

## ORIGIN AND ROOTS OF FRENCH ANTI-SEMITISM JEWISH GENOCIDE IN FRANCE (1940-1944)

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### ABSTRACT

*The study is devoted to French anti-Semitism from the time of its very emergence. It presents the main stages through which it passed, the factors that influenced its development until the late 19th century, when the definition "violent" anti-Semitism became justified and the period between the two world wars that could be characterized as a prelude to Vichy, the regime under which the Jews were subjected to genocide. It also presents the biblical and patristic grounds for its emergence and their use in later times by different churches and political forces, and in the "canonization" of anti-Semitism as one of the characteristics of the ideology of the National Revolution.*

**Key Words:** *Jews, anti-Semitism, biblical and patristic grounds, Vichy, National Revolution, Philippe Pétain, genocide.*

### ÖZET

#### **Fransız Antisemitizminin ve Fransadaki Yahudi Soykırımının Kaynağı ve Kökenleri**

*Çalışma, ortaya çıkışından itibaren Fransız antisemitizmine dayanmaktadır. Geçirdiği önemli safhaları, 19. Yüzyıldaki gelişiminin ardındaki unsurları, "zorba" antisemitizm kavramı gündeme geldiğinde ve iki dünya savaşı arasında Vichy yönetiminin başlangıcı olarak ortaya çıkan süreçte Yahudilerin maruz kaldığı soykırımı göstermektedir. Ayrıca antisemitizmin ortaya çıkışında ve daha sonra çok kez farklı kilise ve siyasi güçler tarafından kullanılışında ve milli devrim ideolojisinin karakteristiklerinden biri olarak kutsallaştırılmasında dayanak edinilen kutsal metin alıntılarını da ortaya koymaktadır.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** *Yahudiler, antisemitizm, kutsal metinler, Vichy, milli devrim, Philippe Pétain, soykırım.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Bulgaria was the only European country which landed a hand to the Jews and today we can proudly say that they were saved and the credit for that goes to the Bulgarian people. Saving human life is not a myth, it is not propaganda backdate. To be able to assess in all of its glory this "lesson in tolerance" which our people gave to the other nations, the great humanity it showed when protecting Bulgarian Jews, we have to put it in the European context, to compare their fate in Bulgaria with that in other European countries during World War II. Otherwise we risk falling into a situation in which nobody mentions Bulgaria as a country where the Jews were saved. At the same time France, one of the countries in which they were subjected to systematic persecution and genocide, which developed not only the most detailed anti-Semitic legislation, but all the necessary provisions and the respective authorities to put it into practice, claims to be one of the countries with the highest percentage of saved Jews - 95 percent according to some sources.

Anti-Semitism in France is not a new phenomenon. Of course, I'm not going to talk neither about the history of the French Jews, who settled in Gaul as early as the 1st century AD, nor to present in details the history of French anti-Semitism. These are topics that cannot be thoroughly presented within a single article. I will mention only some of the most striking facts that mark what they have experienced throughout the centuries until the time when the definition "violent" anti-Semitism became fully justified at the end of the 19th century, and the period between the two world wars that can fairly be characterized as a prelude to the Vichy regime, although that was the time of the Third Republic when anti-Semitic propaganda was punishable by law.

A variety of factors determined the position of the Jews in the society and the attitude towards them. It was influenced by the dynasties, individual kings, the Church, the Vatican. Certainly one should take into account the different status of the Jews in the different French provinces and whether they were part of the kingdom or not, as well as the differences in the attitude towards them in the different dioceses. Along with that, it would not correspond to the truth, if claiming that they were only killed and tortured. In the course of history, the Jews have occupied high positions in all areas of the economy, finance, culture and art, a number of professions and the crafts have become their monopoly. An important problem in the study of anti-Semitism is the elucidation of the issue whether it arose out of necessity, under the pressure from the German authorities after the disastrous defeat of May-June 1940, or developed by the belief and initiative of the French state headed by Marshal Philippe Pétain.

## **BIBLICAL AND PATRISTIC GROUNDS FOR THE EMERGENCE OF ANTISEMITISM**

However, before tracing the roots of anti-Semitism in France and the factors contributing to its emergence, I consider it appropriate to start with pointing out the biblical and patristic reasons for its appearance and their use by the various churches in later times, and in its "canonization" as one of the defining traits of the ideology of the National Revolution - the state ideology of the regime in Vichy.

Christianity was born in Palestine on the religious and spatial basis of Judaism. The Christian Lord (Jesus Christ) himself was of Jewish origin - a Jew in the flesh (Matt. 1:2; Luke 3: 33-34) from the kin of the Old Testament King David (Matt. 22: 42-44), born in the city of David Bethlehem of Judaea (Matt. 2:1). Christ's apostles, disciples and first followers were also Jewish who had abandoned the Old Testament law of Moses and had become Christians. But in Christianity from an early age there were anti-Judaic attitudes, which subsequently (in the 19th century and especially in the first half of the 20th century) would evolve into anti-Jewish tendencies and actions that would bring to the emergence of racial and political state anti-Semitism in many modern European countries.

In the Bible, i.e. in the books of the Holy Scriptures of the Old and especially the New Testament, are found a number of passages which already in the period of the early Christian church (1st-3rd c.) gave grounds for the appearance of reaction against Judaism and which reveal different elements, features or qualities representative of the nature of Judaism (the Jewish character in general): a sense of ethnic and religious superiority because of being chosen by God (Deuteronomy 26: 18-19); persecution and even physical destruction of the Old Testament prophets heralding God's will (Matt. 23: 30,37; 2 Thess. 2:15); deceit (Matt. 23:33); hypocrisy (perfidy) and dissemblance (Matt. 23: 13-15,23,25,28; Mark 12:15); betrayal, committed for money (30 pieces of silver), and not by ideological motives (Matt. 26: 14-15; Luke 22: 4-5); denial of the messianic quality of Christ and rejection of the dignity of the Lord and God (John 1: 10-11) and in this sense - Theomachy expressed in Deicide (John 19: 12-15); taking collective responsibility of all Jewry for the execution of the death penalty against the God-Man and the preference of the criminal (the murderer Barabbas) to the innocent convict Christ (Matt. 27: 15-25); cunningness and fraudulence (Rom. 1:29); deceit and greed (Rom. 1:29); malice and enviousness (Rom. 1:29); God hatred and boasting (Rom. 1:30); formal piety and ostentatious religiosity (pharisaism) (Matt. 6:16; 23: 5,14); false righteousness (Matt. 23: 27-28); ostentatious piety (Matt. 23:14); closing the kingdom of heaven for men (Matt. 23:13); religious rigidity and literalism

(Matt. 23:27); self-exaltation and conceit instead of humility, meekness and repentance (Matt. 23: 6-9; Luke 18:14); covetousness and avarice (Matt. 23: 16-17); usury practiced by Jews against non-Jews only (Deut. 15:6), but prohibited by Christ (Luke 6: 30.34); spiritual blindness (Matt. 23: 16, 24, 26); gossip and calumny (Rom. 1:30); recklessness, perfidy, unfriendliness and intransigence (Rom. 1:31) following and service of the Antichrist as the Messiah (Matt. 3: 7); sonship with paternity of the devil (John 8:44), sonship of *Gehenna* (hell) (Matt. 23: 15.33), etc.

Again in the books of the Bible is found information on manifestations of anti-Semitism (Anti-Judaism) as early as antiquity. Thus the Old Testament book of *Exodus* (1: 15-22) contains data about early manifestations of Egyptian state anti-Judaism against the Jews who were foreigners in Egypt. Such notices are also found in book *Psalms* (Ps. 83: 5).

With the establishment and dissemination of the Christian church in the 1st century AD (33) - very different from the Jewish synagogue as religion, cult and social values - were sharpened the anti-Judaic trends in its bosoms, the more so that the newly emergent religion sought to differentiate and distinguish itself from Judaism even by its denial. A number of church fathers, church teachers and writers in their sermons and works became exponents of expressed Christian antagonism against the Jews. Thus one of the early church fathers - Melito, Bishop of Sardis (+ October 180 AD) in his *Homily on the Passion* tutored the Christian believers in anti-Judaism. Similar ideas are found in the works of St. Irenaeus of Lyon (c. 130-202) and St. Hippolytus of Rome (c. 170-c. 235).

After the Edict of Milan of Emperor Constantine I the Great (280-337) issued in 313 and the triumph of Christianity, the anti-Judaic sentiments flared up with renewed vigor and in Christian apologetic literature permanently - almost up until the middle of the 20th century - was formed and established the topic of the opposition of Jews (Jews-Judahites) against Christians and there was deepening of the intransigence and the incompatibility between the two religions, which gradually led to the emergence of so-called *Christian anti-Semitism*. In this period Christian anti-Judaism was taken up by the Fathers of the Christian Church (clergymen characterized by: Orthodox contemplation and study, Orthodox literary creativity, sanctity and antiquity of life, recognition by the Church), whose works and ideas formed Christian dogma, ethics, aesthetics, philosophy, etc. To the category Church Fathers with similar anti-Judaite writings belonged mostly the Fathers of the Syrian, Greek and Latin Churches, in whose dioceses in that era there was a large Jewish diaspora, as Ephraim the Syrian, John Chrysostom, Aurelius Ambrosius, Gregory of Nyssa and others. Anti-Judaic policy supported by respective retaliatory actions was carried out also

by some Roman and Byzantine emperors: Constantine I the Great (280-337), Theodosius I the Great (346-395), Justinian I the Great (525-565) and others.

The irreconcilability with Judaism and the ideological combat against it was particularly characteristic of the era of the fourth century and of the Church Fathers in this century, who ignited the flames of controversy with Judaism in their sermons and in their public services.

St. Ephraim the Syrian (306-373) defined the Jews as: scamps and slavish people (an allusion to the Egyptian and Babylonian bondage of the Old Testament Judaism); servants of the devil; criminals with an insatiable thirst for blood, 99 times more evil than the non-Jews. St. John Chrysostom (354-407) on his part, in his eight homilies (extensive written sermons) *Against the Jews* denounced the Jews for their bloodlust, likening them by their manners to pigs and goats and characterizing them as worse than the wolves. St. Gregory of Nyssa (335-after 394) described the Jews as: *killers of the Lord and the prophets, disobedient and hating God, allies of the devil, of snake breed, informers and slanderers, blurred brains, pharisaical ferment, gathering of demons, hideous and cursed creatures, killers with stones, enemies of everything beautiful.*

These and other rebukes of the kind and admonishing speeches against Judaism sounded from the pulpits of the Christian churches and the Episcopal chairs all the time for more than fifteen centuries. The Latin Church, feeling threatened by Abraham miscreants in its own diocese, organized and conducted a series of local church councils to limit their detrimental influence on Christians. The council of Elvira (306) and the series of councils in Toledo (589-694) prohibited mixed marriages between Christians and Jews. The Councils of Toledo also adopted decisions providing for the removal of Jews from holding public office, their forced conversion or expulsion in case of refusal to convert. The last of them, the 17th Council of Toledo (694), declared Jews slaves of Christians in perpetuity, prohibited the practice of the Jewish religion and provided for the taking away of the Jewish kids under the age of seven and their placement in virtuous Christian families.

Later on, during the Crusades (11th-15th c.), the Reconquista in Spain (15th c.) and the Reformation (16th-17th c.) would be adopted and observed further restrictions in the private and public sphere, and also with regards to property against Jews-Judahites, as well as against such converts.

The victory of the Reformation in the German principalities was accompanied by persecution of the Jews, because - even baptized - they did not become true Christians, as they served both to *God and to Mammon* in the sense of Matthew 6:24, i.e. officially they were considered Christians and secretly they continued to comply with the Law of Moses and its regulations.

In 1543 Martin Luther (1483-1546) wrote and published in Wittenberg the pamphlet *On the Jews and Their Lies*, denouncing the Jews. The work constituted a kind of a program for radical opposition to the children of Abraham and in it - as retaliation for its failed attempt to bring part of the German Jews in the bosom of the Church - *the father of the Reformation* would lay the foundations of the future German state anti-Semitism. In the pamphlet Luther envisioned and blessed such punitive measures against the Jews, such as burning of Jewish synagogues and prayer houses (and those which could not be burned to be covered by earth), destruction of Jewish homes, seizure of Jewish religious literature, prohibition of usury, mandatory forced labor for young Jews, restricting the free movement of Jews, confiscation of Jewish property and expulsion of the Jews from the German Lutheran lands. This is how already in the 16th century anti-Semitism in its religious appearance would be seeded and would germinate in German mindset and religiousness, and would later bear its appropriate fruit.

The numerous writings and actions taken against Judaism, combined with the successful ecclesiastical propaganda of the Western Church (Catholic and Protestant), managed to prepare the minds of the good Christians and to win them for the cause of anti-Semitism (i.e. anti-Judaism). And also to convince them of the need to take in their defense preventive measures organized by the state to limit the civil, economic and political rights of European Jewry that would naturally lead to the final stage - *the Final Solution of the Jewish Question (die Endloesung der Judenfrage)*.

## **FROM THE COUNCIL OF CLERMONT TO THE "NATIONAL REVOLUTION"**

The Council of Clermont in 1095 which declared the First Crusade might be considered as the beginning of French anti-Semitism. The 11th century was marked by persecution of Jews, forced conversions, taxing them over due, collection of amounts needed for the trip to the Holy Land. At that time the Crusaders closed the Jews from Rouen who had refused to convert in a church and killed them irrespective of their sex and age. The biggest massacres of that period took place in the Rhine valley: thousands were killed and entire communities were wiped from the face of the earth. During the 23-year reign of the Capetian dynasty in France there was no security for the Jews. In 1010 Bishop Alduin, Bishop of Limoges faced the Jews with the choice between conversion or exile. Then the Duke of Normandy Robert I declared that all the Jews in his lands who did not adopt Christianity would be killed. The threat was put into force, as a result of which many Jews committed suicide (Golb 1985: 36)

The accusation of conspiracy was not an invention neither of the 19th, nor the 20th century, although at that time it was repeatedly exploited by anti-Semitic propaganda. According to the chroniclers Adémar de Chabannes<sup>2</sup>, and later also Raoul Glaber<sup>3</sup>, who reported about a secret correspondence between Jews and Muslims, the Jews from the West were to warn the Muslims about Christian expeditions against them and then prompt them to destroy the Holy Sepulchre. This claim was rejected already at that time because of its *improbability*. Glaber added that after the disclosure of this *crime* the expulsion of the Jews everywhere was declared by decree. Then the fighting with the Moors in Spain provided a new pretext for massacres of Jews, even though Pope Alexander II condemned these murders ([www.jewishencyclopedia.com](http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com)).

During the First and the Second Crusade were developed the most commonly used justifications of Christian anti-Semitism - accusations of ritual murder, according to which Jews wanted to repeat the crucifixion by killing Christians and usury, which was declared a mortal sin by the Church. Lending was prohibited for Christians, but not for Jews, as a result of which many of them became rich bankers. In the Middle Ages quite often usury caused hatred against members of the Jewish communities. With the worst time in Europe - the Black Plague from 1347 to 1349 - is connected one more of the justifications of anti-Semitism in France. Jews were accused of poisoning wells. In Strasbourg in February 1349 they were slaughtered. At the same time those of Clomar were burned alive ([jewchenciclopedia.com](http://jewchenciclopedia.com)).

Discriminatory measures against the Jews were not invention of the twentieth century. Already in 1215 the Fourth Lateran Council required them to wear a special suit and rouelle - a circular cloth worn as defamatory sign which symbolized the 30 pieces of silver of Judas. In France in 1269 it would become mandatory at the end of the reign of Louis IX. Since then, the Jews would be considered by the clergy as collectively responsible for the crucifixion of Christ - one of the leading ideas that would be perseveringly repeated centuries on end. The yellow mark or the red mark: in the twentieth century were again restored medieval practices established in the 13th century in France, Germany, England ... Many rulers (in France: Philippe Auguste, Louis IX, Philip III, Philip the Fair, Louis X, Jean the Good) and Popes (Innocent III, Alexander IV, Innocent IV) imposed on the Jews the

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<sup>2</sup> De Chabannes, Adémar (988-1034) – one of the most renowned historians of the 11th century. He was the author of some of the most famous works on the history of Aquitaine in the early Middle Ages.

<sup>3</sup> Glaber, Raoul (985-+ след 1047) - monk chronicler of his time (the time from 1033 AD - *l'an Mil*) and one of the most important sources available to French historians about the period.

wearing of insignia on clothing: yellow or red cloth, a red cap. In the Middle Ages yellow (the color of sulfur) and red (the color of fire) were actually colors associated with the devil, the evil spirit, and betrayal (the yellow robe of Judas), fraud (the cunning of the red-fox), madness (the red and yellow clothes of the jesters and clowns of the King) (Poliakov 1999).

In 1240 King Louis IX organized the first dispute regarding the Talmud between rabbis and Christian clerics, which ended with condemnation of the Talmud, copies of which were publicly burned on the Place de Grève in Paris. Similar auto-da-fes were a common practice in the history of anti-Semitism in France. On September 17, 1394 Charles VI, called the "Mad" put an end to the thousand years of life of the Jews in his kingdom. This date is symbolic, because at that time the Jews in France were not more than a few hundred. In fact, in the course of two centuries they had constantly been expelled, then summoned back by the sovereigns. The aim was to fill the Royal Treasury by taxes or imposing fines. Moreover, any lending was charged by the Treasury (Philippe 1979).

There is very little material evidence of the presence of Jews in the fourteenth century. That is why in 1929 Camille Enlart had good reasons to write: *In the course of the persecutions to which the Jews were subjected in the Middle Ages, all synagogues were destroyed, as well as the cemeteries situated in their vicinity. But in more than 400 cities and villages in France could be found a street in a Jewish neighborhood or Jewish street resembling that Jewish rural France, which has disappeared in the fourteenth century.* (Nahon 1975: 141). However, there were significant communities in Alsace and across northern France and especially in Champagne and Normandy.

One of the restrictive measures to which Jews were subjected was the proclamation of the Black Code of Louis XIV or the "edict for the policing of slavery" of 1685. According to a special ordinance to the police for the Negroes, they had to be expelled to the colonies.

As for the emergence of the Jewish neighborhoods consisting of one or several streets, in France, where they were known under the name *juiverie* (from *juif* - a Jew in French), that was not only the result of coercion. The reasons were various. Religious - they were grouped around their synagogues; for security reasons - because they were victims of anti-Jewish riots, they sought protection; segregation - forced to live separately, so that not to mix with Christians. Along with that the authorities obliged them to live separately in order to facilitate the collection of taxes (Golb 1985).

French anti-Semitism of the late 19th century was remarkable with its popularity and aggression, an evidence of which are the impressive in number and acrimony anti-Semitic publications. Little by little anti-Semitism



seized all the right-wing, as shall be seen during the Dreyfus affair and the Panama scandal with nationalism and racism. It is striking that at the same time Captain Philippe Pétain, the future Marshal and head of state of Vichy has never identified himself as anti-Dreyfusard. He did not take part in the petition for the *Monument Henry*, a national petition launched by the anti-Semitic newspaper *La Libre Parole* in favor of the widow of the author of the false document Colonel Henry, who was responsible for the unjust condemnation of Captain Dreyfus. On the contrary, according to various testimonies, he declared later that he had always believed in his innocence, although in his view Dreyfus had defended himself poorly. Thus the captain of his civilian cabinet Henry du Moulin de Labarthète had heard him saying: *As for me, I have always believed in the innocence of Dreyfus.* (Epstein 2001: 208). According to the two ministers Petainites Henri Moysset (1875-1949) and Lucien Romier (1885-1944) the idea that Félix Gustave Saussier and Jean Casimir-Perier had condemned Captain Dreyfus, although they knew that he was innocent, had excited him, and even scandalized the captain of Jewish origin. In that affair, unlike the case of General Maxime Weygand, the last commander-in-chief of France before the defeat and member of the French Academy, Pétain did not show any element of anti-Semitism. In general, as a military he was considered to be a man respecting republican institutions. (Joly: 2010). Apparently, because of its diversity anti-Semitism was a very complex problem for research. The very personality of the future Marshal was quite ambiguous.

One of the blades of anti-Semitism was the pamphlet of Édouard Drumont "*Jewish France*". In 1200 pages, the book was published by the author for the first time in two volumes in 1886. It was another major success and was highly commented in over 140 publications in the two years after the first edition. In 1888 was published another popular version of it in a summary volume. Its success was partly due to the indicated names of many Jews who had participated actively in the public life and government of the Third Republic. For one year the book had 114 editions - an incredible success, ranking it among the bestsellers of the late 19th century. (De Fontaine 2002: 80-88).

The book distinguishes different types of anti-Semitism: the so-called *racial anti-Semitism* (confrontation between Aryan and Semitic anthropological type); *economic anti-Semitism* (against the rulers of finance and capital, which were in the hands of the Jews) and *religious anti-Semitism* (with regards to the so-called *deicide* and *blood libel against the Jews*, i.e. against *Jewish culture*, as a destroyer of morality and the moral values of the Christian civilization).

Édouard Drumont began his study on *La France juive* in 1886 by an *ethnographic, physiological and psychological comparison between Aryans*

*and Semites.* In the pamphlet was presented one of the popular descriptions of the Jew, reflecting the mentality of the then French society which was carried on to later periods. The most important in it was that he was an essentially inferior creature. According to the author, he had a particular *physical build. The main features, by which the Jew could be recognized were: the famous hooked nose, twinkling eyes, clenched teeth, salient ears, square and not almond-shaped nails, too long torso, flat feet, round knees, outwards curved ankle, soft and flabby hand, characteristic of the hypocrite and traitor.*

*Often, one of their arms was longer than the other.* (Winock 2002: 49). And another no less sinister and condemning definition - here the author has directed the power of his pen against all the people: *I see only one image and want to present it to you: the insulted, disgraced, wounded by the crown of thorns, crucified Christ. Nothing has changed for 1800 years. The same lie, the same hatred, the same people.* (De Fontaine 2002: 80-88).

Right-wing anti-Semitism has very ancient religious backgrounds. It was activated by the revanchist nationalism as a consequence of the defeat in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871. But this traditional anti-Judaism was opposed by modern anti-Semitism which was associated with the racist theses claiming the superiority of the "white race," which would be based on science (anthropometry, craniometry, etc.) It combined the topic of the *Wandering Jew* with that of the *rootless cosmopolitan*. Anti-Semitism was not a stranger to the left, too. It was intertwined with anti-capitalism, republicanism and anti-clericalism. There was the belief that *capital was in the hands of the Jews* and that they were not true patriots. These ideas were multiplied, especially after the defeat and the loss of Alsace and Lorraine.

In the 1930s the economic crisis, unemployment, the flow of immigrants from many different countries and for different reasons, the influx of Jews fleeing from Nazism and the formation of the Popular Front government led by Leon Blum in 1936 resulted in a powerful wave of xenophobia and anti-Semitism. There was a very hostile attitude to mixed marriages between Jews and Christians, but never any legal measure was taken. However, several laws were adopted in response to some manifestations, particularly in medical and lawyers circles which restricted the practice of medicine only to graduates of French nationality (1933 and 1937) and the legal profession - to those who had lived on the territory of the country not less than ten years.

Only five months after Hitler's accession to power, on August 2, 1933 in France were already taken discriminatory measures against the Jews

by the Prime Minister Camille Chautemps<sup>4</sup> with the aim to reject political refugees coming from Germany. He specified: *The entering in France of the Israelites expelled from Germany, should be continued with extreme caution.* (Le Groignec 2003: 15).

In addition to preparing to take discriminatory measures against them, the Third Reich planned to expel them from its territory. But the Western states were reluctant and refused to accept new refugees. On August 10, 1938 the Swiss federal government made it clear that Switzerland strongly opposed the judeisation of the country. From October 5th, the passports of the Jews were stamped with red capital "J" so that they could be unambiguously identified. In December 1938, the Foreign Minister Georges Bonnet informed his colleague Ribbentrop that France was no longer willing to accept Jews arriving from Germany. It even thought of sending 10,000 of them in Madagascar. In his memoirs Raymond Aron wrote that French Jews themselves have reacted strongly to the arrival of their German counterparts after 1933: *They were Swabians* (Aron 1983: 18). Speaking about the foreign Jews, Marc Bloch would not hesitate to write in 1941: *Their cause is not exactly ours. We have the right to say it because it is true.* (Bloch 1990: 309).

## **JEWISH GENOCIDE AND THE FRENCH STATE**

After the defeat of May-June 1940 came into being the Vichy regime headed by Marshal Pétain. One of the essential features of its ideology - the ideology of the National Revolution was anti-Semitism. It was not enforced upon the pressure of the Germans as the former French leaders claimed during the processes of 1945, as well as the entire Pétainist school in historiography. Rather, it was "state anti-Semitism" carried out by the conviction of its leaders, who based themselves on the anti-Semitism which was deep-rooted in a large part of the society and had flourished especially after the defeat.

Even before the war was unleashed a powerful wave of xenophobia directed against naturalized foreigners and people who fled from National Socialism and fascism after 1936, many of whom were Jews. Here is what had been written in their regard in a report of the press attaché to the Bulgarian minister plenipotentiary in Vichy Nikola Balabanov, dated July 29, 1940: *The newcomers were not satisfied with a modest place in society. Especially Jews, due to their innate racial qualities of adaptation and go-*

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<sup>4</sup> Camille Chautemps (1885-1963) - a French politician of the Radical-Socialist party, three times prime-minister during the period of the Third Republic.

getting, were able to find also government offices. In the educational institutions, public health, national pharmacy, in the ministries of trade, industry, and even of the interior, the Jews - new Frenchmen started to be seen more and more frequently. Others, supported by their older racial brothers began to make their way to the political arena and there they were quite likely to reach good leading positions.<sup>5</sup> It is a known fact that Jews had strong positions in banking, finance, crafts, culture, art and the press. All that, "of course," irritated much some nationalists of old French kin, as the Bulgarian press attaché wrote.<sup>6</sup> The problem had both economic and personal dimensions - apparently some Frenchmen had felt threatened on their way to occupy different positions and offices or had decided that their daily bread was threatened by the influx of foreigners in all spheres of life and the explanation for the threat on their part was quite welcome.

The Vichy government had to satisfy public indignation caused by the defeat in the war. It was exacerbated even more when the search for those responsible for the catastrophe started and Jews were among the "most appropriate". In case of difficulty it is advantageous for each government to indicate as its cause an external enemy. Thus it takes the role of protector of the "true", the "indigenous" population, threatened by elements "external" to the nation. A poster of that time clearly illustrates the "concept" of the Jewish threat. It depicts a spider with a Jewish head (as the face of the Jew was traditionally depicted), which had covered the army, the press, trade, sports, literature, theater, education, finance. The text reads: *The ulcer that drank France*. The thesis of the Jewish conspiracy was launched. A mass distribution of anti-Semitic literature began. In July 1942 the publishing house Denoël published a book of Lucien Rebatet<sup>7</sup> *The Remains*, which was a true publishing phenomenon during the occupation with its 65,000 copies sold, with orders reaching up to 200,000. (Belot 1991: 43). It was only the lack of paper that could not satisfy them. In his pamphlet he expressed his criticism of "Maurrasism" calling Charles Maurras a pseudo-fascist and his own support of German National Socialism; he calumniated Jews such as Bergson, Heine, Benda, Soutine, Darius Milhaud, *these harmful, dirty animals, bearing in themselves the germs of all disasters*. (De Dominique-

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<sup>5</sup> ЦДА, МВНР, ф. 176 к., оп. 8, а.е. 1247, л. 18.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, а.е. 898, л. 43.

<sup>7</sup> Rebatet, Lucien (1903-1972) - a French intellectual, writer, journalist and film critic. Known as supporter of fascism and militant anti-Semite. In 1946, he received a death sentence, which was replaced by forced labor. After his release from prison in 1952 he returned to journalism and became director of *Matin Dimanche*. His novels have been assessed as peaks in the French literary history and published in publishing houses of the rank of *Gallimard* and *Robert Laffont*.

Fernandez 2010: 654-655). In his view, the politicians and the military in the Third Republic were responsible for the destruction of France. Actually, we could not but agree with this opinion, taking into account the historical facts and the actions of the French leaders of that period.

Just two days after the election of the strong with its image of winner of the war of 1918 Marshal Pétain as head of state on July 16, 1940, was proclaimed one of the first laws of the new regime related to the formation of the ministerial offices. It stated that only persons whose fathers were of French origin could be appointed in them. This law is an evidence of the atmosphere at the top and it would be followed by much harsher measures. The first anti-Jewish measures were taken very quickly - at the time when the French had just returned from the roads of escape, still not having got rid of the horror and humiliation of the defeat. On August 8, Pétain abrogated the *Marchandea* decree dating from August 21, 1939, which prohibited racist and anti-Semitic insults. Newspapers such as *Gringoire* then freely engaged in anti-Semitic caricature.

Only twelve days later was issued an ordinance forbidding Jews and foreigners to return in the occupied zone. This brought to the separation of thousands of families. The Germans proclaimed in the occupied zone the status of September 27, 1940, which defined a Jew anyone who professed the Jewish religion or had three ancestors, professing the Jewish religion. *Vichy protested: The Marshal believed he and his government were entitled to strictly punish the Jews in France.* On October 3 was issued the first status for the Jews, which was more extensive than the one that was applied in the occupied zone. That was the first openly anti-Semitic French law. The determining criterion was no longer religious but a racial one. It provided a definition similar to that of the German Nuremberg laws of 1935: *As Jew is considered any person descending from three Jewish grandparents or two Jewish grandparents if his spouse is Jewish, regardless of religion.* (B & S Encyclopédie 2007-2010: <http://www.encyclopedie.bsditions.fr>). The authorities were quick to provide legal justification and to give legal form of the anti-Semitic policy. This had nothing to do with German pressure. Moreover, Vichy jealously guarded its independence in solving *the Jewish question*. On October 3 and 4 came into being two laws. According to the first one Jews were excluded from the main political functions, administration, press, cinema, theater, radio. The unwanted Jews were excluded from the liberal professions. The head of state was personally involved in its preparation, in particular as regards justice and teaching. The second one stipulated the internment of "the foreigners of the Jewish race", as a result of which at the end of 1940 20,000 people were detained in camps in the free zone or were interned. The majority of these unfortunates who

had believed to have found shelter in France would end up in death camps in Germany.

On June 2, 1941 was proclaimed the second status of the Jews. Its purpose was to remove Jews from all economic activity. It was even more restrictive: it extended the list of professions from which they were excluded and established *numerus clausus*, limiting the proportion of Jews to 3% in the University and 2% in the liberal professions. From that moment on inaccessible to them would become also advertising, banking, finance, real estate. *Numerus clausus* was established also on dentists, doctors and lawyers. Public functions remained open for the Jewish veterans of 1914-1918 and 1939-1940, the women and children of military men who had died for France. However, they were not allowed any access to the professions related to the press, radio, cinema and more generally, to spectacles. Actually, the latter is completely understandable. Before the war, Jews had strong positions in these key areas defining public consciousness. It is therefore not surprising that the regime in Vichy hastened to remove them by appointing its faithful people.

Issued on October 18, 1940 the ordinance required all Jews who had an enterprise to put it under the management of a temporary administrator: thus Vichy engaged in a high speed race with the occupier, with regard to the confiscation of Jewish property. Vichy would try by all means to avoid the acquisition of the captured property by Germans, with more or less success, in particular with regard to the theft of works of art, in which Goering appeared to be particularly handy... In July 1941 Jews had to surrender to *Aryans* their rights on the enterprises - the so-called *Aryanization* was carried out. The Germans applied that measure in the occupied zone from October 1941. That was another example which showed that the French authorities were more assiduous in conducting the anti-Semitic policy.

The status of June 2, 1941 regulates the issue of the semi-Jews by adding religion as a criterion. As a result of the intense legislation activity of the regime and the establishment of special bodies for its implementation, the Jews were completely excluded from society.

Both statutes had their "justification": *Everywhere, particularly in the public services, the impact of the Jews turned to be demoralizing. All observers note unanimously the harmful effects of their activities over the last years, during which they occupied a significant part of the management of our affairs. The French government respects the personality and property of the Jews. It only prohibits them the holding of certain positions in the social sphere, the government, the formation of the intelligentsia, culture, as experience has shown that Jews bring to individualism and anarchy.*

(Gaulmier 1989: 25, 29). In fact, under *certain positions* one should understand "all".

*Our hope is in you* - in this way ended most of the letters of Jews to the Marshal, which represent a significant part of all letters addressed to him. Many of them were signed: *Your soldier*. Philippe Pétain told Pastor Marc Bœgner, president of the Protestant Federation of France that racist laws have brought to great suffering and injustices, which could, however, be redressed only after the conclusion of a peace treaty. But as a result of the anti-Semitic persecution or the execution of the "Final Solution" 76,000 people were deported to Nazi camps in Europe. 11,000 of them were children. In 1940 they made a quarter of the Jewish population in the country. While it is difficult to make a precise calculation, it is believed that at the beginning of World War II in France lived 330,000 Jews (according to other sources - about 300,000). Only 2,500 of them managed to avoid destruction. In Alsace one in four Jews died in deportation. (Biret 2013: <http://www.crdp-strasbourg.fr/>.) Together with the three thousand people that had died in French internment camps and the thousand executed as hostages the bloody balance reaches 80,000 victims. (In total the number of the people who have never come back was 108,000 ... (Blum-Cherchevski 2006: [http://www.crdp-reims.fr](http://www.crdp-reims.fr/)). However, by these numbers could hardly be measured the blood and suffering, torture and despair, hope and the will to live up to last... Measuring units for that have never been and would never be found...

The situation of the Jews in the occupied zone and in the free zone was different because the French anti-Jewish laws applied throughout the territory, but in the occupied zone the German decrees were added also to them. In June 1940 the Minister of Justice Raphaël Alibert set up a committee that revised 500,000 of the naturalizations proclaimed after 1929. 15,000 people were deprived of their nationality. 40% of them were Jews. With the repeal of the *Crémieux* decree on October 7, 1940, 100,000 Algerian Jews lost French nationality.

On March 29, 1941 was created the General Commissariat for Jewish Affairs which had to propose anti-Jewish legislation and regulatory provisions and to carry out the measures undertaken by the government. These laws were copied or inspired by the Nazi laws with which they were equal in harshness. This legislative ensemble that was not requested by the Germans, was almost the only of its kind in Europe. According to the American historian Robert Paxton, *one could not say that it hasn't existed elsewhere, but not to such an extent. There were the cases of Hungary and Italy*. Jews were subject to 184 regulatory and legislative texts, of which 162 came from the authorities in Vichy and 22 from the German authorities,

stated the lawyer Alain Jakubowicz during the process "Papon" in 1998 (Pech, Lombard 2010: [http:// www.lefigaro.fr](http://www.lefigaro.fr)).

According to an ordinance of August 13, the same year Jews were forbidden to have radios and they had to be handed over to the municipalities, the Commissariat or the Prefecture of their community. With ordinance of February 10, 1942 they were permitted to change their names. As for the foreign Jews, they were considered a waste that had no place in France. From October 4, 1940 the prefects interned foreigners of the Jewish race in special camps or interned them. In February 1941, 40,000 languished in a number of camps. In July 1940, when the Final Solution was not on the agenda yet, the Germans expelled 20,000 Jews from Alsace-Lorraine to the unoccupied zone. After 1942, when following the conference in Wannsee it had to be implemented in practice, the French government would always manage to show compliance to surrender the foreign Jews to the Germans<sup>8</sup> (B&S Encyclopédie. Le régime de Vichy, <http://www.encyclopedia.bsditions.fr/>).

According to the French historian André Kaspi, professor at the Sorbonne, by declaring legislation of *exclusion, depriving the Jews of basic civil rights, of their crafts and property, the internment of foreign Jews, the French state facilitated the work of the Germans... Vichy was an accomplice, an active, necessary accomplice.* (Kaspi 1991: 54). The French government wanted to prove to the Germans that it was able to establish order in the country, even at the cost of a war on the children. On June 6, 1941 Theodor Dannecker, who was responsible for Jewish Affairs in the Gestapo in France, informed Adolf Eichmann, who was in charge of the organization of the Final Solution that Prime Minister Pierre Laval had offered him to the deportation of the Jewish families from the unoccupied zone to be included the children under 16 years of age. *The issue of the children which had remained in the occupied zone did not interest him.* (Marrus 1998: 60-63). As for them, the Germans required only Jews over 16 years of age to be transmitted to them. *But the government in Vichy and actually Laval under the pretext families not to be separated transmitted also the children. In 1942 from France to Auschwitz left 1,032 children aged under 6 years, 2,557 of them between 6 and 12 years of age and 2, 664 - between 13 and 17 years of age. A total of about eleven thousand were deported and only a few of them would return.*<sup>9</sup>

The arrests in the occupied zone were not enough to fill the trains for the deportation. The necessary supplement was provided by the southern

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<sup>8</sup> B&S Encyclopédie. *Le régime de Vichy*, <http://www.encyclopedia.bsditions.fr/>

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.



zone. The internment camps were filled with foreigners, such as those in Gurs, Rivesaltes, Récébédou or Milles, in other words the areas for internment constituted a "reservoir," from which the gendarmerie could easily scoop up. From early August the interned were taken out of the camps to be transferred to the concentration camp Drancy. *On the morning of July 16, 1941 in Paris began operation "Spring Wind": for two days, 900 teams of French police arrested 12,884 stateless Jews („apatriés”) in Paris: 3,031 men, 5,802 women and 4,051 children (2 to 15 years of age). 6,000 people - celibate men and women and couples without children were directly sent to Drancy.*

*The others were pushed in the Winter cycling track ("Vel'd'Hiv") where chaos reigned... many children were left alone, hygiene was deplorable, 50 Jews agonized in a corner of the stadium ... They would stay there for four days before being transferred to the camps in Pithiviers and Beaune-la-Rolande after July 20.<sup>10</sup>*

Only during the blockade of May 1941, 3,747 Jews foreigners were arrested in the capital and then interned in the camps Beaune-la-Rolande et Pithiviers.<sup>11</sup> On August 26, 1941 the unoccupied zone was a theater of persecution that allowed for the arrest of nearly 6,000 Jews. Then a total of ten thousand people were directed first towards Drancy and from there to Auschwitz-Birkenau. There would be no more mass arrests of such scale. 1942, with its 42, 655 deportations of a total of 75,721 Jews deported from France<sup>12</sup>, was a terrible year for both the Jews of France and the majority of the countries occupied by Germany. But the arrests and deportations did not stop until the last day of the occupation of the territory. They affected individuals or were of mass nature, as the blockade of Marseille from January 22 to 27, 1943, as a result of which about 800 Jews were arrested.

French anti-Semitism acquired a sinister nature with the production of fabric from the hair of the Jews and the trucks-gas generators for killing. The harsh actions of Vichy against the Jews were explained with its desire to secure the cooperation of the Germans, which seemed useful and urgent and in which, at least in the beginning, they were not interested at all. It could be said that the policy of anti-Semitism had reached such a scope also because the French society of 1940-1941 remained indifferent to the fate of the Jews and reacted only in the summer of 1942, when the first deportations planned

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> *Fermeture et répression: 1931-1944*, Musée de l'histoire de l'immigration, 2013, <http://www.histoire-immigration.fr>.

<sup>12</sup> For establishing the accuracy of data, see: Serge Klarsfeld (1993), *Le Calendrier de la persécution des Juifs de France*, <http://www.fondationshoah.org/>

by the Nazis took place. Moreover, that did not happen right away. Sometimes it was sufficient to hear assurances from the government that it would not take new measures and that they would not be forced to wear a six-pointed star, as was the case with the stateless Jews, and the people would be calmed down. Along with that, not only the existence of internment camps themselves, but also the living conditions and the high mortality were not hidden from the French. Deportations were carried out by the national railways.

The senior Catholic clergy was hostile to the persecutions, but it believed that the state had the right to protect its citizens, of which Jews did not make part. However, only in 1942 the Church protested against the arrests.

*The persecution of stateless Jews, who had entered France after 1936, and their transfer to the Germans created public reaction and strong resentment on the part of the clergy: both Catholic and Protestant. The French felt humiliated for having broken - and in a brutal way - the traditional right of shelter on which France prided itself.*<sup>13</sup>

Anti-Semitism, the deportation and the scenes that accompanied it, caused a wave of public protest, led by the church. Thus the regime was gradually deprived of one of its traditional supporters. The preachers' organizations hid the Jews: Christian Brotherhood, an association under the patronage of Cardinal Pierre Guerlier and pastor Bœgner, the Protestant community of Chambon-sur-Lignon, in the department of Haute-Loire; common people also did much. The opposition to racism could not leave indifferent any person having conscience. In late July 1942 in an address to the Marshal the cardinals and archbishops in the occupied zone wrote: *Deeply excited after we learned about the mass arrests of Jews and the severe sufferings which were caused to them, especially at the Winter cycling track, we cannot suppress the cry of our minds ...*

*In the name of humanity and Christian principles we are rising our voice of protest for the inalienable rights of the individual...* (Collectif 1945: 51). The prelates asked the president to observe that the requirements of Justice and the Right of Mercy were respected.

In the same vein was the personal letter of the president of the Protestant Federation Pastor Marc Bœgner of August 20, 1942 on the occasion of the murder of Jewish women; the letter to the archbishop of Toulouse Mgr Saliège of August 22, the same year on the human rights and the equal rights of Christians and Jews; of the archbishop of Montauban Mgr

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<sup>13</sup> ЦДА, АМВНР, ф. 176 к., оп. 13, а.е. 40, л. 155.

Théas of August 26, which proclaimed that all human beings - Aryans or non-Aryans, were brothers and declared the anti-Semitic measures contrary to the rights of the family and the individual. Regarding the actions against Jewish refugees was also the appeal to the believers of the Reformed Church of France from September 22, 1942. It was a call for Samaritans charity, against evil: *A Christian church would lose its soul and the meaning of its existence, if it does not support the law of God for all human communities, to protect the nation, in the bosom of which the Lord has put it ... The gospel tells us to consider all men as brothers, for which the Savior died on the Cross.* (Collectif 1945: 51).

Apparently, Pétain was no longer the only salvation of France, neither was he a unifier, because he had divided the French into categories - those who had the power to live, and the others - who did not have it. Therefore, the church took on the role of a pastor, of unifier who accepted people regardless of their ethnic and racial affiliation.

## **THE FACES OF ANTISEMITISM DURING WORLD WAR II**

Anti-Semitism is a multifaceted phenomenon, in which are intertwined different lines of human history. One could rather speak of "anti-Semitismisms". It appeared centuries before World War II, but it was then that it thrived most vigorously and took the greatest number of victims. In France after the armistice one could distinguish three types of anti-Semitism – the French one that occurred within the "free zone", the National-Socialist - within the German occupation zone and the fascist one - within the Italian zone. In his report of January 20, 1943 the Bulgarian minister plenipotentiary in Vichy Nikola Balabanov reported of a seemingly paradoxical situation that was established there. He described the clash between the military authorities in the Italian occupation zone formed after the full occupation of France on November 11, 1942 by German and Italian troops in response to the Anglo-American landing in North Africa on November 8, and the French authorities regarding the Jews from the Italian zone. *In the French Riviera, especially in Nice and Cannes, after the defeat of France were settled a great number of Jews - local and foreigners. After the November events, the French authorities, on the request or at least upon the suggestion of the Germans issued an order under which all Jews located in the coastal area had to leave their residence and settle in other particular regions in the interior in a relatively short time,* wrote the Bulgarian minister

plenipotentiary in Vichy.<sup>14</sup> The Italian military authorities did not allow the implementation of this ordinance regarding the Jews who were their subjects. *Later on, by order of Rome, they did not allow it to be implemented with regards to the other Jews - foreigners. This Italian measure caused some dispute with the French authorities. The latter maintained that it was all about an administrative measure of a domestic nature, which they were free to take and which could not be revoked by the Italian authorities. These authorities on their part claimed that in the area occupied by Italian troops for military reasons, they had the power to take measures they deemed appropriate to ensure military security. Of course, the Italians did not give way, the regulation of the French authorities was not implemented and today many Jews from all nationalities walk calmly along "Côte d'Azur".*<sup>15</sup> Further in his report Nikola Balabanov added that apart from the discontent of the French authorities, the Germans were also unpleasantly affected by this Italian countermeasure.<sup>16</sup>

In November 1942 the Germans invaded the free zone in which eight departments were under Italian control. This enclave gave shelter to more than 20,000 Jews who had flocked in mass to this area. The Jewish banker Angelo Donati became a defender of the Jewish community before the Italian authorities. On the *Dubouchage* street in Nice the activists of the Federation of Jewish Communities in France created Committee for assistance to refugees. It was headed by the Russian Jew from Odessa Yaakov Dobinski. Angelo Donati and the *Dubouchage* committee met regularly to discuss the problems of security of the Jews and to circumvent the measures for rejection and internment formally taken by the Italians under German pressure. For that time Simone Veil wrote: "Nice did not stop accepting Jewish refugees from northern France [...] phenomenon that became even more acute with the occupation of the Midi by the Italian troops at the end of 1942 [...] It should be emphasized that the Italians had a tolerant attitude towards the French Jews. Paradoxically, they appeared to be more liberal to us than the authorities in our country. The Germans [...] were quick to condemn the relative benevolence of the Italians, but in vain. Thus by the summer of 1943 Southern France became the refuge of the Jews [...] In this way for a few months only the population of Nice has increased to nearly thirty thousand ... " (Simone 2009: 34-36)

The Italian Chief Inspector Lo Spinozo authorized the *Dubouchage* committee to supply the Jews with documents of which they had been

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<sup>14</sup> ЦДА, МВНР, ф. 176 к, оп. 8., а. е. 1247, л. 17.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

deprived and organized their accommodation in requisitioned hotels. But the fall of Mussolini forced Donati to embark on a plan for evacuation of the Jews to Italy in agreement with the Italian authorities. As a result of the premature announcement of the armistice between the Allies and the government of Marshal Badoglio the Italians withdrew from the region. The Wehrmacht and Gestapo led by Alois Brunner were given a free hand. The police rushed into Nice on September 9, 1943 even before the German troops. The Jews were trapped. The arrests began immediately. Sought and prosecuted, the cadres from *Dubouchage* street had to leave urgently Nice. Claude Kelman, one of the most active leaders of the committee, was among the last to leave after the Gestapo raided his home and arrested two of his aides. Then the teams of the Zionist youth movement<sup>17</sup> and the Israelite Scouts of France<sup>18</sup> took upon themselves the care for the distribution of material aid, false documents and the opening of roads to evacuate the refugees.

## CONCLUSION

Anti-Semitism is a phenomenon with deep roots in history. It was the result of a number of violent clashes - wars, crusades, ethnic, ideological and religious conflicts. French anti-Semitism dates back to the 11th century. That is why it was difficult to be eradicated, but it deepened and expanded into the "flesh" of the society, in public conscience, the Catholic and Protestant church to get to the point where during the "Dreyfus" affair and the Panama scandal the right and the left and created powerful and aggressive press. Anti-Semitism was so popular that when after the defeat of May-June 1940 a special anti-Jewish legislation was created, accompanied by measures and institutions for its implementation, as well as more comprehensive punitive actions against the Jews, the community did not

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<sup>17</sup> Founded by Simon Levitte and having established itself mainly in Montpellier, it specialized primarily in networking for the escape of the Jews, their removal from internment camps, sheltering and supplying with false documents and then their escort both to Spain and to Switzerland.

<sup>18</sup> The Israelite Scouts of France (EIF) were Jewish scouts. The movement was founded by Robert Gamzon, called the *Careful Castor*, in 1923. When the General Union of Israelites in France (UGIF) was established by order of the government in Vichy and upon German request, as a result of the Law of November 29, 1941, EIF became the sixth section which gave the name of the resistance, founded by EI. In November 1941, EIF were dissolved by the government, but continued their activities under the control of the French Scoutism. It included 60 people under the command of Robert Gamzon, who named the squad after Marc Haguenu, a resistance fighter who was killed by the Germans. The *Marc Haguenu* detachment contributed to the liberation of Castres and Mazamet, then joined First French Army and took part in the campaigns for France and Germany.

react. Only after the first deportations to the death camps began in 1942, the French woke up shocked by the atrocities, but that did not take place immediately.

Since its establishment of the authoritarian-patriarchal regime of the "savior of Verdun," "the Father of the Fatherland" Marshal Pétain started to divide his "children" in categories, unequal in dignity and value: from that moment on there would be "real good Frenchmen" and suspicious, mediocre and completely bad - worthy of jail and liquidation in the death camps. A total of 74 convoys have left in the direction of the concentration camps or the extermination camps - the first from Compiègne on March 27, 1942 and the last from Clermont-Ferrand on August 18, 1944.

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