

# **The Ultimate Sacrifice**

by  
Paul Sanders

Copyright  
Jersey Heritage Trust 1998

## FOREWORD

There is nothing noble about a military occupation. From the viewpoint of the occupied it is a period of continuing humiliation. For the occupier it is often a corrosive and corrupting experience. For Channel Islanders, the small size of the islands and the vast scale of the fortifications inflicted upon them, made the five years of German occupation between 1940 and 1945 a time of suffocation, intrusion and social paralysis. Moral ambiguities abounded. Where was the line to be drawn between submission and collaboration, between intransigence and resistance.

In this important contribution to the expanding literature of the German occupation of the Channel Islands Paul Sanders examines the histories of twenty individuals who were deported from Jersey for trivial offences against the occupying authorities, and who never returned. It is a fitting adjunct to the memorial on the New North Quay unveiled in 1996.

But of equal importance is the analysis which follows of the meaning of defiance in the context of small communities largely bereft of their menfolk of fighting age, and swamped by superior force. Taken in the round Channel Islanders who endured the German occupation have little of which to be ashamed. This was no model occupation. We owe a debt to the author for sweeping aside many misconceptions and for helping to lay the foundations for more detailed and objective historical study of documentation now available than has yet seen the light of day.

Sir Philip Ballhache  
Bailiff of Jersey

## Author's note

Throughout the text the wartime expression 'offences against the occupying authorities' has been retained. When work started on this project a global term defining the type of action taken by the people called the 'Jersey Twenty' was sought. It soon became clear that the term 'defiance' registered the common denominator. The apparent dichotomy between 'offences against the occupying authorities' and 'acts of defiance' encapsulates the reality of the occupation. These two terms have been variously used in the relevant contexts because they respect the peculiarity of the situation in the Channel Islands, while simultaneously, avoiding vagueness. Their alternatives, *petty resistance* and *passive resistance*, have been avoided because they have a judgmental connotation. In the context of defiance to the Nazi regime *passive resistance* is an outright contradiction in terms. *Resistance* is equally unsuitable for the purposes of this study as it is too evocative of armed and political combat against Nazism, neither of which played a pre-eminent role in the Channel Islands. *Resistance* is a general classification rather than an estimable definition which, again, is tainted by lack of precision. *Resistance* is easily adaptable to diverse geographical or national contexts where it is contoured along singularly established lines and categories and in unison with distinct political needs.

'Political crimes' is another problematic expression, fraught with the potential for distorted interpretation, despite the legitimate definition of some of the protagonists in this account as 'political prisoners'. In its classical use the concept can prove quite inadequate in defining a particular group of individuals - even today - because dictatorships, and in particular totalitarian regimes, criminalise many types of non-conformist behaviour which are not always inherently political. What constitutes a 'political act' is above all a matter of interpretation depending on how far the ambit of politics is extended into the individual's private sphere. This is culture specific, varying accordingly from one society to another. The criminalisation of non-conformist behaviour in dictatorial regimes is expansive by nature and can, in certain instances,

extend to punishing mere difference. Repression in totalitarian dictatorships targets both 'actual' and so-called 'potential' opponents. It is usually the discretionary prerogative of the authorities or the police forces to decide what constitutes inimical acts and what does not. This notion served Nazism just as well as Stalinism, and the Stalinist purges are a particularly good reminder as to what extremes the notion of 'potential enemy' can go. The tool designed to silence 'potential enemies' was 'preventive action' which needed no justification and was employed to encompass a growing number of individuals. As a result trivial occurrences increasingly came to be categorised as serious 'offences'. Such weighty terms signifying all and nothing are of little use in our study and have therefore been avoided.

## **Introduction**

On 9 November 1996 a memorial recording the names of twenty Jersey residents was unveiled by the Bailiff of Jersey, Sir Philip Bailhanche, on the New North Quay, opposite the Occupation Tapestry Gallery and the Yacht Marina in St Helier, Jersey. The twenty women and men to whom the memorial is dedicated defied the German authorities during the Occupation of the Island in World War II. All of them died as a consequence of ill-treatment and deprivations they suffered in prisons and concentration camps on the Continent. This publication is the sequel to the new memorial to which it provides the natural complement. The story it tells will, hopefully, encourage reflection on this period of duress in the history of the Island and be a source of pride to its people. The book focuses on one specific aspect of the Occupation - acts of defiance in Jersey and German repression - and if it serves to commemorate those who suffered in an appropriate manner, it will have largely accomplished its task. It should not, therefore, be deemed 'yet another book' on the Occupation.

The memorial in honour of the 'Jersey Twenty' testifies to the many other Channel Islanders who engaged in acts of defiance or disobedience and who had to face similar ordeals as a consequence. Twenty is rapidly becoming a figure of substantial symbolic value in Jersey Occupation history: Twenty Jersey people died for their convictions and actions in German prisons and camps during the War. In 1966 twenty other Jersey people - in numerous cases friends and relatives of the first group - received gold watches in honour to their support for Soviet wartime fugitives in the Island. Finally, twenty bundles of German prison records giving details of those imprisoned by the occupying authorities were carelessly disposed of as waste when Gloucester Street prison was knocked down in the post-war era. Had they survived, they would be of

significant historical interest.

The total number of people sent from Jersey to the Continent to serve sentences in penal institutions currently stands at 88 - a figure that includes the 'Twenty' - and the first part of the book will describe the circumstances of the arrest, the trial, deportation and death of each of these twenty prisoners. By telling their story we are recording part of the general story of Channel Islands prisoners. In most cases an attempt has been made to interweave thematical elements and biography, and to link the individual story to the general historical framework. Other themes touched upon in the book include the employment of civilian workers of British nationality by the Germans and the sheltering of slave workers. One chapter deals with three islanders who fell victim to Hitler's Night and Fog decree, a key instrument in the repression of resistance in occupied Western Europe.

The people commemorated in this book are exemplary cases because they embodied all varieties of dissident behaviour during the Occupation, coming as they did from discrete layers of Island society. Their ranks included labourers, farmers, a shop-keeper, a middle-class entrepreneur, a priest and an Advocate of the Royal Court. The limelight of attention is focused on them because they made the ultimate sacrifice for their actions. Contrary to an erroneous notion of island compliance with the occupier, offences against the occupying authorities were a frequent phenomenon and by no means represented isolated incidents. Joe Miere, the former curator of the German Underground Hospital in Jersey, estimates the number of people arrested for such offences in the Channel Islands at 4,000. Thus five per cent of the population ran into some sort of trouble with the Germans during the Occupation; a population that had been depleted of its most combative members at the beginning of the war - the men serving in the armed forces. Most of the incidents were of minor nature. Though the punishment was often equally lenient, it was hardly excusable, considering that most of these offences should never have been punishable in the first place, even under the special circumstances of military occupation. The limits of German tolerance were extremely low.

Though there were a variety of German courts in the Channel Islands, the majority of cases were dealt with by the court of the *Feldkommandantur 515*, the German civil

affairs unit in the Channel Islands, with headquarters at Victoria College House in Jersey. The remainder were tried by the Jersey branch of the court of the 319th Infantry Division based in Guernsey. The offences tried by German courts during the Occupation included illicit possession of a radio set, spreading BBC news or countering German propaganda, insulting German troops or dishonouring the Reich and the German people, sheltering escaped slave-labourers or German deserters, stealing or receiving German goods, blackmarketeering, sabotage or 'going slow' on German work, escape attempts and weapons offences.<sup>1</sup> Most of the sentences were executed in Jersey prison. Those sent to continental prisons had to expect the worst and indeed many were transferred to concentration camps after serving their prison term.

The second part of the book shifts attention away from the individual stories to the broader historical dimension. It hopes, despite its impressionistic character, to make a modest contribution to the historiography of the War in the Channel Islands. Few attempts have been made to thematise German policy towards the Channel Islands or to perceive the paranoia that had taken root in certain quarters of the German military, besieged by the conviction that the Islands were swamped by British agents; nothing, of course, could have been further from the truth.

Virtually undocumented are the rivalry and differences of opinion thriving amongst the German occupiers and their impact on the implementation of measures on the civilian population. The *Feldkommandantur (FK)* was a separate unit that should not be confused with the combat troops in the islands. Comprising mainly of administrators and officials, its principal tasks were not military in character. In all matters concerning the civilian population and the implementation of occupation government the FK was the highest German authority in the islands, at least in theory. It is hardly surprising, however, that with such a strong garrison the final word in many areas, including measures concerning the civilian population, lay not with the *Feldkommandant* but with the Commander of the combat troops in the islands, the *Befehlshaber*.

During the planning of the fortification of the Channel Islands in 1941 some German military commanders came forward with the suggestion of deporting the entire

---

<sup>1</sup>Taken from a list partly compiled by Michael Ginns, s. JAS, C/C/L Occupation and Liberation Committee Files, letter of Michael Ginns to Jean Baird, 06/11/1996.

population. In their opinion the presence of civilians was anathema to the smooth running of a fortress. These plans never materialised, but the basic idea of removing groups of people - if not the entire population then at least certain sections of it - was never dropped and actually implemented on several occasions. The availability of *food* and the pressing demands of *fortification* served as the rationale underpinning most decisions and the FK had to strike a difficult balance: the presence of certain categories of islanders, e.g. those working in food production, was beneficial to the running of the Occupation and reduced the scale of German imports from France. However, the German administration was less well-disposed to those considered as 'superfluous eaters' or with no useful employment in the German sense and whom they had few scruples in removing from the Islands.

Steps to deport civilians were also linked to the tightening of security procedures on the fortification project during 1941 and 1942. After this period, there was an increase in repression. The new situation soon led the German authorities to differentiate between the so-called 'reliable' and 'unreliable' elements in the islands. Some civilians, it was thought, were more receptive to outside influences and had a more hostile attitude than others.<sup>2</sup> Non-indigenous islanders of mainland origin were the prime target for suspicion. The two German notions of 'useless eater' and 'potential enemy', which provided the basis of the 1942/43 deportations of civilians to internment camps, also had an effect on the treatment of 'offenders'.

---

<sup>2</sup>German military commanders took the commando raid on Sark in October 1942 for proof that not all 'unreliable elements' had been removed from the islands in the September 1942 deportations; this served as the chief argument for a second round of deportations of islanders in February 1943.

# Part I: THE CASE HISTORIES

## 1

### The St Saviour's wireless case

The ban and subsequent confiscation of the civilian population's wireless sets in June 1942 was one of the most controversial measures imposed by the German authorities and represented a major intervention in island life. It triggered defiance on a massive scale and is of vital interest to our story, as some of its protagonists fell victim to German action taken against the continued reception of BBC news. Probably the best-remembered of the 'wireless cases' in occupied Jersey occurred in the parish of St Saviour in spring 1943. It involved - among many others - four of the people whose names are engraved on the Jersey memorial: Canon Clifford Cohu, John Whitley Nicolle, Joseph Tierney and Arthur Dimmery.<sup>3</sup>

Clifford John Cohu was born in C atel, Guernsey on December 30, 1883 as the son of Reverend Jean Rougier Cohu and Ada Sophia Orange. In 1884 the family moved to Yorkshire where his father was the Headmaster of Richmond Grammar School until 1890. Thereafter the Cohus lived at Aston Clinton in Buckinghamshire. Educated at Elizabeth College, Guernsey and Keble College, Oxford, Cohu was ordained priest in 1908. In 1912 he went to India where he served as a minister in several communities,

---

<sup>3</sup>The other people who received prison sentences in connection with the St Saviour's wireless case were: Marguerite Alexander, Alfred Henry Coutanche, Harold Alexander Leneghan, Maud Alice Bathe, Arthur William Downer, Donald Journeaux, his wife Irene, Agnes Maria Sarah Newland (Mrs Journeaux's mother), Frederick John Nicolle (John's Nicolle's father), Mabel Rubina Nicolle (John Nicolle's wife), John Whitley Starck, Arthur Stanley Wakeham, Edward John Gideon Mourant, Thomas Philip Mourant, s. JAS, D/Z Law Officers Files; Journeaux, Donald, *Raise the white flag - A Life in Occupied Jersey*, Leatherhead (Surrey), 1995, 66.

including as Canon of Allahabad Cathedral, until 1935. He was highly regarded for his straightforwardness and chivalry, earning the affectionate designation of *pukka sahib* from the local populace. He was a member of the Indian Ecclesiastical Establishment in Lucknow and held the rank of Colonel in the chaplain's department on his decommission in October 1935. He retired to Jersey in 1937 where he lived at Holly Lodge, Five Oaks with his wife Harriet, whom he had met in India. He was assigned as acting rector of St Saviour when the post became vacant in 1940.<sup>4</sup> Despite his eccentricity, Cohu enjoyed wide-spread popularity and, consequently, became the single most prominent member of the island community to have died in a German camp.

Twenty-three years in India had a profound influence on this highly sensitive man, something that found more than an adequate expression in the obituary which appeared in the Jersey Evening Post on September 29, 1945. The author, a friend of the Canon, bears testimony to a man who *'persistently refused to be caught by the cheap simplicity of a logic which ignores half of human nature.'*

And further,

*'He would not purchase emphasis at the cost of ignoring obvious facts. If life is many-sided, as it certainly is, then faith which is one-sided stands convicted of inadequacy: he knew that the solution of a complicated problem cannot but be complicated itself.'*<sup>5</sup>

Many islanders still fondly cherish his memory and remember his acts of defiance, most spectacularly his rendering of the news while riding down the Parade, St Helier on his bicycle on at least one occasion. In his position as chaplain of the General Hospital he further challenged German authority by disseminating information on his visits to the general and maternity wards. Cohu's source of information was the parish cemetery worker Joseph Tierney who wrote out the news he received every morning from John Whitley Nicolle and his father, a St Saviour farmer, who retained a radio set which had been loaned to them by Mrs Bathe. On the basis of this information news sheets were produced by Tierney and Arthur Wakeham, which were then carried to Canon Cohu

---

<sup>4</sup>JAS, D/S/A Occupation Registration card N° 21247; 'Definite News of Canon Cohu', The Evening Post, Jersey, 25/09/1945; 'The Late Canon Cohu - An Appreciation', The Evening Post, Jersey, 29/09/1945; 'Canon Clifford John Cohu: A Victim of the Occupation' Part One by Alex Glendinning, Sunday Island Times 27/02/1994.

<sup>5</sup>'The Late Canon Cohu - An Appreciation', The Evening Post, 29/09/1945.

and Henry Coutanche who worked at St Saviour's Parish Hall.<sup>6</sup> While the threat to the Germans from such behaviour was little more than innocuous, Cohu's non-conformism made him a thorn in the Germans' side and catapulted him to the top of the occupier's blacklist of 'undesirables'. Substantiating this is a letter Harriet Cohu wrote to the Attorney General after the Occupation and in which she pointed out that her husband's arrest had entailed no house-searches and no questioning of herself nor of the companion who was living with them, Miss Eleanor Margaret Curtis, but that his *'chief fault in their eyes [the Germans'] was that he tried to keep up other people's spirits.'*<sup>1</sup>

Joseph Tierney, who was living at 23 Cheapside in St Helier, was the first member of the network to be seized, on March 3, 1943, followed by a number of arrests over the ensuing fortnight. Cohu himself was arrested by the GFP, the German Secret Field Police, and taken to their HQ at Silvertide, Havre des Pas, in a car on Friday, March 12.<sup>7</sup> Surviving documents show that in the end a total of eighteen people were tried - most of them for receiving and disseminating BBC news or assisting this endeavour in one way or the other. However, it appears that the number of people interrogated was higher. Law draftsman Francis de Lisle Bois passed a warning from Cohu to Reverend Matthew Le Marinel, the rector of St Helier, and Curate Preston who were equally involved in the spreading of news.<sup>8</sup> With so many people involved, most of whom had probably never prepared for the eventuality of being arrested, there was plenty of scope for manoeuvre and a gifted interrogator would have had few problems trying to retrieve the type of information needed to indict as many people as possible.

The German authorities were becoming increasingly nervous about popular disobedience to the wireless confiscation order, a measure the FK had never been enthusiastic about it, owing to the difficulty of its enforcement and the potential it carried for undermining its own authority. A purportedly harmless activity, when banned, turned overnight into an act of great significance. The continued reception of

---

<sup>6</sup>Falla, Frank, *The Silent War*, Guernsey 1991 (reprint), 124/25.

<sup>7</sup>'Canon Clifford John Cohu: A Victim of the Occupation' Part One by Alex Glendinning, *Sunday Island Times*, 27/02/1994.

<sup>8</sup>'Canon Clifford John Cohu: A Victim of the Occupation' Part Two by Alex Glendinning, *Sunday Island Times*, 06/03/1994.

news now represented an act of defiance which challenged the FK's total authority. Once tarnished, a loss of authority could easily extend into other areas. A go-soft approach to this issue was therefore out of the question. The St Saviour's wireless case was the perfect opportunity to stage a show-trial that could act as a deterrent and persuade the rest of the population to refrain from illegal action. However, the result was forcefully counter-productive, with the challenge to the FK's supremacy spreading into other areas: though islanders became more circumspect, they also became more technically ingenious and developed all kinds of virtually undetectable crystal sets. As is attested in many diaries and memoirs, news invariably found its way around the Island. Having handed in one set, many people kept a replica hidden away in a safe place and an impressive number of these contraptions appeared on window-sills on 8 May 1945, ready to blast out Churchill's speech.

The trial took place, barely one month after the arrests, on April 9, 1943, behind closed doors in the Lower Committee Room of the States Building. Eager to give this one occasion a semblance of legality and exploit it for propaganda purposes, the court made a unique provision for Advocate Valpy, Mrs Bathe's lawyer, to act as defence counsel. This is the only documented case where an Island lawyer was ever allowed to defend a client in a German court. Not that it made any difference; as in Valpy's view the outcome of the trial was clear from the outset; the court procedures bore no resemblance to the standards required in a fair trial; guilt was assumed and all the defence counsel could do was plead in mitigation. However, unlike other trials, the case enjoyed a great deal of public exposure - something the Germans surely could have avoided had they aimed for more secrecy. Donald Journeaux, one of the defendants, recounts that on leaving the States Building after the trial, large crowds had gathered in the Royal Square, eagerly awaiting the result - a fact substantiated by an entry in Sinel's Occupation diary.<sup>9</sup>

A determination to rid the Island of Cohu's presence forever accounts for the disproportionately harsh sentence he received, in striking contrast to the sentences given to other defendants for very much the same offence. Cohu was sentenced to 18 months imprisonment for *'failing to surrender leaflets and [...] disseminating anti-*

---

<sup>9</sup>Journeaux, op. cit., 66; s. corresponding entry in: Sinel, Leslie, *The German Occupation of Jersey: A Complete Diary of Events, June 1940-June 1945*, Jersey, 1984.

*German news*', whereas usually sentences for convictions of this category ranged between a mere one to two months. Equally, Tierney's two-year sentence *'for manufacturing and distributing leaflets'* appears as a telling idiosyncrasy in the light of the two months imposed on another defendant, Arthur Stanley Wakeham, for an identical offence. Clearly a hidden agenda was at work seeking to isolate 'troublemakers' and emblematic figures like Cohu.

The second blow was directed at those believed to demonstrate initiative, as shown in the case of Tierney and Nicolle (the latter being branded as the chief 'criminal' by the German prosecution)<sup>10</sup>. The third line of attack targeted those involved who were English-born, as in the case of Arthur Dimmery. He was a gardener whose crime constituted having dug up Mrs Bathe's wireless set which, afterwards, was handed over to Mr Nicolle. Dimmery's relatively low sentence of three months and two weeks was to be served on the Continent, from whence he never returned.<sup>11</sup> He left Jersey for an unknown destination together with Nicolle, on May 5, 1943. After completing his term he probably found himself in the hands of the Gestapo and was sent to Neuengamme concentration camp, outside Hamburg.<sup>12</sup> How Dimmery came to be admitted to Laufen, one of the internment camps for Channel Islanders, remains a mystery. He died there on April 4, 1944 and lies buried at Salzach Municipal Cemetery.<sup>13</sup>

Five days after the verdict, on April 14, 1943, Cohu was transferred from the military (German) to the civilian side of Gloucester Street prison where life was relatively easier.<sup>14</sup> The Germans had taken over two blocks of the prison for their own purposes. The larger building was reserved for German servicemen and the smaller for civilian 'offenders' against the occupying authority. The civilians remained in the German part of the prison until the time of their trial; however, once the German court had reached a verdict, prisoners were transferred to the 'civilian side' under the Jersey authorities. Cohu spent three months in the civilian side before being shipped to the Continent on

---

<sup>10</sup> Journeaux, op. cit., 65.

<sup>11</sup> JAS, D/Z Law Officers Files; Journeaux, op. cit., 46-71.

<sup>12</sup> JAS, L/C/24/A5 Joe Miere Collection, List of political prisoners in the Channel Islanders 1940-1945.

<sup>13</sup> JAS, B/A/W 85/5 Bailiff's War files, War graves

<sup>14</sup> 'Canon Clifford John Cohu: A Victim of the Occupation' Part Two by Alex Glendinning, Sunday Island Times, 06/03/1994.

July 13. His first way-station was Fort d'Hauteville, near Dijon.<sup>15</sup>

Tierney, who in the meantime had been allowed to attend the christening ceremony of his new-born daughter, followed him there on September 18, 1943. The relocation of prisoners to Dijon was necessitated by the pressures of accommodating a growing torrent of prisoners at the French central prison of Villeneuve St Georges. Henceforth the Fort of Hauteville started to share the functions of the central prison and became a collecting point for all those selected to serve their sentences in Germany.<sup>16</sup>

Five of the 'Frankfurt and Naumburg Seven' were regrouped at Hauteville: Canon Cohu, Joseph Tierney, Frederick Page, Clifford Querée and George Fox. All ended up together at Saarbrücken prison in Germany on December 21, 1943.<sup>1</sup> They were transferred to the prison of Frankfurt-Preungesheim on January 6, 1944. Nicolle, who had also joined the other prisoners at Hauteville left Saarbrücken with Alfred Connor, a Jerseyman arrested for possession of explosives in 1943<sup>17</sup>, for an altogether different destination. Both men were transferred to Zweibrücken on December 27, 1943, where they were retained for a few months and then sent to Bochum where they arrived on April 17, 1944.<sup>18</sup> The fact that Nicolle had been sentenced to three years simple prison and that prison terms over two years were executed at Bochum prison accounted for his separation from the other prisoners.<sup>19</sup> However, Nicolle was then sent on to Dortmund where he arrived on April 21.<sup>20</sup> This prison was particularly vile as is recounted by one survivor, according to whom Bochum was already *'bad, but it was a palace compared to Dortmund'*. John Nicolle perished there from starvation and overwork.<sup>21</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup>JAS, B/A/L15 Bailiff's Liberation Files, Enquiries for Relatives, Letter of Mrs Cohu to Lt-Colonel J W Taylor, British Military Authority, Mil HQ, Jersey, Date: 18/05/1945.

<sup>16</sup>The relocation of prisoners from Villeneuve St Georges to Hauteville was officialised in May 1944. At this stage it became the practice to send all prisoners with sentences running over three months to Germany, s. BA-R 22, Reich Ministry of Justice, 1341. Note of the Militärbefehlshaber in France to Section Ib (Kommandostab), Group 3, 10/05/1944.

<sup>17</sup>Connor and another man, Norman Dexter from Guernsey, had also been in the party of Hauteville prisoners sent to Saarbrücken on 23/12/1943. Dexter joined the 'Frankfurt group' and survived Preungesheim and Naumburg, s. list provided by the French Ministry of Veterans and Victimes of War, 31/07/1997.

<sup>18</sup>List provided by the French Ministry of Veterans and Victimes of War, 31/07/1997.

<sup>19</sup>BA-R 22. RMJ. 1341. Army Notification Bulletins 1944, 10th edition, 18/05/1944.

<sup>20</sup>List provided by the French Ministry of Veterans and Victimes of War, 31/07/1997.

<sup>21</sup>According to a letter written by Mr Verbene Amart to Ruby Nicolle after the war and cited by J H L'Amey in his unpublished memoirs *'The German Occupation of Jersey'* (in custody of the Société Jersiaise).

## 2

### William Marsh's fatal breach of the

#### Nazi work ethic

William Marsh was born in St Helier on November 28, 1920 and was a motor mechanic by profession, though at the beginning of the Occupation he worked as a bread roundsman.<sup>22</sup> Described as a loner who was not very communicative with his family, William would spend a lot of time repairing and riding his bicycle, more out of boredom than anything else.<sup>23</sup> When the Germans arrived in the islands he took up employment with them: first at the Grand Hotel which he left a year later in order to work for the Organisation Todt (OT), the German labour organisation, at Bel Royal Garages, on the promise of better pay. Five months later he was on the payroll of the most active German contractor in Jersey, Elsche & Co., where he stayed for a year before joining the *Inselwaffenmeisterei* (island armouries) in November 1943. In all save the first case he was sacked because of his rebelliousness and his adoption of a 'go-slow' work ethic. This confrontational attitude had much to do with Marsh's own temperament, influenced, no doubt, by the fact that one of his closest relatives, his grandfather Samuel Selig Simon, was one of the registered Jews in Jersey. Unlike most other islanders who, on a personal level, were little affected and could almost ignore this reality of the Occupation, the Marsh family directly and daily experienced the discrimination against the island Jews. The anti-Semitic measures affected them as much as their counterparts in occupied Europe and Marsh's grandparents lived in constant fear of deportation. This factor played an important part in Marsh's occupation experience and, on May 11, 1942, he moved from Le Geyt Street to

---

<sup>22</sup>JAS, D/S/A Occupation Registration Cards (form attached to card; signed 17/1/1941).

<sup>23</sup>Information provided by an anonymous relative.

Elston, Langley Park with his parents and sister. This step was taken in order for the family to be closer to Samuel Selig and his wife who had been given consent to take up residence in Vallée des Vaux, a five-minute-walk away, in April 1942.<sup>24</sup> Samuel Selig was ill and the Marsh's move clearly bore a relation to the restrictions which severely immobilised and isolated Jews. Later Samuel Selig moved to Elston, the Marsh's home, where he eventually died in November 1943, a short time before William's arrest.

Marsh's obstreperous behaviour did not change when he arrived at the *Inselwaffenmeisterei* that same month: every morning, on arrival at the worksite, he spread BBC news among the other 15 British civilians who started imitating his example. To keep the workers happy the Germans then introduced a supplementary breakfast pause which at times became rather extended, again due to Marsh's influence. These incidents, one surmises - though a cause of irritation - would have probably been dismissed as a hazard of having to rely on naturally reluctant British civilian workers, had Marsh not started to offer his own opinions. What caused German irritation was his tendency to discuss the political situation and get into arguments with the Germans who did not take kindly to being contradicted. Marsh was too outspoken, perhaps too naive, and later conceded that:

*'It was never my intention to talk bad about the Germans, but through the conversations on war and politics at the Inselwaffenmeisterei it often happened that in the course of a dialogue, sometimes out of fun sometimes out of anger, things were said that otherwise wouldn't have been said.'*<sup>25</sup>

Marsh had clearly misjudged German sensitivities. Moreover, as a worker on a military project he was not exempt from military discipline. Therefore, when he was reported for misconduct in February 1944 it would have been naïve to expect to get off with a simple dismissal from his workplace. He was interrogated by the *Feldgendarmarie* and put on trial. The outcome of the trial was far from obvious, as the search of Marsh's room had produced no results: the Germans could unearth neither a radio set nor some incriminating print matter which they had clearly expected to find. Significantly, the German non-commissioned officer who nicknamed Marsh 'minister of propaganda'

---

<sup>24</sup>Cohen, Frederick, 'The Jews in the islands of Jersey, Guernsey and Sark during the German Occupation 1940-1945', in: *Journal of Holocaust Education 1998*, p. 19; Samuel Simon died before William's arrest, on 7 November 1943.

<sup>25</sup>Interrogation of William Marsh, 03/02/1944, in: BA-ZNA, Z 726. Court of the 319th I.D., Jersey Branch. Investigations into the case against William Marsh.

tried to downplay the affair when he was questioned by the *Feldgendarmerie*. He stated that he '*did not regard Marsh's behaviour as sabotage, he simply wanted to impress his work mates with his alleged knowledge of the news*'.<sup>26</sup> It is therefore reasonable to presume that a more unassuming profile and tone in the courtroom and a willingness to belittle the import of his actions might have shortened Marsh's impending sentence. However, left to fend for himself and in the absence of a defence counsel, Marsh failed to take advantage of the slim margin available to him to influence the outcome of the trial. Acutely sensing the noose tightening around his neck, he made a last ditch attempt to excuse himself: it had not been his intention to brand the German news as 'propaganda', as the two German witnesses claimed he had done, he said, pointing out that '*propaganda came from both (war-waging, n.b.) sides*'.<sup>27</sup>

Subconsciously, however, his mind was bent on not letting the Germans 'have it their own way' and in the last instance he put facts and the right to an opinion above self-interest. The judge's belief in Marsh's subversive and dangerous role was reinforced by his occasional outbursts during the trial proceedings. The curtain fell when he commented on the absence of fair trial procedures by alleging that the soldiers [who acted as witnesses] had received orders regarding their testimonies. This was a direct reference to the fact that they had not been sworn in. It proved to be a suicidal slip of the tongue, as the court deemed it a grave '*insult to the German forces which exposed Marsh's dangerous attitude*'; for the judges this constituted the decisive factor in reaching a verdict. Marsh then desperately tried to retract this statement that had sealed his fate, only to find his offer rejected by the presiding judge. The actions leading to his arrest which ordinarily would have simply been a matter of reprimand, were deduced by the judges to be the motivated handiwork of a '*fanatical enemy [...] who had to be eliminated for a longer period of time*'.<sup>28</sup>

On 19 February 1944 he was sentenced by the court of the 319th Infantry Division, sitting at King's Cliff House, St Helier to one year and three months imprisonment for

---

<sup>26</sup>Examination of the witness NCO Joseph H., 04/02/1944, in BA-ZNA,Z 726. Court of the 319th I.D., Jersey Branch. Investigations into the case against William Marsh.

<sup>27</sup>Trial report, 19/02/1944, in BA-ZNA, Z 726. Court of the 319th I.D., Jersey Branch. Investigations into the case against William Marsh.

<sup>28</sup>Verdict of court of 319th I.D. in Jersey, 19/02/1944, in BA-ZNA, Z 726. Court of the 319th I.D., Jersey Branch. Investigations into the case against William Marsh.

*'insulting the German forces, disturbing the working peace and disseminating anti-German information.'*<sup>29</sup> He was deported to Germany where he shared the fate of several other jailed Channel Islanders and became one of the 'Frankfurt and Naumburg Seven'.

---

<sup>29</sup>BA-ZNA, Z 726. Court of the 319th I.D., Jersey Branch. Investigations into the case against William Marsh; JAS, D/Z Law Officers Files.

### 3

#### The Frankfurt and Naumburg Seven

... to get away from the body  
and reside with the Lord.  
(St Paul, 2 Cor, v.8)

In 1944 the prison in the Frankfurt borough of Preungesheim became one of the principal detention centres for Channel Islands 'offenders' in Germany.<sup>30</sup> A rule enacted in 1942 decreed that residents of the Western occupied territories sentenced by German courts to prison terms exceeding three years were to be transferred to penitentiaries in Germany. However, whether prisoners were deported to Germany or not depended heavily upon the discretion of the competent court.<sup>31</sup> At that time men sentenced to simple prison could be sent to Saarbrücken and Wolfenbüttel (via Freiburg and Karlsruhe), and women to Cologne.<sup>32</sup> In December 1943 Saarbrücken was replaced by Frankfurt<sup>33</sup> as the detention centre for those with sentences of up to two years<sup>34</sup> and when Saarbrücken suffered heavy bomb damage in 1944<sup>35</sup> many Frankfurt prisoners were sent to Naumburg, though they remained under the supervisory control of the Public Prosecutor in Frankfurt.<sup>36</sup> The practice changed over the years and it appears that in the later stages of the war all sentences longer than

---

<sup>30</sup>BA-R 22. RMJ. 1341. Army Notification Bulletins 1944, 10th edition, 18 May 1944.

<sup>31</sup>BA-R 22. RMJ. 1342 (Microfilms), OKW Memo, 13/05/1942, re. transfer of Belgians and French to German penitentiaries.

<sup>32</sup>BA-R 22. RMJ. 1341. Army Notification Bulletins 1944, 10th edition, 18 May 1944. Execution of sentences in area of military government area in France.

<sup>33</sup>BA-R 22. RMJ. 1341, Military government in France, Sec. Ib (Kommandostab)-Group 3, 01/12/1943, re. Order concerning the execution of sentences of 21/10/1943.

<sup>34</sup>Sentences over two years were executed at Bochum prison, in: BA-R 22. RMJ. 1341. Army Notification Bulletins 1944, 10th edition, 18 May 1944.

<sup>35</sup>BA-R22. RMJ. 1342. RMJ to Mess. Public Prosecutors, 24/06/1944.

<sup>36</sup>Letter of Chief Prosecutor in Frankfurt to the Prosecutor at Frankfurt District Court re. Order of the RMJ of 8 October 1943, date: 04/01/1944, s. Preungesheim prison records at State Archives Hessen, Wiesbaden (Reference: 409/4, file 2).

nine months were carried out in Germany.<sup>37</sup>

It was a grim sojourn for Frank Falla, a Guernsey journalist, and his colleagues Charles Machon, Cyril Duquemin, Joseph Gillingham and Ernest Legg, all sent to prison in Germany for the publication and distribution of newsheets containing the BBC news, the Guernsey Underground News Service (GUNS). Arriving at Preungesheim in June 1944, he found fifteen Channel Islanders serving their sentences there. Seven of the Jersey people commemorated in this study were regrouped at Preungesheim after having transferred from prisons on the Western border of Germany.

George James Fox and Clifford Bond Querée were born a decade apart in St Helier, the former on May 22, 1896, the latter on September 27, 1906. They were also living there at the time of their arrest. Fox, originally a cabinet maker, was employed as a kitchen help during the Occupation. Querée is stated to have been employed as a 'labourer' and 'storeman'.<sup>38</sup> The men were tried together by decree of the Court of Field Command 515 on June 23, 1943 and received two-year sentences: Fox for '*continual larcency*', Querée for his '*continual receiving of stolen articles*'.<sup>39</sup> As the case was taken over by the German court it can be assumed that their property offence had concerned goods belonging to the Germans, most likely bread or other foodstuffs.<sup>40</sup> Querée was transported with Canon Cohu to Fort d'Hauteville, Dijon on July 13, 1943.<sup>41</sup>

One month after Querée's and Fox's trial, on July 19, 1943, Frederick William Page had to face charges with four other men for a 'wireless offence' committed at Le Coin Bungalow, the home of James Davey at Route des Pres, St Saviour. Page was born in Portsmouth on November 20, 1900 and worked in Jersey as an agricultural labourer. Page and Davey faced tough sentences of 21 and 18 months respectively for '*failing to*

---

<sup>37</sup>BA-R 22. RMJ. 1341. Army Notification Bulletins 1944, 10th edition, 18 May 1944.

<sup>38</sup>JAS, D/Z Law Officers Files; State Archives Saxony-Anhalt in Merseburg, Rep. C 131 II, 3463, 808.

<sup>39</sup>JAS, D/Z Law Officers Files.

<sup>40</sup>Harris, Roger E., *Islanders Deported. Part 1: The complete history of those British subjects who were deported from the Channel Islands during the German Occupation of 1940-45 and imprisoned in Europe*, Ilford, 1980, 157.

<sup>41</sup>Harris, op. cit., 157/58.

*surrender a wireless set*'. Although the two men were convicted on similar charges, Page, one has reason to believe, was framed, as no evidence relating to his possession of a wireless exists. The other three men, Davey's brother Isaac, Owen Dore and George Louis Sty were fined between 100 and 150 RM each, for having '*listened to wireless broadcasts in company with others*'.<sup>42</sup>

Asked during an interview why Page, a simple listener, was treated in such a comparatively harsh manner, George Louis Sty instantly led on to Page's mainland origins which he believes counted very much against him. Three groups of radio listeners took turns at Davey's house, but Sty never knew who the members of the other two groups were. Although the get-togethers also had a social function, the main aim was to by-pass the firm German control on information in the Island. Sty recounts that Page was an exceptionally unassuming and calm man who like all the others gathered regularly in the loft of Davey's house to receive uncensored news. As in the St Saviour's Wireless Case the listeners were not caught in the act, but one morning at 6 a.m. all the listeners were hauled out of their beds and taken to the *Feldgendarmarie* HQ at 'Tudor House' in Bagatelle Road where each one was interrogated separately for three hours. It is highly possible that a denunciation put the Germans on their track in the first place, probably backed up by the deployment of some investigative methods or observation of the premises in order to hunt down all of Davey's group in its entirety.

Finally, on July 19, 1943 fourteen people were summoned before the court. Sty remembers that the prosecutor was in a highly excitable state and, in a fierce move, demanded that all the defendants be deported to Germany. If things took a different turn for most of the men involved it was due to their consciously low profile during the hearings; with the sole exception of Page. In fact, Page disregarded all caution and demonstrated an extraordinarily resilient manner: from the beginning he made no secret about the fact that he was English-born and boasted that he had fought the 'Hun' as a Guardsman during the First World War.<sup>1</sup> As in the case against William Marsh, the German judge saw a particular danger in his defiant attitude and there was little hesitation about removing Page, who had already been exempted once from the 1942 deportation from the Island. Page was sent to Hauteville on September 18 1943,

---

<sup>42</sup>JAS, D/Z Law Officers Files.

along with Joe Tierney.<sup>43</sup>

Emile Paisnel, born on April 9, 1883 in St Clement, was a farmer living at Boulivot de Bas. His case, like Marsh's, was taken over by the divisional court martial. This court had jurisdiction over all the cases affecting the direct interests of the 319th Infantry Division. Most of the transgressions under scrutiny involved breaches of discipline and misappropriation of supplies, whereas the general interests of the occupying authority were represented by the court of FK 515. The cases taken over by the court of 319th ID were predominantly against German soldiers and foreign workers, but occasionally also involved British civilians. Paisnel was tried for '*receiving stolen articles*' and sentenced to ten months' imprisonment on February 19, 1944. His granddaughter 'Birdie' Paisnel believes that he was denounced for the recovery of some 'articles' discovered by the Germans which actually consisted of coal. Paisnel bartered wheat for coal and his purveyors were two men, a British and a Dutch national, who had removed the fuel from German stocks. The former worked as a driver for the German military and the latter for an OT contractor and they were sentenced with Paisnel to five and four-month terms, respectively, for '*military larceny*'.<sup>44</sup> Jurat Bree intervened on behalf of Paisnel and asked for an execution of his sentence in Jersey - a plea rejected by the court of the FK on March 24, 1944, on the grounds that his sentence was too long to merit such a reprieve.<sup>45</sup> Anticipating the worst, Paisnel obviously tried to take precautions: he left the Island with a large amount of cash stitched in the handle of his suitcase. Nothing was ever seen of it again. Paisnel was deported to St Lô prison where he arrived on May 5 and was later despatched to Fresnes.<sup>46</sup>

Tierney, Cohu, Page, Querée and Fox arrived at Frankfurt-Preungesheim from Saarbrücken prison on January 6 1944. William Marsh and Emile Paisnel who were both tried in February 1944, arrived at Frankfurt on April 18 and May 23 respectively, after a short sojourn at Karlsruhe prison.

---

<sup>43</sup>List provided by the French Ministry of Veterans and War Victims, 31/07/1997.

<sup>44</sup>JAS, D/Z Law Officers Files. Interview with 'Birdy' Paisnel,

<sup>45</sup>ibid.

<sup>46</sup>Files of Prosecutor's Office, Frankfurt District Court records at State Archives Hessen, Wiesbaden (Reference 461, Nr 18893/11).

Preungesheim had four five-floor blocks, filled with 850 prisoners of all European nationalities. The blocks led onto a central building which Frank Falla described as '*a kind of platform and enclosed cabin in which worked the prison administrators, complete with Nazi uniform, Iron Cross, other medals, sword and all the trappings that were supposed to impress us.*'<sup>47</sup> Conditions in Frankfurt were severe, but up to the D-Day landings inmates could communicate with their relatives in Jersey once a month and both Cohu and Tierney took steps for obtaining an early release after serving two-thirds of their time. Mrs Cohu did likewise in Jersey and during her husband's incarceration she repeatedly went to College House to appeal for his release. The last time she heard from him was in July 1944. After the war she testified that he had remained in solitary confinement at Preungesheim, spending ten and a half hours a day inserting hooks into cardboard frames. Although the German judge in Jersey had assured Mrs Cohu that parcels could be sent, these were confiscated on arrival. Unequipped to supplement the wholly deficient diet which consisted of a weekly bread ration of four and a half pounds<sup>48</sup>, emaciation soon took its toll and Cohu's weight dropped from 10 stone 3 lb. when he left the Island to 7 stone in May 1944.<sup>49</sup> In his letters to his wife he frequently refers to the gruelling conditions in prison, particularly the cold and the hunger. Prisoners frequently had to join working-parties clearing rubble or removing unexploded bombs from the devastated streets of Frankfurt. Preungesheim also served as place of execution for all civilians - both Germans and foreigners - tried by special Nazi courts in the districts of Frankfurt, Kassel and Darmstadt and by the 'People's Court'.<sup>50</sup> In mid-1944 executions were taking place at a weekly rate of 30.<sup>51</sup> The eyewitness account of an unknown political prisoner makes for macabre reading:

*'In the beginning they were beheaded with a hatchet, opposite the chapel. Later they [the prison authorities, n.b.] added a hall where they set up a guillotine. Mostly, the executions took place very early in the morning. The executioner and his assistants*

---

<sup>47</sup>Falla, op. cit., 114.

<sup>48</sup>Falla, op. cit., 122.

<sup>49</sup>JAS, B/A/L15 Bailiff's Liberation Files, Enquiries for Relatives, Letter of Mrs Cohu to Lt-Colonel J W Taylor, British Military Authority, Military HQ, Jersey. Date: 18/05/45.

<sup>50</sup>Falla, op. cit., 122. The special jurisdiction under the Nazi judge Roland Freisler was responsible for high treason cases and the members of the failed plot to assassinate Hitler on July 20, 1944 were tried by the 'People's Court'.

<sup>51</sup>Falla, op. cit., 116; SPD Preungesheim, 8. Mai 1945 - 8. Mai 1985. Preungesheim 40 Jahre danach - erinnern oder vergessen?, 29.

*would arrive the night before at the prison, where a nice room had been prepared for them; cigarettes and alcohol were plentiful and they drank and made noise throughout the night until the executions commenced at 6:30 a.m. Heads were chopped in intervals of five minutes.*<sup>52</sup>

No air-raid shelters existed for prisoners and the frequent air bombardments on Frankfurt sent waves of terror and anguish through the prisoners who were confined to their claustrophobic cells. One particularly terrible attack scored many direct hits in the immediate vicinity of Preungesheim prison on February 4, 1944, at a time when five of the seven Jersey prisoners were incarcerated there.<sup>53</sup>

The overall situation changed when, in July 1944, the prisoners from the Channel Islands were transferred to Naumburg-on-Saale, where conditions for 350 prisoners were even worse than in Preungesheim. Typically, bread rations would consist of a mere six ounces and a litre bowl of 'soup' a day. Cells measured 16 cubic metres and conditions were bitterly cramped. Dysentery and dropsy, for which no medication was available, were rampant. According to Falla, they *'were not allowed to smoke, talk, sing, hum or smile-it was starkly grim, but at no time were our spirits dampened, our hopes shattered, for we knew and had explicit faith that one day our torturers would be conquered.*'<sup>54</sup>

Frank Falla also recalled that Cohu's two most heartfelt, but unsatisfied, wishes were to be reunited with his wife and to be allowed to bury the Englishmen who died in prison. Deaths occurred at a rate of 18 men a week<sup>55</sup> and after exchanging half a bread ration against a one-inch-stub of pencil, Falla recorded the names and dates of his companions as they perished in quick succession.<sup>56</sup> Of the Jerseymen, Paisnel was the first to die on August 29, 1944, four weeks after his arrival at Naumburg prison.<sup>57</sup> Of his last days Frank Falla wrote: *Like Percy Miller (a fellow prisoner at Preungesheim,*

---

<sup>52</sup>SPD Preungesheim, 8. Mai 1945 - 8. Mai 1985. Preungesheim 40 Jahre danach - erinnern oder vergessen?, 31.

<sup>53</sup>Eyewitness account by Emil Schmidt, a political prisoner in Preungesheim, in: SPD Preungesheim, 8. Mai 1945 - 8. Mai 1985. Preungesheim 40 Jahre danach - erinnern oder vergessen, 6.

<sup>54</sup> According to information provided by Frank Falla, in: L'Amy, op. cit., 10.

<sup>55</sup>ibid.

<sup>56</sup>Falla, op. cit., 123.

<sup>57</sup>State Archives Saxony-Anhalt in Merseburg, Naumburg Death Register, Rep. C 131 II, Naumburg, Nr 3461, 574; Files of Prosecutor's Office, Frankfurt District Court records at State Archives Hessen, Wiesbaden (Reference 461, Nr 18893/11).

*n.b.) he was too far gone, mentally and physically to care and towards his end refused to eat the paltry food put before him.*<sup>58</sup>

In spite of their state of advanced emaciation Page, Fox and Quérée lived through one more miserable winter in prison, but died soon afterwards: first Page. For a long time the prison administration had been aware that he was hovering between life and death, but refrained from taking any steps to ameliorate the situation. Finally, two weeks before his death, they sent a note marked 'urgent' to the Chief Prosecutor's Office in Frankfurt. It consisted of an authenticated copy of a recommendation by Dr Weissgerber, head of the Office of Public Health in Naumburg and it wistfully noted that Page was suffering from *'heavy circulation disorders and extensive infections of cell tissue. He is no longer fit to be kept in prison. It is required that he be released as soon as possible.'*<sup>59</sup> The request was transmitted on from Frankfurt to the court of FK 515, the deciding authority. On January 4, 1945 the prosecutor was notified of the court's consent and on that day (or the next) a telegram was sent from Frankfurt to Naumburg, authorising the administration to proceed with Page's immediate release.<sup>60</sup> Page, who was on his death-bed passed away shortly afterwards at 6 a.m. on January 5, 1945.<sup>61</sup>

While dispelling any fallacious assumptions that a sudden bout of humanity triggered the action taken, it would only be fair to consider that Dr Weissgerber was one of those few and singular characters who acted on charitable grounds and took initiative in urging speedy action on Page's behalf. What continues to stand out, however, is the negligent and often brutal attitude of the prison staff in general towards the prisoners, as described in Frank Falla's account of conditions in Naumburg. No evidence exists to suggest that the prison authorities were ever genuinely concerned about the prisoners in their custody. It could have been just another case of keeping up administrative appearances. In some cases this made penal prisoners marginally better off than concentration camp inmates who stepped out of civilisation the moment they set foot

---

<sup>58</sup> PRO, FO 950 765. Letter of Frank Falla to FO, 13/04/65.

<sup>59</sup> Medical certificate re. Frederick Page sent to the Chief Prosecutor's Office in Frankfurt, 22/12/1943, s. Files of Prosecutor's Office, Frankfurt District Court records at State Archives Hessen, Wiesbaden (Ref. 461, Nr 18894/2).

<sup>60</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> *ibid.*; State Archives Saxony-Anhalt in Merseburg, Naumburg Death Register, Rep. C 131 II, Nr 3462/25.

inside the camp universe. Notwithstanding the lack of importance attached to human life, a web of regulations surrounded the management of prisoners. These regulations may have stipulated that if a prisoner was very sick or on the verge of death the Chief Prosecutor should be notified and an application made for early release. This in contrast to a concentration camp, where 'shot while trying to escape' or 'died from a general malaise' became the standard formula.<sup>62</sup>

One inconspicuous document at the State Archives of Hessen in Wiesbaden comprises an innocuous note written by the Prosecutor's Office informing the mayor of Naumburg that his claim for reimbursement of the costs of Paisnel's funeral has been rejected. It continues: '*According to regulations such costs cannot be covered by funds of the department of Justice [...]*'<sup>63</sup> Were the prison and, for that matter, the city authorities trying to discard their liability by obtaining early releases for all those who were on the verge of death? And if they were trying to rid themselves of this liability, who was shouldering the responsibilities surrounding and following each death?

Edward Fox was next to die on March 11, 1945, leaving behind four children.<sup>64</sup> Two days later a query reached the Chief Prosecutor's Office in Frankfurt inviting objections to a proposed early release of the last remaining Jersey prisoner, Clifford Querée. Such an eventuality would have mattered little to Querée who was on the brink of death. The motivation for the apparent altruism, as is becoming increasingly evident, must be sought elsewhere. By spring 1945 everyone, bar the most fanatical Nazis, knew that the war would soon be over. Someone would then have to be held squarely accountable for the appalling conditions at Naumburg prison and, in particular, the deaths by neglect of British civilian prisoners.<sup>1</sup> The impulse to evade responsibility also led to the burning of the prison records in the same month of March 1945. After having almost completely lacked this amenity during the cold winter months, the prisoners were now in for their hottest showers ever!<sup>65</sup> On April, 16 1945 they were finally liberated by the Allied forces and Querée was admitted to

---

<sup>62</sup>One of the numerous differences between detention in a prison and a concentration camp. Clearly, the latter had removed most bureaucratic barriers and even the minimal accountability of death was eventually disposed of.

<sup>63</sup>Files of Prosecutor's Office, Frankfurt District Court records at State Archives Hessen, Wiesbaden (Ref. 461, Nr 18894/11).

<sup>64</sup>Naumburg Death Register, State Archives Saxony-Anhalt in Merseburg, Rep. C 131 II, Naumburg, Nr. 3462/25.

<sup>65</sup>Falla, op. cit., 122.

hospital. The strenuous efforts of Frank Falla and the American doctors failed to improve Querée's sinking health and he died two weeks later of pneumonia, on May 1, 1945.<sup>66</sup>

The four Jerseymen lie buried at the British Cemetery in Heerstrasse, Berlin.<sup>67</sup>

Meanwhile the other three Jersey prisoners had been released from Naumburg? Cohu's sentence officially ended on September 24, 1944, Tierney's on March 25, 1945. During their imprisonment in Frankfurt both men had laid the groundwork for an early release.<sup>68</sup> On August 16, 1944, two weeks before he was handed over to the SS, Cohu made one last appeal to the court of FK 515 in Jersey.<sup>69</sup> This may have influenced the treatment he received after he was taken from Naumburg. Walter Lainé, a Guernseyman convicted for radio possession, was kept in solitary confinement at Frankfurt after his 15 month-sentence ended on October 25, 1944. In a post-war communication with the War Office, Lainé attributed this to the fact that he did not volunteer to work for the Germans. Norman Dexter, who was imprisoned on the same charge, received the same treatment and both prisoners were later transferred to Straubing prison, in Bavaria.<sup>70</sup> Similarly, neither Cohu nor Tierney had displayed any enthusiasm for the German war effort. They considered their departure from Naumburg would be a transit arrangement leading to an internment camp.

The prison records relate that on August 30, 1944 Cohu was released from Naumburg prison on the grounds of a '*suspension of sentence*'.<sup>71</sup> The bureaucratic jargon was tailor-made for keeping up legalistic pretences. As we will see in other parts of this book, Nazism had hardly ever to grapple with the challenge of modifying administrative practices, as it was easy enough to by-pass them.<sup>72</sup> As soon as the two

---

<sup>66</sup>JAS, D/Z Law Officers Files; State Archives Saxony-Anhalt in Merseburg. Naumburg Death Register, Rep. C 131 II, Nr. 3463/808.

<sup>67</sup>JAS, B/A/W 85/5 Bailiff's War Files, War Graves-Civilians in Enemy and Enemy Occupied Territory.

<sup>68</sup>On October 11, 1944, Tierney sent a plea for clemency to the court of FK 515, s. Files of Prosecutor's Office, Frankfurt District Court records at State Archives Hessen, Wiesbaden (Reference 461, Nr 18894/2).

<sup>69</sup>State Archives Hessen, Wiesbaden, s. Files of Prosecutor's Office, Frankfurt District Court records at State Archives Hessen, Wiesbaden (Reference 461, Nr 18894/1).

<sup>70</sup>PRO, WO 311/677, War Crimes in the Channel Islands-Evidence and Investigations, Letter by W H Lainé to the War Office, 25/10/1945.

<sup>71</sup>Preungesheim prison records at State Archives Hessen, Wiesbaden (Reference 409/4, Nr 2).

<sup>72</sup>The Nazis never succeeded in totally dismantling the bastions of the traditional state: administration, judiciary and police continued to exist throughout their rule and were not replaced. Nazi Germany was a highly bureaucratic society, in which the rule was slowly superceded by legal confusion and arbitrariness. As is the case in other examples, the tactics followed were to nazify the institutions by blending them with services of the Nazi party.

men's sentences had been 'suspended' they left the tutelage of the Reich Ministry of Justice and were taken over by the Gestapo which sent them to camps under SS authority. Cohu was put in a 'work education camp' in Zöschen, 22 miles from Naumburg and half-way between the two cities of Halle and Leipzig. He arrived there with a group of 50 prisoners, probably from Dachau<sup>73</sup>, on September 13, 1944, at a time when the camp population had swollen to 500. Conditions in 'work education camps' were primitive and reputedly worse than those in most concentration camps. Typically, 30 men, cramped in small round paper tents (16 x 16 foot), would have to spend their nights on a little straw spread out on the bare earth. Cohu's position in the camp universe could not have been less enviable: being the only British prisoner was exposure enough; but as a priest he was doubly disadvantaged, falling frequent prey to the guards' perverse ingenuity. From the minute Cohu walked through the gate he was singled out, abused and beaten and the camp SS were bent on bringing about a guard's ominous prognosis that he would not last longer than seven days. Their brutality prevailed and on September 20, 1944 Cohu finally succumbed to the privations of his 18-month ordeal. When preparing his body, Przemysl Polacek, a Czech prisoner, found a small bible tightly pressed against his breast.<sup>74</sup> Such was Cohu's faith that he had managed to hide this most valuable possession, against all conceivable odds, in defiance of repeated body-searches and despite the infernal treatment and state of terminal exhaustion he had been subjected to during his final days. This was the last act of defiance from this extraordinary man, whose body was abused and broken, but whose spirit remained intact. Doubt lingers about what happened to Cohu's remains: an official document created after the war lists Cohu as having been buried at Zöschen, but a French survivor told Mrs Cohu that her husband's body was more likely to have been incinerated in Halle.<sup>75</sup> Cohu's tragic disappearance was painfully felt in the Island and it was not before long after the war that a commemorative plaque was set up in his honour in St Saviour's church.

Next to no information has survived on Joe Tierney's movements following his

---

<sup>73</sup>PRO, FO 950/766. 'Index to names of British subjects in enemy concentration camps and statistical survey of camps'.

<sup>74</sup>For an account of Cohu's seven days at Zöschen, s. Przemysl Polacek's letter to the British Embassy in Prague, 25/10/1945, in: JAS, D/Z Law Officers Files.

<sup>75</sup>State Archives Merseburg, Saxony-Anhalt, Rep. C 131 II, 982, 34; Rep. K, 662, 146.

discharge from Naumburg prison: except that he died in Celle in April 1945, following his recapture after a failed escape attempt.<sup>76</sup> Even less is known of Marsh's final fate. Documents provided to the Foreign Office by Frank Falla in 1965 show that he was removed from Naumburg and died near the town of Zeitz on March 12, 1945.<sup>77</sup>

---

<sup>76</sup>After the war a letter from a Belgian prisoner, René Vandenterghen, told Eileen, Tierney's wife, of the circumstances of her husband's death, s. L'Amy, J.H., *The German occupation of Jersey*, unpublished memoirs.

<sup>77</sup>PRO, FO 950/765, letter of Frank Falla to FO, 13/04/1965.

## 4

### **Into the Night and Fog:**

#### **Maurice Gould and the Painters**

On May 3, 1997 St Luke's Church in Jersey was the scene of great emotional poignancy, the experience of which promises to be long engraved in the collective consciousness, as the Lieutenant Governor, the Bailiff and other States' attended a service which was followed by a short ceremony at the War Cemetery in Howard Davis Park. The congregation had gathered in order to bid a final adieu to and honour a remarkable youth, Maurice Jay Gould. As they stood in solemn silence, watching his remains being laid to rest in Jersey soil, those whose living memory stretched back fifty-five years recalled the fateful day of May 3, 1942, when Maurice Gould, Peter Hassall and Dennis Audrain had failed dramatically in an attempt to escape the Island. The outcome could not have been more harrowing: Dennis paid with his life and the two surviving youngsters were deported to Germany where Maurice died in 1943. Only Peter survived the cataclysm, and the ceremony marked the end of his fifty-year struggle to fulfil Maurice's last wish: *bring me back home*. Many Jersey folk lie buried in foreign soil, but Maurice suffered a rather peculiar fate, for his remains had lain alongside German military personnel and members of the Waffen-SS in a war cemetery. The inauguration of Jersey's memorial to the Twenty made it a fitting moment to remedy this unsavoury state of affairs which a newly sensitised public opinion no longer tolerated. For the first time in fifty years serious efforts were made to find a suitable resting-place for Maurice's remains. Help came from many quarters, with the Jersey Branch of the Royal British Legion playing a major part in the logistics of the operation and the States of Jersey endorsing the proposed action by a vote of

funds. Finally when Maurice's next-of-kin gave their approval, appropriate steps were taken which culminated in the ceremony in Howard Davis Park.

Measured against similar occasions, which are often uninspiring, protocol-driven events lacking a certain intimacy, the commemoration of this small, yet important footnote of the Occupation brought back to the public memory the tale of the three teenagers. This was, indeed, a story which appeared to epitomise perfectly Jersey's wartime plight, not least because of youngsters' involvement. The public gesture was instinctively endorsed by everyone because it transcended controversy and struck an emotional chord which left nobody who attended untouched. The three teenage boys, whose venture ended in tragedy, bears a lasting testimony to the capacity of individuals to defy oppression and engage in authentic resistance. Ultimately, they have left a reverberating legacy worthy of emulation by those of successive generations.

Peter was the only member of the trio to survive the war. For years his fellow-sufferers' restless souls were to remain his companions and he only started getting a grip on a truly haunting past by putting himself through the painful process of resummoning traumatic memories, casting them into words and immortalising the voices of his friends in an account of his experiences. Accompanying this was his determination to dispel misinterpretations that his and his dead companions' deeds were open to over the past half century. The boys were, not infrequently, accused of having 'rocked the boat'; such allegations were, of course, unfounded, as nobody would have dreamt to suggest that those who did manage to escape in 1944 had provoked such a thing; quite the contrary, they secured a permanent place for themselves in the Pantheon of Jersey folk heroes. Mischief clearly had a hand in such propaganda as their failure made them easy targets for criticism. Therefore Peter Hassall considered it his duty to his dead friends to set the record straight.

Maurice Jay Gould was born on May 31, 1924 in Leicester. He came to Jersey at the early age of two and a half to live with his grandfather, 'Pop' Trueblood, the proprietor of the 'Australian Herbalist shop' in St Helier. In 1941 he worked as an apprentice

mechanic-blacksmith.<sup>78</sup> Over six feet tall, Maurice was not a person who went unnoticed: a 'gentle giant', he was adorned by nature with '*a mass of chestnut coloured hair*' and sported '*even, white teeth [...] always in evidence, because of a built-in grin.*'<sup>79</sup> Unfortunately, his singularity did not escape his future tormentors at SS-Special Camp Hinzert whose favoured object of abuse he became.

Maurice's character was impeccable. During the preparations the boys had to make use of a certain degree of subterfuge and cunning; Maurice took little part in these and Peter Hassall explains why: '*Maurice had very strong principles, and disliked any form of deceit, therefore we did not encumber him with any of the planning phases [...]*'<sup>80</sup>

While their personal motives varied, the three escapees shared a common repudiation of all things Nazi and the way the Occupation was leaving its mark on life in Jersey. They suffered from the moral dilemmas of accommodation with the enemy and were desperate to free themselves of the iron grip that was suffocating their native island Jersey, as elsewhere in occupied Europe, was exposed to racism and infamy and the Germans had launched the film 'Jew Süß', an insidious anti-Semitic attack commissioned by Goebbels's propaganda ministry, which was on show at West's Cinema in 1941. The film, watched by Dennis and Peter, reinforced their conviction about the need to escape. Unlike his companions, Peter's reasons to 'put the Island behind him' and get on with his life in a more self-determined way were also strongly influenced by personal circumstances and his wish to live with relatives in England.

The experience of war, destruction and brutality has profound effects on children; the Occupation was no exception and would have been the cause not only of frustration, but also of mental suffering to sensitive and perceptive youngsters. The young were ill-equipped with strategies for coping with the fact of occupation in comparison with the adults who, in the course of their lives, had already mastered mechanisms to confront and compromise with difficult situations. In a synopsis of his book, Peter summarised the preparations leading to the escape:

*'In October 1941, Peter learned of Dennis Vibert's brave escape to England.'*<sup>81</sup> This

---

<sup>78</sup>Hassall, *unpublished memoirs*, 26.

<sup>79</sup>Hassall, *op. cit.*, 13.

<sup>80</sup>*ibid.*, 43.

<sup>81</sup>Dennis Vibert displayed a tremendous amount of *sang-froid* and a wonderful determination when,

*gave him and his friend, Dennis Audrain<sup>82</sup> ideas of their own, and after talking things over, the two decided to follow Vibert's course to England. Later into their planning, they enlisted the help of another youth, Maurice Gould, who was 17 at the time. In order to obtain the money to buy a boat and motor, Peter temporarily left school to work at his father's shop [...] When sufficient money was on hand, a twelve-foot dinghy and outboard motor were purchased. It was transported across town in plain view of the Germans, then stored in an uncle's back-yard, where it was caulked, painted and made ready for the voyage.*

*By April 1942, the trio had assembled all the necessary equipment for their escape, then taking into consideration the tides and curfew, the boys decided to leave on Sunday 3 May, 1942 [...] A few days before the escape, the dinghy was loaded onto a horse-drawn cart, then brazenly driven along the German occupied streets of St Helier. It was off-loaded at Green Island, on the island's South East coast, where a party of young German soldiers helped the youths get it off the cart.'*<sup>83</sup>

Their preparations display a great deal of thoroughness as they tried to calculate every eventuality; they were equally determined not to arrive empty-handed in England and had to this effect prepared a detailed map of German fortifications and photographs of state-of-the-art war material. Peter was in an excellent position to provide such material, as his father held a virtual monopoly on the development of the snapshots taken and brought to his officially licensed film processing workshop by the unsuspecting German troops. Without his father's knowledge Peter and his brother duplicated photographs from these negatives.

The boys knew the risks and the fate that awaited anyone trying to escape. The consequences of such action had been well demonstrated in 1941 when the German military meted out a death sentence to Frenchman François Scornet who was shot in the grounds of St Ouens Manor, and jailed 15 other French would-be escapees stranded in Jersey which they had mistaken for the Isle of Wight. People who were aware of the boys' intentions, tried to dissuade them from going ahead with their venture because they thought the boat was too small. However, demonstrating a remarkable determination and steadfastness the boys refused to buckle under the pressure. Their resoluteness brings home a general point: *resistance à la Jersiaise*,

---

after returning from a failed attempt in November 1940, he repeated his feat ten months later in the *Ragamuffin*, an 8ft boat. His fabulous coup was one of the few known escapes from the Channel Islands between the onset of Occupation in 1940 and summer 1944, s. Thomas, Roy, *Lest we Forget. Escapes and Attempted Escapes from Jersey during the German Occupation 1940-1945*, Jersey, 1992, pp. 2; Mayne, Richard, 'People who escaped from Jersey during the Occupation', in: *Channel Islands Occupation Review* 1975, 22-24.

<sup>82</sup>Dennis Désiré Audrain (\*1925) was Hassall's closest friend at De la Salle College (The Beeches), a private Catholic boy's school in St Helier, s. Hassall, op. cit., 8.

<sup>83</sup>Hassall, *Synopsis of his unpublished memoirs*, 5/6.

realistically, could be summed up in a single word - escape. If we accept the metaphor of Jersey as a prison, the great act of defiance was not to revolt against the warders, who would always be in superior position if challenged on a direct basis, but to surmount the walls of the prison and escape. This was the best way of creating frustration in the enemy camp. However, this option was an exclusive prerogative of the young and fit, the courageous and the most imaginative.

Unfortunately, the venture of the three youngsters was seriously compromised from the beginning by a number of causes related to their age and experience. They lacked the expertise of Dennis Vibert whose feat they were bent on emulating. Vibert was 22 years old at the time of his successful escape in 1941 and had learnt the basics of seafaring and navigation as a trainee in the merchant navy from 1934 to 1937. Also had they stuck it out two more years until after D Day, their chances of being aboard one of the many successful crafts that were sneaking over to France at that time would have been bright.

On the night of their ill-fated act of bravery, however, there was no going back:

*'When time came to launch the boat at 10:00 p.m., the winds had risen, and the ebb tide was very rough, therefore the launch was postponed. As time was running out, the dinghy was finally launched at 10:45 p.m., despite the rough seas. Unfortunately, when the boat was but a few hundred yards from shore, a combination of starting the motor, a large wave and heavy swells threw it against a rock, and caused it to capsize. Maurice was swept out to sea, as Peter struggled to save his friend, Dennis.'*<sup>1</sup>

Dennis, a non-swimmer, drowned in the attempt to reach the shoreline. When Maurice and Peter reached safety they were arrested almost immediately by the German Harbour Police and taken to their HQ at the Pomme d'Or Hotel. The next day they were picked up by the *Feldgendarmerie* and placed in the German wing of Gloucester Street prison where they were treated as alleged 'terrorists' and manhandled. During the following days they underwent interrogations by the Secret Field Police who had found an incriminating nautical chart on Dennis's body and photographs in a suitcase, and believed that adults were behind the escape. After ten days of interrogations they were transported to Paris via Granville on May 16, 1942. Gestapo headquarters had grown interested in the case and in France the two teenagers were to experience to an even fuller extent what had become the hallmark of Nazi brutality all over Europe.

At the time of their escape, the German *Nacht und Nebel* decree had just entered into effect. This measure was designed to curb the rising tide of resistance activities in many parts of occupied Europe. The *Nacht und Nebel* (NN)<sup>84</sup> decree was issued on December 7, 1941 by the Chief-of-Staff of the Wehrmacht High Command (the highest military authority in Nazi Germany), Field Marshal Keitel on instructions from Hitler. It followed increased resistance activity in France and in other parts of Western and Northern Europe after the launch of 'Barbarossa', the German invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941. France, in particular, had become the stage for several assassinations of Germans and throughout the summer of 1941 military courts had stepped up their repressive stance. Perceiving their failure to cope with the deluge of court proceedings, while the tide of resistance was continuing to grow, Hitler decreed the need for special expeditious methods - designed to deter. Their implementation was entrusted to bodies Hitler trusted, the Ministry of Justice and the RSHA<sup>85</sup> (the Central Office of Reich Security) and the Special and People's Courts. The provisions made by the decree were to cover 'punishable offences against the German Reich or the occupying power', a term that could be interpreted more widely than the terms set out by the martial and penal law then in force. It was applied in all those cases where a speedy death sentence - pronounced by a military trial within a period of eight days - could not be guaranteed by the military authorities. NN prisoners were tried by Special and People's Courts and the main purpose of the decree was to introduce a new dimension of fear and increase the deterrence factor. The NN decree was to sound the bell for a new phase in psychological warfare, expressly targeting civilians.

The second set of underlying themes responsible for this decree was Hitler's disdain for 'lawyers' in particular and regular legal procedures. It was the Führer's long-standing opinion that the lawyers serving in the military courts were particularly a 'dead loss'. One of his favourite lines, and an often reiterated theme for that matter, was that 'soldiers should keep away from things they didn't understand', meaning by

---

<sup>84</sup>The English translation is 'Night and Fog'.

<sup>85</sup>In German: *Reichssicherheitshauptamt*, the most important institutional merger of SS and state services comprising:

a) *Geheime Staatspolizei* (Gestapo), Secret State Police

b) *Kriminalpolizei* (Kripo), Criminal Police

These two services became the *Sicherheitspolizei* (SIPO), Security Police, in 1936.

c) *Sicherheitsdienst* (SD), Security Service of the SS.

The common acronym for the three services was SIPO-SD.

this that all matters of 'security' should be handed over to his most devoted acolytes, the SS.<sup>86</sup> The general tendency in Germany since 1933 had been to replace the independent judiciary of the Weimar Republic by a justice system drawn along Nazi lines. The judiciary's independence was in eclipse when the Nazis introduced their special jurisdiction in Germany in 1941. What the Nazis had achieved by this time exceeded even their wildest expectations. Another well-cherished - but erroneous - idea was to prevent resistance fighters from becoming 'martyrs' in the public mind; Hitler claimed that the exposure of lengthy court procedures achieved exactly that. Here again his prejudice (and not empirically based hard facts) came into play. Trials, it was thought, reinforced the capabilities of resistance and acted as an inspiration to others.<sup>87</sup> Field Marshal Keitel, a man with no opinion of his own, had acquiesced in Hitler's demands and claimed that the NN procedure was a step designed to save the face of military justice. In fact, it contributed to the creeping erosion of military pre-eminence in the Third Reich, for the expediency of the procedure made it an extremely handy tool of repression which was soon monopolised by the SS.

The NN procedure was set in motion in all cases which had an element of resistance: attempts on the lives of Germans or collaborators, espionage, sabotage, communist activities, creating unrest, aiding and abetting the enemy by being a member of an escape network, attempting to join the Allies or giving support to enemy military personnel, and illegal possession of fire-arms. NN prisoners were held *incommunicado* with the prisoners cut off from all outside contacts or sources of information. This provision was rigorously enforced: no news was given to their families or governments, their whereabouts were kept secret, they received no letters, no food parcels and they were strictly separated from other categories of prisoners.<sup>88</sup> NN trials involved rapid proceedings, no pre-trial procedures and a pronounced disequilibrium which worked in favour of the prosecution. Neither did they make provision for witnesses, a defence counsel and translators, when provided, were incompetent. These trials often ended in summary death sentences and for many who received prison sentences or were acquitted, they found the Gestapo outside the prison offering them

---

<sup>86</sup>As in contemporary dictatorships, 'security' is a very flexible idea which can be abused at will.

<sup>87</sup>Father de la Martinière, a former NN prisoner, also described the procedure as 'a variation of hostage taking', concealed behind bogus legality, s. Martinière, Joseph (de la), *Nuit et Brouillard à Hinzent. Les déportés NN en camp spécial SS*, n.d.

<sup>88</sup>Hassall, op. cit., 55.

a ride, most commonly to a concentration camp.

In accordance with the implementation of the Night and Fog Decree, Maurice Gould and Peter Hassall disappeared shortly after their escape attempt, only to re-surface at Fresnes prison, just outside Paris. Fresnes was a detention centre for political prisoners, controlled by the military, and the 3000-strong jail was used as a clearing house for both Allied escapees and French Resistance members. The Gestapo did not believe the boys' version of a self-supported escape and continued to assume that they had received logistical and financial support from British agents in the Island. Interrogations therefore continued at Gestapo HQ (rue des Saussaies in Central Paris) where the boys endured a method of abuse that had acquired notoriety in French resistance circles as *le supplice du baignoire* - the bathtub torture. This standard Gestapo implement involved plunging prisoners into a bathtub full of cold water and forcing their heads under water until their lungs felt like bursting. Hassall and Gould survived this ordeal and were sent to Trier on June 12, in a convoy comprising fifty two other French prisoners. Their final destination was SS Special Camp Hinzert, situated a short distance from Trier in the hillsides of the Hunsrück region.<sup>89</sup> The idyllic setting of the surrounding countryside, which tricked many new arrivals into developing false hopes, painfully contrasted with the horrors perpetrated behind the barbed-wire fence.

The camp was rebuilt in October 1939 as a detention centre for unruly OT labourers employed on the *Westwall*, a fortification project on Germany's Western border. From summer 1941 the camp started receiving a large number of Luxembourgers who opposed the Germanisation of their home-country. Other prisoners included Italians arrested by the French police, French Foreign Legionnaires of German nationality and, increasingly, French NN prisoners. Altogether, 41 convoys of NN prisoners arrived at Hinzert, the first on May 29, 1942 and the last in September 1943.<sup>90</sup> Hassall described Hinzert as a '*brutal little camp*' where the prisoners were like '*fish in a small glass bowl*', never out of the '*sadists' sight*'<sup>91</sup> and gaped at by the civilian population who

---

<sup>89</sup>Fighting to lay the past to rest', in: JEP, 09/12/1996, 18-19; Note of Gestapo HQ to the administration of Fresnes prison, re. prisoner transfer, 05/06/1942 (by courtesy of Peter Hassall).

<sup>90</sup>From November 1943 Natzweiler became the camp of the French NN, s. Martinière, Joseph (de la), *Le Decret et la procedure Nacht und Nebel (Nuit et Brouillard)*, Orleans, 1981; Martinière, Joseph (de la), *Nuit et Brouillard à Hinzert. Les déportés NN en camp spécial SS*, n.d.

<sup>91</sup>Hassall, op. cit., 106

did not hesitate to approach the camp perimeter on their Sunday outings.

Hassall established a minimal *modus vivendi* necessary to maximise his chances of survival, which in any case were dim. As an example, he soon learnt how to avoid beatings. Maurice on the other hand, proved less able to adapt, most of all because of his all-pervading gentleness from which his shell of physical sturdiness failed to divert attention for long. Maurice attracted unwelcome attention because of his physical stature; while his lack of knowledge of the camp's 'official' languages - German and French - magnified his isolation. Maurice had no chance of ever letting his British credentials work to his advantage; in his case it increased his vulnerability. His inability to make any sense of the madness of the concentration camp microcosm was misunderstood as a special form of perfidiousness, inviting the nickname of 'Churchill'. He became a favourite target for the vicious attacks of an anglophobe kapo named André Callaux. Hassall reckoned that *'of all the young prisoners in Hinzert, Maurice had been the most brutally abused.'*<sup>92</sup> He suffered his worst beating at the hands of Callaux when it was his (and Hassall's) turn for one of the several bone-crunching working parties, the infamous *Kohlenkommando* or coal working party. The Hinzert *Kohlenkommando* had all the characteristics of the worst type of 'work' in other concentration camps whose main function was to wear people out with exhaustion.

The word 'work' in the context of the concentration camp differed drastically from its customary connotation. The idea of 'work' in the latter is embodied in a whole web of beliefs centred on human progress, it is a symbol of modern human self-determination, nearly always associated with constructive action.<sup>93</sup> The *Kohlenkommando* was a parody of this: its basic rationale was to assign to a party of youths a job normally done by horses. The aim to degrade human beings by placing them on par with four-legged equestrians was achieved through a gruelling rigorous regimen. Once the prisoners had loaded a cart with two tons of coal, it had to be drawn over a distance of several miles, past rugged hilltops. After unloading, the same procedure was repeated again, from dawn to dusk. For want of alternative footwear, most prisoners performed

---

<sup>92</sup>ibid., 104

<sup>93</sup>Concentration camp 'work' was 'anti-work'. To illustrate this notion further it may be useful to take a look at the situation in Mauthausen, one of the most brutal camps. A particularly distinctive feature of this camp were the infamous 'stairs', chiselled into the rock and descending from the camp to a nearby quarry. The heavy blocks of stone that were transported uphill by undernourished and beaten prisoners caused a heavy death toll that was in no way a matter of accident, but of callous and calculated premeditation.

this type of back-breaking work wearing wooden clogs and Maurice earned a vicious beating for having tried to recover his which he had lost in a downhill stumble.

Another camp routine was the practice of rushing and parading naked, emaciated, undernourished prisoners up and down the camp, a practice cynically termed 'exercises', 'gymnastics' or, simply, 'sports'. Every movement in the camp was accompanied by continuous beatings. Severely traumatised and unable to bear the incomprehensible onslaught, Maurice's condition degraded rapidly. In place of a survival strategy grew frustration, borne out of the failure to comprehend the reason for the cruelty of his fate, and his condition was soon worsened by premonitions that he would not be able to survive. Peter writes:

*'I was very concerned for Maurice, because one needed a cast iron will to live, and it seemed that Callaux had beaten him to the point of giving up. I was aware, and I am sure Maurice was, that he would not live unless his will to fight back was restored [...]. I do not think that a cross word had ever been spoken in his home and neither had he witnessed any violence, and from such a warm and loving home he had been thrown in the Nazi arena to be re-educated by Hitler's sadists. [...] He had not learned to hate as I had.'*<sup>94</sup>

The two Jersey youngsters' suffering ended on July 24, 1942, six weeks after their arrival at Hinzert when the prisoners were transferred to nearby Wittlich prison, a way-station for NN-prisoners destined for trial. Wittlich was '*an 'oasis' in the centre of Germany's wartime morass of concentration camps and prisons*' and when the prisoners arrived, Dr Bitthorn, the prison director, was overheard saying '*that he had never seen such emaciated and badly treated men*'.<sup>95</sup>

The influence of the prison director and a few other well-intentioned people had a beneficial effect on this prison which differed from so many other German penitentiaries. Although their means were fairly limited, they tried to make life bearable for the prisoners by banning beatings and supplementing the rations allocated by the Gestapo in Trier with food grown on prison-owned lands.

Yet, it did not save Maurice from TB, the main NN killer at Wittlich, which spread easily under conditions of dampness, lack of heating and food deficiencies. The damage done to Maurice's health at Hinzert was irreparable: when he arrived at

---

<sup>94</sup>Hassall, op. cit., 106

<sup>95</sup>Fighting to lay the past to rest', in: JEP, 09/12/1996, 18-19.

Wittlich he had already lost 50 pounds.<sup>96</sup> In November 1942 it became rapidly clear that Maurice, seriously ill with TB, was doomed, for as an NN prisoner he stood no chance of being sent to a sanatorium, the only thing that could have saved him. With no adequate medical treatment available, the only compensation lay in sparing no efforts to make the last months of his cruelly shortened life as bearable as possible. Eventually, he was transferred to a special sick ward set up by a French doctor. In September 1943 he virtually stopped eating and he was completely skeletal when he died on October 1, 1943 in Peter's arms. Again, it was due to the efforts of Dr Bitthorn and Father Barz, the prison priest that he was afforded a Christian burial in Wittlich's old cemetery, in defiance of explicit orders from the Gestapo, who kept a watchful eye on 'enemies of the Reich'. Unfortunately, the good intentions demonstrated in this noble gesture were frustrated in 1973, when the German authorities displayed their disturbing lack of sensitivity by relocating his body to a military cemetery.<sup>97</sup>

Hassall's odyssey through the horror of the Third Reich's prisons continued and like his native island, liberation was not to come before May 1945. In March 1944, at a time when he had rebuilt some of his lost inner reserves, the Gestapo's order to transfer the prisoner Hassall could no longer be resisted by Dr Bitthorn and he was sent to Breslau (today Wroclaw, Poland) in Silesia, where he was to await his trial. Breslau had become the seat of the 'Special Tribunal' assigned to try NN prisoners, after Cologne (and its prison) had been heavily wrecked by bomb damage in July 1943. Peter Hassall was tried on June 1, 1944 and a combination of favourable circumstances, i.e. his age, nationality, ability to defend himself in German and clever defence tactics helped him to avoid the death sentence. Instead he received a four-year prison sentence and was able to avoid the common destination of so many other NN - the vicious concentration camp of nearby Gross-Rosen - being sent, instead, to Schweidnitz, a filthy but more 'survivable' prison. When the Russian advance closed in on Schweidnitz, he was moved one more time to Hirschberg prison. With the front-line having by-passed Hirschberg, his liberation on 9 May 1945 was undramatic: the door of his cell was unlocked and he was commanded to pick up his few belongings

---

<sup>96</sup>Hassall, *op. cit.*, 110.

<sup>97</sup>'Fighting to lay the past to rest', in: JEP, 09/12/1996, 18-19.

and leave.<sup>98</sup>

---

<sup>98</sup>Note by Peter Hassall (in author's possession).

## The Painters

Two other NN prisoners from Jersey who died in Nazi concentration camps were the Painters, father and son.<sup>99</sup>

Clarence Claude Painter was born in Abingdon, Berkshire, on November 2, 1893. He had served in the forces and worked in the office of a railway company before his marriage, in Jersey, to Dorothy Mary Smith on his twenty-eighth birthday. Miss Smith was the daughter of a well-known Jersey ice cream and mineral water manufacturer and had taught in England during the First World War. After their marriage Clarence took up a managerial post in his father-in-law's firm and at the time of the latter's death in 1936 he was responsible for the mineral water side of the business, with premises in Cannon Street.

When evacuation procedures for the Channel Islands started in June 1940 it was initially decided that Clarence would stay in order to ensure the continuity of the business and that the rest of family would go to England. In the end, however, it was only the family of Mrs Painter's brother who seized the opportunity, while the Painters remained in Jersey.

Peter Edward, the Painters' eldest son, was born on April 11, 1924 in St Helier.<sup>100</sup> Various people described him as a '*generous and unassuming*' young man, '*wise beyond his years*' and destined '*to succeed in life*'.<sup>101</sup> At the time of his arrest in 1943 he had already completed his schooling at Victoria College where he had been popular both with the teaching staff and his fellow pupils. He had distinguished himself as a first-class sportsman, demonstrated his leadership qualities as a scout troop leader before the war and later joined the OTC (Officer Training Corps). Despite a German ban, conspiratorial boy scout activities had been maintained through the Occupation

---

<sup>99</sup>Musée de la résistance et de la déportation, Besançon, La Martinière Files concerning NN prisoners.

<sup>100</sup>JAS, D/S/A Occupation Registration card N° 23351.

<sup>101</sup>Quotations taken from letters sent to Mrs Painter, s. Painter Papers.

by some dedicated and astute individuals, among them Sidney Guy. The Painter house was used for Scouts meetings on a regular basis, right until the time of the arrest.

A photograph at the German Underground Hospital in Jersey shows Peter in the company of students at Captain Sowden's 'Nautical College', where he was a member, in June 1943. Sowden, a sea captain who retired to Jersey before the war, founded this institution after he was discharged from the command of the SS Normand, a freighter plying the Jersey-Normandy route, in 1941. The discharge followed his refusal to contravene the clauses of the Hague Convention by transporting German ammunitions aboard his ship. While many of his students at the Nautical College envisaged a naval career or wanted to join the merchant navy once the war was over, others, like the 1944 escapees and would-be escapees who acquired their navigation skills from Sowden, had less mundane ideas.

Peter belonged to that '*crowd of cheerful, though frustrated, youngsters*' who saw the best times of their life wasted under the constraints of military occupation.<sup>102</sup> Like many others, Peter tried to ignore the presence of the occupying forces as much as possible, through the pragmatic policy '*to carry on as though they weren't here*'. This however did not keep him from defying the authority of the occupier. For some youngsters this was more a test of courage than anything else; in some instances, however, this could convert into deadly earnestness. Peter took photographs of German planes at the airport with his friends Roy Mourant and Victor Huelin before running out of film; these he would develop himself and then circulate around school. He also contrived to assemble a map of the German island fortifications.

On November 6, 1943 NCO Soltan and three other members of the *Feldgendarmerie* called on the Painter home at Hinemoa, New Zealand Avenue in St Saviour.<sup>1</sup> The door was answered by Mrs Painter who was told that the *Feldgendarmerie* had information according to which her son Peter was in possession of a wireless, cameras and photographs of military importance, requiring them to carry out a routine house search. The Painters had retained a wireless set and unlike many other families made no secret of their reception of the news. After the war Mrs Painter stated that they had carried '*the news to many people*' as well as '*allowed some to come to listen when*

---

<sup>102</sup>From a letter of Edward Mossop to Mrs Painter, 03/06/1945, s. Painter Papers.

*there was something of importance*'.<sup>103</sup>

Undoubtedly, many Jersey people were not fully aware of the risks associated with such activity and no one imagined that anything as banal as the reception of BBC news could secure them a slot in a concentration camp. Although the disappearance of several Jersey people on the Continent pointed to precisely that direction and some knowledge of concentration camps had filtered through to the Channel Islands, the a radio set, were in for a major surprise. When Soltan searched the boys' bedroom he made a fatal discovery: a few days before the house-search Peter had taken a World War I souvenir pistol from its hiding-place under the bedroom floorboards and placed it in his wardrobe. This automatic pistol, a German Mauser in good condition, belonged to Mrs Painter's brother, from whose house - which had been requisitioned by the Germans - it had been salvaged. Mrs Painter's frantic explanations were aborted by Soltan, who retorted: *'This is most serious. I fear that it will go hard with you over this. It is much too serious for me to overlook it.'* In addition, the house-search produced the Painters' wireless, cameras and three photographs of military objects.<sup>104</sup> A keen DIY man, Peter was an avid experimenter with little valve radios and the spare parts the search squad found were earmarked as evidence pointing to the existence of 'a secret radio manufacturing atelier'.<sup>105</sup>

Peter and his father were to present themselves at the *Feldgendarmerie* in Bagatelle Road the following morning at 9 o'clock. Although the youngster assumed full responsibility, the interrogating officer rejected his account because of his age. As a former Infantry and RFC officer who had served during the First World War, the English-born Clarence had some trouble explaining how a pistol could have merely sentimental value to the incredulous Germans. Besides, Clarence Painter suited the German profile of an underground movement activist and therefore was held to be fully responsible. When the interrogation ended at 1 p.m. the Painters were allowed to return home; Clarence Painter, however, was required to report back three hours later. At 5:30 p.m. Peter and his brother John returned with the news that their father had been taken into custody and that clothing, blankets and food could be taken to the

---

<sup>103</sup>PRO, WO 311/11, Post-war statement of Dorothy Mary Painter to the British Military Authority in Jersey, n.d.

<sup>104</sup>Luckily, the Germans never discovered a pile of other photographs of military objects and a map of the island which Peter had marked with the fortifications and which were hidden in an ornamental top in the boys' bedroom. Information provided by John Painter.

<sup>105</sup>Information given by Roy Mourant.

prison every Saturday and Wednesday. The next day the Painter home was raided again, apparently with the expectation of recovering a transmitter. However, the Germans found little else of significance - a few unspectacular scrapbooks of airforce pictures and some airforce literature belonging to John. These trophies, surely seized as recompense for the frustration of not having achieved a more dramatic breakthrough, proved worthless to the subsequent enquiry.

The next day Mrs Painter went to the *Feldgendarmerie* to plead for her husband. Once again she stressed the souvenir character of the pistol, declaring that the family had never owned any ammunition and that it had not been fired. Though Soltan's real opinion is a matter of conjecture, he was apparently prompted to say '*We believe all that you and your husband have told us and will send your statement to the court.*'<sup>106</sup> In any case, at this point in the enquiry, his opinion was of little importance, as the bureaucracy had already started working on the case. Meanwhile, the whole family, including John and his older sister Joan, a teacher at Victoria College Prep, were interrogated individually. Sometime later John, who was in particular danger, was called up to the court at Westbourne Terrace, Wellington Hill and severely reprimanded for the photographs which had been found in his collection. Eventually, however, unlike his brother Peter, he got off the hook, probably because he was still attending college and had not reached military age. Had the German raid taken place sometime after his 18th birthday in February 1944, he may well have suffered the same fate as his father and brother.

The nature of the Painter case and the special attention it received from the German administration is confirmed by a tiny, yet rather telling deviation from a normal administrative practice. Before putting any islander on trial in their court, FK 515 made it a routine matter to enquire of the Attorney General whether any previous convictions existed. In the Painter case the relevant request of November 13, 1943 bore a red stamp reading 'very urgent' in red ink. More importantly, and in addition to this standard procedure, the German court official handling the file - a man called Böhm - requested a second report '*detailing the previous conduct, manner of life, general reputation and political convictions of Clarence Painter and Peter*

---

<sup>106</sup>PRO, WO 311/11, Post-war statement of Dorothy Mary Painter to the British Military Authority in Jersey, n.d.

*Painter*.<sup>107</sup> There was no unanimity on how the Painters should be dealt with. Roy Mourant clearly remembers spending the best part of a day loitering on a bench and chatting with Peter, while a court martial was deliberating in the States Building.

The events in this case link it closely with the application of the NN decree. Each case was examined by the German court in charge who conferred with military intelligence whether the conditions for a trial before a military court in the occupied territories existed. If the military refused the liability, the prisoners were instantly handed over to the Secret Field Police, or the SS. As we have seen, 'possession of a fire arm' was one of the many offences which the NN decree had been designated to cover. Anyone found in the possession of *military* arms was in particularly severe trouble, as a mere suspicion of their use against the occupying forces was deemed sufficient for a death sentence.<sup>108</sup> This would have invariably been the fate of the Painters and it must be assumed that FK 515, eager not to pass any death sentences on islanders, were keen to wash their hands of the Painter case and decided in favour of deporting them under the NN decree. The December 1941 directives governing the implementation of the NN order are very specific: in cases where there were political reservations against the immediate execution of a death sentence, the culprits were to be transported to Germany.<sup>109</sup> Although it has never been possible to prove the existence of a German blueprint for a 'Model Occupation', there is enough circumstantial evidence to show that a policy decision to treat the islands in a manner different from other occupied territories was in force. This is attested by the von Aufsess diaries<sup>110</sup>, where mention is made of a 'velvet glove' approach towards the islanders. The differential treatment of the islands in this area could not have been the product of coincidence or merely a result of the lack of armed resistance in the islands. One glance at the number of death sentences executed in France will serve to reinforce this point: by January 1942 about

---

<sup>107</sup>Letter dated 13/11/1943 from court FK 515 to Attorney General, re. previous sentences of Painter senior and junior; asked to supply information Mr Mourant, the chef de police at St Saviour Parish Hall replied: '*...nothing detrimental is known to me concerning their previous conduct, manner of life or general reputation (...) I am not aware of their political convictions.*', s. Mourant to Duret Aubin, 15/11/1943, in: JAS, D/Z Law Officers Files, Box 20, 1943/18. Sentences and prosecutions by Field Command and Troop Courts.

<sup>108</sup>Kosthorst, Erich/Walter, Bernd. *Konzentrations- und Strafgefangenenlager im Dritten Reich. Beispiel Emsland. Dokumentation und Analyse zum Verhältnis von NS-Regime und Justiz*, Düsseldorf, 1983, 2862

<sup>109</sup>Directives for the prosecution of criminal acts against the Reich and the occupying power (Instructions for their enforcement), 07/12/1941 and 12/12/1941, in: Kosthorst/ Walter, op. cit., 2862.

<sup>110</sup>Aufsess, Baron von, *The von Aufsess Occupation Diary*, edited and translated by Kathleen J Nowlan, Worcester 1985.

200 French citizens had been executed, some for similarly trivial offences as those committed by islanders.<sup>111</sup>

Four days before Christmas 1943, when Joan Painter called at the prison gate with food for her father and brother, she was informed that future visits were unnecessary. A few days later the same German warder revealed to the Painter family that Clarence and Peter had been sent to France and that their whereabouts were to remain secret.<sup>112</sup> They were not to learn until June 1945, through Roger Hardy, a French concentration camp survivor, what fate had befallen their loved ones.<sup>113</sup>

The first stage of their ordeal took them to the Cherche-Midi prison in central Paris where they arrived on December 23, 1943, two days after their departure from Jersey. Incarcerated there two weeks earlier, Hardy encountered both Painters the next morning. They celebrated Christmas and New Year's Eve together, but on January 6, 1944, as was practice for many NN prisoners, the Painters were sent to Natzweiler-Struthof concentration camp 31 miles south of Strasbourg in the Vosges mountains of Alsace.

A place frightfully exposed to the north winds and fog, Struthof was the name of a skiing hotel that had existed there before the war.<sup>114</sup> It was one of the smallest concentration camps in Nazi Germany and had been set up after Albert Speer, Hitler's architect, had noted the granite deposits in the area on an inspection tour. The DEST (German Earth and Stone Works Ltd.), an SS enterprise, acted on Speer's suggestions and by autumn 1940 a project was launched to quarry the granite. The first batch of prisoners to arrive were 300 Germans in May 1941. The growth of this camp was slow and only on August 15, 1942 did Natzweiler become available for the Gestapo's routine posting of prisoners. By the end of 1943 it counted 2,000 inmates. Most worked in arms production, the overhauling of Junkers aircraft engines and around

---

<sup>111</sup>Thomas, Jürgen, *Wehrmachtsjustiz und Widerstandsbekämpfung: das Wirken der ordentlichen deutschen Militärjustiz in den besetzten Westgebieten 1940-45 unter rechtshistorischen Aspekten*, Baden-Baden, 1990, 110.

<sup>112</sup>PRO, WO 311/11. Post-war statement of Dorothy Mary Painter to the British Military Authority in Jersey, n.d.

<sup>113</sup>Roger Hardy died in August 1945, as a result of the deprivations he suffered. Information provided by John Painter.

<sup>114</sup>The Painters appear in a register of NN prisoners which was established by the French priest and former NN at Hinzert, Joseph de la Martinière. Clarence received the camp number 6868 in Natzweiler and then, together with his son the number 81560 in Gross-Rosen, s. Musée de la résistance et de la déportation, Besançon, de la Martinière Files concerning NN prisoners.

500 were employed in the quarries. 1944 witnessed a spurt in activity as Natzweiler became part of a programme to relocate armament plants in subterranean facilities. Correspondingly, numbers rose to between 7,000 and 8,000 in the main camp and 19,000 in the satellite camps. The year 1944 also saw Natzweiler become one of the prime destinations for members of the French Resistance, among them many NN prisoners who were assigned the worst type of work on road construction projects and in the quarries. Natzweiler had an exceptionally high mortality rate and claimed a total of 25,000 lives, the majority of them French and Jewish. In August 1943 the construction of a gas chamber inside the former hotel commenced. It is here that 130 prisoners transferred from Auschwitz, mostly Jewish, were killed, for inns, again from Auschwitz. As the Allies approached, the main camp was disbanded in August 1944; the survivors were sent on a death march to Dachau by the end of that year. Altogether, Natzweiler is believed to have hosted 45,000 prisoners.<sup>115</sup>

The Painters spent three months in this extremely hostile environment which - despite the severity of the regime - they survived. Paradoxically, they were exempted from work, but had to appear for the excruciating roll-calls. This was possibly due to their nationality. On April 19, 1944 they left together with Hardy and numerous other captives for Wohlauf in Silesia where they arrived three days later. They were detained there for two weeks and then sent to work at a camp in Dietzdorf, a Krupp factory 25 miles from Wohlauf producing armoured turrets for aircraft. Around August 20, after four months in this factory, they were sent to work on a canal where they remained until October 1944. Due to the marginally better conditions in both camps they were able to pull through; however, when they were transferred to Gross-Rosen, by this time a notoriously bad camp, their condition worsened rapidly. Characteristically, they had passed through Breslau prison on their way, but by this time in 1944 NNs were no longer put on trial and instead were sent directly to concentration camps.<sup>116</sup>

Gross-Rosen in Lower Silesia was established on August 2, 1940 as a satellite of Sachsenhausen concentration camp and was located in the vicinity of a granite quarry which was, as in many other camps, exploited by the DEST. From May 1941 to

---

<sup>115</sup>Encyclopedia of the Holocaust, op. cit., s. entry 'Natzweiler'.

<sup>116</sup>Musée de la résistance et de la déportation, Besançon. La Martinière Files concerning NN prisoners. NN trials were suspended in September 1944.

February 1945 it operated as an independent camp with over 50 satellite camps erected on the sites of a variety of infrastructure projects and armaments, the worst of which were to be found in the Sudetic mountains. The number of prisoners grew from 1,487 (1941) to 90,314 (1944) and on the eve of its liquidation, Gross-Rosen recorded 97,414 detainees. It is estimated that a total of 125,000 prisoners passed through this camp and Jews comprised its largest group of inmates, as well as its casualties.<sup>117</sup>

Peter, who suffered badly from pneumonia, died in the arms of his father on November 27, 1944 and his body was cremated in Gross-Rosen. Battling with grief, Clarence Painter managed to overcome the shock and his own condition improved slightly over the following weeks. However, when the Russian advance forces closed in a mere 13 miles away from the camp, 40,000 prisoners were moved out, some days before its liberation on February 13, 1945.<sup>118</sup> Clarence, at this stage suffering from a severe case of erysipelas was loaded onto an open truck with other prisoners and sent to Dora-Mittelbau concentration camp. The exposure to the winter elements and the complete lack of food proved beyond his powers of resistance and he died on the third day of the journey. On arrival at Dora, Clarence Painter's body was incinerated at the crematorium.<sup>119</sup>

On June 2, 1945 the news of the Painters' tragic fate appeared on the front page of the Jersey Evening Post. This aroused a wave of emotion in the Island and letters of sympathy started pouring into the bereaved home. It was the words of P A Tatam, the acting vice-principal of Victoria College, which perhaps struck the cord most profoundly and expressed the paralysing helplessness felt by many islanders:

*'Dear Mrs Painter*

*With the deepest sorrow I have heard the terrible news today. I cannot bring myself to believe that such a foul deed has been committed - it seems inconceivable. On behalf of Victoria College I offer you our heartfelt sympathy on the shadow which has fallen so heavily on you and your family.*

---

<sup>117</sup>Encyclopedia of the Holocaust, op. cit., s. entry 'Gross-Rosen', pp. 623.

<sup>118</sup>ibid., 352.

<sup>119</sup>For the whole paragraph on the Painters' deportation and the circumstances of their deaths, s. letters of Roger Hardy to Dorothy Painter, in: Painter Papers; PRO, FO 950 741. Note of G C Littler (FO) to Dr Burckhardt, International Tracing Service, re. Painter jr., 21/09/1964.

*I am completely unable to express, adequately, my feelings of horror. The clouds have indeed been very thick over your path, and none of us has been able to give you any help during these long anxious months of waiting and hoping. We admire you and we are proud of you for the wonderful courage you have shown during the terrible ordeal through which you have passed.*

*I most earnestly hope that the time will come when you will be able to enjoy brighter and happier days.*

*Believe me,*

*Yours very sincerely,  
P A Tatam<sup>120</sup>*

---

<sup>120</sup>S. Painter Papers.

## **James Houillebecq**

James Edward Houillebecq was born on February 24, 1927 to a family who farmed in the parish of St Saviour. He was a pupil at De La Salle College and had not long left school when, in May 1944, a German search party discovered gun parts and ammunition buried on the premises of the Houillebecq home, Alington Villa in St Saviour. James had associated with a group of other youngsters and when they stole a gun from the Germans, James undertook to conceal the disassembled parts without the knowledge of his parents or his sister Nancy. The entire family was arrested, separated, put into solitary confinement and interrogated by the Secret Field Police. Although his parents and Nancy were released after a few weeks, James remained in jail. Henceforth, as in the case of the Painters, the family was able to bring food and clean clothes to the prison gate, while their sole means of communication with James were notes smuggled in and out of prison.

Judging by his offence, the circumstances of his disappearance, the absence of trial proceedings and the complete lack of documentary evidence, it is quite possible that James, as well, was a Jersey NN prisoner. He was deported in August 1944, on what must have been one of the last boats transporting prisoners from the Island, and taken to Fresnes prison, ready to be transferred to Germany. At Fresnes James befriended a young Englishman whose family resided in France and who had been arrested together with his father, a resistance worker forced underground and betrayed by a Gestapo informer. Subsequently, James Houillebecq and the young man were sent to Neuengamme concentration camp, outside Hamburg, and each vowed to contact the other's family if one of them died and the other survived. The young survivor kept his promise and told the Houillebecqs after the war that he had last seen James alive when entering the camp hospital. For many thousands of prisoners this was the last stage of their ordeal in Hitler's concentration camps and James Houillebecq, prisoner n°37354, died around January 29, 1945. The family never found out more, for the young survivor, severely traumatised as he was, decided to cease all further contact with the

Houillebecq; his name remains unknown.<sup>121</sup>

The tragedy continued, for having received the definite news of her son's untimely death, Mrs Houillebecq's health degraded rapidly and she died a short time later, 'of a broken heart', as her daughter Nancy says.

---

<sup>121</sup>JAS, B/A/W 85/5 Bailiff's War Files, War graves, Grave registration report form of J E Houillebecq; PRO, FO 950/741; L'Amy, op.cit., 7/8; Information provided by Nancy Aylward.

## 5

### Compassion with a capital 'C'

#### Louisa Gould's 'Family Affair'

Louisa Gould (née Le Druillenec) from St Ouen was one of seven Jersey residents arrested on the grounds of action motivated by genuine compassion in late spring 1944.<sup>122</sup> Their story highlights the moral compulsions of Channel Islanders who felt obliged to act on behalf of those who had been herded together in cattle trucks and transported from the four corners of Europe in order to toil for the Axis war effort.<sup>123</sup> The fate of the slave labourers, systematically denied the status of human beings and forced to work on the German fortification programme, ranks high in the list of Nazi brutalities. Louisa Gould's 'crime' lay in having sheltered one of these slave workers, a Russian, for twenty long months following his escape in October 1942.<sup>124</sup> She epitomises an attitude nourished by the belief that all the hardship the Occupation inflicted on the local population did not sanction heedlessness to the plight of those whose life was worth less than a pittance.

Louisa Gould, Harold Le Druillenec and Ivy Forster were three of the nine children of Vincent Le Druillenec, a seaman, who moved to Jersey from Brittany some time in the second half of the nineteenth century. Such was the age gap between the children, people often mistook the eldest brother to be Harold's father. In fact, Vincent Le Druillenec died when Louisa was in her twenties and Harold and Ivy were young

---

<sup>122</sup>The seven people were Alice Gavey, Louisa Gould, Ivy Forster, Dora Hacquoil, Harold Le Druillenec, Berthe Pitolet and Elena Le Feuvre.

<sup>123</sup>According to estimates, at least twenty hidden slave workers survived the Occupation in Jersey, some of them having relied on the help of islanders 'for nearly two years', s. Bunting, Madeleine, *The Model Occupation - The Channel Islands under German Rule 1940-1945*, London, 1995, 217.

children. Born in Jersey on October 7, 1891, Louisa was already widowed at the time of the Occupation and ran a general store ('Millais Stores') at La Fontaine, Millais in the parish of St Ouen. Both her sons had received scholarships to Victoria College and her elder son Edward later continued his studies at Exeter College, Oxford. Afterwards he was Languages and Games Master at Colchester House School, Bristol and at the outbreak of the war he volunteered and took a commission in the Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve. He was trained and appointed to HMS Bonaventure as an anti-aircraft control officer. Louisa's life was turned upside down one fateful day in July 1941, when a Red Cross Message notified her that Edward had been killed in action in the Mediterranean four months earlier.<sup>125</sup>

About seventeen months later she was approached by Feodor ('Bill') Buryiy, a fugitive Russian seeking a safe shelter. When Bill told her that he had nowhere to go, Louisa Gould felt it was her obligation to prevent another mother from losing her son:

*'Then you are coming with me. I have lost one of my boys in this war and the other is away and I'll try and make up by looking after you.'*<sup>126</sup>

In a newspaper article published after the Liberation, Bill said that she was the most kind-hearted lady he had ever met. Bill soon became an integral part of her life, assuaging her pain at the loss of her own son. His presence at Louisa's store became ever more apparent, for after a first critical period had elapsed she began to nurture a false feeling of security. Louisa, who was a very outspoken and courageous person, also had a hidden radio and passed on the news to customers. Her frankness was to seal her fate and served as a passport to Ravensbrück. October 1941, when his plane was shot down and he escaped death as the only survivor of the 3-man crew. Bill parachuted into an area that was encircled by German troops and joined Red Army ground units in the fighting. However, after five days he was taken prisoner.<sup>127</sup> After one day Bill was acutely aware of the German contempt for the international standards governing the treatment of POWs and

---

<sup>124</sup>Information provided by Rex Forster.

<sup>125</sup> 'Well-known Jerseyman's Death in Action - Brilliant Scholar and Sportsman', in: Evening Post, Jersey, July 15, 1941.

<sup>126</sup> 'A Russian Officer's Story - His Escape from Jersey POW. Camp - How He Was Hidden and Fed for Two and a Half Years', in: Evening Post, Jersey, 10/05/1945.

<sup>127</sup>Hillsdon, Sonia, *Jersey-Occupation Remembered*, Norwich, 1986, 118; 'A Russian Officer's Story - His Escape from Jersey POW. Camp - How He Was Hidden and Fed for Two and a Half Years', in:

convinced that the *Wehrmacht* held nothing good in store for Soviet prisoners. He therefore escaped, in the hope of joining a partisan unit.

The type of war the Germans fought in Eastern Europe differed greatly from military campaigns in the West. From its inception, the former assumed the character of a 'war of extermination' aimed at destroying the jewel in the crown of a 'Judeo-Bolshevik conspiracy' created by Nazi imagination. This entailed exterminating the Jews and enslaving the Slavic peoples who were considered only a rung above the Jews in the Nazi racial hierarchy. With such paranoid precepts determining German action, it was natural for its perpetrators to assume that Slavs did not merit the protection accorded to prisoners of war by the Geneva Convention. For this reason, Red Army prisoners could expect little from their German captors: Jews and political commissars were immediately singled out and shot on the spot while hundreds of thousands of other Soviet prisoners were next in the elimination sweepstakes, as they starved to death in open-air camps, particularly during the first months of operation 'Barbarossa'<sup>1</sup>. Racked by serious labour shortages all over Europe, the Germans in 1942 discovered the potential of Soviet prisoners as a source of labour. Instead of letting them perish from starvation and disease after a few weeks, their potential as a labour force could be harnessed to the Reich's benefit. In consequence they were put to work, often under gruesome conditions.

During the winter of 1941/42 Bill went underground and managed to remain undetected until the beginning of the spring offensive, when the Germans rounded up all soldiers on the run behind their lines and put them into POW camps. Bill stayed in such a camp until June 28, 1942 and was then transported with 200 other prisoners in a nightmare journey across Europe, finally arriving at St Malo from where they were shipped to Jersey. Eventually, they ended up in labour camp *Immelmann*, at the foot of Jubilee Hill in St Peter.<sup>128</sup> A few weeks after his arrival Bill made his second attempt to escape, only to be recaptured yet again. As a lesson to others, his captors stripped Bill of his clothes, made him load a wheelbarrow with stones and cart it around the camp compound until he dropped. All his movements were accompanied

---

Evening Post, Jersey, 10/05/1945.

<sup>128</sup>Hillsdon, Sonia, op. cit., 118; Ginns, Michael, *The Organisation Todt and the Fortress Engineers in the Channel Islands* (Channel Islands Occupation Society, Archive Book No. 8), Jersey, 1994, 12.

by the thrashes of the guards who forced the rest of the camp population to participate as onlookers. Afterwards, Bill was left standing naked in the open all night until his strength was totally consumed. The realisation that it was preferable to risk his neck than to be at the mercy of brutes may have prompted Bill's third attempt at flight. Later, he would explain his action by quoting a Spanish proverb: *'It is better to die on your feet as a man, than on your knees as a dog.'* Within days he had devised a plan to escape from a work party outside the camp. The timing was good, as the guards had received their pay and would engage in heavy drinking and all Bill had to ask from his fellow prisoners was to divert their attention for a moment.

This escape, on September 23, 1942, proved successful and subsequently Bill was quartered by René Le Mottée, a sympathetic farmer who, in addition to his family duties as the father of five children, kept one escapee in his house, another in a store and a third one in his shed. Bill joined the Russian in the shed and spent much of the daytime in the house. He stayed with René Le Mottée for three months, but had to leave when the Germans started searching all the houses in the vicinity for railway sleepers that had been removed as firewood. Bill then approached Mrs Gould, whom he knew already and told her that he had nowhere to go. All interviewees describe Louisa Gould as a remarkable person, but concede that she mistakenly believed in the trustworthiness of some ill-disposed neighbours. Sheltering was an act of conscience based on individual or family decisions and there was little or no liaison between the people hiding Russians who were usually painstakingly security-conscious.

This was the attitude adopted by Ivy Forster and her family. In December 1942 they had taken in George Koslov, another Russian on the run. Like Bill, Koslov was a young man in his early twenties who was taken prisoner in 1941. He arrived at labour camp *Immelmann* after Bill's escape, in October 1942 and was forced, until his own escape, to work on the Five Mile Road fortifications. Rex Forster, Ivy's son, remembers that although there were occasions when he would take George to the swimming-pool at Havre des Pas, he would stop short of telling school friends who came to visit him about the 'secret' in the attic.<sup>129</sup> Groping for an explanation of Louisa's behaviour he reaffirms that most Jersey people were not fully aware of the consequences of such acts of defiance and that they never imagined being sent to a

---

<sup>129</sup> Rex Forster says that during the Occupation he knew one other Jersey family, the Metcalfes, hiding a Russian called Michael.

concentration camp. Such beliefs were reinforced by the actual return to the Island of some people sent by the Germans to prisons on the Continent. Well beyond 1942, this was quite a frequent occurrence, especially with 'essential workers'.

Let us contemplate briefly Louisa's moral frame of mind: she obviously saw little reason to take more than the basic precautions in hiding what she felt was dictated by her sense of decency. If this is true, Louisa Gould - and many other Jersey 'offenders' for that matter - not only died for acts of defiance but also for their convictions on the nature of right and wrong. Louisa believed, perhaps too blindly, in the continuing validity of her moral universe.

The motivations of her detractor(s) are far less clear and it is virtually impossible to imagine what anybody could have had against Mrs Gould: jealousy, perhaps, because she was a little better off, or was somebody trying to settle an old score?

The fact is that a letter of denunciation was sent to the German *Feldkommandantur*. Like similar letters it was incorrectly addressed to 'Victoria College' instead of 'Victoria College House', the annexe taken over by the German administration, and therefore landed on the desk of Pat Tatam, the vice-principal who was left in charge of the College's affairs after the departure of the headmaster in 1940. He steamed the letter open and then readdressed it, thereby creating a 24-hour delay. Meanwhile a bicycle messenger was sent off to warn Louisa about the danger. Louisa immediately removed all evidence of Bill's presence in the house and Alice Gavey, her maid, undertook to hide the radio set under a large box that acted as a step down into the hen-house, one hundred yards away in an adjoining building. At 6 o'clock the next morning Bill left for the Forster house where he stayed for the following five days.<sup>1</sup>

In the hurry Louisa had not been thorough enough for she overlooked some items which the Germans found during one of their several searches: a camera that had belonged to her late husband and which she had simply forgotten to hand in and, more importantly, Christmas gift labels that had been attached to presents given to Bill and which clearly identified Louisa and Ivy as the givers. Eventually, they also discovered the radio. Louisa was arrested with Alice Gavey and entered prison on May 25, 1944.<sup>130</sup> One week after Louisa's incarceration, the German 'search party' raided the Forster house and arrested Ivy; but the Forsters had calculated this possibility and

---

<sup>130</sup>Information provided by Rex Forster.

taken precautions. When the Germans arrived both Arthur Forster and his son were out - and so was George Koslov. He and Bill had meanwhile been entrusted to Bob Le Sueur who moved them into his office. Bob, a young clerk, who almost single-handedly ran the Jersey branch of the General Accident Life Corporation during the Occupation, had met Bill because Louisa Gould had taken out an insurance policy with his company. A week later two of Louisa's closest friends were arrested: Berthe Pitolet, a Parisian-accented French housekeeper who had lived in Jersey for 25 years and worked in town and Dora Hacquoil, a schoolteacher. Pitolet was a regular visitor at Louisa's house and would spend three or four weeks at a time with her. Hacquoil joined Louisa and Bill in the daily nine o'clock wireless listening 'ceremony' in Louisa's bedroom.<sup>131</sup>

Then it was Harold Le Druillenec's turn: although not directly involved in sheltering Bill, he was implicated in the case. The fact that Ivy and Harold were registered at their sister's shop where they collected their weekly rations provided a clue. Harold took advantage of his sorties to St Ouen in order to listen to the radio his sister had kept and it is probable that the informer(s) gave Le Druillenec's name along with the others, but not that of his wife Phyllis or Ivy's husband Arthur. The latter worked long hours during the Occupation and therefore is unlikely to have accompanied his wife to St Ouen, save on very rare occasions such as Christmas 1943. Neither Arthur Forster, nor Rex, nor Phyllis Le Druillenec were questioned by the German police. When I spoke to her I was at first rather sceptical about a remark she made that the case had been rather a 'family affair'. I remember looking at her in incredulity and thinking 'Surely, it can't be that simple', fully convinced that there must be a crucial missing link. It turned out that she was quite right. Naturally, their imprisoned relatives would have done their utmost to keep as many people as possible out of the affair and in this respect the tactics of the 'Le Druillenees' were so successful that charges against Elena Le Feuvre, Louisa Gould's neighbour and the owner of the property at La Fontaine Millais, were dropped.<sup>132</sup> Dora Hacquoil also stated later that she owed her relatively lenient sentence to Louisa Gould's intervention:

*'I was charged with listening in, but Lou vowed and declared that I always arrived too late [...] They accepted her word [...] a week later [...] she, Harold and Bertie*

---

<sup>131</sup>My Story...Dora Hacquoil - Harboursing Russians', Jersey Evening Post, 02/02/1995.

<sup>132</sup>JAS, D/Z Law Officers Files. Convictions and prosecutions by troop courts.

*were transported to the Continent [...] But for her statement I should have suffered the same fate.*'<sup>133</sup>

That the judges' found it difficult to ascertain the role of each person involved in the case is evident from their failure to prove Harold Le Druillenec's implication on the basis of available evidence; not that this presented an obstacle to a jurisprudence which, in the words of Advocate Valpy, operated on the dubious premise that '*being arrested equalled being guilty*'.<sup>134</sup> In their attempts to base the trial on firmer ground, the discovery of Louisa's radio came in handy. The trial ended on June 22, 1944 and while the sentences were being read out the detonations of the battle that was raging on the Normandy coast were clearly audible in the courtroom. Le Druillenec was sentenced to five months on the sole grounds of his '*prohibited reception of wireless transmissions in company with other persons*'. Louisa Gould received a tough two year sentence for her failure '*to surrender a wireless receiving apparatus*', her '*prohibited reception of wireless transmissions*' and '*aiding and abetting breach of the working peace and unauthorised removal*' (as the offence of giving assistance to escapees was defined in the German judicial jargon).<sup>135</sup> In an example of shrewdness, Ivy Forster escaped deportation through the concerted efforts of the Prison Governor and Raymond Osmont, a trainee doctor, who was able to interchange medical samples and certify an infectious disease after she had been moved to the General Hospital. This manoeuvre got her off the list.<sup>136</sup>

Up to 1944 it had been common practice to retain Jersey prisoners earmarked for deportation in Gloucester Street prison for some time, before sending them on. However, during the first half of 1944 the period between conviction and deportation shortened considerably. The Germans' restlessness was attributable to the threat of imminent Allied landings. Things began to move even more quickly by June 1944. With people on a waiting-list to serve their prison sentences, the Germans now disregarded all procedures and started removing as many people as possible, anticipating the severing of the French link. These steps coincided with the *en masse*

---

<sup>133</sup>My Story...Dora Hacquoil - Harboursing Russians', Jersey Evening Post, 02/02/1995.

<sup>134</sup>Information provided by Advocate Valpy.

<sup>135</sup>JAS, D/Z Law Officers Files, Box 20, Convictions and prosecutions by troop courts.

<sup>136</sup>This is one example of how German paranoia - in this case of infectious diseases - could be exploited successfully by clever and observant people. After the war Ivy Forster went on to become the

evacuation of forced labourers and those German soldiers serving prison sentences in Jersey. On June 29, 1944, twenty Jersey people sentenced for 'political crimes', among them Gould, Le Druillenec and Pitolet, boarded a vessel that formed part of a convoy of six ships and various escort vessels leaving Jersey the same night. Its passengers presented a curious mix of individuals: 634 prisoners of the SS Construction Brigade I in Alderney, spirited away in order to prevent them falling into Allied hands alive, 58 accompanying SS men, 458 OT workers, 28 civilian and military prisoners, 43 foreigners, 46 women and one British POW.<sup>137</sup> However, due to fear of Allied interception, they returned to Jersey where all passengers disembarked in the early morning hours of June 30. The following night, however, the procedure was repeated and this time the convoy succeeded in slipping through to St Malo via an alternative route.<sup>138</sup> It was to be one of the last trips taking Jersey prisoners to the Continent before the link was cut off several weeks later.

The preliminary destination for the three prisoners was Rennes in Brittany, from where Harold was soon moved to Belfort, in Eastern France,<sup>139</sup> while the two women remained there. Rennes prison was badly hit when the nearby railway station was bombed during the Allied advance, offering Berthe Pitolet an opportunity to escape into the street from where she was picked up and hidden until the Liberation of the city by American troops, less than a week later. Louisa, however, stayed put, probably because she was wary of lessening her friend's chances who, being French, had few problems in passing entirely undetected. Therefore, when the chaos Louisa Gould was put on a train that eventually took her to Ravensbrück, the women's concentration camp 56 miles north of Berlin.

This camp had been established on May 15, 1939, with a first contingent of 867 women arriving from Lichtenburg concentration camp three days later. Prisoner numbers rose from 2,000 by the end of 1939 to 10,800 by the end of 1942. In 1944 70,000 women arrived at the main camp and its 34 satellites which were attached to military industrial plants. The main camp had 26,700 prisoners in 1944 and by early

---

first woman States member. She died in June 1997 at the age of 90, s. Obituary in JEP, 07/07/1997.

<sup>137</sup>War Diary of the Sea Transport Officer, St Malo, cited in Ginns, Michael, *The Organisation Todt and the Fortress Engineers in the Channel Islands* (Channel Islands Occupation Society, Archive Book No. 8), Jersey, 1994, 136.

<sup>138</sup>Sinel, op. cit., entry of 29 and 30 June 1944; Interview with Rex Forster.

<sup>139</sup>s. Le Druillenec's deposition at the Belsen Trial, in: Phillips, Raymond (Ed.), *Trial of Josef Kramer and Forty-Four others (The Belsen Trial)*, London, n.d.

February 1945 a total of 106,000 women had passed through Ravensbrück.<sup>1</sup>

Le Druillenec was to see his sister one more time before they were absorbed by the concentration camp system: by some stroke of divine coincidence his carriage stopped next to hers at Belfort station and they were able to exchange a few words. It was Harold's birthday and Louisa managed to hand her brother a tin of tobacco. Harold later described Belfort as 'a slave-market' where the fit were separated from the unfit by the thousands, for further distribution into the concentration camp system. During their stay, prisoners whiled their time away by giving lectures and Harold chipped in with a talk on the Constitution of the Channel Islands. At the time he was totally oblivious of his final destination - a concentration camp. As he later testified, *'it never occurred to me that I was to endure anything more severe than a few months simple imprisonment'*.<sup>140</sup> On September 1, 1944 Harold arrived at Neuengamme, just outside Hamburg, with a party of French and Belgian political prisoners. Neuengamme, in Harold's estimation, was *'a typical concentration camp, clean, well-organised, run with German efficiency'* and with its fair share of sadism. It *'was a central camp, a pool from which labour was drawn for its subsidiary camps'*.<sup>141</sup>

Neuengamme had been established on 13 December 1938 as an external unit of Sachsenhausen concentration camp. The SS camp was established because the Nazis sought to reactivate brick production there for the huge public structures planned in Hamburg and the first prisoners were housed in a disused brick factory . The DEST signed a contract with the city in April 1940, after which a canal was dug to connect the camp with a tributary of the Elbe river and a siding laid to link it to the railway network. By June 1940 it became an independent camp with a prisoner population of about 1,000 and numbers were boosted in the autumn of 1941 by an influx of thousands of Russian prisoners. In 1942 private firms such as the Walther weapons factory asked for prisoner labour and numerous annexes were set up in the shipbuilding and armaments industry. In 1944 the main camp had a population of 12,000 with around twice that number in satellite set-ups. Jewish transports from

---

<sup>140</sup>For whole section, s. script of BBC feature programme 'The Man from Belsen', based on the experiences of Harold Le Druillenec, 12/04/1946 (at BBC Archives); see also Cottrell, Leonard, 'The Man from Belsen', in: British Broadcasting Corporation, *BBC features*, London, 1950.

<sup>141</sup> BBC feature programme based on the experiences of Harold Le Druillenec, 'The Man from Belsen', 12/04/1946 (at BBC Archives); BBC Talk, 25/09/1945.

Poland and Hungary during summer 1944 brought in another 13,000 prisoners. Most of the new prisoners were sent to satellite camps and by 1945 Neuengamme had 70 such annexes. One of the outside commandos, the *SS Baubrigade I* (SS-Construction Brigade I) was sent to Sylt camp in Alderney, in March 1943. The total number of prisoners sent to Neuengamme was around 106,000 and it is estimated that 55,000 prisoners perished there.<sup>142</sup>

Le Druillenec was sent to a commando in Wilhelmshaven, one of the principal naval bases in Germany, where he was made to work as an oxy-acetylene welder. In his BBC radio play written in 1946, a fellow prisoner, an American with Belgian nationality, briefs the new arrivals on the basic principles of life and death in the concentration camp:

*'Well, there are one or two things worth knowing. The first is to recognise that your Block Alteste [sic, Block Chief, n.b.] is God. And, barring escape, which is pretty hopeless, the only chance you've got of staying alive for long is to get on the right side of the Block Alteste [...] They're all prisoners, you see, but privileged prisoners, and they're responsible to the SS for camp discipline. They've got powers of life and death. The second thing to remember is that they're all mad, and when I say mad, I mean mad. You'll see things going on here that'll drive you nuts if you try to figure them out - guys beaten to death for stealing a swede, guys tortured for weeks and then killed because a Camp Chief didn't like their faces. Don't worry about it. Don't argue with yourself about it. Don't judge it by the standards of a sane world.'*<sup>143</sup>

Soon many of the fellow prisoners Harold befriended, fell ill and died, owing to conditions created by 'extermination by work' and a wholly inadequate level of nutrition. On Good Friday 1945 the camp was evacuated, followed by what Harold called '*the most terrible part*' of his story: having injured his foot he was loaded into a cattle truck with other prisoners - 450 prisoners into four wagons. They remained trapped inside '*for five days and five nights, without food, without water, without sanitation*'. Outside Lüneburg the train was caught up in a raid and a bomb scored a direct hit on one of the wagons loaded with over 100 prisoners. When the 250 survivors of the journey were divided into two parties, Harold was in a group loaded onto lorries and driven to Bergen-Belsen. In 1946, when he returned to Lüneburg for

---

<sup>142</sup>Encyclopedia of the Holocaust, op. cit., pp. 1057; Bunting, op. cit., 186-189.

<sup>143</sup>BBC feature programme 'The Man from Belsen', based on the experiences of Harold Le Druillenec,

the Belsen trial, he was to find out that on this occasion again he had narrowly escaped death, as the 100 prisoners who had remained behind in the field outside Lüneburg were summarily executed.

Bergen-Belsen was established on April 30, 1943 to house Jews designated for exchange with German nationals in Allied countries. Included were Jews from neutral countries, some with South American papers and others who had been selected because they had connections abroad. Only a few of these detainees were actually exchanged and they became bargaining material for the SS during the last months of the war. However, in March 1944, Belsen became an ordinary concentration camp and received prisoners from other camps who were classified 'ill' and 'unfit to work'. The first such transport arrived in late March 1944 from Dora and was put in a section of the camp without any facilities. Most of those deemed 'unfit' were Hungarian Jews, and similar transports - among them Anne Frank and her sister in a convoy from Auschwitz - continued to arrive at Belsen until the end of 1944. On December 2, 1944, 15,257 persons were in the camp, over half of them women, and as a consequence of the evacuation of many camps in the East the numbers continued to rise, from 18,465 to 44,060 between January and April 1945. The number of deaths at the camp has been estimated at 50,000, with an outbreak of typhoid killing 35,000 from January to mid-April 1945 alone.<sup>144</sup>

The Red Cross had delivered 500 blankets and enough food to fill a room 12x15x10 feet from floor to ceiling but neither these nor the large quantities of medicaments were ever distributed.<sup>145</sup> The last days at Belsen were terrible, as 'soup' distribution ceased almost entirely and the water supply was cut. Harold witnessed cases of cannibalism, with prisoners simply dropping dead from terminal exhaustion as they were made to drag the corpses of the deceased to burial pits. The stench over the camp was abominable and medical treatment if they were to live, were crammed into eighty-two wooden huts, each 100 feet by 200 feet and about 8 feet at the highest, some of them rotten, with no water, no food, no functioning lavatories.<sup>146</sup> Harold

---

12/04/1946.

<sup>144</sup>Encyclopedia of the Holocaust, op. cit., entry 'Belsen'; Schwarz, Gudrun, *Die nationalsozialistischen Lager*, Frankfurt 1991, 149.

<sup>145</sup>Lasker-Wallfisch, Anita, *Inherit the Truth 1939-1945. The Documented Experiences of a Survivor of Auschwitz and Belsen*. London 1996, 93.

<sup>146</sup>MacAuslan, Alan, *Darling, Darling Meg. Belsen? Where's that?*, Edinburgh-Cambridge-Durham

survived the last nine days of this nightmarish scenario of the walking dead among decaying bodies. It was, as he later wrote, *'the foulest and vilest spot that ever soiled the surface of this earth.'*<sup>147</sup>

After the war Harold often wondered why he was to end up in such a living hell and his surviving manuscripts give an idea of his complete incredulity and shock at the sight of SS guards and emaciated prisoners when the train ground to a halt inside the compound of Neuengamme. Jersey Occupation historian Michael Ginns notes that the Gould, Pitolet and Le Druillenec came to be associated with the SS because they were put in the military wing of Jersey Prison at the time the prisoners of SS-Construction Brigade I were in transit from Alderney to St Malo. Conditions were chaotic and in the confusion their fates may have simply converged.<sup>148</sup>

Certainly, the broader political and military context would have had some bearing. By the time the three Jersey prisoners were deported, the machinery of German occupation in France had been pounded to pieces by superior Allied fire-power. The attempt on Hitler's life on July 20, 1944 caused a further shift in the power struggle within Germany which led to the complete emasculation of the army and the conservative elite. Only at this point did Germany become fully 'Nazi', in the sense that the Party and her formations now ruled entirely on their own terms without any intervention from or consideration for the traditional political power bases. From then on, the only other force that retained a sizeable autonomy was Speer's Ministry of Armaments and War Production, and for that matter the German Economy.<sup>149</sup> 1944 marked the end of the struggle for mastery of all spheres of German life which had led Hitler all the way since his debut in a Munich beer hall in 1919. It is ironic that by the time the Nazi dictatorship was in its fullest blossom, Germany was in her last throes. However, one of the effects of the events of July 1944 was the absolute power attained by Himmler's 'ideological warriors', the SS. They had long before become a state within the state, but with their power in its zenith in the summer of 1944, their position was invincible; they had, indeed, become the most potent centre of power in

---

1996, 171.

<sup>147</sup>Harold Le Druillenec, BBC Talk, 25/09/1945.

<sup>148</sup>Ginns, Michael, op. cit., 113/14.

<sup>149</sup>This last remaining independent power block came to the foreground in April 1945 when Speer disobeyed Hitler's suicidal order to have Germany's future economic viability destroyed.

Germany.

In order to arrest and send people to concentration camps the Gestapo still operated along the lines that had been set in the combat against political opponents of Nazism in Germany after the 1933 take-over. Administrative and police detention procedures had been greatly facilitated by the passing of emergency decrees following the Reichstag blaze in Berlin, in February of that same year. Since then, the police could issue detention orders to hold suspects in 'protective custody', according the Gestapo virtually unlimited powers of arrest and confinement. Most basic democratic rights were nullified through the 1933 emergency decrees. 'Protective custody',<sup>150</sup> which was invariably followed by concentration camp detention, became the Gestapo's most widely used tool of repression and persecution, first in Germany and later in occupied Europe.

Although some islanders returned to Jersey after having served their terms in French prisons, this practice seems to have become increasingly uncommon after 1942. Channel Islander Robert H B Bell was sentenced on January 22, 1942 to nine months' imprisonment for receiving stolen property. On December 3, 1942 the Bailiff of Jersey was officially informed that Bell had been placed in 'security detention'<sup>151</sup> in Dijon from where he would be taken to an internment camp.<sup>152</sup> This policy was made official with the French Ministry of Justice in March 1943, when the military governor prohibited the release of all British prisoners who had served their terms in French penitentiaries and ordered their handing-over to the Gestapo, '*for transfer to internment camps*'.<sup>153</sup> Many prisoners from the Channel Islands were sent to other prisons or concentration camps after their release from French prisons. This posed no problem whatsoever for the Gestapo, as the military government in France had abandoned a wide variety of police prerogatives - amongst them the supervision of internment measures - to the Gestapo in the second half of 1942.<sup>154</sup> Despite a notable expediency of procedures in spring 1944, at that time Jersey prisoners such as Paisnel and Marsh continued to be sent to penal institutions in occupied France under the authority of the military governor and in Germany under the Reich Ministry of Justice (RMJ). Six months later the German penal system established in France collapsed

---

<sup>150</sup>The German term is *Schutzhaft*.

<sup>151</sup>A form of administrative detention practiced in the occupied territories.

<sup>152</sup>Government House Jersey, Lieutenant Governor's files, 50/4. Certification by H F C Ereant, Attorney General of Jersey, 22/11/1966.

<sup>153</sup>Archives de Paris. The Chief of the Military Administration in France to the French Ministry of Justice, 11/03/1943, attachment to list of Channel Islands prisoners in French penitentiaries.

<sup>154</sup>Thomas, Jürgen, op. cit., 106.

and all such prisoners came under the Gestapo's command. On September 24, 1944, Wehrmacht High Command formalised this new state of affairs conceding that prisoners from the occupied Western territories could be sent directly to concentration camps rather than penal institutions under the authority of the RMJ.<sup>155</sup>

The relatives of Harold Le Druillenec and Louisa Gould had little reason to rejoice when Liberation Day finally came. It was with an overwhelming sense of numbness that they anticipated news about their relatives from whom they had not heard since their departure in June 1944. Part of their worries dissipated when information finally trickled in that Harold had survived Belsen and was in a hospital in England. But where was Louisa? Was she trapped in the Russian zone? Answers eluded them for another year, before they finally emerged in the form of a little woman dressed in black who presented herself to the Forsters. Called Tanguy, she was a survivor of Ravensbrück who owned a hotel near Rennes in France. The certainty of her account of Louisa's fate categorically dispelled all hope and confronted them with the inescapable truth. She recounted to the horrified family how she had befriended Louisa in the camp and how in order to survive they had worked in tandem until February 13, 1945 when Louisa, invalided by then, was selected and sent to a newly-erected gas chamber.<sup>156</sup>

In Ravensbrück, the nightmare of last minute gassings - which in other camps like Theresienstadt and Buchenwald had been avoided or sabotaged - became a reality. The Ravensbrück gas chamber was set up by SS personnel evacuated from Auschwitz, after Himmler had made it clear that he expected the dirty work for Führer and the Fatherland to continue until the bitter end. This chamber was situated next to the crematorium and its dimensions were about 29 x 15 foot, enough to have the SS squeeze in approximately 150 persons. At that time there were still 25,000 women in the camp, among them twelve British and fourteen Americans. In the early days of the camp it was *de rigueur* to shoot prisoners in the back of the neck. Some women, among them British SOE agents Violette Szabo, Lillian Rolfe and Denise Bloch suffered this fate at the hands of SS-Sergeant Moll, another notorious evacuee from Auschwitz. However, in January, Schwarzhuber, the commandant in charge of the

---

<sup>155</sup>ibid., 109.

<sup>156</sup>PRO, FO 950 766, 'Index to names of British subjects in enemy concentration camps and statistical survey of camps', May 1946, document established by the War Office.

'protective custody' camp was called before the Camp Commandant and directed to execute Himmler's order to kill all women who were ill or unable to march. For the next six weeks Schwarzhuber called a daily roll-call at 2:00 p.m. when dozens of women were selected for the gas chamber.<sup>157</sup> During that period alone about 2,400 prisoners were exterminated and nothing came in the way of the murderous routine until the Swedish Red Cross started evacuating prisoners in late April 1945.<sup>158</sup> Before Louisa Gould was sent in, Tanguy had solemnly pledged that if she survived she would go to Jersey as an emissary on Louisa's behalf.

The news of Louisa's death spread quickly and as the family were making preparations for a memorial service a letter arrived on April 2, 1946 from Madame Ballard, a second French survivor who had known Louisa immediately before and during their time at Ravensbrück. Madame Ballard was the niece of a Jerseywoman, Marie Gruchy of Beaulieu, St Clement, and she had come to know Mrs Gould during the transfer from Rennes to Belfort. She told the family how the prisoners were loaded onto cattle trucks and how for the entire duration of their 15-day journey across France they received food or water only when the train stopped in one of the stations. Another 15 days were then spent at Belfort, before Madame Ballard joined Louisa in a convoy of women destined for Ravensbrück. Both women became friendly from their first meeting and on arrival they were quartered with German and Polish common law prisoners from whom only the worst could be expected. They slept near each other, which gave them the possibility to talk and indulge in memories of Jersey and their friends and acquaintances. Louisa spoke with natural pride of her two sons, passing around photographs of her deceased son Edward and her grand-daughter. She left a deep impression on many prisoners for whom she set an example of courage and sang-froid in the *'heroic way in which she withstood the suffering'* in the camp. Similar to her brother at Belfort she gave English lessons to her fellow prisoners, a task she accomplished *'in good spirits which was one form of her courage'*. Finally, one month after their arrival at Ravensbrück, Madame Ballard and Mrs Gould were separated when the former was taken to an aircraft factory 10 miles east of Berlin.<sup>159</sup>

---

<sup>157</sup>PRO, WO 235 317. Ravensbrueck Trial, Depositions of Johann Schwarzhuber, the Commandant of the Protective Custody Camp, and Ruth Closius Neudeck, a female guard, Hamburg, 1946.

<sup>158</sup>Kogon, Eugen/Langbein, Hermann/Rückerl, Adalbert et al., *Nationalsozialistische Massentötungen durch Giftgas*, Frankfurt 1983, 261-263.

<sup>159</sup>Letter of Mme Ballard to Ralph Gould, 2 April 1946, in possession of Ralph Gould.

When Harold arrived at Epsom Hospital for treatment, his weight had dropped to barely five stone. He was suffering from septicaemia and a mental disorder and was under heavy medication. However, he could count on the full support of his wife who had moved to England and was able to visit him daily. Harold recognised his wife, but otherwise lived in a complete fantasy world, with tragicomic effects at times. With the basis of his delusions being that he was a millionaire, he asked his wife quite unexpectedly on one occasion: *'How do you like the mink coat I bought you?'* Like other concentration camp survivors who had been starved for months on end and who went almost completely without food during the last week of the ordeal, Harold was ravenous and hoarded additional food in his locker.

Harold pulled through after four months and then returned to Germany in order to give evidence at the Belsen trial held by a British military court in Lüneburg in September 1945. Seven months later, on April 12, 1946, he scripted and narrated a radio play about his concentration camp experiences on the BBC. All this demanded a superhuman effort and fifty years later his lucid account has lost none of its power. The post-war years were not untroubled, as he struggled to disentangle himself from the lasting grip of his ordeal. Soon after the war, probably in 1947, when he was walking in town with his nephew Rex during the Christmas period a Salvation Army band started to play *Silent Night, Holy Night*. Harold paused abruptly and stood still, transfixed and with a dramatically altered expression on his face. As soon as he had steadied himself, he told Rex that the carol brought back agonising memories of Christmas Eve 1944 at Wilhelmshaven when the prisoners were made to stand out in the chill to take the daily roll-call for hours on end, under a clear wintry sky, speckled with stars. That night the star of Bethlehem, the messenger of joy and peace and beacon of God's glory, also shone over the Nazi concentration camps. The mockery continued on Christmas Day when prisoners attended a grotesque Christmas celebration staged by their very tormentors, during which *Silent Night, Holy Night* was rendered by a concentration camp choir. Harold's memory was frequently provoked and although he readjusted comparatively well, in private moments *it* was never far away. Harold Le Druillenec returned to his profession and continued in his duties as the headmaster of St. John's school in Jersey until his death in 1985.

After their move to the office of the General Accident Life Corporation, in the direct aftermath of the affair, Bill Buryiy and George Koslov were entrusted to the care of other hosts. Both men survived and '*were living independent lives by the end of the Occupation, having been able to find jobs and get food on their false papers*', thanks to Dr McKinstry.<sup>160</sup> Bob Le Sueur served as the vital link, for his mobility allowed him contacts with a wide variety of people. He soon helped Bill on to Mrs Dorothy Huelin of Trinity Hill where he stayed for a fortnight and then moved him to the home of two conscientious objectors, Mike Frowd and René Franoux, who had arrived in Jersey in 1940 and occupied a flat at 7 Grosvenor Terrace, Grosvenor Street. Bill would resurface periodically from the sheltering anonymity of their large Victorian house,<sup>161</sup> boasting about the copious meals he had received from another source and it was only after the war that Bob discovered that he had been at the Woodhalls. They were a couple hiding two Russians in the flat they were allowed to keep after the German military had requisitioned their hotel, the 'Mayfair'. Mrs Woodhall's Austrian origin provided her the perfect camouflage, giving the Germans flocking to the *Soldatenheim*<sup>162</sup> on the ground floor no cause for suspicion. A *Soldatenheim* was also the last place where the German police would think to look for Russian fugitives.

Bill Buryiy returned to the Soviet Union after the war. Before he left he was approached by British Intelligence with the idea of installing him as a 'sleeper'. He declined the kind offer, but was welcomed, as were all returnees, with suspicion by Soviet Intelligence for the next twenty years of his life, a situation that led to the eventual break-up of his marriage. Koslov, the Russian hidden by the Forsters seems to have had premonitions about how Stalin's secret police would react to the return of millions of former Red Army soldiers. When it was his turn to be repatriated to Russia, he escaped from Guildford transit camp, but was recaptured. Subject to military discipline, this latest feat of his equalled desertion and he was well aware that he owed the NKVD (the precursor of the KGB) an explanation. From then on George continued to elude all efforts at repatriation by making repeated use of his escape and risk-taking skills acquired during the Occupation and the last the Soviets were to hear about him was when he jumped off an army jeep bound for their Embassy in Brussels.

---

<sup>160</sup>Bunting, op. cit., 220; Information provided by Bob Le Sueur.

<sup>161</sup>Hillsdon, Sonia, op. cit., 118. Another shelterer was Mr Williams of Roseville Street.

<sup>162</sup>Recreation centre for members of the German forces.

Koslov resurfaced when things had calmed down, stayed on in Belgium and later settled in West Germany.

Post-war recognition for what Gould, Forster and Le Druillenec had accomplished was slow and there were times when the family almost felt that they had 'done something wrong'. The myth that all those engaged in illegal activities had risked 'rocking the boat' still had an enormous grip on the popular mind and neither was the relationship between the authorities and wartime 'offenders' a particularly easy one in the immediate aftermath of the Occupation. Unsurprisingly, neither the British government nor the island authorities were particularly forthcoming on the issue and it was finally Britain's cold war enemy, the Soviet Union, who decided to honour twenty Jersey people in 1966 for their wartime help given to Russian prisoners. Among them was Louisa Gould.<sup>163</sup>

In addition, Harold Le Druillenec was awarded one of the highest French decorations, the *Ordre de la Libération*, instituted by General De Gaulle and an MBE on his retirement from teaching. Louisa Gould was honoured for the first time by her native island in 1995, when a commemorative plaque was put up on the wall of La Fontaine, her St Ouen home.

---

<sup>163</sup>The other nineteen people were Albert Bedane, Claudia Dimitrieva, François Flamon, Ivy Forster, René Franoux, Royston Garrett, Leslie Huelin, John Le Breton, Norman Le Brocq, Mike Le Cornu, Harold Le Druillenec, René Le Mottée, Francis Le Sueur, Robert Le Sueur, Dr R McKinstry, Augusta Metcalfe, Oswald Pallot, Leonard Perkins and William Sarre, s. Bunting, *op. cit.*, 325.

## Frank Le Villio

At some point in his journey, Le Druillenec was afforded the company of another Jersey deportee, Frank Le Villio who had been sentenced by decree of the troop court on 19 June 1944 for '*serious military larcency*'.

Two previous convictions show that Le Villio had been in trouble with the authorities before: in March 1942 he was sentenced to three months' hard labour for breaking into a store and stealing groceries worth £ 8.4.2; on this occasion the Royal Court placed him on two years' probation. Within ten months Le Villio was apprehended again for bicycle theft and the sentence (together with the three months for the prior charge) was duly executed. When Le Villio appeared before the German court for an offence against the German military in 1944, the judges' decision was largely influenced by the fact that he had already served six months' hard labour. No mitigating circumstances were acknowledged and Frank was deported to France.

His life had not been a happy one. François René Julien Le Villio was born on 13 September 1925 in St Saviour as one of the five children of a seaman. Frank spent his childhood at Sacré Coeur orphanage in Rouge Bouillon, as his mother died when he was young and his father signed on a liner for seven years when Frank was aged five. At Sacré Coeur the children were subject to a very strict régime. Girls and boys were separated and unable to communicate. In this respect, his sisters were more fortunate as they remained together, but Frank as the only Le Villio boy suffered terrible isolation. When their father returned after seven years, he bought the Rising Sun, a pub in Charles Street. Although they were now able to leave the orphanage and live with their grandmother, the children's overall situation showed little sign of improvement as Mr Le Villio disliked his son and remained a virtual stranger to the other children. In this situation the girls pragmatically chose the security of early marriages.

Those who knew Frank say he was an independent-minded, kind and generous youth who deviated from the straight and narrow owing to the lack of parental love and guidance. Although his actions give little cause for commendation, we ought not to draw hasty conclusions. The perceptive Harold Le Druillenec paints a sympathetic picture of Frank Le Villio in his 1946 radio screenplay and there ought to have been adequate reason for a man with such profound knowledge of human nature to do so. Harold, in fact, felt deeply protective of Frank - the latter was only eighteen years old - and when he met the two sisters in Jersey after the war he confided to them, in a voice choked by tears, that Frank had been '*through a lot of pain*'.

The most intriguing element of the Le Villio case is the fact that his sentence of three months should have been executed in Jersey, at least in theory. On June 21, 1944 the troop court sent a request for execution of Le Villio's sentence in the Jersey prison to C W Duret Aubin, the Attorney General. Le Villio entered prison for the execution of his sentence on June 27. In the meantime, however, the Germans had decided to include Le Villio in the next shipment of deportees to France. A second communication of the troop court, dated July 1, 1944, therefore revised the prior decision, asking for the request for execution to be returned to the court and informing Aubin that Le Villio was on his way to Fresnes.<sup>164</sup> The Germans, as we know, were emptying the prison of as many people as possible and they were certainly not inclined to hesitate over the type of treatment they thought suitable for repeated petty offenders. Le Villio's profile fitted their definition of an 'undesirable' and it seems that he stood no chance of being exempted from deportation. Therefore, when his sister Raymonde arrived at the prison in order to intervene on his behalf, all she could do was watch in dismay as her brother was bundled into the 'Black Maria' which was about to set off to the harbour. Deported on the same boat as Le Druillenec, Gould and Pitolet, Frank's three-month-sentence was earmarked for execution in France, and not in Germany. However, he was transferred straight to Fresnes and then moved to Belfort some time before the liberation of Paris. It was on this journey that he met Le Druillenec, with whom he was sent to Neuengamme. They were separated several weeks later when the former was sent to Wilhelmshaven and although they both ended up in Bergen-Belsen in the final days of the war, no evidence exists that their paths

---

<sup>164</sup>JAS, D/Z Law Officers Files.

crossed again. Following his repatriation to England, Le Villio was treated for TB with steroids in Nottingham and on weekends he paid regular visits to his aunt. Frank tried to build a new life by taking up employment as a railway porter, but soon had to quit as his health deteriorated beyond recovery. Frank knew that his days were numbered and although he was the beneficiary of a generous allowance his last months were, hardly surprisingly, restless and erratic. On 26 September 1946 he eventually succumbed to the lasting effects of his incarceration, at the age of 21.<sup>165</sup>

---

<sup>165</sup>JAS, L/C/24/D2, Joe Miere Collection; death and birth certificates of Frank Le Villio.

## 6

### An icon turned martyr - the Ogier case

Advocate Ogier unlike his fellow islanders portrayed in this book, died neither in a concentration camp nor in a penal prison. However, the inclusion of his name on the memorial is eminently justified because his premature death was greatly influenced by an initial two-month imprisonment at Fresnes in the spring of 1943. Clearer than in many other cases his second deportation to Biberach internment camp was carried out for political reasons, as he had been branded an 'undesirable'.

Born on June 15, 1881 at St Saviour to Lydia Jane de Gruchy and William John Ogier, Leonce L'Hermitte Ogier was one of four brothers who attended Victoria College and became fully immersed in all aspects of school life. An avid sportsman, he excelled as the captain of the School Cricket Eleven and a member of the Rugby Fifteen. At Jesus College, Oxford, he graduated with an honours degree in law. He was called to the Bar at Lincoln's Inn and returned to practice as an Advocate in Jersey, where his father was a member of the firm of *Ecrivains* Larbalestier and Ogier. Leonce was partnered by Jack Le Cornu, with whom he successfully carried on the practice when his father retired after the end of the First World War.<sup>166</sup> In 1910 Ogier had married a Welshwoman, Emma Lilian Carter, and they subsequently had three children: Kenneth, Barbara and Richard. A mysterious malady, initially diagnosed as encephalitis, saw Richard being led from one specialist to another during his childhood and early adulthood.

On February 12, 1943 the Ogier family home was searched by the German police, who

---

<sup>166</sup>Private papers, in: Ogier Papers (in possession of Helen Ogier); Victoria College Newsletter, 1943,

found a map on which Richard had been marking fortifications. The German initiative, one may surmise, was prompted by an informant, whose suspicion was probably aroused by Richard's frequent solitary wanderings around the Island during which the map had been pieced together. The house-search also produced a baby box camera belonging to Kenneth who lived outside Jersey and was serving in the Forces.<sup>167</sup> Upon this discovery Ogier was immediately arrested together with Richard and interrogated. The German authorities in Paris clearly suspected a major plot, for in early March<sup>168</sup> the two Jersey men were shipped to Paris for interrogation at Gestapo HQ and later to Fresnes prison where they were questioned by Major Formanek of the Wehrmacht. It was Formanek who suspected that Richard was suffering from a brain tumour and recommended to the German military tribunal that he be admitted to St Anne's hospital in Paris. His father stood trial in May 1943, was condemned to six months' imprisonment, but was immediately pardoned and sent back to Jersey by the military commander of Paris. Richard stayed on in Paris at the neurosurgical unit at St Anne's hospital where his condition was diagnosed as Parkinson's disease by Dr Bessière. No treatment was possible owing to war time shortages, but Richard remained there until his repatriation to London in November 1944.<sup>169</sup>

When Advocate Ogier arrived back in Jersey on May 24, 1943 a crowd turned out to offer him a warm welcome. In a letter recounting the story to his sister Barbara after the war, Kenneth Ogier wrote:

*'Everybody from the dustmen up would stop him to welcome him home and he was showered with gifts of food. This welcome seems to have been the chief reason for his second deportation, he became too much of a hero. One German officer admitted as much. When he arrived he was tired and a little weak after his experiences but with all this kindness soon picked up again [...]. Many people have told me how Dad told them how well he was and how happy and how these weeks were the happiest of his life. He loved being home again.'*<sup>170</sup>

Ogier had become an icon for the island population and the popular enthusiasm which

---

8/9.

<sup>167</sup>Kenneth Ogier boarded the last train out of Prague where he had been working as an English language tutor for 12 months, on 31 August 1939. According to uncorroborated information he worked for British Intelligence during the war, on the basis of his knowledge of Czech. After the war he went on to become a senior official for UNESCO in Paris where he died in September 1996.

<sup>168</sup>Sinel, op. cit., entry of March 4, 1943.

<sup>169</sup>Various papers, in: Ogier Papers. Richard died in Paris when his heart failed after an operation, on March 4, 1966.

greeted his return was a bitter pill for the German rulers of the Island. Worse still, the entire charge of espionage against Ogier and his son was so flawed that one of the highest military courts in France had experienced difficulties in upholding the verdict and had recommended its suspension. Furthermore, German courts in France did not have a reputation for such fussiness. Indeed, for an unprecedented situation of this nature ever to arise, communications between the German court in Paris and the service instigating Ogier's transfer to France must have been quite abysmal. Still, under normal circumstances all Ogier could have hoped for was to be sent to an internment camp for Allied nationals, despite being pardoned. That he was granted permission to return home was extraordinary and compromised the Germans in Jersey who were undoubtedly irritated by popular reaction. Displays of public discontent beyond a certain narrowly-defined level invariably invited harsh counter-measures, a fact well attested by other events during the Occupation. However, the most unusual feature of the Ogier case is that the authorities hesitated for six long weeks before reaching a decision and initiating action.

Sometime around July 10, 1943, however, the Secret Field Police knocked at the Ogiers' door and within a few hours Leonce was on his way to Biberach internment camp. '*The devils are adept at this cat and mouse game*'<sup>171</sup> commented Mary Deslandes' in her Occupation diary on this blow that caught him completely unaware.

What nobody knew at the time was that Ogier was seriously ill with cancer of the intestines.<sup>172</sup> The main symptoms of the illness are anaemia and weight-loss and it is not surprising that his condition went unnoticed, as most people in occupied Jersey were suffering from emaciation owing to an insufficient diet. The severe physical and psychological strain and the shock of unexpected deportation triggered his rapid degradation, and upon his arrival at Biberach from Compiègne on July 15, 1943 he was immediately admitted to the camp hospital. Ogier was known for his good nature and he tried to give everyone in the camp an impression of cheerfulness. He reassured his wife by referring to his condition as '*a very bad cold*' and promised: '*I shall keep on smiling in spite of my bad luck*'.<sup>173</sup> On 21 July he wrote a last letter to his partner

---

<sup>170</sup>Letter of K N Ogier to B Sandover, 17/07/1945, in: Ogier Papers.

<sup>171</sup>'The Diary of Mary Winifred Deslandes June 1940 to May 1945', entry of July 18, 1943, in: An Island Trilogy. Memories of Jersey and the Occupation by Mary Robin, Basil de Carteret and Mary Deslandes, Jersey, n.d.

<sup>172</sup>s. Ogier Papers.

<sup>173</sup>Letter of Ogier to his wife, Biberach, 18/07/1943, in: Ogier Papers.

Le Cornu in Jersey, telling him that he was much better and how he enjoyed the 'wonderful scenery' and the 'two terrific thunderstorms' that had occurred in the vicinity of the camp. The self-deprecating Ogier was still unaware of how serious his condition was, for he asked Le Cornu to send him 'a small pack of snuff as I need some to wash off my colds.'<sup>174</sup> It must have been around this time that he was fatally moved from the hospital to the top bunk of a barrack. Shortly afterwards he collapsed through loss of blood and was taken to Ulm municipal hospital where he was given a blood transfusion. However, this did not save Ogier's life and he died on August 1, 1943, barely two weeks after his arrival in Biberach.<sup>175</sup> Two relatives interned at nearby Würzach, Percy and Evelyn Aste, (née Ogier), were present at his deathbed and recounted Ogie's (as he was called affectionately) last moments in a letter to his sister Maud in England. On July 28 they had received a telephone message telling them that Ogier was in hospital:

*'It was such a shock for we thought he was home. Nurse took me over the next morning; As soon as I saw him I knew he was dying, for he was in a coma, but three times he came around, saw me and said, 'Evelyn, the girls and Percy'. It was heartbreaking, if only you had been with me. He had haemorrhage of the intestines, lost two litres of blood and his heart was very weak; He had the best medical attention and all kindness. Friends of his, Captain Woodrow and his wife, were in the same hospital and she was always in his room. The authorities asked me if I would like his body cremated because, by so doing, we can take his remains back to Jersey to be buried when we leave [...]. Ogie loved his island so much and, as all say, he was so loved by all, that I feel we have done the right thing, tho (sic) I felt awful signing the paper that this should be done [...]. We just cannot believe this true, we are stunned it is so cruel (sic). I can write no more.'*<sup>176</sup>

Ogier's ashes were returned to Jersey by the Astes and laid to rest at St Saviour's cemetery. Both had been repatriated to England in the months preceding the end of the war, as part of an exchange of 125 Channel Islands internees.<sup>177</sup>

---

<sup>174</sup>Letter of Ogier to Le Cornu, Biberach, 21/07/1943, in: Ogier Papers.

<sup>175</sup>British Red Cross Message to Ogier's sister in Berkhamstead, Herts., 06/11/1943; Message of Arthur Harvey to J F Le Cornu, Ogier's partner, Biberach, 02/08/1943, in: Ogier Papers.

<sup>176</sup>Percy and Evelyn to Aunt Maud, 03/08/1943, in: Ogier Papers.

<sup>177</sup> King, Peter, *The Channel Islands War 1940-45*, London, 1991, 150.

## 7

### What happened at Kreuzburg Internment Camp ? -

#### the Rossi case

On 25 February 1943 Marcel Rossi and his father Jean Marie were sent to Kreuzburg/Silesia as part of the internment measures intended against residents of the Channel Islands.<sup>178</sup> Marcel did not return to the Island after the war.

Kreuzburg internment camp, though a former lunatic asylum, was not the most unpleasant place to spend the war in Germany. The solid building lodged 350 people, among them 200 Jews with British passports. The camp population was an amazing mix of personalities who ensured that distraction was plentiful: foreign legionnaires, a university professor, actors, artists, musicians and several professional sportsmen who had been surprised by the German advance. Bullying the camp population was never adopted as a standard practice by the camp authorities and former internee Douglas Tanguy only recalls one suicide occurring in the camp during his time there. Douglas was one of the Jerseymen interned at Kreuzburg. He still recalls how taken aback he was when one day in February 1943 he learnt from his hairdresser that he had been selected for deportation to Germany. Though stunned, Douglas summoned enough courage to go to College House, where he was laconically informed that the occupying authority thought it a better idea to send him to Germany instead of letting him remain in Jersey. Contrary to the September 1942 deportations which affected the non-indigenous British population of mainland origin, this later measure included many people born in the Channel Islands, mostly men. Douglas, however, also recalls a few

---

<sup>178</sup>JAS, B/A/W 80 Bailiff's War Files, List of persons evacuated from Jersey.

'mainlanders', among them a former Mosley bodyguard by the name of Pleasants ('a not very pleasant character') and three conscientious objectors. What weighed most heavily on internees in his opinion was the fact that their detention was of indeterminate duration. However, life at Kreuzberg was quite tolerable and Douglas reckons that overall Kreuzberg internees were *'luckier than those in other camps'*, as there were many opportunities to 'kill time'. Douglas, a professional musician, soon found his niche in camp life; this was obviously easier for artists or craftsmen than for people with skills which were rendered superfluous by the sealed camp environment. Eventually he formed the 'Kreuzberg Trio' with Charles Haboreiter and Victor Hammett, two British musicians trapped in Europe by the German advance. Musicians were obviously in short supply and Douglas still recalls with a chuckle how he was approached by a German officer charged with entertainment for the Allied POWs at nearby Lamsdorf camp and who for a short while slipped into the role of a music agent. This way the 'Kreuzberg Trio' were afforded a most welcome three-week break away from the camp.

Whiling away their time was the internees' biggest concern and it is by not hard to imagine that the Rossis, who were motor mechanics, would have found this challenge more difficult to negotiate than other internees. However, as Douglas testifies, the Rossis soon came to grips with their camp existence. Jean led a very quiet life and his son Marcel, a tall and attractive young man, spent most of his time keeping fit with physical exercise.<sup>179</sup> Jean was born in Jersey in 1898, of a family originating in Italy. After the First World War he married an Englishwoman, Lilian Maud Baker, and the couple's son Marcel Fortuné was born in Long Sutton, Lincolnshire on December 14, 1921. Like his father, Marcel was a dual Italian-British national. Eventually the family returned to Jersey where Jean worked at St Helier Garages until the arrival of the German occupying force in 1940. At the time the two Rossis were deported in 1943 the family was living at Ypriana, in Chestnut Avenue, St Saviour.

The Rossis' fate in Hitler's concentration camps is difficult to elucidate, for having arrived in Kreuzburg on March 1, 1943 they were removed nine to twelve months later

---

<sup>179</sup>Interview with Douglas Tanguy.

to Oppeln prison and subsequently absorbed by the concentration camp system. The first leg of their journey took them to Blechhammer, a camp situated 18 miles to the West of the town of Gleiwitz. It was established in April 1942 as a forced labour camp for Jews from Silesia who were employed on the construction of the Upper Silesia Hydrogenation Works. The number of prisoners increased to 5,500 and on April 1, 1944 Blechhammer became satellite number four of Auschwitz. On January 21, 1945, 4,000 Blechhammer prisoners were taken on a death march which reached Gross-Rosen on February 2.<sup>180</sup> At this camp Jean Rossi was separated from his son and sent to Dachau, the first Nazi concentration camp established in March 1933. Jean Rossi was liberated by the American army in Bavaria in April 1945, but Marcel, who was sent to Flossenbürg concentration camp, died there, shortly after his arrival in February 1945.<sup>181</sup>

After his liberation Jean Rossi spent a few months in England for medical treatment and then joined his wife who had stayed behind with Jersey relatives. For years he tried to ascertain what had happened to his son, but no survivors came forward with news of Marcel. Jean died, having never discovered the full story, in 1967.

The fate of the Rossis defies the pattern of routine in Kreuzburg, as no other case is known of permanent removal of internees from this camp. The Rossis did not differ from the rest of the camp population. Even escapees and those involved in the misappropriation of food or other misdemeanours were eventually returned to the camp. Word spread very easily and it is therefore inconceivable that the reasons for their removal were related to any occurrences in the camp. The only clue offered is one document of the Wehrmacht High Command which proves that the Rossis' case had been passed onto the highest echelon of the German military hierarchy for clarification. This document of April 15, 1943, expressly alludes to the Rossis and claims that they were Italians. It states wryly that Italian nationals were not affected by the order to deport Channel Islanders to internment camps in Germany.<sup>182</sup>

Rumours that they were removed because they were considered Italians were already circulating at the time of their disappearance from Kreuzburg. Being considered

---

<sup>180</sup>Encyclopedia of the Holocaust, op. cit., 218; 352.

<sup>181</sup>PRO, FO 950 766.

<sup>182</sup>BA-MA, RW/4/624: Secret Note Nr 01675/43, re. Italian nationals Rossi, OKW Wehrmacht HQ to Quartermaster (IV), FührerHQ, 15/04/1943.

Italians rather than British, it is quite likely that the Rossis would have been affected by German measures taken after Italy's disintegration and subsequent capitulation in the summer of 1943. Most probably, they were integrated into the masses of the Italian 'military internees'<sup>183</sup> in Germany who lived in appalling conditions and were worked to death as slave labourers in the German war economy. Had the Rossis refused to sign a declaration committing them to work for Germany? At some stage they could have also been subject to an order of Himmler, the SS leader, issued on September 9, 1943 which stipulated that 'work related offences' on the part of Italians could be countered through the immediate transfer to a concentration camp of the person in question.<sup>184</sup>

---

<sup>183</sup>Italian military personnel taken prisoner in 1943 were refused the status and the protection enjoyed by POWs. Already considered traitors, they were forced to opt for a continued cooperation with Germany. Many were punished for their refusal to sign up for the new Fascist army Mussolini was setting up with the assistance of the SS. The mortality rate of Italian forced labourers in Germany was on par with that of Russians, s. Herbert, Ulrich, *Fremdarbeiter-Politik und Praxis des Ausländer-Einsatzes in der Kriegswirtschaft des Dritten Reiches*, Berlin/ Bonn 1985. pp 259; Cajani, Luigi, 'Die italienischen Militärinternierten im nationalsozialistischen Deutschland', in: Herbert, Ulrich (Ed.), *Europa und der Reichseinsatz. Ausländische Zivilarbeiter, Kriegsgefangene und KZ-Häftlinge in Deutschland 1938-45*, Klartext Verlag, 1991, 295-316.

<sup>184</sup>Grossmann, Anton J., 'Fremd-und Zwangsarbeiter in Bayern 1939-45', in: *Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 34 (1986) 481-521.

## 8

### **The Half-Hearted Escapades of a Small-Time Juvenile Delinquent<sup>185</sup>**

If it was not for one solitary file at the *Bundesarchiv*, nothing could tell us about the fate of Walter Dauny.

As in the Le Villio case, Dauny's troubled youth was devoid of guidance and parental love, making his formative years very unsettled. His case reflects the partial fragmentation of public order during the Occupation years and the vacuum of meaningful authority that it created. A fair number of Channel Islanders - especially those who were adolescents during the period - admit that their behaviour was not always in tune with what would have been socially acceptable under normal circumstances. In particular, stealing from the occupier acquired an aura of respectability and was considered legitimate. However, once corruption had taken root and dislodged ordinary social conditioning in favour of a more anarchic approach, disregard could spread contagiously to the point where no area of property remained wholly sacrosanct.

Walter Allen Stanley Dauny was born in St Peter, Jersey on April 4, 1926 and was soon left without a mother, who died when he was one year old. Subsequently, he was raised by his aunt and uncle who lived at 8 Bath Street, St Helier. His father remarried when he was thirteen years old and took Walter back in, but the relationship with his step-mother was full of friction. Equally, Walter Dauny's other family ties seem to have been of little use in taming his unruly tendencies. His uncle's essentially negative

---

<sup>185</sup> For whole chapter, s. BA-Z 726. Court of the 319th Infantry Division (ID), Jersey branch: Investigations into the case against Walter Dauny.

disposition towards him is demonstrated in remarks he made to the German *Feldgendarms* investigating the Dauny case in 1943, namely that his nephew deserved being removed from the Island on a permanent basis. However justified the reasons may have been for doing so and even with little or no knowledge of what was going on in German prisons and concentration camps, he must have still sensed that this could only have the gravest of consequences for his nephew.

Leslie Le Sueur, a classmate at La Motte school, is one of the few people who remembers Walter Dauny from the time he was living in Bath Street, as they played football together in the same team. Leslie left school in March 1940 and it was not before sometime in 1942/43 that he saw Dauny again, who by then was working on a construction project at Blanchet House, St Peter.<sup>186</sup>

In January 1943, Dauny ran into his first trouble when he was apprehended for stealing an unknown amount of Cognac together with another man whose name he obstinately refused to reveal. Sentenced by the court of FK 515, he served a five-month term which ended in June 1943. When he left prison he took up employment with Elsche & Co., the largest German contractor in the Island, who was building a new electricity plant at St Peter. Walter now moved to town, where he lived on his own in rented accommodation at 40 Roseville Street. With no strong hand of a father, teacher or reasonable friend in his life to rectify tendencies for dangerous escapades and bring him back onto the path of righteousness. It appears his thefts continued. Clearly, Dauny was not somebody who knew how to thrive on theft and there is nothing to indicate that he sold or bartered parts of his loot, most of which was found by the *Feldgendarmerie* when they searched his lodgings in January 1944. The articles he stole together represented no real value and did not improve his level of subsistence, and if his behaviour represented the debut of an apprentice crook, he showed little talent as his actions, were limited to uselessly hoarding a variety of items, in ludicrous quantities.

Dauny sleep-walked his way into petty crime which became his favourite pastime and instilled the illusion in him that life was one big self-service store: in October 1943 he entered through an open window into the clubroom of the Safety Coach Ltd. in Green Street, St Helier and removed a total of 248 (!) books, mostly detective novels,

---

<sup>186</sup>Information provided by Les Le Sueur.

murder mysteries and other light fiction. Dauny took considerable risks, because with such a large number of books to be carried, he had to come back a second time. This example alone conclusively demonstrates how full of naive opportunism his actions were. Later that month, not one but three pairs of roller-skates disappeared from Cleveland Garages, all of which were later found unused in Dauny's bed-sit. Indeed, Dauny had some nerve because, as he later stated, when he did not like the soup served every lunch-time to Elsche & Co. workers, he walked down to a German unit stationed not far from his worksite at St Peter who served him some of their own German soup which, no doubt, was tastier for he made it a habit to come back daily. Finally, during one of these lunch-time visits in November 1943, Dauny could no longer resist the temptation of four pairs of military boots in an unlocked box, all of which disappeared into his bag. As with the rest of his collection, Dauny arranged his loot in a neat little row in his bed-sit, completely oblivious to the fact that the Germans did not suffer fools gladly. However, fate was soon to catch up with him: on the evening of January 5, 1944, Dauny's landlord arrived at the *Feldgendarmerie* claiming that his tenant Walter Dauny was unruly, had threatened his maid with a knife and that he didn't want him any longer in his house. With him he had brought one pair of German military boots which, as he said, might be of interest to Germans.

If, as promised above, the case is to afford a brief glimpse as to what depths the corruption of morals during the Occupation could go, the behaviour of some of the people interrogated by the German police after Dauny's subsequent arrest is telling: whether or not Dauny had really behaved obnoxiously, the fact remains that Dauny was denounced by his landlord, admittedly, with the intention of ridding himself of Dauny's presence in the house. Secondly, there is an uncle suggesting to the German investigators that his nephew deserved to be sent away from the Island. Thirdly, the attitude of a woman, for whom Dauny committed a theft out of a simple compulsion to please, is highly questionable. Although there is no indication that this woman, who lived in the same house and worked as a hairdresser at the German harbour office in Jersey, was involved in the theft herself, as Dauny later claimed, she at least does not appear to have asked too many questions about where Dauny had obtained the articles which he offered her and which she readily accepted. Naturally, when things started to go terribly wrong and she was summoned by the *Feldgendarmerie*, she denied all

knowledge of their provenance.

Dauny's trial took place on February 8, 1944 and the court of 319 ID gave him a nine-month term for serious larceny. Dauny's acts were not those of a criminal mind and as one German judge willingly conceded, the defendant displayed the character of an immature youngster whose indulgence resembled an expression of playfulness. However, one could hardly expect the Germans to have given much thought on how to tackle the problem of juvenile delinquency and dispense benevolent counselling. What irked them most was, of course, the fact that he had helped himself to German property. In the view of the court the general interest of the authorities by far exceeded the simple theft of four pairs of boots, a point stressed in the verdict: *'It must be clear to the local population that German property must not be touched. Those who offend against this principle must be severely punished.'*<sup>187</sup> German irritation acquired a farcical tone in the German prosecutor's indignation over the fact that Dauny had rewarded the hospitality of the Wehrmacht by thieving from them.

Walter Dauny was to pay dearly for his *faux pas* with the occupier. Sometime before February 25, 1944, he was sent to St Lô where he stayed for two weeks. On March 7, 1944 he was transferred to Villeneuve St Georges, the prison where he was to serve his entire term until October 4, 1944. However, Walter Dauny disappeared after the German withdrawal from France and his file gives no further clues as to his subsequent fate. He is presumed to have gone missing in a concentration camp in Germany.<sup>188</sup>

---

<sup>187</sup> Verdict of the Court of the 319th Infantry Division (ID), Jersey branch, in: BA-Z 726. Investigations into the case against Walter Dauny.

<sup>188</sup> JAS, L/C/24/A5, Joe Miere Collection; List of political prisoners in the Channel Islanders 1940-1945; Information provided by Geoff Delauney.

## 9

### **Do you remember June Sinclair and**

### **Peter Johnson?**

Two Jersey ‘offenders’, June Sinclair and Peter Bruce Johnson, disappeared into the abyss of the Third Reich's camps and prisons leaving virtually no traces. Months of research have not uncovered a single original document bearing their names and the little we know about them is based on oral testimony. Both moved to the Island before the Occupation and they had few attachments and no family ties there. Unsurprisingly, social isolation in the grey days of the Occupation increased vulnerability and could lead to the unnoticed disappearance of people.

June Sinclair was a half-Jewish orphan from London who came to Jersey before the war. Joe Miere remembers her because she was his next door neighbour at 27 Midvale Road, St Helier and her picture was taken on a beach outing with Joe and his mother, one sunny Sunday afternoon. Little is known of her apart from the fact that she worked at one of the hotels requisitioned by the German forces, probably the Continental or the Mayfair, and that sometime in 1940/41 she confided to Mrs Miere that her closest relatives had been killed in the Blitz.

June, a genuine city girl, was quick-tempered and did not suffer fools easily. Therefore, when a German soldier who had come to the hotel where she was employed, overstepped the mark, she rapidly retaliated by slapping his face and it seems that the ensuing *melée* degenerated dangerously. Like many others, she was swept up into the Nazi system and she ended her days in the concentration camp of

Ravensbrück. She is presumed to have died there in 1943, aged 23.<sup>189</sup>

Peter Bruce Johnson was a deaf-mute of Australian nationality and this impediment must have magnified his isolation in the volatile occupation context. Almost nothing is known of his fate, except that he was sent to France in 1943 and was last seen at Dora-Mittelbau concentration camp<sup>190</sup> in the Harz mountains.

This camp, situated three miles from the town of Nordhausen, was first mentioned on August 27, 1943 as an external unit of Buchenwald and it became a concentration camp in its own right, with 23 branches, on October 28, 1944. Thousands of prisoners were transferred there in the second half of 1943 in order to excavate underground tunnels for the site of a huge plant for the manufacture of V2 missiles, which became operational in late spring 1944. Conditions at Dora were so murderous that the mortality rate was higher than in any other concentration camp in Germany.

The first group of prisoners sent from Buchenwald included several hardy individuals who organised sabotage and managed to slow down production. When they were detected the underground leaders and many suspects, altogether 200, were hanged in public. On March 25, 1945, 34,500 prisoners remained at Dora-Mittelbau, most of whom were sent on a death march to Bergen-Belsen on April 1.<sup>191</sup>

---

<sup>189</sup>Information provided by Joe Miere; 'In Memory of Those Who Never Came Back', JEP, 08/11/1996.

<sup>190</sup>JAS, L/C/24/A5, Joe Miere Collection; List of political prisoners in the Channel Islanders 1940-1945; Dora-Mittelbau was also the final destination of Clarence Painter.

<sup>191</sup>Encyclopedia of the Holocaust, op. cit., 399.

## Resumé

The twenty lives encountered in the preceding pages give a sufficiently broad idea of the diverse patterns of defiance that existed in occupied Jersey. However, the uniqueness and exemplary character of each case should not obscure our view of general undercurrents of dissidence which we have contrived to categorise in three types:

The first type encompasses genuinely subversive action or open defiance, of which the dissemination of uncensored radio news was the most common manifestation. The majority of the people portrayed in this book fall into this category, the distinguishing feature of which was the sense of purpose and the selflessness with which they deliberately refused to comply with the wishes of the occupying authorities. The most openly defiant of these intrepid people was undoubtedly Canon Clifford Cohu who prioritised his determination to boost morale in the Island over his own safety.

The protagonists of the second category of defiance were those who reacted against the severe shortage of supply and the breakdown of a fair system of distribution through excessive German demand and who took a liberal view on German ownership rights. Most of them were neither resistance heroes nor petty criminals but in most cases ordinary people struggling for survival. Although such activities lack the element of selflessness, a summary condemnation of these people would be unfair, bearing in mind the harsh realities of occupation, which tended to push people to unconventional forms of survival. By no means should this category of 'offenders' be confused with black marketeers who were profiteering on the backs of their fellow islanders, and in all cases described here, the punishment received was disproportionate to the severity of the offences. Their severe treatment had much in common with practice in Nazi

Germany where 'misdemeanours' such as turning up late for work repeatedly or alcohol addiction were included in the Nazi catalogue of anti-social behaviour. In the worst possible case a denunciation could seal the offender's fate, as the police were invested with virtually unlimited power to send people to concentration camps for 're-education'.

The third category comprises acts perpetrated by youthful 'offenders'. These acts contained elements of defiance and were often motivated by patriotism, though not invoked by the same degree of noble intention, selflessness and reflection that characterises other acts of defiance.<sup>192</sup> A provocative attitude typical of adolescents transcends these acts in which appear elements of 'testing one's courage', 'flirting with danger' and shattering the taboos of an adult world that lay in shambles. It does not require much imagination to see why the German occupiers presented a particularly gratifying target for such dispositions that are a normal feature of all societies during all periods of history. The fact that these mostly harmless activities entailed consequences as dire as death in a concentration camp puts the tragedy of the young Jersey 'offenders' into perspective.

It goes without saying that the three outlined categories represent so-called 'ideal types'; many of the cases do not fall squarely into one of the outlined categories, as elements of one or more of the same can coincide. This is the case of Gould, Hassall and Audrain whose escape attempt bears some of the features of the first and the third categories.

A fourth category, probably the most tragic, can not be subsumed into any category of defiance at all; it encompasses people who committed no punishable acts as such, but who were 'sucked' into the system, on the basis of mere suspicion or because they belonged to a group of people that had received the label 'enemies of the Reich'. We may call them 'circumstantial victims'. Marcel Rossi was such a victim. His 'crime' was simply that he held dual Italian-British nationality and that he and his father were Jersey internees in Germany, at a time when Italians were subject to fierce counter-measures on the part of their former German ally in the autumn of 1943.

---

<sup>192</sup>Although they were young, the author does not include the long list of Jersey escapees in this category.



## **Part II: IMPRESSIONS OF AN OCCUPATION**

### **1**

#### *Inselwahn, security obsessions and radio war*

Little has been said about the broader historical context against which 'offences against the occupying authorities' have to be measured. The following chapter will deal with the changes arising out of the German fortification scheme for the Channel Islands and the impact it had on life in the islands. The fortification of the islands' undertaken on Hitler's personal directive, was the single most important factor in dictating relations between the German occupier and the island population and most areas where islanders and Germans clashed were closely associated with the fortification work. These contentious areas were the obstruction of work, the hiding of escaped forced labourers, the lack of supply which put many people in a desperate position and the retention of wireless sets. Through the prism of the fortification programme the true nature of Nazi was evident. It entailed a dramatic increase in the number of soldiers, civilian workers and members of the Organisation Todt (OT), the German labour

organisation, in the Channel Islands. Increasingly, forced labourers were shipped to the islands and obsessive security demands became commonplace. As a result of the changes brought about by the fortification programme the occupying authority needed to deal more swiftly and ruthlessly with popular dissent, thus leading to ever greater expediency in their treatment of the local population. Step by step, a constant and progressive radicalisation of German attitudes took place leading to mounting repression. It is quite reasonable to believe that, had Hitler's *Inselwahn*<sup>193</sup> not prevailed, the Occupation would have evolved very differently.

On October 18, 1941, during a meeting at his HQ, Hitler once again displayed his obsession with the Channel Islands, his only British possessions. Prone to think in terms of prestige rather than utility, the former corporal proved what a bogus strategist he was. Although the overall military situation in the Channel had shown no sign of change and Britain's prospects were bleak, he was to commission a gigantic fortification programme that could hardly be justified in strategic terms. Hitler conjectured that Britain was under severe political pressure from her Soviet ally, allegedly demanding that she engage the enemy. With all British footholds in Europe apart from Malta and Gibraltar lost, Hitler was firmly convinced that North Africa and the Channel were the two theatres of war where the British would try to regain the initiative. He argued that if they succeeded in retaking the islands this would cause severe disruption to German convoys in the area.<sup>194</sup> Characteristically, none of the professional soldiers present dared to contradict him, although he cited no 'hard' evidence to support his argument and although the Germans had little intelligence of British long-term planning. In fact, Churchill had been in favour of ventures to retake the islands as a much-needed morale booster in 1940 and Lord Mountbatten argued the case of retaking Alderney on several occasions in 1942, but in the end such plans were rejected by other members of Britain's Chiefs-of-Staff Committee as too risky and too costly.<sup>195</sup> This conspicuously illustrates the leadership structure in the two camps and points to one of the major differences in the way they were waging war. Decision-making on the British side involved a common and concerted effort and was

---

<sup>193</sup>Literally: Island madness.

<sup>194</sup>BA-MA, OKW RW/4-625. General of Engineers and Fortresses at Army High Command (ObH), Protocole on meeting at FührerHQ on 18/10/1941 re. fortification work in British Channel Islands.

<sup>195</sup>Bunting, op. cit., 224-25.

based on mutual consent; similar tendencies in the German camp were badly hampered by the all-imposing will of one individual. Decidedly, this was the Achilles heel of the Axis war effort, for this individual, Adolf Hitler, based many of his moves on little more than intuition.

With the Führer's pet project naturally overruling all other considerations, immense pressure built up to tighten security measures and deal harshly with all 'offenders'. There were two major areas of concern to the Germans. First, there was the possibility that civilian workers engaged on the fortifications would obstruct the progress of work or even engage in acts of sabotage. It was therefore important to maintain discipline at all times and repress severely all manifestations of disobedience among the workforce. The second concern was that members of the civilian population, taken here in its widest sense, would acquire details of the crash-building programme and transmit this information to the enemy. This was a possibility which increasingly began to obsess the German military ranks.

There were paradoxes in the labour situation. It is a well-known fact that while the Germans were desperately short of labour, they were equally desperate not to let civilian workers recruited among the local population get an idea of what exactly they were doing, particularly not on sensitive military projects. The employment of local civilians had another disadvantage: many of them made it an issue of 'going slow' on the work, with one of the highest rates of absenteeism and the lowest rate of efficiency among all groups of workers.<sup>196</sup> A set of documents in the *Bundesarchiv* shows that lack of discipline among Channel Islands civilian workers was assuming perilous proportions: on June 26, 1942, William Goetzky, a German contractor working in Guernsey, sent a list of 38 Guernsey people in his employment to his client, OT-Normandy (Section 'Gustav'). The document lists workers' attendance and the days

---

<sup>196</sup>BA, ZNS. Court martials. General correspondance. W11/104-107, November 1940 - March 1944, collection of Files (319. I.D.): Correspondance between the court of the 319th Infantry Division and the Nebenstelle Guernsey of the Feldkommandantur, re. unauthorised absenteeism of English civilian workers, June/July 1942. The remaining court documents at the Guernsey Archives give precious indications that German troop courts were mainly dealing with the slackening discipline among their own troops, but many cases also dealt with British and Western European civilian workers. Another case is perhaps noteworthy: On 04/08/1943 a German contractor, the *Gewerkschaft Windsheim, Spezialbau-Einsatz West* (based in Cologne) wrote to Fortress-Engineers HQ (Festungs Pi Stab 19, Abt. 2/II) that William John Upson of 4 Rue Flère, Vale, Guernsey worked a total of ten hours during the period 22/07 - 04/08/1943 (4 hrs on 22/07 and 6 hrs on 29/07) and then left work without being excused, in: Guernsey Archives, 18. Misc. papers.

they missed work without being excused. *'Some of the workers'*, it is stated, *'completely failed to turn up for work and others stopped working after a very short time'*. The majority of Channel Islanders employed at Goetzky's also made it a point to obstruct the work in process. According to the report, *'the majority [of the Channel Islands civilian workforce] are extremely reluctant to engage in regular work [...]* *Other foreign workers [in this case French and Belgians] have adapted themselves to the German work ethic though their food is no better and though they are separated from their families.*<sup>197</sup> By this time the FK's Guernsey branch, the *Nebenstelle*, also endorsed the view that British absenteeism was becoming alarming: Inspector Zachau of the *Nebenstelle* therefore reported the case to the court of the FK 515 in Jersey. He supported his move with the claim that a continual rise in such cases was endangering the work discipline and preventing the conclusion of important military installations on schedule. While requesting that the court take over the Goetzky case, he suggested that a more extensive interpretation be given to the military governor's 'Protection of the Workpeace Order' of November 6, 1941 and that the punishment of the culprits be conducted in a *'perceptible manner'*.<sup>198</sup>

Surely, patriotism alone cannot account for this situation, rather a mixture of different motives. Some civilians were attracted by German work because it yielded certain advantages such as better wages or because it improved their supply of sparse commodities which was greatly facilitated through the possibilities of theft from the places of work.<sup>199</sup> Some of those recruited also cherished illusions about better rations, but in fact the absentees at Goetzky's attributed their poor performance to sickness and weakness caused by an inadequate diet. Channel Islanders were to a certain extent more protected than foreign labourers, first because the Germans were desperate for labour at most times during the Occupation and so needed to avoid alienating the island workforce, and secondly, because the island authorities acted as a buffer between the civilian employees and the Germans, thereby protecting the former from most types of abuse. They had to be treated and paid decently and could not be hoarded into mass lodgings where their movements were easy to control. Islanders

---

<sup>197</sup>BA, ZNS. Court martials. General correspondance. W11/104-107, November 1940 - March 1944, collection of Files (319. I.D.): Letter of William Goetzky, Contractors to the OT-Normandie, Abschnittsleitung Gustav, 26-6-1942, re. unauthorised absenteeism of English civilian workers, re. Order for the Protection of the Working Peace.

<sup>198</sup>Inspector Zachau of the FK Nebenstelle Guernsey to Court of FK 515, 13/07/1942.

<sup>199</sup>Ginns, Michael, op. cit., 66/67.

went home after work and had plenty of outside contact. Plans were therefore devised to prevent the employment of local civilians on the most sensitive sites or in locations where they could get a good picture on progress made in the fortification of the islands.

Foreign labour, and in particular forced labour, was brought into the islands in order to counter the dependence on local labour. However, the different nationalities of these workers barely concealed their one common denominator. They all had little good to say about their new masters and as a consequence the Germans soon became apprehensive that Channel Islanders might plot sabotage and espionage by joining forces with the foreign labour.<sup>200</sup> Thus one putative security threat followed another, accelerating the already latent predisposition for highly inflated misrepresentations. Quite literally the situation was surreal: the world had seen few occupying powers carrying out prestigious military projects commissioned expressly and supervised attentively by their venerated supreme chief, and with no choice other than to employ thousands of mistrusted enemy civilians and POWs. Naturally, paranoia thrived.

The protection of their fortress dominated the minds of the Germans, most of all because their security procedures were lax. Improvement in this area was urgently called for, as is demonstrated by one incident reported to the head of the Secret Field Police,<sup>201</sup> (the 'Gestapo of the Wehrmacht') at *Abwehr*<sup>202</sup> HQ France on March 16, 1942. In this case, the entire extension plans of the Jersey *Luftwaffe* base had disappeared.<sup>203</sup> Similar deficiencies were spotted by *Abwehr* officers surveying security procedures on the French coast: surveillance of the workers was minimal and the *Abwehr* therefore automatically assumed that '*members of enemy intelligence were active amongst the workforce and had detailed information on the fortifications*'.<sup>204</sup>

---

<sup>200</sup>For a comprehensive breakdown of the different types and nationalities of foreign labour shipped to the Channel Islands by the German occupier, s. Ginns, Michael, op. cit.

<sup>201</sup>The term in German is *Geheime Feldpolizei (GFP)*. There was no Gestapo as such in the islands, however GFP included many Gestapo members in their ranks who had been drafted into the forces, s. Gessner, Klaus, 'Geheime Feldpolizei - Die Gestapo der Wehrmacht', in: Mallmann, Klaus-Michael/Paul, Gerhard (Ed.), *Die Gestapo - Mythos und Realität*, Darmstadt 1995, 492-507.

<sup>202</sup>Military Counter-Intelligence

<sup>203</sup>BA-MA. RW/49 97: *Abwehr* Command France (F/IIIc), Channel Islands - Commitment of labour resources, protective security measures 1942-1944. Communication of Army Group Command D, Chief-of-staff to *Abwehr* Command France, Head of GFP West, 16/03/1942.

<sup>204</sup>BA-MA. RW/49 97: *Abwehr* Command France (F/IIIc), Channel Islands - Commitment of labour resources, protective security measures 1942-1944. Communication of Army Group Command D, Chief-of-staff to *Abwehr* Command France, Head of GFP West, 16/03/1942. Report on fact-finding mission to coastal area Dieppe 24-26/03/42.

Finally the *Abwehr* decided that maximum security could only be achieved by effectively blocking all channels of transmission between the islands and Continental Europe. However, it was soon realised that virtually no secret would remain intact if security procedures were to be concentrated in the extensive harbour area of St Malo, which the *Abwehr* acknowledged was impossible to control. Therefore, tactical considerations dictated the concentration of measures of control on the islands, thereby exploiting of the islands' natural geographical separation from mainland Europe. On April 7, 1942 *Abwehr* France indicated in a report the measures it deemed necessary to achieve this task. They were to include a reduction of all movements between the islands and the continent, tight control of the Channel Island harbours and the coastline, strict censorship of postal services, a ban on pigeons, the billeting of workers and measures of deterrence against the civilian population. Also included in the catalogue of suggestions was a ban on all wireless sets owned by the civilian population.<sup>205</sup> However, as a more immediate counter-measure the reinforcement of the German forces was taken up and on the April 10, 1942 thirteen additional Secret Field Police were despatched to the Channel Islands.<sup>206</sup> Nine days after its drafting, *Abwehr* France adopted the report's recommendations concerning the seizure of wirelasses in a communication to their Berlin HQ:

*'The possibility of converting radio receivers into transmitters or the camouflaging of existing transmitters as receivers [...] makes the confiscation of all wireless sets in the Channel Islands necessary.'*<sup>207</sup>

It is difficult to ascertain what prompted such conclusions, but the *Abwehr's* vision of Channel Island realities was inspired by measures carried out in occupied France which, despite its geographical proximity, was a very different place. In France and in the Low Countries transmitters had been discovered that were used by resistance cells

---

<sup>205</sup>BA-MA. RW/49 97: *Abwehr* Command France (F/IIIc), Channel Islands - Commitment of labour resources, protective security measures 1942-1944. III H, 7.4.1942: Summary report on secret measures of prevention taken in the Channel Islands.

<sup>206</sup>BA-MA. RW/49 97: *Abwehr* Command France (F/IIIc), Channel Islands - Commitment of labour resources, protective security measures 1942-1944. Communication of Army Group Command D, Chief-of-staff to *Abwehr* Command France, Head of GFP West, 16/03/1942. Head of GFP West at OB West, 30/03/1942.

<sup>207</sup>BA-MA. RW/49 97: *Abwehr* Command France (F/IIIc), Channel Islands - Commitment of labour resources, protective security measures 1942-1944. Communication of Army Group Command D, Chief-of-staff to *Abwehr* Command France, Head of GFP West, 16/03/1942. *Abwehr* Command France to *Abwehr* HQ at OKW, re. Intelligence reports on OT workers, 16/04/1942.

in order to maintain radio contact with London. Equally, the resistance received instructions through the BBC programmes. The *Abwehr* was not well acquainted with the special situation in the Channel Islands where no serious cases of sabotage occurred and where German troops had little to fear and they clearly thought that, as in other countries, the development of resistance and sabotage in the islands was merely a matter of time. The enthusiasm with which some islanders responded to the V-sign campaign in spring 1941 only served to confirm such strong beliefs about the effectiveness and direction of the British Radio War. The distortion of German vision, is indicated by the reasons assigned for the reinforcement of the Secret Field Police. It was a step designed to keep track of *'intentions to build resistance movements, acts of sabotage and terrorist groups and to build a reliable network of informers among the workers and the island population.'*<sup>208</sup> The venture yielded a plentiful harvest, evident in the rising tide of denunciations. Prejudice was tenacious and stereotypical representations of the situation in the Channel Islands remained *en vogue*. The distortions were reinforced by a panoply of erroneous reports, such as the one established by Lieutenant-Colonel Bleibtreu, the officer in charge of the *Abwehr* advance party at St Malo, who spent a week in the Channel Islands on a fact-finding mission, from April 29 to May 6, 1942. Bleibtreu claimed that the security risk presented by the civilian Channel Islands workers living with their families was by far greater than that presented by foreign OT workers. He then asserted:

*'In the event of an English attack, sabotage and open revolt have to be reckoned with. It should present no difficulty at all to advance troops recruited among the population to disrupt communications throughout the limited island territory and carry out extensive sabotage. In particular as the English have already made attempts to organise themselves under the command of an English Major<sup>209</sup>, pretending that they were taking air raid precautions. In the opinion of the Feldkommandantur's Ia (intelligence officer) this air raid organisation has military character and has an excellent structure. Although the Feldkommandantur has taken all the necessary steps, it should be borne in mind that the actual wire-pullers which*

---

<sup>208</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>209</sup> Bleibtreu was referring to Major Crawford Morrison, the Jersey Air Raid Protection (ARP) warden who had set up a secret information-gathering network. Like most other endeavours of this type, its activity was based on the initiative of individuals and no directives were received from the UK. By planting agents in German employment they were able to conduct an extensive survey of the fortifications in the Island. The work carried out by these agents was sophisticated and information was also collected on the morale of the troops, what they talked about and how they reacted to British broadcasts. Major Morrison was deported in September 1942 and the ARP was disbanded on 15/05/1943, s. L'Amy, *op. cit.*, vol. 2 (3-6); Bunting, *op. cit.*, 203.

*have been sent from England , have not been apprehended.*<sup>210</sup>

Bleibtreu suspected three channels of transmission: first of all deficient control of the ships going to France, and in particular the OT workers on leave who were able to take information out. Secondly, a direct sail-link to Britain via the smaller islands. The allusion to the escape attempt of Gould, Hassall and Audrain, which took place during his stay, brought out this perspective.<sup>211</sup> Had he been in the islands for longer he would have discovered that such escape attempts were not common. Escape attempts on a massive scale only started occurring after the liberation of the Cotentin peninsula in summer 1944.<sup>212</sup> And as much as the three boys had been encouraged by Vibert's example, others harbouring similar ideas would have been deterred by their failure and subsequent disappearance into the Night and Fog. Thirdly, Bleibtreu's paranoia prompted the claim that the island population was in possession of better radio sets than the troops, and the conclusion that they could easily be converted into transmitters. Naturally, 'could' in this context equalled 'would', making fact and fiction indistinguishable and gave individual acts - which were motivated by little else than the desperate need to counter feelings of isolation through the reception of war news - an aura of conspiracy. Bleibtreu called for swift action in order to tackle the 'security threats' and gleefully recommended the deployment of undercover agents. As a follow-up to Bleibtreu's mission two agents, 'researcher' *Willy* in Jersey and 'researcher' *Renard*<sup>213</sup> in Guernsey, were camouflaged as OT welfare assistants and issued IDs allowing them to enter the harbour areas. Their principal task was to recruit German agents among the workers and the civilian population. Another nine 'researchers' were posted to St Malo, Granville and Cherbourg, maintaining contact via Bleibtreu's office in St Malo.<sup>214</sup>

---

<sup>210</sup> BA-MA. RW/49 97: Abwehr Command France (F/IIIc), Channel Islands - Commitment of labour resources, protective security measures 1942-1944. Report by Lt.-Colonel Bleibtreu (Officer-in-command at Abwehr advance post St Malo) on experiences of his fact finding mission to the Channel Islands, 29/04-06/05/1942. Date: 08/05/1942.

<sup>211</sup> Bleibtreu's 'findings' had an impact on the interrogation of Hassall and Gould at Gestapo HQ in Paris. According to Peter Hassall the Germans suspected the involvement of ex-military officers in the planning of their escape, s. Hassall, Peter, synopsis of his unpublished memoirs, 8.

<sup>212</sup> Richard Mayne: 'People who escaped from Jersey during the occupation', in: *Channel Islands Occupation Review* 1975, 22-24.

<sup>213</sup> French for 'fox'.

<sup>214</sup> BA-MA. RW/49 97: Abwehr Command France (F/IIIc), Channel Islands - Commitment of labour resources, protective security measures 1942-1944. Report of Lt.-Colonel Bleibtreu (Officer in-command at Abwehr advance post St Malo) on experiences of fact-finding mission to the Channel Islands, 29/04-06/05/1942. Date: 08/05/1942.

A wireless ban had been on the agenda for some time and was the brainchild of military commanders in the islands who were looking for easy solutions to their security problems. It is quite possible that their irritation owed much to the 'scandalous' fact that the troops in the Channel Islands could freely avail themselves of alternative sources of information, whereas in Germany the reception of enemy and even neutral radio broadcasts was banned from the first day of the war.<sup>215</sup> According to Bleibtreu's *Abwehr* report mentioned above, the BBC news beamed to the islands *'was especially geared to influencing the German soldiers.'*<sup>216</sup> How this argument could have been used as a justification remains a mystery, for the eventual ban affected the civilian population and not the soldiers who were allowed to retain their sets.

Parallels for tight control of the airwaves exist also for other countries of occupied Europe, but the Channel Islands were to be the only place where wirelesses were banned altogether. Similar plans had also been drawn up for occupied France, but faced with a territory many times the size of the Channel Islands and a serious manpower shortage, this scheme soon had to be abandoned; only in a territory as limited and cut off as the Channel Islands could such a measure be realistically contemplated.

In a post-war statement Lieutenant-Colonel von Helldorf said that the divisional commander, General Müller<sup>217</sup>, was in favour of the wireless confiscation, whereas Colonel von Schmettow, at that time the island commander of Jersey, and Colonel Knackfuss, the *Feldkommandant*, opposed it. In this (and in many other questions) Müller was strongly influenced by his divisional intelligence officer, Captain Selig, who was also an advocate of total evacuation of the civilian population.<sup>218</sup> Von

---

<sup>215</sup>The sanctions became severer as the war wore on. Towards its end people in Germany were executed for certain types of radio reception.

<sup>216</sup>BA-MA. RW/49 97: *Abwehr* Command France (F/IIIc), Channel Islands - Commitment of labour resources, protective security measures 1942-1944. Report of Lt-Colonel Bleibtreu (Officer in-command at *Abwehr* advance party St Malo) on experiences of fact-finding mission to the Channel Islands, 29/04-06/05/1942. Date: 08/05/1942.

<sup>217</sup>PRO, WO 309/192. The British War Crimes Investigators characterised Müller as a *'typical Prussian officer'* who *'easily went into a temper'*. Knackfuss is more favorably described as a *'very jovial type. Used to wear a monocle and was clean shaven. Speaks Italian fluently and looks a bit like an Italian'*. According to a report available to the investigators Knackfuss was *'relieved of his post in 1944, court-martialled in a result of his opposition to Müller and his anti-Nazi behaviour generally'*.

<sup>218</sup>PRO, WO 309/192. Statement by Freiherr von Aufsess, 9 September 1946. He outlined Müller's ideas: *'This evacuation was to be carried out for military reasons, because, if the islands were to be built up as a fortress, there could be no question of having civilians there apart from those who could supply themselves with food and promote the supply of food.'* According to his statement, officers were discussing the possibility of a lengthy period of siege and emphasising the advantages of a small

Helldorf had become von Schmettow's ADC in November 1940, at a time when the garrison comprised a few battalions and anti-aircraft detachments. Müller became the key actor in the theatrics of German power-play when he arrived in spring 1941 with an additional division and replaced von Schmettow as the head of overall military command in the Channel Islands. Until Müller's posting home in 1943, von Schmettow's position was reduced to keeping an eye on the island fortifications and the troops in Jersey. Von Helldorf's job during that time was confined to procuring supplies for the troops in Jersey.<sup>219</sup> The internal power struggle for authority in the Channel Islands reached its climax in April 1943 when divisional command demanded the complete dissolution of the *Feldkommandantur* 515, the German civil affairs unit, and transfer of its duties to the 319th Infantry Division (ID). However, these steps were thwarted in unison by the competent superior authorities in France, the *Oberbefehlshaber (OB) West*<sup>220</sup>, and the Military Governor in France<sup>221</sup>, who insisted on the usefulness of the FK 515.<sup>222</sup>

An episode revealing the attitude of the combat troops is mentioned in a letter of September 12, 1941 sent by Dr Casper of the FK 515 to his immediate superior authority at St Germain,<sup>223</sup> outside Paris. In this communication he stated that the 319th ID had asked that measures leading to the confiscation of radio sets be taken in order to avenge an anonymous, obviously defamatory English poem that had been sent to the Division. Casper, this time in unison with von Schmettow, asked his superior not to take the divisional command's arguments seriously, as the reception of a simple poem in his eyes provided no sufficient basis to retaliate in such a manner. Besides, he argued, the proposed measure would only fuel rumours.<sup>224</sup> Casper had obviously understood the specific set of circumstances at work in the islands, where it took little

---

population. Aufsess concluded: '*The Feldkommandantur was opposed to all of these plans.*'

<sup>219</sup>PRO, WO 309/192. Statement of Oberstleutnant Hans W von Helldorf re. Channel Islands, 27/12/1945.

<sup>220</sup>The High Command of German combat troops in Western Europe.

<sup>221</sup>The term in German is *Militärbefehlshaber in Frankreich*.

<sup>222</sup>s. relevant Files, in: BA-MA. RH 26 319/10.

<sup>223</sup>Casper's immediate superior was the head of administrative zone A at St Germain. For administrative purposes occupied France was divided into four zones. The head of each administrative zone was accountable to a chief administrator who was based at the seat of the German military governor in France (*Militärbefehlshaber in Frankreich*), at the Majestic Hotel in Paris.

<sup>224</sup>BA-MA. RW 35/537 35/537. Listening to enemy broadcasts. FK 515, Casper to Chief of Administrative Zone A (Northwestern France) of Military Government in France, re. confiscation of wirelasses in the Channel Islands, 12/09/1941.

to feel cut off and where radio confiscation risked compromising the steady course of occupation government.

Other perceptive people proffered their views and a report written in February 1942 by Major Kretschmann of *Abwehrstelle* Paris was also more objective about the situation. Kretschmann wasted no time dwelling upon whether receivers could be converted into transmitters as he regarded the entire radio issue as one of marginal importance. In his opinion the transmission of precise details of the fortifications was difficult via the wireless and he noted that more convenient modes of information transfer were available. More likely channels - infinitely trickier to deal with - were personal, freight and postal traffic.<sup>225</sup> However, in the heated atmosphere of 1942 voices urging rational consideration of the facts were out of tune with the prevailing paranoia. Rapid measures were sought implemented by people who knew how to howl along with the wolves. Only those wolves who howled louder than the others distinguished themselves, demanding ever drastic measures, the more ruthless the better. The Nazi dictatorship had no place for people with reservations.

The wireless issue exposes the rivalry and in-fighting that existed between the German services inside and outside the islands. Each had its own ideas about the ideal way to conduct and reinforce the Occupation. The *Feldkommandantur* had a more realistic view on the wireless issue. The administration had never made it a secret that they considered the presence of civilians beneficial and reiterated that without their presence the occupiers would be faced with a desert to which everything would have to be imported from France. In this they were already at odds with the Wehrmacht hierarchy in Berlin who at one time were quite favourable to the evacuation of the entire island population. Fearing a deterioration of relations with the population who, as they did not forget to stress '*had up to then acted in the most correct manner*',<sup>226</sup> the FK objected to the wireless confiscation, not least because it was the authority responsible for implementing such an order. However, against a united and determined alliance of combat troop commanders, counter-intelligence and Wehrmacht High

---

<sup>225</sup>BA-MA. RW/5 243, 5/243. Foreign Section/Abwehr, III H, Report on a journey to the Channel Islands. Date: 10/02/1942.

<sup>226</sup>BA-MA. RW/49 97: Abwehr Command France (F/IIIc), Channel Islands - Commitment of labour resources, Protective security measures 1942-1944. Communication of OKW/Foreign Section/Abwehr to OB West Army Group Command D, May 1942.

Command who all insisted on the harmful effects of BBC-transmissions on the population, other considerations went unheeded.

The FK 515 was in the front-line of activity. Its duties were mainly administrative, but it also had a responsibility to provide the troops with supplies. The FK was the German service 'running' the occupation and FK officials came in close working contact with the island authorities. A general lack of manpower made the Germans adopt a particular model of 'indirect administration' in many parts of occupied Europe: its stress was on surveillance of all domains of society and the state, with direct control of only certain key strategic positions. What had a more than usual influence on the German regime in the Channel Islands, in comparison to the situation in other occupied countries in Europe, was the very strong influence the combat troops exerted on island affairs, the basic absence of *racial* prejudice against the civilian population<sup>227</sup> and the prestige attributed to the Third Reich's only British possession.

Considering the dire outlook in this area, food production and agriculture were obviously at the top of the German agenda. The other duties of the FK were extremely varied: it directed finance and economy in the islands, masterminded the German police force in the islands, kept a close eye on the island authorities and the island police and had jurisdictional power over islanders who flouted German law or regulations. The FK was also the service charged with carrying out all policies concerning the civilian population including, among other tasks, the implementation of anti-Semitic measures, wireless confiscation and deportations. The German administrators, such as Dr Casper and Baron von Aufsess, belonged technically to the armed forces but had been recruited among members of the German civil service. They were not professional soldiers and most aspired to return to their pre-war careers after the end of hostilities. They were posted abroad on a long-term basis and their intellectual capacities were usually above average. Ideologically, many of them were supporters of German national-conservatism. This political persuasion embraced, among other things, anti-liberalism, traditional anti-Semitism, racial prejudice and anti-communism and approved those elements of National Socialism that coincided with its own *Weltanschauung*. However, they were not blind and fanatical Nazis. Naturally, such men would have developed a better understanding of the Channel Islands. They

---

<sup>227</sup>Needless to say that this did not include the Jews in the Island. The stress is on *racial* prejudice and the book demonstrates to a sufficient extent that other forms of prejudice against civilians existed.

knew that preserving the population's autonomy in listening to their radios bore no potential harm and would not constitute a seedbed of revolt as long as Britain's chances of retaking the islands were minimal. Besides, it made their job easier, for they knew that instead of neutralising potential trouble-spots, this measure may have the opposite effect. Excuses were sought by the FK in order to counter the impending measure and they went as far as claiming that the remaining broadcast link with Britain had so far protected the Channel Islands from air attack.<sup>228</sup> However, their action was not motivated by philanthropy (however much sympathy some administrators may have felt towards certain islanders) but pure political intelligence. Such a measure would deliver, as it eventually did, the final blow to the image of credibility and legitimacy they were fabricating and leave the last illusions of an orderly and 'correct' occupation shattered. Clearly, islanders would consider this move to have overstepped the line considerably and the measure bore all the ingredients for being counterproductive to the swift implementation of German rule as conceived by the FK. In the end the FK's prognosis proved right, as it provoked non-compliance and put further strain on the already over-stretched tasks of the German police force and courts in the islands.

The wireless issue mirrored German opinion on the Channel Islands and crystallised it transparently. In the weeks preceding the ban many different services were involved in the preliminaries to this measure and because of its contestable character and the lack of direct instructions from Hitler a great deal of paperwork was created which touched upon diverse areas of occupation government. One of the 'by-products' of the internal discussions on the radio issue was the frequent allusion to the tendency to view the non-indigenous population of mainland origin and their families differently from native Channel Islanders. That this issue was ever raised shows the Germans' limited understanding of life in the Channel Islands, their institutions and constitutional framework. It was a German *idée fixe*, no doubt nurtured by the prejudicial concepts of Nazi theory, that a substantial difference existed in the character of native and non-native Channel Islanders and that the latter posed a greater potential danger to

---

<sup>228</sup>BA-MA. RW/49 97: Abwehr Command France (F/IIIc), Channel Islands - Commitment of labour resources, Protective security measures 1942-1944. III H, 07/04/1942: Summary report on secret measures of protection in the Channel Islands.

German interests. With military intelligence appearing on the scene, things for the first time began hotting up in spring 1942 and several meetings and a large amount of correspondence dealt with the wireless issue. By this time the unsubstantiated perception that wireless retention was a major peril had been endorsed by Berlin, thereby becoming conventional wisdom. A ban was now only a few weeks off and the unresolved points still awaiting decision were the 'how' and the 'when'.

When Colonel Martini of the Wehrmacht High Command addressed the participants of a two day meeting at *Abwehr* HQ France in St Germain-en-Laye on May 6, 1942, he told them that Hitler had given maximum priority to the work in the Channel Islands and that the Wehrmacht had raised no objections to the confiscation of radios and photographic equipment. The representative of the military governor in France beat a retreat on the issue, trying to fend off their involvement with a set of legal arguments seeking to establish that the FK 515 was not the competent authority to carry out and enforce such measures. The surviving documents on this meeting show clearly that a distinct line was being drawn between indigenous Channel Islanders and the rest of the population and that the latter were referred to as '*dangerous*'. It was suggested that the evacuation of at least all males who entered into this category should be given serious consideration.<sup>229</sup> Significantly, differential treatment went beyond measures such as the deportation of those originating from the mainland, as finalised in September 1942. Four days after the meeting at St Germain *Abwehr* HQ in Berlin detailed measures destined to restrict the movements of the civilian population between the islands and from the islands to the Continent. Again it stressed that particularly strict standards should be applied to all those of mainland origin.<sup>230</sup> Cruickshank's official history of the Channel Islands Occupation supports the thesis that differential treatment also influenced the practice of the German courts and that

---

<sup>229</sup>BA-MA. RW/49 97: *Abwehr* Command France (F/IIIc), Channel Islands - Commitment of labour resources, Protective security measures 1942-1944. Note on meeting of 06-07/05/1942. Colonel Martini reiterated that '*originally, the total evacuation of the islands had been envisaged, but that this had been abandoned because of concerns about possible reprisals.*' The other participants at this meeting included representatives of the *Abwehrleitstelle Frankreich* (*Abwehr* Command France), *Armeeoberkommando 15* (High Command of the 15th Army), *Heeresgruppe D* (Army Group D) and the *Militarbefehlshaber* (military government in France)

<sup>230</sup>BA-MA. RW/49 97: *Abwehr* Command France (F/IIIc), Channel Islands - Commitment of labour resources, protective security measures 1942-1944. Suggestions of Foreign Section/*Abwehr*, III, 11/05/1942. It was also detailed that foreign workers were now to be replaced by POWs, that all the British civilian workforce would be concentrated on building sites with a low security priority, that they should be replaced by foreigners as drivers and that the general ban on photography in the islands was to be extended to members of the Wehrmacht and the OT.

mainland-born people received heavier sentences than islanders and were likely to be sent to France.<sup>231</sup> This principle appears to have influenced some of the cases portrayed in the book: Arthur Dimmery, Frederick Page, Clarence Claude Painter and June Sinclair.

On May 30, 1942 the commander of the 319th ID informed Knackfuss, the *Feldkommandant*, about the decision of 7th Army Command to confiscate the civilian population's wireless sets and that the FK 515 should proceed with the implementation of the measure.<sup>232</sup> One week later, on June 6, the Bailiff of Jersey was informed and requested to take executive directions and submit them to the FK. The population was notified about the details of the collection procedure in the Jersey Evening Post of June 8 and by June 22, a total of 10,050 wireless sets had been handed in.<sup>233</sup>

However, there were definite signs that islanders' willingness to accommodate was waning in synchrony with the unmasking of the 'velvet glove' approach. The Bailiff of Guernsey, Victor Carey, made his frustration clear in a letter of June 8, 1942 addressed to the Field Commandant in which he expressed his '*great disappointment*', particularly as '*the local authorities have always endeavoured to act strictly in accordance with the rules laid down by the Hague Convention*'.<sup>234</sup> These words, though not drastic enough, were symptomatic. During the following months it became clear that a large number of people in the Channel Islands were not prepared to surrender their last link with the civilised world and that prison sentences of up to six weeks and heavy fines of up to 30,000 marks (£3000) did not act as a sufficient deterrent. In November 1942 Knackfuss found himself in the unenviable position of having to report this fact to his superior authority in St Germain and inform them on the unsatisfactory state of affairs. Acting on the instruction of General Müller, Knackfuss asked them to pass an order threatening the death penalty for continued non-surrender of wireless sets or alternatively giving the FK 515 *carte blanche* to hand out longer prison sentences. As a consequence a provision penalising wireless retention and the dissemination of news was included in the 'Order for the Protection

---

<sup>231</sup> Cruickshank, Charles, *The German Occupation of the Channel Islands*, London, 1975, 339/340.

<sup>232</sup> BA-MA RW 35/537 Listening to enemy broadcasts, 319 ID to FK 515, 30/05/1942

<sup>233</sup> JAS, B/A/W 30/94 Bailiff's War Files, Papers relating to the order to surrender wireless sets 1942-

43

<sup>234</sup> *ibid.*

of the Occupying Authority' issued on December 18, 1942 by the German military governor in France. If the maximum sentence was not passed on an islander, this was probably due to the policy of the FK whose court had authority over the wireless cases. On the other side, from now on the FK could vary the prison sentences in any manner they deemed appropriate.<sup>235</sup> Far from taking steam out of the Germanic bulldozer, the incident illustrates that inter-German rivalry and leadership contests only added to the burden of the population.

---

<sup>235</sup>BA-MA, RW 35/537, Listening to enemy broadcasts, Chief of administrative zone A of the military government in France, concerning the confiscation of radio sets in the Channel Islands, 07/11/1942.

## 2

### The Question of Island Resistance

The theme of resistance in the Channel Islands has long been subject to controversy. What is amply clear is that in comparison to what was going on in other occupied countries, resistance in the islands was indeed in an embryonic stage. However, the preceding pages make a convincing case against any inclination to disregard conflict between islanders and the German occupiers as irrelevant. That the subject has become one of the black holes of Occupation history owes much to the lack of recognition for those who did engage in acts of defiance against the occupying authorities.

The interpretation of resistance in the Channel Islands is still handicapped by the long-term effects of focusing on the spectacular facets of resistance in Continental Europe and by the all-imposing perception of the War in popular British culture. A second factor deriving directly from this is a marked uneasiness in the islands to place its own occupation experience in the context of the general European experience.

Despite the large output in publications, European resistance has been subject to little analytical history, not least because of a trying lack of reliable sources. It has gone largely unnoticed that historical research still owes us a final evaluation of Second World War European resistance, delineating what constitutes resistance and what does not. The absence of comprehensive and reliable models has allowed an often monolithic and unnuanced picture of resistance to prevail. This chapter makes no claim to establishing the final word on the complex issue of resistance in the Channel Islands. That, without doubt, far transcends the scope and the possibilities of this book. However, the following lines are intended to offer some pointers in the quest for the future guidelines on the debate.

For a long time the bulk of public and academic attention was lavished on the more

spectacular aspects of armed resistance, in the process sweeping alternative approaches under the carpet. Professor Alan Milward of the London School of Economics was one of the most outright critics of a popular view, still wide-spread in the 1970s, that presupposed a strategic value of armed resistance. At that time many historians were dedicating disproportionate amounts of attention, time and energy to certain manifestations of resistance, without setting out to address the most pertinent questions first, and accounts on resistance often took a rather hagiographic stance. Milward's principal criticism was that this approach failed to measure the real impact of armed resistance on influencing the outcome of the war in terms of military and economic gains. In an article on the economic and strategic effectiveness of resistance he therefore repeated his claim that European resistance had achieved very little in strategic terms and that its real importance lay in a very different area:

*'It is in the moral and psychological dimension that resistance assumes its greatest value. Most resistance was personal, isolated and unique, and in affecting the ultimate outcome of the war was entirely unimportant compared to the co-ordinated and carefully controlled actions of real armed forces. But for each individual the act of resistance did have a psychological value of immense importance. On this level resistance is neither strategy nor tactic but response. It was the ultimate affirmation of every human being's right to his own individuality. The myriad acts of petty defiance do testify to the unquenchable fire of humanity.'*<sup>236</sup>

It is only during the last two decades that Resistance research has made attempts to establish viable categories and systematise knowledge. It is recognised today how varied the face of European resistance during World War II actually was and how much influence the circumstances reigning in each country had on the course of each of the various occupations. Resistance was heterogeneous, assuming many different facets, and we will briefly consider its armed, spiritual and moral forms.

The most important concept to have emerged in recent years is the notion of 'civilian resistance'. It brings an interesting new dimension to Resistance research and presents

---

<sup>236</sup>Milward, Alan S., 'The Economic and Strategic Effectiveness of Resistance', in: Hawes, Stephen/White, Ralph (Edd.), *Resistance in Europe 1939-1945*. Based on the proceedings of a symposium held at the University of Salford (March 1973), London, 1975, 201/2. Retroactively, resistance was also of great importance as it set the scene for the painful post-war rebuilding process. In the immediate aftermath of the War it was those who could put forward claims that they had participated in the Resistance who enjoyed an almost automatic legitimacy in the eyes of the nation. The legacy of resistance was of vital importance and determined the course of post-war political life in

an effective challenge to long-held beliefs about the value of civilian action as opposed to armed resistance. The most influential and meticulous study on the subject of Second World War civilian resistance is Jacques Semelin's *Unarmed against Hitler. Civilian Resistance in Europe 1939-1943*.<sup>237</sup> Civilian resistance defines the action that a society devoid of arms and face-to-face with an aggressive occupier can devise in order to preserve its integrity. It also expresses the potential of civil societies to defend themselves when the armed option has failed. Civilian resistance exists in two forms: as a natural complement to and in support of armed resistance, or as a type of resistance pursuing genuinely civilian targets, such as preserving the independence of a country's institutions. It operates on two levels - institutional and popular.

An overwhelming amount of evidence suggests that, especially in occupied Western and Northern Europe, 'civilian resistance' achieved more in real terms than guerrilla warfare, a fact recognised in retrospect by many military historians.<sup>238</sup> There are numerous examples of this and three salient cases where German power confronted its limits serve as examples: firstly, there was the massive go-slow movement of the French railwaymen which caused severe disruption to German movements during the crucial first weeks of the Normandy landings, one of France's most important contributions to Allied victory. Secondly, there was the salvage of the Jewish population of Denmark to Sweden in 1943 and thirdly, on a smaller but nonetheless impressive scale, the Rosenstrasse protests in Berlin, again in 1943.<sup>239</sup>

The possibilities of civilian resistance are determined by factors which Semelin outlines as follows. The predominant factor defining a society's capacity to resist is that of group solidarity which determines the extent of social cohesion. Next follows the strategy of the occupier towards each occupied country, a shifting variable in occupied Second World War Europe. German intervention in the affairs of the occupied countries differed greatly and was most commonly - but not exclusively - determined

---

many European countries.

<sup>237</sup>Semelin, Jacques, *Sans armes face à Hitler. La résistance civile en Europe 1939-1943*, Paris, 1989. (English transl. *Unarmed against Hitler. Civilian Resistance in Europe 1939-1943*. Westport/London 1993.)

<sup>238</sup>s. Lidell Hart, Basil, 'Lessons from Resistance Movements', in: Roberts, Adam (ed.), *The Strategy of Civilian Defense*, London, 1969.

<sup>239</sup>For details s. Semelin, Jacques, *Unarmed against Hitler. Civilian Resistance in Europe 1939-1943*, Westport/London 1993. The rescue of the Danish Jews is one of the best-documented episodes of the Holocaust. For a survey of publications s. Goldberger, Leo (ed.), *The Rescue of the Danish Jews - Moral Courage under Stress*, New York, 1987. A study of the Rosenstrasse episode is now also available, s. Stoltzfus, Nathan, *Resistance of the Heart - Inter-marriage and the Rosenstrasse Protest in Nazi Germany*, New York/London, 1996.

by racial ideology. Poland was in the way of German dreams of *lebensraum*, therefore it was to vanish from the map of Europe. Its elite was neutralised and the remainder of the population was left with a choice between serfdom and extinction. The people of Western Europe never had to endure such extremes of brutality and France's collaborationist and authoritarian Vichy regime retained a sizeable degree of autonomy until 1942. Denmark protected her democratically elected government and her institutions against Nazi intrusion until 1943; while German intervention in Norway, where they imposed a downright collaborationist leadership, was more direct. The third factor determining civilian resistance was the attitude of the war-time leaders in the occupied countries, allied to the question of their legitimacy.<sup>240</sup>

Unfortunately, the concept of civilian resistance offers no help in analysing defiance in the occupied Channel Islands, as the theory is firmly centred on action that assumed the proportions of a collective effort. For all situations where individual action is the only detectable form of resistance Semelin suggests the terms *dissidence* and *disobedience*.

Naturally, the most intriguing question in our context must be why the numerous acts of defiance in the Channel Islands did not consolidate into collective action. It has been frequently insinuated that this was linked to an equal or even greater disposition to fraternisation and collaboration in the islands than in the rest of Europe. However, there is little reason to see why Channel Islanders should have been greater or lesser collaborators than other Europeans, and if some aspects of the Channel Islands Occupation were so strikingly different, this must have been, above all, related to a marked difference in conditions, rather than mentality.

France's foremost scholar on the Second World War, Professor Jean-Pierre Azéma, estimates that one million French people, a figure representing roughly 3% of the population, had become militants or active supporters of the Resistance by spring 1944. No comparison is intended with the extremely diligent and heroic action of some French Resistance movements but, if figures have anything to say about a general willingness to confront the occupying force, the Channel Islands have little reason to shy away from comparisons with the rest of Europe. As mentioned in the introduction,

---

<sup>240</sup>Preface by Jean-Pierre Azéma, in: Semelin, op. cit., 9.

4,00 people were arrested during the Occupation for breaking German law in the Channel Islands, a figure representing five per cent of the population. To this should be added the number of Channel Islands escapees that ran at 225. The civilian population's boats had been confiscated in 1941 and all escapees and would-be escapees took great risks, demonstrated in the cases of those who were shot, drowned or arrested in their attempts to leave the islands.<sup>241</sup> Did such elements represent a latent predisposition for more active forms of resistance in a sizeable proportion of the Channel Islands' civilian population?

It is for the reader to arrive at his/her individual conclusions but account should be taken of the fact that human behaviour was, and always will be, conditioned by factors which differ greatly from one place to another. Therefore the crucial element still awaiting a satisfactory explanation is not whether opposition in the Channel Islands existed, but why 'defiance' failed to materialise as 'resistance'. The absence of convincing answers to this important question demonstrates sufficiently what the current debate on island resistance lacks most: imagination, open-mindedness and recognition of the complexity of a situation that was anything but normal.

Unique circumstances produce unique effects and in these terms, the Channel Islands Occupation has few rivals. Even the staunchest critic of the Channel Islands wartime record must acknowledge that their situation was determined by a set of very specific demographic, topographic, social, historical, and strategic factors which bore little relation to other contexts.

The fortification work undertaken in the islands was a dossier Hitler was briefed on regularly and in which he took a strong personal interest for an extended period of time. With his attention usually firmly monopolised by the war in the East and his brooding over yet more megalomaniac architectural projects, the importance of the top priority status Hitler granted this project should not be underestimated. Testifying to this priority is the fact that by spring 1944, German fortifications in the Channel

---

<sup>241</sup>JAS, L/C/24/A5 Joe Miere Collection. For offences against the occupying authorities, 2,400 people were arrested in Jersey and 1600 in Guernsey. (These figures do not include the Channel Islanders deported to internment camps in Germany). Of the escapees 150 came from Jersey, 75 from Guernsey. Escaping from Guernsey to France was riskier because of the longer distance involved and the danger of being spotted by German. For a lists of escapees s. Mayne, Richard: 'People who escaped from Jersey during the Occupation', in: *Channel Islands Occupation Review* 1975, 22-24; Thomas, Roy, *Lest we forget. Escapes and attempted escapes from Jersey during the German Occupation 1940-1945*, Jersey, 1992, 128-129.

Islands boasted eleven heavy batteries with 38 strongpoints, whereas the whole of the fortified French coastline from Dieppe to St Nazaire had the same number of batteries with only 37 strongpoints!<sup>242</sup> At the height of the fortification programme in May 1943 a little over 70,000 Channel Islanders had to put up with the presence of 42,000 Germans and foreign workers, equivalent to two-thirds of the civilian population.<sup>1</sup> Whereas the islands had one German soldier to every three islanders, mainland France had one German to every 100 Frenchmen after the occupation of the Southern Zone,<sup>243</sup> with the German forces concentrated in the urban centres. Not only was the occupier-occupied ratio higher than in any other part of Europe but there was also no place where occupiers and occupied had to coexist on a closer basis. Few people outside the Channel Islands have an idea how small Jersey is and we should recall the dimensions: the area of the island is a mere 44 square miles, with maximum distances of ten miles across and five miles from north to south. Islanders lived cheek by jowl with soldiers waging war on their country, thereby transferring conflict to a psychological level where tension between islanders and the German occupier continued unabated. What effect this had can only be guessed but there is little doubt that this added further strain to a variety of other pressures that were bearing on the population. This is where the Occupation was at its most significant and singular and one wonders indeed why historians have shown so little inclination to deal with the crucial and existential aspect of the island siege syndrome. Many observers, now and then, erroneously interpret outward signs of wartime rapprochement as signs of genuine harmony between the occupier and the occupied. Although this was certainly correct in some cases, it can not obscure the fact that most islanders' attitude had more in common with the 'wait-and-see' approach adopted by Europeans and that as members of a nation at war with Germany the loyalty of the majority of the population for Britain was untarnished.

There are examples of other occupied islands in Europe, but none besides the Channel Islands had been selected as a venue for a gigantic and impregnable fortress. The sense of congestion, the invasion of all spheres of life including privacy, the extending

---

<sup>242</sup>Toms, Carel, *Hitler's Fortress Islands - Germany's Occupation of the Channel Islands*, London, 1967, 56.

<sup>243</sup>Hæstrup, Jørgen, *European Resistance Movements, 1939-1945. A Complete History*. Westport/London 1981, 135.

tentacles of suspicion, the appalling lack of information that gave rise to the most ludicrous rumours and the absolute impossibility of escaping the reality of Occupation, were all mixed into an explosive cocktail and contributed to an inevitable 'siege syndrome'. Channel Islander Wilfred C Potter was sent to Laufen internment camp in 1942. In a Red-Cross message to a friend in London he described his *'relief from that horrible insular feeling. I can say that I have no regrets in what I have left behind.'* This was no unique display of feeling and the comments of the British Censor which have survived in the papers of the Treasury Solicitor at the Public Record Office show that the messages of many other internees had the same tenor.<sup>244</sup> For the majority of people who remained behind, the Occupation was a stifling and profoundly alienating experience which subjected them to a very peculiar set of pressures, a ubiquitous theme in all diaries and accounts published by islanders who lived through it.

As already said above, the absence of armed resistance in the islands cannot be equated with a total absence of antagonism. In the past it was largely overlooked that guerrilla war conditions in Western Europe<sup>245</sup> were largely restricted to the mountainous and isolated parts of France that saw very few Germans. Moreover, in many cases taking up arms against the occupier was conditional on relations between occupier and occupied having reached a critical stage, often in direct consequence of German measures that clearly 'overstepped the line'. The massive growth of the French Resistance in 1943 was partly due to the fact that membership in the Resistance presented the only chance to avoid the German labour draft and that the general conditions were favourable to those wishing to go underground. In this respect the situation in the islands was anything but ideal and clandestines were well advised to keep as low a profile as possible.

Then there are the ramifications of Allied strategic planning that need to be considered. It is fortunate that pragmatism prevailed in the Allied camp, never succumbing to the considerations of prestige which had so captivated Hitler. The minds of Allied leaders were firmly set on winning the war and this priority determined all other commitments. Continental Resistance was encouraged and received extensive Allied aid because keeping the spirit of defiance alive on the Continent was considered a vital prerequisite

---

<sup>244</sup>PRO, TS 26/89. Wilfred C Potter (IIag VII) to Mr Jones, London E4.

<sup>245</sup>There can be no comparison at all with the conditions of 'ideological war' in Eastern Europe.

to the opening of the Second Front in Europe. In Allied calculations France was the most important country and naturally fuelling its resistance was considered a crucial stepping stone to final victory. In comparison, the nearby Channel Islands were poor competitors in terms of importance. The recapture of the Channel Islands was by no means a vital necessity to gain victory in Europe and taking action in this theatre of war would have entailed diverting forces, risking heavy losses for questionable returns and, ultimately, prolonging the war. Therefore, quite apart from the difficulties imposed by geographical shortcomings, the marginal importance of the Channel Islands in strategic terms made it unsuitable for any type of subversive action or encouragement of resistance and the British authorities were well advised not to add fuel to the fire. Revolt in the Channel Islands in the event of an Allied landing would have led to mass reprisals or hostage shootings and such a scenario would have hardly contributed to the cessation of hostilities. In fact, it would have worsened the British position. In the past, Hitler had given sufficient proof of his ability to blackmail governments effectively and the British government may have found itself in a situation vaguely resembling the 1941 French hostage crisis which saw the Vichy government desperately trying to appease his explicit orders to shoot innocent civilians in reprisal for attempts on the lives of German military personnel. Surely, if there was a worst possible scenario that the British wanted to avoid, *coûte que coûte*, then this was it, whatever the cost.

Especially in the latter stage of the War the sole British interest with regard to the Channel Islands was for the situation to remain as calm and stable as possible, for in February 1945 the senior German positions in the Channel Islands were taken over by Vice-Admiral Hüffmeyer and the *Kriegsmarine*.<sup>246</sup> With this appointment the population became a terrible pawn in the hands of buoyant and unpredictable fanatics. Right up to the time of his arrival in the islands in July 1944, Hüffmeyer, known among islanders as the ‘mad Admiral’, had held the post of National Socialist Education Officer of the Navy, with the task of keeping the Navy in line with Nazi doctrine. According to von Schmettow's ADC, Lieutenant-Colonel von Helldorf, it was perfectly clear to all German officers that this man had been sent to spy on them and to slowly wrest power from the Army.<sup>247</sup> The German Navy was known for its

---

<sup>246</sup>Cruickshank, *op. cit.*, 120.

<sup>247</sup>PRO, WO 309/192. British War Crimes Investigations. Statement of Lieutenant-Colonel Hans-

thorough nazification, a fact well-documented by Hitler's choice of Admiral Dönitz, the Commander-in-Chief of the German Navy, as his successor at the head of the German government after his death. Many of the top Nazis had abandoned their *Führer* in his final days and Hitler sensed betrayal everywhere. After excluding Göring and Himmler from the succession he turned to the German Navy, the last bastion of unconditional Nazi loyalty. These were the people in command of the Channel Islands during the last two months of the Occupation and British policy was well advised to avoid anything that might provoke them into taking extreme action. Post-war testimonies of German officers confirm that this fear of extreme action was not unfounded. According to von Helldorf, Hüffmeyer was determined *'to hold the island in a state of siege until 1947, whatsoever might befall the civilian population.'*<sup>1</sup> Hüffmeyer was frank about what consequences he thought his determination was likely to entail and made frequent statements *'to the effect that he would let the population starve to death and if they revolted he would have them shot.'*<sup>248</sup> Von Helldorf himself was banished to Herm in 1945 and similar action was taken against other military personnel suspected of conspiratorial tendencies. Therefore, the less the situation in the islands deteriorated, the better the chances of a peaceful take-over on VE-Day became and the more the spectre of futile last-minute bloodshed evaporated.

Another important determinant of successful resistance is the political maturity required to form strong and unified movements of opposition. Channel Islanders did not demonstrate a lack of individual willingness to resist. However, few historical precedents or role-models for sustained resistance existed in the history of the islands, as the short spontaneous outbursts of popular unrest in the 18th and 19th century riots show. The long periods of stability had not favoured tendencies of popular disobedience. A society that had cultivated a natural abhorrence of any kind of public turmoil would have the greatest difficulty in coping with the ambiguities of a situation as presented by the Occupation, especially if things were made to look as though the established and legitimate leaders were still in charge. The traditional lack of political activism in island politics and the non-existence of mass movements or party

---

Werner von Helldorf, 27/12/1945.

<sup>248</sup>PRO, WO 311/677. War Crimes in the Channel Islands. Evidence and Investigations. Interrogation of Lieutenant-Colonel Hans-Werner von Helldorf by Major A W Neve, The Suffolk Regiment, 19/11/1945.

organisations to channel popular sentiment and opposition was a serious impediment to those islanders eager to 'do something' during the Occupation.

Jacques Semelin writes in his study that the degree of social cohesion was one of the factors cementing the capabilities of civil societies to resist the Nazi onslaught. It can be no surprise that the exploitation of inner conflict and an attack on the cohesive forces of civil societies - the feeling of belonging together - were important strategies of German occupation government all over Europe. Jersey chronicist J H L' Amy noted in his diary that German propaganda was geared to sowing dissension. A weighty contribution towards this process of disintegration was made by the recruitment of informers and the hefty remuneration with which the German police rewarded acts of denunciation. In 1943, Jerseywoman Mary Deslandes wrote in her Occupation diary that the Island was '*lousy with despicable Quislings*' who received a reward of £100 for informing on people retaining a wireless and £25 for information leading to the capture of a listener-in.<sup>249</sup> This was only the tip of the iceberg, as many denunciations remained anonymous and were carried out merely for personal reasons.<sup>250</sup> When probing into why 'resistance' in the Channel Islands was so astonishingly atomised and lacked the thorough organisation of movements that existed in neighbouring European countries, such elements have to be cited in evidence. Maybe the individualised nature of resistance in the Channel Islands was a vital necessity and natural reaction in order to avoid detection? Surely, the conditions were not conducive for the operation of organised networks or movements which the Secret Field Police would have had little difficulty in dismantling.

Decidedly, it has to be admitted that most conventional definitions of resistance are difficult to sustain when dealing with the Jersey context. Jersey acts were executed the 'island way', they stemmed from individual decisions and were conditioned by the potential and the limitations of an island community. This point is fully illustrated by the example of the Jersey Twenty.

Nevertheless change was on its way. Certain incidents during the Occupation clearly

---

<sup>249</sup>The Diary of Mary Winifred Deslandes June 1940 to May 1945', entries of February 13 and July 18, 1943, in: *An Island Trilogy*, op. cit.

<sup>250</sup>Similar attacks on the collective binding forces of society in the Channel Islands were also achieved through German propaganda coups such as the public display of black market goods that had been seized from certain islanders.

indicate that, however underdeveloped, tendencies to risk open confrontation existed, in particular among the younger generation which was adapting fast to the new situation. This is well demonstrated by the clashes that took place between German military personnel and Jersey youths during the embarkation of the September 1942 deportees. This incident was not taken light-heartedly by the Germans who, while trying to play the affair down, retaliated with the arrest and imprisonment of well over a dozen youths involved and sent one of them, Emile Barbier, to Germany where he served a three-year term. The German authorities clearly understood that youth aspirations could spill-over and young men without 'useful employment' in the German sense therefore became one of the groups targeted for the February 1943 deportation. In the latter stage of the War it was again the young generation who took on the occupier by escaping to France by the dozen or by filling up the Jersey prison to breaking-point. However, certain other episodes prove that demonstrations of popular opinion were not always confined to the young: Ogier's return to Jersey after his trial in Paris and the burials of British servicemen were events greeted by popular enthusiasm and a mass turn-out. While nothing could be done against the crowds and while dead seamen posed no particular threat, other cases demonstrate sufficiently how tight supervision of all displays of popular sentiment was.

Sadly and undeservedly, the 'offences' issue has been trivialised into a banality and one hopes fervently that many people will start appreciating how extraordinary some acts of defiance were under the circumstances prevailing at the time. The 1942 episode on the aborted introduction of death penalties for radio retention, outlined in an earlier section of this book, demonstrates how misplaced complacency on the issue is. Fortunately, in this case the German rulers stuck to their 'velvet glove' approach. But could there be an absolute guarantee against the iron fist?

### 3

#### **An Issue at Stake: Post-War Imbroglio**

The establishment of a memorial to the Twenty marked the beginning of a new chapter in the relationship of the island with a bitter and previously neglected part of its recent history. Since the end of the War, public discussion tended to avoid more controversial aspects of the Occupation and a particular uneasiness prevailed with regard to how the legacy of the 'missing people' should be addressed. Asked why no particular honours were conferred on those who did not return in the immediate post-war years, relatives and friends of the 'Twenty' make little attempt at concealing their past frustration. For a long time this special story of tragedy and suffering, which did not fit squarely into official history, meandered under a veil of silence. Had it not been for a thorough change of perception in later decades, the fact that Channel Islanders had been imprisoned for 'offences against the occupying authorities' may have escaped most people's attention. The unveiling of the memorial has been a fitting gesture, aimed at undoing previous lack of recognition; it has effectively neutralised a disturbing dearth of deserved public attention in the face of history and opened the field for a closer look at who these 'missing people' were, what they did and what the motivations and circumstances of their actions were.

The reasons for post-war silence on the topic of the 'missing people' were manifold. Some of the disregard no doubt stemmed from the false belief that Jersey acts of defiance compared unfavourably to other forms of resistance that took shape in continental Europe. Few people seemed to realise that in the immediate post-war years the question of the extent and military importance of continental resistance was a highly politicised issue in most European countries, each determined to make its wartime resistance record appear as heroic as possible. War time resistance was a

question of honour. It was instrumental to rebuilding shattered pride and driving forward national reconciliation. Focusing on resistance prevented many countries from dealing with the more controversial aspects of occupation. The celebration of resistance helped to assure continuity and avoid the excessive political, institutional and economic turmoil which would have inevitably followed had thorough purges been initiated. The moral costs of this post-war gamble, set on putting the past behind as quickly as possible, continue to make regular headlines in some countries to this very day.

The other, more serious reason for lack of recognition has to be sought in the Channel Islands themselves and is intrinsically linked to the position of the island authorities during the Occupation. Frank Falla, the Guernsey journalist sent to Naumburg prison, lived to tell the story of his two colleagues and the other Channel Islanders who died during their incarceration. In the 1960s he wrote a book about his experiences called *The Silent War*.<sup>251</sup> Although Falla never held the opinion that the authorities were guilty of active collaboration or fraternisation, he was apprehensive about the lack of subtlety and flexibility they had demonstrated and the categorical interpretation they gave to 'correct relations'. While claiming that this was '*the right impression to give the Nazis*', he maintained that '*it should not have been practised by authority on its own people*'.<sup>252</sup> Falla was unhappy with the fact that the authorities did not exercise much imagination in feigning compliance with German demands and thought that they could have done more to secretly counter the effects of some German measures. The authorities' lack of transparency on the issue continued into the post-war period. Tellingly, the last chapter of Falla's account thematising the Channel Islands 'offenders' is titled 'Forgotten people' and the relative absence of official interest in these people is highlighted in Falla's vigorous criticism of the Guernsey authorities' disengagement on the 1964 British-German agreement launching compensation procedures for British victims of Nazi persecution:

*'...our treatment in Guernsey left a great deal to be desired. I suppose it all dated back to the days of the German Occupation when we were naughty lads and stepped out of line with the Germans [...] I cannot help feeling that if someone had been*

---

<sup>251</sup>Falla, Frank, *The Silent War*, Guernsey 1994 (reprint).

<sup>252</sup>*ibid.*, 156.

*nominated officially to help people with their claims, someone who knew those who were really eligible for compensation as against those who just hoped they were, someone perhaps who had access to the records which must exist of those who were taken away and imprisoned, then the work of the Foreign Office could have been facilitated. Why, I wonder, was even this small thing not done?*<sup>253</sup>

Channel Islanders imprisoned in Nazi concentration camps and similar institutions during the Second World War were eligible to receive payments. When Britain set up a distribution scheme, Falla, a private person, took on the task of advising people who wished to be considered. Evidently, neither the Guernsey nor the Jersey authorities were particularly keen on assuming this responsibility and it was again Falla who became the Foreign Office's intermediary in the handling of applications from Channel Islanders.

However, Falla's interpretation has to be taken with caution as the authorities' lack of involvement may have been due to other factors unknown to him at the time. Not everything that characterised the situation in Guernsey was automatically valid for Jersey. In fact, the Jersey authorities seem to have had no problems associating themselves with the award of gold watches to twenty Jersey rescuers of escaped slave labourers by the Soviet government in March 1966. When Mr Vassev, the chargé d'affaires at the Soviet Embassy, arrived in Jersey for the ceremony he was officially greeted by the Bailiff, R H Le Masurier, and taken around the States Building. In the photograph in the Jersey Evening Post of March 29, 1966, Mr Vassev can be seen chatting to Senator Ralph Vibert and Harold Le Druillenec took the occasion to give a short, eloquent speech. Why similar steps to honour Guernsey people were not taken, remains a mystery and in his speech Mr Vassev emphasised that the honours bestowed on Jersey people *'were in recognition of all in the Channel Islands who helped, including Guernsey.'*<sup>254</sup>

The official position towards the subject of 'offenders' highlights some of the dilemmas arising out of the experience of military occupation. One of these was the co-operation between the civil authorities and the German civil affairs unit. One could argue that attempts to address the issue in the post-war era equalled a concealed reproach in the direction of the island authorities, the main problem being that few instances are

---

<sup>253</sup> *ibid.*, 167

known where 'offenders' profited from interventions on the part of the island authorities.<sup>255</sup> Not that this would have made much of a difference, for the authorities' margin of action was indeed limited. However, their choice to remain at their desks while the Germans were shipping people away for trivial offences remains contentious and what was lacking in the post-war period were symbolic gestures. In this sense the silence of the authorities was not always comprehensible.

Obviously, the main problem was that the authorities had never made the maintenance of local administration conditional on future developments. The principles of 'correct relations' were agreed upon at the beginning of the Occupation, during the 'honeymoon phase' when everyone hoped that adversity could be overcome by a common-sense approach. As it wore on, German administration of law became more strict and repression increased, showing the real face of German rule. The progressive deterioration of relations between occupier and occupied was a process that occurred all over Western Europe, but the modalities of administration in the islands were never adapted to new circumstances. As they trespassed against essentially German law, the 'offenders' were putting in question the entire structure of Occupation government, principles of which had been endorsed by both parties. In some countries, however, co-operation with Germany was reconsidered and nullified, a process invariably leading to direct German rule or take-over by die-hard collaborators in most cases. This was the situation in Denmark in 1943 when the Danish government, challenged in a variety of crucial areas, subjected their relationship with the Reich to a thorough re-evaluation.

The foundations of Occupation government and the cooperation of a local bureaucracy with the occupying force are laid down in the Hague Convention, a body of International law which contained a fair amount of ambiguity during the Second World War. In principle it safeguarded the authority of the local and national administrations, but the occupier could intervene in any area and establish his own jurisdiction on the grounds of 'military necessity'. The Germans based many of their measures on the

---

<sup>254</sup> 'Russian presentations', JEP, 29/03/1966.

<sup>255</sup> One of the instances portrayed in this book is the intervention by Jurat Bree on behalf of Emile Paisnel.

Convention but its essential spirit was continually being ignored. The wireless ban was just one such example of an illegal measure justified on the basis of the Convention and Frank Falla's outraged refutation ('Rubbish!') of Sir John Leale's remark about the government's impossibility in conferring post-war honours on those who had allegedly broken the Convention - meaning by this 'offenders' - was wholly justified.<sup>256</sup> Not surprisingly, there are examples all over Europe where the German occupier took the liberty of exploiting the clauses of the Convention, as in the case of the exorbitant 'occupation payments' all occupied countries had to grant their German overlords.

Nothing could save the island authorities from committing themselves to a minimum of co-operation, but whether it was appropriate for the island authorities to implement anti-Semitic measures as demanded by the occupier and to accept the wireless confiscation and the 1942/43 deportations is a totally different question. Was it necessary to give in to the requests of the German courts demanding information on all previous convictions of 'offenders' up to the late 1920s? In some of these cases the authorities could have drawn a line and dissociated themselves. It could be suggested that they were befuddled by the rhetoric of 'correct relations' and a preoccupation with legalism.

The argument that the island would have suffered more under direct German rule and that the authorities acted as a buffer between the Germans and the population has some justification. However, it cannot be used summarily to brush aside all reservations, unless a specific example proving the contrary can be cited in evidence. The argument is above all a matter of appreciation and should by no means be generalised. There were situations when ceasing to function did less harm than deciding to continue co-operation with an aggressive occupier; in the latter case full responsibility had to be assumed for the consequences. Examples of cases exist where wartime officials decided that there was a breaking-point beyond which continued co-operation would sap their credibility among the population and be deemed unethical. Danish officials did not consider themselves indispensable when they were faced with a German ultimatum in August 1943. Under pressure to introduce a series of severe measures suspending democratic rights and making acts of sabotage punishable with

---

<sup>256</sup> cited in: Bunting, Madeleine, *op. cit.*, .John Leale was the President of the Guernsey Controlling Committee during the Occupation.

the death penalty the entire government Scavenius resigned. Denmark took the gamble and came under direct German rule in 1943.

Nevertheless, any criticism of the Jersey authorities has its limits. There is no basis for arguing a case of active collaboration in Jersey. The instructions given by the Germans were carried out without enthusiasm and complied with to the letter. As far as we can see at this point, no extensive interpretation was given to them and the authorities certainly did not take any initiative that would have profited the Germans. In this respect the island authorities' practice was irreproachable; perhaps it shows to what extent they actually believed in the principle of 'correct relations'. Unsurprisingly, the Channel Islands bureaucracy, consisting in most cases of locally-trained lawyers whom nothing had prepared for such a situation, was no match for the most formidable military machine the world had ever seen. Some of the German officials who came to the islands were very worldly and adroit. When they arrived in the wake of the invasion force in 1940 the island authorities were relieved to see not Nazi brutes but rather cultured and reasonable civil servants with whom they had something in common. When these men offered the authorities an honourable 'gentleman's agreement' on how to run occupation government, they readily accepted. The idea that an accommodation with the invader could be achieved in order to avoid worse was wide-spread among the population. In an entry to her Occupation Diary Mary Deslandes wrote with great perceptiveness:

*'The army of Occupation seems to have settled down to a steady 8,000 now and we have grown quite accustomed to having them around. No one hates the poor wretches individually. They provoke no one and a better behaved, more inoffensive body of men it would be impossible to find.*

*What one does hate, with a bitter, corrosive hatred, is the system they represent and the conditions which their presence here imposes. They are very much the dominant autocrats in possession and only by favour of their much vaunted magnanimity are the natives allowed to live on their own island, on sufferance, shorn of their rights and almost of their liberty.'*<sup>257</sup>

It took the authorities two long years, until the 1942 deportations, to realise that they had been outmanoeuvred and duped by formalistic procedures and that German

---

<sup>257</sup>The Diary of Mary Winifred Deslandes June 1940 to May 1945', entry of September 3, 1941, in: An Island Trilogy, op. cit.

promises were worthless. This was not necessarily because their interlocutors were after all brutes but because the German administrators were themselves at the end of a long line of command. Above all they had no means of preventing outside intervention and were in no situation to vouch for their guarantees. One of those guarantees was that nobody would come to any harm as long as calm prevailed in the islands and as long as the population abstained from acts of hostility. This pledge was broken by the deportation of Channel Islanders to internment camps in 1942, a measure instigated by Hitler against which there was very little the *Feldkommandantur* could do. After the War, Dr Casper of the FK wrote that he had hoped for a time when a corpus of common principles would be created in International Law, saving officials and administrators from having to *obey 'illegal orders'*.<sup>258</sup> More than anything else, this statement reveals the streaks of authoritarian thought which were endemic in Germany long before the Nazi era and which led to the deification of the state and the purely formal aspects of law.

Great credit should be paid to the authorities for not interfering with certain forms of resistance that developed within island institutions, of which the following are examples.

Dr R. McKinstry, the medical officer of the Jersey Public Health Department with offices in Royal Square, provided many escaped slave-labourers with false IDs and ration cards. In 1944/45 this type of help was extended to Jersey people on the run. Frank Killer, a young Jerseyman jailed after a failed escape attempt, injured himself when he broke out of Gloucester Street prison in February 1945. His injuries were tended by Ray Osmont, the General Hospital doctor who had provided Ivy Forster with the medical certificate necessary to save her from deportation to a Continental prison, while he received false papers from Dr McKinstry.<sup>259</sup>

As we have heard in an earlier chapter, Gloucester Street prison was divided into two parts, a German military prison and the Public Jersey prison. Prisoners in the latter were so well-cared for by the governor Mr Briard and his wife that Dora Hacquoil, one of the three women jailed in connection with the Louisa Gould Case, later wrote:

---

<sup>258</sup> Aufsess, Baron von/Casper, Wilhelm, *In the Eye of the Hurricane. Remembrances from the Channel Islands 1941-1943*. Jersey, 1991, 123.

<sup>259</sup> L'Amy, *op. cit.*

*'Really, a political prisoner's life in Jersey is a farce. I was amazed to hear that we are all heroes.'*<sup>260</sup> The three women received food from farmers and friends which was duly forwarded to them, and their cell was decorated with flowers. In November 1944 Briard was finally cautioned with regard to his duty by the German administration because of the negligence shown in connection with an escape from the prison the preceding month.<sup>261</sup> Other diligent Occupation heroes included Pat Tatam of Victoria College and the General Post Office workers who opened countless letters of denunciation and warned the persons in danger, thereby saving many islanders from a fate similar to that of the Twenty.<sup>262</sup>

The images of British policemen opening the door to Germans or saluting German officers have lost none of their haunting fascination and have been integrated in the conventional imagery of the Channel Islands Occupation. However, what most onlookers fail to see is the provenance of these pictures, where exactly, by whom and under what conditions they were taken. They equally fail to take account of the fact that the structure of the police forces in the two main islands was by no means identical and that many of these photographs were shot in Guernsey. It will probably come as an unpleasant surprise to those continuing to take these pictures at face value that they have fallen into a Nazi propaganda trap laid out over fifty years ago, still proving frightfully effective as an instrument of dupery. Uncommented and left to 'speak for themselves', these photographs allegedly epitomise the Channel Islands Occupation. In order to counter the calumny of the Jersey police force as a pillar of collaborationism, it is appropriate to include a report written by Jersey policeman Albert Chardine in 1945. Chardine was a well-known figure to the Germans with whom he got into trouble on several occasions. In 1942 he served a prison term in Jersey for supplying Gould, Hassall and Audrain with petrol for their escape attempt. Chardine continued to defy the occupier after his release from prison and was on the German blacklist of 'undesirables'. He escaped internment in Germany only through the intervention of his superiors. In 1945 he courageously refused to patrol Gloucester Street where escapes were occurring with a monotony that left the Germans

---

<sup>260</sup>My Story...Dora Hacquoil - Harboursing Russians', JEP, 02/02/1995.

<sup>261</sup>JAS, B/A/W 81/4 Bailiff's War Files

<sup>262</sup>Sinel, op. cit., entry of February 26, 1943.

breathless. Chardine never suffered any prejudice from the following lines he wrote:

*'Police Report*

*Date 15-2-1945*

*Time 6-50 pm*

*Subject Re. Patrolling of Gloucester St & Newgate Street, Re. Escaping of Political Prisoners*

*Sir,*

*I beg to report that at the above stated time I was instructed by P.Sgt. Griffin to patrol Gloucester St & Newgate St. re. Political Prisoners attempting to escape from prison.*

*On receiving the instructions I refused to carry them out because I don't think it is the duty of a civilian policeman, and I have friends who have been put prison by the Germans for very little reason, and I would not like them to know that I was outside waiting to catch them if they tried to escape; and as you know I, and several other policemen have been in prison for the Germans, and I am sure if any of us were in their today we would not like to know that our own workmates were waiting to try and stop us from escaping.*

*A A Chardine*<sup>263</sup>

The disinclination of the suffering endured by Channel Islanders imprisoned on the Continent was not part of an establishment cover-up, rather the result of the preoccupation with the negative aspects of the Occupation, lack of objectivity and an insufficient detachment from an issue that was, and still is, charged with emotion.

The controversial status of the issue of 'offenders' is best contrasted with the treatment of escapees who were, deservedly, celebrated as the heroes of the Occupation. However, it is paradoxical that those whose escape plans failed and who were then jailed in Gloucester Street Prison by the Germans belonged to the group of people for whom post-war recognition was far less forthcoming.

The general uneasiness was compounded by a preoccupation with the military aspects of the Channel Islands Occupation, which have become the accepted framework for discussion. This tendency appears to have partly determined the outlook Dr Cruickshank chose for the Official history of the Channel Islands Occupation he wrote in the 1970s. However, Cruickshank was too accomplished a historian to ignore social

---

<sup>263</sup> JAS, D/Z Law Officers Files, Police Reports.

aspects of the Occupation and his work incorporated many elements depicting the life of islanders and the garrison. Unfortunately, consecutive attempts based on his approach were less rigorous in such considerations and monopolised their interest for military aspects (which is as short-sighted an approach as attempts on the other end of the scale exclusively thematising collaboration). Paradoxically, these research efforts focused on an aspect of the Channel Islands Occupation that failed to materialise, as the German fortresses and their fire-power were never put to the test. In the long run, however, skirting around other Occupation themes - such as the 'offenders' issue - was to no avail and it was only a question of time for the naturally repressive tendencies to be vanquished. One of the events that changed public perception was the Anne Frank Exhibition organised by the Jersey Museums Service in 1988. It attracted 5,000 visitors and was one of the best-attended exhibitions ever staged in Jersey. A special section thematising the fate of Jersey people who defied German authority, a subject that had never been appropriately addressed before, was inserted into this exhibition and polarised people's attention. The changed treatment of the subject owed much to a widespread new consciousness in Europe where each country was trying to come to terms with the wartime period and learn lessons for the future. Resulting from the adoption of all aspects of Second World War history by popular culture, the next decade saw a gradual reappraisal of the occupation years and crystallised islanders' need to identify and remember the unsung heroes of that period.

Memorials documenting the lasting testimony of Jersey 'offenders' abound today. A first memorial in Howard Davis Park was dedicated some years ago and honoured all those who were deported to the Continent and died in concentration, internment and prison camps. However, this memorial did not detail any names and on this occasion, as on others, the fate of 'offenders' was amalgamated with that of internees who did not share the same fate as 'offenders'.

The 1995 celebrations marking the 50th Anniversary of Liberation, a popular event which stimulated the forces of solidarity and the sense of purpose in the Island and instilled a new type of self-assertiveness, provided the ideal setting to address the 'offenders' issue publicly. Fifty years represent a clear cesure marking the definite entry into history of all events beyond and the Occupation and Liberation Committee, a

body set up by the States of Jersey in 1992/93 in order to find appropriate forms of celebrating the event, led the way in the commissioning of several major projects of commemoration, among them the plaque honouring Louisa Gould already mentioned in an earlier chapter. It was the first time that an official body had been assembled that had sufficient political weight to overcome all obstacles and provide a major leap forward. Another plaque, this time to Jersey political prisoners, was unveiled at the site of the former prison in Gloucester Street, on April 27, 1995, exactly fifty years after the execution of Nicolas Schmitz, a young German deserter arrested with his Jersey girl-friend while on the run. It is hard to imagine a more symbolic date for such a ceremony and it speaks for the organisers' generosity of spirit - many of whom were people who suffered at German hands - that they chose to reach out to those Germans who proved by their action and their fate that they deserve our sympathy as much as Jersey 'offenders'.

Plans for a memorial honouring the Jersey Twenty coincided with a variety of favourable elements. According to Occupation and Liberation Committee president Senator Jean Le Maistre the memorial project dedicated to Jersey 'offenders' benefited from a positive atmosphere and the fact that a suitable site became available, one of the major obstacles in the past. At the time plans for the restoration of an old warehouse on the New North Quay, to house the Occupation Tapestry Gallery and the Maritime Museum, were progressing and when Constable Leonard Picot approached the Committee with the idea of a memorial to Jersey 'offenders', the area outside was seen as the ideal location. The Jersey Museums Service was instrumental in the execution of the project and sculptor Gordon Young created a fitting epitaph by incorporating the memorial around the base of a restored nineteenth century Jersey lighthouse that had been saved for the Maritime Museum. His work has resulted in a striking symbolism of past, present and future of the island and the unveiling ceremony in November 1996 proved a fitting finale to the work of the Committee.

## 4

### Perspectives of Occupation Study

Despite the evident focus on the 'Twenty' it must be noted that many other Jersey people who survived their imprisonment continued to suffer from their wartime deprivations, both mentally and physically. As demonstrated in the cases of Sinclair and Johnson there may also have been a very small number of islanders whose disappearance into Hitler's camps went entirely unrecorded, most likely people who had moved to the island before the Occupation and who had few attachments or family ties there. Resolving this issue has been beyond the scope of this project and it remains doubtful whether a final word on this issue will ever be spoken.

What will remain of the Channel Islands Occupation in collective memory, especially when the last of the wartime generation have taken their recollections to their graves? The basic shortcomings of many publications on the Channel Islands Occupation are their lack of representative data which is linked to the introduction of quantitative methods of research, and as long as Occupation accounts do not adopt a more scholarly perspective, the subject will remain open for exploitation and polemics. Considering the abundance of private archives, collections and diaries in the Island, the location of appropriate material should cause few problems.

Outside the islands, the current discussion and image of the Channel Islands Occupation is biased through a focus on the negative concepts of denunciation, collaboration and fraternisation. That such elements existed is incontestable but they by no means constituted the mass phenomena they are made out to have been. Already in the case of denunciation we have seen that an opposite sister existed in an almost equal measure, the tipping-off in the event of danger. A bizarre connivance can be discerned, with public opinion on the Continent reacting with relief to the fact that

British citizens under German occupation did not behave in a dramatically different manner to their continental counter-parts and mainlanders seeing subconscious beliefs about the 'not quite so British' Channel Islanders confirmed. All one can say about these and similar allusions is that they fail to acknowledge any specificity and are grossly simplifying. As is becoming increasingly clear, most people are neither heroes nor traitors and, invariably, human behaviour comes in shades of grey. Future discussion should therefore respect a triangular relationship of conformism, defiance and self-preservation as the defining poles around which behaviour oscillated and which determined wartime choices in the islands.

The current debate is a dialogue of the deaf between self-appointed Occupation specialists in the islands and journalists and authors from the mainland, characterised by an absence of tolerance and respect for the opinions of others. Both sides fail to see that history writing progresses by stages and that historical knowledge is, inevitably, the product of the dialectics of argument and counter-argument. Different opinions are vital prerequisites in order to increase objectivity and a good historian is, basically, any innovative person capable of asking the right questions and then attempting to find answers. Even though there is no guarantee for the success of the latter undertaking (which is the far more difficult part of the exercise), rightly posed questions can serve as a valuable inspiration and provide a model for future research. Another important lesson many Occupation historians will have to learn is that not all facts are equally important and worthy of their attention. One of the historian's most important tasks is to make a good selection of material from the masses of available information. Research and the way facts are presented should respond to the basics of logic and epistemology and harmonise with the argument one hopes to sustain.

Unfortunately, the problem with many publications on the Channel Islands Occupation is that they show little inclination to discriminate between relevant and irrelevant facts, pay excessive tribute to detail and make few attempts at establishing priorities and creating a 'hierarchy of facts'. An attempt has been undertaken in this account to offer a narrative that, while abstaining from excessively detached and 'dry' analysis, does not surrender to anecdote. Therefore we have prioritised the determination of the recurrent *leitmotifs*, the 'macro-elements' of the Channel Islands Occupation. As already indicated, some factors, such as the food situation or anything touching on the

fortification programme, are believed to have had a profounder influence on the outcome of the Occupation than others. Nobody escaped their ramifications and somewhere along the line Channel Islands 'offenders' were equally impacted by this constellation.

The Occupation was a unique event in the long history of the islands. However, sometimes it is almost forgotten that they have this experience in common with many European countries. Our understanding could benefit greatly from the adoption of comparative perspectives, the utilisation of the rich resources available in these countries and the scrutiny of their impressive research achievements. Occupation historian Charles Cruickshank's dictum that enough material has survived to fill several volumes of Occupation history still remains entirely valid. Nevertheless, our most important source, oral testimony, is becoming increasingly difficult to obtain and with every year that passes by a few more pages of this history are lost forever. Sadly, there is nothing that can bring this knowledge back and already today Occupation research has to rely heavily on the testimonies of those who were youngsters during the Occupation. The great danger in this is that youngsters or children shared perceptions of the event which deviated largely from those of their parents and that their insight was, by the nature of things, limited. On the other hand, few islanders who had important responsibilities during the Occupation are still alive today and some of the dark zones remaining in current depictions of the Occupation story are indeed disconcerting: Just as the pages of Harold Le Druillenec's splendid manuscript at the BBC archives remained unturned for fifty years, nobody ever interviewed personalities like Pat Tatam of Victoria College or Captain Sowden and nobody made an attempt to trace the valiant GPO workers who opened letters of denunciation. All these omissions, based on futile attempts to circumvent certain aspects of the Occupation, are utterly frustrating to anyone interested in establishing what really happened. Many by now lost vestiges, such as the twenty bundles of records destroyed when the old prison was dismantled, could have told us as much about the only major occupation of British territory by a foreign force as about ourselves and the society we live in. One way or the other, the past continues to live on, thus calling for efforts to exorcise its spirits.

The material gathered together for this book shows that it is not too late yet for Occupation history. We hope that our portrayal of the 'Jersey Twenty' will help reassess and diversify the debate on island 'resistance' and serve as a stepping-stone for increased recognition of Jersey acts of defiance. May it also aid the Island in finding its rightful place in the historiography of pan-European Second World War resistance.

## **SOURCES**

### **I. ARCHIVAL SOURCES**

#### **BBC Written Archives**

- BBC feature programme based on the experiences of Harold Le Druillenec, 'The Man from Belsen', 12/04/1946
- BBC talk by Harold Le Druillenec, 25/09/1945

#### **Bundesarchiv (BA)**

*Military Archives (MA), Freiburg*

**RH** 26/319. 7th Army High Command

Wehrmacht High Command (Oberkommando der Wehrmacht-OKW)

**RW** 4/624-625. OKW/Wehrmacht HQ

**RW** 5/243. OKW/Foreign Section/Abwehr

**RW** 35/537. Military Government in France (Militaerbefehlshaber in Frankreich): reception of enemy broadcasts

**RW** 49/97. Abwehr Command France (F/IIIc): Channel Islands - Commitment of labour resources, protective security measures, 1942-1944

*Reich Documents Section (R), Berlin*

**R** 22/1341-1342. Reich Ministry of Justice (RMJ)

*Zentrale Nachweisstelle (ZNS), Aachen*

**W** 11/104-107. Court martials-General correspondence  
**Z** 726. Court of the 319th Infantry Division (ID), Jersey branch:  
Investigations into the case against William Marsh  
Investigations into the case against Walter Dauny

### **Government House, Jersey**

50/4 Lieutenant Governors' file

### **Jersey Archives Service (JAS)**

Bailiff's War Files

**B/A/W** 30/94. Papers relating to the order to surrender wireless sets, 1942-43

**B/A/W** 80. List of persons evacuated from Jersey

**B/A/W** 85/5. War graves-Civilians in enemy and enemy occupied territory

Bailiff's Liberation Files

**B/A/L** 15. Liberation files-Enquiries for relatives

**C/C/L** Occupation and Liberation Committee Files

**D/Z** Law Officers Files

Box 20. Sentences and prosecutions by Field Command and Troop Courts

**L/C/24** Joe Miere Collection

A 5. List of political prisoners in the Channel Islanders, 1940-1945

D 2. Death and birth certificates of Frank Le Villio

**D/S/A** Occupation Registration cards, Registration and Identification of Persons (Jersey) Order, 1940

### **Musée de la résistance et de la déportation, Besançon**

La Martinière documents concerning NN prisoners

### **Public Records Office (PRO), London**

Foreign Office (FO)

**950** Claims Department

741. UK-Federal Republic of Germany agreement on compensation for victims of Nazi persecution

765. Questions of compensation for servicemen

766. Index to names of British subjects in enemy concentration camps and statistical survey of camps'

War Office (WO)

**235** Ravensbrück Trial, Hamburg, 1946

317. Depositions of Johann Schwarzhuber and Ruth Closius Neudeck  
**309** War of 1939-1945: HQ BAOR, War Crimes Group (NWE)

192. Channel Islands deportation and ill-treatment of civilians  
**311** War of 1939-1945: Military Deputy, Judge Advocate General - War Crimes Files

11. German Occupation of the Channel Islands: Death and ill-treatment of  
slave labourers and transportation of civilians to Germany  
677. War Crimes in the Channel Islands: Evidence and Investigations

Treasury Solicitor's Papers (TS)

**26** UN War Crimes Commission

89. Channel Islands

### **State Archives of Hessen, Wiesbaden**

46/18893. Prosecutor's Office at District Court Frankfurt  
409/4. Preungesheim prison records

### **State Archives of Saxony-Anhalt, Merseburg**

Rep. C 131 II. Naumburg Death Register

## **II. ORAL SOURCES**

### **INTERVIEWS**

Part I

Chapter One	Advocate Valpy
Chapter Two	(an anonymous relative of Frederic Marsh)
Chapter Three	'Birdie' Paisnel
Chapter Four	George Sty Roy Mourant
Chapter Five	John Painter Vernon Cavey Phyllis Le Druillenec
Chapter Six	Rex Forster Robert Le Sueur Raymonde Martel Daphne Syvret Madeleine Breslin
Chapter Seven	Helen Ogier Douglas Tanguy

### III. OTHER SOURCE MATERIAL

#### Lists

List of Jersey prisoners, French Ministry of Veterans and War Victims, Paris  
List of Channel Islands prisoners in French penitentiaries, 1943, Archives de Paris

#### Private Papers

Ogier Papers (in possession of Helen Ogier, Paris)  
Painter papers (in possession of John Painter, Jersey)

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### I. PUBLISHED WORKS

Aufsess, Baron von/Casper, Wilhelm, *In the Eye of the Hurricane. Rememberances from the Channel Islands 1941-1943*. Jersey, 1991.

Aufsess, Baron von, *The von Aufsess Occupation Diary*, edited and translated by Kathleen J Nowlan, Worcester 1985.

Broszat, Martin/Fröhlich, Elke, *Alltag und Widerstand. Bayern im Nationalsozialismus*, Munich, 1987.

Bunting, Madeleine, *The Model Occupation - The Channel Islands under German Rule 1940-1945*, London, 1995.

Cajani, Luigi, 'Die italienischen Militärinternierten im nationalsozialistischen Deutschland', in: Herbert, Ulrich (Ed.), *Europa und der Reichseinsatz. Ausländische Zivilarbeiter, Kriegsgefangene und KZ-Häftlinge in Deutschland 1938-45*, Klartext, 1991.

Cruickshank, Charles, *The German Occupation of the Channel Islands*, London, 1975.

De Carteret, Basil/Deslandes, Mary/Robin, Mary, *An Island Trilogy. Memories of Jersey and the Occupation*, Jersey, n.d.

*Encyclopedia of the Holocaust*, 4 vols.

Falla, Francis, *The Silent War. The Inside Story of the Channel Islands under the Nazi Jackboot*, Guernsey, 1994 (reprint).

Foot, M R D, *Resistance. An Analysis of European Resistance to Nazism 1940-1945*, London, 1976.

Gellately, Robert, *The Gestapo and German Society. Enforcing Racial Policy 1933-1945*,

Oxford, 1990.

Ginns, Michael, *The Organisation Todt and the Fortress Engineers in the Channel Islands* (Channel Islands Occupation Society, Archive Book No. 8), Jersey, 1994.

Hæstrup, Jørgen, *European Resistance Movements, 1939-1945. A Complete History*. Westport/London, 1981.

Harris, Roger E., *Islanders Deported. Part 1: The Complete History of those British Subjects who were Deported from the Channel Islands during the German Occupation of 1940-45 and Imprisoned in Europe*, Illford, 1980.

Hawes, Stephen/White, Ralph (Edd.), *Resistance in Europe 1939-1945*. Based on the proceedings of a symposium held at the University of Salford (March 1973), London, 1975.

Herbert, Ulrich, *Fremdarbeiter-Politik und Praxis des Ausländer-Einsatzes in der Kriegswirtschaft des Dritten Reiches*, Berlin/ Bonn 1985.

Hillsdon, Sonia, *Jersey-Occupation Remembered*, Norwich, 1986.

Journeaux, Donald, *Raise the White Flag - A Life in Occupied Jersey*, Leatherhead (Surrey), 1995.

King, Peter, *The Channel Islands War 1940-45*, London, 1991.

Kogon, Eugen/Langbein, Hermann/Rückerl, Adalbert et al., *Nationalsozialistische Massentötungen durch Giftgas*, Frankfurt, 1983.

Kosthorst, Erich/Walter, Bernd. *Konzentrations- und Strafgefangenenlager im Dritten Reich. Beispiel Emsland. Dokumentation und Analyse zum Verhältnis von NS-Regime und Justiz*, Düsseldorf, 1983.

Lasker-Wallfisch, Anita, *Inherit the truth 1939-1945. The Documented Experiences of a Survivor of Auschwitz and Belsen*, London, 1996.

Lean, Tangye E, *Voices in the Darkness. The Story of the European Radio War*, London, 1943.

MacAuslan, Alan, *Darling, Darling Meg. Belsen? Where's that?* Edinburgh/Cambridge/Durham, 1996.

Martinière, Joseph (de la), *Le decret et la procedure Nacht und Nebel (Nuit et Brouillard)*, Orleans, 1981.

Martinière, Joseph (de la), *Nuit et brouillard à Hinzert. Les déportés NN en camp spécial SS*, n.d.

Mallmann, Klaus-Michael/Paul, Gerhard (Ed.), *Die Gestapo - Mythos und Realität*, Darmstadt 1995.

Phillips, Raymond (Ed.), *Trial of Josef Kramer and Forty-Four Others (The Belsen Trial)*, London, n.d.

Schwarz, Gudrun, *Nationalsozialistische Lager*, Frankfurt, 1991.

Semelin, Jacques, *Sans armes face à Hitler. La résistance civile en Europe 1939-1943*, Paris, 1989. (English transl. *Unarmed against Hitler. Civilian Resistance in Europe 1939-1943*. Westport/London, 1993.)

Sinel, Leslie, *The German Occupation of Jersey: A Complete Diary of Events, June 1940-June 1945*, Jersey, 1984 (reprint).

Streit, Christian, *Keine Kameraden. Die Wehrmacht und die sowjetischen Kriegsgefangenen 1941-1945*, Stuttgart, 1978.

Taylor, James/Shaw, Warren, *A Dictionary of the Third Reich*, London, 1987.

Thomas, Jürgen, *Wehrmachtsjustiz und Widerstandsbekämpfung: das Wirken der ordentlichen deutschen Militärjustiz in den besetzten Westgebieten 1940-45 unter rechtshistorischen Aspekten*, Baden-Baden, 1990.

Thomas, Roy, *Lest We Forget. Escapes and Attempted Escapes from Jersey During the German Occupation 1940-1945*, Jersey, 1992.

Tillion, Germaine, *Ravensbrück*, Paris, 1988.

Toms, Carel, *Hitler's Fortress Islands - Germany's Occupation of the Channel Islands*, London, 1967.

## II. UNPUBLISHED WORKS

L'Amy, J.H., *The German Occupation of Jersey*, unpublished memoirs, n.d. (in custody of the Société Jersiaise).

Hassall, Peter, *unpublished memoirs*.

## III. PERIODICALS, NEWSPAPERS, BROCHURES, ETC.

Cohen, Frederick, 'The Jews in the Islands of Jersey, Guernsey and Sark during the German occupation 1940-1945', in: *Journal of Holocaust Education*, 1997.

Ginns, Michael, 'The Commandant', in: *Channel Islands Occupation Review* 1981, 6-11.

Grossmann, Anton J., 'Fremd-und Zwangsarbeiter in Bayern 1939-45', in: *Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 34 (1986).

Hassall, Peter, *Synopsis* (of his unpublished memoirs).

Mayne, Richard, 'People who escaped from Jersey during the Occupation', in: *Channel Islands Occupation Review* 1975, 22-24.

Mayne, Richard, 'Forgotten Islanders', in: *Channel Islands Occupation Review* 1974, 15-18.

SPD Preungesheim, *8. Mai 1945 - 8. Mai 1985. Preungesheim 40 Jahre danach-Erinnern oder vergessen?*, 1985.

### **The Evening Post, Jersey**

'Well-known Jerseyman's Death in Action-Brilliant Scholar and Sportsman', 15/07/1941.  
'A Russian Officer's Story - His Escape from Jersey P.O.W. Camp - How He Was Hidden and Fed for 2 1/2 Years', 10/05/1945.  
'Tragic News for Jersey Family - Father and Son Die in German Prison Camp', 02/06/1945.  
'Definite News of Canon Cohu - Died in German Prison Camp', 25/09/1945.  
'Russian presentations', 29/03/1966.

### **The Jersey Evening Post**

'My Story...Dora Hacquoil - Harboursing Russians', 02/02/1995  
'In Memory of Those who Never Came Back', 08/11/1996  
'Fighting to Lay the Past to Rest', 09/12/1996.  
'Obituary: Ivy Forster', 07/07/1997.

### **The Sunday Island Times**

'Canon Clifford John Cohu: A Victim of the Occupation', three-part article by Alex Glendinning, 27/02, 6/03, 13/03/1994.