

FROM RESISTANCE TO REVOLUTION:
ALBERT CAMUS AND THE CLANDESTINE PRESS
IN THE FRENCH RESISTANCE

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Christian Penichet-Paul

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Thesis Supervisor:

Kenneth H. Margerison, Ph.D.
Department of History

Approved:

Heather C. Galloway, Ph.D.
Dean, Honors College

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Christian Penichet-Paul

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Abstract

The values of the French Resistance during the German occupation of France were defined and supported by the Resistance's clandestine press. These underground newspapers supported left-wing policies, which influenced France throughout the nation's occupation, liberation and post-liberation periods. In turn, the values of the French Resistance became, to an extent, the values of France. The writings of Albert Camus in *Combat*, one of the major underground newspapers in the movement, present an understanding of the liberal ideals established in the Resistance. Camus concept of a 'liberal revolution,' which advocated France to transform into a socialist state with a renewed national community, helps to understand the left-wing aspects of the Resistance. Through an analysis of Camus' editorials in *Combat*, it was possible to comprehend the thoughts and values of Camus and his view on the Resistance. In addition, secondary sources provided important contextual information on the events pertaining to the Resistance and Camus' articles. The Resistance's perspective, expressed through its underground newspapers, was an important part of France's experience during and in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War. The clandestine press, as represented by Camus' editorials in *Combat*, was significant in the establishment and circulation of the Resistance's values. In response, the ideals of the French Resistance became major social and political forces in France.

Introduction

Albert Camus joined the French Resistance in the fall of 1943 as a writer and editor for the underground newspaper *Combat*. Camus' writings in the clandestine paper embodied the thoughts and values of the Resistance and a significant number of the Resisters. His writings supported the republican tenets of liberty and justice, and proposed the creation of a socialist post-war society to restore France's truth and honor. Camus' articles in *Combat* demonstrate the left-wing values found in the Resistance, as well as the movement's efforts to influence the future of France. Through a careful examination of Camus' articles from 1944 to early 1945, it is possible to understand the Resistance's important endeavor to influence France during the nation's periods of occupation, liberation, and post-liberation. The role of the clandestine press in circulating the ideals of the Resistance and converting Frenchmen and women to the cause was important. The Resistance became a major social and political force in post-war France. As a result, Camus' articles in *Combat* permit a proper analysis of the Resistance's values and the role of the underground press in influencing the path of France.

The defeat and occupation of France by the German army in June 1940 was followed by the establishment of the French Resistance. Men and women from different backgrounds came together and resisted against German control in northern France and the puppet government of Philippe Pétain in Vichy, in the south of France. The Resisters fought to undermine the *status quo* and liberate France through internal opposition. From aiding French Jews to destroying methods of communication, such as railroad tracks and

telephone lines, the Resisters waged a four-year battle for the liberation of France. In the course of the Resistance, the underground press was formed to share information and the principles of the movement.

The underground writings of Albert Camus demonstrate the importance of the clandestine press. Camus, an unknown writer at the time, joined the Resistance in 1943 and began to write articles for *Combat*, a clandestine newspaper that represented a number of Resistance groups with republican values. In the articles, Camus discussed the motivations behind the underground opposition and proposed a “liberal revolution,” or the creation of a socialist state, in France. Camus’ writings in *Combat* illustrate the significance of the secret press and its role in influencing social and political factors in France.

The four years of German occupation and Vichy rule were met with resistance by determined Frenchmen and women. Without the formation of the clandestine press, however, the Resistance would have lacked the ability to share information and provide its perspective on the future of France. Camus’ writings can help to demonstrate the role of the clandestine press in the French Resistance and the French post-war debate. Thus, this paper will examine Camus’ writings in *Combat* during the periods of occupation, liberation, and post-liberation. Camus’ writings reveal the presence of left-wing ideas in the Resistance and the efforts to shape the character of France. In this manner, the role of the clandestine press in France can be adequately formulated.

The articles written by Camus in *Combat* represented the thoughts and values of a large number of the Resisters. For this matter, it is appropriate to analyze Camus’ writings as evidence of general ideals found in the movement. The Resistance’s foremost

support for republican tenets and a liberal revolution played a significant role in the aftermath of the Second World War in France.

The Resistance

The nature of the French defeat on May 1940 was unprecedented. The German army passed through the mountainous region of the Ardennes on May 10 and within a few weeks captured the French army in Belgium. Refugees streamed south from Belgium, a phenomenon which lowered the confidence of the remaining French troops awaiting the German advance. The German invasion gained considerable momentum and at times retreating French soldiers found themselves falling back on towns occupied by Germany. By June, it was clear that France had lost the war. The German invasion produced an *exode* (exodus) of phenomenal proportions. French residents, predominantly from the north and Paris region, left their homes with as many possessions as they could load on to carts and lorries. Estimates of the *exode* range between 6 and 10 million people. This massive movement of refugees swelled the population of provincial towns in the south of France. The flight of millions of people also created a massive disruption of society and stimulated both fear and confusion in France. The German invasion and the *exode* demonstrated, with little doubt, that France had been decisively defeated.¹

The French government, led by Prime Minister Paul Reynaud, fled south from Paris to Bordeaux. On 14 June, German forces arrived and captured an undefended Paris. Germany's total victory was swift and unexpected, surprising even to the Germans. General Walter Warlimont, an aide to the Supreme Command of the Wehrmacht, noted that the German headquarters thought they would find the same opponent as in the First

¹ H.R. Kedward, *Resistance in Vichy France: A Study of Ideas and Motivations in the Southern Zone 1940-1942* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), 5-9.

World War. However, Adolf Hitler believed France would be unable to repeat its military performance. Warlimont noted Hitler never missed the opportunity, after the defeat, to add derogatory comments on the moral and psychological state of France. For the French, the defeat created an overwhelming feeling of embarrassment and futility.²

In Bordeaux, Reynaud resigned from his position as prime minister. France's displaced government granted Marshal Philippe Pétain, an 84 year-old hero from the Battle of Verdun in the First World War, the power to alter the Constitution. Pétain assumed power as the head of the government and dissolved the Third Republic. He installed a military government and moved the capital to Vichy, a spa town in central France. Pétain was identified by the French with the victory of Verdun and regarded by many as a providential figure. In the chaos and confusion of France's defeat, Pétain's fatherly stature and appeal to unity made an almost religious impact on the French people. Most Frenchmen and women were willing to follow Pétain to end the confusion caused by the defeat and the chaos of the *exode*. Pétain's propaganda machine told the French they had one choice, to remain confused and helpless or to follow him. Pétain's rise to power was followed by an Armistice with Germany. In the Armistice, northern France remained occupied; however, central and southern France, including the colonies, would be administered by Pétain's government with supervision by Germany. Pétain and the Armistice were seized as the only solutions that would result in peace and a return to normal life in France.³

Pétain's government in Vichy France focused on creating a conservative National Revolution based on the traditionalist values of religion, authority, and order. The agenda

² Marcel Ophuls, *The Sorrow and the Pity* (New York: Berkley Publishing Corporation, 1972), 5-12.

³ Kedward, *Resistance in Vichy France*, 9-12.

called for the state's removal of undesirable influences. Jews, communists and foreigners became the object of discrimination and legal persecution. The purpose of the National Revolution was to restore France to her traditional roots. In addition, Pétain's main advisor, Pierre Laval, supported a policy of collaboration. French collaboration consisted of political and economic co-operation with Germany. While technically neutral, Vichy aided Germany in the war for the purpose of maintaining French independence and, in some instances, because of ideological similarities. Pierre Mendes-France, an airman during the war and Prime Minister of France from 1954 to 1955, noted certain military and civilian circles in France held the attitude "better Hitler than Léon Blum," the leader of the French left in the Third Republic. Elements of the French right, which manifested in Vichy, sympathized with the traditionalist policies of Nazi Germany.⁴

From the outset, a number of Frenchmen and women opposed the German occupation and the authority of the subservient Vichy government. People who offered alternative ideas and action to the pervading attitude of defeated France refused to follow Pétain or accept the Armistice. They became Resisters by rejecting the psychology of defeat and becoming subversive in the new circumstances. The Resisters recognized France's republican heritage from the beginning. The German occupation and Vichy France conflicted with the French principles of equality and justice. For instance, the arrest of Jews in Paris on July 1942, known as the Vel d'Hiv roundup, included a complicit role by French policemen and resulted in the shipment of 13,000 people to Auschwitz. The new authorities administered the event, which violated all of France's republican tenets. In response, some Frenchmen and women joined the resistance to

⁴ Shannon L. Fogg, *The Politics of Everyday Life in Vichy France: Foreigners, Undesirables and Strangers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 13-18; Ophuls, *The Sorrow and the Pity*, 15-16.

restore France's republican values. The patriotic refusal to accept France's defeat also encouraged individuals to continue the fight against Germany. Emile Coulaudon, a member of the Resistance in Clermont, noted that he could not stand seeing German soldiers eat the last steaks at a restaurant before French citizens. In his view, it was worth fighting and dying for France's independence. French nationalism was an important element that encouraged subversion during the war.⁵

Resisters in France did not come from one homogenous group. They came from a plurality of groups and joined for a number of different reasons. The acts of resistance were also diverse and ranged from non-communication with the occupiers to full-scale sabotage. However, while there was no monolithic discourse, the general assumption was that the values of the Resistance were to the political left. The Resistance's ideology embraced the concepts of liberty, justice and anti-parliamentarianism. Individuals in the Resistance fought for the right of self-determination and the liberation of France. In general, the Resistance in France is sub-divided between the internal and external resistance movements. The internal resistance was a heterogeneous collection of resistance groups operating within France. The groups were substantially diverse, consisting of individuals from different backgrounds such as Communism and Catholicism. The external resistance operated from outside France and included the anti-German and anti-Vichy activities of Charles De Gaulle, who led *France Libre* (Free France) in London. For the majority of the war, the Resisters reacted spontaneously and on their own, not as a result of a centralized system.⁶

⁵ Kedward, *Resistance in Vichy France*, 65-66; Ophuls, *The Sorrow and the Pity*, 8.

⁶ Peter Davies, *France and the Second World War: Occupation, Collaboration, and Resistance* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 49-59.

France's internal resistance consisted of different components. The Communist Party in France was among the first groups to oppose the Nazi and Vichy regimes. After the French Armistice with Germany, communists were ordered by Joseph Stalin to accept the occupation. Stalin's order was prompted by the German-Soviet pact signed on August 1939, which agreed to ten years of nonaggression between Germany and Russia. However, upon the German invasion of Russia in 1941, France's Communist Party activated its infrastructure to mobilize the French population against the German occupation and Vichy government. The party's newspaper, *L'Humanité*, succeeded in producing underground editions that eschewed the 'usurpers and traitors' of the occupation and Vichy. For a period, the communists focused on rebuilding the party and regrouping its members, and felt politically isolated in resisting German control.⁷

The participation of socialists and other individuals of the political left was significant for the Resistance. The leaders of the Socialist Party, including Léon Blum, were persecuted and arrested by the Vichy government. In turn, the party's supporters began to join or sympathize with the Resistance. Their main goal was to liberate France from German occupation and restore her republican values, particularly the concepts of equality and justice. Socialist supporters joined the communists to undermine the German occupation and Vichy government. As a result of these political groups, the Resistance gained its general left-wing values.⁸

Nationalists and members of the political right were also present in the Resistance. Louis de la Bardonnie, a farmer and father of eight children, sympathized with the French right. However, during the Resistance, he joined with seven local land-

⁷ Fogg, *The Politics of Everyday Life in Vichy France*, 48-50.

⁸ Kedward, *Resistance in Vichy France*, 95-104.

owning friends to collect details about the Germans in the occupied zone. The information was secretly delivered to *France Libre* and the British. De la Bardonnie believed that the values of morality and patriotism were pivotal and felt that Pétain was being untruthful to France. De la Bardonnie's account illustrates that the Resistance, while having left-wing tendencies, also included nationalists and conservatives who resisted the government of Pétain.⁹

Individuals from religious backgrounds were another component of the Resistance. For instance, the presence of Catholics was evident with the participation of M. le curé Alvitre. As a red priest, Alvitre never accepted the legitimacy of the Vichy government. He listened to De Gaulle's first broadcast from London, in which he appealed for the continuation of France's fight. The broadcast encouraged Alvitre to proclaim himself a "Gaullist" and join the Resistance. Alvitre sheltered Jews and Resisters during the occupation, and participated in the bombing of a collaborator's house. While leaning to the political left, Alvitre did not accept communism. Furthermore, he believed Pétain was not a collaborator, but just a victim of those around him, particularly Laval. Alvitre's background and ideas illustrate the ideological range of the Resistance. Alvitre was a Catholic priest with left-wing tendencies. In the same manner, religious Frenchmen and -women, from different political backgrounds, joined the Resistance to help refugees and ensure justice.¹⁰

The *Maquis* were equally important in the Resistance. On 16 February 1943, the law of *Service du Travail Obligatoire* (STO) was enacted in Vichy France to provide 250,000 workers for Germany. The program required all young men born between 1920

⁹ Kedward, *Resistance in Vichy France*, 250-253.

¹⁰ Kedward, *Resistance in Vichy France*, 253-254.

and 1922 to register and become liable for compulsory service in Germany. Many of the young men protested and went into hiding in rural communities. The young men, considered outlaws by the Vichy government, joined the Resistance and became known as the *Maquis*. The guerilla bands participated in ambushes and combats and fought to remain free and liberate France.¹¹

The external resistance consisted of individuals who operated outside of France. The main individual in the external movement was De Gaulle, a French general who left France before the Armistice was signed and founded the Free French Forces in London. The purpose of the forces was to continue France's struggle against Germany. On 18 June, De Gaulle broadcasted his first message to the French from London, where he stated that the flame of resistance in France must not die. His radio address became the first signal that someone was ready to fight back. From the beginning, De Gaulle recognized the need for unity and coordination between the external and internal resistance forces. He was not fond of the resistance groups in France, but his realism and political awareness suggested to him that solidarity was a vital prerequisite for liberation. In turn, his hope was to gain the widest possible support by unifying all the resistance forces to ensure the liberation of France.¹²

Jean Moulin, a former prefect of France, became the most memorable member of the Resistance. Moulin became De Gaulle's main connection to the internal Resistance groups in France and succeeded in unifying both external and internal groups into the *Conseil National de la Résistance* (National Council of the Resistance or CNR). He recognized that the movement needed to progress from combat activity to a new phase

¹¹ H.R. Kedward, *In Search of the Maquis: Rural Resistance in Southern France, 1942-1944* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 19-34.

¹² Davies, *France and the Second World War*, 54-58.

that would include an Allied invasion followed by liberation. Only through this method, he believed, would France be seen again as a great power. Moulin was arrested outside Lyon on 21 June 1943, interrogated and killed. Moulin's efficient unification of the Resistance and his refusal to provide any information after his arrest symbolized the courage and sacrifice of the movement.¹³

The clandestine press played a major role in the formation and evolution of the Resistance. In the early clandestine news-sheets, distribution was more important than content. The Communists, who had experience prior to the war with underground newspapers because of press censorship during the Third Republic, were the first group to extend their network of contacts and encourage the growth of the opposition. In terms of the Resistance, printing important news which the Vichy press ignored or refused to publish and countering the German propaganda became the most powerful motivations to get people to support the movement. The activity destroyed the image of Vichy's reasonableness and made it and the occupation appear unnatural and irrational. The early role of the press was to make the *status quo* appear unsafe, and the opposition as a proper alternative for France.¹⁴

The role of the underground press expanded in the following months. In the middle of 1941, the first two numbers of *Libération*, a clandestine newspaper published by Emmanuel d'Astier in Clermont, established for the first time the synonymity between Vichy and collaboration. The paper also entailed planning for a new regime in France, not just for the defeat of Germany and Vichy. The new voice of opposition in *Libération* was consequently copied by other clandestine newspapers, including *Liberté* and *Vérités*.

¹³ Alan Clinton, *Jean Moulin, 1899-1943: The French Resistance and the Republic* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 151-153 and 177.

¹⁴ Kedward, *Resistance in Vichy France*, 125-127.

In April 1942, the first number of the reincarnated *Le Père Duchesne*, a revolutionary paper first started in 1793, was launched. The paper symbolized greater historical wisdom and continuity than Pétain. It pointed to republicanism as the true tradition of modern France and left no doubt that Vichy had plunged the nation into a civil war. The underground press continued to expand to the point that newspapers began to welcome the birth of others papers and the latter would acknowledge the reference with gratitude. The papers even provided the French Resistance with its first joke, ‘a collaborator has made the following accusation, “I saw a Jew, with my own eyes, eating a German’s brain [and] it was exactly 9.15 p.m.” The accusation is false [because] Germans have no brains, Jews do not eat pigs and at 9.15 p.m. everyone was listening to the BBC.’ The expansion of the clandestine press resulted in the formation of the Resistance’s general ideology. By the summer of 1942, the general consensus in the underground press was that France should be reformed after the war in a broadly socialist nature.¹⁵

The first number of the resistance newspaper *Combat* appeared in December 1941. The paper was founded by Francois de Menthon and Henri Frenay, the publishers of *Liberté* and *Vérités*, respectively. The two movements were merged after de Menthon’s paper was discovered by the Vichy police and a number of his colleagues, including his brother-in-law, were arrested. De Menthon was a profeseur de Droit at the faculty of Nancy. He began to publish *Liberté* in order to continue the intellectual activism of Christian Democracy during the occupation. Frenay was a captain in the French army who, after the defeat of France, started *Vérités* to convey his sentiments and plans to continue the war. *Combat* initially abstained from any political attack on Pétain or on the internal politics of Vichy. However, by 1942 the caution and hesitation

¹⁵ Kedward, *Resistance in Vichy France*, 139-143 and 153-158.

progressively disappeared. *Combat* was republican newspaper that recruited people who were not particularly attached to party politics, but whose republicanism stood strongly against Vichy's authoritarianism. In the beginning, the paper was not as radical as *Libération*, but increasingly it showed total hostility to the Armistice, the occupation, and a readiness to witness Pétain and other collaborators brought to justice. *Combat* contributed to the Resistance's journey towards an ideology. In the second number of the clandestine paper *Libérer et Fédérer*, there was a demand, supported by the articles in *Combat*, for France to cease being a nation of *petit bourgeois* and be one of a revolutionary people. Albert Camus, recuperating near Lyon from a tuberculosis attack, would join *Combat* in the fall of 1943 and help define the values of the Resistance.¹⁶

The members of the Resistance joined the opposition to the German Occupation and Vichy France for a number of different reasons. However, Moulin's successful implementation of CNR allowed for a general ideology, as represented in the clandestine press, to emerge in the Resistance. Those who identified with the Resistance hoped for a liberal revolution that would cement the values of liberty, equality and fraternity in a renewed national community. The ideology was supported and encouraged by Albert Camus in *Combat*, where his belief in the role of the clandestine press in the French Resistance apparent.¹⁷

¹⁶ Kedward, *Resistance in Vichy France*, 30-38 and 147-158.

¹⁷ Charles Sowerwine, *France Since 1870: Culture, Politics and Society* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 233.

Albert Camus

Born in 1913 in Mondovi, a coastal town outside of Algiers, Albert Camus was a French *pied noir*, a descendant of the European immigrants who settled in Algeria. Camus' childhood in the French colony was harsh and spare. After his father's death in the First World War, Camus' family moved to Belcourt, a *pied noir* neighborhood in Algiers. Belcourt resembled the Lower East Side of New York City, with its densely populated areas of poor but not destitute workers and shopkeepers. The family resided with Camus' maternal grandmother in a small apartment with no plumbing or electricity. Camus' grandmother was known for her violence and bitterness, and expressed herself to Camus and his brother with slaps and whippings. Her authority was accepted by Camus' frail mother, who would stand by during the beatings and beg her not to hit the children too hard. Despite the harshness of his childhood home, Camus understood the neighborhood's impact on his ideology. In Belcourt, he was introduced to the notion of French Republicanism. The French secondary school system imbued Camus with the values of progress and egalitarianism, as well with the French Revolution's tenets of rationality and secularism.¹⁸

Camus received his graduate diploma in philosophy in 1936 and immediately began to work on his writings. During the few next years, until 1938, he earned his living as a journalist, tutor, salesman and meteorologist. His ambition was to be a teacher; however, because of his illness, the result of a violent attack of tuberculosis in 1930, he

¹⁸ Robert Zaretsky, *Albert Camus: Elements of a Life* (London: Cornell University Press, 2010), 7-12.

was unable to pass the examination required for the license. Instead, Camus wrote all the time and began to experiment with theater. He organized *Le Théâtre du Travail* (Worker's Theatre) in Algiers and, by 1939, published two books of essays. Camus began to gain fame in Algiers from his writings and theatre work.¹⁹

The Second World War interrupted Camus' life. He tried to enlist in the army, but was refused because of his health. In 1940, Camus left Algiers and went to work as a journalist on the *Paris-Soir* in Paris. There in May 1940 he finished *The Stranger*, a novel about the transformation of an indifferent individual. Camus, unknown outside of Algiers, did not see his novel published until 1942, when André Malraux, a French novelist, recommended it to a major publisher. *The Stranger* centers on Meursault, a character who is indifferent to everything in existence except the physical sensations of the moment. For Meursault, the physical sensations constitute the only experiences that are valid, while everything else in the world is absurd and meaningless. *The Stranger* was recognized as an immediate success in France. The next year Camus published *The Myth of the Sisyphus*, which was a statement on Meursault's philosophy. Together, the two works deal with Europe's demand for the authentic during the chaos of the war. In 1941, Camus had decided to return to North Africa. There he taught part-time at two schools set up by the Vichy government for Jewish children. From the beginning, Camus had few illusions concerning Pétain and found Vichy's collaboration unjust and despicable. In August 1942, Camus suffered another tuberculosis attack and left Algeria to recuperate at a sanatorium thirty-five miles from Lyon.²⁰

¹⁹ Austin Fowler, *The Major Works of Albert Camus: A Critical Commentary* (New York: Monarch Press, 1965), 5-10.

²⁰ Stephen E. Bronner, *Camus: Portrait of a Moralist* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 57-63; Fowler, *The Major Works of Albert Camus*, 8-10.

Camus returned to Paris in 1943 and joined the Resistance in the later part of the year. He made contact with the underground newspaper *Combat* through his friends Pascal Pia and René Leynaud. Camus joined the paper as an anonymous writer and editor of the seven by ten inches news-sheet. *Combat* presented itself as the voice of the United Resistance Movement, which also included the *Libération* and *Franc-Tireur* papers. The group's goal was to fight for the liberation and future of France. In Paris, Michel Gallimard, the new publisher of *Combat*, secured a flat for Camus along with a small monthly stipend.²¹

Camus believed that resistance against the Nazis and Vichy France was strongly justified. In "Letters to a German Friend," which was published clandestinely during the occupation, Camus explained the importance of the opposition. He stated that while the world might not have an ultimate meaning, it at least has the truth of man, and it is man's task to save this truth and the idea of life. Since man can conceive justice, it must be provided. In turn, the Germans had only added to the injustice and misery of the human condition. For Camus, it was pivotal to exalt justice and fight against the eternal injustice provided by the Germans. Camus' "Letters to a German Friend" illustrated his strong belief in the justified nature of the Resistance.²²

In *Combat*, Camus nurtured the spirit of the Resistance through the final years of the occupation. He noted that, while the Resistance was united in its distaste for Germany and Vichy, liberation was just the first step in the process. Camus encouraged France to cleanse itself from the tainted politics practiced before the defeat. For him, the

²¹ Bronner, *Camus: Portrait of a Moralizer*, 58; Oliver Todd, *Albert Camus: A Life*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997), 177-180.

²² Albert Camus, "Letters to a German Friend," in *Resistance, Rebellion and Death*, trans. Justin O'Brien (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1960), 21-22.

sacrifices of the men and women of the Resistance were not meant to resurrect the Third Republic, but to start a revolution based on a humanistic conception of man. The sentiment was highlighted in August 1944 in the first issue of *Combat* that was published openly. The issue called for France to go, “from resistance to revolution.” *Combat* credited the allies with making the liberation of France possible, but noted that it must be the Resisters who shape the future of their nation.²³

Camus continued to advocate for a socialist transformation of France after the liberation. As the writer of two recognized works, *The Stranger* and *The Myth of the Sisyphus*, and editor of *Combat*, Camus gained a significant following of readers. At first, Camus called for a policy of “justice without mercy” for the collaborators. Camus and other members of the Resistance believed the collaborators were responsible, along with the Germans, for the suffering of France during the war. The Resistance’s attitude was that the collaborators should be punished for co-operating with Germany. In this manner, France could resolve the injustices of the occupation. However, the purge of collaborators in the days following the liberation discouraged Camus. During the purge, more than 10,000 people died and many more suffered under spontaneous “popular tribunals” that handed down arbitrary judgments. Camus backed down from his earlier position and accepted the criticisms by Francois Mauriac, a Catholic novelist, on Camus’ early views on collaborators.²⁴

Camus’ participation in *Combat* supported the republican values of equality and justice in the French Resistance. His encouragement of the socialist transformation of France, based on his republican upbringing, was present in his writings and espoused by a

²³ Zaretsky, *Albert Camus*, 48-53.

²⁴ Bronner, *Camus: Portrait of a Moralist*, 73-76; Zaretsky, *Albert Camus*, 53.

majority of the Resisters. In turn, as evident through Camus' articles, the clandestine press became a major factor in the journey of post-liberation France.

Occupied France

Camus joined *Combat* in the fall 1943 as a writer and editor for the paper. His first articles appeared during the last years of the German occupation and Vichy France, just as the Resistance gained significant support. Camus enthusiastically supported the concept of a “liberal revolution,” in which France would be transformed into a social democracy. As the editor in chief and editorial writer from August 1944 to June 1947, Camus played an important role in the clandestine press. The articles written by Camus during the occupation reflected the Resistance’s general position on participation in the movement, collaboration, and the future of France.

During the Resistance, Camus urged Frenchmen and women to join the fight for France and a new truth. By the spring of 1944, it was evident that the German Reich would not last one thousand years. The Allies were preparing to invade Normandy and end the war. In turn, Camus urged his fellow citizens to support the Resistance and help liberate France. The March 1944 article, “Against Total War, Total Resistance,” analyzed how the Resistance concerned all French citizens. Camus wrote that German atrocities in France demonstrated that innocent Frenchmen who said, “This does not concern me,” were wrong. The Germans, Camus noted, decided that the actions of the Resistance did concern the innocent, indicating that the fight encompassed the entire nation. Camus cautioned strongly against just sympathizing with the Resistance. He noted that sympathizers were killed, deported or tortured just as easily as militants. Camus called for total Resistance from every French national to enhance the possibility of success

during the Allied invasion. The article illustrates the press' role in converting public opinion and encouraging participation in the Resistance.²⁵

The clandestine press covered the atrocities perpetrated by Germans during the occupation. In May 1944, Camus wrote an article on the tragedy at Ascq, a small town in Northern France. On April 1, 1944, two explosions severed a railway line and led to the derailment of two cars in a German train. Hours later, a German officer led a large contingent of troops into Ascq, broke down the doors of houses, and rounded up sixty men. The victims were marched to a pasture opposite the train station and shot. Camus noted that the massacre continued for three hours. Is it possible, Camus inquired, to read the report without being, "overcome by feelings of revulsion and disgust?" He reminded *Combat* readers that all Frenchmen were engaged in a general and unrelenting struggle against a dishonorable enemy. Camus appealed to Frenchmen to discover the solidarity of France, a new martyr, and the power that results from vengeance. The tragedy at Ascq supported Camus' earlier analysis that the Resistance concerned all French citizens. The German atrocity justified the Resistance and served as a motivation for new members to join movement.²⁶

French collaboration in the war became another imperative matter in the clandestine press. Camus wrote an article in July 1944 condemning the Vichy government and its policy of collaboration. He equated the actions of Pétain and Laval with treason and noted that Vichy France had rationed everything except humiliation and shame. In Camus' estimation, the words and actions of Pétain and Laval did nothing but

²⁵ Albert Camus, "Against Total War, Total Resistance," March, 1944, in *Camus at Combat: Writing 1944-1947*, ed. Jacqueline Lévi-Valensi (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 1-3; Davies, *France and the Second World War*, 70-72.

²⁶ Camus, "For Three Hours They Shot Frenchmen," May, 1944, 5-6.

divide France and kill Frenchmen. The regime bestowed “honor” on resignation, “order” on torture and called patriots terrorists. In contrast, Camus noted, the French Resistance spoke a language in which France could recognize itself. Camus called for Pétain and Laval, as well as other collaborators, to be judged for their actions. He explained that the nation was preparing to sacrifice itself for liberation; therefore, the forgiveness of collaborators would never be adequate. The people who tortured and executed members of the Resistance deserved, in the article’s perspective, to be appropriately punished. Camus’ position on the collaborators consisted of justice without forgiveness. Camus and the Resistance were eager to build a new France which rejected the policies and ideas from the Vichy period. In turn, the desire for Pétain and Laval to account for their actions became a major goal of the Resistance.²⁷

The Milice (Militia) also represented a major form of collaboration. Founded by Joseph Darnand, a hero of the First World War and secretary of state in the Vichy government, the Milice consisted of combatants directed for the purpose of fighting the Resistance. Pétain approved the organization in January 1943 and granted it substantial autonomy to combat the Resistance, which was growing in power. As head of the Milice, Darnand organized the closest co-operation with the Germans in tracking down the *Maquis* and other members of the Resistance. Darnand arrested numerous people, including members of leading Gaullist families, and committed substantial atrocities, such as torture and murder. For members of the Resistance, the Milice was one of the most shameful and inexcusable acts of Vichy. In an April 1944 *Combat* article, Camus described the Milice as a small portion of weak and cowardly Frenchmen who turned against France. The Milice fought for and defended the cause of the very people who

²⁷ Camus, “You Will Be Judged by Your Actions,” July, 1944, 7-9.

were subjecting Frenchmen to torture. The article noted that the Milice had tortured and killed Resisters captured by the Gestapo. Darnand portrayed the organization as the defender of the law, but in the view of the Resistance, the Milice brought patriots to trial and sent them to the firing squad a few seconds later. Camus vowed the Milice, as a group of collaborators, had sentenced itself to death after the liberation of France. The article affirms *Combat's* distaste for collaboration and desire for subsequent justice.²⁸

Camus attacked Darnand in July 1944 in "The Murderer's Great Fear." The editorial states that the job of Darnand and the Milice was to prove that human dignity is a lie. The Milice heaped insults on their prisoners and debased them through intimidation and torture. For Camus, the Milice's goal was to make its prisoners suffer and, on occasion, to extract a confession. He referenced André Malraux, a French novelist, who said that it must be hard to aim a flamethrower at a man who looks you in the eye. In turn, Camus pondered what a militiaman must be like to take pleasure in torturing a man whose eyes are open. Camus charged that Darnand's mission was the destruction of dignity and the self-conscious individual. He appealed to *Combat's* readers to fight rifle against rifle and save the confidence and dignity of man. The Resistance's aspiration for a liberal revolution depended on subverting the collaborators.²⁹

The Resistance's position on collaboration was not limited to major figures or militant organizations. While Camus did not write a specific article on individuals who were sympathetic to the German cause and the Vichy government, it is most likely that he distrusted them. The underground newspaper *Combat du Languedoc*, however, published an article with a clear opinion on the individuals who collaborated during the war. In the

²⁸ Camus, "Outlaws," April, 1944, 3-4; Alexander Werth, *France: 1940 to 1955*, (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1956), 124-125.

²⁹ Camus, "The Murderer's Great Fear," July, 1944, 6-7.

article, average Frenchmen who turned in their fellow countrymen to the Germans were considered to be disgraceful. The article noted that inside the prison of Toulouse, men and women were suffering and dying for France. In contrast, French informers acted against their own country and informed on the Resisters. The article indicated that the collaborators would not be forgiven or forgotten, and, without the Germans to protect them, would be punished. The collaborators betrayed not just France but individual persons fighting for liberty and justice. In turn, the Resistance demanded justice and retribution in post-liberation France. The plan to renew France depended on bringing the collaborators to justice so they could account for the crimes perpetrated during the occupation.³⁰

The future of France was an important subject in the clandestine Press. In “From Resistance to Revolution,” Camus called on the readers of *Combat* to ponder the fate of their country. He noted that France deserved a structural reform that would institute a, “true people’s and worker’s democracy.” A liberated France needed to encompass the energy and honor of the Resistance and be guided by the working class. Camus demanded the implementation of a constitution that would restore the republican values of freedom and justice and create a foreign policy based on loyalty to its allies. He also supported the subjugation of trusts and moneyed interests. For Camus, such a program would go by the name of a “liberal revolution.” In the view of the Resistance, France could only regain its grandeur by saving itself from the mistakes and humiliation of the war. The liberation of France was inevitable in 1944, and Camus realized that the Resistance needed to use the occasion to implement major reforms in France. The article

³⁰ “For Our Country – Against Traitors,” in *The Republic of Silence*, ed. A. J. Liebling (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1947), 371-373.

illustrates Camus' belief, present during the German occupation and Vichy rule, that France needed to save itself by evolving from resistance to revolution.³¹

The call to restore France was evident in the beginning of the Resistance. In De Gaulle's address "To All Frenchmen," proclaimed after the defeat in 1940, he noted that France needed to recover her liberty and greatness. While the government had capitulated and yielded to panic, the French people were called to oppose the occupation and save France. De Gaulle noted that forces in the free universe, indicating the United States, had not made themselves felt. When they did, De Gaulle stated, they would crush the enemy and France must be ready to be present at her victory. Camus agreed with De Gaulle that the French must be present during the liberation of France. Furthermore, Camus cautiously supported De Gaulle's leadership and a majority of his government's policies in the aftermath of the liberation. From the beginning, De Gaulle called for France to continue the fight to ensure her freedom and wish for reform. The call for Resistance was supplemented with a strong desire to improve France.³²

France's fate dominated Camus' articles in the months after the liberation. In September 1944, Camus wrote that liberation did not end the ordeal of France but simply illustrated the burdens and pressures that remained. Until the consequences of the war were overcome, France would remain weak and troubled. Camus called for an ultimate victory fought through a war against money and resignation. France, in Camus' unrelenting perspective, needed to recover its grandeur through reform. The article demonstrates Camus continued support for a liberal revolution. The idea emerged from the humiliation of defeat and continued to expand through the period of liberation. For

³¹ Camus, "From Resistance to Revolution," August 21, 1944, 12-13.

³² Camus, May 25, 1945, 218-219; Charles De Gaulle, "To All Frenchmen," in *The Republic of Silence*, ed. A. J. Liebling (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1947), 94.

Camus, the hope for a revolution was a strong motivation and justification for the Resistance. The sacrifices of Frenchmen and women during the occupation were to result in the hope for liberty and rehabilitation in France.³³

The aspiration for a reformed France was apparent in the nation's universities. In an article in *L'Univeristé Libre*, the student newspaper of the Resistance, severely criticized the German changes in France's educational programs. The newspaper noted that Germany revised the programs in history and geography to deliberately obscure and negate France's academic traditions. The students characterized the altered history program as fanatic and reactionary. The program omitted movements important for the liberation of mankind, including the history of the Low Countries in the seventeenth century, when the Netherlands gained independence from Spanish. The geography program was also remodeled to appeal to the Nazi ideology. Instead of Eurasia, the new program presented Eurafrika, a basis of Nazi prejudice. The study of Europe recommended that special consideration be given to Germany, Hungary and Romania, and indicated that northern France was no longer a part of the French nation. The article concluded by stating that, despite the undesirable changes in the education programs, France would, "learn to live again...and live anew." In effect, the article's conclusion presented the desire to eschew the policies of the period and create a new France. The true program of France, in the estimation of the university students, was to oppose the German agenda and, through their opposition, liberate France and form a better nation. Camus recognized the resistance of young people in the movement. He noted that on the days of insurrection there were as many children's faces on the barricades as there were

³³ Camus, September 29, 1944, 51-52.

adult faces. Camus believed that young people who participated in the Resistance were waiting for their elders to act and restore the future of France.³⁴

Camus' articles, as well as the works published in other underground newspapers, illustrate the enthusiastic support for a "liberal revolution" in France. The revolution was a major hope, motivation and justification for the Resistance and sought to return France to its former grandeur. Camus role in the clandestine press helped to define this revolution and the Resistance's position during the occupation. The articles composed by Camus encouraged French participation in the Resistance, reflected deep distaste for collaboration, and began to define the agenda for post-war France. The encouragement for participation gave momentum to the Resistance and, in turn, the sacrifices of its members resulted in major hostility towards collaboration, and the justification for a better France. The Nazi occupation defined the role of the clandestine press in the Resistance and in liberated France.

³⁴ "The New Program in History and Geography," in *The Republic of Silence*, ed. A. J. Liebling (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1947), 321-323; Camus, January 2, 1945, 160-161.

Liberation

Paris was liberated on August 1944 through the joint effort of Allied forces and the French Resistance. De Gaulle ensured that French forces participated in the liberation of Paris, and were not minimized during the Allied operation. After four years of occupation, people in France felt a genuine sense of optimism. There were celebrations and parties on the streets of Paris, signaling that hope had been restored. For the French, the liberation was a period in which France ‘looked backwards and forwards. France, in economic and political terms, appeared to be born again. The new liberty resulted in *Combat*’s first openly published issue and the progression of the Resistance’s role in France. In the articles written during the period of liberation, Camus highlighted the importance of freedom, social justice, and the new press.³⁵

The significance of freedom was analyzed in the first public issue of *Combat*, which appeared on 21 August 1944. As the fifty months of occupation neared an end with the liberation of Paris, Camus noted that the city was rediscovering the feelings of freedom and joy. However, he warned against the illusion that freedom came without effort or pain. Camus explained that the liberation of Paris was just the first step in the broader, and more metaphorical, liberation of France. The fight for a socio-democratic revolution was imperative and, in Camus’ opinion, the most difficult of the battles. He did not want France to return to the, “outward appearance of freedom” from the Third Republic. Camus’ point was that the power of money, which he believed led to the Vichy

³⁵ Davies, *France and the Second World War*, 76-79.

regime, must be fought and controlled. Only then would France be truly liberated. The position presented in the article exemplified the importance of freedom gained, not just from the end of the occupation and Vichy, but through a liberal revolution that would result in a social democracy.³⁶

The Resistance's attempt to influence post-Liberation France was evident in Camus' description of freedom. For Camus, the word was defined in the triumphant and tired faces of the fighters in the streets of Paris. The Resisters who rose up and proclaimed that the fight was not lost paid the price for France's freedom and its future. Camus noted that the impending victory ensured that the Resisters had been correct and guaranteed the return of freedom and peace. In Camus' perspective, man's grandeur lies in his decision to rise above his condition. The Resistance earned the freedom of France with unjust deaths, because they rose up and did what had to be done. The dead comrades of the Resistance, in turn, represented the price paid for France's liberation and justified the movement's role in the nation's future. Camus' article shared this perspective and, in addition, equated truth with freedom. Truth, Camus explained, was everywhere on the night of the liberation and was prepared to fight and prosper. The Resistance's definition of freedom, as presented in Camus' article, was an attempt to justify the movement's role in the future of France.³⁷

Camus believed that the affairs of liberated France should be managed by those who fought in the Resistance. In "Morality and Politics," he noted that the men condemned by the people of France should not return to the political scene with innocent smiles. The condemned men consisted of collaborators and the politicians of the Third

³⁶ Camus, "Combat Continues..." August 21, 1944, 11-12.

³⁷ Camus, "The Night of Truth," August 25, 1944, 17-18.

Republic. Camus identified Camille Chautemps, a former minister, as an example of the men who should refrain from participating in the new government. Camus believed that Chautemps, while not a collaborator, represented the futility of the Third republic and had given up on France after the defeat. For Camus, the members of the Third Republic spoke of France as dead, “ignorant as they were of the land of blood and tears that went on living without them.” Camus advocated a complete separation from the old and the formation of a new government led by the Resisters.³⁸

The provisional government established in September 1944 was optimistically received by Camus. The government was led by De Gaulle and included some members of the Resistance. Camus noted that France should be proud of having a minister who, just the day before, was in the Breton underground. Another minister was alive only because he escaped from the train that was deporting him to Germany. Camus believed that the men in the new government were adequate choices because they had assumed their responsibility to France before taking over their ministries. In contrast, past politicians took control of the ministries and then had to be persuaded to assume their responsibilities. In the end, Camus cautioned that the provisional government would be judged by what it did rather than what it was. The men of the ministries were to take the trust of the country and continue to fulfill the revolution. Camus expected values of the Resistance to progress from the streets of France to the institutions of the government.³⁹

Camus accepted De Gaulle’s position as the leader of the provisional government, but De Gaulle did not sympathize for long with the internal resistance. His government rapidly came into conflict with France’s resistance organizations. By the end of October

³⁸ Camus, “Morality and Politics,” September 4, 1944, 27-28.

³⁹ Camus, September 10, 1944, 34-35.

1944, *Combat* became outspokenly critical of De Gaulle, noting that the Resistance was acquainted with local conditions and the movement's role was to usefully inform the government. In contrast, De Gaulle believed the Resistance had outlived its usefulness. Camus continued to support some of De Gaulle's actions, but the provisional government's conflict with the Resistance presented the difficulty of finding a role for the Resistance in liberated France.⁴⁰

The sacrifice of the Resistance justified the movement's role in post-Liberation France. However, Camus realized that the return of French prisoners of war, members of the army captured by the Germans in 1940, could lead to possible conflicts. Camus attempted to prevent any future problems by stating that no gulf separated the two groups. He noted that the brotherhood forged by defeat is more certain than that of victory and that the men of the French army suffered along with the Resisters. Neither suffering, in Camus' opinion, was in vain because it was the same suffering and distress that resulted in victory. The refusal of the prisoners of war to give up, along with the rebellion of the Resisters, gave France her freedom. The solidarity presented by Camus mitigated a potential conflict and ensured the importance of the notion of freedom.⁴¹

The concept of justice became an imperative matter during the liberation of France. The collapse of the Vichy regime was swiftly followed by calls for justice. Camus wrote that the men of Vichy, who governed against France and the Resistance, had to be punished. He noted that Darnand fled France and Pétain and Laval tried to convince the nation that their actions were forced. Camus equated Pétain and Laval with treason and resignation, and reminded the collaborators that they could not expect

⁴⁰ Werth, *France*, 227-230.

⁴¹ Camus, September 12, 1944, 35-36.

forgiveness or indulgence from France. Camus later relented on this position, but during the period of liberation he supported the idea of bringing all the collaborators to justice. Camus explained that he did not believe in hate, but faced with the countless stories of torture and execution, it was only possible to be a man of justice. Justice dictated that those who killed and permitted murders during Vichy were responsible before their victims and should be punished. The Resistance's pledge to honor its dead comrades and castigate the collaborators developed into the idea of societal justice.⁴²

The arrest of Louis Renault in September 1944 brought the issue of collaboration to the forefront of public thought. Renault, an industrialist and founder of the Renault automobile firm, was accused of collaborating with the German authorities. Under the occupation, Renault's factories were used to manufacture products for Germany. In fact, a police source claimed that 75 percent of the French considered the British bombings of the Renault factory in Paris in early 1942 justified, because they were working for Germany. The complexity of the issue was recognized by Camus. He noted that it was a fact that French industry worked for the enemy. However, he realized the strength of the industrialists' argument that they were forced to cooperate with Germany. Camus determined that the industrialists must be evaluated based on the extent of their cooperation. Germany might have forced them to collaborate, but the industrialists could have worked to slowdown production or passed on their profits to networks of the Resistance. In such a case, an industrialist such as Renault would not be guilty of treason. Unfortunately for Renault, Camus deemed his participation unfavorable to France. Renault's family had close connections with the German occupation and the Vichy government. Camus argued that Renault's arrest was warranted because he had the duty,

⁴² Camus, "Time for Justice," August 22, 1944, 14-15.

as one of the major industrialists in France, to use his power and rebel before the people did. Instead, Renault simply obeyed the German government, humiliating France. Camus relented on his position on collaborators after the bloody purge in the months 1944 after the liberation. However, Camus' first opinion indicates the uncompromising desire in the Resistance for justice and to punish France's collaborators.⁴³

The concept of social justice was elaborated by Camus in an article examining Pope Pius XII's first post-war speech. The speech emphasized the need to restore social life and moral law in Europe. However, Camus noted that Pope Pius XII had failed to denounce the fascist dictatorships while they were still in power. For Camus, Christianity did not ensure the values of justice and freedom. He believed that Christianity was the essence of injustice, because it was based on the sacrifice of the innocent and the acceptance of that sacrifice. Camus held that justice could not exist without rebellion, as evident during the liberation of Paris. In turn, the establishment of justice depended on the continued fight for a liberal revolution. Justice would then, "save the freedom of souls destined from inception for servitude." Camus' article indicates the secular values of the Resistance and its conceptual fight against injustice.⁴⁴

The Resistance's conviction of justice was also apparent in its attitude towards Germany. Camus wrote that falsehood, or the injustice of the Nazi regime, failed to win because it was defeated by the power of truth. While Adolf Hitler was perceived as a genius by nearly all the Germans and a number of Frenchmen, his policies were based on false concepts. Therefore, Camus believed that Hitler and Germany were doomed from the beginning. The power of truth overcame the falsehoods and difficulties of the Nazis

⁴³ Camus, September 26, 1944, 47-48; Werth, *France*, 161-162.

⁴⁴ Camus, "Justice and Freedom," September 8, 1944, 31-32.

and won the war for France. In the end, Germany sacrificed everything to obtain nothing and to remain in agony. Camus equated the Resistance's fight with truth and justice and Germany's policies with falsehood.⁴⁵

Forgiveness became an imperative matter in the concept of justice. The general attitude in France was that the transition to the new regime should be carried out by punishing those guilty of serious acts of collaboration. The new authorities counseled moderation, an expression that was shared by most local Resisters. For Camus, justice was necessary because the notion of forgiveness was incompatible with the spirit of the Resistance. The death of Resisters, including thirty-four Frenchmen tortured and murdered at Vincennes, demanded that collaborators be adequately punished. Camus' view was considerably influenced by the necessity to honor the sacrifice of his dead comrades. He also believed that the Resistance fought the sword with the sword and that barren forgiveness would lessen the fight's significance. During the liberation, Camus advocated for justice, in moderation, on behalf of France's sacrifices.⁴⁶

The responsibilities of the new press were strongly enunciated by Camus. In "Critique of the New Press," Camus wrote that the liberated newspapers, which emerged from the Resistance, must continue to fight for France's grandeur. Camus believed that a country's worth was based on the quality of its press. He appealed to the liberated newspapers to raise France's stature by ennobling their language and restoring the journalists' responsibility to the public. Camus wanted the new press to write as it wrote during the occupation, when the words in an article could result in death. The risk made it obvious that words were valuable and needed to be weighed carefully. Camus believed

⁴⁵ Camus, September 15, 1944, 37-38.

⁴⁶ Camus, "The Age of Contempt," August 30, 1944, 20-21; John F. Sweets, *Choices in Vichy France: The French Under Nazi Occupation*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 230-233.

that, during the first days of the liberation, the press had failed to replicate the quality of its clandestine works. The new press was also the voice of liberated France. The press' responsibilities were to provide the public with truth and allow them to discover the best course for France's future. In order to fulfill its duties, Camus contended that the new press must be reformed and remain free from a dependence on money. In this manner, the press would espouse the spirit of the Resistance and not lose sight of the need to restore France to its former stature. If the voice of the liberated press was one of vigor and humanity, as opposed to mediocrity, its right to the nation's esteem would be ensured.⁴⁷

The responsibilities of the new press would be met through reform of the nature of journalism. Camus defined "journalist" as a person who took it upon himself to inform the public of the events of the previous day, becoming a historian of the moment. However, as a historian, the journalist needed to know that truth is elusive and offer the state of affairs with objectivity and prudence. Camus did not believe the liberated press in France was observing the values of journalism. He felt that the new press was reverting to the sensational methods of the pre-war years and ignoring "truth." Camus postulated that the four years of occupation had encouraged the public to accept the truth, because they had just been through a terrible period of reality. In turn, the press needed to be reformed to meet its responsibilities to the public. Camus noted that if the press filled the air with mediocrity and fabrication, the public would breathe it and become dependent on it.⁴⁸

The freedom of the press was a significant issue for Camus. In September 1944, he wrote on the military censorship of newspapers in liberated France. Camus accepted the censorship of "military news" to avoid aiding the enemy. However, he noted that the

⁴⁷ Camus, "Critique of the New Press," August 31, 1944, 21-23.

⁴⁸ Camus, "The Reform of the Press," September 1, 1944, 23-25.

control agency appeared to have an unclear interpretation of “military news” and censored any news in which military people were mentioned. Camus stated that freedom of the press is a right in France and while liberty can coexist with some constraints, they must be freely accepted and defined. Camus accepted military censorship on news that might aid Germany, but not on political commentary. He issued an admonition to the control agency, noting that if the press was censored it would defend its rights through a number of methods. The first method would be to go underground and publish the political news and commentary that the authorities wanted to censor. Camus’ warning illustrated his adamant support for the freedom of the press and belief in the importance of the new press in post-liberation France.⁴⁹

The liberation of France served as a transition period for the Resistance, in which the movement evolved from clandestine activity to public policy. Camus’ articles in *Combat* represent the Resistance’s perspective on the concepts of freedom, social justice and the new press. The Resisters believed that freedom could be gained just through an impending revolution. In addition, societal justice was imperative to account for the sacrifices of dead comrades and the crimes of collaborators. Finally, Camus also noted the significant role of the new press in liberated France and, as such, sought to reform it and highlight its rights to guarantee the press’ ultimate success. The liberation of France transformed the role of the Resistance into a political force. In turn, Camus and other members of the formerly clandestine press held the power to voice the movement’s perspectives and influence the path of France.

⁴⁹ Camus, September 22, 1944, 44-45.

Post-Liberation France

The Resistance in post-Liberation France sought to transform the nation through a liberal revolution. *Combat* and other newspapers of the liberated press espoused the views of the movement and played a tactical and influential role in the period. Camus' articles illustrate the Resistance's aspiration to ensure France's international stature and the domestic importance of justice, socialism, the press and remembrance.

The recognition of liberated France was an important matter for Camus. He wrote on the necessity for the international community to grant recognition to the provisional government of France. Camus particularly supported De Gaulle's attempts to gain recognition from Britain and the United States. Winston Churchill, the British Prime Minister, had spoken on his desire to see France granted recognition and instituted in the Allied high command. However, Camus found that Churchill's actions did not equate with his words, because the British government had failed to grant France recognition. Camus blamed the lack of recognition on certain aspects of the United States' government, which disliked De Gaulle's personality and believed, inaccurately, that the Resistance was predominantly communist. Churchill refused to immediately recognize the provisional government in France because he and the United States were skeptical of De Gaulle. Furthermore, the Roosevelt administration was in the middle of the 1944 presidential election and it was thought the recognition of France would bring hostile criticism to the President. Camus stated that, while France had internal factions, it was united in all external matters. De Gaulle, the communists, and other groups of the

Resistance had forged a shared fraternity that could not be repudiated. Camus postulated that the Resisters were not obliged to have the same domestic ideas but, in international matters, there was just one France. For Camus, the groups of the Resistance would not allow themselves to be disunited by foreign circles that found particular French parties in suspicion. Camus appealed to the allies to understand the situation and finally choose to either recognize France or not. The article demonstrates Camus perception that, in order to recover its global stature, France needed to gain international recognition on its terms and stand in unison on external policy.⁵⁰

The participation of France in the occupation of Germany on October 1944 was greeted with enthusiasm. On 23 October, 1944, the United States, Britain, and Russia officially recognized France's provisional government and permitted its participation in the occupation of Germany. Churchill convinced the United States that De Gaulle's government had the support of the majority of the French people and that continuing to withhold recognition would agitate the French. Camus wrote that France's inclusion in the allied military government represented the true recognition of French rights. In regards to the international community, Camus believed that France was exactly in the position it sought. He noted France could now show, "the misled Germans that strength can indeed be joined with justice." However, Camus warned against considering the occupation of Germany as vengeance. The rules of occupation in Germany would be harsher than the ones in France in 1940. The French were warned by Camus not to violate the rules. For Camus, once the rules had been clearly defined, France needed to observe them strictly and avoid imitating the actions of the Germans in the war. Camus'

⁵⁰ Camus, September 30, 1944, 52-54; Peter Mangold, *Britain and the Defeated French: From Occupation to Liberation, 1940-1944* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2012), 201-203.

policy towards Germany was intended to repair the insult of defeat and illustrate France's new strength. Through this method, France would be in a stronger position for defense in the future. The French participation also indicated that the Resistance's appeal for the international respect of France was successful.⁵¹

France's role in the future of the world was cemented in the Yalta Conference in February 1945. The power of the veto in the United Nations was reserved for five countries, including France. Camus acknowledged the importance of the conference and noted that, if maintained, it would put an end to the idea of international democracy. Policies in the new organization could be nullified by any of the five states with the power of veto. While Camus was pleased that France would be one of the five powers, he believed that the years of war and struggle should conclude with an international democracy. The certainty of peace depended on international law that protected small nations as well as powerful ones and punished imperialist projects. For Camus, the conference reinforced the sovereignty of the great powers at the expense of smaller nations. Camus generally welcomed the elevation of France's stature, but not through a method that stood against the republican values of the Resistance. Camus believed that an international democracy was imperative for the maintenance of peace. The solidification of France's international status was an important matter for Camus.⁵²

The liberated press also advocated the concept of justice in France. Camus sought a post-Liberation future in which justice and liberty ensured the rights of all French citizens. He believed the reconciliation of justice and liberty would allow each individual to bear his or her sole responsibility for happiness. In an October 1944 article, Camus'

⁵¹ Camus, October 19, 1944, 78-80; Mangold, *Britain and the Defeated French*, 236-238.

⁵² Camus, February 15, 1945, 171-173.

political perspectives and desire for the future of France were presented. Camus wanted France to have a collectivist economy with liberal politics. He defined “justice” as the social state in which each individual is granted every opportunity and the majority of the country’s population is not constricted by a privileged minority. The word “liberty” was defined by Camus as the political climate in which the human person is respected as to what he or she expresses. Camus believed that the guarantees of justice and liberty were necessary to commence the social revolution in France. The formation of a collectivist economy would take wealth away from the privileged and grant it to labor, ensuring the presence of liberal politics. Camus, as well as many members of the Resistance, called for the immediate implementation of a constitution in which the concept of justice would be definite. For Camus, the genuine revolution could not commence without a moral revolution.⁵³

The Resistance’s principle of justice dealt with the purge, or *épuration*, of French collaborators. The purge was a period of national insurrection that followed the liberation of France. Every Frenchman’s duty was to fight the common enemy and his accomplices. French collaborators were judged and tried by local tribunals and summarily executed. The tribunals judged acts of collaboration and carried out 15,000 executions between 1942 and 1945. Other forms of punishment were also present in the purge. For instance, women who were said to have consorted with Germans were paraded publicly with shaven heads.⁵⁴ At first, Camus believed that the purge was necessary to eradicate the policies and ideas of Vichy France. He noted that some Frenchmen wanted to leave matters as they stood, not for disreputable reasons, but insisted that the purge was

⁵³ Camus, October 1, 1944, 54-56.

⁵⁴ Sowerwine, *France Since 1870*, 228-230.

necessary for the future of France. For Camus, the principle of justice lay in proportion. He thought it would be ridiculous to punish a bureaucrat who remained faithful to his habit of obedience, while important industrialists and opinion-makers remained untouched. Camus stated, in an apparent contradiction to his earlier perceptions of morality, that if the law could not cope with the subtleties, it must be modified for a precise delimited duration.⁵⁵

The collaboration of Frenchmen was perceived as treason in an October 1944 speech by the new Minister of Information, Pierre-Henri Teitgen. Camus approved of Teitgen's speech and noted that the honor of France must be restored. Each concession given to the Germans and each decision to follow the path of least resistance led to acts of dishonor. For Camus, it was imperative for the collaborators to understand that, "every choice to take the easy way out harm[ed] us as much as the enemy's guns." Camus stated that the men and women of the Resistance reacted against injustice despite not being "professional patriots," such as the military. The extent of France's tragedy deprived it from the right to indulge in exhaustion. Camus sought to extract honor from the collaborators through the justice found in punishment.⁵⁶

The Council of Ministers, which governed France provisionally after the war, established the High Court of Justice in November 1944 to judge the members of the Vichy government. The court initiated the trials of Pétain and Laval, which garnered significant attention in France. Pétain was sentenced to death in his trial, but the punishment was commuted to life imprisonment because of his advanced age. Pétain's death sentence, however, was a symbolic gesture that implied the absolute condemnation

⁵⁵Camus, October 18, 1944,76-78;Werth, *France*, 284-287.

⁵⁶ Camus, October 27, 1944, 90-92.

of his regime. Laval, as Pétain's main advisor, was also sentenced to death and executed on October 1946.⁵⁷ For Camus, the institution of the court signified from the beginning that Pétain and Laval were guilty of treason. While a large number of people in France believed Pétain's intentions were good, Camus insisted that he was responsible for the atrocities committed during the Vichy government. Camus believed it was impossible for Pétain to pursue a double policy with the Germans. Beginning in 1940, it was either, "fight or bend the knee, but [impossible] to imagine fighting on one's knees." Camus also postulated that, assuming Vichy's policies were double, it would have been a crime worse than ordinary treason, because French heads still rolled. In Camus' perspective, the sacrifices of the tortured and dead comrades of the Resistance called for a pitiless and decisive form of justice, which he hoped to promote through the publication.⁵⁸

The press in post-liberation France aimed to influence the future of the nation. The concept of justice supported by the liberated press guaranteed a break with the past and the beginning of a new France. However, in the first days of January 1945, Camus wrote that the time for justice on the collaborators had passed. The justice he had supported a few months earlier had been difficult to implement. Camus believed justice required reconciling the country's pressing need to destroy its treacherous past with an insistence on due respect for the individual. Quick justice, in turn, was essential to achieve the goal. By January, Camus found the process to be insufficient and erratic. He felt that the tribunals issued death sentences to people who did not deserve them, such as the journalist Georges Suarez, while central collaborators were acquitted. Camus appealed for an end to the purge and settled on the need for charity. Camus' altered

⁵⁷ Werth, *France*, 259-262.

⁵⁸ Camus, November 2, 1944, 95-97.

perspective illustrates his concern for the justice of the individual and reaction to the severity of the purge. In terms of the liberated press, the notion of justice indicated his desire to equate the national conscience with the values of the Resistance. The goal of the press was to assert its ideology and gain as many supporters as possible.⁵⁹

Political socialism was another predominant concept in post-liberation France. Camus noted that, judging by the articles in the Paris press, every person in France appeared to be a socialist. The political thought of France had accelerated to the left. However, Camus regarded socialism not as a fashion, but a commitment. He stated that the need for social justice, though mitigated since the liberation, was still urgent. For Camus, the notion of liberal socialism, not yet clearly defined, but generated from the spirit of the Resistance, was imperative for the rebirth of France.⁶⁰

Camus' socialist doctrine focused on the determination to pay the necessary price for justice. Camus wanted socialism to reflect the falsehoods and weaknesses found in humanity and not to be regarded as absolute or infallible. The doctrine focused on the obstinate and tireless, if inevitably halting, improvement of the human condition. For Camus, socialism meant that justice was well worth a revolution. The Third Republic did not meet Camus' standards for the socialist doctrine. However, he believed that the liberation of France provided a major opportunity for reform. Traditional doctrines of socialism could evolve by reaching out and accepting the men of the Resistance who were beginning to embrace the doctrine. In this manner, the concept of socialism would facilitate the Resistance's societal revolution.⁶¹

⁵⁹ Camus, January 5, 1945, 163-165; Kedward, *Resistance in Vichy France*, 150-153.

⁶⁰ Camus, November 23, 1944, 120-121.

⁶¹ Camus, November 24, 1944, 121-123.

The rights of the press were also a significant concern in liberated France. Camus noted in October 1944 that the Underground Press Federation had protested the Councils of Ministers' ordinances on the publication and operation of newspapers. The ordinances granted the Council of Ministers power over the sales price, allocation of paper, format, and publication frequency of newspapers. Camus opposed the measures and declared that it was of direct concern to the journalists of the Resistance. In turn, he proposed to the provisional government that, instead of supervising every publication, it should rely on specialists familiar with the technical and ethical difficulties of the profession. The specialists would consist of journalists who denounced the Vichy press and produced underground newspapers. While Camus would have preferred to oppose all supervision, his proposition was in touch with the values of the Resistance. Camus felt that the press must maintain the young revolution and, as a result, must accept consultation from respected journalists to avoid its formation into a futile fourth estate. In order to prevent a return to the press of the Third Republic, Camus supported minimal intervention in order to ensure the revolution.⁶²

The following month, the Ministry of Information presented a decree to reduce the print runs of newspapers by 25 percent. The government's decision was in response to shortages of pulp, coal and transportation. Camus considered the decree to be unfounded and a severe menace to the freedom of the press. He noted that the cuts threatened the existence of *Combat* and other major newspapers that emerged during the Occupation. In effect, the measure deprived the Resistance of its main organ of expression. In Camus' perspective, the doctrine was recommended by interests hostile to the Resistance and its desire for reform. The aggression against the liberated press

⁶² Camus, October 4, 1944, 57-59.

demonstrates that the Resistance's struggle did not end with the liberation of France, but continued throughout the period of post-liberation. For Camus, only the people of France, expressing themselves through free elections, could indicate whether the time had come for the press to remain silent. Camus vowed to continue defending the freedom of the press and the principles of the Resistance.⁶³

Remembrance of the sacrifices paid by the men and women of the Resistance became a major concept in post-liberation France. In November 1944, Camus noted that the impending victory in Germany represented the triumph of the French people. He believed that the spirit that drove the French army in Germany was the same spirit that made the liberation of Paris a success and inspired France not to surrender. However, Camus acknowledged that the victory wore a somber face, because few nations have won a war without shedding the blood of its people. For Camus, the final triumph came through, "a long line of bodies riddled with bullets in prison yards and along the walls of France." In the manner of most human words, victory took its meaning from sorrow as well as joy. The sacrifice of France and the Resistance became an imperative subject in the new press.⁶⁴

The "Week of the Missing" in France commemorated the human tragedy and frustration of the Occupation. The event, which was advertised by articles in the media, collected contributions on the streets of Paris to alleviate the misfortune of French prisoners of war and deportees. However, Camus noted that the week should not cause the people to forget the years of suffering. He believed the men and women of France endured a tragedy of separation. For five years, the people of France waged a battle

⁶³ Camus, November 30, 1944, 128-130.

⁶⁴ Camus, November 25, 1944, 123-124.

against time and the realization that their friends or lovers were growing old and dying. Camus postulated that reunion was the only acceptable course. The return of Claude Bourdét, for instance, was greeted by Camus with strong enthusiasm. Bourdét was a friend of Camus and former coordinator of *Combat* in the underground. His rescue and return to France, in Camus' perspective, honored the strength of the Resistance.⁶⁵

The case of René Leynaud represented the ultimate sacrifice paid by France. Reynaud, a Catholic resistance poet, joined the Resistance in the first months of the war and worked as a journalist for *Combat*. He was arrested in Lyon in May 1944 and shot by German forces a few weeks later in the woods. Camus was fond of Leynaud, to whom he dedicated the *Letters to a German Friend*. Camus described Leynaud as a man of transparency, with obstinate values and a passion for poetry. Leynaud's words, Camus noted, would now be silenced forever. Camus believed it was impossible to criticize the men of the Resistance and indict their failings, because they did the best they could under the situation. For Camus, the Resisters who remained alive, including himself, did not do enough. In contrast, Leynaud gave his life for the freedom of France. The courage and sacrifice demonstrated by the men and women of the Resistance was imperative to justify the movement's role in post-liberation France. In turn, the Resistance believed the memory of its sacrifices must not succumb to forgetfulness.⁶⁶

The post-liberation period in France served to incorporate the values of the Resistance and the destiny of the nation. Camus' articles in *Combat* illustrate the Resistance's aspiration to ensure France's international stature and the concepts of justice, socialism, the new press and remembrance. The Resisters believed that it was

⁶⁵ Camus, December 22, 1944, 149-150; Camus, April 17, 1945, 193-194.

⁶⁶ Camus, October 27, 1944, 90-92; Patrick Henry, *We Only Know Men: The Rescue of Jews in France During the Holocaust*, (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2007), 108.

important for France to recover its global stature and grandeur. Furthermore, the concepts of justice and socialism were essential to ensure the liberal revolution that began during the day of the Occupation in France. The rights of the new press also had to be guaranteed to provide the voice of the revolution. Finally, Camus also noted the significance of remembering and upholding the sacrifices paid by the Resistance. The post-liberation of France cemented the role of the Resistance as the main political actor and social force of the moment. The press, as represented by the articles of Camus, constituted the imperative deed of presenting the movement's perspectives and influencing the new path of France.

Conclusion

The articles written by Camus illustrate the republican values of the Resistance and a significant number of the Resisters. An examination of Camus' articles in *Combat* demonstrates that the values of the Resistance were, in general, to the political left and included republican ideals such as liberty and justice. Camus' articles also present the efforts of the Resistance's underground press to influence the path of post-war France in order to create a better future.

Camus' writings in *Combat* must be examined through the periods of the occupation, liberation and post-liberation France. The articles by Camus published during the occupation represent the Resistance's aspiration for a liberal revolution in France. The concept of revolution was initiated through the calls for involvement in the Resistance and justice against collaboration, and the emergence of ideas for the future of France. The period of liberation cemented the Resistance's perspectives on the future of France and specified the importance of freedom, societal justice and protection of the rights of the new press. The new press, which emerged from clandestine activity during the occupation of France, transformed into the major organ of expression for the Resistance movement. In the post-liberation of France, the liberated press worked to assure the nation's global stature and support policies regarding justice, socialism, the rights of the new press and remembrance of the Resistance's sacrifices. In these manners, Camus' articles illustrate the transformation of the clandestine press and its significant influence in liberated France.

The clandestine press espoused the vision of the Resistance, which became the major political and social force after the liberation of France. Camus, as an influential journalist in *Combat*, presented the Resistance's main values and perspectives on important events and helped to influence the future of France. The aspirations of the Resistance, as presented by Camus, influenced and transformed the future of France.

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