an inquiry. Carried out by the prefect Roger Gromand, it drew the attention of senior French governmental figures to the irregular activities of the ONI agents:

For the months of January 1948, the figures are the following: 480 Displaced Persons and 741 Germans. These poor results makes one think that the recruitment faced serious difficulties. If, on one hand, one considers the vast number of available Displaced Persons living in Germany as well as the current German demographic situation and, on the other hand, the important means implemented to carry out the

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/818, traduction d'un article extrait de la gazette ukrainienne du 25 janvier 1948.

¹²⁴ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/818, Lettre de l'attaché de 2ème classe Ponty à Monsieur le Commissaire de la République, Délégué Supérieur pour le Gouvernement Militaire de Bade, Fribourg, 2 October 1947.

¹²⁵ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/491, Rapport de Monsieur Berge à Monsieur le Colonel, Directeur des Personnes Déplacées, Baden-Baden, 17 novembre 1947.

recruitment (the ONI delegation alone employed *no less* than 191 agents), it is not unreasonable to think that serious imperfections hampered the running of the operation. Numerous reports have signaled that the recruitment was the target of a veritable sabotage, motivated by political reasons.¹²⁶

Without doubt, Gromand concluded, 'DPs were asked to answer questions by [politically motivated] recruiters who had no other aim than to oust candidates that were hostile to the Soviet regime.'¹²⁷ Recruiters justified their decision by arguing that official instructions required appraising whether 'the ideas of the candidate were not in complete opposition with the social beliefs prevailing in the *milieux* where they were bound to live in France.'¹²⁸ Extracts from Gromand's report offer a sense of its flavour:

We deplore the case of Senesse, agent from Karlsruhe, former ONI driver, employed by the OIR, accused of carrying a prohibited weapon and falsifying money; the case of Jonis, CGA delegate at Paderborn, former Latvian member of Parliament, not naturalized, having only lived a year in France, completely oblivious about agricultural matters; the case of Hourdeaux, former chef of the Donaueschingen center who has just been sent back to France due to accusations of false declarations, falsification of food rations cards, unlawful wearing of decoration, abusive use of police cards, illegal possession of weapons.¹²⁹

In Berlin, French Political Advisor Jacques Tarbé de Saint-Hardouin urged the *Quai d'Orsay* to act, noting that American authorities had a 'very bad opinion of the French recruitment mission.' According to him, this constituted 'bad propaganda in our zone whose political colours you know as well as in the American zone.'¹³⁰ As this quotation subtly indicates, the opposition to ONI agents emerging from within the military government was intrinsically linked to the broader conflict between communist leaders and Gaullist followers. As Fourth Republic President Vincent Auriol observed, '80% of the *Quai d'Orsay* is Gaullist. Same in Germany.'¹³¹ The Gaullist party-cum-movement, the *Rassemblement du peuple français* (RPF), formally launched in 1947, certainly benefited from the unofficial support of numerous occupation officials in the zone.¹³² In the context of the Cold War and the opposition to the newly-

¹²⁶ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/846, Report from Préfet Roger Gromand, p. 4.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid, pp. 4-5.

¹²⁹ Ibid, p. 5.

¹³⁰ CAC, Versement 770623, article 172, Lettre de De Saint-Hardouin à Monsieur Bousquet, Berlin, 20 October 1947.

¹³¹ Auriol *Journal*, quoted in Dietmar Hüser *Frankreichs "Doppelte Deutschlandpolitik."* Dynamik aus der Defensive - Planen, Entscheiden, Umsetzen in gesellschaftlichen und wirtschaftlichen, innen- und außenpolitischen Krisenzeiten 1944 – 1950 (Berlin : Duncker & Humblot, 1996), p. 168.

¹³² Emmanuel Droit 'Le RPF dans les Zones Françaises d'Occupation en Allemagne (1947-1958)' in François Audigier and Frédéric Schwindt (ed) *Gaullisme et gaullistes* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2009), pp. 187-201, p. 197.

established Fourth Republic, RPF activism in the zone combined ardent anti-communism with a defiant, unapologetic imperialism.¹³³ It was, according to Emmanuel Droit, 'perceived by many RPF servicemen as the expression of a specific political culture based on a continuity of practices and values that arose during the Resistance period.'¹³⁴ To illustrate the point, a confidential information note from the Brigade de Bad-Kreuznach reported on 16 October 1947 :

Over the last two weeks, several gendarmes of the Brigade have been 'contacted' in order to join a Gaullist group. [...] Gendarmes who gave evasive answers to these requests were told 'if you are not Gaullists, you are Communists. After the taking of power, if you did not go along us, you will be dismissed. If you disclose that we spoke to you, *il vous en cuira* [you'll pay for it].' According to these gendarmes, the garrison's officers are eager to act and firmly believe that the occupation troops should march into France.'¹³⁵

In January 1948, the majority of these *communist* recruiters were dismissed.¹³⁶ A month later, CGT representatives were also forced off the ONI Board of Directors.¹³⁷ This heralded a drift to the political right for the ONI administration which matched the recent end of centre-left coalition government in France.¹³⁸ These punitive measures were followed by a reform of the recruitment procedures, with the creation of IRO-directed prospecting missions.¹³⁹ For all that, the impression left by *communist* ONI agents lasted. Coupled with the effects of the strikes of the winter of 1947, they helped cement a negative view of France as a poor country rapidly falling under Communist influence. In April 1948 Général Koenig highlighted France's dismal recruitment figures when compared with Great Britain, Belgium, the United States and, to a lesser extent, Canada:

Host countries [...] are in order of diminishing importance: Great Britain (47.635 without counting the soldiers of the Anders Army), Belgium (26.000), the United States (24.000), France (21.500 but one needs to deduct 14.500 *Israélites* which are only transiting via France); so France ranks in fact behind Canada (10.500) and just in front of Palestine (5000), Holland (3.500), Brazil (2.700), Paraguay (2.300), Australia (2.200), Venezuela (1.223), Switzerland (1.142), Bolivia (750) and Morocco (500).

¹³³ Ibid, p. 192.

¹³⁴ Ibid, p. 188.

¹³⁵ MAE, BONN 148, Fiche de renseignements, origine : brigade de Bad-Kreuznach, Gendarmes de la Brigade, 16 October 1947.

¹³⁶ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/846, Report from Préfet Roger Gromand, p. 4.

¹³⁷ Léon Gani *Syndicats et Travailleurs immigrés* (Paris: Editions sociales, 1972), p. 45.

¹³⁸ Ibid, p 44.

¹³⁹ AN, AJ/43/760, IRO, rapport mensuel du mois de mai 1948, 3 June 1948. In the spring of 1948, the IRO supervised for instance the recruitment of DPs for Citroen factories; AN, AJ/43/760, IRO, rapport mensuel du mois de avril 1948, 4 May 1948.

France has barely benefited from its geographical proximity to supplant overseas countries.¹⁴⁰

The image of Communist France had enormous potency. Despite the countless efforts of the PDR administrators and other French officials to counteract it, the evidence suggests that the damage was done. This may be gauged from the testimony of Anne-Marie de la Morlais, a social worker from the *Union Nationale des Associations Familiales* (UNAF) charged with female recruitment in the American zone.

Anne-Marie de la Morlais and the feminine recruitment

Anne-Marie worked for the ONI on behalf of the *Union Nationale des Associations Familiales* (UNAF), the national union of family associations.¹⁴¹ A well-known figure in the IRO circles as well as within the French military government, she was highly critical of ONI management.¹⁴² Convinced that female recruitment was not the business of men, she arrived in Karlsruhe on 28 August 1947 and set up a 'specific plan' for women's recruitment, with a Mrs. Trimble of Heidelberg.¹⁴³ De la Morlais repeatedly complained about the 'organized apathy of the ONI.'¹⁴⁴ According to her, France's survival depended on the entry of healthy, *assimilable* DP women:

Our housewives collapse under the burden, suffer miscarriages and undergo abortions. Many weak babies (their mothers being exhausted) have died in the first two years of their lives. At 10%, we have the highest rate of infant mortality, whereas the rates for neighboring countries' range from 2.5% to 3.9%.¹⁴⁵

Despite France's obvious demographic needs, the ONI direction was, in her words, 'botching up recruitment'.¹⁴⁶ Not only did it take more than two months for work contracts to arrive, but the propaganda leaflets that de la Morlais meticulously designed were not printed. In a note entitled *sabotage des contrats*, she drew French authorities' attention to the unprofessionalism of ONI Direction management: 'Work contracts are used to send anyone, anywhere.

¹⁴⁰ MAE, Bonn 148, Etude d'ensemble sur les personnes Déplacées, Lettre secrète du Général d'Armée Koenig à Monsieur le Secrétaire d'Etat aux Affaires Allemandes et Autrichiennes, 14 avril 1948, GFOC – N.1.017/PDR.

¹⁴¹ Jérôme Minonzio et Jean-Philippe Vallat 'L'union nationale des associations familiales (UNAF) et les politiques familiales', *Revue française de science politique*, Vol.56, No. 2 (2006), pp. 205-226, p. 206.

¹⁴² MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/846, Madame de la Morlais à Inspecteur du Travail, Délégué Général de l'ONI, Karlsruhe, 20 janvier 1948.

¹⁴³ Ibid ; MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/846, Rapport du Travail de Mme de la Morlais sur le recrutement et le placement féminins, 4 February 1948.

¹⁴⁴ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/846, Anne M. de la Morlais, note [24 May 1948].

¹⁴⁵ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/846, Madame de la Morlais à Monsieur l'Inspecteur du Travail, Délégué Général de l'Office National d'Immigration, Karlsruhe, 20 janvier 1948 and Rapport du Travail de Mme de la Morlais sur le recrutement et le placement féminins, 4 février 1948, p. 2.

¹⁴⁶ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/846, Madame de la Morlais, assistante sociale de l'UNAF à l'ONI, à Monsieur le Président de l'UNAF, Karlsruhe, 11 February 1948.

The ONI's main concern [...] is to get rid of the maximum number of contracts.'

¹⁴⁷ While some medical officers were told to recruit women aged between eighteen and thirty-five, others were informed that women up to forty-five could be selected. ¹⁴⁸ This administrative *pagaille* was all the more deplorable because the number of foreign recruitment missions was steadily increasing and thereby, the competition between them was worsening. When she first arrived, only six nations were recruiting. But, by February 1948, seventeen nations were competing with France. ¹⁴⁹

De la Morlais spent a considerable amount of her time touring DP camps, reassuring their residents about the supposed 'communist threat' in France:

Many questions about communism – political life in France – DPs' rights in France – their situation regarding the Soviet embassy etc.

Two miners from neighbouring camps returned from France – at the time of the general strikes – because they could not work and therefore stayed without money. They asked to return to Germany because life was impossible in France. I try to minimize the incident in presenting it as 'perhaps plausible' but certainly exceptional! The DPs understand and become less dubious about France – very good atmosphere at the end. ¹⁵⁰

De la Morlais also stressed the breadth of French welfare provision when compared with other, more popular destination countries:

I am being asked to present life in France, its social legislation etc... Then a noisy heckler says that 'it is better to go to Australia or Canada, as they are superior countries.' My answer disconcerted the noisy hecklers 'no social legislation in America comparable to France – nor family support.' ¹⁵¹

Other grievances related to delays in family reunion, something usually resulted from French administrative chaos rather than DPs' shortcomings. By contrast, the problem of young men emigrating alone while leaving behind unmarried mothers with their abandoned children was real. ¹⁵² This issue caused mounting anxiety among IRO and PDR officials, who worried about the increasing number of 'forgotten' children in camps as well as the proliferation of illicit

¹⁴⁷ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/846, Anne M. de la Morlais, 'Sabotage des contrats' [undated].

¹⁴⁸ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/846, Rapport du Travail de Mme de la Morlais sur le recrutement et le placement féminins, 4 février 1948, p. 2.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid, p. 2.

¹⁵⁰ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/846, Anne De La Morlais, Report, Region de Amberg, 19 April 1948.

¹⁵¹ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/846, Anne De La Morlais, Région de Stuttgart, 3 May 1948.

¹⁵² MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/790, Lettre de la Présidente pour la Zone Française et représentante pour l'Allemagne de l'Association des Femmes Ukrainiennes, à la Direction des PDR, Bad Kreuznach, 21 October 1950.

abortions.¹⁵³ While it was men who more commonly abandoned their offspring, some women did too.¹⁵⁴ The November 1948 IRO monthly report highlighted the scale of the problem:

Unmarried Mothers. Most of these are 20-25 years of age, with children 1-4. All of them refuse to return home [...] and say they want to emigrate. It is extremely difficult to make them understand that they have little chance of obtaining their wish. We have the very definite impression, however, that several of them have made their minds to stay in Germany, but are afraid to say so for fear of losing IRO assistance. Few of these unmarried mothers are trained for any kind of work. A distinction should be made, however, between those in the camps and those living in private lodgings. The former do not work, are dirty and in general let themselves be; whereas those living in private lodgings are trying very hard to earn a living [...].¹⁵⁵

These concerns were echoed among certain ethnically-based support agencies. The Association of Ukrainian Women complained that DP men and women bore children with different partners, asking emigration committees to insist that male DPs bear responsibility for their illegitimate children.¹⁵⁶

Just as unmarried mothers were offered little, if any, opportunity to emigrate, people aged over forty-five had little prospect of passing through the screening of labour migrants. In Ravensburg, a group of older DPs were denied official authorisation to create an association to aid DPs aged over forty-five to emigrate.¹⁵⁷ Young people with elderly dependents were also advised to separate from them, a suggestion that, quite understandably, revived traumatic memories of wartime separations. According to IRO counselling officer E.W.D Steel, DPs' unhealthy attachment to their families was one of the symptoms of their 'refugee complex.' According to her, DPs were 'removed from reality' and in a state of permanent anxiety.¹⁵⁸ This viewpoint was consistent with dominant perceptions widespread amongst humanitarian actors of the time that DPs' were 'apathetic', inert, or had regressed to an infantile state.¹⁵⁹

If the majority of countries refused to allow DPs to emigrate with their families, France did introduce the 'Plan Culture-Famille' in November 1948, a

¹⁵³ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/483, Le Gouverneur Hettier de Boislambert, Délégué Général pour le Gouvernement Militaire du Land Rhéno-Palatin à Monsieur le Général d'Armée, No. 19602/PDR/19PR/NN, 12 August 1948.

¹⁵⁴ In April 1948, French administrator Griolet raised concern about DP women abandoning their children in order to emigrate in Canada and England. MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/556, l'administrateur Griolet, Directeur PCIRO à Monsieur l'Administrateur Chef de Service des Personnes Déplacées, No. CM/ti/800, 7 April 1948. Also see AN, AJ.43/798, Lettre du Chef du Service Régional de la CPOIR pour le Land Rhéno-Palatin à l'attention de l'officier IRO Care and Maintenance, 22 March 1948.

¹⁵⁵ AN, AJ/43/759, IRO French zone, narrative report, November 1948, p. 8.

¹⁵⁶ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/790, Lettre de la Présidente pour la Zone Française et représentante pour l'Allemagne de l'Association des Femmes Ukrainiennes, à la Direction des PDR, Bad Kreuznach, 21 October 1950.

¹⁵⁷ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/484, Lettre du Général d'Armée Koenig à Monsieur le Gouverneur Délégué Supérieur pour le Gouvernement Militaire du Wurtemberg, N.8236CC/SG/AACS/PDR/AN, 27 May 1949.

¹⁵⁸ AN, AJ/43/760, Counselling service, E.W.D Steel, rapport du mois de juin 1948, 12 July 1948.

¹⁵⁹ Gatrell 'From 'Homelands' to 'Warlands', pp. 9-10.

scheme designed to recruit 1,000 agricultural workers with their families. The plan generated considerable expectation among DPs and IRO officials. Philip Ryan, chief of operations in the US Zone, recalled that '[t]he nature of the scheme meant that many semi-skilled agricultural workers for whom other resettlement opportunities had not been found could emigrate to France together with their families.¹⁶⁰ In the event, these hopes were soon disappointed. Despite IRO intense propaganda activities in favour of the recruitment, DPs still remained reluctant to emigrate to France. Moreover, international competition was, if anything, intensifying. In June 1948 the US congress passed the DP Act, authorizing the admission of 205,000 displaced persons over a period of two years.¹⁶¹ For Jewish DPs the formation of the State of Israel in May 1948 was also of central importance, transforming the outlook for emigration to the newly established country. But do these pressures entirely explain the DPs' continuing lack of enthusiasm for emigration to France?

From single workers to families

Despite French governmental efforts to simplify recruitment procedures and improve administrative coordination, in the summer of 1948 the road to emigration either to France or French colonies was still strewn with bureaucratic hurdles. For instance, the departure of the forty-six candidates selected by the Moroccan mission during its visit to the zone in July and August was delayed by nearly a month because the visas for DPs' families were not sent to the French Consul at the same time as those of the workers.¹⁶² The IRO authorities were unimpressed with the Moroccan mission, which they decried as being made up of a handful of incompetent businessmen whose visit was costly and unproductive.¹⁶³ Within the French zone recruitment for France was also delayed by the June 1948 monetary reform and the resulting non-payment of DP salaries.¹⁶⁴ The majority of unpaid DPs preferred to wait in the zone before being resettled in France or elsewhere. More importantly, French selection missions were still severe, interpreting selection criteria conservatively and to the letter. A French selection mission, for instance, visited Niederlahnstein from 21 to 23 September 1948. Of fifty-four families examined, only twenty-eight

¹⁶⁰ AN, AJ/43/628, Philip E. Ryan, chief of operations, to Mr. Tuck, 21 December 1948.

¹⁶¹ Holborn *The IRO*, p. 367.

¹⁶² AN, AJ/43/760, IRO French zone, narrative report, November 1948, p. 3.

¹⁶³ AN, AJ/43/760, rapport mensuel du mois d'août 1948, 6 September 1948.

¹⁶⁴ AN, AJ/43/760, IRO, rapport mensuel du mois de juillet 1948, 2 August 1948.

were accepted, with twenty-six families (seventy-eight people in total) rejected.¹⁶⁵

As explained earlier, the launch of the Plan Culture-Famille in the autumn of 1948 followed on previous attempts to improve France's attractiveness.¹⁶⁶ In January 1948, France had signed an agreement with the PCIRO, which provided for the payment of a bonus of 16 dollars to DPs willing to emigrate in France.¹⁶⁷ Although the evidence suggest that it proved difficult to actually implement this measure, the French authorities replicated it in the autumn of 1949, offering 60 dollars to DPs willing to emigrate in France.¹⁶⁸ This policy of enhancement of familial immigration was also in affinity with the Christian values of the Ministry of Population, Germaine Poinso-Chapuis.¹⁶⁹ Practising Catholic, she was a strong advocate of familial immigration.

Given the reluctance of many countries to accept entire DP families, the Plan Culture Famille offered a comparative advantage to France. In many respects, the plan was original with several elements designed to help those families who accepted it to establishment themselves in France. IRO officials welcomed the project, particularly its recognition that heads of families could be up to fifty years of age and the further concession that, in special cases, where the individual's physical condition was exceptionally good or where their children were already of working age, the age limit might be increased to fifty-five.¹⁷⁰ Yet again, however, other factors hampered the scheme's operation in practice. Abiding mistrust of Communist influence in France remained problematic.¹⁷¹ Experts, journalists and welfare professionals also pointed out that DPs preferred emigrating overseas in the belief that the New World provided better security in the event of renewed international conflict.¹⁷² These problems were compounded by the steady trickle of dissatisfied DPs returning from France. In August 1948, A.C. Dunn, IRO acting chief of Operations noted,

[D]espite repeated promises, French authorities are still sending returnees back to the US Zone without following the legal procedure outlined by EUCOM Headquarters. It appears from reports reaching this Headquarters that many workers recruited for France arrive in that country only to find that the jobs for which they signed a contract are not available, or that

¹⁶⁵ AN, AJ/43/760, IRO, rapport mensuel du mois de septembre 1948, 5 October 1948.

¹⁶⁶ CAC, Versement 770623, 173, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères à Monsieur le Ministre du Travail, 11 June 1948 (signé Bousquet).

¹⁶⁷ MAE, HCRFA, PDR3/56, Several agreements were signed between the French and IRO Authorities, on 13 January 1948 and 5 November 1948. Textes relatifs aux Personnes Déplacées en zone Française d'Allemagne.

¹⁶⁸ CAC, Versement 770623, article 173, Projet d'échange de lettres entre le Gouvernement français et l'administration de l'OIR au sujet de l'application du plan Culture-familles en faveur des personnes déplacées éligibles.

¹⁶⁹ Spire *Les étrangers à la carte*, p. 126.

¹⁷⁰ Holborn *The IRO*, p. 384.

¹⁷¹ AN, AJ/43/628, Procès Verbal de la conference sur le plan français 'culture famille', 26 October 1948.

¹⁷² AN, AJ/43/760, IRO, rapport mensuel du mois de juillet 1948, 2 August 1948.

living accommodation promised for families is not obtainable. [...] There is now a new French Scheme through which 1000 farm workers and their families are to be recruited for France. We are extremely hesitant to sponsor this new plan, especially due to the fact that numerous returnees have come back because the farmers on whose land they were contracted to work could not provide living accommodation for their wives and children.¹⁷³

As Dunn's report suggests, the problem of the returnees was not new. Many DPs who went to France in 1947 and 1948 found reception arrangements defective. Housing was substandard, food rations unsatisfactory, and many DPs were rejected by their employers, leaving them in desperate circumstances. In addition, there were often considerable lapse of time before family dependants were admitted into France. In 1950, reflecting on immigration and French public opinion, Professor Joanny Ray admitted that 'living conditions, which used to attract immigrants in the past, have changed considerably: real wages have not yet returned to the pre-war level [...] housing conditions were still very precarious.'¹⁷⁴

'We are behind barbed wire'¹⁷⁵

In January 1948, French administrator Paul Gobe toured the DP camps of Northern Bavaria in the hope of stimulating DPs' interest in France. Dissatisfaction with the French scheme reigned 'As in all the other DP camps, those of the Bayreuth area are unfavourably impressed by France's high cost of living, governmental instability, political troubles and the bad reception that DPs often receive at their arrival in Karlsruhe. Everyone knows that these rumours, either true or false, circulate very rapidly in all the DP camps and often appear in DP national gazettes.'¹⁷⁶ Paul Gobe reported the tragic odyssey of Rudolf Uzanicki, a former legionnaire who was awarded the French Legion of Honour.¹⁷⁷ Lodged in a rabbit hutch in Montpellier, he was forced to strike with other agricultural workers. 'In this place were only Communists, and they strike weekly. During this strike, I didn't dare to work, for they threatened to kill me or to return me back to Yugoslavia. Not only the workers were communised, the same authorities and police was communised to. I have been permanent

¹⁷³ AN, AJ/43/628, A.C.Dunn, Acting chief of operations to Executive Secretary, PCIRO Headquarters, Palais des Nations, Geneva, 20 August 1948.

¹⁷⁴ AN, AJ/43/1269, Prof. J. Ray 'Les problèmes actuels de l'immigration face à l'opinion publique française', in *Pages documentaires. Un problème social: emigration et immigration*, April–May 1950, pp. 261-277, p. 273.

¹⁷⁵ AN, AJ/43/628, Translation, Letter from Chabeniok Stefan, 26 Novembre 1947 [CPIRO archives].

¹⁷⁶ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/818, L'attaché Paul E. Gobe à Monsieur le Capitaine R. Schultz, Amberg, 21 January 1948.

¹⁷⁷ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/818, Attaché de 2ème classe Paul. E. Gobe à Monsieur le Capitaine R. Schulz-Leclerc, chef du service de l'immigration, Regensburg, 27 January 1948.

hungry and very afraid from communists.’¹⁷⁸ Constantly suffering from hunger and cold, he returned to Germany, where he was placed in the Brombach centre, a ‘veritable concentration camp.’ Before emigrating in France, Uzanicki was amongst the loudest advocates of the French cause. After his unfortunate experience, he became one of its severest critics. Administrator Gobe urged the French government to stop sending DPs to French departments whose local administration was either overwhelmingly communist or otherwise hostile to DPs.¹⁷⁹ *Meurthe et Moselle* was one such. There, French farmers refused DP workers with dependents:

You can imagine the strong emotion caused by this decision, a decision backed up by *les services départementaux de la main d’oeuvre*. Obviously, many DPs cannot accept the idea of a long separation from their family, who remains in the precarious DP situation in Germany. And, here, things get worst. Returned to the French zone, the ‘réfractaires’ (If one dares using this word) are sent in special camps. They often call these camps ‘concentration camps’ in their correspondence.¹⁸⁰

DPs’ grievances were magnified by their camp representatives, who circulated letters and stories from DPs in France. In December 1947, for instance, American Zone Camp Director Roberts, passed on a series of DP letters sent by DPs to their wives.¹⁸¹ ‘We are here behind [barbed] wire [...] we do not know how long we shall stay here.’¹⁸² ‘The contract which we signed in Karlsruhe is a valueless scrap of paper [...] French authorities failed to check employers’ offers before recruiting people for France.’¹⁸³ Another letter read:

We left for France, but we were not permitted to work because we have families. The Arbeitsamt (Labour Office) sent us back to Nancy in order that we might return to Germany; we went to Camp Offenburg and then to a concentration camp in Brombach. We do not know why we are behind wires – we fear we are in some danger, the nature of which is well known to you. We are asking you most sincerely to get us out of this miserable position; we have not offended against the law – everything happened in the way I have told you. This is pure truth, and we can swear to it. God help us!¹⁸⁴

¹⁷⁸ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/818, Declaration of Uzanicki Rudolf, transcribed by the camp Leader, Blazo Cetkovic, 13 January 1948.

¹⁷⁹ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/818, Attaché Paul. E. Gobe à Capitaine R. Schulz-Leclerc, Regensburg, 27 January 1948.

¹⁸⁰ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/846, Commissaire de Police G. Alexinsky à Directeur de la Réglementation et des étrangers, Fribourg (Bade), 22 January 1948.

¹⁸¹ AN, AJ/43/628, Letter from G.G. Roberts, Camp Director, IRO Stuttgart Centre to Miss C. Trimble, Resettlement Division [December 1947].

¹⁸² AN, AJ/43/628, Annexe to the Letter from G.G. Roberts, Camp Director, IRO Stuttgart Centre to Miss C. Trimble, Resettlement Division [December 1947].

¹⁸³ AN, AJ/43/628, Extract from a letter written by the Lettonian DP Zanis Marka and his wife Alma Marka who immigrated to France with their two children, 3 December 47. Translation from Latvian.

¹⁸⁴ AN, AJ/43/628, Letter from Chabeniok Stefan to Magister Sojko Wasyl, 26 November 1947. [Translation]

Another DP related his arrival in a camp near Paris: '[t]he walls were full of holes and it was as cold as a dog's kennel. We were given something to eat but it was awful – dried snails and peas.'¹⁸⁵ The experience of hunger is central in this testimony, which ended in almost apocalyptic terms: 'Dear Father,... I would not even advise my worst enemy to come to this country. Please write and tell me what I have to do – am I to be lost without a trace, as in Siberia?'¹⁸⁶ These multiple allegations of 'concentration camp'-type conditions and of comparisons with Stalin's gulag recurred time and again in such letters exchanged with loved ones.

In spite of protracted negotiations, it proved impossible to establish procedures for the return of DPs to the satisfaction of the British and American occupation authorities in Germany.¹⁸⁷ A large number of those who returned made their own way back to Germany. Alerted by IRO officials and the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Labour nevertheless ordered an investigation into the inadequacies of DPs' reception arrangements in France.¹⁸⁸ French observers conceded in response that *returning* DPs were sent to a disciplinary camp:

True, the Brombach camp is a disciplinary camp in which all the unsuccessful workers who had been placed in France and are driven back to Germany are held for security reasons. This policy is dictated by the necessity to isolate these workers from those to be recruited, in order to avoid counter-propaganda. By all accounts, the conditions in this camp have significantly improved, and barbed wires have been cut off.¹⁸⁹

Yet for French officials these disciplinary measures were justifiable, necessitated by the need to prevent contact between returnees and other DPs still considering emigration to France. They believed that DPs' complaints were exaggerated, arguing that Italian migrants were satisfied with the situation they encountered in France:

The conclusion of the investigator on this affair is that Kosarynskys' grievances are not justified. This is corroborated by the fact that no reclamation has been made concerning the organization of the camp, neither by the Italian Consul, nor by the local representative of the CGIL. As the majority of immigrants in this centre are Italians, the Italian Consul

¹⁸⁵ AN, AJ/43/628, Translation of letter from Bernard Kosarynski, 28 November 1947.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Holborn *The IRO*, p. 383.

¹⁸⁸ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/818, L'attaché Paul E. Gobe à Monsieur le Capitaine R. Schultz, Amberg, 21 January 1948.

¹⁸⁹ AN, AJ/43/628, Rapport sur les enquêtes effectuées à la suite de la communication par le Délégué pour la France de la CPOIR de lettres émanant de "Personnes Déplacées" recrutées en qualité de travailleurs pour la France, Sous-direction de la main d'oeuvre étrangère, 1 March 1948.

or the representative of the CGIL would have brought the camp' defectiveness to our attention, if they had found some.¹⁹⁰

Commissioned by the Ministry of Labour, Samson concurred. 'These persons who have experienced multiple forms of deceit during their internment in Germany are now suffering from a veritable psychosis of propaganda and broken promises.'¹⁹¹ According to him, conditions in France were as good as the economic situation allowed them to be. What bears emphasis, though, is that DPs were not ordinary migrant workers; they were, first and foremost, traumatized war victims for whom stable living conditions were even more critical. Many employees remained reluctant to do so, arguing that to provide DPs with the same wage as French workers when they were less productive was itself a form of 'sacrifice.'¹⁹² Although French authorities made substantial efforts to sell the DP population to French employees – through radio broadcasts and articles in newspapers – they never really succeeded.¹⁹³ In the summer of 1949 the *refoulement* centre of Toul-Bautzen was still full of DPs rejected by French employees.¹⁹⁴

Despite DPs' widespread scepticism about France, the French farm family scheme might still be counted a partial success. The scheme ultimately attracted 1,139 families, amounting to 3,666 people admitted.¹⁹⁵ Soon afterwards, in early 1949, the first signs of job market saturation appeared and by May the Ministry of Labour recorded a significant decrease in demand for foreign workers.¹⁹⁶ In the face of worsening unemployment, some French local authorities fiercely opposed the circulation of materials advertising DP labour.¹⁹⁷ As a result, the inter-ministerial commission and the ONI decided in August 1949 to temporarily suspend direct immigration, reducing the quota for farm families.¹⁹⁸ Three months later, in October, all French selection of DP immigrants was suspended owing to seasonal unemployment in agriculture and the consequent overcrowding of DPs' reception centres.¹⁹⁹ Not only could France barely absorb those DPs already accepted, but the various DP

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ MAE, HCRFA, PDR6/818, Rapport confidentiel sur le fonctionnement du Centre de Fribourg pour le recrutement de main d'oeuvre à destination de la France et certaines conditions du travail en France, 19 Novembre 1947. Transmis par Koenig aux Ministères des Affaires Etrangères, 26 November 1947, p. 3.

¹⁹² AN, AJ/43/628, Report signé Samson, Ministère du Travail et de la Sécurité Sociale, sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2 April 1948.

¹⁹³ CAC, Versement 770623, 173.

¹⁹⁴ CAC, Versement 770623, 173, compte-rendu de la reunion du 8 aout 1949 du comite mixte charge de suivre l'application des accords relatifs a l'immigration directe.

¹⁹⁵ Holborn *The IRO*, p. 384.

¹⁹⁶ CAC, Versement 770623, 173, Ministère du Travail et de la Sécurité Sociale, Note pour Monsieur le Sous-Directeur de la Main d'oeuvre étrangère, sous direction de l'emploi, 21 May 1949.

¹⁹⁷ CAC, Versement 770623, 173, Section de la Main d'oeuvre, note pour Monsieur le Directeur, 3 August 1949.

¹⁹⁸ CAC, Versement 770623, 173, compte-rendu de la reunion du 8 aout 1949 du comite mixte charge de suivre l'application des accords relatifs a l'immigration directe.

¹⁹⁹ Holborn *The IRO*, p. 384.

recruitment schemes were proving increasingly expensive.²⁰⁰ Cost varied depending on whether DPs were recruited on contracts or through the family scheme.²⁰¹ But French officials complained that IRO participation only reduced overall costs by a tenth.²⁰² In consequence, during 1948 the ONI, which depended on French employees' financial contributions, confronted the most severe financial crisis of its history.²⁰³ Meanwhile, continuous French efforts to obtain additional funds from the IRO infuriated their British counterparts:

The French Delegation are very busy canvassing a proposal whereby IRO would pay the French government a capitation grant of 133 dollars per DP resettled in France. They claim that it would still be cheaper to send DPs to France than to Australia or South America and that the absence of shipping problems would also lead to more rapid resettlement and hence greater 'invisible savings' on care and maintenance. We have already told them that they are asking too much since, resettlement in Canada and the USA costs little, if anything, more than what the French are asking. [...] Although we think that there are no longer the same objections to resettlement grants on the grounds of principle as there were when "Westward Ho" and other non-subsidized West European resettlement schemes were extant, the French would stand a better chance of getting their plans accepted if they were to reduce their demands to say, 50 dollars [...] If 50 dollars is taken as the basic figure, IRO may be able to provide a stick and a carrot to induce the French to take larger numbers and hence more 'marginal hard core' DPs by increasing the grant for each additional 5,000 DPs, e.g. 50 dollars a head for the first 5000, 70 dollars for the next, 90 dollars for the next, and so on. Thus the last to be taken on (who would, of course, be those who had been rejected by everyone else) would repay the French so much more than the first, or better class recruits, that they would be under a mounting temptation to accept sub-standard DPs for the sake of their immediate dollar-earning capacity, rather than their ultimate social value.²⁰⁴

In the event, these arguments proved transient. By early 1949 French interest in taking in large numbers of DPs had dissipated. An unanticipated phenomenon had overturned demographic projections: in only four years a post-war baby-boom had produced an additional three million live births.²⁰⁵ As Paul André Rosental points out, demographers first believed that the birth rate increase

²⁰⁰ In January 1949, representative of the Ministry of Labour Guerard estimated that DP entry to France cost 17.250 frs to the French government. CAC, Versement 770623, 173, compte-rendu de la réunion du 31 janvier 1949 du Comité mixte chargé de suivre l'application des accords relatifs à l'immigration directe.

²⁰¹ CAC, Versement 770623, article 173, Lettre du Ministre des Affaires Etrangères à Monsieur le Ministre des Finances, 21 July 1948.

²⁰² AN, AJ/43/628, Procès verbal de la conférence sur le plan français 'Culture-famille' le 26 octobre 1948 à Baden-Baden. As far as the general ratio is concerned, France's overall contribution to the IRO budget was almost equivalent to the sum of the subsidy it received from it. MAE, NUOI, Secrétariat des conférences 1944-1959, 296, Rapport confidentiel de R. Pointe, chef du Cabinet de M. Jacobsen, 'La France et l'organisation internationale pour les réfugiés', 6 April 1951.

²⁰³ CAC, Versement 770623, 173, Compte rendu de la réunion du 25 octobre du comité mixte chargé de suivre l'application des accords relatifs à l'immigration directe ; Dänzer-Kantof *Immigrés en France*, pp. 45-47.

²⁰⁴ NA, FO 371/78198, Confidential telegram of the United Kingdom Delegation to the IRO General Council, Geneva, 29 June 1949.

²⁰⁵ AN, AJ/43/1269, Prof. J. Ray 'Les problèmes actuels de l'immigration face à l'opinion publique française', *Pages documentaires. Un problème social: emigration et immigration* (1950), pp. 261-277, p. 269.

was a short-term, circumstantial phenomenon.²⁰⁶ After the First World War, the French birth rate had risen sharply but then immediately dropped, a reflection, it was thought, of child-bearing deferred during the conflict.²⁰⁷ Yet, throughout 1948 and 1949, the rising French birth rate continued to prove demographers wrong.

The limits of asylum

Turning briefly to consider the case of another discrete category of displaced persons - the thousands of Spanish refugees who crossed the Pyrenees after the closure of the Franco-Spanish border in March 1946 - the same mounting barriers to asylum in France become evident. Until 1948 post-war French governments pursued a resolutely anti-Francoist and commensurately liberal policy toward Spanish refugees.²⁰⁸ Yet, from 1948 onwards, Spanish refugees were increasingly perceived as an economic burden and a threat to public order. Local authorities maintained that many among them were simply manual workers in search of employment rather than *bona fide* political refugees. Although the IRO relieved France from the financial burden generated by the influx of Spanish refugees by paying maintenance costs and providing material assistance, the French authorities refused to resurrect their previously liberal policies. A minority of political refugees were accepted, but the majority of asylum-seekers were deported back to Spain having been declared ineligible and economically unsuitable.²⁰⁹

As the Spanish experience suggests, following the Liberation migration and asylum policies diverged into two opposing streams. The first was inclusive, migrant workers securing equivalent welfare rights as those of French workers. The second, though, was exclusionary and marked by heightened barriers to entry, allegedly justified by France's limited economic and social capacity for absorption. As explained earlier, French ONI agents and IRO officials often stressed that France offered generous welfare provision, including family and social security benefits higher than in most other industrial nations. But they also maintained that the country simply could not grant these privileges to every candidate for entry.²¹⁰

Admittedly, the new decade would see the re-emergence of new patterns of humanitarian compassion typified by Church groups, which increasingly

²⁰⁶ Rosental *L'intelligence démographique*, p. 202.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁸ Cohen 'The West and the displaced', p. 114.

²⁰⁹ The rate of deportations of illegal clandestines rose from 5% to 60% in 1950. Cohen 'The West and the displaced', p. 118.

²¹⁰ AN, AJ/32/1269, M.R. Pointe 'Le Pays d'accueil', Published report, 'Journée d'études de Sainte-Odile, 11 au 15 juin 1951', Secours catholique, pp. 31-40, p. 40.

lobbied on behalf of refugees in Western Europe. Typical in this regard was the French *Secours catholique*, which, in June 1951, organized a workshop on 'Réfugiés Européens et migrations internationales', in the Mont Saint Odile monastery in the Vosges mountains of Alsace. It gathered together refugee experts from eight different countries. The French representatives were also a diverse group. Alongside members of the *Secours catholique*, ILO experts were IRO officials, Mrs Chevalley (President of the Service Social d'Aide aux Emigrants), the Abbé Glasberg (Centre d'orientation sociale des Etrangers) and Professor Massignon (Professeur au Collège de France). All professed their support for the application of French republican values (*Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité*) to the refugee situation.²¹¹ Still feeling the effects of the huge pre-war influx of Spanish refugees, the French government however was wary of binding commitments in regard to refugees and migrant rights. This was particularly visible during the negotiations preceding the signature of the Geneva Convention relating to the status of refugees in July 1951.

Knowing that only a few countries expressed genuine interest in elaborating a system of refugee protection, France advocated a narrow and continental definition of refugee.²¹² Aware of its bargaining power as a representative of a major country of asylum, France opposed the 'universalist camp' led by Britain. French spokesmen argued that British universalism was a 'non-committal and hypocritical position for an island well protected from refugee influx.'²¹³ To be sure, memories of the late 1930s, when France was left to its own devices in handling the flood of German and Spanish refugees, were central to this argument.²¹⁴ The final Geneva resolution, a compromise between these divergent views, left open the implementation of specific time and space restrictions. In 1952, the creation of the *Office Français pour la Protection des Réfugiés et Apatrides* (OFPRA) confirmed the importance of national regulations. While some refugee supporters in France had campaigned for an international organization to protect refugees, the French government opted for a national one: 'while the Geneva Convention provided the international framework for refugee eligibility, the French state had the last word in refugee selection.'²¹⁵

²¹¹ AN, OIR, AJ/43/1269, Published report, 'Journée d'études de Sainte-Odile, 11 au 15 juin 1951', Secours catholique, pp. 3-4.

²¹² Cohen *In war's wake*, p. 153.

²¹³ Cohen, 'The West and the displaced', p. 268.

²¹⁴ Greg Burgess *Refuge in the Land of Liberty. A History of Asylum and Refugee Protection in France since the Revolution* (London : Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p. 195.

²¹⁵ Cohen 'The West and the displaced', p. 272.

Conclusion

After the First World War, France attracted over a million foreign migrants who proved willing to fill vacant positions in often unattractive and low-paid occupations. After the American quota system was implemented in 1921 and revised in 1924, France became the most important destination for immigrants in the entire industrialized world. Migration was, at least initially, regarded as a temporary palliative, not as a long-term solution to the country's anaemic population growth.²¹⁶ After the Second World War, France once again called upon migrant workers to aid national reconstruction. In contrast with the 1920s though, France not only strove to attract workers on short-term contracts; this time, it also hoped to facilitate the entry of *assimilable* foreigners on a long-term basis in order to transfuse fresh blood into its flagging population. Yet, as the recruitment of DPs clearly illustrated, France quickly lost appeal as a prosperous nation with a proud tradition of asylum and hospitality to refugees and migrant workers.

The issue of France's unpopularity was particularly salient in Germany, where occupation officials strove to restore France's grandeur and prestige. In the battleground for DP labourers, France suffered severely in comparison with other competitor countries. Despite French IRO officials and PDR administrators' efforts to publicize the attractions of France, DPs proved understandably cautious about emigrating to what they regarded as an impoverished and, for some, a quasi-Communist country. New World Countries and Britain remained far more popular. In total, France drew in 38,000 DPs, while Britain attracted more than the double this number: 86,346.²¹⁷ For their part, the United States absorbed nearly 300,000 DPs, Israel accepted 132,109 DPs and Australia admitted 182,159.²¹⁸

DP emigration was not simply the final act of a long humanitarian drama involving IRO experts and Western officials. As Daniel Cohen has recently demonstrated, anxieties regarding 'surplus population' and the dissemination of 'freedom loving' Europeans were intrinsically related to the necessity to countenance the global spread of Communism.²¹⁹ 'Orchestrated by the Cold War West under American leadership', the redistribution of 'surplus manpower' and 'surplus population' marked 'the peak of centralized international

²¹⁶ Lewis *The Boundaries of the Republic*, p. 240.

²¹⁷ Holborn *The IRO*, p. 389.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 415.

²¹⁹ Cohen *In war's wake*, p. 11.

migration.²²⁰ In the interwar years, international organizations, such as the ILO, had already advocated supranational regulation of migratory movements and the orderly redistribution of excess population.²²¹ Yet, as IRO Assistant Director Pierre Jacobsen observed, ‘no organization prior to 1939 has attempted to put [planned international migration] into practice’, international body only providing regulations, conventions and recommendations.²²² ‘In no earlier world migration’, commented official IRO historian Louise Holborn, ‘have so many uprooted people in an organized effort been resettled in foreign countries as was accomplished by the IRO. The migration of refugees for settlement [was] nothing new; what was new about this migration was the fact that it was organized.’²²³ In fact, over a period of four a half years, the IRO supervised the migration for settlement of 1,038,750 persons in some forty-eight countries, ranging from the US which accepted 328,851 to Panama which accepted 63.²²⁴

Despite the IRO efforts to overcome DPs’ obstacles to resettlement and encourage national representatives to take in DPs on humanitarian grounds, the old, infirm and breadwinners of families with too many dependents stood little chance of finding a country willing to accept them. Intellectual DPs (advertised by the IRO as the ‘Forgotten Elite’) also faced similar discrimination. The majority of them either stayed in Germany or were resettled as manual workers.²²⁵ As explained in the introduction, this generated sharp criticism. Aware of their agency’s limits, IRO officials insisted on their efforts to enhance what would today be called DPs’ employability:

We have been criticized for the *côté négrier* [slave-labour aspects] of the work of the IRO. I do not think that a solution could have been found if we did not accept these solutions of *négriers* [slave-traders]. In reconciling contradictory interests, the IRO found a solution. If its solution is not perfect, it is at least in part acceptable and in some cases surprisingly satisfactory.²²⁶

Through the development of vocational training, language and literacy classes and the establishment of medical and occupational rehabilitation services for the numerous physically handicapped refugees, the IRO enhanced DPs’ chances to leave Germany. Admittedly, in the French zone, the development of

²²⁰ Ibid, p. 101, p. 125.

²²¹ Rosental ‘Géopolitique et Etat-providence’, pp. 99-134.

²²² AN, OIR, AJ/43/1269, Published report, ‘Journée d’études de Sainte-Odile, 11 au 15 juin 1951’, Secours catholique, p. 12.

²²³ Holborn *The IRO*, p. 365.

²²⁴ Holborn *The IRO*, p. 430.

²²⁵ Holborn *The IRO*, pp. 426-428; Chloé Maurel ‘L’action de l’UNESCO dans le domaine de la reconstruction’, *Histoire @ Politique*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (2013), pp. 160-175.

²²⁶ AN, OIR, AJ/43/1269, Published report, ‘Journée d’études de Sainte-Odile, 11 au 15 juin 1951’, Secours catholique, p. 12.

the FPA was delayed by difficulties in obtaining the necessary German currency funds. Even so, as explained earlier, fourteen training centres were created. Moreover, in October 1949, the Resettlement Placement Service (RPS) was established to facilitate the selection of those refugees classified as having limited opportunities for resettlement. The RPS compiled a dossier on each refugee and provided potential employers with a complete professional history of the head of the family, including photostatic copies of diplomas, testimonials of former employers, the IRO's trade-test certificate, a curriculum vitae, as well as all relevant information about each member of its family, notably their complete medical reports.²²⁷

After the termination of IRO operations at the end of 1951, the ILO stood apart as the sole international organisation devoted to the cause of planned migration. But the United States, loath to delegate large powers to an international body with Communist governments among its members, refused to sponsor the ILO project.²²⁸ In Germany, approximately 140,000 IRO refugees became the responsibility of the new West German State. In 1951 the West German government assigned them the new legal status of 'stateless foreigners.' In most respects, these stateless foreigners enjoyed the same rights as German citizens. One notable exception was in the political field, the right to set up political associations being denied.²²⁹ The newly-established United Nations High Commission for Refugees remained nominally responsible for Germany's stateless people.²³⁰ In France, meanwhile, numerous officials still insisted that German overpopulation posed an inherent security threat to Europe. For them, the twin problems of refugees and surplus population the other side of the Franco-German border impeded the building of a European community. After French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman announced his famous plan for a European Coal and Steel Community on 9 May 1950, he echoed these concerns stressing that a solution to the problem of refugees and population surplus was 'a precondition to the success of European integration.'²³¹ Evidently, the DP issue retained its capacity to divide nations as well as communities and families.

²²⁷ Holborn *the IRO*, pp. 428-429.

²²⁸ Cohen *In war's wake*, p. 123.

²²⁹ Holian, Anna Marta 'Between National Socialism and Soviet Communism: the Politics of self-representation among Displaced Persons in Munich, 1945-1951', PhD thesis, the University of Chicago, 2005, p. 517.

²³⁰ *Ibid*, p. 517.

²³¹ Cohen *In war's wake*, p. 122.

Conclusion

In his remarkably perceptive documentary film on the return of French *Absents*, Henri Cartier-Bresson captured the raw horror that allied liberators encountered at the Liberation. 'Each building site was a penal colony, each worker a slave, each soldier a prison guard or a torturer. This was Germany, yesterday.' The collapse of Germany was accompanied by a humanitarian disaster of staggering proportions. Nazi work and racial policies had brought unprecedented numbers of Europeans to Germany, most by force. These victims surfaced from factories, concentration camps, streets or hiding places. Having longed for home and fantasized about those they had left behind for years, most sought to return swiftly. Some began their journey immediately after the Liberation, on foot or by any borrowed means of transport. Others expected justice and the punishment of traitors and collaborators prior to their repatriation. Former collaborators rubbed shoulders with anti-Nazi activists. Cartier-Bresson, who had himself been held captive during the war, captured the public denunciation of a Gestapo informer in an American-controlled transit camp for DPs.



Fig. 47. Dessau, April 1945 © Henri Cartier-Bresson / Magnum Photos.

A woman with her head bowed in shame is publicly exposed as a Nazi collaborator to the camp commandant. The woman accusing her, enraged and vengeful, bares her teeth and raises her arm before publicly slapping her in the face. Just as 20,000 French female collaborators had their heads shaved in

France, their neighbours, wartime traitors and collaborators, were unmasked in improvised DP camps in Germany.¹ Revenge, it was hoped, would compensate for the torture inflicted by collaborators, for the terrifying years DPs had spent cut off from their families and for the multiple humiliations they had endured.²

Cartier-Bresson's film powerfully illustrates the experiences of 'life after death' for former captives in the first days following their Liberation.³ He captured the return by plane of French deportees and their arrival in Le Bourget, evoking their joy at drinking their first glass of French wine in years. After the '*mal du pays*' [homesickness], French returnees suffered on arrival, the '*mal du retour*', a sadness created by recollections of those who did not survive. Cartier-Bresson's film encapsulates the transition from 'extreme violence' to the long slow adjustment to peacetime. It shows columns of refugees moving Westwards and Eastwards. UNRRA is not mentioned once in his film; nor is the problem of those DPs who refused to return 'home.' For Cartier-Bresson, as for the majority of French people, the headline story was of French *Absents*' homecomings and families reunited. As Megan Koreman observes, although it is not remembered as such, the return of French *Absents* was the great event of 1945.⁴ It was no coincidence that Cartier-Bresson's film ended with scenes of joyous, tearful reunions in a Paris railway station.

Unlike Cartier-Bresson's film, this thesis has not focused on the 'return' of displaced persons but, rather, on those left behind. Not everyone boarded the 'train of joy'; nor were those who did so necessarily welcomed 'home' with open arms. Some displaced persons could not return to their home societies and the families they left behind. Their homes had been looted or bombed, their neighbours or relatives had been murdered. Some feared for their own lives or for their freedom. As mentioned in the introduction, according to Soviet government statistics nearly a fifth of the civilians and PoWs who returned to the Soviet Union were conscripted into forced labour battalions immediately upon arrival.⁵ Paradoxically, Germany thus became the refuge for thousands of its former victims who refused to return to their Communist-dominated countries. Although most viewed their time in post-war Germany as transitional,

¹ Fabrice Virgili *Shorn women: gender and punishment in liberation France*, translated from the French by John Flower (Oxford: Berg, 2002).

² Megan Koreman *The Expectation of Justice: France, 1944-1946* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999).

³ Richard Bessel and Dirk Schumann (eds) *Life after death* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

⁴ Megan Koreman 'A Hero's Homecoming: The Return of the Deportees to France, 1945', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 32, No. 1 (1997), pp. 9-22, p. 21; On the return of French STO see Helga Bories Sawala *Dans la gueule du loup: les Français requis du STO* (Paris: Presses Universitaires Septentrion, 2010), pp. 284-296.

⁵ Tara Zahra *The Lost Children: Reconstructing Europe's Families after World War II*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), p. 199.

pending emigration to countries such as the United States, Canada, Australia or (later) Israel, this waiting period was often protracted.

Henri Cartier-Besson's account is nevertheless pivotal to the story told here. This thesis has tried to explain why, despite the presence of the UNRRA and later the IRO in the French zone of occupation, the solution to the 'non-repatriable' DP problem was initially answered so differently by French occupation officials when compared with their British and American counterparts. Part of the answer lies in the fact that France had been affected so differently by the Second World War. As Lagrou observes, the 'fundamental differences in the Western European experience of the war were not national frontiers but particular experiences at the heart of this particular war: resistance, labour conscription, and persecution.'⁶ For British and American planners, isolated as they were from direct experience of civilian population transfers, the tracing and categorization of DPs was, in many respects, an arid bureaucratic exercise. For French planners, by contrast, repatriating and tracing civilians was less dispassionate. This fundamental disjuncture in the perception of the DP problem: immediate and personal for the French; a matter of logistics and social theories for the British and Americans, was a source of significant conflict between them. As explained in chapter one, Anglo-American unfamiliarity with deportation bred enormous differences in perspective, as much concerning relief needs and requirements as future international collaboration more generally. Irritated by UNRRA's slow and inefficient response, French authorities chose to maintain their own PDR service in France's occupation zone independent of UNRRA structures. The decision to do so caused friction between different authorities in the zone and complicated the work of UNRRA teams in the field. The problematic question of the return of French *Malgré-nous* created additional diplomatic constraints - notably in regard to the Soviet Union - that British and American authorities never faced.

There was, though, much more behind French specificities than divisive wartime experiences. Approaches to the DP question were closely related to the ways in which French policy-makers mobilized both to reconstruct the French nation and to prevent any resurgence in German expansionism. The work of French authorities and relief workers was not only shaped by diplomatic considerations, but also by concerns about economic recovery, domestic political tensions and diverging cultural trends. The emergence of alternative ways of providing interim provision for DPs therefore reflected France's wider

⁶ Pieter Lagrou *The legacy of Nazi occupation: patriotic memory and national recovery in Western Europe, 1945-1965* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 292.

political aspirations for the future. French responses to the DP problem also mirrored the ways in which French occupiers approached the occupation of Germany more broadly. National security concerns dominated French policy.⁷ Ever conscious of Germany's physical proximity, French attempts to secure the political or economic detachment of the Ruhr and Rhineland region as well as measures taken to ensure German industrial disarmament were devised to prevent Germany from regaining its economic power and thereby its military potential.⁸

Security concerns also motivated French attempts to recruit DPs and German refugees to curb the growth of the German population. DP and German children were particularly coveted, their youth promising better prospects for seamless integration into French society. French occupation officials not only tried to bring unaccompanied Allied children to France; they also encouraged German mothers of French occupation children to surrender their offspring into the care of the French state. This phenomenon constituted the 'first great movement of adoption in France', French authorities having compiled more than 15,680 dossiers relating to children sired by French occupation soldiers and German mothers.⁹ In 1958, François Mauriac's *boutade* 'I love Germany so much that I am thrilled that there are two of them' testified to the persistent trauma wrought on France by three wars with Germany in the space of three generations.¹⁰

If security needs dictated the pursuit of policies designed to contain German strength; French economic realities dictated dependence on the United States.¹¹ An important factor behind the signature of the Franco-UNRRA agreement of 18 February 1946 was French policy-makers' eagerness to secure surplus supplies and foreign currency. UNRRA did not, however, provide the dollars that the French signatories expected. It did, though, bring to the field an army of *professional* and *international* relief workers determined to the spread New Deal values. In particular, social workers schooled in America's expanding federal welfare agencies transported a firm belief in the principles of casework to liberated Europe.¹² In a shift from earlier relief efforts, UNRRA

⁷ Martial Libéra *Un Rêve de Puissance: La France et le Contrôle de l'économie Allemande (1942-1949)* (Bruxelles : Peter Lang, 2012), p. 590 ; Elisabeth Du Réau 'Integration or Co-operation? Europe and the Future of the Nation-State in France, 1945-1955', Dominik Geppert (ed) *The postwar challenge, 1945-1958* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 241-257.

⁸ Jessica Reinisch *The Perils of Peace. Public Health Crisis in Occupied Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 292.

⁹ Yves Denéchère 'Des adoptions d'Etat: les enfants de l'occupation française en Allemagne' in *Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine*, Vol. 57, No. 2 (2010), pp. 159-179, p. 160.

¹⁰ Quoted in Michael Sutton *France and the Construction of Europe, 1944-2007* (New York : Bergahn books, 2007), p. 7.

¹¹ Irwin M. Wall *The United States and the Making of Postwar France, 1945-1954* (Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 35.

¹² Tara Zahra 'The psychological Marshall Plan': Displacement, Gender and Human Rights after World War II', *Central European History*, Vol. 44, No. 1, *Human Rights, Utopias and Gender in Twentieth-Century Europe* (2011), pp. 37-62, p. 45.

planners aimed to provide more than mere 'soup kitchen' charity by meeting DPs' emotional needs as well.¹³ This meant focusing on DPs' emotional problems, on their individual backgrounds and circumstances. Admittedly, the majority of UNRRA relief workers in the French zone were French and Belgian, largely unaware of psychoanalytic and psychological theories. Few were familiar with Freud or with the application of 'casework.' But, they did read UNRRA's instructions, they mixed with American relief workers, and they developed their own understandings of what 'rehabilitation' meant.

The history of UNRRA and the IRO in the French zone should not, therefore, be solely understood as a story of confrontation and culture clashes. Numerous transfers of expertise and the circulation of ideas and people between the zones occurred. As was evident in chapters four and five, UNRRA and IRO were forums where new forms of expert knowledge about displacement, reconstruction and 'rehabilitation' emerged. By examining the extent to which humanitarian aid went 'from soup-kitchen charity' to 'humanitarian expertise' in the zone, we have seen that the French zone was never hermetically sealed to changing humanitarian practices. Certainly, the shift from providing 'bread and butter' relief to long-term psychological rehabilitation was only partially fulfilled in the French zone. French UNRRA recruits lacked either substantial professional expertise in case-work or the common cultural and professional values necessary to frame a sophisticated rehabilitation programme for DPs. Furthermore, as demonstrated in chapter five, the use of camps as humanitarian enclaves was limited. Yet, UNRRA relief workers progressively embraced the organization's declared mission of 'self-help', albeit on terms that reflected their interpretation of what DPs' best interests were. Faced with growing criticism from within official occupation circles, many UNRRA recruits became increasingly eager to demonstrate their capabilities as social workers and 'international' civil servants. The French zone therefore witnessed the emergence of an inchoate 'professional discourse', which grew out of the necessity to differentiate UNRRA activities from those of the PDR service in the zone. As elsewhere, DP camps became 'laboratories' in which expert knowledge was acquired, debated and contested. Old and new practices of relief work inter-mingled. Differing allied visions of relief work ran in parallel. Some drew on current psychological and psychoanalytic theories while others remained more traditionally oriented to short-term welfare. While, for instance, UNRRA's American director Faucette strove to help DPs to become

¹³ *Helping the People to Help Themselves. The Story of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration* (London Stationary Office, 1944), p. 8.

'self-respecting citizens who work in harmony together' thereby disproving the 'Herrenvolk' ideas of their former masters in the Gneisenau Kasern, in Tübingen DPs complained about UNRRA Team Director De Hericourt, an allegedly tyrannical director and 'protector' of the Germans.¹⁴

In this context, DPs became central figures in wide-ranging debates about the ideology and methods of modern humanitarianism, the categorization of wartime collaborators, helpers and allies, and the reconstruction of European families and countries. Throughout this PhD, I have argued that the DP problem was embedded in much broader post-war occupation policies and was thus more than a technical issue of short-term relief. Answers to the DP question were closely related to the ways European policy-makers mobilized to reconstruct families, replenish populations, create homogeneous nation-states and prevent any future resumption of German aggression.¹⁵ French responses to the DP problem were also bound up with diplomatic relations with the United States, Britain, Poland and the Soviet Union. They were integral to the reconstruction of France's economy and they were shaped by legacies of French resistance. By bringing together a series of issues, which are not generally seen in the same context – this study has tried to bridge a number of gaps in French post-war history and historiography. So how, in the final analysis, has this study modified our understanding of the post-war period?

First, this study offers an opportunity to reassess the new 'orthodoxy' regarding French post-war foreign policy. Over the last two decades the emphasis on French diplomatic failures in the post-war period has given way to a more sympathetic reading of the extent to which French leaders shaped the reconfiguration of post-war Europe.¹⁶ So much so that positive assessments of French political influence on the European continent, notably its ability to influence post-war international developments, have become widely accepted.¹⁷ Yet, as Talbot Imlay suggests, French diplomacy after 1945 was perhaps less effective or coherent than these recent studies imply. The complex and uneven picture of Franco-UNRRA/IRO relations that emerges in this thesis suggests that French policies were more ambiguous than 'orthodox' accounts indicate. Admittedly, French planners managed to negotiate a decent deal for themselves within UNRRA's executive structures. Yet, as France's position

¹⁴ UNA, UNRRA, S-1021-0085-05, Mr. W.J. Faucette, History of UNRRA, report No.E.26, 31 March 1947, 5 ; S-0421-0069-05, Lettre des DPs de toutes les nationalités vivant à Tubingen à Monsieur le directeur général de l'UNRRA pour la zone française en Allemagne, 10 January 1947.

¹⁵ Zahra *Lost Children*, p. 243.

¹⁶ See chapter One.

¹⁷ Talbot Imlay 'A success story? The Foreign Policies of France's Fourth Republic' *Contemporary European History*, Vol. 18, No. 4 (2009), 499–519, p. 500.

within UNRRA's administration improved, divisions between French policy-makers resurfaced. As UNRRA became entrenched in the French zone, administrative arguments took a more Franco-French turn. Disputes about whether the presence of UNRRA was needed revealed intractable conflicts between Paris and Baden-Baden, Baden-Baden and Rastatt, and Rastatt and Haslach.

The policies of French occupation officials re-emerge here in all their complexity, marked by extraordinary ambiguities. Internal rivalries, coupled with a complex decision making-process and the lack of coherent direction from Paris, fed political and jurisdictional conflicts between political planners, experts and relief workers in the field. As a result, decision-making was fractured and susceptible to changing circumstances. Following the lead of historians Dietmar Hüser and Talbot Imlay, this thesis has also placed emphasis on an often-overlooked element in post-war French diplomacy: domestic politics. Metropolitan debates about the recruitment of DPs revealed how deep and multifaceted the divisions created by the war were. The DP problem not only pitted East against West; it also divided French against French. The bitterness of the debates over DP recruitment mirrored the nascent Fourth Republic's internal divisions. On the one hand, some French planners saw DPs as a rich source of human capital for economic and social reconstruction at home. The philosophy behind their approach was strongly nationalist and republican. On the other hand, Communist decision-makers and their ideological fellow-travellers on the French left remained strongly opposed to the recruitment of what they regarded as *fascist* DPs. These debates resulted in contradictory instructions from the Foreign Ministry and Parisian ministries, affecting the implementation of DP policy inside occupied Germany.

While recognizing the importance of diplomats and national politicians in formulating DP policies, this thesis has also shown that these policies crucially depended on how French administrators re-interpreted their instructions once inside the zone. Probing beneath the formal structure of official instructions to reconstruct the ways in which DP policies were put into practice is revealing. It is worth recalling that, within the zone, eight decision-making entities existed: General Koenig and his Cabinet, Emile Laffon and the GMZFO (*Gouvernement Militaire de la Zone Française d'Occupation*), the GFCC (*Groupe français du Conseil de Contrôle*) in Berlin, and the five Superior Delegates.¹⁸ The majority of these Superior Delegates were former *Gaullist* military commanders inclined

¹⁸ Libera *Un rêve de puissance*, p. 302.

to assert their jurisdictional rights to the full.¹⁹ Nothing illustrated more clearly the discrepancies between official policies and local practices in French-occupied Germany than the problem of repatriation. By exposing the vicissitudes of repatriation, this study has exposed a realm of historical contingency left largely obscure by previous scholarship.²⁰ Building on the work of Andreas Rinke, Adolphe Lesur and Julia Maspero, it adds nuance to the idea that the French adopted a pro-Soviet policy in their zone. It demonstrates that contradictory instructions and jurisdictional disputes opened spaces for DPs' to make claims of their own, enabling a discrete DP politics to emerge. As the Baltic protests of March 1947 testify, DPs were not only 'passive' recipients', but also political actors.²¹

While French political and security strategies favoured decentralisation, if not dismemberment, French economic priorities privileged a unified administration of Germany.²² Economically damaged by four years of occupation, France attempted to use its zone to facilitate reconstruction in France. DPs were required (like Germans) to work for the French authorities 'in return' for the protection they received. As Charles de Gaulle explained in 1945, "Yesterday there was no national duty that had precedence over the duty to fight. But today there is none that can take precedence over that to produce."²³ 'Though the subsequent economic recovery in France was similar to that in other Western European nations, what made France unique', as historian Richard Kuisel points out, was the 'collective sense of national decline and disenchantment' that inspired the creation of an interventionist state committed to national planning.²⁴

French occupation officials justified the employment of DPs by arguing that it eased their return to 'normality.' Manual work was widely praised at the Liberation for its healing and therapeutic virtues. As Daniel Cohen has demonstrated, 'many virtues aside from economic one were ascribed to productive and manual work in post-war France: re-generation, morality, patriotism, and humanism.'²⁵ Brandishing their high employment figures, French

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ This elegant phrase is taken from Mary Dewhurst Lewis's book. 'Vicissitudes of Refugee rights between the wars.' *The Boundaries of the Republic. Migrant Rights and the Limits of Universalism in France, 1918-1940* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), p. 155.

²¹ For broader information about the role of Baltic DPs in the shaping of Allied policies see Juliette Denis 'Complices de Hitler ou victimes de Staline? Les déplacés baltes en Allemagne de la sortie de guerre à la guerre froide', *Le Mouvement Social*, Vol. 244, No. 3 (2013), pp. 81-98.

²² Reinisch *Perils of Peace*, p. 262.

²³ Rebecca Pulju *Women and Mass Consumer Society in Postwar France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 8.

²⁴ Kuisel, *Capitalism and the State*, 280. Pulju *Women and Mass Consumer Society in Postwar France*, p. 6.

²⁵ Daniel Cohen 'Regeneration through Labor: Vocational Training and the Reintegration of Deportees and Refugees, 1945-1950', *Proceedings of the Western Society for French history*, volume 32 (2004), pp 368-385, p 384. [URL: <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.0642292.0032.021>]

UNRRA and PDR relief workers congratulated themselves on their advancement of more individualistic and effective solutions for DPs, in marked contrast with American methods, which, they inferred, catalysed the development of a 'begging complex' among the displaced.²⁶ In its history of the IRO, French diplomat René Riestuehlber concurred, arguing that DP conditions were more 'normal' in the zone than elsewhere. 'Thus, in the French zone, the small number of refugees, the methods adopted and the local conditions have prevented a regime of population concentration in the vicinity of ruined cities. The impression that dominates is that of people dispersed within pleasant countryside [campagne riante] and picturesque villages.'²⁷

This thesis demonstrates that this self-congratulatory discourse should not be taken at face value. It needs to be placed in the context of French efforts to restore national prestige.²⁸ The reinvention of the Republic was accompanied by significant attempts to re-affirm French traditions of asylum and humanitarianism, presenting France as the homeland of 'democracy' and the 'rights of man.' This was particularly evident during the crisis of the Exodus over the summer of 1947. To counteract the greater international standing and military capacity of the Big Three, France presented itself as the bastion of humanism. According to Léon Blum, for instance, 'the highest form of patriotism' was 'not to stretch our country to the highest point of military power but to make it the interpreter, the agent, the procurer of ideas which respond to her particular vocation in the world.'²⁹ The study of UNRRA and the IRO therefore provides fascinating insight into what might be described as French *missionary* efforts in post-war Germany.

As much as French cultural policies worked to restore the image of France as the cradle of high culture and the heartland of Enlightenment philosophy, French efforts to rehabilitate DPs reveal how France attempted to remake Germany in its own image.³⁰ French occupation officials attempted to impart their political culture and their way of thinking, not only to Germans but also to DPs. As Adam Davis and Bertrand Taithe have recently argued, French humanitarian aid 'constituted an explicit and material development of the meaning of being French in the world.' Beyond philosophical engagements with

²⁶ Haut Commissariat de la République française en Allemagne, Service des Personnes Déplacées, *Sept ans d'activité en faveur des personnes déplacées en zone française d'occupation, 1945-1952*, rapport dactylographié et illustré, [undated], p. 27.

²⁷ René Ristelhueber *Au secours des réfugiés. L'oeuvre de l'Organisation Internationale pour les Réfugiés* (Paris: Plon, 1951), p. 118.

²⁸ Pieter Lagrou 'Beyond memory and Commemoration: Coming to Terms with war and Occupation in France after 1945', Dominik Geppert (ed) *The postwar challenge, 1945-1958* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 65-80, p. 66.

²⁹ *Le Populaire*, 3 August 1945, quoted in Reinisch *The Peril of Peace*, p. 292.

³⁰ Corine Defrance *La politique culturelle de la France sur la rive gauche du Rhin* (Strasbourg: Presses Universitaires, 1994), p. 126.

abstract concepts such as universalism, humanitarian aid expressed French political aspirations to play a leading role in the [post-war] world.’³¹

Contrary to this idealised image of humanitarian assistance in the French zone, this thesis argues that the reality behind French employment policies and humanitarian practices was grimmer than this self-congratulatory account suggests. The emphasis on DP employment made possible the development of DPs’ initiatives and a sense of responsibility by enabling them to run independent workshops and giving them the opportunity to live in private accommodation. In this sense, it contributed to ‘normalizing’ DPs’ living conditions. At the same time, actual implementation of employment policies reveals disturbing indications of brutality, unjustifiable in their cruelty and arbitrariness, as the example of the Zelstoffabrik confirms. Again, there was neither geographic uniformity nor official consistency evident here. Employment conditions varied according to where DPs lived and for whom they worked. French economic policies were sensitive to regional and local variations: they tended to be constructive in the Saarland, relatively constructive in the Rhineland-Palatinate and, on the contrary, vengeful and exploitative in Württemberg.

Furthermore, employment policies varied according to DPs’ gender, national affiliation, linguistic abilities and levels of education. UNRRA relief workers and occupation administrators tended to think more highly of Baltic and Banatais DPs than they did of Poles. Intellectual Baltic DPs and *Banatais* farmers were often described as more productive and highly skilled, whether because of superior training or innate ability than ‘lazy’ Polish and Ukrainian DPs. As a result, ‘privileged’ Baltic and *Banatais* tended to secure easier access to work in camps’ administration or workshops; this, in turn, gave them better access to food, money and cigarettes. Polish and Ukrainian DPs, on the contrary, faced widespread prejudice and were more likely to be forced to work outside camps. By highlighting this calculus of privilege and prejudice, this thesis contributes to the recent literature keen to emphasize that the Liberation did not represent a bright new dawn. Admittedly, in the wake of France’s full-blooded collaboration with the Nazi regime, many, if not most French occupation officials and relief workers understood how inappropriate it was to refer to foreigners in the xenophobic terms that were ubiquitous in the late thirties and Vichy period. This did not mean that entrenched stereotypes and

³¹ Adam Davis and Bertrand Taithe ‘From the Purse and the Heart: Exploring Charity, Humanitarianism and Human Rights in France’ *French Historical Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 3 (2011), pp. 413-432, p. 414.

inter-war practices disappeared. Employment discourses reaffirmed a hierarchical taxonomy in which productivity and desirability were explicitly linked to ethnic and gender differences. Ugly reflexes of anti-Semitism, ethnic prejudice and misogyny resurfaced.

How does this sit with Michael Kelly's argument that the liberation of France represented a 'humanist moment'? The plethora of books published with some variant of *l'homme* or *l'humanisme* in their title confirmed, according to him, that humanism 'emerged suddenly and unexpectedly as the uncontested framework of values within which the debates and struggles of the period were expressed.'³² For Kelly, this phenomenon has passed virtually unnoticed by subsequent commentators, yet it provided 'the ideological adhesive for French national unity, a precious and fragile field in 1944, and defined the parameters of what was thinkable, or at least speakable.'³³ Admittedly, there were promises of a more just society born of the Resistance. In the realm of migrations, new regulations were passed aimed at encouraging permanent immigration and a new National Immigration Office was founded to coordinate policy among ministries and protect 'foreign workers.' Without question, this overtly populationist approach to migration 'exhibited more openness to permanent settlement than had the guest-worker policies of the 1920s.'³⁴ But French policy-makers' egalitarian rhetoric cannot be taken as read. As Mary Lewis powerfully argues, beneath the surface of this republican universalism, the reality was that the Republic's doors were open to some migrants, yet closed to others.³⁵

The formidable economic recovery that followed the Second World War and the beginning of what Jean Fourastié famously termed the 'Thirty glorious [years]' risks obscuring the profound division of the early post-war period.³⁶ Admittedly, the contrast between 'the enormous outbursts of violence during the 1940s' and the rigid conservative normality that characterized so many aspects of life in French (and European) societies during the decade that followed is, in many respects, astounding.³⁷ But French debates about the recruitment of DPs reveal the deep anxieties that France was experiencing. Beneath the surface of ostensibly political opposition to DP recruitment lay a labyrinth of economic fears, a traditional protectionist reflex, and cultural concerns about the

³² Kelly, Michael *The Cultural and Intellectual Rebuilding of France after the Second World War* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p. 128.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Lewis *The Boundaries of the Republic*, p. 250.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 240.

³⁶ Jean Fourastié *Les Trente glorieuses ou la révolution invisible de 1946 à 1975* (Paris: Fayard, 1979).

³⁷ Richard Bessel and Dirk Schuman 'Introduction. Violence, Normality and the Construction of Postwar Europe' in Bessel and Schuman (eds) *Life after Death*, pp. 1-13, 5.

'desirability' of DPs. Debates over the recruitment of DPs triggered controversy about how far DPs could or should be assimilated into the nation state, about the presumed superiority or inferiority of races, and about the nature of French national identity itself.

Arguments over the recruitment of DPs therefore raise fundamental questions about how the French constructed identities in the post-war years. DPs were perceived through the prism of domestic wartime experiences. French *Absents* posed challenges to the black and white demarcations of collaboration and resistance. Taking this as its starting point, the PDR ministry policy consequently unified the different categories of repatriates. A famous poster representing a prisoner of war and forced labourer carrying a häftling proclaimed: 'They are united. Don't divide them.' While the ministry PDR's policy aimed to iron out differences between the different categories of repatriates, other French authorities, by contrast, tended to rank repatriates according to their 'merits', with PoWs being as François Cochet observed



Fig. 48. 'Ils sont unis, ne les divisez pas!', Imp. Morlamé, 1945.

'Les Exclus de la Victoire.'³⁸ Disputes over the status of French absents were closely related to the development of two opposing political cultures of memory. Historians have long shown the emergence of two contrasting French national myths at the Liberation, each designed to reframe the nation in a particular ideological light and thus help cope with the past. The Gaullist myth, best described by Henry Rousso, essentially claimed that the French had stood united in resisting Nazi Germany.³⁹ The second, the 'communist myth', supported the 'paradigm of an antifascist community of combat and suffering'.⁴⁰ The Communist Party claimed to be the party of the '75,000 fusillés' (shot). This anti-fascism was a highly inclusive form of patriotic community. As the Cold War

³⁸ François Cochet *Les exclus de la victoire. Histoire des Prisonniers de guerre, déportés et STO 1945-1985* (Paris: Kronos, 1992); Olivier Laliou 'Le statut juridique du déporté et les enjeux de mémoire, de 1948 à nos jours' in Bruttmann, Tal; Joly, Laurent and Wieviorka, Annette (eds.) *Qu'est ce qu'un déporté? Histoires et mémoires des déportations de la Seconde Guerre mondiale* (Paris: CNRS Editions, 2009), pp. 333-350, p. 334.

³⁹ Henry Rousso *The Vichy Syndrome: history and memory in France since 1944*. Translated by Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991).

⁴⁰ Lagrou 'Beyond memory and Commemoration', p. 76.

unfolded, so these disputes over the status of French absents were increasingly translated into Cold War terms.

If the domestic debates about the 'desirability' of DPs were closely related to the problematic memories of collaboration and resistance, they also reveal that the memories of Nazi persecution was more fragmented than the dominant Gaullist and Communist myths suggested.⁴¹ The Communists deliberately exaggerated the extent of DP collaboration, perhaps in an attempt to conceal memories of the Nazi-Soviet Pact and their *de facto* alliance with Germany in the eighteen months that followed. In Alsace-Lorraine, on the contrary, the *Banatais'* wartime experience was clearly mobilized as a means to rehabilitate the memory of their Alsatian brothers who were also 'forcibly enrolled' by the Germans. Despite the fact that France's 'Dark Years' of German occupation count as the most intensely worked-over period of French history, relatively little attention has been paid to the question of the return of French PoWs, labour conscripts, deportees and *Malgré-nous*.⁴² Following in the footsteps of Pieter Lagrou and Karen Adler's work on the legacy of France's wartime experiences, the thesis has shown that the *Banatais* hold a mirror to the way that the people of Alsace-Lorraine framed their own wartime suffering, revealing, in the process that French memories of the war were not only more fragmented, but more politically divided than historians have previously assumed.⁴³

In many respects, the situation of DPs was comparable to those of the French STO.⁴⁴ In France, as Adler notes, the 'STO remained a historically and politically sensitive topic, one that no French historian tackled in depth and on a national scale before 2010.'⁴⁵ In her study of reparations for Nazi victims in post-war Europe, Regula Ludi concurs: economic difficulties after liberation, aggravated by high levels of inflation and widespread unemployment, and the deprivations they involved 'soon drew attention to other problems than the humanitarian crisis caused by mass victimization. In spite of their high public

⁴¹ Lagrou 'Beyond memory and Commemoration', p. 66.

⁴² François Cochet 'Des retours "décalés". Les prisonniers de guerre et les requis du travail', *La France de 1945. Résistances, retours, renaissances* (Caen: Presses universitaires de Caen, 1996) pp 141-152 ; Cochet *Les Exclus de la Victoire* ; Yves Durand *La captivité. Histoire des prisonniers de guerre français, 1939-1945* (Paris, 1980) ; Christophe Lewin *Le retour des prisonniers de guerre français* (Paris : publication de la Sorbonne, 1987) ; Olga Wormser-Migot *Le retour des déportés. Quand les Alliés ouvrirent les portes* (Bruxelles : Editions Complexe, 1985) ; Annette Wieviorka *Déportation et Génocide* ; Lagrou *The Legacy of Nazi occupation* ; Koreman 'A hero's homecoming' ; Tal Bruttman; Laurent Joly and Annette Wieviorka, (eds) *Qu'est ce qu'un déporté? Histoires et mémoires des déportations de la Seconde Guerre mondiale* (Paris: CNRS Editions, 2009).

⁴³ Karen Adler 'Nation and Alienation: Retrievals of Home in Post-war French film', *History*, Vol. 96, No. 323 (2011), pp. 326-353, p. 330.

⁴⁴ Bories Sawala *Dans la gueule du loup*, pp. 309-317 ; Christoph Thonfeld 'Memories of former World War Two forced labourers-an international comparison', *Oral history*, Vol. 39, No. 2 (2011), pp. 33-48, pp. 35-38.

⁴⁵ Adler 'Nation and Alienation', p. 334. Two books were published on the STO in 2010: Bories Sawala *Dans la gueule du loup*; Patrice Arnaud *Les STO: Histoire des Français Requis en Allemagne Nazie* (Paris: CNRS, 2010).

profile in 1945, Nazi victims faced mounting difficulties in having their claims heard in the years that followed.⁴⁶

Just as this thesis reveals divided and fragmented memories of the war, it has also pointed to continuities of thought regarding gender and the persistence after 1944 of some of the tenets of the male breadwinner ideology described by Laura Frader.⁴⁷ Admittedly, women won full political citizenship with the April 1944 decree enfranchising women. And the first Plan issued in 1945 called upon women (alongside immigrants) to contribute in the economic reconstruction of France by returning to work.⁴⁸ The preamble to the 1946 Fourth Republic constitution further guaranteed notional equality between the sexes in all domains.⁴⁹ Yet, as Laura Frader observes, 'in spite of the equality guarantees of the Constitutions of 1946 [...], women lab[ou]red under a host of civil constraints built into the French Civil Code, particularly within marriage, and lacked full legal personhood.'⁵⁰ Furthermore, in spite of public pronouncements lauding women's contribution to reconstructing post-war society, family policy remained pro-natalist: women were encouraged not to work but to remain in the home, caring for children.⁵¹ For Hanna Diamond, 'the Liberation was in no sense a 'liberation' for women.'⁵²

Despite what would today be called UNRRA's claims of gender blindness, the positions allocated in the field were, in large measure, ranked along gender lines: most camp directors were men, while the majority of the welfare officers were women. For UNRRA Zone Medical Officer De Cilleuls and many male officers, women's allegedly natural maternal and nurturing qualities made them ideal recruits to provide assistance to male doctors.⁵³ Equally, UNRRA's rehabilitation programme served to re-masculinise and re-feminise DPs according to traditional gender roles. Labour practices were also highly gendered. Female DP employment rates and salaries were considerably lower than male ones. When Dorothea Greene arrived in Reutlingen, she noted, for instance, that 'here we found the DP stores (food, supplies, clothing and amenity supplies) run by a DP woman. This is the first place that we had found

⁴⁶ Regula Ludi *Reparations for Nazi Victims in Postwar Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 33.

⁴⁷ Laura Levine Frader *Breadwinners and Citizens: Gender in the Making of the French Social Model* (Durham/London: Duke University Press, 2008); Hilary Footitt 'The Politics of Political Women': Reassessing the First Députées' in Andrew Knapp (ed) *The Uncertain Foundation, France at the Libération, 1944-1947* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 87-102.

⁴⁸ Frader *Breadwinners and citizens*, p. 233.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 235.

⁵¹ Frader *Breadwinners and citizens*, p. 235. Antoine Prost 'L'évolution de la politique familiale en France de 1938 à 1981', *Mouvement Social*, Vol. 129 (1984), pp. 7-28.

⁵² Hanna Diamond *Women and the Second World War in France 1939-1948. Choice and Constraints* (London: Pearson, 1999), p. 204. On this theme also see Éric Alary and Dominique Veillon 'L'après-guerre des femmes: 1947, un tournant?', Pierre Milza and Serge Berstein (eds) *L'année 1947* (Paris: Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 2000), pp. 487-511.

⁵³ Frader *Breadwinners and citizens*, p. 231.

a woman in such a position.’⁵⁴ Men’s work was mainly conducted outside camps (in forestry, mines, and paper factories for instance), while women’s work tended primarily to be inside camps. Meanwhile, within France, ‘the battle of coal’ marked a crucial moment in the celebration of working-class masculinity, the virile male industrial worker becoming an iconic manly figure in French men’s attempt to recoup their self-esteem after wartime humiliations.⁵⁵

The incorporation of gender into the study of UNRRA/IRO in the French zone, indicates that some French male UNRRA personnel also suffered from what we might term a ‘complex of the civilian.’ French UNRRA’s male staff struggled to adjust to their non-combatant status, to their uniform without *galons*, and to their lowly status within both UNRRA’s wage hierarchy and the administrative structures of the military government in the French zone. To be sure, this problem was neither specific to the French zone nor to French recruits. Indeed, it remains a feature of modern humanitarian intervention, UN field workers sometimes showing signs of an inferiority complex towards military actors. But the institutional rivalry between the PDR administration and UNRRA, when combined with gender anxieties deriving from the war, significantly aggravated these problems of status among relief workers in the French zone. It seems that for some UNRRA male recruits, joining the organization was less about aiding DPs and applying ‘scientific methods’ to alleviate their suffering than about their own personal sense of having ‘missed out’ during the war years, something that fired their efforts to regain authority and prestige. Gender tensions were, in this sense, bound up with broader questions of national identity and efforts to come to terms with the recent past.⁵⁶ They were also related to what Mary Louise Roberts calls ‘fears of Americanization through sex.’ French authorities fretted that the lure of American commodities might lead a new class of women into prostitution, ‘sexual encounters between American soldiers and French girls coming to symbolize a loss of French respectability and honour, as well as the suppression of French culture by American wealth and power.’⁵⁷

So, while there are solid reasons to define the history of DP administration in the French zone as peripheral to more encompassing stories – notably those of the return of French PoWs and civilians, the efforts to come to

⁵⁴ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0004-14, Dorothea Greene, Reutlingen, UNRRA Team 589, [August 1946].

⁵⁵ Hanna Diamond ‘Miners, Masculinity and the ‘Bataille du Charbon’ in France 1944–1948’, *Modern and Contemporary France*, Vol. 19, No. 01 (2011), pp. 69-84.

⁵⁶ On how national belonging operated along gender lines during the occupation of France see Karen Adler ‘Reading national identity: Gender and ‘prostitution’ during the occupation’ *Modern and Contemporary France*, Vol.7, No.1 (1999), pp. 47-57.

⁵⁷ Mary Louise Roberts ‘The Silver Foxhole: The GIs and Prostitution in Paris, 1944–1945’, *French Historical Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 1 (2010), pp. 99-128, pp. 127-128.

terms with the recent Vichy past, and the reconstruction of domesticity and family in the wake of war - the transnational perspective of this thesis reveals that the history of UNRRA, the IRO, French administration and the DP problem deepens our understanding of the dynamics of reconstruction that transformed French society after 1945. The study of the UNRRA, ITS and IRO archives, combined with the examination of the French occupation administration, also offers new perspectives on demographic issues, the tensions at heart in the French occupation project and the difficult recognition of Nazi victims in Liberation France. Equally, examining allied occupation and refugee policies through the lens of French DP administration provides some new insights for the study of the post-war international refugee regime.

General accounts of the liberation of Europe often depict the Nazi defeat as a dramatic historical rupture in Western Europe, heralding a period in which liberal democracy, internationalism, free markets and human rights all came to the fore. According to Glenda Sluga, 'if the end of World War I was the apogee of nationalism, then World War II was the apogee of twentieth-century internationalism, when 'international government' renamed as 'world government' was a rhetorical commonplace.⁵⁸ What set this new internationalism apart was, according to Sluga, the extent to which 'for a relatively brief moment and among a considerable swathe of mainstream and marginalized public opinion, the discarded utopian precepts of the earlier period suddenly took on the semblance of political realism.'⁵⁹ Admittedly, the post-war period saw the casting of human rights (and refugee rights) in individual rather than collective terms and the creation of a myriad of UN agencies aimed at protecting rights and improving world-citizens' well being. But historians are becoming increasingly attentive to the paradoxical and ambiguous elements of these post-war international projects.

In practice, as Tara Zahra points out, international organizations and policymakers simultaneously endorsed two collectives – the family and the nation – as the basis for European reconstruction and as the recipe for individual psychological rehabilitation. 'In the process, they defined 'human rights' and children's 'best interests' in sharply gender-specific, nationalist and familialist terms.'⁶⁰ Likewise, as Pamela Ballinger observes, careful examination of the emergence of the post-1945 international refugee regime and its recognition of certain identifiable groupings (such as gender and family)

⁵⁸ Glenda Sluga *Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), p. 79.

⁵⁹ Sluga *Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism*, pp. 80-81.

⁶⁰ Zahra *Lost Children*, p.19.

temper the assessment – argued most forcefully by Mark Mazower – that the ‘strange triumph’ of human rights after 1945 meant abandoning the inter-war focus of the League of Nations on collective (minority) rights in favour of rights framed in individual terms.⁶¹ Despite the fact that they spoke a ‘universal language of human rights’, Allied occupation officials and relief workers divided Germans from Poles, Poles from Russians, and Jews from Christians. Furthermore, as Ballinger notes, the recent literature on Jewish international activism in post-war Germany also revealed that Jewish survivors were recognized explicitly as victims of genocide. ‘These authors thus question a recent stress on the supposed immediate post-war silence surrounding this genocide. The ‘silence’ thesis was itself, of course, a necessary (if overstated) response to the anachronistic reading of the Holocaust paradigm back onto the 1940s and 1950s.’⁶²

Differences in interpretation frequently derived from differences in methodology. Historians who focus on the motivations of activists and drafters of the UN Declaration of Human Rights often come to radically different conclusions from those focusing on field-workers. Historians, most famously Samuel Moyn, have argued that human rights were far from universally agreed concepts in the mid-twentieth century.⁶³ Yet, as Daniel Cohen powerfully illustrates, European refugees still facilitated ‘their frustrating, often hypocritical, but in many respects revolutionary beginnings.’⁶⁴ The *Psychological problems*’ report, as well as UNRRA high-officials’ response to French policies of compulsion to work, reveal that the language of human rights weighed upon DP policies, even if only marginally. Some UNRRA planners sought to protect DP ‘rights’ - including the right to live normal community lives without the threat of movement orders or repatriation; the right to have the chance to begin a new life overseas with dignified emigration opportunities; the right to a salary in exchange for work - even if their discourses did not explicitly mention ‘human rights’. As this thesis makes clear, generalization is commensurately difficult: first, because UNRRA and the IRO were composed of personnel with very different backgrounds, motivations and political orientation; secondly, because, as David Pendas observes, the literature on the history of human rights (and also to a certain extent western humanitarianism) remains fragmentary.⁶⁵

⁶¹ Pamela Ballinger ‘Impossible Returns, Enduring Legacies: Recent Historiography of Displacement and the Reconstruction of Europe after World War II’ *Contemporary European History*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (2013), pp. 127 - 138, p. 136.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ Samuel Moyn *The last utopia: Human Rights in History* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2010).

⁶⁴ Cohen *In war's wake*, p. 99.

⁶⁵ David Pendas ‘Toward a New Politics? On the Recent Historiography of Human Rights’, *Contemporary European History* Vol. 21, No. 1 (2012), pp. 95-111, p. 96.

Building on this recent scholarly literature, this thesis has demonstrated that UNRRA/IRO projects were partly innovative and empowering, partly reactionary and coercive. UNRRA rehabilitation efforts simultaneously reflected a new emphasis on the psychological dimensions of dislocation and a long-standing view of the family as the foundation of both society and the nation. UNRRA activities both facilitated (employment) and hindered (repatriation) the implementation of French official directives. Furthermore, the effects of UNRRA's ideas were not uniformly benign. Often they were contradictory. Equated with the democratization of relief work, UNRRA contributed to the nationalization of refugees. Avowedly secular, it also fed the religious revivalism occurring in post-war Germany. Openly 'neutral' and 'impartial', it failed to implement a coherent and unbiased policy on repatriation. As David Forsythe has demonstrated in his analysis of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), neutrality is a matter of constructed image.⁶⁶ In frontally and doggedly opposing the PDR direction over the issue of repatriation, General Lenclud not only misunderstood the subtlety of French policy but also compromised UNRRA's posture of neutrality. Instead of promoting mutual understanding by facilitating pragmatic cooperation between the PDR and Eastern European governments, Lenclud exacerbated divisions. This also lent weight to criticism that UNRRA itself failed to send clear instructions to its personnel. As a result, Laffon reproached UNRRA officers for failing to understand the 'delicacy' of French policy.

Finally, this thesis has drawn attention to the convergences between colonialism and humanitarianism in the post-war era of European decolonization. In June 1945, former British Colonial administrator Nevins was entrusted with the task of organizing a Yugoslav and Polish Displaced Persons (DPs) camp in Pirmasens. He reported '[t]he Poles and especially the Yugoslavs are exceedingly well organized and the Centre taken as a whole has developed into a typical village community in which the various elements, to all outward appearances at any rate, live together amicably enough.'⁶⁷ Reflecting on the organization of his camp, Nevins warned against the detrimental effects of humanitarian aid '[i]t has frequently occurred that well meaning persons and societies, by striving at all costs to implant their own method and ideas regardless of climate, race and custom, have not only destroyed the social system they set out to improve, but have contributed no living structure in its

⁶⁶ David P. Forsythe 'On Contested concepts: Humanitarianism, Human Rights, and the Notion of Neutrality', *Journal of Human Rights*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (2013), pp. 59-68, p.66.

⁶⁷ UNA, UNRRA, S-0417-0010-09, H.N. Nevins, Director Team 61, Preliminary Draft scheme for the organization and staffing of the Displaced Persons Centre at Pirmasens, 26 June 1945.

place.⁶⁸ He touched here on a critical tension at the core of UNRRA's project and modern refugee humanitarianism more generally. While humanitarian actors tend to understand humanitarianism as a doctrine of universal validity, inherent to its project is an impulse to overturn practices of religion, ethnicity and gender in a manner and to an extent that might not be universally shared by the 'recipients' of help.⁶⁹ As a result, humanitarianism more closely resembles empire, despite its emancipatory claims, something that discomfited its many defenders.⁷⁰

French insistence on the obligation to work exposed traces of a colonialist mind-set. French humanitarian discourse also contained elements of domination that both resembled and, to some degree, derived from colonialism. Colonial administrators believed that by forcing the colonized to work they were protecting them against their own 'lazy' inclinations, and that compulsion was, therefore, justifiable as long as it was 'explained' and did not exceed the 'capacity' of the colonized to understand what was being demanded of them. Similarly, some occupation and UNRRA officials believed that they, too, were saving DPs from themselves, by compelling them to combat their 'apathy.' In practice, DPs had very little say over the terms under which such 'humanitarian aid' was given. To be sure, DPs were not forced to work in desperate conditions comparable to those of the colonies. Labour abuses and related hardships in post-war Germany were neither in scope, nor scale comparable to those in the colonial world during the inter-war years. Yet, employment policies reflected a critical tension at the core of UNRRA's project. The figure of Nevins, an administrator with extensive experience in British colonial administration, personified this continuity between late colonialism and humanitarianism. As Taithe suggests international organisations' discourses of relief and humanitarian expertise often present 'the paradox of originating from the twin sources of missionary and colonial administration while reneging both genealogies.'⁷¹

In sum, this thesis has tried to show that UNRRA and the IRO's 'revolution' was perhaps not as innovative, coherent and modern as observers contended in the 1950s. But it also shows that UNRRA/IRO should not be completely erased from the history of French administration in post-war

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Keith David Watenpaugh 'The League of Nations' Rescue of Armenian Genocide Survivors and the Making of Modern Humanitarianism, 1920-1927' *American Historical review*, Vol. 115, No.5, (2010), pp. 1315-39.

⁷⁰ Michael Barnett *Empire of Humanity : a history of humanitarianism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011).

⁷¹ Taithe, Bertrand 'Pyrrhic Victories? French Catholic Missionaries, Modern Expertise and Secularizing Technologies' in Michael Barnett and Janice Gross Stein (eds) *Sacred Aid. Faith and humanitarianism* (New York : Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 166-187.

Germany. Today, the two organizations appear virtually forgotten in France. Outside a handful of specialist historians, most French people are unaware that it ever existed, including direct successor institutions. Their contribution to the shaping of contemporary humanitarian practices should thus be better acknowledged, particularly in the literature on the history of French humanitarianism.⁷² Admittedly, the majority of UNRRA field workers in the zone had never heard of Freud. But, some UNRRA relief workers became progressively aware that relief work should not simply be equated with 'feeding' refugees. However limited and incomplete the shift from 'bread and butter' to 'psychological rehabilitation' was in the zone, UNRRA and IRO mattered, transforming, albeit to a limited extent, French humanitarian practices. UNRRA and the IRO articulated norms that have today gained in authority. As Didier Fassin and Richard Rechtman note, 'contemporary society now accepts without question the notion that psychologists and psychiatrists intervene in situations of war and disaster, case of exceptional or even everyday violence.'⁷³

Sixty-five years ago this was not self-evident practice and notions of 'psychic wounds', 'trauma', and 'emotional memories' were poorly understood. According to Rechtman and Fassin, this shift in paradigm occurred in the mid-1960s when 'victims' entered in the realm of psychology and in the public sphere. Before, the 'victim – who in fact was rarely thought of as 'victim' – was tarred as illegitimate; 'trauma' was a suspect condition.'⁷⁴ Without refuting this interpretation, this thesis has nuanced the notion that an 'anthropological rupture' occurred in the mid-1960s: in the 'era of suspicion' of 1945-1950, there were some signs, albeit limited, that a condition of victimhood was recognized alongside an awareness that refugees might have suffered from psychological 'trauma.'⁷⁵ In the French zone UNRRA and the IRO transformed the landscape of humanitarian aid, contributing to the practices of humanitarian action, as we know them today.

⁷² For a broad overview of this literature see Eleanor Davey 'Beyond the 'French Doctors': the evolution and interpretation of humanitarian action in France', Humanitarian Policy Group Working paper No. 29, October 2012.

⁷³ Didier Fassin and Richard Rechtman *The Empire of Trauma. An inquiry into the condition of Victimhood* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), pp. 4-5.

⁷⁴ *Ibid*, p. 5.

⁷⁵ Also see Julien Mary 'Compte-rendu: Les traumatismes de l'empire : expressions, effets et usages des violences (post)coloniales', *Histoire@Politique. Politique, culture, société* – Rubrique « Comptes rendus – colloques ». Mis en ligne le 2 avril 2013, www.histoire-politique.fr.

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