France during World War II
Historiographic analysis based upon the Annual bibliography of the French history (Bibliographie annuelle de l’Histoire de France) 1964-2010

Résumé
La France dans la Seconde Guerre mondiale
Bilan historiographique à partir de la Bibliographie annuelle de l’Histoire de France (1964-2010)

L’historiographie de la Seconde Guerre mondiale en France n’a cessé d’évoluer. Ces évolutions peuvent être étudiées à partir des recensements de la BAHF (de 1964 à 2010), permettant de poser un regard statistique face à la masse considérable de publications et de mettre en évidence l’évolution des champs de recherches.

Dans les années 1964-1965, marquées par l’anniversaire de la Libération, de nombreux ouvrages, articles et témoignages étudient les mouvements de Résistance et les maquis.


Dans les années 2000-2010 les thèmes de recherches concernant le gouvernement de Vichy sont désormais élargis et nuancés par les chercheurs. On assiste à l’émergence de la notion de mémoire, à un renouvellement de l’historiographie grâce à de nouvelles sources, de nouvelles méthodes avec un déplacement de la macro- vers la micro-histoire et un intérêt pour des parcours personnels et des lieux précis.

Abstract
Historiography of World War II never stopped evolving. The BAHF’s overviews (from 1964 to 2010) allow to study through a statistic approach these evolutions despite the large amount of publications, but also highlight the evolution of research fields.

The years 1964-65, years of celebration of the Liberation and Victory, a large number of books, articles and testimonies study the Resistance movement and the Maquis.

During the years 1970-1975, Resistance is presented through a patriotic perspective, either communist or Gaullist. First writings about Jews in the Resistance appear as well as many articles on the Nazi mass deportation.

The Vichy government is at the center of researches in the years 1980-1985. Institutions are represented not only by the Army, or the Navy but also by studies about Justice and administration. Number of books are self-published, testimonies of former war prisoners.

The study of the fate of Jews is the main focus of the historiography of the 1990-1995 period, and new topic are being studied: French "collaboration" with the Nazis, French captivity camps, cultural life under the Vichy government and numerous monographs about the Invasion of Normandy are published.

In 2000-2010, research themes regarding the Vichy government are now extended and tempered by researchers. The notion of "Memory" (Mémoire) arises and there’s a renewal of historiography due to new sources, new methods with a transfer from macro to micro history and an attention to personal experiences and specific places.
Since the end of World War II, France never stopped wondering on these years of war also called in French “black years, dark, troubled or grey years”. Based upon these reflections, studies, monographs, articles, testimonies and memoirs, were produced, as well as numerous novels and films.

Historiography of World War II in France never stopped evolving. These evolutions can be studied through the overviews of the Annual bibliography of the French history from 1964 to 2010 (Bibliographie annuelle de l’Histoire de France), since it allows a statistic approach despite the large amount of publications, and also brings to light evolutions of research fields.

On September 1st 1939, France joins World War II. From late September 1939 to May 10th 1940, France goes through what was called “the Phoney War” (la drôle de guerre), marked by a lack of major military operations on its territory and an endless inactivity for the troops standing on the Maginot Line.

On May, 10th 1940, the launching of the offensive led to a mass exodus (l’exode): from May to June 1940, 8 to 9 millions of civilians mostly French but also Belgians and North Europeans are thrown on the roads, trying to flee the German troops progress.

“La défaite s’abattit sur la France comme la foudre sur un arbre. La vue d’une armée aussi considérable jetée à terre en quelques semaines ébranla les Français jusqu’au fond d’eux-mêmes”.

The Third Republic didn’t survive the defeat. The Marshal Pétain was given full authority to implement a new constitution.

The new government, often called the Vichy Government is named after the town where they had settled their headquarters. Therefore, the Vichy Government steps into collaboration with the Nazis and begins a National Revolution. Meanwhile, the General de Gaulle, from London, in his Appeal of 18 June exhorts the French people to keep on and fighting the enemy, and marks the beginnings of the resistance organization “Free France” (la France Libre).

As early as 1944 was created the History Commission of the Nazi occupation and of the Liberation of France (Commission d’Histoire de l’Occupation et de la Libération de la France) and in 1945 is founded the War History Committee (Comité d’Histoire de la guerre), their fusion in 1951 would led to the creation of the Committee of History of the Second World War (Comité d’Histoire de la Seconde Guerre mondiale) whose works would be published in the World War II Historical review (Revue d’histoire de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale) following the War Historical Records (Cahiers d’histoire de la guerre).

The War History Committee was dissolved at the end of the seventies, and was replaced in 1978 by the History of present time Institut (l’Institut d’histoire du Temps présent), a CNRS research unit.


In the political history chapter, Second World War entries are classified into 9 sections. This classification was progressively established from 1964 to 1980 because of the increase of publications about the Second World War, and was therefore achieved in the 1985’s edition of the BAHF.

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1 “The defeat stroke France like lightning hits a tree. The sight of this major army being knocked out in only a few weeks hurt the French deeply” in Burin (Philippe), La France à l’heure allemande, 1940-1944. Paris. Éditions du Seuil, 1995, p.11
1/ General studies
2/ The "Phoney War" (September, 1st 1939- May, 9th 1940) (la Drôle de guerre)
3/ The exodus (L’Exode)
4/ Military operations
5/ The German occupation and the Vichy Regime
6/ The Resistance
7/ The Deportation
8/ The Liberation
9/ The legal purge (l’épuration)

Diagram #1: Political History of the Second War, number of entries

The topics’ evolution from 1965 to 2010-11 in these entries shows:

A meaningful growth of the number of entries from 1965 to 1990.
An over-representation of these entries during the year 1995 (twice the 2000’s entries).
A stabilization of the entries’ growth starting in 2000 without getting up to 1995 figures.

Major topics
Three topics explain this over-representation in 1995: Military operations, the Resistance Movement, and above all the Vichy Government.
But as the first two topics then decrease, the Vichy section diminishes a little but still represents more than half of the 2010-11’s entries (206/384, that is 53,6%).
**Minor topics**
The “Phoney War” is concentrated during the years 1970 to 1975.
The exodus is a major topic specific to the year 1980 (almost a third of all the entries: 75/225). In 1995, the deportation section has the larger number of entries (45 for an average of 19.1 all periods together).
Same scheme regarding the Liberation or the legal purge in 1995, as the “anniversary celebrations” seems to prevails.
Finally the hypertrophy of the General studies in 1965 most likely reveals a problem in the nomenclature.

**Diagram #2: Second World War: thematic repartition expressed as a percentage of the cases found items in the chronological indexes**

**Diagram #2bis: thematic repartition of the found items (only politics)**
The entry "Politics" prevails during the period 1965-2010/11. Three topics: protestantism, art and medicine/sciences only appear in the entries later on (only in 1990), as it is in 1980 that appear Catholicism and teaching. In 1965 only one topic exists "politics.

Details
Some entries can be considered as stable in their repartition during the whole period:
- Institutions (from 7,2% in 1970 to 9,8% in 2010-11), The Press from 2,8% to 2,8%, and to some extent protestantism, the arts, the medicine and sciences.
Catholicism undergoes a three-fold increase between 1980 and 2010-11, judaism and Overseas undergoes a four-fold increase.
And finally the economy (three-fold increase) and above all the society (eleven-fold increase) catching up "the institutions" in 2010-11 to become the three major topics, in 2010-11 but still really behind the "Politics" section.

Diagram #3: Studied periods, all historiographic fields mixed, expressed as a percentage of the cases found in the chronological indexes

Periods with an increased interest:
Mainly all the periods starting with the French "Restauration":
- 1815-1851: 4,1% in 1965 to 10,3% in 2010-11, that is a two point five-fold increase
- Second Empire: 2,7% en 1965 to 8,9% in 2010-11 that is a three-fold increase
- Third Republic: 9,2% in 1965 to 20,2% in 2010-11, that is a two-fold increase, becoming the preferred period in 2010-11.
Periods with a growing lack of interest:
It concerns the post ancient periods:
  - Mainly the Middle Age, with the greatest fall, since it prevailed in 1965 with 23% of the entries, reduced to the fifth position in 2010-2011.
  - But also the 17th century (drops from 18,1% to 8,7%), 16th and 18th centuries also go through a minor drop.

Periods relatively stable:
  - French Revolution, First Empire, Second World War, and Fourth Republic.

Diagram #4: Political History, studies period, expressed as a percentage of the entries number found in the chapter

The French Revolution sees a growing interest over the overviews, with an increase of 15,6% to 14,2% between 1965 and 2010-11.
Two periods: The Third Republic and the Second World War growing up in the representation along all the studied periods, to finally become in 2010-11 the two major topics, before the French Revolution.
In 2010-11, those three studied periods represent more than 60% of the center of interests.
Diagram #5: political history of the Second War: form and origins of the works, after the entries of the BAHF

Books:
It is noteworthy that the book production is remarkably stable over this period, even if a slight weakening of foreign books production can be noticed during the last years of observation.

Articles:
On the contrary, articles are a growing form of expression, in French as well as in foreign languages. It is noteworthy that if in 1995 French articles reach their maximum production, 2000 sees the foreign articles’ production becoming more important, it would be interesting to ponder the analysis of their respective content.

Colloquium:
Finally, since 1970-75, there's a growing number of colloquium being organized. There is a peak in 1995 and then a slight decline at the end of the observation period, yet without getting back to the 70-75 year's figures, as if the year 1995 had been a turning point or had domino effect.
In 1964 and 1965 notices were gathered in the World War II section: 120 entries are gathered in 1964 and 136 in 1965 in the political history chapter. The 1964-65’s are commemoration years of the Liberation: Numerous local periodicals mention the Normandy landings and battles. 1964 also sees Jean Moulin’s ashes being transferred to the Pantheon (senior official, representative of Charles de Gaulle designated to unify the Resistance movements, arrested by the Gestapo on June, 21st 1943, he was tortured to death), and an exhibition about Jean Moulin and the Resistance2 is held in Paris. Many works, articles and testimonies study the Resistance movements and the different Maquis. Only one article about Jews in France during the Second World War is published in an Italian periodical: Rassegna mensile di Israele3. The Committee of History of the Second World War publishes its Bulletin: mass deportation’s statistics of each department, in 1964 more specifically in Ariège, Tarn and Indre-et-Loire departments4. Those statistics will be continued till 1980. Several editions of testimonies and memoirs about the German occupation period are published5.

The Seventies

The Resistance movement is presented through a patriotic, communist6 and Gaullist7 filter. The communist’s memory insisted on the PCF’s action (French communist party). Local periodicals present their regional Maquis. Numerous testimonies of Resistance fighters. The first writings about Jews in the Resistance movement appear: one entry in the review Judaïsme: French-Jewish Resistance to the Nazi and one book written by A. Latour8: La Résistance juive en France, 1940-1944 (The Jewish Resistance in France, 1940-1944). About the Holocaust: Charlotte Delbo, member of the Resistance movement, deported to Auschwitz in 1943 publishes Auschwitz et après (Auschwitz and After)9. A book is also published about the Struthof camp10: “On May, 1st 1941, in the Struthof locality, Nazis opened a concentration camp, named KL-Natzweiler. The central camp, the only concentration camp in France, was located in the then annexed Alsace department.”11, as well as an article/testimony about Buchenwald12.

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Mid-seventies
1975 commemorates the opening of camps and several articles are published in local periodicals.
Eberhard Jäckel¹⁴, in his book La France dans l’Europe de Hitler (France in Hitler’s Europe), had shown, as early as 1968, that collaboration hadn’t been a German request, but had sprung from the French State itself, but it didn’t get much attention at the time.
In 1973, is published in France, the French translation of the American historian Robert Paxton’s¹⁵ La France de Vichy causing public scandal. R. Paxton explains his viewpoint in his work Why France? American Historians Reflect on an Enduring fascination¹⁶: “I had discovered that nothing of what I had found in German archives or other contemporary documents could back up the common ideas the French people had about the Vichy government. The common viewpoint, since 1954, when Robert Aron had published his classic’s Histoire de Vichy (History of Vichy)¹⁷ was that all initiatives taken during the German Occupation had come from the German side, as Vichy had only complied with these directives, the German archives showed that Vichy had some autonomy during the first year and that they had used this autonomy gap to vigorously fulfill its double project: National revolution in France itself and, abroad, and a policies of neutrality…”.
This book had a great impact on the French community of historians.
A new law enacted in 1979, started opening archives and many historians started looking at the history of Vichy under a new perspective.
The question of the fate of the Jews and Vichy involvement in the Shoah soon took an increasing importance among studies. (On the Hebrew term “Shoah”, see Annette Wieviorka¹⁸, “Comprendre, témoigner, écrire” (“Understand, testify, write”): “Today the event has a name according to its strong specificity “Shoah” in France and Israel, “Holocaust” in the Anglo-Saxon world and in most of the texts and international authorities (even if part of researchers prefer the word genocide). The locution “Final solution” (Endlösung)... is still in favor among German historians: since it emphasizes the Nazis mechanisms of destruction”.

²¹ Paris, B. et S. Klarsfeld, 1978, no pagination
The eighties and nineties
Progressively the Vichy government will become the heart of most studies, growing from 75 entries in 1975 to 124 in 1985.
Institutions are now not only represented by the Army, the Navy or Air Force, but are also studied the Justice, the Administration and the police.
The role played by the Catholic Church is also being studied.
More and more articles analyze the subject of the Compulsory Work Service (Service de Travail Obligatoire, S.T.O.) and the Malgré-nous (“in spite of our will”), men of the Alsace-Moselle region whom were forced to conscript into the Wehrmacht; and above all a large number of books are being self-published, testimonies of former war prisoners about their captivity.
Some studies appear based upon the history of a city or a province.

From the nineties to ninety five
The collaboration, the National Revolution, the French anti-Semitism, the French internment camps, function played by foreigners in the Resistance movement are topics now being studied.
The fate of Jews is at the heart of the historiography of this period: Condition of the Jews and their exclusion, roundups, especially the Vel' d'Hiv Roundup on the 16th and 17th of July 1942 in Paris.
Another topic appears: the cultural life under Vichy government, with the thesis of Michele Cone: Art and politics in France during the German Occupation and the book supervised by Jean-Pierre Rioux is also published.

1995: 50th anniversary of the Liberation. With 917 entries, that is 29,1% of the political history chapter, The Second World War becomes the first studied period before the Third Republic and the French Revolution (19,3%).
Military operations include 244 entries with numerous monographs of local and regional history on the Normandy landings.
Researches on the Resistance Movement, are presently studying the different movements, through a social viewpoint rather than a military one: are now studied the status of women, of immigrants, of Jews, of simple activists (see, The Resistance a social history).

In 1995, is published a new review: *Clio. Histoire, Femmes et Sociétés* (*Clio. History, Women and Society*) (nowadays *Clio. Femmes, Genre, Histoire*) centered on women's history and gender's history. The theme chosen for the first issue is *Resistances and Liberation: France, 1940-1945*. In her introduction Françoise Thébaud\(^{30}\) wonders about women historiography during World War II in France because it is less taken into considerations as in Italy for examples. This feature explores through different point of view this same topic: "the neglect of women in the Resistance movement"\(^{31}\), "Women in the Mediterranean Resistance"\(^{32}\), and an under-studied subject, almost a taboo subject, the feminine collaboration with two articles about the Official purge after the Liberation: "The tondues (women whose head were shaved for alleged collaboration) at the Liberation"\(^{33}\) and "Repression against women guilty of collaboration during the Occupation"\(^{34}\).

Laurent Douzou, the same year, publishes in the *Cahiers de L'Institut d'Histoire du Temps présent*, an article untitled: "La Résistance, une affaire d'hommes ?"\(^{35}\) ("The Resistance, a men's business?").

In the years 2000 to 2010, researchers have now broadened the Vichy government research fields and have more subtle approaches. Are taken into account: History of museums and libraries\(^{36}\), History of teaching and universities, and archeology.

Several local or regional studies are published about the everyday life difficulties of French people, especially problems to get fresh supply, the black market, rationing, hours of long wait in front of stores. The movie theaters and theaters, only heated places, are very busy. In 2009, an exhibition is organized in Paris about fashion accessories and objects, as testimonies of women life in Paris, from 1940 to 1944\(^{37}\), and presenting fashion during the German Occupation.

In 2007, Isabelle von Bueltzingsloewen publishes a book about starvation in psychiatric hospital during the German Occupation\(^{38}\).

Numerous testimonies and personal diaries are published, like Albert Grunberg's *Journal d'un coiffeur juif à Paris sous l'Occupation*\(^{39}\) (*Diary of a Jewish barber in Paris during the German Occupation*): during more than two years, from 1942 to 1944, A. Grunberg stayed hidden in an attic room (chambre de bonne) on the 6\(^{th}\) floor of a building, protected by the concierge and his wife, and several neighbors.

Is also published the *Journal, 1942-1944*, left by Hélène Berr, studying English in Paris and who died in Auschwitz\(^{40}\).

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\(^{31}\) Thalmann (Rita), « L'oubli des femmes dans l'histoire de la Résistance », *Clio. Femmes, Genre, Histoire*, 1995, n° 1. [Online]


\(^{34}\) Leclerc (Françoise) et Weindling (Michèle), « La répression des femmes coupables d'avoir collaboré pendant l'Occupation », *Clio. Femmes, Genre, Histoire*, 1995, n° 1. [Online]

\(^{35}\) Douzou (Laurent), « La Résistance une affaire d'hommes ? », *Cahiers de l'Institut d'Histoire du Temps présent*, 1995, no 31, p. 11-23


The fate of hidden children (French or foreign Jews) by assistance networks is the subject of many articles.

We witness the emergence of the concept of memory (mémoire) and the history of memory is studied. In his book: *La mémoire désunie*\(^41\) (The dismantled memory. Political recollection of the dark years from the Liberation to nowadays), Olivier Wieviorka makes an assessment: “The memory of the war has, over the seasons, varied, following a chronology, which Henry Rousso\(^42\) established the main lines, for the Vichy period. Therefore, France went through an incomplete period of mourning (1944-1954), then a phase of denial (or psychological repression) (1954-1971), before the mirror broke (1971-1974), leading to a memory shaped mainly by the Shoah and the Vichy Government”\(^43\).

In 2010, Nicolas Mariot and Claire Zalc published a study following the fate of 991 Jews from the small Jewish community in Lens, in the North of France from 1940 to 1945, day after day, family by family\(^44\).

Historiography is regenerated by new sources, new methods, with a shift from macro- to micro-history, and a renewed interest for personal stories and precise locations.

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\(^{43}\) Wievorka (olivier), *op. cit.*, p. 280