

and money. Many, without money, connections, or even the ability to speak French, could not even hope to try.

French Jews more often had a choice but did not try. On the contrary, Aline Strauss recalls that her mother's French Jewish relatives were highly critical of her decision to leave, viewing it as an unpatriotic abandoning of France. They insisted on staying in France and in their own homes, and several were subsequently deported.⁶¹ Their decisions in 1940 and 1941, however, must be examined not with the knowledge of subsequent events but in the context in which they were made. Most French Jews, while disillusioned and greatly inconvenienced by the Vichy regime, at least trusted in its willingness to protect them. Most believed, with Marc Bloch and Joseph Kessel, that it was better to be uncomfortable in their own country than comfortable in a strange and alien land. Most surely agreed with Emmanuel Berl, who later recalled, "The anti-Semitic movement . . . did not surprise me. Of course, I did not think that it would go as far as it did. And besides, we didn't ask ourselves too many questions. One lived from day to day."⁶² Until it was too late.

3

Racial Laws, 1940–1941

THE FIRST GERMAN TROOPS TO OCCUPY NORTHERN FRANCE BEHAVED with courtesy and restraint. Denise Baumann, a nineteen-year-old university student who would ultimately lose her entire family at Auschwitz, wrote of the German soldiers in her diary that first summer: "What difference is there between them and other lads when they play on the beach, when they go swimming?"¹ The historian Léon Poliakov, then a thirty-year-old Russian Jewish immigrant in France, agreed, recalling later about those early days, "Although sad, made ugly by the uniforms and the white posters of the occupier, life in Paris appeared normal. We didn't even worry about the Jews. The Germans had been 'correct'; there had been no massacres nor pogroms."² Lisa Fittko's elderly German Jewish parents, who remained for a year in their home in Paris, also assured their daughter in the unoccupied zone that the Germans were invariably polite. Fittko commented wryly, "One clung to this image, because it helped make life under the occupation bearable."³

Henry Bulawko, a Jewish immigrant, Resistance activist, and survivor of Auschwitz, was equally confident in the beginning.

The fear and panic of the first days soon changed into an uneasy quiet. The Germans were "correct," as the posters and collabora-

tionist press told us at the time. Their anti-Semitism seemed purely verbal.

We regained courage. We even went so far as to hassle the sellers of the anti-Semitic newspaper *Le Pilon* in the Place de la République. . . . Twice we chased out the little urchins who came to sell it in the well-known Jewish quarter.⁴

With the renewal of confidence, many Jews came back to homes and businesses in the occupied zone until their return was prohibited by a German ordinance on September 27. Philippe Erlanger even observed that many returned to Paris because growing anti-Semitism in the unoccupied zone so disturbed them that they decided to take their chances with the Nazis and try to resume normal lives.⁵ One who returned, twenty-two-year-old Emmanuel Ewencyk, born in Poland but naturalized in 1938, later remarked, "The non-Jews saw the situation more clearly than the Jews, and were very surprised that the Jews came back."⁶ His own friends insisted that he leave again, and by the end of 1940 he did. But many remained.

The Germans had indeed been "correct" that first summer, but signs of future behavior were there for those who wished to see. Anti-Semitic propaganda on Nazi-controlled radio networks in occupied France began immediately. In July, the Germans expelled into unoccupied France thousands of Jews from annexed departments in Alsace and Lorraine—remnants of the prewar community who had not already been evacuated in September 1939 or fled west in May 1940.⁷ Irène B. later recalled that she and her family in Ingwiller (Bas-Rhin) were given forty-five minutes to prepare one suitcase per person, and were then driven in trucks through town for hours on Bastille Day, July 14, for all to see their humiliation. The next day they were driven to the demarcation line and dumped on the other side.⁸ In a similar action on August 8, German police drove another 1,400 German Jewish refugees across the demarcation line from Bordeaux into the unoccupied zone, where the French immediately interned them at Saint-Cyprien.

The casual observer, however, probably first noticed anti-Semitism as it occurred, apparently spontaneously, among the French themselves. A. Honig recorded in his diary on July 30, 1940, that newspapers like the *Paris-Press* and *L'Oeuvre*, which had castigated Germans for atrocities in Poland, including those against Jews, were now blaming Jews for France's troubles. Also in July, blue-shirted French Fascist militants began to picket Jewish shops in Paris and

put up anti-Semitic posters. By August, they and others were breaking windows. Honig noted that many Parisians were mouthing anti-Semitic slogans in cafés, in restaurants, and in the streets. He believed that this was counter to the taste of most, but decided that many ignored it out of naïveté or indifference.⁹

Although overt anti-Semitic acts were less visible in the unoccupied zone, the government at Vichy was not slow in making its anti-foreign position known. On July 17, less than a week after it was formed, it issued a law limiting employment in the public sector to individuals born of French fathers.¹⁰ The law was applicable, as were all Vichy decrees, in both zones. Laws on August 16 and September 10 similarly regulated the practice of medicine and law, respectively.¹¹ On July 22, another measure authorized Minister of Justice Raphaël Alibert to establish a commission to review all grants of French citizenship awarded under the liberalized law of August 10, 1927.¹² Within the next three years, the commission reviewed, among others, the cases of 13,839 Jews, revoking the citizenship of 7,055.¹³ On August 27, Alibert annulled the Daladier-Marchandau decree of April 21, 1939, which had prohibited attacks on individuals in the press based on race or religion. An anti-Semitic press, often with covert Nazi funding, soon proliferated. Subsequent laws, on September 3 and 27, gave prefects the power to intern individuals considered dangerous to the national security, in the first case, and all male immigrants between the ages of eighteen and fifty-five who were judged to be "superfluous in the national economy" in the second.¹⁴

Except for the revocation of the Daladier-Marchandau decree, these first government measures were aimed at foreigners in general, including foreign Jews, rather than at Jews in particular. In addition to anti-Semitism, the new laws reflected the national search for a scapegoat for defeat and, as military demobilization returned thousands of former soldiers to the job market, popular concerns about unemployment. Among the laws' victims, however, foreign Jews were increasingly disproportionately represented as the months passed.

Despite initial appearances of benevolence, the Germans in the occupied zone took the first official measures directed specifically against Jews. An ordinance on September 27 began by defining who was to be considered Jewish. It included anyone adhering or once adhering to the Jewish religion, or anyone with more than two Jewish grandparents, as also determined by religious affiliation. In addition,

the ordinance prohibited Jews who had fled to the unoccupied zone from returning, called for a census of Jews in the occupied zone, demanded that the word *Juif* be stamped on identity cards, and required that Jewish shopkeepers place a yellow sign in two languages in their windows reading "*Enterprise juive*" and "*Judisches Geschäft*"—"Jewish Business." Honig noted in his diary on October 25 that the last measure had been obeyed, and he added sadly that other signs declaring "*Maison 100% française*" had also appeared, but freely, without duress.¹⁵

The German-decreed census was conducted in the occupied zone between October 3 and 19. In the Paris region, 149,734 Jews of all ages, including 85,664 citizens and 64,070 foreigners, officially registered their names, addresses, professions, and places of birth at local police headquarters and received the requisite stamp, "*Juif*."¹⁶ An estimated 10 percent ignored the census. The reasons for this overwhelming response are elusive. Obviously, many Jews had no choice. Observant members of a particular synagogue, well-known public figures (like Philippe Erlanger or Henri Bergson), individuals with recognizable Jewish names such as Blum, Bloch, Weill, Cohen, Rothschild, or Lévy, and visibly orthodox, Yiddish-speaking immigrants could not escape registration. But in a country where religion had not been recorded in census data since 1872, many nonobservers had not been regarded as Jews for generations. They could easily have hidden their identities.

David Lemberger, age fifty in 1940, had immigrated to Paris in 1936. At the time of the Jewish census, he went promptly to register his entire family. Probably he had no choice. He undoubtedly spoke French with an accent, and he had perhaps recorded his Jewishness in earlier official documents. As he waited in line to register, he overheard the exchange between the census taker and the man in front of him—a dignified elderly French man wearing the rosette of the Legion of Honor. The man declared that his name was "Dubois Pierre" and added that he was Jewish. The census worker paused and finally asked, "But, with a name like that . . . do you really want to declare yourself as a Jew?" Without hesitation, the old man replied, "It is the law, *Monsieur le Commissaire*."¹⁷

Even those with foreign-sounding names often had a real alternative. As Léon Poliakov later remembered, "My family name ended in 'ov,' my birth certificate was in Leningrad and I had no enemies. Therefore, impossible for the Germans to verify my racial affiliation."¹⁸ According to Maurice Rajsfus, his Polish Jewish parents in

suburban Vincennes, who had never attended religious observances and had a typically Polish name, could also have ignored the census.¹⁹ And so could the parents of Denise Baumann in Paris, French refugees from the war in eastern France, unknown in their new community, non-observant, and with no revealing name.²⁰ Yet Dubois, Poliakov, the Rajsfuses, and the Baumanns registered, as did thousands of others like them. Why?

Erlanger, who admitted that he was too well known as a Jew to ignore the law, recorded that "many others for whom it would have been easy to camouflage themselves did not think of it." He went on to ponder "the submission of the majority of the Jews, their fatalism in the face of their eternal unhappiness."²¹ Poliakov explained his own obedience not as fatalism but as "a characteristic mixture of opposing motivations: the refusal to deny my origins on the one hand, the habit of obeying the law on the other."²² His explanation applied to many. The refusal to deny origins was linked to a widespread revival of pride in the Jewish heritage during a period of persecution. The habit of obeying the law was an equally understandable characteristic among educated and patriotic middle-class people who had always taken pride in their good citizenship. It was an especially strong habit among Jews in France who had discovered that the law offered reliable protection.

Foreign Jews who had acquired a suspicion of authority and of non-Jews in general in their countries of origin were more ready to disobey the law than their French coreligionists. In this, they often shared the prevailing mentality of their former non-Jewish countrymen. A Russian friend of Poliakov reminded him that, "in my village, when the statistical services tried to take a census, the peasants, knowing that nothing good could come of it, hid in the woods. I beg of you, follow their example."²³ Such thinking was alien to French Jews, and to Jews who would be French.

Linked to the desire to obey the law, of course, was a real fear of the consequences of disobedience. Coming so early in the occupation, at a time when the Germans still seemed benevolent, the census could appear benign. The possibility of denunciation and punishment for disobedience was more frightening, and no Jewish leaders, including Communists, advised their people to ignore the census. Such attitudes necessarily altered with time, but even as late as the summer of 1942, most Jews persisted in believing that as long as they obeyed every regulation, their law-abiding society would spare them.

With regard to the census, they were wrong. Census data formed

the basis of the lists used during all future roundups for deportation. Census data provided addresses, since subsequent moves or travel became illegal without special permission and registration. Census data recorded national origins, essential when police were composing lists of specific nationalities for a particular roundup. The Rajsufuses, the Baumanns, and thousands like them were arrested two or three years later at the addresses they had given the French police in 1940, and deported to their deaths at Auschwitz.

Individuals and families who might have lived out the war undetected as Jews became permanent targets as soon as they registered. They could not subsequently escape persecution without giving up everything and going underground. Half-measures to elude detection became hazardous. False documents and unregistered residences became essential for survival. Most Jews eventually entered the shady world of illegality, but they did so with great personal reluctance and fear. Those who did not rarely survived.

On October 3, 1940, less than three months after the establishment of the new Vichy regime and just six days after the first German anti-Jewish ordinance in the occupied zone, Pétain's government decreed its first *Statut des Juifs*. The timing suggests that the statute had been in preparation well before the publication of the German decrees. The surprising priority awarded the "Jewish question" cannot be explained as a result of direct German pressure. Even Henri du Moulin de Labarhère, Pétain's private secretary at the time, later admitted, "Germany was not at the origin of the anti-Jewish legislation of Vichy. This legislation was, if I dare say it, spontaneous, native."²⁴ It seems to have come from the government's desire to prevent a demoralized public with a visible scapegoat for defeat, from a wish to preempt German regulation of the issue, and from the prejudices of Pétain himself. In his journal entry for October 1, 1940, Foreign Minister Paul Baudouin wrote of the Council of Ministers meeting that day at which the statute was discussed: "It was the Marshal who was the most severe. He insisted particularly that the Justice and Education [Ministries] should contain no Jews."²⁵

The law of October 3 actually broadened the German definition of who was Jewish, as it applied in the occupied zone, to include anyone with just two grandparents "of Jewish race" who was also married to a Jew.²⁶ In addition to the definition, the law specifically excluded Jews from public service, the officer corps of the armed forces, teaching, journalism, the theater, radio, and cinema. Exemp-

tions for some positions might be granted, on special application, to Jewish war veterans and individuals of outstanding merit. Just how outstanding the merit had to be is demonstrated by the fact that of 125 Jewish university professors (of a total of about 4,000 in the country) who applied for exemptions based on their academic and/or military records, only 10 had been exempted by January 1941.²⁷ Just a few more received exemptions later.

The day following the first *Statut des Juifs*, a second law specifically authorized prefects to intern, assign to supervised residence, or enroll in forced labor any foreign Jews in their departments, as they saw fit.²⁸ Another on October 7 deprived the roughly 115,000 Jews of Algeria of the citizenship granted them by the Crémieux decree in 1870.²⁹ That measure prompted an anguished Raymond-Raoul Lambert to record in his diary on October 9, "The Marshal has been dishonored. What shame and what infamy! A father in Algeria who has lost his son in the war is, because he is Jewish, no longer a French citizen."³⁰ Then on October 25, the minister of war, among the first to enforce the statute of October 3, removed from the army not only Jewish officers, as required, but enlisted men as well.

It is difficult to exaggerate the devastating impact of the racial laws, particularly on French Jews who had considered themselves so profoundly French. Raymond-Raoul Lambert confided in his diary on October 19, "I wept last night like a man who has been suddenly abandoned by the woman who has been the only love of his life, the only guide of his thoughts, the only inspiration of his actions."³¹ Nineteen-year-old Claude Vigée read of the new laws at a newspaper kiosk in Toulouse that same day and later remembered: "It seemed to me that I had been struck by a blow straight to my heart. I have never forgotten, I will never forget that moment. It managed to divide my life into two irreconcilable parts: that of confidence, and that of doubt and abandonment."³²

Georges Friedmann, who, as seen, had not suffered from anti-Semitism before the war, despite his name, and who had never attended a synagogue service or met a rabbi, spoke for hundreds of others when he recalled the shock of receiving the official notification of dismissal as a university professor in Paris:

I was thrown out of my profession as if I were unworthy to exercise it and condemned to unemployment with other similarly placed members of the French community to whom I had not felt myself bound by any particular tie. Both intellectually and emo-

tionally this was a shattering blow. For some weeks, in spite of the support of my friends, I was shaken to the core; the very foundations of my being trembled.³³

Similarly, Frédéric Hammel, by then a university chemistry professor at Clermont-Ferrand, remembered receiving a dismissal notice, "without a personal word." He went on to describe the reaction of his colleagues:

My professor of General Physics expresses his sadness in the most neutral manner and with the courtesy which is characteristic of him. The Dean [of the Faculty of Sciences], who was a close friend of my Patron, has neither a word of regret nor of thanks. He barely shakes my hand to tell me that our interview is over before it has begun. I will never have an explanation of that very disappointing attitude.

Hammel had one pleasant surprise, however, when another professor, who "had nothing of the hero and was politically rather right-wing," bade him farewell publicly, in front of a group of thirty students, and added that, "for him, the Jews are French like the others and . . . he bitterly regrets that the 'Statut' is depriving the university of my services."³⁴

Few non-Jews were so courageous; there were few public protests. On the contrary, public demonstrations of approval were frequent. Pierre Weill Raynal's father Étienne, for example, previously a popular history teacher at the Lycée Voltaire, was booed and insulted when forced to leave. Raynal himself later recalled that in the endless discussions of the racial laws between professors and students at his own lycée, Louis-le-Grand, most people justified the new legislation. However, Raynal, like Frédéric Hammel, did remember some teachers who discreetly showed sympathy.³⁵ Raymond-Raoul Lambert received a touching letter of sympathy from his former commanding officer.³⁶ Dr. Robert Debré, as seen, received a promotion by unanimous vote. But few expressions of support were so public.

Leaders of the Christian churches remained equally silent. Not a single Catholic bishop and only one regular priest—the Jesuit Father Gaston Fessard, during a sermon at the Church of Saint Louis in Vichy in December 1940—publicly protested the racial laws of October 3. Among Protestant clergy, Pastor Marc Boegner, president of the National Protestant Federation, did more, writing private letters of protest on March 26, 1941, to Grand Rabbi of France Isaïe

Schwartz and to Admiral François Darlan, the vice-prime minister.³⁷ But even Boegner admitted in his letters the existence of a "massive immigration problem" and asked only for a reform of the statutes. Also, his protest was intended to remain private. The letter to the grand rabbi became public inadvertently and was published in the anti-Semitic journal *Le Pilon* in an attempt, not entirely successful, to embarrass the pastor.³⁸

Indeed, Jews themselves rarely protested the racial statutes publicly. Almost no one followed the example of Lucien Vidal-Naquet, who, according to Raymond Aron, "protested publicly, they told me, in front of the *Palais de Justice*, defying his colleagues who were passively applying the Vichy ordinances."³⁹ Equally few followed the opposite step, as exemplified by a Jewish professor who publicly declared that the racial laws had no great importance and that he would never protest them in order not to add to the confusion reigning in France.⁴⁰ Most Jews regarded the laws as of earth-shattering importance but either suffered in silence or wrote dignified private letters of protest. One outstanding example of the latter was Pierre Masse, a former deputy, senator, and cabinet minister who, upon learning that Jews could no longer serve as officers in the French army, wrote a scathing letter to Marshal Pétain. The letter said in part:

I would be grateful if you could inform me whether I must take away the military stripes from my brother, a second lieutenant in the 36th infantry regiment, killed at Douaumont, in April 1916; from my son-in-law, a second lieutenant in the 14th regiment of dragons portés, killed in Belgium, in May 1940; from my nephew, J.-F. Masse, lieutenant in the 23rd colonial, killed at Rethel, in May 1940.

May I leave with my brother the military medal won at Neuville-Saint-Vast, with which I buried him? My son Jacques, second lieutenant in the 62nd battalion of Alpine chasseurs, wounded at Soupir, in June 1940, may he keep his stripes?

Am I in fact assured that the medal of Saint Helen will not be taken away from my great-grandfather?⁴¹

Tragically, Pierre Masse's part in the story of the persecution of Jews in France did not end with his letter. He and his brother Roger, a colonel of the artillery and a veteran of both wars who had lost his son in combat in 1940, were among the 743 French Jewish men arrested in their homes in Paris on December 12, 1941. This was the

same early German-conducted reprisal raid against Jewish citizens that had netted René Blum. At the age of sixty-two, Pierre Masse was deported from Drancy to Auschwitz on September 30, 1942, where he was gassed upon arrival.⁴² Fifty-seven-year-old Roger preceded him on June 5, in the second convoy to leave France for the death camp. Regular mass gasings had not yet begun at Auschwitz, so he was admitted. He soon died from deprivation.⁴³

The months that followed the first Statut des Juifs witnessed a long series of anti-Jewish regulations from both the Germans and the French. On October 18, the Germans published a second ordinance for the occupied zone, requiring Jews to declare their possessions at police headquarters and establishing a system for nominating "temporary administrators" of Jewish businesses for the purpose of selling them to non-Jews or liquidating them. Also in October, a specially constituted *Einsatzstab* under the direction of Alfred Rosenberg in Germany began the systematic pillage of Jewish homes and the confiscation, among other items, of scores of private art collections. On April 26, 1941, another German ordinance added to the Vichyite list of occupations prohibited to Jews all employment in hotels, insurance, navigation and transport, travel agencies, banks and other financial institutions, real estate, schools, and numerous other fields involving contact with the public at large.

The French response to the German ordinances was prompt. Soon after the October 18 property decree, the Vichy government set up the Service de contrôle des administrateurs provisoires (SCAP) to ensure that all "temporary administrators" of Jewish businesses in the occupied zone would be French and to enforce the Aryanization provisions quickly in order to preempt German interference. On March 29, 1941, a French law created the Commissariat général aux questions juives (CGQJ), a government bureau of Jewish affairs.⁴⁴ The Germans had requested such an agency for the occupied zone, but Vichy officials, ever anxious about questions of sovereignty and unity of administration, extended it to both zones. Then on July 22, the French government voluntarily extended the German program of economic expropriation of Jewish property, both French and foreign owned, to the unoccupied zone.⁴⁵

Under the leadership of Xavier Vallat, the first commissioner of the CGQJ, the Vichy regime produced a second Statut des Juifs on June 2, 1941, replacing that of October 3, 1940.⁴⁶ Addressing the thorny question of who was to be considered Jewish, the new statute came up with a slightly different solution. As before, it declared that

anyone with three grandparents "of the Jewish race" was Jewish regardless of possible conversion, as was anyone with two Jewish grandparents who was married to someone similarly half Jewish.⁴⁷ It then added that a person with two Jewish grandparents was, despite his spouse, also to be considered Jewish unless he could produce a baptismal certificate dated before June 25, 1940. By refusing recognition of nonconfessional status in cases of individuals with two Jewish grandparents, this new definition encompassed many more children of mixed marriages and exceeded that of the Nazis, who defined a Jew as one with three Jewish grandparents and classified individuals with two Jewish grandparents but no personal Jewish affiliations as *Mischling*. Overnight, many who had been exempt from the racial laws lost their rights.

The new law also extended the list of private occupations prohibited to Jews to coincide more or less with that issued by the Germans on April 26. It broadened exemption policies slightly for some positions by extending the possibility to individuals who could prove five generations of French ancestry and past family service. Finally, the statute declared that prefects could intern French Jews as well as foreigners and required a census of Jews in the unoccupied zone. As a result, about 140,000 Jews obediently delivered written declarations of their identity, profession, and possessions to their respective prefects.⁴⁸ Unlike Jews in the occupied zone, however, Jews in the south were not required to receive a "Juiif" stamp on their identification cards until December 1942, a month after the German occupation of the southern zone.

A series of subsequent Vichy decrees affected thousands of Jewish students and professionals. Throughout France, Jews could no longer be publishers or editors. Jewish writers could have their work published only with special authorization. Jewish painters could not exhibit their work at the Salon d'automne. The production of plays by Jewish authors and the playing of music by Jewish composers was strongly discouraged and reduced to a minimum on the radio. A law of June 21, 1941, imposed a *numerus clausus* of 3 percent on Jewish university students.⁴⁹ On July 16, 1941, a similar decree placed a limitation of 2 percent on Jewish lawyers admitted to the bar.⁵⁰ In Paris alone, an estimated 250 people were removed and only 47 were retained.⁵¹ Then on August 11, the same provision was applied to Jewish doctors.⁵² At least 726 eventually closed their offices in Paris, and fewer than 200 continued to practice.⁵³

The racial laws of 1941 were greeted with the same public silence

as those of 1940. The French remained, for the most part, indifferent. Most had other problems. They worried about the one and a half million French prisoners of war in Nazi Germany—fathers, brothers, husbands, and sons who had been expected home after the armistice but who now seemed unlikely to be freed. They worried about scarce food, clothing, and fuel supplies, inadequate transportation and communications, job security, the formidable demarcation line, which often divided families, and the increasingly hostile behavior of the German occupier. If they were at all disposed to think of others, they focused on the troubles of friends or neighbors, war widows and orphans, or, in rare cases among people of goodwill, the indigent in general. Official censorship deprived them of information about specifically Jewish hardships, while the anti-Semitic press continually reminded them of the “Jewish problem.”

Among churchmen, however, consciences were beginning to stir. The indefatigable Pastor Boegner wrote two more private letters of protest, this time to Pétain himself, during the summer of 1941. He also encouraged Pierre Cardinal Gerlier, the Catholic archbishop of Lyon and primate of the Gauls, to deliver to the Marshal in September a similar private note protesting the second racial statute. Meanwhile, about fifteen young Protestant pastors and social workers met in September at Pomeyrol, near Tarascon (Bouches-du-Rhône), to discuss the role and responsibilities of the Church under the current circumstances. They adopted a manifesto of eight theses. Thesis 7 raised “a solemn protest against any statute rejecting the Jews,” and thesis 8 declared that the Protestant churches “considered resistance to any totalitarian and idolatrous influence to be a spiritual necessity.”⁵⁴ A group of conservative pastors prevented the manifesto from becoming official Protestant policy in France, but the document circulated among the faithful and began to make an impression.

Among Catholics, too, there were stirrings. In June, four professors of theology at Lyon, Fathers Joseph Chaine, Louis Richard, Joseph Bonsirven, and Henri de Lubac, prepared a text condemning the racial laws. While it never received official approval, the document nevertheless began to circulate in the region. In July in Paris, Father Riquet delivered a note to the Assembly of Cardinals and Archbishops asking that it condemn the racial laws as “a scandal for the Christian conscience as well as a defiance of the French intelligence.” The assembly not only rejected his request but issued a call for “a sincere and complete loyalty to the established power.”⁵⁵ The Church hierarchy had its own agenda of benefits expected from the

new conservative regime and had no intention of jeopardizing it through political criticism. But on an individual level, discomfort with the racial laws was growing.

As one of the final anti-Jewish measures of 1941, the Vichy government on November 29 announced the establishment of a national Jewish council called the Union générale des Israélites de France (UGIF), with separate branches in the northern and southern zones.⁵⁶ The measure, a response to a German ultimatum for such a council in the occupied zone, had been evolving throughout the year. Toward the end of 1940, SS Captain Theodor Dannecker, chief of the Gestapo's Jewish Office (Judenreferat) in France, had begun demanding that Jewish charitable organizations in the occupied zone come together under a single coordinating committee. The result was the creation in Paris on January 30, 1941, of the Comité de coordination des oeuvres de bienfaisance du Grand Paris (Coordination Committee of Jewish Relief Organizations). Most local French and immigrant Jewish relief groups affiliated with the committee to avoid dissolution. It was superseded by UGIF in November.

Under the Vichy measure, UGIF membership became compulsory for all Jews in France, both French and foreign. The organization technically replaced all existing agencies except purely religious associations and assumed their assets. UGIF's role and structure developed gradually and separately in the northern and southern zones and altered considerably during the course of the occupation. Generally speaking, however, UGIF-North remained legal to the end, operating openly and meeting most German demands. Structurally the successor of the Parisian Coordination Committee, and led primarily by French Jews, it lacked roots among Jewish immigrants and Communists who might have pushed it more firmly into clandestine activity. Physically, also, it remained in Paris, easily accessible to pressure from Nazi anti-Jewish agents.

Until the Liberation, UGIF-North supplied desperately needed food, cooked meals, clothing, medical care, and financial subsidies to indigent Jewish families, literally keeping them alive but inadvertently hindering their perception of their precarious status and security. It also operated hospitals, old-age homes, and orphanages for Jews who could not use “Aryan” facilities. Much less positively, UGIF-North delivered tons of food and clothing to prisoners at Drancy and deportees bound for Auschwitz—material that eventually fell into German hands—and took elaborate measures to ensure

that prisoners released from Drancy for temporary care in its medical and social institutions did not escape. Unlike some Jewish Councils (*Judenräte*) in East Europe, which operated under far greater pressure, it never directly selected individuals for internment and deportation. On the other hand, it rarely warned Jews of raids it knew to be in preparation, furnished information about the consequences of deportation, or advised people to hide. It discouraged its component agencies, not always successfully, from engaging in clandestine rescue activities. It provided little leadership, imagination, or wisdom to a community desperately in need. Its wartime role was and remains a subject of enormous controversy.⁵⁷

Throughout the occupation, UGIF-South remained far more independent of German control, more loosely organized, and more deeply rooted in the Jewish community as a whole than UGIF-North. Although most of the largest prewar Jewish social service agencies were legally dissolved throughout the country in the spring and summer of 1942, they were preserved by being incorporated with little alteration into UGIF-South and permitted to function autonomously under different names. Thus, they were able to maintain structural and financial integrity and continue prewar social services under a legal cover.⁵⁸ As will be seen, that relative autonomy and legal cover also allowed some agencies to drift more and more completely into clandestine and illegal rescue work after August 1942, even while UGIF-South remained officially committed to strict obedience to the law.

Like their counterparts in the north, leaders of UGIF-South who opted for a strict legality were severely criticized after the war. While they offered social services that were indispensable to indigent families, they also kept offices open where many clients and employees were arrested, maintained lists of names and addresses liable to German seizure, and created false illusions of normality. The criticism is legitimate—mistakes were made, and leadership was often uncertain and misguided. Raymond-Raoul Lambert, the director of UGIF-South, seems never to have understood that the Nazis intended to deport *all* Jews in France, and that any deals or concessions obtained were therefore temporary. But despite the intentions of some leaders, and with the eventual tacit agreement of others, the UGIF cover provided its component parts with the time and the funds needed to define a new clandestine role. In that new role, the component parts rescued several thousand Jews in need of help.

4

Internment Camps in the Unoccupied Zone, 1940–1941

AMONG THE SADDEST TALES IN THE TRAGIC HISTORY OF INTERNEES IN unoccupied France in 1940 is the saga of 6,538 German Jews expelled by the Nazis from their homes in Baden-Württemberg, including the cities of Mannheim, Karlsruhe, Heidelberg, Fribourg-en-Brisgau, and Constance, at 7:00 on the morning of October 22.¹ Men, women, and children, many either very young or very old, were given only a few minutes to prepare a maximum of two bags each before they were carted off to congested assembly points and then to local railroad stations. Crowded into seven special trains, they were sent off on a forty-eight-hour trip to the southwestern corner of unoccupied France. Theirs and the simultaneous expulsion of 1,125 Jews to France from the Palatinate and the Saar were the only wartime Nazi deportations to the *west*.²

The Baden Jews disembarked at Oloron-Sainte-Marie, thirty-three kilometers southwest of Pau in the Pyrenees, on the night of October 24. In a frigid autumn rainstorm, they were loaded onto trucks for the ten-kilometer journey to Gurs. Originally an internment center for refugees from the Spanish Civil War, Gurs had held 9,771 female enemy aliens and their children, 3,695 Spaniards, and 1,329 French political dissenters during the summer of 1940. All but about 3,309