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The Parisian Police and the Holocaust: Control, Round-ups, Hunt (1940-44)

Laurent Joly

Translated from the French by Benn E. Williams & Laurent Joly

Within the context of the genocidal policy planned by the Third Reich, slightly more than half of the 74,150 Jews deported from France between March 1942 and August 1944 were arrested in Paris and its close suburbs, which together constituted the then *département* of the Seine.¹ For the large majority of these 38,500 men, women, and children, their arrest was carried out by ordinary policemen belonging to the Paris Police Prefecture, one of France's most prestigious institutions, founded in 1800 by Napoleon.

In contrast to Berlin and other large European cities, the SS's usual methods (total isolation of the Jews, mass summonses, arrests by the Gestapo and parallel police forces) were practically never applied:

- In Paris, Jews were never regrouped by force into special neighborhoods; there were no ghettos.
- In Paris, the Germans' interlocutors on the eve of the rounds-ups were not debilitated Jewish leaders but bureaucrats who, although subject to the agreement armistice and to the Vichy government's collaborationist politics, represented nonetheless an administration solidly anchored in its habits, rationales, and own interests.
- In Paris, only a few thousand Jews were apprehended by the parallel police forces instituted by the occupier (the 'Jewish service' of the Gestapo) and by Vichy (the

¹ Divided into four *départements* in 1964 (Paris, Hauts-de-Seine, Seine-Saint-Denis and Val-de-Marne).

Jewish affairs police, created in 1941 by Pierre Pucheu, the minister of the interior, and the armed wing of the Commissariat-General for Jewish Affairs, the SEC-Section for Enquiry and Control, which succeeded it in 1942). All the others, notably the 12,884 Jews arrested on 16-17 July 1942 (the Vel d'Hiv round-up), were the victims of operations led by the Parisian police (Municipal Police, Judicial Police, *Renseignements Généraux*).

In sum, in Paris, the implementation of the 'Final solution' was entrusted to the traditional administration: the police officers but also their chiefs had been trained and socialized under the Third Republic².

Why and under which conditions did the Vichy government, sovereign over nearly half of France until November 1942, and eager to maintain its authority over bureaucrats in the occupied zone, accept to place its forces of order at the service of the Nazis' anti-Jewish policies? Why did the German authorities renounce the most radical methods initially planned and accept instead the use of the traditional police (against whom the Nazis harbored significant prejudices)? How did the Parisian police chiefs and their agents apply German orders and Vichy directives?

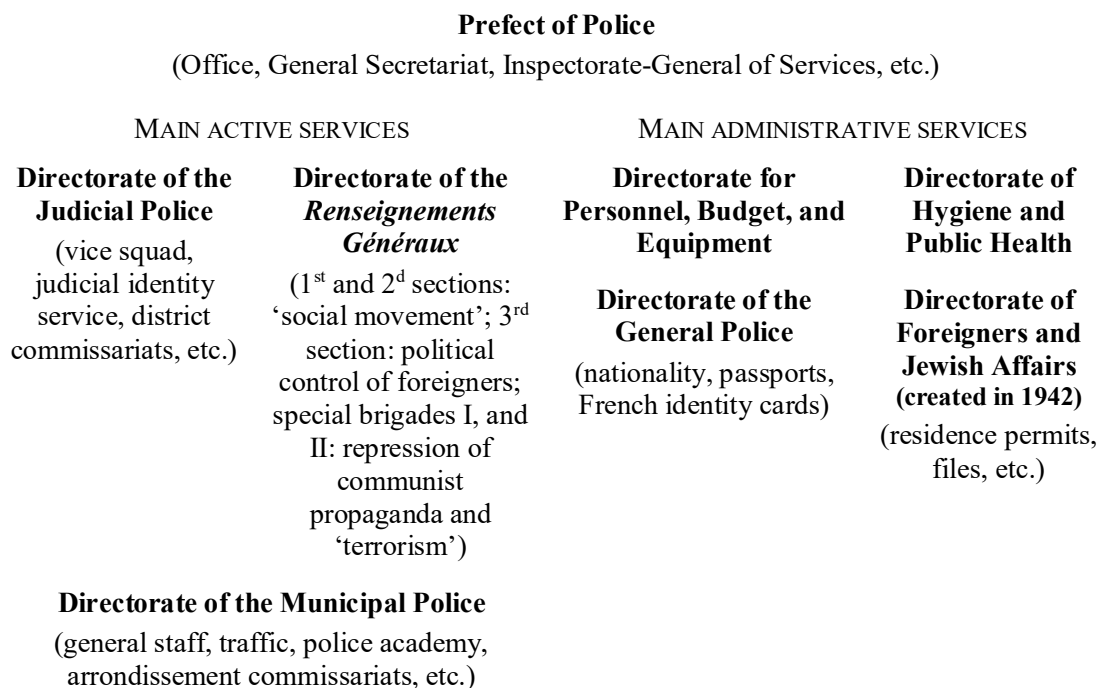
Definitely, militant antisemitism and collaborationist zeal held little place within the Paris Police Prefecture. But the occupier could profit from its professional savoir-faire, from its spirit of obedience, and its allegiance to Vichy.³ At the same time, such a configuration – involving competent and disciplined policemen who were not

² Unlike Paris, in Berlin, Brussels or Amsterdam, the chiefs of the traditional police forces mobilized against the Jews were Nazis.

³ See the important thoughts of J.-M. Berlière, 'L'impossible pérennité de la police républicaine sous l'Occupation', *Vingtième Siècle*, 94, 2 (2007), 183-98.

predisposed to support Nazi antisemitic policy, except for widespread xenophobia in the services⁴ – provided room for manoeuvre and opportunities for circumvention and rescue.⁵ This undoubtedly explains why, despite the round-ups and daily arrests, so many Jews in Paris were able to escape the worst (approximately 50,000 remained in the capital at the Liberation), whereas in Warsaw, Berlin, or Amsterdam, nearly all of the Jewish communities were exterminated.⁶

Fig.1: Organigram of the Paris Police Prefecture during the Occupation



⁴ See C. Rosenberg, *Policing Paris: The Origins of Modern Immigration Control between the Wars* (Ithaca 2006), 77-86.

⁵ I. Ermakoff, ‘Police et arrestations’, in C. Zalc, T. Bruttman, I. Ermakoff and N. Mariot (eds), *Pour une microhistoire de la Shoah* (Paris 2012), 217.

⁶ Nearly 400,000 Warsaw Jews were exterminated, leaving scarcely a few tens of thousands of survivors. Only 1700 Jews survived the Holocaust in Berlin. R. N. Lutjens, Jr., ‘Jews in Hiding in Nazi Berlin, 1941-1945: A Demographic Survey’, *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, 31, 2 (2017), 268-97. About 75 % of Amsterdam’s Jews were deported. P. Tammes, ‘Surviving the Holocaust: Socio-demographic Differences Among Amsterdam Jews’, *European Journal of Population*, 33, 3 (2017), 293-318.

Of the nearly 300,000 Jews counted in France 1940-41, 74,150 or 25 % were deported. We find the same proportion in Paris and its suburbs with 38,500 deported from among the 150,000 registered Jews, or 26 %. This seems less striking than in other countries, notably in the Netherlands where 104,000 Jews, including nearly 80,000 of those residing in Amsterdam, of the 140,000 registered, or 74 %, were deported.

Drawing on a large number of little known primary sources,⁷ the article's objective is to propose a complete and synthetic analysis of the role of the Parisian police in the persecution of Jews during the Occupation.⁸ In doing so, the institutional approach that we propose here, focused on the internal logic of the police in the Seine *département*, seems ideal to shed new light on the problem of explaining the toll of the Holocaust in France.⁹

⁷ Including more than 200 personnel and purge dossiers, notably of each police captain (*commissaire*) responsible for the execution of the Vel d'Hiv round-up.

⁸ Amazingly enough, there is no comprehensive work on the subject. Only the administrative part of Jewish persecution in Paris (census, registration, classification) has been studied systematically: L. Joly, *L'Antisémitisme de bureau: Enquête au cœur de la préfecture de Police de Paris et du commissariat général aux Questions juives (1940-44)* (Paris 2011), 31-219, 316-45. However, the specialized brigades created within the Parisian police were pioneeringly investigated by J.-M. Berlière, with L. Chabrun, *Les Policiers français sous l'Occupation d'après les archives inédites de l'épuration* (Paris 2001), 254-87. The role of these brigades was also examined by L. Joly, 'Le travail de Louis Sadosky à la direction des RG. Du "Rayon allemand/polonais" au "Rayon juif" (1937-44)', in L. Sadosky, presented by L. Joly, *Berlin, 1942: Chronique d'une détention par la Gestapo* (2nd edn, Paris 2014), 159-91, and L. Joly, *Dénoncer les juifs sous l'Occupation: Paris, 1940-44* (Paris 2017), 111-30.

⁹ This problem is still being discussed by historians. See M. R. Marrus, R. O. Paxton, trans. M. Delmotte *Vichy et les Juifs* (new French edn, Paris 2015), W. Seibel, *Persecution and Rescue: The Politics of the 'Final Solution' in France, 1940-44*, trans. C. Cronin (Ann Arbor, MI 2016), L. Joly, *L'État contre les juifs: Vichy, les nazis et la persécution antisémite (1940-44)* (Paris 2018), and J. Semelin, *La Survie des juifs en France (1940-44)* (Paris 2018). See also the valuable article of P. Griffioen and R. Zeller, 'Anti-Jewish Policy and Organization of the Deportations in France and the Netherlands, 1940-44: A Comparative Study', *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, 20, 3 (2006), 437-73. On the margins of this historiography, A. Michel, *Vichy et la Shoah: Enquête sur le paradoxe français* (Paris 2012), attempted to rehabilitate Pierre Laval's action.

1) Faced with the occupiers' antisemitism, 1940-42

In the spring of 1940, the French army, swept aside in three weeks by the Wehrmacht, suffered one of its worst defeats in history. Paris was declared an open city. The Germans triumphantly marched into the capital on 14 June. Eight days later, France and Germany signed the armistice, dividing the country into two main zones separated by a demarcation line.

In the occupied zone, the French administration was obligated to execute German orders. The principal occupying authorities settled in Paris and the pressure on the police was particularly strong. From the outset, German officers complained about the conduct of the Parisian patrolmen (*gardiens de la paix*), who failed to salute them. The Prefect of Police, Roger Langeron, multiplied the instructions. Soon, how-to-salute classes were offered in the commissariats! The occupier also demanded that the first demonstration of hostility (as well as the defacement of German posters) be severely punished. The obligation of surveilling numerous German sites (offices, hotels, garrisons, etc.) quickly generated rancor and weariness on the part of the Parisian police. Lastly, the implementation of a dictatorial regime around Pétain in the unoccupied zone had an effect on the public servants in the occupied zone. Subject to the accord with the German authorities, the French State could extend its laws and its administrative power north of the demarcation line. The agents judged incompetent or disloyal were revoked. The new

chiefs of police, named by Vichy, implemented iron discipline.¹⁰ Collaboration was on the agenda.

This was the environment imposed upon the Parisian police, particularly upon the municipal policemen charged with the public order in Paris and its suburbs. From the arrondissement police captains¹¹ to the patrolmen, these ordinary agents of the state would become placed at the heart of policy of arrests of Jews in the Seine *département*.

Autumn 1940: the identification and isolation of Jews

From their installation in Paris, the occupying authorities were obsessed with ‘the Jewish enemy’ supposedly spying upon and menacing the security of their troops. Certain hotels, restaurants, and shops were designated ‘Jewish establishments’ by makeshift signs, in German. Meanwhile, the Wehrmacht’s secret police carried out raids and pillaged the offices of known Jewish bankers and lawyers as well as mansions belonging to the Rothschilds.

At the same time, small pro-Nazi groups mauled Jewish shopkeepers and broke store windows, crying ‘Death to the Jews!’ Prefect Langeron complained to the occupying forces and urged his troops to crack down on the agitators. Starting in August 1940, the German military administration contemplated legal measures. At the beginning of October, the first anti-Jewish ordinance, dated 27 September 1940, was made public. It

¹⁰ From 1 July 1940 to 1 December 1941, nearly 600 agents were discharged, 320 were dismissed, most of them for professional incompetence, and 10,400 days off were cancelled. Archives of the Police Prefecture of Paris, Le Pré Saint-Gervais, Seine-Saint-Denis (hereafter APP), D^B 542, report of Hennequin, 17 December 1941.

¹¹ Charged with maintaining public order, they belong to the Directorate of the Municipal Police of the Paris Police Prefecture, whereas the district captains (*commissaires de quartier*), more specifically required to investigate crimes, belong to the Directorate of the Judicial Police.

defined Jews, ordered a general census of Jews, and the affixation of a 'JEWISH BUSINESS' poster in every shop owned or managed by a Jew.

Most of the Jews in the occupied zone resided in Paris and its immediate suburbs. The immigration service of the Police Prefecture was charged with organizing the census. A detailed form was created. Jews in the Seine *département* had to present themselves to the commissariat nearest their domicile in order to declare their identity and profession. On 19 October 1940, the census had been completed. More than 60,000 declarations, concerning 149,734 people, were registered.¹² In each commissariat, the secretaries meticulously filed the completed forms and forwarded them, in the subsequent days, to the Prefecture's central administration, where the immigration service created a vast card index (the famous *fichier juif*).

Shortly later, the German authorities ordered the affixation of the 'JEW' stamp on identity papers. Jews from the Seine *département* were again required to present themselves to the commissariats.¹³

The marking of Jewish shops was what made for the first time the stigmatization of the Jews largely visible for the rest of the population. From November 1940, in Paris, nearly 4700 businesses were designated by the sinister yellow poster '*JÜDISCHES GESCHÄFT* / ENTREPRISE JUIVE,'¹⁴ eliciting gatherings and loud commentaries. It was also the first time that victims of persecution attempted to sensitize public opinion. In a number of stores, the infamous poster was adorned with references attesting of the

¹² In addition, about 20,000 Jews were registered in the other *départements* of the occupied zone.

¹³ And it was there that, on German orders, that they had to return in August 1941 to hand over their radios – Jews were being accused to listening to radio emissions from London and of disseminating false news.

¹⁴ APP, 220W2, 'Situation à Paris', report of 2 December 1940.

patriotism of the owner or members of its family. The occupying authorities gave the strictest instructions to end these manifestations. For the first time, Parisian Municipal Police were associated with the repression of Jews.¹⁵

The round-ups of May and August 1941

Beginning in autumn 1940, Vichy massively interned foreign Jews, refugees or expelled by the Nazis, in the unoccupied zone. In turn, the German authorities rapidly sought to intern Jews in the occupied zone for reasons mixing standard security considerations with preparations for the ‘Final solution’ – in January 1941, Adolf Eichmann’s representative in Paris, SS lieutenant Dannecker, wrote a plan geared to accelerate the persecution of Jews for the purpose of their ‘evacuation’ to the East, notably by the internment, ‘to start’ with ‘foreign Jews.’¹⁶ In March, the pressure on Vichy mounted. Following Theodor Dannecker’s recommendations, the creation of a ‘Jewish central office’ was requested. Shortly thereafter, the Pétain-Darlan government created the General Commissariat for Jewish Affairs (law of 29 March 1941) with Xavier Vallat at its head. The renowned ardent anti-Semite and Catholic deputy from the interwar period possessed, however, no police powers. The German military administration urged the representative of the Ministry of the Interior in Paris to order the internment of foreign Jews. Having access to the card indexes of the Police Prefecture, the occupier prepared an initial list of stateless

¹⁵ ‘We had [...] to intervene in two directions; disperse the demonstrators [...] grouped in front of Jewish shops, but also take down displays of little “French business,” “Veteran,” [...] signs as well as visible diplomas and decorations,’ Georges Ballyot, former captain of the 8th arrondissement justified himself, uncomfortable, in his memoirs. G.-J. Ballyot, *Un flic dans la tourmente: Souvenirs (1937-1944)* (Paris 1992), 97.

¹⁶ Report of Dannecker, 21 January 1941, quoted by S. Klarsfeld, *Le Calendrier de la persécution des Juifs de France 1940-44*, t. 1, 1^{er} juillet 1940 – 31 août 1942 (Paris 2001), 65-6.

men (mostly Poles) of working age. The idea was to convene them at 7 a.m. on 14 May 1941.

It was the first – and last – time that such a method, commonly applied in Europe, was implemented in France. The Municipal Police completed and distributed nearly 6500 summonses. ‘Tuesday, 13 May 1941, around 5 p.m., we hear on the landing loud and rapid footsteps. A brutal knock on the door. I open it and I see before me a police officer, face scarlet, in a hurry. With a nervous gesture, he gave me a green paper folded like a tire and he left in haste,’ remembered David Diamant in 1977.¹⁷ The next day, some 3750 foreign Jews, like him, were required to present themselves for an ‘examination of their case’ in several centers throughout the capital.¹⁸ Cornered, those concerned were driven, by bus, to the Austerlitz train station and, from there, sent to Pithiviers and Beaune-la-Rolande, camps about a hundred kilometers from Paris.

Newspapers in the occupied zone were ordered to present the operation as 100 % French, decided by the ‘French government’ and carried out by the ‘French police.’¹⁹ But, for the occupier, it was far from a success: the rate of insubordination exceeded 42 %. For every ten Jews summoned, at least four risked disobedience, which implies that they went into hiding. Arriving from Poland or Austria, these Jews (some of whom or their relatives had suffered direct persecution) were cognizant of the Nazi danger and many (communists, Bundists, etc.) were politicized. Furthermore, the round-up had been

¹⁷ D. Diamant, *Le Billet vert: La vie et la résistance à Pithiviers et Beaune-la-Rolande camps pour juifs, camps pour chrétiens, camps pour patriotes* (Paris 1977), 22.

¹⁸ One per *arrondissement* (arrond.), often in the same that would be used for the big round-up of July 1942, e.g., the gymnasium on Rue Japy (11th arrond.) or the garage on Rue Édouard Pailleron (19th arrond.).

¹⁹ ‘Paris débarrassé de nombreux juifs étrangers’, *Le Matin*, 15 May 1941.

preceded by several weeks of negotiations, information leaked, and rumors circulated about the number of Jews ‘going to be interned or placed in work camps.’²⁰

After the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union and the first communist attacks, the German military administration instituted a policy of reprisals deliberately centered on Jews.²¹ Dannecker benefited and pushed a new operation with a new method: close an arrondissement and carry out a vast round-up.

The 11th was selected. Average-sized, the arrondissement was where the largest number (600) of Jews were arrested on 14 May and where foreign communists Jews were reputed to be the most active. On 18 August 1941, the young SS officer warned the director of the General Police of the Police Prefecture, Jean François, who was in charge of the administrative service for Jews, of the upcoming operation. Humiliated, François discovered that the day before, a Sunday, Dannecker, aided by some collaborators had stormed the premises and used the ‘Jewish file’ to prepare for the round-up!²²

Another German officer, a simple captain, summoned Émile Hennequin, deputy director of the Municipal Police. Like in May 1941, and later, starting in July 1942, the crux of the logistics was entrusted to the Municipal Police. Only it had the necessary personnel (more than 16,000 of the 20,000 Prefecture agents were patrolmen) and the experience with street operations. For Hennequin, a vain and authoritarian type of police officer, the round-ups of Jews were a drudgery imposed upon the Municipal Police, and

²⁰ APP, 220W4, ‘Situation à Paris’, report of 28 April 1941.

²¹ G. Eismann, *Hôtel Majestic: Ordre et sécurité en France occupée (1940-44)* (Paris 2010), 299-327.

²² APP, I^D 16, note from François to the Prefect of Police, 21 August 1941.

professional honor dictated that they accomplish the thankless task to the best of their abilities.

Table 1: The round-up of August 1941

Districts (<i>quartiers</i>) of the 11 th arrondissement	Number of foreign Jews registered in October 1940	Number of Jews (men, aged 18- 50) subject to an arrest card
Folie-Méricourt	2865	1304
Roquette	4973	1868
Saint Ambroise	1803	1412
Sainte Marguerite	1373	1200
Total	11,014	5784

The arrest cards (5784) and the operational plan were prepared in a rush. The captain of the 11th arrondissement, Daniel Girault, led the action. Four other street police captains – Delbrel, Galy, Hénin, and Lambeau, respectively the captains of the 4th, 7th, 13th, and 15th arrondissements – were expressly dispatched to the four districts (*quartiers*) of the 11th to supervise the agents mobilized, 2400 in total.²³ A logic and hierarchy internal to the PP were at work: the captains of the four districts, from the Judicial Police, left their places, naturally, to their colleagues from the Municipal Police, who were higher ranking and more familiar with street operations.

On 20 August 1941, at 6 a.m., the 11th arrondissement was entirely sealed off. All of the metro stations were blocked. Passersby were systematically checked. Home searches were carried out. With the assistance of the Paris police, German soldiers and Gestapo agents arrested approximately 3000 men, an arrest rate of less than 52 %. Disappointed by this result Theodor Dannecker took the initiative to direct the Prefecture

²³ APP, B^A 2436, note from the director of the Municipal Police Meyer, 19 August 1941; Archives nationales, Pierrefitte-sur-Seine, Seine-Saint-Denis (hereafter AN), 3W⁹¹ 1/2, letter from the Prefect of Police to the representative of the Ministry of the Interior in the occupied zone, 21 August 1941.

to carry out an additional operation as early as the next day.²⁴ In total, more than 4200 Jews were apprehended and sent to the Drancy camp situated a dozen kilometers from Paris, thus ushering in the ‘Jewish camp.’

The final outcome of the operations – 4200 arrests whereas the initial goal was 5800 (or 72 %) – did not satisfy Dannecker. He faulted the *fichier juif*, which he found too defective, and thus he imposed a new census of the Jews in Paris (October-November 1941). A new card index, completely typed and updated, was elaborated.²⁵ It would abet the round-ups of the coming months.

The Parisian police on edge: the introduction of the yellow star

As winter approached, the attacks multiplied. The occupier escalated its policy of reprisals overlapped more with the logic of the ‘Final solution.’ On 12 December 1941, the *Feldgendarmes*, assisted by Parisian police officers, arrested 743 French Jews – notables and veterans – in their homes. The signal was clear: all Jews in France were targeted for punishment.²⁶

Meanwhile, the occupier pressed Vichy to legally impose the wearing of the yellow star on all the Jews of France – as was the case in Germany since September 1941

²⁴ This operation was conducted in three stages: nearly 540 arrests on the morning of August 21, in the 10th, 18th, and 20th arrondissements (by agents of the Municipal Police, the Judicial Police, and the *Renseignements Généraux*); street operations in the afternoon; last house arrests in the evening in other arrondissements and in the suburbs. In total, 1131 Jews were arrested on 21 August (APP, I^D 16, note from François, 22 August 1941). Among the latter, several well-known lawyers, including Senator Pierre Masse, were arrested as hostages by order of Dannecker.

²⁵ See Joly, *L’Antisémitisme de bureau*, 97-104.

²⁶ Two days later, General von Stülpnagel, military commander in France, signed a notice announcing the transfer ‘to forced labor in the East’ of a ‘large number of Judeo-Bolshevik criminal elements’ as well as the imposition of a fine of a billion francs ‘to Jews of the occupied territories’ and the execution of ‘one hundred Jews, communists, and anarchists,’ shot as early as the next day (15 December) at Mont-Valérien, near Paris.

as well as in Croatia, Slovakia, and Romania. Negotiations continued until May 1942. But the French government, judging such a measure counter-productive, held steady its unwillingness. The German military administration resolved to issue an ordinance for the occupied zone. The pretext provided was always the same: in the name of security. Starting in 7 June 1942, Jews six years and older had to wear the yellow star in public. In the Seine, they were required to go to the commissariats to fetch their stars. Soon, 92,600 Jews, French and foreign, were fitted with the infamous insignia in Paris and in its suburbs.

As of 7 June 1942, in Paris, the Jewish affairs police and its antisemitic inspectors were hunting the offenders. But the surveillance reverted, essentially, to the Municipal Police. The Germans' instructions were both draconian and menacing: 'The German authorities attach extreme importance to the execution of these prescriptions and the plainclothes German police officers will ensure that the police services correctly fulfill their duty.'²⁷ Each week, tens of Jews were arrested in the street by Parisian patrolmen for 'failure to wear the star.' This drudgery, terrifying and abnormal, prepared them for the worst (the routine of obedience and the tracking of Jews, the fear of the Gestapo) but also, for some, for the best (the yellow star shocked public opinion and the police officers had the option to prevent or turn their heads), while the first deportation trains (5, 22, 25, and 28 June 1942) left for Auschwitz. Onboard, men rounded up in 1941 and the first victims of individual arrests, most often for not wearing or concealing the star.

²⁷ APP, B^A 1818, circular No. 140-42, 6 June 1942.

2) *The Municipal Police and the Vel d'Hiv round-up (16-17 July 1942)*

Until Spring 1942, Theodor Dannecker and the planners of the genocide imagined that the deportation of Jews from France would take several years – an initial quota of 6,000 (primarily Jews arrested in Paris in 1941) was only planned for 1942. But at the beginning of June Heinrich Himmler decided that Europe should be 'rid' of Jews within a year.²⁸ In occupied France, SS General Oberg, recently named Himmler's representative in Paris, abruptly demanded the arrest of 40,000 Jews. Head of government from April 1942 and eager to relaunch the policy of collaboration, Pierre Laval could hardly refuse his assistance. He charged his Secretary General of the Police, René Bousquet, the youngest prefect in France and an elite high-ranking official, with finding the solution. Validated by Marshal Pétain during the council of ministers on 3 July 1942 in Vichy, this solution was an agreement to arrest the number of Jews demanded by the SS, with the condition that these round-ups would target only the stateless (ex-Poles, Germans, Russians, etc.) and that the French police would operate with complete independence. For Vichy and for Bousquet, what happened in Paris in 1941, where the police had arrested Jews alongside and under the eye of the Germans, should never be repeated again. Despite the occupation and the armistice convention, the national police needed to be the master of its actions. It was a question of honor, of sovereignty.

²⁸ On this sudden acceleration of the genocidal process, see F. Brayard, *La « solution finale de la question juive »: La technique, le temps et les catégories de la décision* (Paris 2004).

In July 1942, the occupier and Vichy agreed on the principle of police collaboration subject to respecting the hierarchy and the autonomy of execution of the French administration. That is how René Bousquet officially ordered the new Prefect of Police Amédée Bussière to execute, on behalf of the Germans, a large round-up of the Jews of the capital.

The organization

In the Seine *département*, about 115,000 Jews (just under half of them foreigners) had been counted during the introduction of the yellow star in June 1942. For the purpose of the operation, the Police Prefecture ‘Jewish card indexes’ were mobilized to identify the stateless aged 16 and older. At Theodor Dannecker’s initiative, two planning meetings took place on 7 and 10 July. The Prefecture’s senior administrative officials²⁹ as well as the chiefs of the Municipal Police discussed with the Germans the modalities of action: age limits (16-60 for the men, 16-55 for the women), exemptions,³⁰ arrests, transfers, and internments. The objective: to deport between 22,000 and 25,000 Jews of working age.³¹

Once the index cards were extracted from the ‘Jewish card index,’ nearly a hundred Municipal Police officers, convened for the express purpose, recopied them: 27,391 arrest cards were established. These index cards were then distributed by

²⁹ In particular Jean François, the director of the General Police.

³⁰ Dannecker agreed to exemptions for pregnant women close to give birth, mothers with children under 2 years of age, wives of prisoners of war, persons whose spouse, even deceased, was French or non-Jewish, etc.

³¹ Children were not counted, although, for the Nazis, it was understood that they would be arrested and guarded until being sent to the gas chambers at Auschwitz, some weeks later.

arrondissement (20) and suburban districts (25). In the evening of 13 July, they handed over, in sealed envelopes, to the 45 Municipal Police captains in question.

The major issue was clearly the mobilization of personnel. In the mind of Émile Hennequin, director of the Municipal Police since December 1941, it was unthinkable that the round-up would disrupt the ‘normal service’: law enforcement, traffic, etc. The suspension of leaves and – thumbing their noses at the occupier – the ‘service guarding German establishments’ on 16-17 July had to provide enough personnel for both ‘normal service’ and the special operation.³²

In total, 1600 arrest teams were created (1472 in Paris and approximately 120 in the suburbs) consisting of 3200 police officers: 1700 patrolmen and 1500 reinforcements (patrolmen cadets, plainclothes inspectors from the other two large branches of the Police Prefecture, the Judicial Police and the *Renseignements Généraux*). In addition, there were more than 800 agents to guard the holding centers to which the arrested Jews were to be brought before being sent to Drancy (for the childless adults) or the Vélodrome d’Hiver, ‘Vel d’Hiv’ for short, the winter sports complex located in the 15th arrondissement (for the families). There were also several dozen senior officials supervising the operations as well police escorts for the buses and maintaining order around Vel d’Hiv. Thus, nearly 4500 policemen were mobilized.³³

On the eve of operations, the ‘instructions for the teams charged with arrests’ were distributed. The police were not ‘to discuss’ the ‘observations that could be formulated’

³² APP, B^A 1813, circular No. 173-42 signed Hennequin, 13 July 1942.

³³ Furthermore, the Prefecture is assisted by the Gendarmerie to guard the Vel d’Hiv and the holding centers.

nor to consider the victims' 'state of health': 'Each Jew to [be] arrest[ed] must be taken to the Center.' Once the apartments were vacant, agents had to furthermore ensure that the gas, electricity, and water valves were indeed closed, and animals and keys left with the concierge. The list of personal belongings was equally precisely defined: '2 blankets, 1 pair of shoes, 2 pairs of socks,' etc.³⁴ Beyond the desired efficacy, the goal of these 'instructions' was to restrict the police-victim interactions to prevent any attempt to bribe.

The so-called Vel d'Hiv round-up was, thus, first and foremost a police operation planned to the tiniest detail.

The operation

On 16 July, at 4 a.m., the required police officers reported for duty in their commissariats. The two-person teams were constituted. Less than an hour later, they began to knock on doors. By 10:30, more than 6600 people had been arrested. The action was slower than anticipated, notably in the 11th and 20th arrondissements, where the Jewish population was large. At the end of the day (5 p.m.), 11,363 Jews had been apprehended. The next day, only 1400 additional victims were found. Many had fled during the night. Furthermore, a number of police officers were troubled by what they were ordered to do. One of them testified in 1967: 'I returned home overwhelmed. What a tragedy for me [...]. I constantly kept seeing this child crying.'³⁵

³⁴ APP, B^A 1818, 'Instructions for the teams charged with arrests', signed Hennequin, 12 July 1942.

³⁵ Quoted by Ermakoff, 'Police et arrestations', 229.

The official account at the end of the operation (17 July, 1:15 p.m.) was 12,884 Jews arrested³⁶: 3032 men, nearly double the number of women (5802), and 4051 children under age 16.³⁷ Of the 27,391 arrest cards prepared, only 8833 Jews older than 16 had been arrested. The rate of arrest was less than one-third (32 %). What happened?

Within the Police Prefecture, there were a number of leaks, from employees of the *fichier juif* to patrolmen. Given the fact that it involved thousands of agents and its organization spread over a dozen days, the operation could hardly have been otherwise. For the victims, rumors of mass arrests had been haunting them since 1941 and became much more precise and worrisome in July 1942. This time, the noises came directly from the police. Those who could afford it, left illegally for the free zone. The others (most often men because the majority could still not imagine that women and children were at risk) hid close to home or in their homes. This was how 68 % of the Jews avoided arrest.

Hitherto overlooked, this result might seem surprising since the belief of passive victims has been so strongly embedded in popular perceptions. This can be explained, first, by the vigilance of the Jews, their capacity to pull together and to find support from the populace. But, it can also be explained by the actions of the police within the Paris region.

³⁶ From July 18 to 20, nearly 270 more Jews were arrested. Hence the official figures of the operation: 13,152 arrests.

³⁷ All stateless Jews aged 16 years and older were considered adults and could be arrested.

The role of the captains and the variations from one arrondissement to another

Using Serge Klarsfeld's *Mémorial*, which provides the addresses of some 74,150 Jews deported from France after their arrest, we can estimate, quite precisely, the arrondissement-by-arrondissement results of the Vel d'Hiv round-up (see the figure below). The first striking finding: the closer one was to the center of Paris, the lower the rate of arrest. For the nine 'peripheral' arrondissements (12th-20th), almost three times larger than the others (average surface area: 6,66 km²) and 'still a little rural' in some places,³⁸ the rate was 36 %.³⁹ For the 11 central arrondissements (average surface area: 2,45 km²), the rate did not exceed 27 %.⁴⁰ Nine percentage points is a significant gap. Undoubtedly, in the central arrondissements information circulated the best and leaks from the police were numerous.⁴¹ Most importantly, that was where Jews were the most concentrated, in the same streets, in neighboring buildings, where they could exchange information, be alerted, and help each other.⁴²

³⁸ M. Bluwal, *Un aller* (Paris 1974), 18. On 16 July 1942, Marcel Bluwal, who lived with his mother in the 12th arrondissement, avoided arrest.

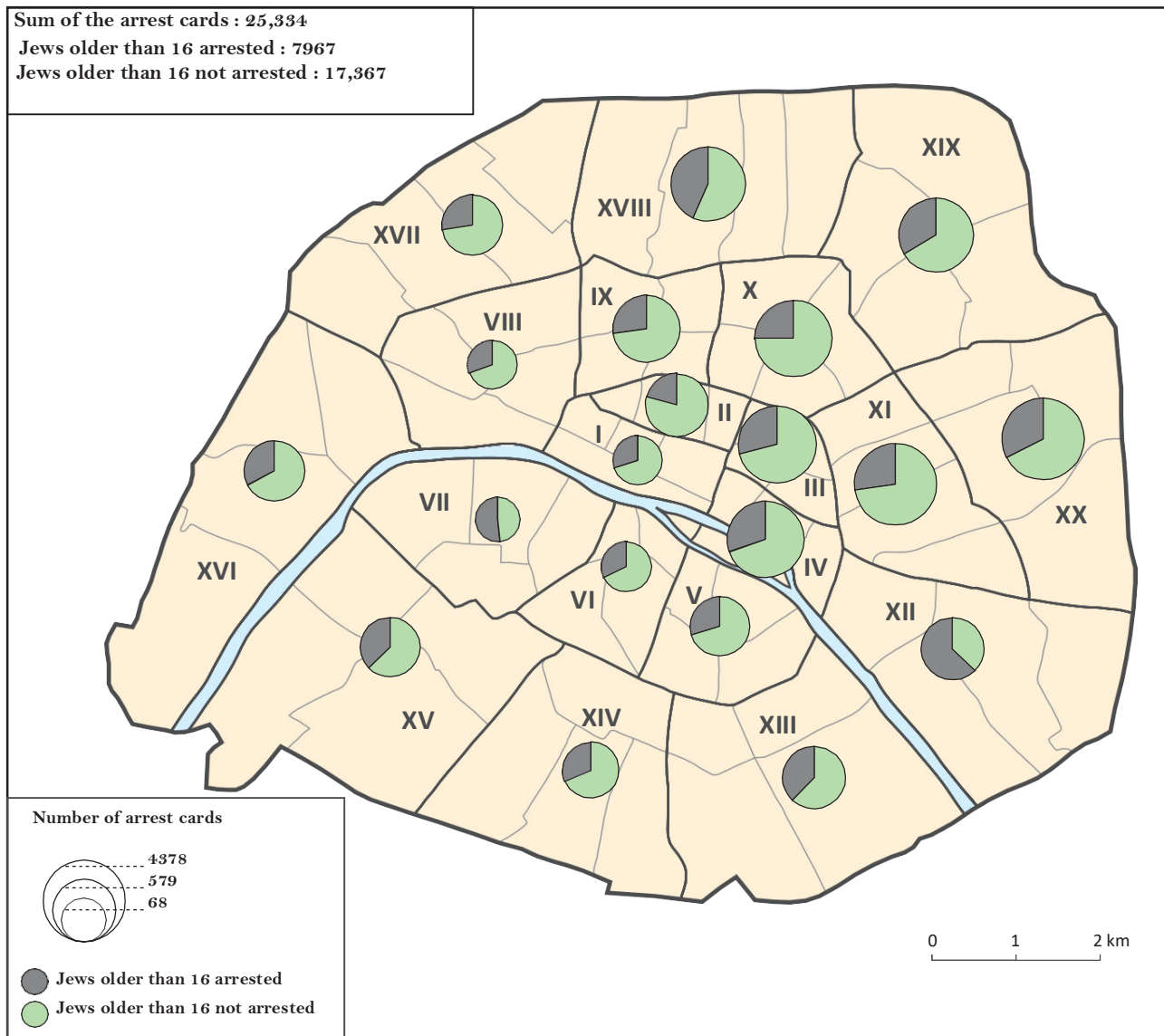
³⁹ 4036 arrests for 11,061 cards.

⁴⁰ 3931 Jews over 16 years-old arrested from 14,273 cards.

⁴¹ The Police Prefecture's central services are in the heart of the capital, between the 1st and 4th arrondissements.

⁴² The recent book by H. Deguine, *Rue des Immeubles-Industriels: Une rue de Paris en guerre (1939-45)* (Paris 2018), illustrates this in remarkable detail. Many Jewish families lived on this street. About 130 stateless persons were targeted by the round-up. Only 28, or 21 %, were arrested by the police on 16 and 17 July 1942. The comparison with the suburbs (866 Jews older than 16 arrested for 2057 cards, or 42 %) confirms the analysis: there, where targeted Jews numbered the least, the most spread out and isolated, the arrest rates were, in general, the highest.

Fig. 2: Arrests of Jews in the 20 Parisian arrondissements 16-17 July 1942



Thus, it is probable that the principal factor explaining the variations from one arrondissement to the next was environmental, social, and spatial.⁴³ But the role of the police captains was far from negligible.⁴⁴ Each of them had the authority and training to make his men act, even those, who, in their conscience, were reluctant to arrest Jewish families:

- Some captains could read Émile Hennequin's instructions without commenting upon them, which commonly signifies reservations or even disapproval on their part (which was the case of captain Sabaut, in the 10th arrondissement, where the arrest rate was only of 25 %).
- Commenting arose from a personal initiative. Those who demanded 'efficiency,' threatened sanctions against their police officers who did not arrest enough Jews and informed them of the risks of not satisfying the German demands.
- More concretely, the captains could have forced their men to knock down doors at homes where no one responded – which Hennequin did not demand on them. In the 4th, 12th, 18th, or 19th arrondissements, such orders were given. In

⁴³ More research is needed to validate this hypothesis, at the level of streets, blocks, families, individual trajectories, etc., following the example of the pioneering research about the Lens Jewish community by N. Mariot and C. Zalc, *Face à la persécution: 991 Juifs dans la guerre* (Paris 2010). About Paris, in addition to H. Deguine, *Rue des Immeubles-Industriels*, a first study combining social and spatial approaches was carried out by I. Backouche and S. Gensburger, 'Antisemitism and Urban Development in France in the Second World War: The Case of Paris's Ilot 16', *Contemporary European History*, 23, 3 (2014), 381-403. On the contribution of geography for the Holocaust studies, see A. K. Knowles, T. Cole and A. Giordano (eds), *Geographies of the Holocaust* (Bloomington 2014).

⁴⁴ On the articulation between the two types of explanation, environmental for the former, directly linked to the features of the persecution system for the latter (its organization, the role of the chiefs, the agents state of mind, etc.), see the new and challenging proposals of Ermakoff, 'Police et arrestations', art. cit., 215-43.

the 20th, Florentin Brune, a captain known as a ‘slave to instructions,’⁴⁵ went so far as to distribute tools to his teams’ for forcing or breaking doors.

- Once the Jews were arrested and taken to the holding center, the captain could free the sick, the paralyzed, women in an advanced state of pregnancy, or he could order to steer them straight to Drancy or the Vel d’Hiv.

Clearly, there was room to manoeuvre and, looking closely at matters, it is not surprising that the operation’s results varied, sometimes significantly, from one arrondissement to the next. For example, in the 2nd, the arrest rate was the lowest (20 %) whereas in the 12th, it was the highest (63 %).

In the 2nd, captain Roger Jéhanno warned a German Jew who was his friend and urged him to alert all his acquaintances. Others confirmed that Jéhanno was no zealous.⁴⁶ His colleague in the 12th arrondissement was the opposite. Forty-seven years old, Henri Boris represented an atypical profile. Former soldier, he had first belonged to the *Renseignements Généraux* and its terrible immigration service⁴⁷ before joining the folds of the Municipal Police. Adept at strong-arm methods, harassing his patrolmen, Boris participated in the round-ups, striking and insulting his victims. At the end of 1942, in his annual evaluation, even Émile Hennequin deplored his ‘lack of poise.’⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Quoted in APP, K^B 17, purge dossier Brune, police report, 13 March 1945.

⁴⁶ A second witness alleges that he organized with Roger Jéhanno ‘a genuine service of warning Israelites.’ AN, Z^{6NL} 397, case number 9039, investigation file Jéhanno, attestations from D. Gesselson, 7 May 1945, and S. Rosa, 7 April 1945.

⁴⁷ On this service and its practices, see Rosenberg, *Policing Paris*, 76-106.

⁴⁸ APP, K^A 105, personnel file Boris, annual assessments for 1942.

In July 1942, the 20 Parisian captains, all excellent professionals on the rise,⁴⁹ were still overwhelmingly loyal towards the authority of Vichy.⁵⁰ Collectively, they arrested Jews and applied the orders. But only a minority demonstrated antisemitic zeal and relentlessness: Turpault in the 4th, Boris in the 12th, Lainé in the 18th (in whose arrondissement the arrest rate reached 43 %), and Brune in the 20th.⁵¹ Others withdrew, refusing to comment on the instructions and refusing to energize their teams (Ballyot in the 8th or Sabaut in the 10th arrondissement). Some even alerted victims (as we saw with Jéhanno in the 2nd). For the majority, along with their director, Hennequin, arresting Jews represented a thankless task, an abnormal intrusion into their daily activity, but one that they had to execute to the best of their abilities. Certainly, this range of contrasting attitudes explains why the outcome of the 16-17 July 1942 operation was also contrasted (failure rate of 2/3) – and relatively underwhelming for the SS police.

3) *Hunting Jews (July 1942 – August 1944)*

The Municipal Police had to immediately redouble its efforts. From July 17, Émile Hennequin asked his services to search for Jews ‘absent during the attempted arrests.’⁵² Three days later, the extremely zealous Brune, captain of the 20th arrondissement,

⁴⁹ The average age was 41.

⁵⁰ Only after the allied landing in North Africa (November 1942) and the imposition of forced labor in Germany (February 1943) did several of them work for the resistance.

⁵¹ See Joly, *L'État contre les juifs*, 88-94.

⁵² APP, B^A 1818, circular of 17 July 1942.

telephoning one of Hennequin's collaborators, suggested that one profit from the next 'renewal [...] of the ration cards' in mayors' offices (22 July 1942) in order to capture the Jews who had escaped the round-up. The system he imagined was foolproof: the lists of wanted Jews would be communicated to all the centers; each captain would place 'a discrete unit in each distribution room used to distribute ration cards' which 'would execute the arrests.' Hennequin scurried to relay the idea to the Prefect of Police, Amédée Bussière, adding that it 'was necessary to decide' that each Jew on the arrest lists 'would no longer receive a ration card!'⁵³ Bussière did not retain the last proposition, but several captains followed the Brune's original suggestion: trap the Jews in the distribution centers for ration cards.

Regularly mobilized until 1944 for the round-ups, the Municipal Police units found themselves implicated in the daily tracking of Jews hiding in Paris. In so doing, they strengthened the actions of the two specialized brigades created within the Judicial Police and the *Renseignements Généraux* of the Police Prefecture.

The round-ups and daily arrests by the Municipal Police

Bousquet's accords with SS leaders required the French police to arrest the categories of foreign Jews imposed, one after another, by the Third Reich. 14 September 1942 marked the Baltic, Bulgarian, Yugoslav, and Dutch Jews' turn. Hennequin and the Municipal Police were again mobilized. Appalled by the mediocre results (183 arrests for 708 cards, or 26 %, plus 27 children), the German authorities hardened the conditions for arrest.

⁵³ AN, Z⁵ 219, case number 7778, investigation file Brune, note of captain Didier, 20 July 1942.

Starting with the round-up of Romanians (24 September 1942, 1574 Jews arrested), there were no longer age limits nor hardly any dispensations except for rare, privileged exceptions (such as furriers working for the occupiers).⁵⁴ On 5 November, Heinz Röthke, who had succeeded Dannecker at the head of the Gestapo's 'Jewish service,' expressly ordered acting 'secretly' and 'brutally' in the middle of the night against Greek Jews.⁵⁵ The results were dramatic: 887 Jews 16 years and older were arrested (a 51 % arrest rate) as well as 173 children. Röthke was elated and René Bousquet received official congratulations for the Parisian police's good results!⁵⁶

Generally, in the fall of 1942, police collaboration between Vichy and the occupier functioned at full steam. On October 28, in a telegram addressed to Berlin, the Third Reich's ambassador in Paris commended the work carried out by the French forces of order against communists and 'terrorists.'⁵⁷ The allied landing in North Africa followed by the Wehrmacht's occupation of the whole of France (November 1942) obliterated Laval's and Bousquet's dreams of collaboration. The pressure on the French government was stronger than ever. The police were torn between their duty to obey and their patriotism. Increasingly, they loathed serving Nazi policies. But, at the beginning of 1943, the duty to obey still prevailed, on the basis of fear and repressive routines, as the round-up of 10-11 February demonstrated.

⁵⁴ On these two roundups in September 1942, information concerning the number of arrest cards and teams mobilized is incomplete or not available.

⁵⁵ APP, B^A 2433, order from Röthke, 3 November 1942.

⁵⁶ S. Klarsfeld, *Le Calendrier de la persécution des Juifs de France 1940-44*, t. 2, 1^{er} septembre 1942 – 31 août 1944 (Paris 2001), 1250.

⁵⁷ B. Kasten, „Gute Franzosen“: *Die französische Polizei und die deutsche Besatzungsmacht im besetzten Frankreich 1940-44* (Sigmaringen 1993), 82-3.

Organized in haste (to minimize leaks) under direct SS pressure, this round-up essentially targeted stateless Jews over the age of 60, i.e., too old to have been sought out and arrested in July 1942. Hennequin mobilized some 1830 police officers. Begun at 11 p.m. on 10 February, the operation was carried out with such brutality that the Inspectorate-General of Services received a request for an investigation!

Exculpating the Municipal Police, its report illuminated, nevertheless, the methods of certain captains, including Brune in the 20th.⁵⁸ The round-up's 'success' rate in his arrondissement reached 37 % – 17 points higher than the average (20 %). The final result (1500 Jews arrested of whom 500 were older than 70, or, an arrest rate of one-fifth) was the smallest ever recorded in the Seine. Clearly, the method of mass home arrests had run its course.⁵⁹ Most of the Jews had abandoned their declared homes or frequently spent the night away from home. It was necessary to find them where they hid or in the street.

In 1943, the tracking (targeted operations, exploitation of denunciations, etc.) was increasingly used. In this regard, the Municipal Police played a significant support role. In each arrondissement's commissariat, one special brigade was charged with exploiting the arrest cards of Jews not found during the round-up. A handful of plainclothes policemen returned to the homes of the persons of interest. Sometimes they hit the target. Some victims, who had fled on the eve of an operation, returned home a few days later. In certain arrondissements, captain Brune's suggestion (grab the 'wanted' Jews in the ration card distribution centers) was implemented. Tens of victims were captured. For

⁵⁸ AN, 3W⁹¹ 1/2, report of the Inspectorate-General of Services of the Police Prefecture, 24 March 1943.

⁵⁹ The round-up of 22 March 1943, principally targeted Hungarian Jews (420 arrest cards), resulted in only 56 arrests (less than 13 %).

example, on 25 November 1942, Louise Gradsztejn, 16 years old, went to the mayor's office in the 4th arrondissement to retrieve ration cards for her and her family. Her father, Israel, a Pole aged 47, was on the 'wanted' list. The employee pointed out the young girl to the arrondissement's Jewish brigade. Agents Bignand and Guillaume questioned her and forced her to lead them to her home: 'My father was in bed because he was ill. They forced him to get up and to follow them.'⁶⁰ Deported from Drancy on 9 February 1943, Israel Gradsztejn was killed at Auschwitz.

A French citizen, young Louise was released. The Municipal Police arrested only Jews belonging to 'deportable' categories or if they were in violation of German ordinances. Dismissed from the Police Prefecture and condemned at the Liberation for his antisemitic zeal – for some 30 arrests – Just Bignand defended himself by arguing that he helped numerous Jews. Furthermore, he added, in the 4th arrondissement the Jewish population was significant, and he could have taken tens of victims every day. Actually, he did not dare to confess that his protection was most often bought.⁶¹

In their arrondissements, the Municipal Police officers knew their inhabitants well. Furthermore, neither by taste nor vocation were these ordinary agents hunters of Jews. There was a great temptation to exploit the persecuted individuals' distressful situation or yield to offers of money from those whom they should have been profiling or arresting. If the type of the anti-Jewish Municipal Police officer and extortionist was relatively rare,⁶² that of the occasionally corrupt patrolman was more common. Under-documented and

⁶⁰ AN, K^B 9, purge dossier Bignand, report of 17 November 1944.

⁶¹ AN, K^B 9, purge dossier Bignand, letter from Bignand to the Inspectorate-General of Services, February 1945.

⁶² For example, the case of this patrolman of the 19th arrondissement, sentenced to death in 1945. See Joly, *L'État contre les juifs*, 195-6.

little-studied by historians, police corruption is definitely one of the factors explaining the survival of many Jews in the capital.

Ultimately, all the special brigades of the Municipal Police arrested fewer than 1000 Jews for failure to wear the star or other violations from June 1942 until the Liberation. The role of the Municipal Police was almost exclusively to organize and execute large operations.⁶³ ‘The numerical list of arrests of Jews,’ since ‘16 July 1942,’ prepared on 30 June 1944 by the Directorate of the Municipal Police, established that in two years some 24,378 Jews (almost of them foreigners), men, women, and children, had been arrested⁶⁴ – and most often deported. No other entity of the French police contributed more to the Nazis’ genocidal policy.

The Permilleux brigade or the Judicial Police in the service of the Gestapo

Not content with profiting from the police agreement concluded with René Bousquet to feed the convoys departing for Auschwitz, the occupier did not hesitate to openly flout the principles. At the beginning of November 1942, the SS police required the Prefect Bussi re to create a brigade charged with tracking down the Jews of Paris. After having consulted Bousquet’s services, the Prefect complied: a special brigade was created at 36 Quai des Orf vres (the Directorate of the Judicial Police). Each week, the Gestapo’s ‘Jewish service’ prepared a list of people to arrest for the Permilleux brigade (named after the very timid and prudent Charles Permilleux, who led it until the summer of 1944).

⁶³ The last significant round-up, on 3 February 1944, had more than 500 victims.

⁶⁴ APP, B^A 1817, note from the Directorate of the Municipal Police, 3 July 1944.

From 7 to 15 December 1942, 35 Jews were, for example, apprehended by the inspectors of this brigade while executing the third list transmitted by the Gestapo. Among them, 30 had French nationality.⁶⁵

Thus, even if they had not violated any German ordinances, Jewish French citizens were arrested by the Parisian police and delivered to the Nazis. Such was the Permillieux brigade's purpose: be the linchpin in the merciless tracking on behalf of the SS. Examining the arrest results, passing under his eyes, Prefect Bussière occasionally complained in messages addressed to Bousquet about this abnormal situation.⁶⁶ But nothing changed: the Permillieux brigade continued to arrest French Jews.

In August 1943, in the context of Mussolini's fall in Italy and the Third Reich's military stalemate, Pierre Laval, the head of government, refused the collective denaturalization of Jews who had become French after 1927 – a measure that should have involved a new series of massive round-ups. The Gestapo's 'Jewish service' opted then for the strategy of a direct police action: the 'arrest of all Jews that one could find.'⁶⁷ From the logic of the round-ups negotiated with Vichy, one shifted to a logic of tracking – by specialized police authorities – of all the Jews, French or foreign, without discriminating. The size of the 'Permillieux brigade' reached 50 inspectors (in 25 teams of two).

Of these 50 police officers, only a handful demonstrated collaborationist and antisemitic zeal. The others, young inspectors assigned to the brigade (at the Police

⁶⁵ Joly, *Dénoncer les juifs sous l'Occupation*, 120-1.

⁶⁶ See AN, F⁷ 14887, letter from Bussière to Bousquet, 8 November 1943.

⁶⁷ Report from Heinz Röthke, 21 July 1943, quoted by Klarsfeld, *Le Calendrier de la persécution des Juifs de France*, t. 2, 1584.

Prefecture, rare were the volunteers for such positions), carried out their investigations, but without enthusiasm: 'It was only when we had precise denunciations drawn from neighbors did we make arrests'; 'the German denunciation had the name [...], how would you want us to fudge the report, the denouncer had given details,' they would justify at the Liberation.⁶⁸ Some indulged in deliberate sabotage, with the complicity of captain Permillieux's right-hand man, principal inspector Colin, who was close to the Resistance.⁶⁹

In the end, until the Liberation, the Permillieux brigade arrested 5175 Jews (mostly French). Most were deported. In the eyes of the SS, these results were not exceptional, but they contented themselves with the 200-300 Jews flushed out and taken to Drancy by Permillieux's men every month. Outside of Paris and in other occupied countries, the hunting of Jews was often entrusted to parallel police rife with extremely militant and predatory collaborationists.⁷⁰ In Paris, the Gestapo made the decision to rely on the Police Prefecture whose institutional identity and the reputation for efficacy was too well established not to be respected – and used. Furthermore, in the minds of the Germans, Paris constituted a security issue too important to let the collaborationist groups operate.

⁶⁸ AN, 5W 13, case number 14277, hearing of Jacques Beugin, 18 December 1946; APP, K^B 25, purge dossier Colletta, minutes of the appearance before the purge commission, 10 April 1945.

⁶⁹ 'Colin [...] makes no secret of his anti-Nazi views and did not hesitate to tell me that he would be delighted to help us as much as possible,' confides Georges Kohn, Jewish head of the Drancy camp, in his diaries. *Journal de Compiègne et de Drancy*, by F. Montel and G. Kohn, revised and annotated by S. Klarsfeld (Paris 1999), 8 February 1943, 192.

⁷⁰ About Isère and Provence regions, see the pioneering works of T. Bruttman, *La Logique des bourreaux (1943-44)* (Paris 2003), and I. Lewendel, with B. Weisz, *Hunting Down the Jews: Vichy, the Nazis and Mafia Collaborators in Provence, 1942-44* (New York 2012). About the Netherlands (Amsterdam in particular), see A. van Liempt, trans. S. J. Leinbach, *Hitler's Bounty Hunters: The Betrayal of the Jews* (Oxford/New York 2005).

The population was judged insufficiently antisemitic and the occupier preferred to rely on professional and discreet police officers.

The 3rd section of the *Renseignements Généraux* or the hunt for people with falsified identity papers

Until the summer of 1943, another brigade belonging to the Police Prefecture was tasked with tracking Jews for the occupiers: the ‘Jewish section’ of the 3rd section of the *Renseignements Généraux*. Charged with the political control of foreigners in the capital, the 3rd section, starting in 1941, directed its activities against the Jews, including those with French citizenship.

Head of the ‘Jewish section,’ police sergeant Louis Sadosky, a sadistic and narrow-minded officer, led a street brigade. Under his orders and those of two other police sergeants, about twenty inspectors scoured the Parisian streets and train stations (mainly Austerlitz and Lyon, from which trains departed for the south of France) in order to spot ‘communist Jews’ or Jews in violation of German ordinances. In August 1941 (in the 11th arrondissement), then in July 1942, they took part, as reinforcements, in the general operations against Jews. After the Vel d’Hiv round-up, the ‘Jewish section’ was expressly charged with finding individuals who had escaped arrest.

For example, on 15 December 1942, Sadosky apprehended Szmul Gurfinkiel on rue Réaumur. A Polish Jew, 31 years of age, he was a tailor, father of two children aged

three years and one month, and he had left his home the day before the 16 July.⁷¹ He was deported on 9 February 1943. Like him, dozens of ‘wanted’ Jews or those in violation for not wearing the yellow star were arrested by inspectors of the 3rd section of the *Renseignements Généraux*. For the year 1942, the 3rd section arrested 2194 individuals. But, of this total, less than a quarter were deported as Jews. Others (more than 400) were the object of legal proceedings.⁷² Thus, the majority of the Jews arrested by Louis Sadosky and his colleagues escaped the ‘Final solution.’

In the summer of 1943, a reorganization of the Police Prefecture’s services relieved the 3rd section of the application of German ordinances against Jews; this shifted exclusively to the Directorate of the Judicial Police and its Permillieux brigade. But the ‘Jewish section’ maintained its traditional mission of the political control as well as the task of punishing Jews in violation of ordinary legislation (above all forged identity cards). For most of the inspectors, this news was a boon, allowing them to achieve results without overly compromising themselves as the Liberation approached. The principal inspector Martz, who led the street teams of the 3rd section, openly encouraged his men to target Jews in violation of the law on identity cards (which was the case of a large part if not the majority of the Jews residing in the Paris region) rather than communists and members of the resistance.⁷³ Arrested 3 March 1944 by two inspectors of the ‘Jewish section,’ a young woman testified at the Liberation that these police officers were ‘very

⁷¹ AN, Z⁶ 146, case number 2050, investigation file Sadosky, report signed Sadosky and Quéau, 15 December 1942.

⁷² Violations of the Vichy’s anti-Jewish regulations or of ordinary legislation, falsification of identity papers, black marketeering, etc.

⁷³ APP, K^B 73, purge dossier Martz, minutes of the appearance before the purge commission, 16 May 1945.

amiable' with her: 'I admit to my identity card in order to be punished correctionally⁷⁴ [and] avoid being given to the German authorities. They even gave me the advice to appeal the judgement in order to remain in the French judicial system. I was condemned to 6 months of prison and liberated June 18, 1944 from the central prison of Caen.'⁷⁵

Obviously, the Parisian police officers were perfectly cognizant of the fate awaiting the Jews whom they arrested and handed over to the Germans (i.e., directed to Drancy): deportation was assured and death probable. During Sadosky's trial⁷⁶ in 1946, Charles Martz responded in this manner the presiding magistrate's question:

- In the service, did you know what was happening to people who were arrested?
- Yes! That is why those possessing forged identity cards were passed along as common criminals.⁷⁷

In total, from 1941 to 1944, the 3rd section carried out approximately 5000 arrests of Jews. Among these, more than 1200, or about 25 %, were deported.

Thus, there was a certain impermeability between Vichy's repressive system and Nazi machine of destruction. One did not automatically feed the other. The SS police had only about a dozen men to drive, on the ground, the anti-Jewish policy. Therefore, they depended intrinsically on the services of the Police Prefecture and could hardly demand that all Jews arrested by the Parisian police be directly sent to Drancy.

⁷⁴ That is, by a 'correctional' court.

⁷⁵ Quoted in APP, K^B 95, purge dossier Sadosky, report of 20 December 1944.

⁷⁶ He received a life sentence of forced labor for the arrest of several hundred Jews.

⁷⁷ APP, B^A 1818, minutes of the Sadosky trial, Seine Court of Justice, hearing of 10 January 1946.

It is this complexity of the machine of persecution in occupied France – with its administrative burdens and its contradictory logic, of which the Nazi authorities were obliged to take into account – which explains, in many respects, the toll of the Holocaust in France,⁷⁸ and, more specifically, in the Seine *département*.

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Of the 74,150 Jews deported from France in the framework of the ‘Final solution,’ the large majority was arrested by Vichy forces of order. In the Seine, more than 90 % of the approximately 38,500 deportees who resided in Paris and in the suburbs were arrested by the services of the Police Prefecture – the agents of the Municipal Police first and foremost – between 1941 and 1944.

In France, the ‘Final solution’ was an objective of Nazi policy, but not its primary objective. No other territory in Western Europe had, militarily, the strategic importance of France, where, no one could ignore it, an Allied landing would inevitably take place. From there, the primacy given to security imperatives: stability of the country, maintaining order, struggle against the armed resistance, and communism. In this perspective, Paris constituted a unique case. The occupier never imposed round-ups targeting French Jews as it had in the provinces.⁷⁹ In June 1944, SS general Oberg, urged by his anti-Jewish services, had envisioned ordering a large operation against the tens of

⁷⁸ In this regard, we agree with T. J. Laub, *After the Fall: German Policy in Occupied France, 1940-44* (New York 2009), 222-46.

⁷⁹ In Bordeaux, Poitiers, and in the Vosges, small ‘Israelite’ communities, established for decades, were hard hit at the beginning of 1944.

thousands of Jews, mainly French, identified by the Paris Police Prefecture. Heinrich von Stülpnagel, military commander in France, and Gerd von Rundstedt, commander-in-chief of the German armed forces in Western Europe, dissuaded him with the following argument: the allied landing on 6 June did not agitate the Parisian population, so why risk popular disapproval with an anti-Jewish round-up that could have been unleashed once the war was won?⁸⁰

However, there is another Parisian exception. Outside of Paris, there is no equivalent of the Permillieux brigade, an ordinary police group working for the Gestapo and arresting French citizens daily – who were the majority among the 5175 Jews apprehended by the brigade. Thus, in Paris, like in the provinces, profiting from the breakdown of the French State after November 1942, then the advent of the Milice during the winter of 1943-44, the German authorities were able to target French Jews after having hit hard the foreign and stateless Jews in 1941-42. In total, one-third of the 74,150 Jews deported from France held French nationality.

Such is the toll of the ‘Final solution’ in France. Without Vichy’s policy of collaboration and the Laval-Bousquet policy of the summer of 1942, the outcome would never have reached this magnitude. The failure of Alois Brunner’s commando unit (a handful of Austrian SS assisted by French auxiliaries, Doriotists, and *Miliciens*) in the former Italian occupation zone (November 1942-September 1943) illustrates, perfectly, the impasses of Nazi policy when carried out on its own. Setting out for Nice, Brunner

⁸⁰ The number one enemy of Germany continued to be the *franc-tireur* and partisan, who could be summarily executed after being captured, according to Sperrle decree (February 1944) and a Keitel order in April 1944. P. Lieb, *Konventioneller Krieg oder NS-Weltanschauungskrieg? Kriegführung und Partisanenbekämpfung in Frankreich 1943/44* (Munich 2007), 410.

had, by the end of 1943, gotten his hands on only 1,800 Jews, while he had hoped for 25,000. During February-March 1944 in Grenoble, his commando unit made only 423 arrests.⁸¹ A few months earlier, Berlin had rejected the request formulated by the head of the Gestapo's 'Jewish service' in Paris, Heinz Röthke, who needed 250 men to track Jews, because the priority went to fighting the resistance.

Thus, the planners of the genocide had to make do with limited means, essentially relying on the French police. This solution had disadvantages: the heads of the traditional police and their agents were not anti-Semite activists and, generally speaking, they did not like the Germans. But, there were also advantages: these police officers were competent and knew perfectly the environment of the persecution. One could expect a satisfactory yield. In this regard, the diverse exemptions, in favor of French Jews, spouses of prisoners of war, expectant mothers, etc., accorded in July 1942, were certainly connected to the fact that the SS imagined then that they would arrest masses of people. But, more fundamentally, these exemptions constituted the system's ethic release valve. Without them, it would have been impossible to obtain the cooperation, even the consent, of the ordinary agents of the state. Thanks to them, these agents could convince themselves that they had avoided the worst, that they had acted as best as they could have.⁸²

In conclusion, in Paris, as in the free zone, and despite multiple and isolated cases of disobedience, the system didn't waver. Even the most humane captains and patrolmen

⁸¹ Bruttman, *La Logique des bourreaux*, 163.

⁸² At the Liberation, Hennequin, the director of the Paris Municipal Police credited himself with having 'battled' to 'obtain' from Dannecker the 'numerous exemptions' from Vel d'Hiv. AN, Z⁶ 447, case number 4389, investigation file Hennequin, minutes of the questioning, 29 November 1946.

followed orders and arrested Jews. The machine of destruction was regularly fed. The ‘SS leaders [...] closed their eyes to the leaks and the failures that they knew about,’ notes the historian Jean-Marc Berlière, who adds: ‘Good pragmatists, they knew that, left to their selves, without the French police and administration, they would have achieved lesser results and the cost of carrying out German-only operations would have caused a panic among the victims that those responsible for the “Final solution of the Jewish question” would have gone to great pains to avoid.’⁸³ Undoubtedly, if Laval and Bousquet had not put all of the power of the French State into these operations, the toll of the Holocaust in France would have been lessened – and Vichy’s moral fault less heavy.

“The Parisian Police and the Holocaust: Control, Round-ups, Hunt, 1940-4”, *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 55(3), 2020, p.557-578 – article first published online: May 23, 2019, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0022009419839774>

⁸³ Berlière, ‘L’impossible pérennité de la police républicaine sous l’Occupation’, 197.