Post-War out of the Epilogue:
Étranger Jewish Disunity in France after the Second World War

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Class of 2016

A thesis (or essay) submitted to the faculty of Wesleyan University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts with Departmental Honors in History

Middletown, Connecticut April, 2016
Abstract

In 1943, after years of political and organizational disunity, the deportations of Jews in France invoked fear that helped bring the entire French Jewish community together in efforts to save as many Jews as possible. Jews who defined themselves as Communists, Socialists, Zionists, religious, secular, Israelite, or étranger (foreign) set aside their vast cultural and political differences to achieve this goal. After the war, the leaders of the official organ of the Jews in France (CRIF) tried to unify the French Jewry around “Jewish politics”: fighting anti-Semitism and supporting peace in Israel. The unity that scholars and the central institution of the French Jewry portray regarding the French Jewry after the Second World War fails to account for the differences in community structures within the French Jewry created by political Parties. In order to demonstrate the political and communitarian differences within the French Jewry in the Post-War era, this thesis examines how the tens of thousands French Jewish veterans created different veteran organizations. This thesis analyzes two of these groups, the Union des engagés volontaires, Anciens combattants Juifs (UEVACJ) and the Union des juifs pour la Résistance et l’entraide (UJRE) to present the differing goals and political stances within the French Jewry. While fluctuating diverse political allegiances of Jews in France in the Post-War era promoted the unification of the French Jewry around “Jewish politics”, this thesis hopes to highlight what prevented community unity in the Post-War era.
Acknowledgements

I have read (and skipped) many acknowledgement sections in my life, yet I never grasped the importance of this page until I embarked on this process. So many people contributed to this final product that deserve my gratitude.

Naturally, I must first thank Professor Oliver Holmes for his guidance, vigilance, and friendship. The strong rapport that we built during this process created the academic space that helped me grow as a writer. Without your ideas, insight, and enthusiasm, I simply would not have been able to finish this project.

I also want to thank my editor Alexandra Ricks. Alexandra, you blew me away with your notes and structural ideas. Thank you.

Henri Zytnicki, my source within the UEVACJ, responded promptly to dozens of emails, phone calls, and video conferences, and I really appreciate his aid in helping my understanding of the étranger Jewish veterans. The UEVACJ will close in 2016, and I am so fortunate to have connected with him before the organization ceases activities.

A lot of the background knowledge for this thesis came from courses that I took while at Wesleyan and abroad. Readings and concepts from the courses of Magda Teter, Erik Grimmer-Solem, Richard Grossman, Nathanael Greene, and Charlotte Vorms (Paris I) contributed to the structure of this thesis, and my understanding of the history of France. Also, the Wesleyan History Department
provided me the White Fellowship, without which, I would not have been able to collect the primary sources needed to write this thesis.

Finally, I would like to thank my parents (Betsy and David Brint) and grandparents (Alan and Ronnie Schwartz) who have made my college experience possible. Thanks for helping me succeed throughout my life! Also, Grandma, please keep sending me every newspaper clipping with the words France or Jew in it!
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Acronyms

AIU : Alliance Israélite Universelle
AVCJ : L’Association des anciens combattants volontaires juifs
CRIF : Conseil Représentatif des Institutions juives de France
FLN : Front de libération nationale
FTP-MOI : Francs-tireurs et partisans-Man-d’œuvre immigrée
JCA : Jewish Colonization Association
IDF : Israeli Defense Force
ORT : Association for the Promotion of Skilled Trades
PCF : Parti communiste français
PF : Popular Front
PPS : Polish Socialist Party
PRM : Popular Republican Movement
RMVE : Régiments de Marche de volontaires étrangers
UEVACJ-EA : Union des engages volontaires, Anciens combattants juifs (1935-1945) leurs Enfants et Amis
UJJ : Union de la jeunesse juive
UJRE : Union des juifs pour la résistance et l’entraide
Introduction

In the final days of 2008, the Israeli government launched a preemptive attack in Gaza after months of talks failed to renew the ceasefire between Hamas, the governing authority of Gaza, and Israel. Without the renewal of the ceasefire between the two governments, Hamas smuggled arms and rockets into Gaza and fired them into Southern Israel.¹ The initial attacks launched by the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) in Gaza targeted both Hamas government and military structures, but as the weeks passed, news outlets began to report an increase in civilian casualties. While the IDF continued to produce evidence of the smuggled weapons that Hamas stored in schools and mosques, many protesters from around the world spoke out against the IDF’s deployment. The protesters claimed that the IDF disproportionately responded to Hamas’s rockets, and the IDF’s action led to a large number of civilian fatalities.²

In Paris, two thousand miles to the northwest, the war in Gaza sparked controversies within the ideologically diverse Jewish communities in France. When the French Communist Party (PCF) and the Green Party in France accompanied French Muslims and other activists in protests against the increased number of civilians killed in the Gaza War, the Conseil représentatif des institutions juives de France (CRIF), the umbrella organizations for most Jewish organizations in France

and the official French affiliate to the World Jewish Congress, responded to these
protests by refusing to invite the PCF and Green Party to their annual dinner, as was
customary. The CRIF’s decision prompted a few Jewish organizations who previously
had membership with the CRIF to formally rupture their ties with the CRIF. For the
first time since the CRIF’s founding in 1943, during the Second World War, an
organization within the French Jewish community formally split from the official
representative body of the French Jewry.³

At the height of the German occupation in France, Communist, Zionist and
Socialist Jews fighting in different Resistance groups came together and formed the
CRIF in an attempt to save as many Jews as possible from deportations. The Jewish
leadership in France has disingenuously presented the French Jewry as unified ever
since. In the Post-War era, the CRIF dedicated itself to fight on behalf of the French
Jewry for the perceived common goals (“Jewish politics”): denouncing instances of
anti-Semitism, promoting the collaboration among the hundreds of organizations
created by the French Jewish community, and working with anyone willing to
participate to help promote peace in Israel.⁴ Although it took over sixty years for the
first formal rupture within the CRIF to take place, the political and cultural
differences within the diverse French Jewry had rendered the Jewish communities in

http://vieuxsinge.blog.lemonde.fr/2009/03/27/lujre-suspend-sa-participation-au-
France splintered far before 2009, even though the CRIF never presented the communities in such a way.

Scholarly writings about the Post-War era also presented the French Jewry as united in a similar way to how the CRIF depicts the French Jewry. Scholars and the CRIF suggest that the tension that existed before the Second World War between the étranger Jews (Jews of Eastern European origins who immigrated to France from 1880-1939) and the French Israelites (Jews without immediate immigrant ancestors whose primary tongue was French and who led more acculturated lives in French society) diminished in the Post-War era. Maud Mandel, author of *In the Aftermath of Genocide: Armenians and Jews in Twentieth Century France*, concludes that the French Israelites and the étranger Jews “increased their willingness to mobilize politically as Jews began to acknowledge a growing appreciation of the ethnic links binding Jews to one another across national borders.”5 Mandel and other scholars focus on the unity of these two groups as they respond to previous literature about Jews in France that emphasized the tensions between these groups in the interwar period. This thesis embraces Mandel and other authors’ claims of some rapprochement between the étranger Jews and the French Israelites communities, yet this thesis rejects the universality of the claims of unity within French Jewry. The different political or cultural motivations that drove étranger Jews to either engage in the military and/or étranger Resistance groups created ideological identities that

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fundamentally contradicted each other and prevented the unity in the Post-War era that the CRIF projected it had achieved.

The over twenty-five thousands étranger Jews who engaged against the Nazis and French collaborators chose different venues to fight (the French army or in various Resistance groups) based on their political beliefs. After the Second World War, the étranger Jews militants organized into multiple associations that varied in political agenda and goals. The differences between the structures and the actions of the Post-War veterans’ groups help illuminate the diverse goals of those who engaged. The newspapers of the étranger veteran organizations as well as the formal documents that they published are available in archives in New York and Paris, and they provide the primary means of demonstrating the differences of goals and ideological distinctions between the organizations. Many of the differences that drove the étranger Jewish community apart before and during the Second World War resurfaced in the Post-War period.

No matter if they fought in the French military or in any number of Resistance organizations, it would not do justice to the participation of the étranger Jews to call their acts during the war “fighting.” The communities of étranger Jews did not fight in the war, they engaged. The distinction of engaging from fighting comes from the French verb *engager* that the étranger Jewish communities use to describe their role in the war. Engager implies more than fighting, it implies a moral commitment and a conscious choice. Similarly, in English if one is engaged, they are more than busy. They are actively involved in the task at hand. Each étranger Jew
had his/her own reasons to engage in the French military or the étranger Jewish Resistance groups. These diverse motivations further contributed to the disconnectedness of the reorganization of the étranger Jewish communities after the Second World War.

Communism, in its many forms, played a central role in the establishment of different identities in the étranger Jewish community. Many of the étranger Jews who fought in the Resistance or who volunteered to fight in the French army felt stronger connections to the Communist International (Comintern) than to France or the Jewish communities. In the second half of the twentieth century, deteriorating relations between the étranger Jews and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) influenced identity changes within the étranger Jewish community to feel a stronger connection to the French Jewish community. Many étranger Jews played an influential role in the rise of Eurocommunism, Communism apart from Soviet Union International, in the 1970s and 1980s.

The examination of the étranger Jewish community after the Second World War extends from the work of scholars who write about Jews in France. Initially, scholars writing about Jews in France attempted to understand the different allegiances that Jewish communities in France felt towards each other and the country. Both in the form of governmental reports or scholarly productions, vast amounts of literature have been devoted to the study of Jews in France, yet few authors describe the differences within the étranger Jewish communities in France. The origins of the study of Jews in France date back well over two hundred years to
the era when Napoleon called for scholars to write reports that he anticipated would explain the true allegiances and the inner workings of the Jewish communities in France. Napoleon responded to the perceived lack of integration of French Jewry into the French society by passing legislation, for instance temporarily removing Jews from the money lending industry, which he claimed would help assimilate Jews.⁶ For the next century and a half, authors wrote about the social position or the circumstantial conditions of Jews in France. These studies placed Jews in relation to their non-Jewish French counterparts with the goal of trying to recognize the true allegiances of the Jews in France.⁷

A few decades after the Second World War in 1979, historian Paula Hyman contributed to the stimulus of studies about the étranger community by including chapters that identified and described some étranger identities before the Second World War. In her book *From Dreyfus to Vichy: The Remaking of French Jewry 1906-1939* Hyman includes a chapter entitled “Immigrants and Natives 1906-1933,” and one of the central themes associated with the chapter is the étranger Jewish population’s relationship with the French Israelites.⁸ By differentiating the two groups, Hyman helps frame the distinct étranger Jewish identity. Hyman then presents the different political affiliations of étranger Jews before the Second World

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War (Socialist, Communist, and Socialist-Zionist) in the chapter “Jewish Labor Movement.” Though Hyman presents the multiple political identities of the étranger Jews, she fails to demonstrate the conflicts and disunity between the political factions within the étranger Jewish community.

Working off some of the questions that Hyman presented while writing about the étranger Jews in France, historian Nancy Green played an important role in the growth of a field of study that speaks to the Jewish immigrant history in France. Green’s works provide insight into mutual aid societies of étranger Jewish communities and the conditions for Jewish immigrant workers.\(^9\) From the 1980s until the turn of the twenty-first century, Green’s work focused on an international comparison of the ways that Jewish immigrants established themselves in new countries and the institutions and organizations that the immigrants created to operate as a community. Drawing from Green’s approach of examining the role of the organizations created by the étranger Jews, this thesis expands in a new direction. While Green tries to demonstrate the similarities of organization throughout the world, here, the organizational differences within the étranger French Jewish community in the Post-War period will be stressed.

Before discussing the Post-War era, in Chapter I, “Étranger Jewish Road through France (1771-1944)”, this study provides essential background information

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ranging from the origins of the political diversity in the étranger Jewish communities, to the means of arriving in France, to the conditions for the étranger Jews during the interwar period, and, finally, to the ways that they engaged in France against the Germans. The information about the relationships between groups before and during the Second World War will provide historical insight needed to understand the Post-War period in France. Chapter II “Jewish Community Attempts at Unification after the Second World War” compares two organizations created by étranger Jewish veterans and former Resistance fighters in order to understand the reasons that the groups operated independently from one another even though their goals often aligned. Also in this chapter, analyses of how members of both organizations responded to international events provides another means of demonstrating differences in opinions and priorities of the members of the groups. Finally, Chapter III, “Changing Political Identities and the Rise of Literature about Étranger Combattants”, presents the role of the French Communist Party (PCF) in the renaissance of étranger Jewish identity within the étranger Communist community. The étranger connection to the PCF fluctuates throughout the Post-War era. After a nationally televised film portrayed the PCF disloyal to the étranger Jewish community during the Second World War, many étranger Jews sought scholars to write about their experiences during the war. The retelling of the étranger Communist engagement during the Second World War seems to attempt to distance the étranger Communist Jews from Communism. This shift reflects the
conflicts between the étranger Communist Jews and the PCF at the time that scholars wrote the literature.

The CRIF helped unify the French Jewry around the concept of “Jewish politics,” and for many years they effectively joined previously fractured communities of Jews. The fluctuating identities of the étranger Communist Jews, however, prevented the entire Jewish community from remaining connected, because the strong political allegiances of the étranger Jews interfered with the “Jewish politics” that the CRIF claimed were apolitical. By not engaging in political conversations, however, an apolitical group can make a very strong political statement.
Chapter I: Étranger Jewish Road through France (1771-1944)

Eastern European Jewish Experience before Immigration (1772-1900)

*Jewish Economic History in the Russian Empire from 1772-1905*

During the interwar period (1919-1939), the Russian-American photographer Roman Vishniac shot photos of impoverished Eastern European Jews with the intention of raising money internationally for their benefit (*See Figure 1*).  

10 His photos promote the view of the Eastern European Jewry as “abjectly poor in its material condition, and in its spiritual condition, exaltedly religious.” That quote comes from the preface of Vishniac’s book *Polish Jews*.  

11 As a result of the international popularity of Vishniac’s photography, his intended imagery depicts a common current perception held of Jewish life in Eastern Europe before the Second World War. Though many Jews in Eastern Europe lived in poverty or followed any number of Hassidic sects, Vishniac fails to represent the political, religious, and cultural diversity within the Eastern European Jewry. 

Jews from Eastern Europe who immigrated to France from 1880 until 1935 primarily came from a working class background in search of economic opportunities, which contradicts with the image of Ashkenazi Jewry that Vishniac promulgated. (*See Figure 2*) Most of the working class Jews who immigrated to

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France dressed in clothing more similar to the French than the Hassidic Jews that Vishniac depicted. Also, political ideologies generally had a more substantial influence on the daily lives of the Jewish immigrants to France than religion. Financial prospects and educational opportunities drove the étranger Jewish communities to France, and the many deep-rooted political ideologies that the Eastern European Jewish immigrant population had established before immigrating continued to play important roles in their lives in France.

The rise of the Left and Zionist political parties resulted directly from the harsh political and economic condition imposed by the Russian (Tsarist) government on the Jewish communities in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The origins of the economic decline of the Jewish population started after the Kingdom of Poland, where a large percentage of the Ashkenazi (Eastern European Jewish ethnicity) community lived, collapsed towards the end of the eighteenth century. Increased economic and political prominence of the Noble class in the Kingdom of Poland in the eighteenth century led to a decentralized government that rendered the king’s military weak. The King of Poland could not effectively defend the nation from the three major neighboring powers: the Empires of Russia, Austro-Hungary, and the Prussian states, and in three instances in the late 1700s, these powers attacked and partitioned the Kingdom of Poland.\[^{12}\]

After these partitions, the majority of the Eastern European Jewry resided in the Russian Empire. Unlike the more desirable conditions of the Austro-Hungarian rule where Jews benefitted from diverse economic opportunities and greater access to education, Catherine II (The Great) forced the now Russian Jews to remain within the limits of a defined area of Jewish residency called the Pale of Settlement, referred to as the Pale. Jews could not move outside of the Pale from 1804 until 1891, a few exceptions notwithstanding. Restrictions of movement within the Russian Empire were not exclusively placed on the Jews; merchants, serfs, and townspeople also had the same restrictions placed on them. These restrictions made the Jewish economic situation difficult in the first seventy years under the Russian Empire.

Conditions for the Jews in the Pale ameliorated during Alexander II’s reign (1855-1881). A series of military defeats and a broad discontent among the Russian populous stimulated Alexander II to invoke a serious of radical reforms that improved the lives of serfs, Jews and merchants alike.\(^\text{13}\) Specifically for the Jews, Alexander II granted Jewish merchants the right to conduct business beyond the Pale in 1859, and in 1861, he reformed the Russian universities and professional degree centers to allow Jews.\(^\text{14}\) In the 1860s and 1870s, during this era of reform, more industrial activity started in the cities of the Pale, and Jews found jobs in

Fortunately for the Jews, they did not have the same restrictions on movement as the ethnic Polish serfs, who remained attached to Lords during the initial years of industrialization. Jews living in non-industrial cities and small villages migrated to cities with industrial growth like Łódź, Warsaw, Lublin, and Bialystok with the goal of finding jobs outside of the commerce sector so they could improve their economic prospects. This shift contributed to the rise of the working class in Poland for Jews and non-Jews alike.

The benefits of industrialization spread also to members of the Jewish business and banking communities. Sender Bloch, Fajwel Janowski, and the Poznanski family (Figure 4) in Lodz are examples of Jewish industrialists who acquired massive amounts of wealth during the industrialization of the Pale. The textile, leather works, matchstick, and to a lesser extent the oil, metal, and sugar industries had strong Jewish entrepreneurial presences throughout the Russian Empire. Jewish bankers also played a significant role in the industrialization, because they responded to the Tsar’s goal of industrial growth through the investment of private capital. Naturally the Jewish bankers invested in the Jewish entrepreneurs. A disproportionate amount of industrial activity in the Empire occurred within the Pale of settlement due to these investments. The capital from Jewish bankers drove the mechanization and modernization of Poland, along with investments from ethnic Germans and some Polish nobles.16 Their new factories provided an outlet for Jews

15 Ibid, 44.
who previously worked in overcrowded sectors of the economy like commerce. They provided middle class jobs and founded the basis for large Jewish communities in growing cities. For example, in the early nineteenth century in Bialystok, one of the largest textile producing cities in the Russian Empire, 70% of the city population was Jewish as was almost every factory owner.\footnote{Ibid.} This was not unique to Bialystok; Jewish entrepreneurs controlled industrial factories in cities like Warsaw, Kiev, Lodz and Minsk.

Though the policies of the Russian Empire benefitted Jews in the upper class, other policies had a negative impact on the working class. In 1861 Alexander II instituted significant agrarian reforms allowing peasants the right of resettlement (they did not have to remain on their former Lord’s land).\footnote{However, it was not until the Stolypin reforms from 1901-1903 that serfs could possess deeds to the land that they worked.} These new opportunities ironically produced an unsustainable influx of people working in agriculture, and resulted in a 50% decrease in acreage per male. Farmers sought supplemental incomes in the urban area working in factories.\footnote{Carol Scott Leonard, \textit{Agrarian Reform in Russia: The Road from Serfdom} (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 44.} Jewish industrialists did not predicate their hiring practices on ethnicity, and when cheaper labor became accessible with the Serfs, the entrepreneurs hired them over the Ashkenazim. The decrease in wages for laborers resulted in unsustainable salaries, working conditions that continued to diminish, and the increased profits and wealth of the industrialists. Over the next thirty years, this situation created the ripe conditions for the Jewish
community, and many other communities, to temporarily band together in the fight to promote common left ideologies.

The Jewish economic and social conditions further declines in 1881 when revolutionaries in Russia responded to dissatisfaction with the pace of reform, and assassinated Alexander II. The assassination stifled this trend towards reform, because Alexander II’s successor, Alexander III, reacted harshly by retracting many reforms that were meant to take place. Alexander III also placed partial blame for the assassination on the Jewish community, because a Jew was involved in the bombing. He enacted regulations that restricted Jewish settlement outside the Pale, he forbade Jews from issuing mortgages, and he prohibited Jews from transacting business on Sundays. The restrictions imposed upon the Jews led them to participate in large numbers in commerce, which contributed to poverty for the Jews because the sector of the economy became even more overcrowded. Though the Jewish community in the Pale only comprised about 13 percent of the population, Jews controlled an average of 62% of commerce activities in the Pale in the 19th century as a function of these unsustainable economic realities. The government failed to provide opportunities in diverse sectors of the economy for the Jewish population. This significant economic blow to the Jews in Russia

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contributed to the diminished economic conditions of the Jews in the Pale, and the mass migration out of Russia.

*Origins of Jewish Left movements*

Étranger Jews in France forged most of their political identities and allegiances in Poland during the fifty years preceding the Second World War. The policies of the Tsarist government fostered economic and social conditions for the Jewish industrial workers in the Pale of Settlement that stimulated the rise of the Left political parties among the Jews. The affiliations that each Jew took with a political Party influenced the people with whom they associated, the newspapers that they read, and the leaders to whom they responded. These political origins and identities of the Jewish immigrants to France eventually had strong influences on when and in what capacity the étranger Jews in France engaged during the Second World War.

Jewish workers in the Pale of Settlement helped found Socialist parties in Eastern Europe in the nineteenth century, and these political parties also played an influential role in organizing the Jewish immigrants in France. Socialist organizing in the Pale commenced in 1892, when Polish leaders gathered clandestinely in Paris and created the Polish Socialist Party (PPS). This revolutionary group sought to unite the ethnic Poles around defending workers, providing free education for all, and
nationalizing the means of production by the state for the ethnic Poles. Initially, the PPS excluded Jews and Lithuanians (the two largest ethnic groups living on the former Kingdom of Poland) from the PPS. As a result of the nationalistic policies of the PPS, members of both the Jewish intelligentsia and Jewish workers helped form the Bund, a Jewish Socialist movement on October 7, 1897 in Vilna. Ironically, though the PPS excluded Jewish participation, the founders of the Bund credit the influence of the exclusionary practices of the PPS as a means of solidifying their Jewish identities. For the next forty years, the Bund Party served as an influential Jewish political movement in the Pale, and then starting in 1919 as an official Party during the Second Polish Republic.

The Bund’s identity stretched beyond Social-Democratic politics. The Bund also united around a renewed sense of Ashkenazi Jewish identity, the Yiddish language, and to fight to regain the autonomies from the government that they had during Feudalism. Strengthening and standardization of the Yiddish language (the language of Eastern European Jews which is a combination of German, Slavic Languages, and Hebrew) served as a primary means of accomplishing unity and recognition as a nation. The Bundists created the YIVO institute in 1925, which acted as the academic center of Yiddish culture around the world. The Bundists also stimulated the Yiddish press and theater. The members of the Bund did not rely on

Yiddish though, especially because one third of its members did not speak the language and they predicted that more in the future would not speak it as well. The Bundists also focused on National autonomy for the Jewish people, which they hoped would entail self-governance, limited economic restrictions, and the right to educate their children in their own schools.24

The historian and activist Simon Dubnow and other Ashkenazi Jewish historians influenced the Bund to embrace the concept of extraterritorial Jewish nationality.25 The members of the Bund viewed themselves in opposition to Zionists who wanted to create a Jewish nation-state (preferably in Palestine). Both the Bundists and the Zionists were nationalists, but the Bundists maintained their unity as an international/Diaspora nation without the need for a nation-state.26 Instead of a nation-state, the Bundists like Dubnow called for the unification of the Jewish people around their common culture. The Bundist ideals attracted tens of thousands of Jews who wanted to both connect to the Leftist movements taking place in Eastern Europe, while maintaining their homeland and cultural identities.

Though the Bund had strong connections to both Socialist ideologies and leaders in the PPS, the founders initially integrated a range of Leftist political ideologies from Socialists to Marxists. Jews had prominent roles as both Mensheviks, a faction within the Communist Party that promoted democracy and coalitions, and

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24 Ibid.
Bolsheviks, who relentlessly pursued the overthrowing of the Tsar through Revolution. This unity lasted in some capacity until the Communist Party officially ruptured with the Bund during the Russian Revolution in 1917. At the time of the Russian Revolution in 1917, the Bund maintained membership above 33,500, but all of the Communists left the Bund. This event clearly divided the étranger Jews politically. Communist Jews no longer could reconcile their membership in an organization that promoted nationalistic views instead of fighting for the concepts of the International. This rupture contributed to the lack of unity within the French Jewry for the next century.

The Bund’s strong influence on the left-leaning members of the Jewish community prompted Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov (Lenin), the primary figure in the Russian Revolution that overthrew the Russian Provisional Government and started the new Communist government in Russia, to address concerns about the Bund. Lenin, whose grandmother was Jewish although he never embraced his Jewish roots, expressed differences with the Bund first regarding religion, because his ideology rejected connections between religion and politics. The Bund viewed religion as a part of the Jewish identity, and Lenin could not support a political party affiliating with religion. Second, the Jewish Socialists and Communists disagreed on their

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approaches to nationalism. While Lenin tolerated nationalist identities and multiple languages, he only supported groups that fought against all national oppression or inequality. Lenin, therefore disapproved of the Bund because of its sole focus on Jewish affairs.

The Russian Revolution resulted in Jews separating into six primary political camps, with the largest being the Zionist camp of 300,000. Eventually the Bund reconfigured itself in December 1917 in Lublin (which at the time was under German control), and eventually organized in Paris. Membership of the Bund in France grew from sixty in 1919 to thousands in the late 1930s. For the next twenty-two years, left-leaning Jews throughout the world did not remain united under a political organization. The Bund instead became an organ for the International Socialist movement and recognized itself within the Labor and Socialist International. Though Marxism in one way or another influenced many Jews, Bolshevism was not the primary outlet to express these leftist affiliations. This proved consistent in France during both the interwar period and the Second World War. The majority of those who engaged in the war did not consider themselves Communists.

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30 Gitelman, "Russian Revolutions of 1917".
32 Poland emerged as a sovereign state for the first time in over 150 years when it established itself in 1918. It was formally recognized by the world in the Treaty of Versailles in 1919.
Arrival in France and Ante-Bellum

The collective motto of the Eastern European Jews in France in the interwar period was “Heureux comme Dieu en France” [Happy as God in France], which indicates the overall positive view that the immigrants had towards their new country. Though on average they lived and worked in conditions inferior to most other Frenchmen, the communities flourished by other means. Eastern European Jewish immigration to France increased during the interwar period, which resulted in Jewish population in France doubling to 300,000. Étranger Jewish life massed primarily in Paris but also gravitated to cities like Nancy, Marseille and Lyon. Demonstrating their ideological diversity and civic engagement, the étranger Jewish Parisian community published over one hundred forty newspapers during the interwar period.33 Similarly, community and religious life prospered: the étranger Jews founded new synagogues, opened community centers, and established and operated summer camps. This section presents both the paths of arrival of the immigrants as well as the initial years living in France before the Second World War. Tensions that built between the different Jewish communities in France during the interwar period continued to manifest themselves in the Post-War period during the reconstruction of the Jewish community.

Deteriorating Condition for Jews in Eastern Europe during the Interwar Period

The Jewish population of France doubled during the interwar period, mostly due to the growing étranger population. Different motivations drove distinct groups of étranger Jews to France. Some came in an attempt to find new economic opportunities after the First World War ruined the Polish economy. Others arrived as a function of their international fight against Fascism. Many Jewish refugees had no other option as they fled Nazism and other nationalistic violence in their countries than to come to France. Each path attracted different communities of étranger Jews, and in order to understand the Post-War reorganization of the Jewish community, one must understand the diversity of motivations for immigration.

Similar to the millions of Jews who emigrated out of Eastern Europe before the First World War, the lack of economic opportunity served as the primary factor that drove emigration during the second wave of immigration (1918-1931). The devastation in Poland and Lithuania due to the First World War was second only to Belgium: half of the bridges in Poland were destroyed, many of the factories were ruined, and citizens overcrowded commerce and agriculture sectors of the economy. The Polish Jewish communities also specifically experienced devastation as a result of this war, as the fighting resulted in the destruction of 100,000 homes that left

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500,000 Jews homeless.\textsuperscript{35} Poland’s economy lacked the infrastructure to employ its population, and its citizens required new means of earning wages. During the interwar period, France became an economic refuge, a political melting pot, and eventually in the mid and late 1930s a destination for refugees from Eastern Europe and Germany.

The growth of nationalist thought and actions also contributed to the emigration of minority groups from Eastern Europe like the Jews and Armenians. Widespread nationalist movements within the large Empires throughout Europe and Africa that fought in the First World War contributed to the reorganization of the Empires into nation-states. Jewish minorities in the new states of Eastern Europe from Lithuania and Romania to the USSR and Poland experienced increased violence as a result of the nationalistic tendencies in those countries and others. The Treaty of Versailles ended the First World War, and the new nation-states (i.e. Poland, Lithuania, Hungary, and Austria) were all but forced by the powerful victorious nations (United States of America, British Empire, and France) to accept the Minority Treaties. In Poland, this treaty provided the 10 million Jews, Lithuanians, and Ukrainians equal rights in the newly formed nation.\textsuperscript{36} In Poland and other recently formed countries, the ethnic nationalists wanted members of their ethnic nation to control property and the government. In response to these imposed statues of minorities, some nationalists turned to violence that targeted Jews, and explicitly

\textsuperscript{36} Ponty, "L’émigration des Juifs de Pologne dans l’entre deux-guerres".
cited Jews as “a national enemy.” The newly established nation Poland received negative attentions as the world press reported the attacks. In reaction to this negative media, the Polish government defended itself to France and other nations by sending a detailed report explaining problems with some factions of the Jewish community. The government declared in the report that ethnic Poles felt that many Jews did not work hard enough to integrate into their society, especially the religious Jews. This document shows that although the nationalists did not control the Polish government until 1935, their rhetoric and blaming of Jews influenced the Polish government’s view of the Jewish community. Though the international community had good intentions to unify all people within these new countries, the imposed regulations did not result necessarily in peace and unity.

Jewish emigration from Poland would have probably had more to do with ethnic violence had it not been for Josef Pilsudski, a Polish general who served as the first Chief of State for the Second Polish Republic until the end of 1922. Pilsudski gained popularity for his role fighting for Polish independence from first the Tsarist Empire (1914-1917) and then the Soviet Union from 1920 to 1921. Pilsudski saw Jews as an integral part of the Polish society. He followed the PPS’s program, which

39 Poland further experienced turmoil from 1920-1921 during the war with the Soviet Union. Many Jewish communists were conflicted for whom they should support. This created a lot of tension between the Polish government and the Jewish people, and within the Jewish community.
supported equal rights for all citizens regardless of political or religious background. Pilsudski had turned his powers over to the democratic system in 1922, yet after four years of destructive inflation and other economic problems, Pilsudski staged a coup against the National Democratic government in 1926. Pilsudski served as the Prime Minister until 1930, and then one of his closest aides Walery Slawek became the Prime Minister. Some have classified this as a puppet regime. During the times when nationalists wielded the most power (1922-1924 and 1935-1939), Jews emigrated at the highest rates from Poland. In these two time periods, Pilsudski was out of power. A steady stream of Jews emigrated from Poland from 1924-1935 while he was in power regardless of how the economy performed, Jewish. The statistics of when Jews emigrated coupled with Pilsudski’s general positive perception of Jews in France supports the hypothesis that Pilsudski’s actions towards the Jews had a positive influence on Jews remaining in Poland.

Paths of Arrival to France

Three distinct groups of Eastern European Jewish immigrants arrived in France during the interwar period: clandestine immigrants who sought either economic opportunity or refuge from anti-Jewish violence, recruited workers who came through legal channels, or militant Jews who came to France after the defeat

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40 Michlic, “Poland’s Threatening Other the Image of the Jew from 1880 to Present,” (2006).
of the Republicans in the Spanish Civil War. Sentiments towards these immigrants varied based on the economic situation in France. Starting in 1919, a mutually beneficial migration developed between France and Eastern/Southern European countries. The millions of French workers killed or disabled during the First World War rendered the French economy underemployed. The French government and French employers turned to other nations in Europe to help increase their labor supply. France needed to attract bodies to work the fields, mines, and factories, and the devastated Jews and Poles joined the millions of Italians, Armenians, Portuguese and Greeks who came seeking refuge and work. This helped stabilize and grow the French economy, and communities in France initially welcomed these new laborers.

The relationship benefitted both the French as well as the Eastern Europeans. In Poland, for example, the devastated economy could not nearly support the number of workers who sought work. This situation further contributed to the poor economy because wages remained low and the number of people who required services increased. The relationship between countries with large underserved labor forces and France proved even more essential in 1924 when the United States passed the Immigration Act of 1924. The law significantly limited the number of Eastern and Southern Europeans who could immigrate to the United States. The growing and underserved French economy became a much more prominent destination for the Jews of Eastern Europe.

The majority of Eastern European Jews who immigrated to France during the interwar period traveled by trains. Often, these people arrived legally by acquiring
tourist visas and staying past the expiration date. They came with the intention of working and not returning, yet the immigrants did not completely cut ties with Poland. Most immigrants still had large families in Poland, and Jews often returned annually to visit with family or conduct business. One needed to wait a year before they could attain an identity card in France, so the first illegal year often left the immigrants in a precarious state. Throughout the 1920s a steady population of ten thousand Jewish immigrants a year arrived in France. This trend continued until 1931 when the effects of the international economic downturn took root in France. A lack of a need for workers led the French government to start policies that attempted to limit illegal immigration in 1931.

Not all Eastern European Jews got to France illegally. French companies recruited Italian, Polish, Spanish, Portuguese, and Romanian workers to come to France and work in agriculture, in the mines, or in factories to fill job positions in underpopulated sectors of the French economy. After Italy, Poland provided the largest work force through the recruiters after the First World War. Ethnic Poles had a tradition of providing seasonal migrant labor to Germany before the First World War. Only one hundred Jewish workers received job placements in the East of

Charles Zucker, an étranger Jew in France who immigrated to the United States in 1941, recalls that his father, who immigrated to France before the rest of the family, traveled back to Poland regularly to conduct business and be with family. Charles Zucker, interview by Benjamin Balshone, 1982. Other accounts indicate similar return visits to Poland to visit family including Maurice Rajfsus’s father seen in: Maurice Rajfsus, Mon père l’étranger: Un immigré juif polonais à Paris dans les années 1920 (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1989), 27.

France in Mont-Saint-Martin, Thionville and other parts of Alsace. The jobs that came from French companies did not offer permanent employment nor a path to citizenship, which may help explain why so few Jews accepted positions through the recruiters despite the abundant number of Jews with the proper qualifications. Jews may have themselves selected to travel illegally instead of through the recruiters because they intended to immigrate permanently. Coming to France illegally may actually demonstrate a commitment and desire to attain French citizenship more than one who came seeking employment.

Spain acted as another gateway through which those who eventually engaged in France entered the country. During the Spanish Civil War (1936-April 1939), over 30,000 foreigners, came to fight on both sides of the war, of which 5,000-7,500 were Jewish soldiers along with eight Jewish commanders. Germany and Italy contributed to the Fascist General Franco by providing planes, pilots, artillery, and naval support. On the other side of the war, left-leanring activists from Americans to Poles engaged with the Republicans (those who wanted to maintain the Democratic Republic instead of a Dictatorship). Jews influenced by the Comintern, other left-leaning politics, or a desire to defeat Fascism fought against

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Franco. Almost all of the Jews who fought in Spain joined with the Communist POUM (Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista). During their engagement in the Spanish Civil War, the Jews learned important skills that translated to their fight in the French Resistance. They learned how to aim and fire weapons, how to make bombs, and other important skills for guerilla warfare.

After the last of the Spanish Republican coalition forces officially surrendered to France on April 1, 1939, some of the étranger Jewish fighters were able to repatriate to Poland, Romania or the USSR. Others, however, fled north to France to escape Franco with tens of thousands of Basques, Spanish farmers, and other members of the International brigades. The French government interned these masses in camps in southwestern France, the most prominent of them being Gurs. Hundreds of Jews stayed in these camps. Some Jews like Trocki Hirsch, a Polish Jew who had lived in Paris before fighting in the Spanish Civil War, escaped Gurs and then enlisted in the Régiments de marche de volontaires étrangers (RMVE). The RMVE units allowed étranger people to fight in the French infantry. Others, like Marcel Langer, the first leader of the FTP-MOI in the Toulouse area (one of the most active regions for the Resistance), did not enlist in the military but played a vital role

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49 Translation: The Workers’ Party of Marxist Unification
in the Resistance. These are but two examples of the hundreds of Jews who first engaged in Spain and then in France.

A final path of arrival to France of étranger Jews were the Jewish refugees who fled the widespread outbreak of fascist and nationalist rhetoric and violence from Germany and Poland to Hungary and the Soviet Union. From 1935 to 1939 thousands of the Jewish refugees came to France hoping to escape the persecution. These immigrants often felt deep resentment for the countries they left, and many would eventually enlist to fight in the Second World War.

Unlike the positive reception that Jewish immigrants received when the French economy needed their labor, the arrival of refugees in the late 1930s sparked fierce opposition. The primary source of anti-refugee rhetoric came in the form of anti-Semitism in France from Action Française, the prominent vocal anti-democratic, nationalist Far-Right political party. Though they had levied attacks against immigrants and Jews since before the Dreyfus Affair, the organization acted especially prominently in 1938 and 1939 as Jews sought asylum in increasing numbers. In 1938, Action Française’s attacks against the refugees augmented after Kristallnacht, Nazi paramilitary forces and German civilians who targeted and destroyed Jewish businesses, synagogues, and homes on November 9 and 10. Kristallnacht brought a large wave of Jewish refugees into France who told the horror stories of Nazi Germany. Action Française accused the Jewish refugees in

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France of trying to drag France into a war of their own making against Germany.\textsuperscript{52} To quell the growing popularity of these threats levied by the far Right, the Prime Minister of France, Édouard Daladier, of the Radical Party, declared that all refugees of age would immediately enlist in the French military. The government granted the refugees asylum, but also forced them to “prove” their commitment to the nation. A compromise between the Radicals and the far Right demonstrates the magnitude of the growing fears that the mainstream political engine felt towards the far Right.

\textit{Daily Life during the Interwar Period}

Despite the harsh treatment that the Jews in France witnessed with Action Française in the late 1930s, the beginning of the interwar period provided the étranger Jews with ample opportunities to grow their communities. Eastern European Jewish immigrants to France almost universally arrived in Paris during the interwar period. In Paris, they inevitably resided in one of the predominately Jewish communities: Saint-Denis and Belleville (primarily working class), the Marais, or near Montparnasse for those involved in the arts or education.\textsuperscript{53} Most pre-First World War immigrants chose France because they wanted to attend university for

medicine or law or to be an artist while the majority of non-academic Eastern European immigrants before 1924 went to the USA. Non-professionals who immigrated during the interwar period often chose France because their family members had already established themselves in the community. For example, the mother of Victor Zigelman, a Jewish veteran, came because her brother already established himself in France, and could support the new immigrants.54

Ashkenazi immigrants typically lived in dwellings with living conditions well below the average standard of living in France. Victor Zigelman contributes to a better understanding of the living conditions. In his biography, he recalls that his immigrant family (though he was born in France to Polish-Jewish parents) lived without electricity or running water, though they did have gas.55 They also tended to live in very small apartments due to low wages in sectors of the economic in which the Jewish immigrants worked. Jews primarily worked in the textile and commerce sectors of the French economy. The influx of immigrants overcrowded these industries which kept wages low. Low wages and long work hours resulted in community playing a large role in rearing the children of Jewish immigrants. Having a strong community proved essential in order to survive, because long hours at work for parents resulted in parents not able to spend ample time with their children. Grandparents, siblings,

54 The mother of Victor Zigelman, the son of an immigrant, came because her brother was already established in France. Isabelle Pleskoff, Portraits de Victor Zigelman (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2009), 44.
55 Ibid.
and community centers helped raise the children. Luckily for the hard-working parents, political Parties played a vital role in providing care possibilities for the immigrants’ children. Children played sports, learned about the Parties, and connected them to their Ashkenazi/Yiddish roots. The French sections of political parties separated étrangers from their formal organizations, so étranger Jews primary initiated and organized these happenings (Communist and Socialist Jews created over twenty-nine Jewish union sections in the interwar period). The connections to political Parties from such a young age further contributed to the rise of political affiliations and political activity in the étranger Jewish community.

Étranger Jews were very segregated based on religious affiliation and geographical origin. In Jacques Burstein-Finer’s memoire, Burstein-Finer, a secular Jew, states that few religious Jews immigrated to France, but “the majority did not come anymore to sit at the [Shabbat] table with their parents.” Burstein-Finer lived in Belleville (the secular working class Jewish community) and away from the religious Jewish communities. The increase of synagogues during this era suggests that some étranger Jews did continue to practice Judaism, although they were in the minority. The major differences between the members of the étranger Jewish community came for their differences in political views rather than religious

57 Jacques Burstein-Finer, Paris terre d'espoir (Le Sycomore, 1979), 233.
58 This source sums up reports from the Consistoire central israélite de France (the official institution that represents the Jewish religion in France). "The Holocaust in France: Jewish Immigration from Eastern Europe to France," Yad Vashem, http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/holocaust/france/#!prettyPhoto.
differences.

The primarily secular étranger Jews spent their time in the cultural and political spheres. The Farband (Yiddish) served as an umbrella organization for immigrant societies. They organized plays in the theaters, cinema viewings, helped finance newspapers, and provided other services for the immigrant communities. Étranger Jews also recall their deep connections to local sporting clubs like the Yiddisher Arbeiter Sport Klub (Yiddish Worker’s Sports Club). Members of these communities remember that sports played an important role for Jews to break free of the weak perception that they felt the French had for them.

Immigrant communities were dedicated to maintaining the Yiddish language as their primary tongue, which caused a lot of tension with all established French communities. Jewish Yiddish life prospered during the interwar period. The étranger Jewish community published over one hundred forty six Yiddish newspapers from 1918 to 1939. Zionists, Bundists, and Communists were all dedicated to maintaining the language as their primary tongue. Therefore, they held all meetings in Yiddish, taught their kids Yiddish and some even refused to invite guests who did

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60 Zigelman describes the central role that sports played to instill pride and a sense of purpose in the local communities. Pleskoff, *Portrait De Victor Zigelman*.


not speak their language. Further, the constant stream of new immigrants, coupled with the relatively insular étranger Jewish communities further promoted the strength of the language. Even libraries with the same goals of promoting and preserving the Yiddish language segregated based on political views. Communists created the Sholem Aleikhem library with over 3,800 books and literature. The Bundists then created the Bibliothèque Medem, which still operates in Paris as a Yiddish library and learning center.

**Tensions between Étranger Jewish and Israelite Communities in France**

The Israelites, acculturated Jews in France who disassociated from the étranger Jewish community, knew little about the étranger Jews, and often feared that the étranger Jewish presence in France would diminished the extent of their assimilation. An Israelite Jew, André Spire, wrote that the arrival of the Jewish immigrants in France exasperated him. Even before large populations of impoverished Jews sought economic and political refuge in France, the French Israelites worked to limit the need of impoverished Jews to immigrate to France. Marriages between Israelites and étranger Jews were frowned upon by both

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communities. Culture, language, religion, and politics divided the French Israelites and étranger Jewish communities.

For over one hundred and fifty years, one of the most influential French Israelite organizations, the Alliance Israélite Universelle (AIU), has worked to promote prosperity for the Jews outside of France. Their primary charter came from a desire to make the Jews of the world auto sufficient and safe. The AIU believed in an international union of Jews, and sought to ameliorate the living situations for impoverished Jews in their native countries. This philanthropic organization provided a secular French education in many countries like Morocco, Romania, Russia, and Turkey. The AIU hoped that the French language would provide a means of mobility for impoverished Jews, and help them better acculturate into the international world.

The AIU had strong ties to an organization called the Jewish Colonization Association (JCA), whose objective was to help relocate persecuted Jews out of the impoverished regions of Eastern Europe (especially the Russian Empire) and to countries outside of Europe. The JCA provided agricultural land for the immigrants, with the hope that owning land would improve acculturation and acceptance in the new communities around the world: Argentina, Palestine, and even the USA, yet never France or Western Europe. The AIU and JCA organizations had strong administrative ties, and the founder of the JCA, Baron Maurice (Zvi) de Hirsch, gave

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his first substantial philanthropic gift of one million francs in 1873 to the AIU.\textsuperscript{68} The AIU’s involvement demonstrates their desire to keep the majority of the Jewish immigrants out of France during the first wave of immigration, from 1880 to 1914, yet as the United States reduced its willingness to welcome Jewish immigrants, the AIU could no longer restrict the flow of Jews to France.

The French Israelite fears of the effects of the unintegrated étranger Jews on the French opinion of all Jews can be traced to the Dreyfus Affair (1894-1906). The French military establishment wrongfully accused Captain Alfred Dreyfus of providing information to the Germans. The wrongful conviction divided the nation, and the Jewish community witnessed the widespread anti-Semitism present in their nation. In response to this discrimination, the French Jewish community redefined itself by adopting the term Israélite. Prior to the Affair, Jews interchangeably called themselves Juifs, Israélites, or Mosaistes.\textsuperscript{69} In 1897, a prominent Jewish leader Claude Levy proclaimed that, “We, French Israelites, we are French first and Jewish second.”\textsuperscript{70} This quote is from 1897, the heart of the Dreyfus Affair. One can see that the community does not lose the Jewish identity, yet it makes its priority of French allegiance clear. The arrival of the étranger Jews, with their foreign attire, more

\textsuperscript{70} In original French: “Nous, Israélites Français, nous sommes Français d’abord, Juifs ensuite.” ibid., 96.
religious practices, foreign tongue, and clear political lean resulted in the Israelite community placing blame on the étranger Jews for “the outbreak of the anti-Semitic movement.”71

Overall, relations between the étranger Jews and the French Israelites remained strained throughout the interwar period. Étranger Jewish organizations also regularly refused to work with the haut-bourgeoisie. Members of the Bund refused to work with the Fédération des sociétés juives de France and declared that they would never work with them.72 However, after the Second World War, these communities found ways to rebuild French Jewish institution and life and came together in many ways.

**Popular Front, Refugees, 1930s in France**

The 1920s proved to be a rather positive time for étranger Jews in France. They developed cultural centers and other landsmanshaftn (philanthropic organizations), received French naturalization more easily, and felt relatively safe compared Jews living in Eastern Europe. However, the global economic crises of the 1930s disrupted this time of advancement for the étranger Jewish community. The French economy started to react to the effects of the global economic depression in 1931, which contributed to economic woes until the Post-War era. These economic

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71 Ibid., 101.
72 "Brochure de l'arbeter Ring." (Décembre 1933).
conditions coupled with the ominous realization that the external Nazi threat was real and significant encouraged Socialists, Communists and the Radicals to work together and form a Popular Front (PF), a left wing coalition that controlled the government from May 1936 to the autumn of 1938. The PF rallied these previously fractured political entities around fighting against Fascism, opposition to war preparations, and pledges of each party not to the other two parties.

The enormous political movement, the Popular Front (PF), sought to alleviate the massive economic problems in the economy through collaboration and compromise. The concerns that Socialists and Communists had with working with one another was consistent at the national level and within the étranger Jewish communities. The two groups did not trust one another because they had very different means (Revolution for the Communists or working within the system to enact change for the Socialists) to the same end (equality and protection of the worker). Léon Blum, a French Israelite member of the Socialist Party and the Prime Minister of France during the Popular Front from 1936 to 1937, led the PF to victory. The movement that Blum steered effectively unified the parties of the Left (Socialists and Communists) and the more center Radicals. By the thousands (14 to 15 thousand, by some predictions) Jews joined the Popular Front and fought with Blum for workers’ rights.73

The Popular Front temporarily brought the étranger Jewish communities

together. The Bund, the Communists, and the Zionists worked to build ties despite their formerly strained relationships. Internal conflicts regarding policies of international affairs, particularly with regards to the Spanish Civil War, plagued the alliance between the Communists, Socialists, and Radicals, yet the politically diverse group of Jews and their French counterparts were able to work collectively to pass economic reforms i.e. reduction of the work week to forty hours. The Popular Front rewarded the Jewish involvement in many ways. The Bund received enough funds from the Popular Front government to create a summer camp with three barracks in the woods in Vieux-Moulin that could accommodate one hundred students, which represents a small yet tangible example of the benefits of the PF for the étranger Jewish community. The unity that the PF imposed on the Jewish communities in France started a trend that the étranger Jewish community tried to recreate after the war.

Léon Blum’s optimistic policies tried to quell the chances of another major war through disarmament, diplomacy, and appeasement. Clearly, these policies did not alleviate the tensions of Europe, and war broke out a year after the PF fell. Blum and the PF did take two actions that helped them prepare for war. First, they increased the conscription time for all eligible citizens to two years. Naturalized citizens also had to serve in the military. Second, the PF government built stronger

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75 Ibid., 253.
relations with the British government, which had been previously strained. 76

Unfortunately for France, Blum’s decision to invest little in the military 77, coupled with the lack of ingenuity among the upper tier generals made a French defeat almost inevitable. 78 The Battle for France would only last a few weeks. Though the Popular Front succeeded in attaining many gains for the working society, the government failed to leverage effectively its momentum beyond a year. Its allegiances with the Communists (attached to the USSR) and the Socialists (devoted to pacifism) resulted in the Popular Front not having enough power to act as an international power. Instead, France stagnated both economically and geopolitically because of the policies and inaction of the alliance.

The same fear of war and economic downturn that stimulated the rise of the PF also led the French government to stop providing naturalizations for étrangers. The contrast in the government’s approach to étrangers between 1927 and 1932 is swift, harsh, and critical for the Jewish immigrants. In 1927, the Assemblée Nationale adopted a law that “facilitates access of foreigners to French nationality.” 79 In 1927, one only needed three years of uninterrupted residence instead of ten in order to be able to make a naturalization claim. Over 485,000

77 Ibid., 90.
78 Marc Bloch, an established Jew, comments on the extensive failures of commanding officers in their planning and reactions to German actions. He was an officer in the military. Marc Bloch, Strange Defeat; a Statement of Evidence Written in 1940 (New York: Octagon Books, 1968).
79 Extensive background information provided in the permanent exhibition Repères located at the Musée de l’histoire de l’immigration in Paris.
naturalizations, not all Jewish, were processed from 1927 to 1935 as a result of this law. Then came the global economic downturn. In response to the depressed job market, in 1932 the French Parliament unanimously voted to protect the *main d’oeuvre* (workforce) by enacting quotas of foreign workers in every sector of the economy. In 1934-1935, the government went as far as “returning” people to their country of origin.80

Étranger Communist Jews sensationally joined the Parti communiste français (PCF) in calls to prevent Jewish refugees from coming into the country during the economic crisis. The PCF announced in their daily newspaper “C’EST COMPLET (it’s full, no more room), the refugees have invaded our Paris.”81 The PC then outlawed branches of the party for foreign speakers. At the same time, *la commission intersyndicale juive*82 (dominated by communists) demanded that Jews “abstained from coming to France no matter what the situation in fascist countries” because the Communist Jews felt that the workers were already exploited and the refugees would take their jobs.83 Many étranger Communist Jews felt a stronger connection to the International than to the other étranger Jews.

80 Ibid.
82 Translation: The Jewish Unions Commission.
Jewish Fighting during the Second World War

In 1940, forty million people inhabited France, and an estimated 300-320,000 of them were Jewish. The start of the Second World War ended an era of massive population growth that brought one hundred and twenty thousand étranger Jews to France (counting both étrangers and their offspring) within a twenty-year period. Seventy thousands of these étrangers received their naturalization primarily between 1927 and 1935 while the government relaxed naturalization laws. Almost every able Jewish man (étranger or Israelite), and some étranger women (who fought with the Resistance units) engaged against the Nazis during the Second World War. All of the étranger Jews who were not obliged to serve in the military had the option to volunteer to fight in the French military in 1939, and those who were not in POW camps could have joined Resistance groups during the German occupation. The decisions of how, if, and when they engaged varied greatly based on the individual political views of étranger Jews.

Historical writing about étranger Jewish fighting against Germany in France during the Second World War primarily cites examples of the effective and numerous étranger Communist Resistance groups within the Francs-tireurs et partisans-Main-d’œuvre immigrée (FTP-MOI). The FTP-MOI included groups from different regions in France, as well as a section for people too young to fight.

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officially in the larger units called the *Union de la jeunesse juive* (UJJ).86 The FTP-MOI
groups served as factions within the French Communist Party (PCF), but their
étranger status required them to form outside of the primary Resistance structure of
the PCF.

Though the FTP-MOI groups did influence the success of the overall
Resistance, the few hundred Jews who engaged in this capacity pale in comparison
to the tens of thousands of Jews who engaged in the military. Yet, those who fought
in the military have not been sufficiently studied in the scholarly realm. For example,
Renée Poznanski’s book *Jews in France during World War II* contains almost five
hundred pages that discuss Jewish life in France under German and Vichy rule. Large
sections are devoted to discussions of Resistance fighting, yet only two pages
contain information about the twenty-five thousand étranger Jews who enlisted
(only about sixteen thousand were called to fight) in the French military, and nothing
about French Israeliite citizens who fought in the war against Germany.87 Derek
of the USSR, USA, United Kingdom, and even Canada, yet when discussing France, he
only analyzes the Jewish engagement in the Resistance.88 Contrary to these former
omissions, this study will spend an equal amount of time describing the

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86 Translation: Union of Jewish Youth
87 Sections about Resistance fighters include “From Clandestineness to Resistance” and “The
Jewish Resistance: Between Specificity and Adaptation”. Pages 19-20 about étranger Jews
who joined the French military in: Renée Poznanski, *Jews in France During World War II*
(Waltham, Mass.; Hanover, N.H.: Brandeis University Press in association with the United
engagements of the étranger Jews in the French army as well as the Jews in the various Resistance groups. Scholars have not broached the topic of disunity within the militants in the étranger Jewish community, and as a result they do not have the means to understand the distinct motivations to engage of different étranger Jews.

**Étranger Jews in the French Military during the Battle for France**

On May 27, 1939, étranger residents of France saw a widely publicized report that the Prime Minister of France, Édouard Daladier, decided to permit foreign residents to enlist and fight in special units of the French military. The first day that enrollment centers accepted foreign applicants for the military, thousands of étrangers amassed at the War Ministry on Rue St. Dominique in Paris or the Yiddish Theater on Rue de Lancry in Paris to register. *(Figure 5).* The French government promised these foreigners the same benefits as other soldiers: proper training, quality living conditions, and recognition of their service after the war.\(^89\) The tens of thousands of étranger Jews represented the largest minority group that served in the RMVE, and they serve along with thousands of Armenians, Greeks, Portuguese, and especially Spanish volunteers.

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\(^89\) *Engagements pour la durée de la guerre souscrits par les étrangers*, 1939.
The primary motivations for these étranger Jews to enlist in the military included a desire to defend their pays d’accueil (host country), to contribute to the end of Fascism that they understood affected the lives of their coreligionists throughout the Diaspora, and to eventually attain French naturalization. Many étranger Jews also thought that being a veteran would make their families less vulnerable to attacks. With the exception of some communities within the Communist and Zionist parties, most étranger Jews wanted what Boris Holban, an étranger Jews wanted: “to feel integrated in the French army.” Social pressures and a sense of duty drove the étranger Jews who volunteered for the French military more than political motivations. Motivations to engage varied greatly for many of the étranger Communist Jews who eventually fought in the Resistance.

Not all étranger Jews living in France took the opportunity to enlist in the military, particularly some étranger Communist Jews whose allegiances to the Comintern and France contradicted each other. While preparing for war, the French military entered refugee camps such as Gurs, which held evacuees from the Spanish Civil War, and offered the étranger Jews and Spaniards the opportunity to join the volunteer units of the army. Some refugees like Marcel Langer, an étranger

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Communist Jew who fought in the Spanish Civil War and was an important leader in the FTP-MOI, refused to enlist because the Comintern communicated to all Communists not to enlist while they proceeded with peace talks with the Germans. Langer eventually engaged in the FTP-MOI, until the French police arrested and executed him for his activities in the Resistance. To further elucidate the complexity of the identities of these men, Langer’s final letters to his family professed his passion for France. He repeatedly writes, “Vive la France.”93 The political affiliations of the étranger Communist Jews influenced how they engaged during the Second World War, and the decisions to show more allegiance to the Comintern continued to create conflict in the Post-War era.

Many of the étranger Communist Jews who had similar mixed allegiances between France and the Comintern decided to take the opportunity to enlist in the French army. A few months after étranger Jews could first volunteer for the military, the USSR signed the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact in August 1939, which aligned the Nazis and the Soviet Union. This pact caused some étranger Communist Jews living in France to have a conflict of interest.94 After Germany and the USSR invaded Poland on September 1, 1939, étranger Communist Jews such as Boria Lerner, Joseph Epstein, or Max Sarcey became disenchanted by Moscow, and subsequently

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93 Combattants, Héros et martyrs de la Résistance: Biographies, dernières lettres, témoignages et documents.
enlisted in the French army.95 By not immediately engaging or not engaging at all, the rest of the Jewish community perceived the étranger Communist Jewish action as a lack of support for France, which acted as a source of tension within the Jewish community after the war while the community tried to rebuild itself.

Selecting from the tens of thousands of applicants, the French army primarily organized the group of étrangers into three infantry regiments: 21st, 22nd et 24th RMVE units. The troops trained in the Pyrénées Orientales at Camp de Barcarès from October 1939 until May 10, 1940. Unlike the promises of equal treatment of the French government, the volunteers regularly remarked of their second class treatment. Most of their armaments and clothing were surplus from the First World War, and the French military paid little attention to providing the soldiers with properly fitting uniforms.96 The soldiers of the RMVE units received training that failed to resemble the theater of war that awaited them. The old-school French Generals ordered the Officers to train the soldiers in trench/bayonet warfare, like the French army saw during the First World War. This type of war barely manifested itself at all during the German invasion a year later.97 The soldiers waited for nearly eight months while training and hearing the news of the German victories.

throughout Europe. The restless soldiers claimed after the war that throughout this period of waiting, they felt a deep desire to engage the enemy in battle.98

With war eminent, military officials in May 1940 ordered the troops of the 21st RMVE to travel by train to the Ardennes Forest on the border with Belgium where they performed regular patrols until June 8, 1940. Many hundreds died the following two days when the units entered combat with the Nazis. Their units quickly reorganized under Lt. Colonel Martyn on June 16, 1940, and that day they achieved their first victory in the woods of Ansiota and the city of Allain.99 More fighting continued for a few days, until they received orders to ceasefire on June 22, 1940.100 At the end of only six weeks, the RMVE units had casualty rates above fifty percent (almost five times larger than most units within the French military). The dangerous missions that the commanders ordered, coupled with their poor equipment contributed to these high rates of death and injury.

Sixteen days before the surrender of the 21st RMVE, on June 6, 1940, the entire 22nd RMVE surrendered to the Germany army, and all members of the Regiment were taken to POW camps.101 In the proceeding days upon surrendering,

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98 Ibid.
99 For information about citations received by the Jews in the RMVE units, see this document from the Service historique de la Défense Château de Vincennes: Paul Debussy, "Citations Concernant Les Officiers, Sous-Officiers et Hommes De Troupe Du 21ieme R.M.V.E. (Mai-Juini 1940)." ed. Bordereau d'Envoi (Perpignan, Pyrennes Orientales1941).
100 Military note about the orders for the RMVE units to move: "Notice: Concernant Le 21 Régiment De Marche Des Volontaires Etrangers En 1940."
the rest of the troops in the RMVE units were also transported to the POW camps in Germany. At the beginning the Germans did not effectively organize the internment of 1.8 million French soldiers, yet soon the organization of the prisons allowed the Germans to transfer the prisoners to agricultural jobs that the German conscripts left when they joined the military.$^{102}$ The conditions of the POW camps were far superior in comparison to Auschwitz and other concentration or extermination camps exclusively for Jews and other targets of the Nazi Regime. Soldiers reported that they sent correspondences, organized sports teams, participated in orchestras, and even voted on their leaders.$^{103}$ The time that the étranger Jews spent in POW camps ironically saved their lives. The Vichy regime, French government that collaborated with the Nazis and had jurisdiction over the south of France, also highlighted its limited influence over the Nazis to support good conditions for its soldiers. Vichy used the good treatment of the soldiers and the occasional release of prisoners as evidence of the benefits of collaboration.$^{104}$ The government also made the argument, through a series of propaganda campaigns, that the soldiers in captivity would come back rehabilitated into conservative and patriotic people.$^{105}$

Except for a few étranger Jews who escaped the camps, the soldiers spent the entire war in the POW camps. Later in the war, the étranger Jewish prisoners were isolated

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$^{104}$ Julian Jackson, France: The Dark Years, 1940-1944 (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 123.

in their own camps, yet they never were deported to extermination camps because the Germans observed the rules of the Geneva Convention that protected POWs in order to protect German-French relations.

Étranger Jews, typically Communists, who did not enlist in the RMVE units were drafted to the ranks of the Polish and Czech armies that had reorganized in France. After a crippling defeat by the Germans and the Soviets, on September 9, 1939 the Polish Army and the French government came to an agreement that the Polish army could reestablish itself in France. The official government documents that organized the Polish army in France show that the Polish government drafted all men between the age of seventeen and forty-five living in France for their military units in France. The government went to extreme lengths to make sure that the Polish citizens in France understood this new regulation: Sixty thousand flyers were to be pasted throughout France, every radio station had a reminder three times a day, and the Polish army reached the communities through Polish (and therefore some Jewish) community leaders. Upon hearing this decision, many Jews enlisted in the French military or failed to respond to the draft, because they wanted to avoid the same discrimination in the Polish army as they experienced in Poland. Yet, some étranger Jews did fight along with their Polish compatriots. An example of this engagement is the prolific author Adam Rayski, an étranger Communist Jew, who

was drafted into the Polish section of the French military in 1940. His allegiance was to both Poland and the Comintern. After the war, Rayski returned to Poland “my home,” but returned to France in 1956.\(^\text{108}\) He embraced an identity as French, and played a significant role in 2009 in the fracturing of the Jewish community. The fact that he waited to enlist in the French army until he was legally forced to demonstrates his primary allegiance to the Comintern. Rayski, and his étranger Communist Jewish peers, continued to fight on behalf of the Comintern after the Pact between Russia and Germany was ruptured in 1941.

\textbf{Étranger Communist Jews in the Resistance}

Étranger Communist Jews residing in Paris in 1941 helped form the Resistance group called the \textit{main d’œuvre immigrée} (MOI). This Resistance cell eventually unified with the Communist French group \textit{Frans-tireurs et partisans} (FTP) to form the FTP-MOI. Initially, saving persecuted Jews did not serve as the primary focus of this primarily Jewish Communist organization, but rather their goals were to win victory over Germany and to establish Communism in Europe and beyond.\(^\text{109}\) Their ranks were filled with étranger communists living in France who were not part of the French Communist Party; the étranger Communist Armenian community provided almost an equal number of militants to the FTP-MOI, and the


Jews and Armenians fought side by side. Although integrated with the FTP, these groups depended directly on Jacques Duclos, who passed on orders from the Communist International (Comintern). Members of the FTP-MOI also included other immigrants, especially many Armenians and young Hungarian writers, artists and intellectuals. Among them were the painter Sándor Józsa; sculptor István Hajdú (Etienne Hajdu); journalists László Kőrösi and Imre Gyomra; photographers Andras (André) Steiner, Lucien Hervé, and Ervin Marton; and printer Ladislas Mandel. Over six hundred Jews participated in the Resistance movement in France in one way or another.

Over 40% of the étranger Jewish fighters were women, while in the overall Resistance very few French women participated in these groups. In Eastern Europe, some of the most important political leaders were women. For example, Esther Frumkin was one of the most active leaders of the Bund in Poland from 1901 until her death during the Holocaust. Mila Racine, a Soviet Jew, immigrated to Paris during the interwar period. She worked for the Eclaireurs Israelites de France, tracking the movements of the Germans on the border between the Free Zone and the Occupied Zone. She was a devout Zionist-Socialist, yet served alongside many immigrant Communist female Jews.

110 Boris Holban, Hélène Studler: La passeuse de liberté; La vie héroïque d’une religieuse, Grande Patriote et Grande Résistante Messine (Woippy: Klopp, 1999).
112 Ibid.
The popularity of the FTP-MOI soared during the German campaign against the FTP-MOI group in Paris in mid-November 1943. The Nazis launched a direct propaganda attack against the group. The propaganda campaign came in the form of a massive postering campaign throughout France. People called the poster the *l'affiche rouge* (the Red Poster) (Figure 8). The posters question the motivations of the “Liberators” by pointing out that the group is an “Army of Crime” and terrorists.\(^{113}\) *L'affiche rouge* tried to call on the population to change their views of the Communist Resistance. The FTP-MOI had enough influence on the Nazi’s power structure that the Nazis felt the need to attack the integrity of the Communist Jews after they had killed them. The bold Communist Red colors meant to scare the public and associate the acts not with freedom and anti-Fascism, but terrorism and Communism. *L'affiche Rouge* remains a symbol of the Resistance, so much so that director Robert Guédiguian made a film about this group in 2009 called *L'Armée du crime* (The army of crime).\(^{114}\)

A primary question that is posed when studying étranger Jewish Communist groups is whether they fought for the Jewish people. Adam Rayski, who fought with the FTP-MOI after engaging with the Polish Army in France, claimed that he did. He stated, “in historical memory, the [pains] advance quicker for the Jews than for


other people. The time of others is not exactly that of our own.\textsuperscript{115} By placing more emphasis on the Jewish people over the troubles of others, he backs away from the primary Communist premise of fighting equally for all. By reviewing the log of the FTP-MOI in Lyon one notes that almost every mission gears itself around the destruction of properties with the goal of hurting the Fascist state until the coalition of the CRIF in 1943.\textsuperscript{116} During the war era, étranger Communist Jews, such as Rayski, reconnected with their étranger Jewish roots. By fighting for Jews, they seemed to reconnect with the Jewish components of their identity, which helped unite the Jews after the war. Yet, the political components continued to promote disunity, as will be demonstrated in the next chapter.

\textsuperscript{115} In original French: “sur l’horloge de l’histoire, les aiguilles avancement plus vite pour les Juifs que pour les autres peoples. Le temps des autres n’est pas précisément le nôtre” Loinger and Zeitoun, \textit{Les Résistances Juives Pendant L’occupation}, 36.

\textsuperscript{116} Diamant, \textit{Jeune Combat: La jeunesse juive dans la Résistance}, Actions des Groupes FTP-MOI à Lyon 85-98.
Chapter II: Jewish Community Unification after the Second World War

Through interviews and email correspondence, Henri Zytnicki provided a lot of the framework for Chapter II. Zytnicki, born in 1938, has no memories of his father who died while fighting in the RMVE units in the French Army. Nonetheless, Zytnicki feels a strong connection to the étranger Jewish community, and he works to continue its legacy by leading the *Union des engagés volontaires, anciens combattants juifs* (UEVACJ), a veteran’s organization that fought to maintain the strong social ties among the étranger Jewish veterans while fighting for veteran rights with the French government. The French Jewish community, from all ideologies and class backgrounds, united against a common enemy during the war, but the illusions of unity that the Jewish organizations, like Zytnicki’s, tried to portray after the war did not hold. This chapter aims to demonstrate ways in which the organizations functioned apart from one another. Zytnicki tries to make the case that the UEVACJ and the *Union des Juifs pour la Résistance et l’entraide* (UJRE), the counterpart to the UEVACJ for the étranger Communists in the Resistance, functioned with each other, and occasionally they did, but for the most part these communities (like many other divides in the French Jewish communities in France) did not remain united.
The Organization of the Jewish Communities during the Second World War

Vichy and the Jews (Part I: Harsh Conditions for the Jewish Population in France)

At the end of the six-week Battle of France in June 1940 an estimated 1.8 million soldiers from all corners of the French army entered Prisoner of War (POW) camps in Germany. Throughout the rest of the war, the POWs worked out of labor camps, and the Nazis released few of them. While almost all of the Jews who engaged in the French military, both étranger and French, labored in German camps such as Hohenfels, hundreds of thousands of their fellow Jews in France lived for the next four years under the control of two authoritarian governments.117 The Nazis controlled the government and population in the zone occupée (Paris, the north, and the western coast), and a French government installed in Vichy controlled the zone libre (south of France including Mediterranean coast). An equal number of Jews lived in each zone, and during the first two years Jews flowed towards the zone libre while fleeing the Nazis. In 1942, with the help of the collaboration of Senior French officials, the Nazis took de facto control of the Vichy government. The augmentation of Nazi Power in the zone libre brought a reduction in both the security and overall quality of life for Jews in France.

Vichy betrayed both French Jewish citizens as well as Jews who sought refuge in France during the Second World War. The Vichy regime reduced the rights of all

117 Combattants, Le combattant volontaire juif, 1939-1945 ... 25e Anniversaire de l’union des engagés volontaires et anciens combattants juifs, 61.
Jewish people by passing over twelve statutes that explicitly targeted the Jews in France. The first legislation against the Jews came in July 1940, about a month into the creation of the Regime; the statue allowed the Vichy Regime to denaturalize (revoked previous naturalizations) étranger Jews who had received their naturalizations in or after 1927. Written in *Révolution Française* (platform of the Vichy Regime), the leaders of Vichy France determined that étranger Communists and Jews were responsible for the military defeat against the Nazis, and therefore were “unworthy of French citizenship”, which the Regime used to justify stripping étranger Jews of their naturalizations. Pierre Laval, a French politician who served as Prime Minister of the Vichy Regime at various times, promoted anti-Jewish legislation because of his nativist/anti-Semitic beliefs. His rhetoric further justified the denaturalizations by claiming that the étrangers took jobs from French people, and over six thousand Jews in France lost their naturalizations as a result of these policies. This first statute provided the legal justification for the deportation of étranger Jews after 1942, and all of these étrangers’ lives were threatened.

Despite the abundant anti-Jewish regulations passed during the Vichy Regime, some French Israelites believed that Vichy would protect them in the long-run. Some historians claim that the Vichy regime initially intended to protect the French Israelites. Robert Paxton disagree suggesting that the Armistice with the

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118 "Loi portant statut des juifs," (Vichy, 1940).
120 Ibid.
Germans created breathing room for the Vichy officials, and therefore the Vichy leaders themselves promoted the anti-Jewish laws.\(^{121}\) Nevertheless, some French Israelites continued to believe in the French state, but they became victims of its policies a few months later. The Vichy regime passed legislation that affected the entire Jewish community. Vichy excluded all Jewish professionals from their fields such as the army, medicine, journalism, and the government. By 1941, laws completely excluded all Jews from engaging in business or commerce.

In spite of these harsh restrictions against the Jewish communities in France, many members of the French Israelite community had previously considered the supreme leader of the Vichy regime, Maréchal Pétain, a friend. Some of the French Israelites believed that he would act on their behalf. For example, Jacques Helbronner, a French Israelite who served as President of the Central Consistoire, knew Pétain well and met with him regularly during the Occupation. In his correspondences with Pétain, Helbronner seemed sure that the Maréchal would protect the Jews.\(^{122}\) Helbronner was known in the étranger Jewish community as “Maréchal’s Jew,” which the étranger Jewish communities intended as an insult because they viewed this friendship as a betrayal of Helbronner against his coreligionists.\(^{123}\)

\(^{121}\) Ibid, 112.
\(^{122}\) Jackson, France: The Dark Years, 1940-1944, 364.
\(^{123}\) Adler and Mazal Holocaust, The Jews of Paris and the Final Solution: Communal Response and Internal Conflicts, 1940-1944, 95.
Overall, some French Israelites felt that by supporting the Vichy regime they would maintain their status as French and could further demonstrate their commitment to France.\textsuperscript{124} In some respects, the Vichy regime did protect the French Israelites more than the étranger Jews. The majority of the Jews who the Nazis deported were étranger and refugee Jews without citizenship, yet many who previously had citizenship (French Israelites or naturalized étranger Jews) were also deported and killed at Auschwitz. The disparities between the French Israelite and étranger Jewish communities promoted further divisions during the war. Étranger Jews eventually reorganized apart from their coreligionists due to the disproportionate treatment that the French Israelites perceived they deserved.\textsuperscript{125}

During the summer in 1942, the French government used shortages of necessities as a means of justifying the internment and deportation of étranger Jews. The Vichy regime claimed that the étranger Jews ran the black markets and consumed resources that otherwise could have served the French citizens.\textsuperscript{126} The étranger Jews did play a large role in the black market in France, yet not all scholars concur with the validity of the propaganda of the Vichy regime that stated that the black market was bad for the French citizens. Historian Shannon Fogg, for example, recognized that the Black Market and the wealth that it brought the local

\textsuperscript{124} Jackson, \textit{France: The Dark Years, 1940-1944}, 364-69.
\textsuperscript{125} Adler and Mazal Holocaust, \textit{The Jews of Paris and the Final Solution: Communal Response and Internal Conflicts, 1940-1944}, 104.
populations of rural France forged strong relationships between the Jews and the local populations. Jews not only sold essential goods on the market, they also bought from locals which helped them sustain themselves during the economic harsh times. Contrary to any harmony that may have been created between Jews and the non-Jewish communities in France, the Vichy propaganda encouraged the isolation of Jews throughout France. Rhetoric that projected Jews as the primary problem surrounding the shortages essentially decimated the chances of the French Jewish community to ameliorate the Jewish situation in France.

Twenty-five percent of the Jewish population living in France during the Second World War died. Causes of death ranged from military deaths and executions of Resistance fighters to starvation and the murder of people who died in concentration camps and extermination camps. Most of those 75,000 died at Auschwitz, yet others died in French controlled detention centers: Vélodrome d’Hiver (Vél d’Hiv) (in Paris), Drancy (suburb of Paris), and Beaune-la Rolande (Loire Valley). Contrary to the bearable conditions of the soldiers in POW camps, survivors of the detention camps describe the severity of the French camps: Gendarmes (French Police) ordered prisoners to solitary confinement prisons, no one received permission to leave (POWs left the camps to work and bathe), and

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unlike the POWs, the Gendarmes did not permit any community events.\textsuperscript{129} Women and children were disproportionately deported to Auschwitz according to recently released documents from the Prefecture of Police in France. This is probably due to the large number of Jewish male soldiers in POW camps and work camps, who survived at a very high rate.\textsuperscript{130} Regardless of where they endured the war, Jews lived in extreme danger throughout the occupation/Vichy regime.

Vichy not only collaborated with Germany, it further promoted anti-Semitic and nativist policies of its own accord.\textsuperscript{131} Post-War French society was not apologetic. Rather the Post-War society focused on blaming the Germans. The CRIF, central organ of the French Jewry in the Post-War era, emphasized unity and rebuilding instead of apology and retribution. Of those who returned, a large percentage of the population came out of hiding, thousands of Jewish Prisoners of War returned, and about 2,200 survivors of Auschwitz (out of 77,000 deported) repatriated to France. Despite the genocidal treatment of the Vichy Regime on the French Jewry, many factions of the Jewish community in France reorganized.

\textsuperscript{129} From an interview in the film: Sabrina Van Tassel, Sabrina Van Tassel, "La cité muette," (France: JZE Production, 2015).
\textsuperscript{131} Marrus, Paxton, and Mazal Holocaust, \textit{Vichy France and the Jews}. 
**Vichy and the Jews (Part II: Jewish Central Organizing from the Consistoire to the UGIF)**

In 1808, Napoleon I, Emperor of France, responded to complaints about perceived abuses related to excesses in Jewish moneylending by creating an organization, the Consistoire, which regulated religious life of the Jews.132 This new organization directly connected the Jewish people to the government, yet this religious/community organization made certain to separate politics from religion. The Jewish leaders stressed the overall patriotic feelings towards France. Consistoire Judaism served as a moral and cultural entity, and not something that inhibited integration.133 The Consistoire maintained its status as the connection between the French Jewry and the government until 1905 when the Third Republic established separation between church and state, which forced autonomy on the Consistoire (an inherently religious organization). The Consistoire took on a more communitarian role of organizing the non-religious Jewish community along with their religious structures, all without government.

The Jewish community maintained separation from governmental oversight until November 29, 1941, when the Vichy regime and the Nazis established a centralized entity called the *Union générale des israélites de France* (UGIF). The

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UGIF, like the Consistoire, reestablished the link between the Jewish community and the government. This time however, the connection with the Jewish community and the public went beyond serving the Jewish community solely through Judaism. The Jewish leaders who ran the UGIF organized all community, social, charitable and religious components of Jewish life in France in cooperation with the government.

The creation of the UGIF completely restructured the vast Jewish organizations in France. Mutual aid societies, religious organizations, and Jewish political groups such as the Association for the Promotion of Skilled Trades (ORT), the Consistoire, and the Bund respectively fell under the jurisdiction of the UGIF.134 Though these organizations continued to function in many of their normal capacities, they had to abide by the restrictions and the oversight of the UGIF. For example, ORT, an international non-profit Jewish organization, continued to conduct extensive programming (vocational training) in twenty cities throughout the zone libre and also in POW and internment camps. Programming included vocational training for prisoners to prepare for the Post-War, running a farm that sustained eighty families, and remarkably the ORT also worked in the zone occupée and facilitated homeless shelters in Paris.135 The UGIF provided funds and administrative support for these vast initiatives of the ORT, though the ORT protested this oversight.

134 "Union generale des israelites de France (UGIF) 1940-1944 Archival Guide Introduction," ed. YIVO.
Vichy chose Jews who had previously served in high capacities of French Jewish charitable organizations like André Baur, vice president of the UGIF and the former director of the *Comité de coordination des Oeuvres de bienfaisance juives du Grand-Paris*, to lead the two branches of the UGIF (the UGIF had a northern branch in the zone occupée and one in the zone libre).\(^{136}\) All of the other eighteen members of the committee that comprised the UGIF had similar roles in Jewish organizations in France, yet leaders from étranger Jewish organization did not receive appointments to the UGIF.

The creation of the UGIF resulted in a projection of the Jews inherently as the “other” in society. The “other” implies non-French (foreigner), an invader, or even a traitor. The wording of the law that created the UGIF claimed to “assure the representation of Jews with public authorities,”\(^{137}\) and it required all Jews, étranger and citizen, to affiliate with the organization. By grouping together all Jews and suggesting that Jews are represented in a unique way, the non-Jews in France may perceive the Jews as not French (“other”). One can further see Vichy’s intention of making Jews the “other” because the authors of the law used a preposition instead of an adjective to describe the Jewish connection to France in the title of the UGIF. Instead of calling them *Israélites français* (French Israelites), the title refers to the

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\(^{137}\) In French: “assurer la représentation des Juifs auprès des pouvoirs publics” ibid.
Jews as the *Israélites de France* (Israelites of France). French Jewish leaders, and some étranger Jewish leaders, debated at length with the Vichy government to be called *Israélites français*, because they felt that the adjective better portrayed their relation to France. Yet, in the end, the language rendered the Jews in relation to the land instead of members of the nation. The official governmental description of the Jews projected them as the “other” in the end, which further contributed to the separation of the Jews from French society.

Contrary to the perception of security that members of the French Israelite community felt, in 1943 and 1944 as the Nazis continued to deport and round up Jews, the leaders of the UGIF were no exception. Baur and his colleagues were deported and killed in Auschwitz. As a result, the Jewish community had to reorganize after the war without the institutional experience of the French Israelites who participated in the UGIF, and many members of the étranger Jewish community contributed to the reconstruction of the Jewish community in France.

Members of the Jewish community in France have compared the UGIF to the *Judenrat* in Poland, a self-enforcing intermediary between the Nazis and the Jews they interned, because of the perceived collaboration between the UGIF and the Nazis in the deportation of Jews.\(^{138}\) The Vichy Regime blackmailed all members of the UGIF to force them to serve. Even Xavier Vallat, the French bureaucrat who came up with the idea for the UGIF, admitted that the Jews on the UGIF “have

accepted all of these roles, like so many of their comrades, in a spirit of complete
sacrifice.”¹³⁹ Many who subsequently labeled leaders of the UGIF as collaborators
and traitors to their coreligionists fail to account for the fact that sometimes UGIF
involvement was involuntary, and that in some instances UGIF leaders actively
resisted.¹⁴⁰ For example, when Théo Dannecker, a protégé of the notorious Nazi
bureaucrat Adolf Eichmann, ordered his men to enter the archives of the Consistoire
to find the hundreds of thousands of Jewish names (both French and étranger), they
only found the names of 7,000 well-respected Jews from the upper bourgeoisie class
and the intelligentsia because the UGIF knew of the plan and preemptively
destroyed the files of étranger Jews. The Nazis and the Vichy regime could not
imprison and deport these upper class Jews because they retained their French
citizenship. This illegal act probably saved lives.

Comparing the UGIF to the Polish *Judenrat*, as some étranger Jews have
done, may exaggerate the extent of collaboration because unlike the Polish
*Judenrat*, the UGIF did not organize deportation convoys to extermination camps.
The leaders of the organization should, however, receive criticism because the UGIF
regularly failed to provide effective leadership and foresight to improve the chances
of survival of the Jews living in France. Even after many of their colleagues had been

¹³⁹ In original French: “avaient accepté toutes ces fonctions, comme plusieurs de ses
camarades, dans un esprit de sacrifice complet.” Maurice Rajsfus, *Des Juifs Dans La
Collaboration: L’ugif (1941-1944)*: Précédé d’une courte étude sur les juifs de France en 1939
¹⁴⁰ *Des juifs dans la collaboration: L’ugif, 1941-1944. Préc. D’une courte étude sur les juifs de
Internationales, 1980).
deported in 1943, the leaders of the UGIF still failed to work with the Jewish Resistance groups that organized the hiding of Jewish children throughout France. Instead, the members of the UGIF followed orders from the Vichy Regime, and properly registered the children of deported parents. This subsequently led to the arrest of 233 of the children, and ultimately the death of 200 who died at Auschwitz on July 31, 1944.\textsuperscript{141} The lack of faith of the étranger Jewish community produced by the inaction of the UGIF stimulated the étranger Jewish community to organize within itself.

**Reconstructing Jewish Organizations**

The étranger Jewish community led the reorganization of the French Jewish community after the Second World War, which marks a significant change in the leadership structure of the French Jewry away from the Israelites. This shift came due to the prominent role that the étranger Jewish played in the Resistance movement, and also because the Vichy regime deported so many leaders within the French Israelite community. The Vichy regime and the Nazis intentionally eliminated many of the leading figures and infrastructure of the Jewish community: the governments directly targeted the French rabbinate for death, 40,000 Jewish businesses were placed under trusteeship and three quarters of them had been sold to “Aryans”, and most Jewish homes were inhabited by someone other than their

\textsuperscript{141} Jackson, *France: The Dark Years, 1940-1944*, 365.
Therefore, a coalition of new French Israelites and previously disenfranchised étranger Jews had to play the primary roles in the reconstruction of the Jewish community.

The French Jewish communities stayed and reestablished themselves in France for several reasons. First, the Jewish community had a large enough population after the war compared to other European countries, which promoted the proper setting in which the community could sufficiently rebuild. Seventy-five percent of Jews survived the Holocaust and hundreds of thousands more Jews would come in the next two decades from North Africa. Second, the community had extensive financial support from the international Jewish community, which helped them redevelop and reestablish governing bodies for its people. Finally, the Jewish community played an active role in the war against the Germans both as Resistance fighters and as soldiers in the army, which the community displayed to demonstration their patriotism. These factors, plus an overwhelming desire to remain French, provided the prime conditions for the community to have enough momentum to reestablish.

Despite the horrific treatment that some French authorities imposed on the Jewish community, many Jews repatriated after the war. The strength of the Post-War France Jewish community would not have been possible without the aid that international organizations provided as well as reorganization efforts of the French

Jewry. One of the first studies about French Jewry in the postwar was published in June 2015 in the book *Post-Holocaust France and the Jews 1945-1955* edited by Sean Hand and Steven Katz. In David Weinberg’s143 chapter "The Revival of French Jewry in Post-Holocaust France: Challenges and Opportunities", Weinberg provides insight into the role of international organizations in the reconstruction of the French Jewry. Though some Zionist aid groups primarily focused on aid to Jews who wanted to immigrate to Palestine, most organizations within the international Jewish community wanted to “reinforce diaspora Jewry...and reintroduce European Jewry into the world Jewish polity.”144 The French Jewry received tens of millions of dollars annually until 1955 from Jews internationally, especially the Jewish Federation in the USA, to help rebuild the Jewish establishments and support the survivors.145 The international community provided the most funds to Russia and France, because these two locations had the highest rate of Jewish survival and they both had strong Jewish organizations with which the aid groups could partner to distribute funds and supplies properly. France was also ironically easier for the international community to operate in because they had already established some relationships while working with the UGIF on aid projects during the war.146 Weinberg demonstrates

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143 A Professor Emeritus who, in 1974, wrote one of the first accounts of étranger Jews in Paris of the interwar period.
145 Ibid., 29.
how the international community’s financial assistance influenced the propensity of Jews to return and remain in France.

The international organizations that Weinberg describes did have an important role in maintaining the livelihood of the French Jewry both during and after the war, yet his insight fails to account for the organizations that were created by the French Jewish communities themselves, particularly the French étranger Jewish organizations. Weinberg claims that the international Jewish aid organizations provided much of the framework for the new institutions that became the governing entities of all of the Jewish communities in France (both of the French Israelites and of the étranger Jews). Weinberg explains that the international community called for the creation of four entities that still structure the French Jewry today. The international community called for:

- a central fund-raising organization... responsible for the maintenance of communal activities and for the financial support of the State of Israel;
- social service agencies... that provided basic and long-range social, economic, and psychological services for an increasingly diverse community;
- a federated political organization that defended Jewish interests before government authorities and voiced communal concerns in the public arena;
- and broad-based cultural and educational organizations that enabled adults and children who had been isolated from Jewish life during the war to reconnect with their heritage.

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The structure proposed by the international community did take form after the war, but Weinberg places too much emphasis on the role of the international Jewish community in this reconstruction. The process started in 1943 as the leaders of the étranger Jewish Resistance groups (Zionist, Communist, and Bundists) united against the deportations of Jews in France.

As the UGIF failed to protect the Jewish communities in France in 1943, étranger Jews of a broad range of political allegiances partnered with each other and formed the CRIF.149 As the Nazis started to deport many of their coreligionists, a remarkable coalition was built between the FTP-MOI (Communists), Bundists (Socialists), and Zionists (Jewish-Nationalist). Two years earlier in 1941, the Bundists and Zionists agreed that they would not work with the Communists, because many étranger Communist Jews aligned themselves with the USSR; the USSR’s Pact with Germany (Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact) strongly discouraged members of the Communist International from attacking Nazis until 1941. The Communist lack of action created resentment in the other Jews communities who found their lack of dedication to the French cause problematic, because the action of one group of étranger Jews threatened the French perception of the entire étranger Jewish community. Further tensions brewed between the Bundists and the Communists as the Bundists received reports that in 1941, under direct orders from Stalin, the leaders of the Polish Bund where murdered while seeking asylum in Russia.150

149 In original French: Conseil représentatif des institutions juives de France
Nevertheless, these formerly fractured groups came together and devoted their efforts to hiding and rescuing Jews in France. Historian Renée Poznanski correctly sums this massive political shift within the Jewish community by calling it “the political reunification of the French Jewish world.”\footnote{Renée Poznanski, Étre juif en France pendant la seconde guerre mondiale (Paris: Hachette, 1994), 625.}

When Poznanski makes this statement, she refers to the étranger and French Jewish unification, which took place under the auspices of the CRIF. With the failure of the UGIF clear to many Consistoire leaders, the leaders willingly supported the CRIF. The Consistoire made significant concessions as they partnered with the étranger French Israelites, for instance, it agreed that the Jewish community would divide control of the political and social organizations from the religious ones (the President of the CRIF could not be the president of the Consistoire). Therefore, the Consistoire lost the power to act as the direct Jewish envoy to the government, something it had from 1808-1905 and 1940-1944. The two organizations continue to function together today.

Since its inception as a Resistance entity where étranger Jewish Resistance groups coordinated the safety of Jews destined for deportation, the CRIF has tried to “unite all of the Jews in the fight for total liberation in France and for permitting Jews to reintegrate in their place in the French community…”\footnote{In original French: “association a pour but d’unir tous les Juifs dans la lutte pour la libération totale de la France et de permettre aux Juifs de réintégrer leur place dans la communauté française.” Charles Lederman, "U.J.R.E Statuts," (Union des Juifs pour la Résistance et l'Entraide, 1944 ). http://ujre.monsite-orange.fr/page2/index.html.} As the war neared
its end, the CRIF took on a more organizational role instead of a Resistance role. Weekly internal reports from the organization show that the primary goals of the organization after the war were to fight against anti-Semitism, aid étranger Jews with attaining (or reacquiring) their naturalizations in France, help Jews so desiring to emigrate from France, support peace in the State of Israel, and to support and promote Jewish organizations throughout France.\textsuperscript{153} The CRIF also makes a point to track publications and report incidents of anti-Semitism in the press. The conservative catholic newspaper “La Croix” regularly got cited as a source of hate speech for statements like “Zionism is the new Nazism.”\textsuperscript{154} Most Jewish philanthropic or social organizations in France are partner members of the CRIF, and over 60 of them maintain ties to the CRIF today.

In order to try to maintain harmony and unity within the politically diverse French Jewish world, the CRIF did, as still does, not take many political stances, which inevitably greatly reduced the potential influence as an organization. For example, because the Jewish community in France did not all agree on if or how a Jewish state should have been created, the CRIF could not explicitly come out and support any specific plan for Israel as the Bundists, Zionists, and most French Israelites wanted. Instead the CRIF still follows its Charter of 1944 “to assure the normal and friendly coexistence between all of the entities of the population in


\textsuperscript{154} In original French: “Le Sionisme est un nouveau nazisme” "Bulletin Interieur D'information N 14."
Israel, the CRIF will support all efforts that achieve the fullest agreement between the Arab and Jewish populations in a democratic way.¹⁵⁵ This type of language and lack of political stance limited the political possibilities for the CRIF, and this demonstrates how the CRIF could not act as an organization that enacted great amounts of tangible legislative change for international issues. In a similar fashion, the politically differences within the French Jewry limited the CRIF’s role on domestic policies. Instead, the CRIF goals revolved around uniting and protecting the Jewish community, yet not all Jewish organizations felt that they could be a part of an organization that could not entertain political discussions.

Though the CRIF and the Jewish community made incredible strides in reuniting the Jewish community during and after the war, the harmony within the politically diverse French Jewry failed to endure. Too many political and structural differences eventually tore away at the integrity of the Jewish community, contrary to the depictions that the CRIF wants to maintain. However, the goals of the organizations did not reflect the reality of the differing opinions within the community. The next section of the chapter demonstrates a further divide within the étranger community between étranger veterans and former étranger Resistance fighters. Both organizations participated with the CRIF for at least some time, but

¹⁵⁵ In original French: assure la coexistence normale et amicale de toutes les parties de la population, le CRIF soutiendra les efforts ayant pour but de réaliser l’entente la plus complète entre les populations arabes de Palestine, dans le plus large esprit démocratique Samuel Ghiles-Meilhac, "Charte Du Crif," in Le Crif (1944), 316.
even that relationship would not endure. These examples demonstrate how politics can still affect an apolitical organization.

**Jewish Veterans and Former Resistance Fighters Remain Divided in Post-War**

Though the CRIF and the Jewish community fostered harmony and unity within a large portion of the French Jewry through “Jewish politics”, political differences and other distinctions kept some étranger Jewish groups apart. The distinct organizations that the étranger Resistance fighters and étranger Jewish veterans created after the war in France demonstrate one of these divides, but the separation of these groups does not necessarily imply hostility. Étranger Jewish veterans and the étranger Jewish Resistance fighters organized after the war in unique ways, which manifests the inherent organizational and political differences of the étranger Jewish community. The following passage introduces these two organizations and demonstrates the differing allegiances of the members of the groups.

**Organizations for Étranger Militants after the Second World War**

The *Union des engages volontaires, Anciens combattants juifs* (1935-1945) *leurs enfants et amis* (UEVACJ-EA)\(^{156}\) is the combination of two nearly identical

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\(^{156}\) Translation: The Union of military volunteers, Jewish veterans, their children and friends.
organizations: the *Union des engagés volontaires* (UEV)*157* and the *Anciens combattants juifs* (ACJ).*158* The only detail that separated these groups was their geography. While the UEV started in Paris, the ACJ was set up in Lyon, and during the hectic Liberation period as soon as one realized that the other existed, they decided to unite. Both organizations established themselves at the end of 1944 for étranger Jewish veterans who fought in the French military, and the organization opened itself to anyone who fought in the Resistance, although almost anyone who had UEVACJ membership that fought in the Resistance fought in the military units first. The UEVACJ headquarters was placed in Paris, but the Lyon chapter of the organization continued to thrive along with future sections in Marseille, Nancy, Lille and Strasbourg. Decades later, in the 1990s the UEVACJ decided to open the organization to the children and friends of veterans, and the group added the initials EA (friends and children) at the end of its name in order to perpetuate the étranger identity and the memory of the voluntary contribution of étranger Jews to France. This generation of friends and children (Henry Zytnicki, Francois Szulman and Jacques Amiel to name a few prominent members of this generation) ran the organization from the 1990s until today. The UEVACJ-EA has continuously remained active since its inception. Unfortunately, due to financial difficulties and the death of

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*157* Translation: Union of volunteers soldiers  
*158* Translation: Jewish Fighting Veterans
the last étranger Jewish veteran, the UEVACJ will cease to function at the end of the year 2016.  

The étranger Jewish veterans who returned to France understood the need to organize and create systems both to survive and to prevent catastrophes such as the deportations of Jews from happening again. All of the members of the UEVACJ-EA, six thousand members at its height in the late 1940s, came from the étranger Jewish community (the children of Eastern European immigrants or immigrants themselves). For decades, the organization fought for the rights of the volunteer Jewish veterans, provided the means for the community to remain socially connected, and also promoted a small political agenda primarily targeted towards supporting peace in Israel and boycotting anything related to Germany. Throughout the nearly seventy-two years that the UEVACJ existed, internal, domestic and international events usually related to the USSR or Israel at times ruptured the organization’s unity and at other times brought the former brothers in arms together. The history of the organization demonstrates the rocky unity of the étranger Jewish community after the war, though other organizations, like the CRIF, attempted to portray the Post-War differently.

159 The organization will transition its collection and services to the Mémorial de la Shoah in Paris.

160 Some Sephardic Jews, an ethnically and culturally distinct group of Jews who come from a geographical area extending from North Africa to the Middle East with a unique language and customs, engaged in the French military or in some cases in the RMVE units like the Eastern European Jews, yet they did not join the UEVACJ because the Ashkenazi identity played an important role in the organization. Henri Zytnicki, November 11 2015.
Another significant Post-War Jewish étranger fighter organization was the
Union des juifs pour la Résistance et l'entraide (UJRE). The UJRE began as one of
the Communist Resistance groups that helped found the CRIF in 1943. At the time,
the CRIF preached unity of the Jewish communities in France. This appeal resonated
within the Communist UJRE, and the UJRE accepted the need to set aside their
major political differences and unify in order to defend the Jews in France. The
Communists Jewish Resistance leaders took the initiative to unite the Jewish
étranger community in the fight against the Nazi-Vichy attack against the Jews. The
militant coalition sought to save Jewish children and also embark on a massive
propaganda campaign against the Nazis. After the war, the UJRE’s members
rejected the Comintern’s request that étranger Jews relinquish the étranger and
Jewish components of their identities. While some étranger Jews complied with the
Comintern’s request, members of the UJRE embraced the resurgent Jewish
component of their identity. They wanted to fight for “Jewish politics” along with
the CRIF without the restrictions of Moscow.

After the war, both the UEVACJ and the UJRE joined the CRIF, however, in
the early years of organization, the UJRE rejected decisions of the Jewish
community’s new central institution. The CRIF and the UJRE have a very contentious
history, unlike the relationship between the UEVACJ and the CRIF, because the
UJRE’s political agenda clashed with the CRIF’s. The first instance of conflict came

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161 Translation: Union of Jews for Resistance and Mutual Aid
162 Courtois, Peschanski, and Rayski, Le sang de l’étranger: Les immigrés de la Moi dans la
Résistance, 273-78.
from 1944 until 1947 when the UJRE and Bund leaders called on the CRIF coalition to send evidence of the UGIF’s “crimes” to a French court.\textsuperscript{163} The CRIF refused to do so because it wanted to protect the image of unity in the Jewish community. Another example of the tensions between the CRIF and UJRE was briefly alluded to in the Introduction. The UJRE left the CRIF in 2009 after the CRIF did not invite the PCF and Green Party to their annual dinner, because the two political parties participated in protests against the Gazan civilian causalities during the Gaza War of 2009. The UJRE accepted the “Jewish politics” of the CRIF, and felt that the CRIF’s actions of responding to the political decisions of the PCF and the Green Party “contradicts with the values of tolerance and respect for pluralism that influenced the founders of the CRIF, of which the UJRE played an essential role in the unification of secular and religious organizations and institutions.”\textsuperscript{164}

While the UJRE tried to reform and change the Jewish community in France, the UEVACJ remained neutral by never explicitly mentioning the UGIF or the Gaza protests in its periodical \textit{Notre Volonté} despite the enormity of the internal conflict. Instead the UEVACJ focused on caring for its members and maintaining strong relations with organizations from all parts of the Jewish community in France.

Prominent Goals within the two Communities

Though the UEVACJ and UJRE had similar goals in the immediate years of the Post-War, the two organizations functioned apart from one another. Both the UJRE and the UEVACJ helped create mutual aid programs, because virtually everyone needed help immediately after the war. The UEVACJ started programs to help the widows of the étranger Jewish soldiers who died during the war. The UJRE similarly worked to help Jewish orphans whose parents died while fighting in the Resistance or in extermination camps.165 Each group had its own fundraising efforts because, though both groups provided similar mutual aid services, they often served different communities. The political divides of the étranger Jews before the Second World War represented the communities that these organizations served after the war.

Both the UEVACJ and the UJRE fought to secure naturalizations and other benefits such as pensions for veterans and former fighters respectively, yet the two organization never worked together while lobbying the French government. The government also reinstated Jews who previously had been naturalized, but had lost citizenship due to decrees from the Vichy regime. The UEVACJ and the UJRE did not oppose one another while they worked (although not together) to procure pension rights and naturalization rights for étranger veterans and Resistance fighters and

their families. The two organizations worked with the newly established National Office of Immigration (under the Minister of Labor) with the goal of helping its members attain temporary Residency Visas (cartes de séjour), and eventually naturalization.

The French government occasionally made the naturalization process difficult for veterans who were not “assez assimilé” (assimilated enough), and in these cases the UEVACJ and the UJRE played vital roles in lobbying on behalf of the étranger Jewish veterans and former Resistance fighters. The naturalization process started with an agent from the Bureau of Naturalization asking eight pages worth of questions. The bureaucrat had to determine key characteristics, for instance, if the person has lost all spirit to return to their country and if it would seem that they are completely assimilated. The French government wanted to verify that new citizens could join the society and only have allegiances to France. For those that served in the French military, attaining French naturalization proved much easier than for the Jews who did not.

The UEVACJ took on many initiatives in the first few years, and stressed the importance of obtaining and retaining naturalizations for its members. The étranger Jewish militants needed to fight for the retention of naturalization because until 1952 the French government had the right to take the French nationality within the first seven years with the rights granted in Articles 96 and 111 of the Code of

Nationality. The most publicized denaturalization case that Notre Volonté published was that of Jacob Gromb-Koenig in 1951. In August 1948 the French government granted Gromb-Koenig naturalization, but three years later in 1951 they repealed it. Over the course of a year, the UEVACJ published extensive progress reports in Notre Volonté about steps that the organization took to recuperate naturalization to this Jewish veteran. As was previously reviewed in the description of naturalizations, the French government valued the rate at which people assimilated. In the case of Gromb-Koenig, the government deemed him “insufficiently assimilated.”

Isi Blum and Jacques Orfus, General Secretary and President of the UEVACJ respectively, petitioned the Secretary of Public Health and Population Schneitter to fight on behalf of Gromb-Koenig, and he did by proclaiming, “never will a volunteer recruit be expelled from France.”

It is important to note, however, that he spoke to a delegation on behalf of Gromb only after the UEVACJ sought his help.

The Conseil d’État voted to repeal Gromb-Koenig’s denaturalization decision, yet the trial had negative effects on the UEVACJ community. Based on the comments made by contributors to the UEVACJ newspaper Notre Volonté, the disappointment and confidence of the members of the UEVACJ was seriously shaken by the initial decision to remove naturalization. They clearly accepted France as

167 Combattants, Le combattant volontaire juif, 1939-1945 ... 25e Anniversaire de l’union des engagés volontaires et anciens combattants juifs.
“their new Fatherland” and the association wanted to assure its members that the state would continue to support them in the future.170

Because of events like the Gromb-Koenig affair, the association recommended that its members attain two cartes de combattant. First, UEVACJ wanted all of its members to have its membership card (Figures 10/11), which was marked each month when people paid their dues. According to an interview with a member of the UEVACJ, “members were proud to get their marks every month.”171 UEVACJ leaders also worked hard to get their members a carte de combatant from the French government. Having a state sanctioned document signifying their engagement could help them prove their dedication in the future. These benefits would have been available to both Communist Resistance fighters and étranger veterans.

The UEVACJ emphasized reconstructing the étranger veteran community socially while also fighting for benefits and remembering the past. The leaders of the organization felt that long term prosperity was predicated on a strong social element of the organization. Notre Volonté, the official newspaper of the UEVACJ, devoted many pages and articles to report on future and past social events for the étranger Jewish veteran community.172 The UJRE never seemed to establish the same level of community engagement beyond the political, nor did they express desires of creating the social component to the organization.

170 Ibid.
171 Henri Zytnicki, interview by Zachary Brint, 2-19, 2016, Phone Call, Paris/Middletown.
172 A Grand Night Ball, Notre Volonté 1946.
The largest capital campaign that the UEVACJ embarked on came in the late 1950s while the organization built a recovery/vacation home for the members. The UEVACJ decided to create the complex in Levens in the Alpes Maritimes. A combination of member donations as well as a door-to-door fundraising campaign provided enough funds for the new construction.\textsuperscript{173} Les Lauriers Roses, the name of the facility, was finished on December 15, 1963. Members remember the incredible panoramic views, the pretty walking paths, the day trips to the ocean, and the rest and mental recovery that they desired.\textsuperscript{174} Today Les Lauriers Roses is no longer owned by the association. Declining membership and excessive repair work required the group to sell the property.

UEVACJ started the conversation about building the facility for two primary reasons. First, leaders claimed that Lanciers-Roses provided a refuge for the veterans. The psychological consequences that the members had maintained due to their engagement, their deportation, and their captivity merited this new space in the mountains.\textsuperscript{175} However, the second and stronger explanation that the leaders of the organization gave for building Lanciers-Roses came when they noticed that their efforts in achieving naturalizations and aiding the étranger community with social aid efforts no longer required the attention previously given. In order to remain relevant, the leaders felt that Lauries Roses would help maintain the unity of the

\textsuperscript{173} Henri Zytnicki, interview by Zachary Brint, 2-19, 2016, Phone Call, Paris/Middletown.
\textsuperscript{174} "La naissance des Lauriers Roses." \textit{Notre Volonté}, February 1965.
\textsuperscript{175} Ibid.
The distinct social organizing further demonstrates the separateness of the members of the members of the UJRE and UEVACJ. Political divides from the pre-War era evolved into social divides after the war. Though the social differences are not the focus of this study, one can see how political differences could influence disunity in other aspects of society.

Learning lessons from their predecessors of the First World War, the étranger Jewish veterans of the Second World War fought anti-Semitism from the inception of the UEVACJ, and made this fight a priority along with their fight for their rights to services and pensions. The veterans and former fighters needed to respond to the attacks that the press during the Vichy regime had leveled against them; an example of which was archived by the UGIF, which kept files of instances of anti-Semitism in the Vichy press. The illustration in Figure 9 is a cartoon printed on July 2 between 1942 entitled “L’Armée juive” (The Jewish Army) that questions the allegiance of the Jews fighting in France by claiming that the Jews hide their true identity even though they are in the army. The cartoon makes direct reference to the Zionist Resistance group in France called l’Armée Juive,” and the insinuations can be assumed to extend to all Jews (also a few members of the UEVACJ fought with the Zionist Resistance groups instead of the Communists for ideological reasons). In the cartoon, the Jewish officer calls his Jewish soldiers “Serongneugneu” (probably meaning idiot because neu is idiot) because he can see that one of their noses (stereotypically large in representations of Jews) became visible and crossed the line.

176 Ibid.; "Entretien #2 Avec M. Zytnicki."
of uniformity (*dépasse*). The cartoon suggests that Jews inevitably stick out in French society. Either they stay “in line” with the others and their nose crosses the lines or they lean back to hide their nose. The attack may send the message that Jews both cannot fit into society, and that they cannot hide their true identity. After viewing the anti-Semitism rampant in the French press during the Vichy Regime, the UEVACJ recognized that the need to expose and limit instances of anti-Semitism with the goal of reintegrating the étranger Jewish veteran community into the society.

The UEVACJ immediately developed a strong rapport with Jewish veteran organizations from the First World War, which advised the UEVACJ to start fighting anti-Semitic attacks preemptively. The UJRE followed suite, and demonstrating anti-Semitism in the French media became a priority for the organization. In the 1930s, Jewish veteran organizations from the First World War took too long to recognize the need to highlight publically the Jewish military contributions to France. The 8,500 étranger Jews who volunteered for the army waited until 1928, nine years after the end of the war, to organize *L’Association des anciens combattants volontaires juifs (AVCJ)*. The group printed a bimonthly publication called *Le Volontaire Juif: Patriotisme et Intégration*. The title indicates some of the long-term goals of the association and its publication. Despite its name, the newspaper at first only addressed concerns related to veteran groups such as uniting the veterans for social gatherings and fighting for pension rights for their members. Jewish

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177 Translation: The Association of Veteran Volunteer Jews: Patriotism and Integration
veterans did not start to publish information speaking out against growing instances of anti-Semitism in the press until 1933. Often, anti-Semitic rhetoric revolves around questioning the allegiances of the Jews, and the demonstration of military contributions can counter assertions of a lack of patriotism.

The AVCJ waited until the Fuhrer of Germany, Adolf Hitler, assumed power in 1933 and started anti-Semitic attacks directly targeting the German Jewish veterans of the First World War before the AVCJ recognized the need to defend the Jewish engagement in the First World War in France. The AVCJ and other French organizations hoped that the established non-Jewish French institutions would speak out against the nativist spread throughout Europe. Yet little attention in France was paid to Hitler’s attacks against Jewish veterans. For example, in the publication from *The French Mutual Aid Society for Veterans, Widows and Orphans* comments of anti-Semitism against Jewish veterans in Germany do not get printed until page 61 of a monthly review in 1934. Therefore, the ACVJ organization felt the need to remind to the French public of their sacrifice for France, and proclaimed throughout the 1930s “their right to be French.” The group waited too long to make fighting anti-Semitism a key component of their organization, and a few years later during the Vichy Regime, the Jewish commitment to France came into question in the nativist rhetoric.

In 1946 the UEVACJ started to print a monthly publication, *Notre Volonté*,\(^{181}\) for its thousands of members, which served as the primary means of contact and updates for and about the étranger veteran community. From the beginning of the publication, it is evident that the organization made a point to condemn all incidents of anti-Semitism. The UJRE did the same in its monthly publication called *la Presse Nouvelle Magazine*. Both organizations published articles in both Yiddish and French and covered similar topics. This mutual strategy of using a monthly publication begs the question, why do both organizations need to print separate newspapers?

**Building the Monument-Tomb at Bagneux Cemetery**

The UEVACJ almost immediately embarked on a mission to commemorate and bury their comrades who died in battle or in POW camps. The proponents of the project wanted to create a monument to act as both a memorial and as a tomb. The President of the UEVACJ, Jacques Orfus, declared that he intended the tomb to be open to any Jewish étranger veteran or étranger Jewish member of the Resistance.\(^{182}\) However, none of the sixty-six men buried in the tomb died while fighting in the Resistance and they were all soldiers in the RMVE units, which provides further evidence of the self-segregation between the UJRE and the UEVACJ members.\(^{183}\)

\(^{181}\) Translation: Our will (this word does not translate into English very well. Emphasis on desire and volunteering should be noted)


\(^{183}\) This analysis was conducted by matching names of the dead (engraved on the memorial) to lists of the Jewish volunteers in the RMVE units. No Resistance members were in the
Considering the poverty that the surviving étranger Jews returned to, the fact that they raised 2,500,000 francs to fund its creation is rather remarkable. The group commissioned Nathan Rapoport, the sculptor of the monument in memory of the insurgents in the Warsaw Ghetto, to realize this piece (Figure 15). The UEVACJ decided to erect the monument in one of many Jewish sections of the Bagneux cemetery in a southern suburb of Paris.

The beige stone structure at the Bagneux cemetery draws attention to anyone passing in the cemetery because no other structure of similar size or grandeur exists in the cemetery. The primary component of the monument that one sees is a man wrapped in a cloth with the figure’s muscular chest revealed. His thick and disproportionately large right hand grips a sword that symbolizes a willingness to fight. The subject’s forward leaning posture exposes his broad chest that accompanies the determined and courageous gaze. The man connects to the stone structure behind him that resembles the other Jewish tomb stones in the cemetery which are all shaped like what has come to represent the shape of the Ten Commandments. On the memorial, the inscription reads, “Honor and Glory for the Jewish Fighters who died for France (1939-1945).” Yiddish is also printed on the structure but below the feet of the man. The elevated placement of French may

tomb the list, which was established after a comparison to the list of names in David Diamant’s book. Diamant, Combattants, héros et martyrs de la résistance: Biographies, dernières lettres, témoignages et documents. The book collects the names of hundreds of étranger Jews who died in the Resistance.

184 Combattants, Le combattant volontaire juif, 1939-1945 ... 25e anniversaire de l’union des engagés volontaires et anciens combattants juifs, 142.

185 Translation: “Honneur et gloire aux combattants juifs morts pour la France 1939-1945”
represent the étranger Jewish community’s desire to depict themselves as patriotic and assimilated. This dedication to France is further verified with the prominent placement of a French flag next to the tomb. Further, in front of the monument one can read the names of the sixty six dead veterans who were buried on the site.\textsuperscript{186}

Other organizations of étranger peoples who engaged during the Second World War waited much longer to erect their memorial monuments. The Polish, Czech, Greek, Armenian, and Italian counterparts of the UEVACJ erected their monuments in a prominent designated area in the famous Pere Lachaise cemetery in the XXième arrondisement. None of these structures double as a tomb. Some like the memorial for the Poles who died for France during the Second World War did not get erected until 2006. The immediacy of the erection of the étranger Jewish monument and its illusions to patriotism suggests that the UEVACJ wanted to send a powerful message to France of the devotion of its members to the country. The members of the UEVACJ felt threatened and the community clearly felt that this memorial, worthy of a huge investment, would resonate throughout the entirety of the French world. In 1947 when the monument was first inaugurated, President of the Republic Vincent Auriol gave a speech along with the President of the CRIF and the Secretary General of the UEVACJ Isi Blum and the President Jacques Orfus. The first event drew many thousands of people (\textbf{Figure 15}), and the annual event will continue to take place for years to come. Although, members of the UJRE have

\textsuperscript{186} The remains of the Jews were transported to this site for the families that wanted their loved ones buried at the monument.
occasionally taken part in the ceremony, the ritual of the annual visit is inherently an event of the UEVACJ and the étranger Jewish veterans. Ceremony and ritual helped perpetuate the disunity of the étranger Jewish community in the Post-War era. The decision of the former étranger Communist Jewish Resistance fighters not to be buried with the other étranger veterans continued to promote disunity every year that this ceremony takes place.

The monument also sends other messages to the Jewish community. This tomb/memorial resembled many of Rapoport’s other works like his statue of the leader of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, Zydowska Organizacja Bojowa, or his statue at Kibbutz Negba in Israel. The *Encyclopedia Judaica* does an adequate job describing Rapoport as a conventional sculptor whose rhetorical patriotic monuments are characterized by idealization and pathos.\(^{187}\) This style would resonate with the UEVACJ who wanted a monument that provided clear explanations of their allegiances without room for interpretation, while also evoking strong emotions.

*International Affairs Disrupt Étranger Jewish Organizing*

In two months, October and November of 1956, two different geopolitical events, the Suez Crisis and the Hungarian Uprising, unsettled the unity within both the apolitical UEVACJ and the more politically active UJRE. The responses of each

group, or lack of response, to the events further demonstrates the differences within the former militant étranger Jewish community in France in the Post-War era.

The majority of étranger Jewish Communists prior to the late 1940s proudly connected themselves to the International, which meant Moscow. Recall that many étranger Communist Jews waited to engage against the Nazis because of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, and most of these étranger Jews only started fighting upon Stalin’s orders after Germany invaded the USSR in 1941. The deep-rooted ties of the étranger Communist Jews in France to Moscow were first threatened in the Post-War era when Stalin explicitly attacked the Jews in the Soviet Union. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, Stalin reacted to perceived threats of growing Zionist sympathy among the two million Jews in Russia by stopping infrastructure projects in the Jewish Autonomous Oblast (a Jewish state within the USSR), arresting members of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee, closing the Jewish museum in Vilnius, and eliminating Yiddish publishing houses, presses, and libraries. While some étranger Jews decided to no longer align with the USSR after these attacks, many French Jews remained loyal.

A decade later in 1956 the Soviet reaction to the Hungarian Uprising prompted an even larger population of étranger Communist Jews to reevaluate their relationship with the Soviets, which often led to disassociation. In October 1956, twenty thousand Hungarian students accompanied by former reformist Prime

Minister Imre Nagy led a Revolution to overthrow the Soviet backed regime headed by András Hegedüs. A year earlier, Hungary had signed the Warsaw Pact, an allegiance of the satellite Soviet states that pledged the mutual defense if any member were attacked. The de facto use of this Pact by the Soviet Union was to suppress uprisings against the member states i.e. Hungary (1956), Czechoslovakia (1968) and Poland (1956). Tens of thousands of Hungarians protested against the Hungarian People’s Republic when it became apparent that it was a puppet government. The students sought Hungarian independence from all foreign powers, especially the imperialistic Soviets.\textsuperscript{189} Thirteen thousand Hungarian protestors were wounded as a result of the Soviet/Government brutal treatment of the protestors. In the end, over 200,000 Hungarians fled the country during the hostilities. The Soviets crushed the rebellion by killing thousands, and the Communist Regime continued.

The repressive Soviet response to the Hungarian Uprising demonstrated to many étranger Communist Jews in France that the Soviet government had embraced colonial practices in direct contrast to the initial goals of the Communist project. At the end of the Second World War, in the eyes of French Communists, the USSR was the party of Socialism as well as the most advanced democratic country in the world.\textsuperscript{190} While nowhere in the UEVACJ records does the Hungarian Uprising receive a mention, former members of the UJRE and the FTP-MOI left the Communist Party


after this uprising, because the Soviet stifling of speech contradicted their ideals. For example, the historian of Communism, Annie Kriegel, left the Party with many members of the intelligentsia after recognizing the ways that the Soviets used Communism to suppress people. Kriegel was an étranger French Jew who joined the PCF during the war and fought with the FTP-MOI in Grenoble, and had a lot of responsibility as a leader in the organization. She continued after the war and was rapidly promoted within the Party, yet in reaction to the events of 1956, she started to adapt inverse political opinions. She identified as a staunch Zionist, an anti-Communist, and advocated for Democracy. Many Jews who previously affiliated with the PCF aligned themselves with the UJRE after the crisis in Hungary. The UJRE allowed these Jews to continue to promote their politics while not aligning with the USSR. As will be described in the next chapter, the UJRE and the PCF had a contentious history, and many members of the UJRE who were Communists did not affiliate with the International.

While no clear messages came from the members of the UEVACJ as a result of the Hungarian Uprising, a week later, some of the leaders within the UEVACJ, including then President Jacques Orfus, wanted to protest the Soviets because they decided to provide arms to Egypt during the Suez Crisis, which placed Israel at risk. The protest which Orfus and a small group of former UEVACJ members staged took

place in front of the embassy of the USSR. Orfus, and many of the Zionists protesting reacted to the fact that the USSR planned to furnish the Egyptians with a large quantity of arms. In 1956 Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal because the USSR, the United Kingdom and the US withdrew their support to construct a dam. Israel feared that arming the Egyptians would result in military conflict between the two states, and they hoped to stop the USSR.

The Israelis successfully drew upon fears that the French had about the growing rebel independence group in French Algeria the Front de libération nationale (FLN) and the Israeli spy network, Massad, demonstrated to the French that the Egyptians were supplying the FLN with weapons. After losing the Second World War and the war in Vietnam, French military pride, and therefore national pride, suffered. The War in Algeria (1954-1962), continued throughout the Suez Crisis. For political leaders such as military leaders and politicians with a conservative lean, l’Algérie Francaise (French Algeria) was an integral part of the unity of the nation. The Israelis knew that many in France wanted to prevent yet another military and moral defeat. The Israelis correctly understood this emotion and France responded to this information by supporting the attack on Egypt in the Suez Canal. The French assault on Egypt then caused a vacuum in Egypt because they needed a new arms supplier, a role which France previously served. The USSR stepped in and offered to start arms trading negotiations, which inherently put the

Israelis in danger. Orfus and his followers were staunch Zionists and protested the USSR’s involvement, because the Jews felt that the USSR explicitly attacked Israel by arming the Egyptians.

Not only does the difference in motivations to protest further elucidate the different political motivations of the members of the UJRE and the UEVACJ, but this two-week period also helps highlight a division within the UEVACJ. A group of étranger Jews who engaged in the French army during the Second World War left the UEVACJ because of the apolitical nature of the organization. They rejected the decision of the UEVACJ’s General Assembly to not protest the Soviet Embassy over their involvement in the Suez crisis, which took place a week after the Hungarian Uprising. Orfus and his followers considered themselves staunch Zionists and rejected the UEVACJ’s apolitical decision.

After leaving the UEVACJ, Orfus and his followers started a new organization with a similar purpose. This group had its own monthly publication called *La voix du combattant Juif*, and on it the publication noted that they were “the official association of the Jewish veterans of 1939-1945.”¹⁹⁴ They published monthly issues for two years before ceasing operations. After this venture failed Orfus took over the only daily Yiddish newspaper that survived until the 1990s, “Unzer Wort.” Orfus never rejoined the UEVACJ. Instead he became the Secretary General of the General

Zionists organization. He also served as President of summer camps in Israel.\footnote{195 "Qui Est Roger Cukierman?,” http://www.egaliteetreconciliation.fr/Qui-est-Roger-Cukierman-21053.html.}

Further, it is clear that Orfus would rather start a new organization for étranger veterans instead of joining the UJRE. It was not as though the UEVACJ and the UJRE were alternatives for one another, although the UEVACJ probably would have welcomed anyone from the UJRE who wanted to join.

Documentation to understand why the UEVACJ did not protest is not available. The organization did not have many communists, and almost no Jews would have supported the USSR after Stalin’s explicit attacks against Yiddish culture and the leaders of Yiddish cultural communities. Articles in \textit{Notre Volonté}, the official newspaper of the organization, had even condemned the attacks against Yiddish culture.\footnote{196 Ilex Beller, "Les attaques de staline sur nos freres à la culture yiddish," \textit{Notre Volonté} 1948.} Further, the UEVACJ’s lack of willingness to engage in this protest could not be explained by the group’s desire to show support for the Republic so their patriotism could not be questioned in the future, because France acted on Israel’s side in the war, and protesting the USSR would not be perceived as anti-French. The group seems to just avoid almost all political engagements unless they directly interfere with the concerns of its members.

\textit{Étranger Jewish Disunity in the Twenty-first century}
After the rupture, the UEVACJ slowly started to decline as an organization. The organization began publishing *Notre Volonté* with less frequency (every three months then only twice a year). In the 1990s the Enfants et Amis section of the group took over more of the everyday functions of the organization. The last President of the association who actually fought in the RMVE was Joseph Okonowski, who died on January 20, 2015 at the age of 95. The number of member deaths that got reported in the newspaper started to increase in the 1970s and 1980s, which further contributed to its decline. The association kept a limited social schedule by offering Yiddish courses, Bridge tournaments, painting lessons, and some other excursions.\(^{197}\)

The UJRE, a founding member of the CRIF, on the other hand completely divorced itself from the CRIF in 2009. Reacting to the 2008-2009 Gaza War between Hamas and Israel, the UJRE declared in a letter to the President of the CRIF, Richard Prasquier, that the CRIF no longer “defends the moral interests of the Jew in France and contributes, apart from its initial values, to the lack of peace in the Middle East.”\(^{198}\) The UJRE called for more support for the Palestinian people, and they felt that the only way to guarantee the security and development of Israel is to promote peace. In true Communist fashion, the group stood by their political views and acted out against the injustice that they perceived to occur in Israel/Palestine.

\(^{198}\) UJRE, "Lettre Oueverte a M. Richard Prasquier, Président Du Crif."
Taking on the political stance of apolitical is a political decision. The CRIF’s overall initiative to unite the Jewish community by avoiding political decisions and simply pursuing “Jewish politics” could be achieved. The CRIF’s model cannot support the political ideological differences that existed between the veteran and Resistance fighter community. Though there was some political crossover of those who served in the war (some Communists in the military and some non-Communists in the Communist Resistance groups) the political differences did divide the community after the war. Therefore, because the historical community has focused so much on the events of the Resistance during the war and the statements of the CRIF, the public does not have an accurate understanding of the extent of the divide within this community. By placing more emphasis on this divide one understands that the Jewish community is too diverse in France to maintain solidarity.

In the Post-War period, the Resistance in France symbolized victory, unity and pride for the country after the humiliating military defeat by the Nazis. General Charles de Gaulle, the leader of the united resistance coalition called Free France and Chairman of the government in the immediate Post-War, helped reunite France around the concept of Resistance victory. However, de Gaulle blatantly excluded Communists Resistance leaders in the Post-War era, because as a more conservative politician he did not want Communism to dominate France. De Gaulle symbolized Resistance, and his actions against the Communists diminished the potential of
continuing a union the postwar period. By doing this, he unleashed prewar ideological cleavages leaving many Communists out of the Resistance united front.

The Jewish community, like France as a whole, reconstructed itself around the concept of the glory and unity of the Resistance. Jews affiliated with the Resistance dominated the reorganization of the Jewish community. Even former members of the UGIF tried to label themselves as members of the Resistance because of its positive connotation and unifying effect. Not one of the presidents of the CRIF, there have been ten, have been (or had parents who were) members of the group that volunteered to join the French military.

In the Post-War era, the Resistance groups either dissolved or functioned as political entities. Only the group of the étranger Jewish veterans thrived as a social and communitarian organization in the Post-War. The divided veterans/fighter organizations rarely cooperated in conjunction with one another, which reflects on the true way in which the étranger community reorganized after the war. The fight for reintegration and reorganization rendered the Jewish community divided, contrary to the initial goals of unity.

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Chapter III: Changing Political Identities and the Rise of Literature about Étranger Combattants

An old man with thick glasses, a bright red sweater, and thinning hair sews pant legs while trying hard to stifle his tears. Charles Mitzfiger\textsuperscript{201} allowed director Mosco Boucault to ask him questions about his engagement in the FTP-MOI Resistance while he worked in his tailor shop. His tears make it apparent that the pain from his engagement and the deportation of his family still haunt him. And then, as if he has an off switch, he stops crying and returns to his work. Even in his old age, Charles does not have the luxury to allow his memories to fade. Nazis killed almost his entire family. The “family” that remained for Charles after the Second World War was either the étranger Jewish community or the French Communist Party. The years after the Second World War resulted in complex relationships for the étranger Communist Jews: some étranger Communist Jews complied with the PCF’s requests of them to relinquish their étranger identity, and other étranger Communist Jews (such as the members of the UJRE) refused to heed this request. Throughout the decades in the Post-War era, many étranger Communist Jews shifted their allegiances towards the UJRE and away from the PCF. The previous chapter demonstrated how the Hungarian Uprising and other international events influenced the shift of étranger Communist Jews away from the PCF. This chapter argues that the rise of the content about the étranger Jews who fought during the

\textsuperscript{201} Charles Mitzfiger was not credited in the film, so the accurate spelling of his name is not known.
Second World War in France is directly dependent on the history of interactions between the étranger Jewish community and the PCF.

**In 1945, PCF calls for removal of Étranger Identity**

After the official end of the Vichy Regime in 1944, the PCF sought to fill the power void left by the fall of the Vichy regime by reintegrating into French society and gaining political influence instead of enacting Revolution. Communism achieved its peak popularity in France at the end of the war, as it was boosted by the role that Communist Resistance fighters played in the defeat of the Nazis. The PCF played a central part in the process of drafting a new constitution in France. Through the first few years of the Post-War era, the PCF consistently received around 5.12 million votes (the most or sometimes slightly less than de Gaulle’s Popular Republican Movement (PRM)). Even with their large voting bloc, however, the PCF did not have a majority, and had to find another party with whom they could form a coalition. The two other major parties, the Socialists and PRM, constantly expressed their reluctance to partner with the PCF. The PCF reacted by trying to make its base more unified and stronger, and therefore the PCF called on certain blocs within their Party to take solidarity actions: the PCF called on unions to increase voter turnout and not vote for the Socialist, and the PCF also targeted the entire étranger community (Jewish and non-Jewish), and called on them to abandon their étranger

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identity as a statement of solidarity with the Party.\textsuperscript{204} Abandoning their étranger identity would include not participating in the UJRE, because the UJRE fought specifically for the Jewish Resistance and promoted mutual aid societies geared to help Jews.

The goals of solidification of the base of the PCF divided the étranger Jewish community. In 1945, the PCF printed appeals in the newspaper of the Main d’oeuvre immigrée newspaper, \textit{La Presse nouvelle}, calling for political integration and for the people with étranger identities to embrace a “more evolved form of thinking” (one identity for all people).\textsuperscript{205} Similar to the critiques that Lenin had about the Bund and other forms of Jewish identity, the Communists made the argument that in order to have a common purpose, the International, the communities of Resistance fighters needed to embrace only one identifier, Communism. Ironically, the étranger identity within the étranger Communist Jews started to mold during the Second World War, when the PCF refused non-French citizens from joining their Resistance groups. Instead, the étrangers formed the FTP-MOI. Although the FTP-MOI communicated extensively with the Communists, the division fostered the creation of the étranger identity within the Communist community.

Some étranger Jewish Resistance groups did acquiesce to the PCF’s wishes. For example, the \textit{Union de la jeunesse juive} (UJJ), a group of teenagers that fought in the MOI Resistance groups, renounced their étranger Jewish identity at the bequest

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\textsuperscript{204} Ibid., 140.
\textsuperscript{205} \textit{La Presse nouvelle} in Adam Rayski, \textit{Nos Illusions Perdues} ([Paris]: Balland, 1985), 169-170.
of the PCF after the war. Jacques Kott, one of the members of the UJJ, explains that most of the members in the group felt Communist first and Jewish second, and in the hopes of integrating more effectively into society they willingly renounced their étranger Jewish identities.

Historian Claude Collin calls this deleted aspect of their identities *l’oubli* (forgetting) of the former étranger Jewish Resistance fighters. After the Second World War and the destruction of the European Jewry, many members of the étranger Jewish community felt that the PCF provided them the best opportunity to reintegrate into society. Yet, as the PCF lost popularity throughout the years, the étranger Jews started to embrace again the étranger Jewish identity, which suggests that the members never completely relinquished the étranger identities that they acquired during the war. Throughout the decades following the Second World War, many members of the UJJ ruptured their allegiances to the PCF and aligned with the UJRE.

The étranger Communist Jewish members of the UJRE, unlike the UJJ, did not maintain strong ties with the PCF, so the members of the group maintained their étranger identity. The UJRE’s unwavering support of peace in Israel for both the Palestinians and the Israelis was one aspect of the UJRE’s organization that prevented it from embracing demands from the PCF. The PCF did initially support

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208 Ibid., 112-16.
the State of Israel, but that support wavered. Even though the UJRE neither took
direct orders from the PCF not Moscow, its members still felt a deep connection to
the political causes associated with Communism. The UJRE gained popularity
throughout the decades with the former étranger Communist Resistance fighters as
individuals left the PCF and wanted to regain their étranger Jewish identity while
fighting for similar political causes.

It took Adam Rayski, future president of the UJRE, almost a decade after the
Second World War to leave the Communist Party and return to his étranger Jewish
identity. Rayski came to France from Bialystok, Poland in 1934 to both flee the rise
of anti-Semitism and anti-Communism perpetuated by the Polish Nationalists who
took power, and to continue to serve the Party.209 He wrote for the Yiddish
Communist newspaper *La Presse nouvelle* until 1939. Rayski could have volunteered
to join the RMVE units, yet he did not feel a strong connection to France at the time.
Instead, the Polish Army reestablished itself in France and drafted all Polish citizens,
Rayski included, into its service. After the military defeat in France, Rayski escaped
POW camps and fought in the FTP-MOI Resistance. In 1949, Rayski decided to return
to Poland because of differences in opinion that he had with the PCF leadership.
Rayski also felt a strong connection to Poland, which had become a Communist state
(a dream of his ten years prior).210 He held various high bureaucratic positions in the
Polish Communist Party such as the editor of Party newspapers. After a decade,

210 Ibid., 165.
Rayski left Poland in 1956 due to anti-Semitic purges within the Polish Communist Party on Stalin’s orders. Fed up with the dysfunction and discrimination within the Party, Rayski focused his efforts on the UJRE and its initiatives where he continued to fight for the causes of social justice and believed in Communist ideologies. Rayski’s example demonstrates that any étranger Jew, even a prominent Party member, could return to his/her étranger identity created during the Resistance engagement during the Second World War.

Étranger Jewish Veteran Scholarly Literature?

Discussions about literature and films produced about the étranger Jewish community must focus predominantly on the étranger Communist Jews who fought in the Resistance, because insufficient literature about the étranger veteran Jews has been produced. The UEVACJ has had to produce content about étranger veteran Jews through its own initiatives: the UEVACJ published anniversary books and created exhibitions for museums like le Mémorial de la Shoah and Musée de l’histoire de l’immigration at Palais de la Porte Dorée. In 2010, the UEVACJ also worked with the public French television network, French Televisions, to produce a

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211 This source, a blog, was used to find out why Rayski left Poland in 1956. The author, Robert Prince, draws from an article written by Rayski to which I did not have access. Robert Prince "Remembering Adam Rayski (Whom I Never Knew)," http://robertjprince.net/2008/03/21/remembering-adam-rayski-whom-i-never-knew/.

212 Nos Illusions Perdues, 211.
short documentary about all étranger Jews involved in the RMVE units during the Second World War.213

When asked about the disproportionate amounts of literature published about the étranger Resistance, Henri Zytnicki claimed that “the association [UEVACJ] does not feel competitive with the Resistance fighters, and many were part of our association. We proudly produced a lot of content about the veterans, and will continue to educate the public about their engagement.”214 The UEVACJ even helped fund Mosco’s films that only talked about the Resistance while not promoting films about their veterans until 2010. The lack of books and movies that discuss the étranger Jewish veterans may however provide some insight into the desires of acculturation of the community. After the war, the étranger Jewish veterans received many benefits from the French government as well as naturalizations and pensions. The primary sources of conflict between the étranger Jewish veterans and the French government revolve around the Gromb-Koenig naturalization affair and the fact that causalities in the RMVE units were seven times higher than other French army units.215 Unlike the étranger Communists who actively sought well-known historians to write histories of their engagement, the members of the UEVACJ may not have because they did not want to stress the conflicts associated with their engagement. In its exhibitions and books, the UEVACJ

214 Zytnicki, "Entretien #2 Avec M. Zytnicki."
does not talk about the Gromb-Koenig Affair, nor does it stress the disproportionate death rates incurred by the members of the RMVE units compared to soldiers in other units. The decisions not to promote more literature about the étranger Jewish veterans reflect the overall goal of the UEVACJ: to remember the étranger Jewish veterans, to provide positive social interactions for its members, and to ensure the vitality of the Jewish community in France by highlighting contributions to the French military and Resistance and fighting against anti-Semitism. The UEVACJ wanted to acculturate into society, and avoided conflicts in order to preserve the perception of unity.

Controversy in 1985 Stimulates Study of Étranger Communists in Resistance

Despite the UJRE’s commitment to maintaining the étranger Jewish identity, the withdrawal of the étranger identity by many étranger Communist Jews contributed to the limited the amount of literature written about the groups of étranger Communist Jews in the first three decades after the war. Jews affiliated with the PCF refused to provide interviews to historians who tried to write the histories of the étranger Jews during the war.216 It was not until three decades later that the testimonies of the fighters were extensively recorded, and scholarly literature was written about the étranger Jewish Resistance members.

In the early 1980s, controversy surrounding the film Les Terroristes à la retraite, written and directed by the well-established director Mosco Boucault,

stimulated the field of study about the engagement of the étranger Jews in the Resistance. Mosco, people refer to him by his first name, did not have a direct connection to the FTP-MOI, because his father, an Ashkenazi Jew from Romania, immigrated to France in 1956; Mosco’s family background allowed him to closely identify with the fellow Ashkenazi Jewish subjects, yet he did not need to be defensive of their engagement, because he did not have direct connections to the étranger militants.

Mosco told the story of the étranger Communist Jewish Resistance in two films Les terroristes à la retraite (1985) and Ni travail, ni famille, ni patrie (1993). During the making of his first film, Mosco uncovered what he calls the PCF’s “betrayal” of the étranger Communist Jews. Mosco’s exposure of the contentious history between the PCF and the étranger Jews was not his initial impetus for creating the film. Initially, he “wanted to show that Jews were not only victims, they also fought.” The Jews in France, like the entire French nation, worked after the war to perpetuate a memory of heroism instead of victimhood. Mosco follows in this tradition, and wanted to reinforce the heroic characteristics of the étranger Jews. For Mosco, focusing on the victimhood would place more blame on the French which could possibly alienate the Jews from French society. The Jewish community

after the war sought reintegration and avoiding victimhood was key to achieving this goal.

The film presented evidence that claimed that the French Police murdered twenty-six members of the Manouchian group (an étranger Communist Jewish/Armenian group) because of the lack of action of the PCF. This framing sparked great controversy between the étranger Jews and the PCF. Mosco’s findings disclose the role of the PCF in this mass killing. The findings suggest that the PCF had knowledge that the French police began to pursue the members of the FTP-MOI yet still refused to smuggle vital Jewish combatants out of Paris.219 Until this film, members of the Manouchian group placed blame for their torture and eventual death on Joseph Davidovitch, an étranger Jewish member of the Manouchian group who revealed the names and location of the other members after weeks of torture. The sentiments of the other members of the Manouchian group can be seen from the final letters of the resistors to their families.220 Members of the FTP-MOI executed Davidovitch for his betrayal upon his release from French prison. Before the film, members of the étranger Jewish community, including the UEVACJ, also exclusively placed blame on Davidovitch and were ignorant to the role played by the PCF.221 Though this study does not have adequate information to determine

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219 Riding, "French Film Bears Witness to Wartime Complicity."); Diamant, Combattants, Héros et Martyrs De La Résistance: Biographies, Dernières Lettres, Témoignages et Documents.
220 Combattants, Héros et Martyrs De La Résistance: Biographies, Dernières Lettres, Témoignages et Documents.
whether or not these allegations against the PCF are true, Mosco’s film did spark intense controversy that prompted the academic examination of étranger Jewish involvement in the Communist Resistance in the form of historical books published in popular publishing houses.222

The PCF reacted harshly to the prospect of this film airing on television. From 1983 to 1984, the PCF used its political influence as a part of President François Mitterrand’s Socialist-Communist coalition to actively block the government funded television station SEPT from broadcasting Mosco’s film. Mosco, with the permission of SEPT, then sought for the film to be shown on privately owned channels. The PCF successfully stalled the film, set to air in 1984, by forcing the consultation of the High Authority of Audiovisual Communication, the government’s authority on censorship. The PCF claimed that the film committed libel and could not produce the evidence to back up its negative depiction of the Party. This prompted a large conflict in the country, which brought further attention to the film and helped it draw a large audience. Finally, in 1985 the PCF was no longer included in Mitterrand’s government. Without the PCF’s influence in the French government, the film aired on SEPT as originally planned. Members of the French public paid extensive attention to the étranger Jewish contributions to the Resistance.

The film’s project and media attention brought together many étranger Jewish community members and academics, for instance, the group of former FTP-

MOI fighters who reached out to historian Annette Wieviorka to write about their engagement.²²³ The fifteen years after the film encouraged more former étranger Jews to leave the PCF. These étranger Jews, coupled with those who left the Party after the Hungarian Revolts in 1956 and other geopolitical events did not have concerns discussing their memories of the Resistance as étranger Jews. Few étranger Jews who remained loyal to the PCF willingly discussed their engagement with historians and filmmakers because they did not want to perpetuate the étranger identity.²²⁴ With the expansion of interest from the French public and increased accessibility to oral histories, historians wrote dozens of books about the engagement and identity of the étranger Jews in the Resistance. The film incited an era of renewed interest in the étranger engagement during the Second World War.

First Works: The David Diamant (Erlich) Collection

The primary sources that fueled the extensive works that discuss the étranger Jewish engagement in the Resistance would not have existed if David Diamant had not meticulously saved the documents produced by étranger Jewish Resistance groups during the war. David Diamant, pseudonym of David Erlich, was an étranger Communist Jew and a committed member of the Resistance during the

²²⁴ In Mosco’s second film, he did attract three former étranger Jews who remained loyal to the PCF, yet agreed to serve as primary figures in his interviews throughout the films.
Second World War. He was born in 1904 in Hrubieszow (a town currently in Poland but at the time apart of the Tsarist Empire). He enlisted in the French military in 1939 as an étranger, but the army never called him into service. Instead, Diamant found work at an aviation factory that benefitted the Nazis, and soon decided instead to join the Resistance. He helped found a group of Resistance fighters within the FTP-MOI structure in Paris.

After the war, Diamant remained loyal to the PCF’s demands to relinquish his étranger identity. He used his language skills (he had fluency in six languages) to translate many of the documents related to his group of the FTP-MOI Resistance and other groups within the étranger Jewish Resistance. He collected over 1,200 pages worth of documents from 1939 to 1986 that provide insight into the daily functions of the different groups within the FTP-MOI and also document topics related to prisoners and deportees. His collection, formally titled the David Diamant Archives Project, was later expanded and now houses documents related to the étranger Resistance engagement from the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, the PCF, and the Center of Contemporary Jewish documents. Currently, the Bibliothèque marxiste de Paris stores the entire collection.225

The first published books that spoke to the étranger Jewish engagement in the Resistance did not have the intention of reaching a broad audience. They were written in Yiddish, which clearly suggests that the audience was the étranger Jews

themselves. The first two non-Yiddish books published that spoke to the étranger Jews in the Resistance were written by Diamant himself, and they also did not have the intention of reaching a broad audience, although his later books would.\footnote{Verified after doing an extensive analysis on Worldcat, and then verified with reference to the Bibliography created by the Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. "Jewish Resistance: A Working Bibliography Third Edition," ed. The Miles Lerman Center for the Study of Jewish Resistance (Washington, DC: Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum 2003).} The publishing house that produced Diamant’s books, les Éditions Renouveau, only published Diamant’s books. The lack of prominence and size of the publishing house suggests that the publications did not reach a broad audience, as would the books published by other authors after 1985. It is possible that the books served similarly to the books of the UEVACJ, which were intended for the fighters themselves and their families.

Diamant’s initial works do not place the engagement into a broader context, instead they provide collections of documents that help describe the engagement of members of the FTP-MOI. For example, one of his books compiles the last letters that members of the étranger Jewish Resistance wrote before being killed.\footnote{Diamant, Combattants, Héros et Martyrs De La Résistance: Biographies, Dernières Lettres, Témoignages et Documents.} Though Diamant’s books did not contribute greatly to the broader understanding of the étranger Jewish engagement, almost every book about the étranger Jewish experience explicitly cites Diamant’s archives and works. By collecting and organizing the archives of the étranger Resistance groups, Diamant acted against the demands
of the PCF because his collections contributed to the étranger identity. Without
Diamant’s archives and works, and without the stimulus from Mosco’s film, the field
of study about the étranger engagement during the Second World War would not
nearly have as extensive of a bibliography as it does today.

Within the books: Misrepresentation of étranger Communist Jewish engagement
in French military

Wieviorka

One of the fiercest debates connected to the engagement of the étranger
Communist Jews revolved around the allegiances that they had either to the Jewish
community or to France as a whole. As the étranger Communist Jews left the PCF
and joined the UJRE, many of them wanted to downplay their connection to
Communism. Many of the books written about the étranger Jewish engagement
relied on oral histories in order to understand the sentiments of those who engaged.
One must consider the historiographical concerns related to oral histories while
reading these texts, including the influence of changing allegiances on memory.

Annette Wieviorka, one of the best-known French historians of the Holocaust
whose family members engaged in the Resistance in France, mischaracterizes the
timeline of the étranger Jews Communist who engaged in the French military.228

Though by no means the largest political faction of étranger Jews who engaged in

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the French army, there were some étranger Communist Jews who answered the call to engage. The project of Annette Wieviorka’s book *Ils étaient juifs, résistants, communistes*, started when a group of former étranger Jewish Resistance fighters wanted a book written about them after the controversy surrounding the PCF started in 1982 with Mosco. Wieviorka derives evidence from interviews with former étranger Communist Jewish Resistors and newspaper documents. She restates how proud these men were that some of their brothers enlisted in the military even before the controversial Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact was ruptured.229 However, Wieviorka’s failure to use archival evidence regarding the timeline of the enrollment into the French army renders her representation of the étranger Communist Jewish engagement inaccurate. Wieviorka probably based her description of the rush of enlistees in photos like Figure 8, which took place in late spring 1939. Instead of properly dating this photo, she relies on an article from the Naïe Presse, the Communist Yiddish press, which called on its readers to enlist in the military in September 1939. If Wieviorka had gone into the archives of the Ministre des Affaires Étrangers or had looked at non-Communist Newspapers, she would have realized that the possibility of an étranger to enlist started almost four months earlier. This is when the majority of étranger Jews enlisted in the military. The étranger Communist Jews did not begin enlisting until the same week as the Nazis invaded Poland. Though some étranger Communists engaged in the RMVE units, it would seem that their drive to engage came less from a desire to serve France and more from

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listening to the officials at the Naïe Presse. These articles did not draw more people to engage in the RMVE units because many of the étranger Communists ignored the Naïe Presse, and instead waited for the Comintern to break its allegiance with the Nazis before they engaged.

The French Communist Resistance still has very positive connotations in French society today, yet French public scholars have shed light on the mixed allegiances of some of the “heroes” of the French Resistance. The French philosopher Michel Onfray has called for a reestablishment of the truth of the motivations behind Communists who fought in France during the Second World War. Onfray shows that Guy Moquet, a non-Jewish French Communist who became one of the symbols of the Resistance, rejected joining the French military because of his allegiance to the International. He was arrested by the French Police in 1940 for distributing defeatist papers after receiving instructions to do so by the Soviets before he joined the Resistance in 1941. He was killed the next year for his actions against the Nazis during the Occupation. Onfray wants his audience to question the prominence that the French public gives to Communists who engaged in the war despite their mixed allegiances. The delay in fighting Nazism suggests that they had more allegiances to the Soviets instead of the French, and therefore they should not be revered to the same magnitude as they are today. After leaving the PCF in the Post-War era, many Jews wanted to strengthen their connection to

France, and the ways in which the Communist Party influenced allegiances during the war could be negatively perceived in France. The literature that has been written about the étranger Jewish Communists fails to reveal the motivations of the fighters at the time of engagement.

*Rayski*

Behind the incredibly prolific étranger Jewish author Maurice Rajsfus, Adam Rayski produced the second most number of books about the étranger community. His book *Nos illusions perdues* is a memoire that connects his thoughts and memories to the broader context of relations between the étranger community and the Communist Party. Rayski held high positions in the Communist Party before he left the organization in 1956, and his views of the Party are reflected in the book. Rayski projects the negative tone towards the Party onto the entire étranger community. First of all, his title uses the first person plural (our) form which implies that he speaks for more than just himself. In fact, he seems to insinuate that he speaks for all étranger Communists, and goes on to claim that “we were accomplices, directly or indirectly, into crimes and lies.”\(^{231}\) The community of authors who wrote about the étranger experience had almost all left the Communist Party before doing so. Therefore, they inherently had negative views of the Party. Rayski’s misappropriation does provide insight into his views and distaste for the

\(^{231}\) Rayski, *Nos Illusions Perdues*, 313.
Party that many within the community probably felt. This helps highlight that this
book and other works of literature have been influenced by the emotions attached
to such personal experiences.

These examples of books about the étranger Communist Jewish experience
are but two of the dozens of studies and memoirs that have been published by
scholars and amateur historians. Most of authors and directors producing content
about the étranger Jews have strong connections to the former étranger Jewish
Communist Resistance fighters. Some of the authors actually fought in the
Resistance like the prolific authors Adam Rayski and Maurice Rajsfus. Other authors
like Annette Wieviorka, Stéphane Courtois, Renée Poznanski, and Nicolas Tandler
were born during or immediately after the war to étranger Jews parents. The
Communist Party seems to receive negative depictions in many of these instances.

The UEVACJ literature avoided engaging with the literature because it did not
want to affiliate itself with the controversial Communist Party. And when the former
étranger Communist Resistance fighters produced movies and books about their
experience, they removed the connections to the Party or forcefully demonstrated
their current negative opinions. All of this comes from desires to acculturate and
integrate into society. The étranger Jews, like Charles Mitzfiger did not want to relive
the isolation and destruction associated with being an outsider in society. The PCF
actually brought the étranger Jews closer together in the 1980s and 1990s as the
community aged and sought to record its contributions to France.
Conclusion

On August 25, 1944, General Charles de Gaulle announced the liberation of France at the Hotel de ville de Paris. In his famous speech “Paris libéré” (Liberated Paris), de Gaulle avoids the topic of the collaborators of the Vichy regime, instead he attributes the victory in France to the support and assistance of all of France.\textsuperscript{232} Life in Paris after the Second World War shortly returned to “normal” at the directive of de Gaulle, but the allegiances and identities of members of the French Jewry radically shifted as a result of the Shoah. The examination of the Ashkenazi étranger Jewry in France after the war demonstrated both the continuation of pre-War political disunities as well as reformed allegiances around “Jewish politics” that benefitted the unity of the French Jewry.

The CRIF seemed to follow de Gaulle’s lead, and placed emphasis on the Resistance coalition of the Communists, Bundists, and Zionists in the hopes that the French Jewry would universally promote the “Jewish politics”: fighting against anti-Semitism, supporting peace in Israel, and lobbying for equal rights for all Jews. Though not all étranger members of the French Jewry joined the CRIF, those who did demonstrated a radical shift in their approaches to the national community. The fact that the members of the UJRE, étranger Communists who fought in the FTP-MOI,

participated in the CRIF and its “Jewish politics” in the Post-War era demonstrates the path towards solidarity within the entire French Jewry.

The Tsarist policies that led to industrialization and poor working conditions contributed to the rise of the forging of the unique political identities within the étranger Jewish community. Upon immigrating to France, the Eastern European Jews remained divided organizationally based on their political affiliations. These identities continued to manifest themselves in the ways that the étranger Jews engaged in the Second World War in France. Étranger Communist Jews refused to enlist in the French military, because they had more of an allegiance to the Comintern than France or the Jewish community, and members of the FTP-MOI initially rejected the concept that they should work to save Jews in France. The étranger Communist Jews instead wanted to fight for the safety of all, as is the Lenin/Communist approach to combatting xenophobia. After the Second World War, many étranger Communist Jews avoided the CRIF and the UJRE. Yet, the controversies of both the Comintern (Stalin’s purge of Jewish identity in 1947, Massacre of Hungarian Uprising, and the Soviet arming of the Egyptians) and the PCF (The PCF failed to attempt to save Jews in the Manouchian group as was highlighted by Mosco’s film) influenced the shift of allegiances of the étranger Communist Jews away from the Comintern and towards the French Jewry. When the UJRE left the CRIF in 2009, they did not leave because they did not support Israel and the “Jewish politics”, rather, the UJRE left because it felt that the CRIF diverged from the
freedom of expression that the “Jewish politics” formerly promoted. These étranger Jews clearly embraced a collective Jewish identity after the war.

If the étranger Communist Jews of the UJRE were willing to embrace the “Jewish politics” and a newfound Jewish identity, why did they not unite more with the UEVACJ Jews? The monument erected by the UEVACJ two years after the end of the Second World War perfectly epitomized the disunity between the étranger Communist Jews and the rest of the étranger Jewish veteran community. The UEVACJ invited the families of any étranger Jew who died while fighting to be buried at their tomb. None of the sixty-six people entombed at Bagneux died while fighting in the FTP-MOI. This phenomenon could be the result of the community and social disunity within the étranger Jewish community. In the interwar period, the lives of families often revolved around each person’s political Party. The partisan nature of the services provided during the interwar period separated social life and community unity.

Based on the analysis of the veteran organizations in France, the members of the étranger Jewish community may have shifted towards the concept of French Jewry, but they did not unite as communities. Examining the geographical resettlement of the étranger Jews returning to France, reorganization of the mutual aid societies previously divided politically, or even the business relationships within the étranger Jewish community could have provided insight into the unity or disunity of the étranger Jewish communities in the Post-War era, but these methods were beyond the scope of this study.
What makes a community? How do people determine that they feel a shared identity with another? The Jewish community only united in France when the Nazis and Vichy explicitly attacked the entire French Jewry; in a way, this attack stimulated the unified French Jewish identity. The Jewish community that remains united today does so because they want to prevent conflict in the future. The CRIF focuses its attention more on promoting peace in Israel (Israel is a key source of anti-Semitic rhetoric in France) and thwarting anti-Semitism. The French Jewry is united because of perceived external threats to their life in France.
APPENDIX: Collection of Photos

Figure 1: 1939 Roman Vishniac’s photo of members of a religious community outside of a Jewish Store in Drohobycz, Second Polish Republic (currently Ukraine)\textsuperscript{233}

Figure 2: 1920s, a Jewish shoe factory Liuboml, Poland (currently Ukraine)\textsuperscript{234}

\textsuperscript{233} Vishniac and Heschel, \textit{Polish Jews: A Pictorial Record}.
Figure 3: 1920s female loom workers in Leo Goldberger’s textile factory, Budapest

Figure 4: Palace of the Poznanski Family, textile moguls. Lodz, Poland currently a museum

Figure 5: 1939 A photo outside the École Militaire of étrangers (Jews and non-Jews) enlisting in the RMVE units.237

Figure 6: Picture of étranger Jewish volunteers outside of Valbonne where they trained before heading north to engage the enemy.238

238 Ibid.
Figure 7: Members of the RMVE 22nd Regiment in a POW camp in Stalag, Bavaria, Germany 1941

Figure 8: L’Affiche Rouge. Printed by the Vichy Regime in June 1944, with the goal of discrediting members of the Resistance. All of the people on the poster were killed. (The liberation by the army of crime)

239 Ibid.
Figure 9: From YIVO archives in the file of the UGIF. The cartoon was collected by the UGIF to document anti-Semitism in Vichy. 241

Figure 10: Active Member Call of UEVACJ. Members used this to help secure pensions from the French Government. Documents of UEVACJ preserved at the YIVO archives in New York City. 242

Figure 11 Interior of the Carte du Membre Actif of the UEVACJ 243

Figure 12 View of the exterior of the UEVACJ’s refuge Les Lauriers Roses 244

243 Ibid.
Figure 13 Inauguration ceremony of the UEVACJ’s Les Lauriers Roses

Figure 14 Photo of the UEVACJ’s monument to the étranger Jewish veterans and fighters who died fighting in the Second World War.

245 Ibid.

Figure 15 Inauguration ceremony of the monument at Bagneux cemetery. 247

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