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'National Reconciliation?' Mitterrand, Chirac and the Commemorations of Vichy 1992–95

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Abstract *The highly controversial inauguration of a central monument commemorating the deportation of Jews from Paris in 1942 became the focus of presidents Mitterrand's and Chirac's attempts to secure national reconciliation from 1992. Memories of state persecutions and victims of national policy presented an obstacle to the representation of conventional national 'identity'. This essay analyses the ways in which this monument and related commemorations of Vichy were nevertheless used to legitimate a cohesive official state memory: by rhetorical appeals to humanist traditions and to nationhood as an ideal, almost religious vocation.*

The introduction of a 'National Commemorative Day of Racist and Anti-Semitic Persecutions'¹ in 1993 and the inauguration of a monument in 1994, at which to perform an annual wreath-laying ceremony on this day in Paris, marked a turning point in the official state interpretation of French collaboration. Whereas anti-Semitic persecutions and deportations had previously been mourned in private ceremonies or (when public) subsumed to republican ritual,² the commemoration of 1993 appeared to satisfy both Jewish and state interests,³ and was generally sanctioned by historians and all political parties except the extreme Right.

The commemoration was instigated in 1992 by President François Mitterrand on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the internment of 13,152 Jews on 16 and 17 July 1942 in the Vél' d'Hiv', the winter cycling stadium 'Vélodrome d'Hiver' in Paris, before deportation. This event rapidly became a focal point of nationwide attention when Mitterrand refused to respond to the petitions of the citizens' action group Comité Vél' d'Hiv' 42 requesting him to make a speech in the name of the Fifth Republic acknowledging responsibility for crimes of the Vichy regime. Mitterrand's silence, and otherwise ambiguous statements about his involvement in Vichy before working on behalf of the Resistance from 1943, deepened public mistrust. The controversy over this commemoration culminated three years later when the newly elected President Jacques Chirac responded positively to the demands of petitions by giving a historic speech, the first in which a president of the French Republic officially acknowledged the responsibility of the Vichy regime for the deportations, and therefore in the genocide of the Second World War. The new commemoration and monument thus secured—with symbolic means—'national reconciliation' between the republican state and those who demanded symbolic reparation for the crimes of the French State of Vichy.⁴

The novelty of this rhetorical gesture consisted in its solemnity and explicitness. Although numerous collaborators had already been tried, sentenced and often executed in the purge or 'purification' (*'épuration'*) measures from 1944, Chirac's speech was

perceived as a primary gesture of historical enlightenment and national reconciliation which would radically revise the Gaullist myth of a nation united in resistance. The speech of 1995 was therefore compared to official verbal and symbolic reconciliatory measures made in the Federal Republic of Germany: Willy Brandt's act of kneeling before the monument at the Warsaw ghetto in 1970; or Konrad Adenauer's declaration before parliament acknowledging crimes and promising moral and material reparation in September 1951.

The Vél' d'Hiv' commemoration, monument and presidential speech of 1995 were also novel insofar as they broke a national convention according to which ritual commemorations and monuments offer solace or support for the *positive* identification of citizens. They therefore challenged a conventional understanding of national 'identity'⁵ founded on emotional attachments to symbols or 'sites of memory',⁶ defined by Pierre Nora as 'focal points of our national heritage.'⁷ The collection of over 130 essays in *Les Lieux de mémoire* proposes a conception of French history founded on sites of memory recalling distant historical moments (essentially from the nineteenth century) which possess no, or have lost, immediate emotional appeal, but which are still shared by members of the cultural community defined as 'French': works of literature and history, geographical boundaries, architectural symbols, historical events or cultural traditions. The debate over the Vél' d'Hiv' has shown that Vichy is rather a source of memory which continues to engage and divide witnesses, participants and victims, as well as a younger generation which has no direct experience of the events. It also provided insight into the *process* by which a contemporary national symbol emerged out of conflict, how it was negotiated rhetorically in political and public spheres, and how the accumulation of interpretations and representations appeased the public emotions which had given rise to the commemorations. After the debate, the commemoration, monument and speech subsisted as ritual, aesthetic and rhetorical residues of a politically motivated process of historicisation, and therefore fulfilled the function of commemorations defined by Nora as the 'regulation of conflicts.'⁸

Yet the 'regulation' of conflict over the Vél' d'Hiv' presupposed acknowledgement of responsibility for premeditated crimes committed by the nation (unlike conventional war memorials). How do states bear witness to the crimes of a nation without forfeiting its legitimacy as the focus for a cohesive social community? Again, the case of Germany may be cited as a precedent, where commemorations of past dictatorships are often interpreted as a source of 'negative nationalism': a moral attitude according to which the open recognition of culpability in the name of a nation conceals a latent national consciousness. 'A punishment for national identity,' claims the philosopher Walter Reese-Schäfer, 'can only be considered as a form of punishment by those who have a sufficiently well-developed sense of their nationality.'⁹ The commemorations of Vichy during the early 1990s in France similarly show that symbols of the nation's crimes may underpin a compensatory, positive sense of nationhood. In this essay, I therefore intend to explore how the 'negative' commemoration of the Vél' d'Hiv' in France was used by state representatives in order to underscore the necessity of voluntary adhesion to positive humanitarian values, and in particular to the Gaullist doctrine of an abstract *idea* of the nation.

No monument is in itself naturally 'national', or the product of an anonymous historical process. Rather, it is a product of the political will of members of associations, institutions, political parties or states, and construed as national during the course of its planning, whether as a consequence of its central site in a capital city, state involvement, its emotional appeal to a broad section of society, or its repeated rhetorical

definition as 'national.' Although all these factors contributed to the emergence of the Vél' d'Hiv' ceremony and monument, discourse proved to be the single most influential element in its national construction. The very origin of the controversy, which led to the introduction of the national day of commemoration in 1993, the inauguration of the monument in 1994 and Chirac's speech in 1995, lay in the appeal to the president by the Comité Vél' d'Hiv' 42 for an explicit *verbal* recognition of Vichy crimes. The resulting 'discursive event'¹⁰ consisted in a conflict of interpretations expressed by rival political communities or individuals striving to achieve social acceptance of their vision of the past. In order to understand how this elaborately contrived symbol acquired national significance as late as the 1990s, we must therefore analyse in detail the rhetorical strategies employed in petitions for the commemorations, in the statements and speeches of presidents Mitterrand and Chirac, and in the ensuing media debate, as well as the significance of this rhetoric in relation to the political context in which it was employed. Since the debate lasted for over three years, and focused less on the form of the monument than on the wording of the presidential speeches, it is appropriate to analyse the media debate as a form of commemoration in its own right. The Vél' d'Hiv' commemoration and monument functioned as a catalyst of what James Young calls 'memory-work', resulting from an *unresolved* memorial which 'challenges visitors into a dialogue between themselves and their past.'¹¹

The aim of this essay is not to situate the Vél' d'Hiv' historically in relation to earlier commemorations and monuments,¹² but to examine how the Vél' d'Hiv' served to incorporate the complex and disturbing memories of collaboration, anti-Semitism and deportation into a repertoire of national symbols fostering a cohesive national identity. I will focus on four points, in the following order: the relation of the Vél' d'Hiv' to other Second World War memorials in Paris; the political expediency of discursive strategies employed in petitions urging Mitterrand to make a speech in 1992 and in the formal responses of both Mitterrand and Chirac; the political context in which the commemoration unfolded, relating issues of the 1940s to those of the 1990s; the differing propositions of the two presidents for 'national reconciliation', and the way in which protagonists of this commemoration thus appealed to national 'identity' during the debate.

The historian Henry Rousso has already demonstrated historically the mutations of political interpretations of Vichy after 1944 in his pioneering study *Le Syndrome de Vichy 1944-198 ...*,¹³ and (in collaboration with Eric Conan) in the more recent *Vichy, un passé qui ne passe pas*.¹⁴ Yet both these studies interpret the public preoccupation with Vichy as an 'obsession'. Instead, I will attempt to show that the controversy over the Vél' d'Hiv' marks the transition of the memorial legacy of Vichy from 'obsession' to a period of relative reconciliation. Parallel to the trials of the last surviving Vichy officials Paul Touvier in 1994 and Maurice Papon in 1997/98, the Vél' d'Hiv' marks symbolically the historicisation of Vichy: the end of a pathological 'obsession' with this period and the beginning of its integration into a complex national legacy of both 'positive' and 'negative' sites of memory.

Urban Context of the Monument

Since the construction of the Vél' d'Hiv' memorial, the city of Paris contains two central monuments specifically commemorating deportations of the 1940s. First, the 'Mémorial des martyrs de la déportation', inaugurated in 1962 by de Gaulle and dedicated to 'two hundred thousand French martyrs who died in the deportation



FIG. 1. Stele marking the site of the Vélodrome d'Hiver (1986).

camps,' is a massive stone construction located on the eastern tip of the Ile de la Cité, administered by the Ministry of War Veterans and Victims and traditionally used for official ceremonies. However, this monument makes no specific reference to Jewish victims, and its dedication to '*French martyrs*' [my italics] distorts the historical record by suggesting that victims died willingly for a *national* cause rather than as victims of state persecution.

The site of the Vél' d'Hiv' was initially marked by a plaque installed in 1946 by an anti-racist association at the entrance to the building on 8 boulevard de Grenelle, and used exclusively for private commemorations. The (now demolished) site of the stadium has been marked by a monument since 1986, when the then prime minister Chirac unveiled a stele (Fig. 1) and a street sign naming the square beside the site as 'Place des Martyrs Juifs'. Only in 1992 did it become a focus of media attention following the controversy over Mitterrand's handling of the commemoration. The bronze sculpture depicting a seated group with suitcases was finally erected in a small



FIG. 2. Monument to the memory of victims of the Vél' d'Hiv' round-ups of 16–17 July 1942 (1994).

park on the adjacent Quai de Grenelle in 1994 (Fig. 2). The novelty of this memorial consists not only in its explicit recognition of Jewish victims, but also in the symbolic link it creates between deportation, genocide, the French State of Vichy and, as a result of the commemorations, the Fifth Republic. In contrast to the inscribed stele inaugurated in 1986, which imputes responsibility for the deportations to 'the police of the government of Vichy under the orders of Nazi occupiers,'¹⁵ the inscription on the new monument directly accuses the French State: 'the French Republic pays homage to the victims of racist and anti-Semitic persecutions and crimes against humanity committed under the de facto authority called "government of the French State" 1940–1944.'¹⁶ However, both the inscription on the monument of 1994 and President Chirac's speech of 1995 distinguish clearly between the French State of Vichy and the Republic; by paying 'homage', they testify to the moral, not the political responsibility of the Republic. Although the Vél' d'Hiv' commemorations and more recent monument explicitly acknowledge the responsibility of French authorities in the deportations of 1942, therefore, and thereby contradict the Gaullist myth of a nation united in resistance, they do not disqualify the moral integrity of the Republic. By flaunting the disgrace of collaboration as a negative model (the deportations of 1942 had not previously been commemorated by heads of state on this large scale), this memorial serves to contain and appropriate potentially volatile memories by simultaneously projecting the alternative, 'positive' republican tradition.

The dialectical relation of the 'positive' myth of the Resistance and the 'negative' commemoration of deportation and genocide is reflected in the proximity of the location of the Vél' d'Hiv' monument to a number of urban ornaments reminding us of de Gaulle's military victories. It stands 100 metres west of the Bir Hakeim bridge over the Seine, named after the site of successful Resistance operations of the

Free French forces in North Africa in 1942. On the bridge stands the statue of a galloping horse 'La France renaissante', erected in 1930 but complemented by an inscribed plaque recalling the Bir Hakeim victory. A further 100 metres upstream from the bridge stands a monument to General Diego Brosset, who led operations at Bir Hakeim. The Vél' d'Hiv' monument is therefore a symbolic anomaly, but also a complement to its immediate memorial surroundings.

The significance of a monument cannot be deduced from its architectural and urban characteristics alone. In order to assess the question whether the monumental, rhetorical and ritual innovations of the Vél' d'Hiv' site genuinely redress the previous memorial and commemorative imbalance, in which Gaullist ideals pervaded official state representations of Vichy, we must examine more closely the reasons why this commemorative site acquired symbolic significance leading to the introduction of the national day of commemoration in 1993, the inauguration of the monument in 1994 and Chirac's historic speech of 1995.

The Political Appropriation of the Vél' d'Hiv' Via Rhetoric

The ceremony of 1995 was largely applauded by historians and the press because no president had previously given verbal acknowledgement of crimes committed in the name of the Vichy regime in this frank manner. 'For the first time,' claimed Eric Conan and Henry Rousso, 'a President of the Republic used language void of ambiguities, verbal contortions and roundabout means which previously characterised most presidential speeches.'¹⁷ According to Henri Hajdenberg, president of the Representative Council of the Jewish Institutions of France (CRIF), Chirac's declaration amounted to 'a turning point, for this marks the end of the eclipse of the responsibilities of the French State.'¹⁸

The uncompromising campaigning of citizens' action groups for a verbal gesture (three versions of the petition by the Comité Vél' d'Hiv' 42 appeared in *Le Monde* between 1992 and 1994, including an additional petition by the Union of Jewish Students of France (UEJF) in 1993) raised public expectations to such an extent that verbal acknowledgement by the president was construed as a single exclusive condition of the commemoration, a moral imperative which suggested that a verbal statement would effectively expiate the state's responsibility for crimes committed during the Second World War. Petitions and speeches both employed the moralistic vocabulary of 'debt', 'affliction', 'accountability' and 'atonement'. The petition of 17 June 1992 spoke of the verbal gesture as 'a necessity for French collective memory, which is afflicted with this unspoken fact.'¹⁹ The petition of 16 July 1992 similarly claimed that 'the French State is now accountable.'²⁰

However, emotive appeals to the 'Etat français', that is, the state in general without specific reference to either the Vichy regime or the republic, threw doubt over precisely who and what was held to be accountable: the French State (of Vichy) or the French (republican) state. Although, as Robert Paxton has shown, several administrative elites of Vichy, including the police and judiciary, continued to function after 1944, the moralistic tone of politicians who inculpated the 'Etat français' in *general* accentuated the emotive nature of the debate. The contrast between Mitterrand's refusal and Chirac's willingness to fulfil the demands of the petitions further polarised the moral attitudes towards the two presidents, such that Mitterrand was surrounded by scandal and Chirac's gesture understood, as Hajdenberg's response shows, as the final word on the subject. Although Chirac's rhetorical acknowledgement of 'collective fault' and

'imprescriptible debt'²¹ in 1995 belongs to the realm of *informal* politics (the speech was purely symbolic and had no direct bearing on policy), and is historically untenable (fault and imprescriptible debt are moral categories not strictly applicable to a collective or entire nation), it nevertheless put a temporary end to controversy over the allegedly ambiguous attitudes of post-war political leaders towards Vichy.

(i) *The Petition: A Verbal Act as an Exclusive Condition of Moral Reparation?*

The first petition of the Comité Vél' d'Hiv' 42 set the tone of the debate:

[...] On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the round-ups at the Vél' d'Hiv' on 16 and 17 July, we demand that it be recognised and officially proclaimed by the President of the Republic, the head of state, that the French State of Vichy is responsible for persecutions and crimes against the Jews of France. This symbolic act is required for the memory of the victims and their descendants. It is also required for French collective memory, inflicted with this unspoken fact. Ultimately, the very idea of the French Republic, faithful to her founding principles, is at stake.²²

The purpose of this petition was to urge president Mitterrand to recognise officially, in the name of the Fifth Republic in 1992, the moral responsibility of the 'French State of Vichy' for racist persecutions of the 1940s, with the stated goal of appeasing 'the memory of the victims and their descendants' as well as 'French collective memory.' From the beginning, therefore, the petition focused upon the presidential commemorative speech as the single means by which the French state could atone for acts of the French State of Vichy, with the aim of appeasing 'collective memory' and of sustaining the 'idea' of the Republic and its 'principles'. Both the moral and political dimensions of the petitions were formulated in general, absolute terms. In moral terms, for example, the petitions supposed that crimes of the French State may be expiated or 'cured' by means of formal verbal recognition; the petition presented the nation as an organic, personified whole capable (in religious terms) of achieving personal redemption by contrition and confession. The petitions thereby overstated the symbolic authority of the president by demanding a verbal recognition as an *exclusive* condition in order to end the 'inflicted' or 'ill' ('malade') state of the nation. Non-verbal symbolic acts such as the presence of President Mitterrand at the commemoration, the inauguration of the Vél' d'Hiv' monument and the museum at the Izieu internment camp, or the introduction of a national day of commemoration in 1993, were considered insufficient. The petition was based on the combined political and religious assumption that the president's verbal recognition of an apparently unspoken fact would be equivalent to moral reparation for the entire nation. This insistence on a *verbal* gesture characterised all subsequent symbolic gestures and statements relating to the Vél' d'Hiv' commemoration. Moreover, by making verbal utterances the sole condition for the success or failure of the commemoration, the debate over the Vél' d'Hiv' revolved not around the most appropriate rituals or sculpture, but around the *wording* of commemorative speeches and definitions of the French nation as a collective whole: either as the nation under Vichy (being commemorated), or the nation under the Fifth Republic (drawing legitimacy in the present from the commemoration).²³ Media attention therefore focused on the precise naming of *what* (Vichy) the Vél' d'Hiv' should commemorate and *in the name of what* (France of the 1990s) it should be commemorated. The issue of defining adequately the French nation with respect to the

Vél' d'Hiv' commemoration was determined by distinctions between France and Vichy, and thus became the main condition for the perceived success or failure of subsequent commemorations. Chirac's speech of 1995, which acknowledged in unambiguous terms—in the same moral vein as the petition—the crimes of the Vichy regime, was therefore applauded as a form of redemption or 'final stroke' which reconciled the French nation of the 1990s to its recent history.²⁴

(ii) *Mitterrand's Reticence: 'The Fifth Republic is not Vichy'*

In the annual presidential television interview on 14 July 1992, Mitterrand refused to comply with the petition of the Comité Vél' d'Hiv' 42 on ideological grounds. A verbal acknowledgement of 'debt' by the president, pronounced in the name of the Fifth Republic for acts occurring under the Vichy regime, would have evoked symbolically a moral, historical and political continuity between the Vichy government and the Republic of 1992, that is, between the France of 1942 and the France of 1992. 'Throughout its history, the Republic has constantly adopted an entirely open attitude to ensure that citizens' rights should apply to all people recognised as citizens, in particular to French Jews. [...] So don't expect the Republic to be accountable! In 1940, however, there was a French State, the Vichy regime, which was not the Republic. And we should ask this French State to account for the events.'²⁵ The act of recognition as demanded in the petitions would have brought into question two fundamental aspects of French political culture to which Mitterrand alludes in the interview. First, citizens' rights and republicanism (the founding constitutional principles of the Republic, the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Man), which were officially denied under Vichy.²⁶ Second, such a recognition would have contradicted the Gaullist perception of Vichy as an anomaly or form of 'parenthesis' in which French political tradition was momentarily suspended, an interpretation which nevertheless both overestimates the role of the Resistance and underestimates continuities between the states of Vichy and the Republic before and after 1944.

A positive response to the petitions would also have promoted historical misrepresentation. As Conan and Rouso have noted, the stringency of the appeals of 1992 implied that crimes had never before been recognised whereas, in reality, the crimes had been recognised both symbolically and legally during the purges of collaborators immediately after the war, which led to trials of over 120,000 collaborators, over 700 executions and some 4500 summary executions by the Resistance.²⁷ 'By appearing to stigmatise a kind of collective guilt [...] and charging the state with the sole responsibility of past silences, they provoked an anachronistic polemic.'²⁸ The originality of the petition lay not in its content, therefore, but in the fact that it demanded a purely *verbal* form of reparation as a symbolic act by the head of state.

(iii) *Chirac's Oratory: The Myth of Universalism*

President Chirac's commemorative speech at the Vél' d'Hiv' in 1995 initially created 'very broad consensus'²⁹ among representatives of Jewish associations, intellectuals, politicians from both the Left and the Right, and from governments abroad. This speech also appeared—'at least in words'³⁰—to break with the controversial Gaullist notion that Vichy was illegal (a notion which had been implicitly sanctioned by Mitterrand's silence in 1992), and therefore brought the public debate to a temporary halt. Press reports reflected overall support for Chirac, with only muted criticism. Gilles

Bresson, writing in *Libération*, alluded to the conflict between the two presidents over the Vél' d'Hiv' by reporting that 'Jacques Chirac has well and truly turned the page on Mitterrandism'³¹ while Henry Rousso claimed that 'Chirac has left behind a myth and approached History.'³² In short, Chirac scored a political success by responding to demands to assuage controversy on the basis of the assumption that the verbal recognition of crimes 53 years after their occurrence in some way neutralised or, in moral terms, expiated them.³³ But what was the precise wording, and what historical and political meanings did the speech attribute to memories associated with the Vél' d'Hiv'? Although it won broad consensus, closer examination of the terminology reveals ambiguities which suggest that consensus was won largely by the skilful rhetorical manipulation of the issues at stake. This speech couched the recognition of crimes in a rhetoric of the nation, where the affirmation of collective moral fault served as a negative model for the reaffirmation of nationhood as a transcendent, abstract ideal.

This speech was organised according to a stringent narrative structure and employed complex terminology conveying an equally complex portrait of the nation. The thematic sequence of the speech may be divided into five segments, each conveyed in a specific rhetorical mode of lament, history, appeal, warning and prognosis, as follows: (a) a lament on the injury done to the memory of France by the Vichy regime, and on the inadequacy of words to account for the events being commemorated; (b) a historical account of these events emphasising the fact that France was directly implicated in the deportations of Jews; (c) an appeal to remember these events as a moral duty, both because Jewish theology lays emphasis on memory, and because these crimes represent an 'imprescriptible debt' for French people; (d) a warning against the persistence of racism, anti-Semitism, fear and 'exclusion', combined with an appeal to memory and 'vigilance' in order to counteract enduring 'obscure forces' (a lightly veiled reference to the Front National); (e) a prognosis that hope for the future is based on the lessons of history and conscious resistance to racism in the name of humanitarian values. These five themes were couched in highly stylised rhetoric containing a number of references to the nation, some of which evoked and therefore invested the Vél' d'Hiv' with traditional Gaullist paradigms of national self-understanding. These may be summarised as follows:

Nation as person (identity): The speech opens with the words 'There is, in the *life* of a nation, [...] [my italics]. The nation is subsequently referred to as 'la France' followed by an active verb as in the phrase 'France accomplished irreparable deeds.' The constant references to four complementary subjects of the nation in the speech—'je', 'la France', 'vous' and 'nous'—therefore creates a rhetorical bond of solidarity between the person of the president ('je'), the person 'France', the vaguely defined collectivity of spectators ('vous') and the all-encompassing collectivity 'nous'.

Nation as idea: One of the most celebrated and most quoted phrases of de Gaulle, 'une certaine idée de la France',³⁴ is reiterated and reinforced by Chirac. He appeals to this essentially abstract, subjective perception of the nation, 'a certain idea of France, honest, generous, faithful to its traditions, to its genius' as a positive alternative to Vichy, one which offers a moral foundation for collective emotional allegiance to the nation. Universal humanist values—'values of freedom, justice, tolerance which are the basis of French identity'—are thus affirmed in contrast to Vichy as a negative model, the rejection of which serves to reassert French republican traditions. The very abstraction of nationhood as a set of *apolitical* ideas thus appeals more effectively to social

consensus: the abstract, moral conceptualisation of the nation here leaves the political significance of the Vél' d'Hiv' site open.³⁵ Such appeals to national consensus on the basis of moral ideas are consistent with the core Gaullist doctrine of national unity (*rassemblement*).³⁶

Eternal nation (time): Chirac's speech combines several time sequences which transcend, and therefore appear to diminish the consequences of the years 1940–44. First, the personified nation is measured by a life span interrupted intermittently by brief 'moments' of tragedy or shame, corresponding to 16/17 July 1942. This time-scale is surmounted by more or less extensive historical time-spans: the past is conceived of as open, if not eternal, in references to 'our traditions' and 'our past', or else as having originated in the Enlightenment ('an idea of Mankind, its freedom and dignity') and in the Resistance ('spirit of vigilance'); the future is evoked as 'hope' based on the 'lessons' of history. Both these references to distant origins in the past and an open future are transcended by repeated invocations of immeasurable atemporal 'values'.

Memorial nation (identity and time): The Vél' d'Hiv' commemoration is devoted entirely to the symbolic and rhetorical evocation of memories of the past. The speech refers to two forms of social memory, that of the 'Jewish community' and that of 'France': 'the Jewish community remembers, and so does the whole of France.' Although Chirac does not subsume the memory of Jews to that of the nation, and avoids the integrationist rhetoric used in his speech of 1986, where he spoke of the Jewish community's 'rootedness in the national community',³⁷ he nevertheless evokes the integrative force of the nation in apolitical, ideal terms as noted above. These references to memory reinforce the link between the idea of a personified nation (endowed with the human faculty of memory) and time-scales governing the nation (whether those of a lifetime, history, or eternity).

Nation divided and united: Although, as Henry Rousso points out, the duality or 'division' ('clivage') of French history conveyed in Chirac's speech reflects an authentic historical division between collaborators and résistants, the speech constructs the image of a nation united in ideas and values, which is bolstered by rhetorical references to the nation as a transcendental, ideal community ('one and indivisible, in the heart of the French'). The status of 'Vichy' and that of 'France' are therefore not presented in equal terms in the speech, for Vichy constitutes a historical 'moment' which interrupts or 'soils' the ideal continuity of timeless republican values. They do not constitute, as Rousso argues, a 'double necessity' or a 'division',³⁸ but a *historical* principle on the one hand (Vichy), and a *transcendental* principle on the other (France). Chirac's rhetorical construction of a nation divided between historical guilt ('collective fault') and pride (in 'a certain idea of France') in fact reaffirms the unity of the national community: the affirmation of division is, by definition, affirmation that something whole is divided, therefore divided yet intact. This rhetorical double bind, employed by Chirac and defended by Rousso, may only be sustained if we distinguish clearly between the terms in which the French nation is here understood: as divided in history, and united in an atemporal transcendental set of values.

The Vél' d'Hiv' and the Politics of National Integration in the 1990s

The Vél' d'Hiv' commemoration speech of 1995 was the first act of state symbolics

performed by Chirac in his role as head of state, and occurred at the peak of his career after two previous attempts to become president. In anticipation of the commemoration, one month before the first round of the presidential election on 9 April 1995, Chirac gave a speech to a gathering of several thousand young people in Paris which underscored a deeply felt sense of history based on the idea that a new age would begin following the election and the end of the fiftieth anniversary commemorations of the Second World War: 'Next May, an era will come to an end, a generation will make way for new people. The next French president will enter office following the fiftieth anniversary commemorations of the end of the Second World War. A new chapter of our history is about to open. And we are going to write this chapter together.'³⁹

This conscious link between the presidential election of 1995 and the commemorations of the Second World War offers a key to understanding the political intentions underlying the handling of the Vél' d'Hiv' commemoration. Chirac drew on fundamental tenets of Gaullist doctrine: presidential charisma, the nation as a vocation and transcendental 'idea', and an appeal for national renewal ('a new chapter'). In the same speech, evocations of the 'social fracture' further bolstered fears of an apparent national division which emphasised the need to voluntarily reassert national unity, in accordance with the principle of *rassemblement*.⁴⁰ The Vél' d'Hiv' commemoration was thereby subsumed to the president's quest to secure national consensus following his election victory and to assure political legitimisation by appropriating a symbol of one of the most controversial issues of contemporary French history.

Chirac appealed to social consensus and patriotism by negating Vichy and affirming common identification with a presidential leader, with a nation conceived as an organic whole harbouring collective memories (nation as person), and with a transcendental or timeless sense of nationhood (eternal nation) based on humanitarian values (nation as idea). Vichy therefore played a central role in a strategy of verbally acknowledging painful memories in order to appeal anew to patriotic sentiment. By simultaneously evoking the anti-Semitism of Vichy and xenophobia of the 1990s in conjunction with timeless humanitarian values, Chirac used the commemoration to political ends by a process of association or *historical grafting*, whereby political issues from the past are raised as a model or warning for the present. According to the historian Robert Frank, 'collective memory suppresses, transforms and revives certain aspects of the latent civil war which divided the French from 1940 to 1944, and grafts them onto political battles of the Fourth and Fifth Republics.'⁴¹ Three such grafts occurred in Chirac's speech. First a tribute to the memory of the French Jewish community (minority rights). Second, a warning against 'integrationism' (extreme minority groups) and 'obscure forces' (racism and the Front National). Third, an appeal to national republican traditions. They offered an account of history in which the dilemma of confrontations between minorities and forces of persecution, that is, between victims and perpetrators (whether in 1942 or 1995), may be overcome by adhering to traditional republican values. In short, Chirac's speech conveyed an appeal to national integration on the basis of republican values as a compromise between and alternative to minority demands and racial persecution.

This affirmation of the policy of national integration as a negation of Vichy is a characteristic example of the interpretation of the past in light of present concerns, and of the use of memories of the past to legitimate policies in the present. In Chirac's speech, this instrumentalisation of the past was achieved in part by means of a rhetorical amalgam of policies of social and ethnic integration on the basis of the single word 'exclusion'. While 'exclusion' in 1942 was a consequence of racial laws against

Jews, Gypsies, or the mentally handicapped, for example, 'exclusion' in 1995 referred primarily to the *social* exclusion resulting from unemployment. 'Exclusion' was one of Chirac's main slogans in the presidential election campaign of 1995, used in conjunction with the slogans 'social fracture' and 'France for everyone' (*la France pour tous*), issues over which the election of 1995 was fought.⁴² 'Exclusion' also defined the situation of immigrants living in France without a legal residence permit: the 'sans papiers', essentially African asylum-seekers who were refused the right to acquire French nationality following new laws on naturalisation introduced in 1993.⁴³

By simultaneously calling for the respect of minority groups and the rejection of both extremist minority movements ('integrationism') and parties with racist programmes ('obscure forces'), Chirac linked the racial tensions of the 1940s with those of the 1990s while appealing in both cases to the common alternative of universal Enlightenment values. However, this historical amalgam of racism of the 1940s and 1990s derived from a purely rhetorical allusion via the homonym 'exclusion'. In reality, the extent to which the racism of the 1940s (essentially directed towards Jews) can be related to the racism of the 1990s (essentially towards African immigrants) is questionable insofar as the deportations of 1942 are historically unrelated to the immigration issue of the 1990s, resulting from the nationality code of 1993. However, this rhetorically induced historical and political amalgam reinforced the emotional effect of the speech by equating indignation at the treatment of Jews in the past with indignation at the treatment of immigrants and unemployed people in the present. The evocation of multiple meanings of the term 'exclusion' in order to allude to two or three political issues in different historical periods (although they are closely related on moral grounds) therefore obscured historical distinctions between the issues, yet compounded the sense of moral indignation deriving from different sources. The single word 'exclusion' therefore encouraged a sense of *general* indignation detached from its precise political and historical causes. For this reason, where the grafting of different histories of injustice by Chirac solicited a general moral response of indignation, spectators were made to be more receptive to a general and exclusively *ideal* (rather than complex political) solution, like the one proposed in the speech. The force of this speech lay in its moral definition of a problem for which it offered an equally moral (albeit rhetorical) solution.

In the aftermath of the Vél' d'Hiv' commemoration, Chirac's speech took on a further political dimension insofar as the commemorations of Vichy became an object of dispute between major political parties, including the Front National, over the legitimacy of their respective claims to promote national heritage. Following Chirac's speech of 1995, the leader of the Front National, Jean-Marie Le Pen, accused the president of having sought to settle an 'electoral debt' towards the Jewish community, and of having 'soiled our nation and its memory.'⁴⁴ Le Pen had previously attempted to undermine the authority of Chirac in 1995 by suggesting that his party is controlled by Jewish organisations.⁴⁵ He made a third attack on the Gaullist party in 1997 by condemning the trial of Maurice Papon and bringing into question the reputation of de Gaulle by insinuating that his wartime exile in London invalidated his status as a figurehead of the Resistance.⁴⁶ Though trivial in content, Le Pen's acts of verbal aggression were timed to effectively undermine the credibility of the Gaullist party RPR (Rassemblement pour la République) following its failure to win a majority of seats in the parliamentary election of July 1997.

By condemning Chirac's Vél' d'Hiv' speech and the Papon trial as an affront to patriotic sentiment, the Front National presented itself as the genuinely national party,

and even adopted the Gaullist campaign slogan 'neither right, nor left, but French!'⁴⁷ Fears that the Front National would thus gain electoral advantage drove the president of the RPR Philippe Séguin to condemn the trial as 'a pretext for two trials: that of General de Gaulle and Gaullism, and that of France.'⁴⁸ Vichy therefore became a political football between Right and extreme Right parties, and between factions of the Gaullist party itself, which Séguin dramatised as a threat to the stability of both Gaullist tradition and of the very nation. While Chirac distanced his party from the racist policies of the Front National by deploring xenophobia and racism in his *Vél' d'Hiv'* speech, Séguin attempted to distance the same party from Chirac's stance in order not to offer ideological ammunition for Le Pen to condemn the president or the RPR as unpatriotic. On close inspection, however, the Gaullist precepts maintained in Chirac's speech suggest that the protests mounted by Gaullist colleagues like Séguin against Chirac's handling of Vichy were not entirely justified. The dispute provoked in 1997 by Séguin was a purely sectarian response to verbal attacks made by Le Pen on de Gaulle and Gaullist tradition. In reality, the *Vél' d'Hiv'* commemorations did not negate, but revised and restated Gaullist principles of nationhood.

'National Reconciliation?' The Shadow of the Gaullist Vision of History over Presidents Mitterrand and Chirac

When Mitterrand justified his refusal to acknowledge responsibility for Vichy crimes in 1992 on the grounds that 'in 1940, there was a French State, the Vichy regime, which was not the Republic,' he was criticised for adhering to de Gaulle's understanding of the Vichy regime as a form of 'parenthesis' in French history, as a political system entirely detached from the republican traditions preceding and following it.⁴⁹ His refusal to accede to the demands of petitioners did partially uphold de Gaulle's vision of the political illegitimacy of the Vichy regime. But he cannot be accused of sustaining the Gaullist myth merely on the grounds that he refused to verbally acknowledge the Vichy regime on behalf of the Fifth Republic, for he also made significant symbolic gestures in recognition of the deportation of Jews in 1941–42 which went beyond those made by de Gaulle: by attending ceremonies, introducing the national day of commemoration, having the *Vél' d'Hiv'* monument erected, ceasing to lay a wreath at Pétain's grave, and by inaugurating the memorial museum at the internment camp at Izieu. Prior to the 1970s, commemorations in memory of Jews had been performed primarily in traditional republican style. Whereas de Gaulle inaugurated the 'Mémorial des Martyrs de la Déportation' in Paris, for example, which commemorates the deportations of the 1940s in general and names 'French martyrs' as *victims*, Mitterrand instigated commemorations of crimes against Jews in particular, which inculcate the 'French State' as *perpetrator*.

Chirac's speech of 1995, in contrast to Mitterrand's silence, was interpreted as a radical break with Gaullism. The public recognition of crimes, the declaration of a 'collective fault' and 'imprescriptible debt' suggested not only political, moral and historical continuity between Vichy and the Republic, but also implied moral accountability continuing into the present in 1995. The assertion that culpability is inherited collectively constituted a radical break with de Gaulle's understanding of Vichy. Nevertheless, Chirac's recognition of Vichy did not abandon but reaffirmed the holistic notion of France as a community bound by common universal values, if not a myth of universalism.⁵⁰ When Chirac made a verbal recognition of crimes on behalf of the nation, he did not discredit the nation, since an expression of collective fault in the

1990s for events of the 1940s presupposes a personified notion of nationhood possessing moral integrity spanning 50 years—analogous to that of an individual, who may be forgiven after acts of remorse and confession. The metaphor of the nation as a single organism, with an integral and relatively coherent memory like that of a human individual, presents the faults of the nation as *human* faults: while the nation is discredited with the crimes of Vichy, it is simultaneously credited with the faculty of overcoming these faults.

The speech of 1995 thus adopted Gaullist doctrine by appealing to the nation as an organic community whose members are bound by an abstract 'certain idea', and a sense of solidarity conveyed by the communitarian rhetoric of 'we' and 'you', common memories and a common future. Its location was not described in geographical or territorial terms, but as the 'heart' of all French people, such that Frenchness was conceived as something exceptional and incommunicable: a 'certain', and therefore indescribable idea of the nation.⁵¹ The sense of community was reinforced by the challenge of combating xenophobia on the basis of a collective voluntary reassertion of the ethical values of republicanism. By conveying a strong sense of nationhood and national continuity on the basis of these values, therefore, Chirac did not refute but restated the Gaullist doctrine of Vichy as a 'parenthesis' in French history. Whereas de Gaulle is reputed to have denied the legitimacy of the French State of Vichy in legal terms ('null and void'), Chirac denied Vichy in moral terms, where national traditions were momentarily 'soiled' by Vichy.

Although the attitudes of presidents Mitterrand and Chirac were polarised with regard to their differing receptions of popular Gaullist historiography during the Vél' d'Hiv' commemorations, it is essential to guard against equating Mitterrand's attitude with that of de Gaulle while interpreting Chirac's response as a form of emancipation from de Gaulle. In reality, Mitterrand appears to have partially revised the Gaullist vision of Vichy by promoting non-verbal symbols of the French State's responsibility for deportations, whereas Chirac conveyed a verbal revision of de Gaulle's vision while upholding orthodox Gaullist rhetoric of the ideal nation. In light of the general adherence to Gaullist historiography by both presidents, one may suppose that the polemicalisation of the differences between their handling of the commemoration was founded not on historical arguments but on the political inclination to define or reinforce the binary opposition between the presidents and their parties. The polemic polarisation of each president's reaction to Gaullist doctrine appears to have been motivated by contemporary political concerns: dissatisfaction with Mitterrand's personal involvement in Vichy prior to his Resistance activities from 1943; indignation over his belated and ambiguous verbal statements concerning this involvement (particularly during the historic television interview in September 1994);⁵² and a concern to take a clear public stance against the racist discourse of the Front National. In reality, both presidents appealed to national reconciliation by adhering to Gaullist historiography and universal republican values. The Vél' d'Hiv' commemoration played a key role in both presidents' attempts to reassert republican ideals by first exposing then deploring Vichy as a negative model.

In this essay, I have attempted to analyse four aspects of the process in which the Vél' d'Hiv' commemorations and monument constitute a discursive 'site of memory' which fostered the reconciliation of official state memory to the traumatic history of collaboration and deportations: the way in which emphasis on the religion of victims in this monument compensates the emphasis on their nationality in existing Gaullist monuments; the narrative interpretations of the legacy of Vichy in petitions and state

responses to them; the rhetorical 'grafting' of issues of the 1990s onto those of 1940–44; and the persistence of the Gaullist vision of history underlying both presidents' interpretations of the deportations of 1942. The relative success and failure of Chirac and Mitterrand in promoting reconciliation may also be partially imputed to the generation gap between the two presidents (Mitterrand born in 1916, Chirac 1932), such that only Mitterrand was directly involved in positions of political responsibility during the years of occupation. However, this conflict resulted primarily from their divergent understandings and rhetorical renderings of the continuity of state before, during and after collaboration, as well as Chirac's rhetorical astuteness in relativising positive and negative traditions.

'National reconciliation' is a paradigm of French political culture, which continued after 1944. During the 1950s and 1970s, adherents of Philippe Pétain attempted to rehabilitate the conflicting images of the hero of Verdun and architect of the armistice with Germany in 1940 by having his ashes transferred from the island of Yeu to Douaumont, that is, from the sanctuary of the prison where he spent the last years of his life to the cemetery for fallen soldiers of the First World War.⁵³ Mitterrand even continued the tradition of laying a wreath on Pétain's grave until 1992. Georges Pompidou likewise proposed national reconciliation in 1972 by granting a legal pardon to Paul Touvier, former head of the militia in Lyon. In contrast, the Vél' d'Hiv' introduced criteria of moral reconciliation and the absolution of French 'collective memory'—not by means of amnesty, but of the explicit recognition of fault, as established in the initial petitions of citizens' action groups from 1992.

This campaign to urge reconciliation between the French (republican) state and Jewish victims of the French State must be interpreted within the context of prevailing political interests of the 1990s: albeit not only as a traditional conflict between Left and Right, but between ideologies of the inclusion in and exclusion from public life. One could even read this monument as the embodiment of two opposed interpretations of French political culture since the end of the economic and social upheavals known as the *trente glorieuses* in the 1970s. On the one hand, the monument and commemorative day testify to the recognition of 'exclusion' in both the 1940s and 1990s. In this case, the Vél' d'Hiv' could be said to symbolise the partial 'fragmentation'⁵⁴ of French society (in the face of ethnic or regional movements, for example) heralding the dissolution of consensus based on the classical model of republican integration. On the other hand, the explicit (verbal) negation of 'exclusion' by the presidents during the inauguration and commemorations of the Vél' d'Hiv' testifies to the voluntary reassertion of national unity or *rassemblement* on the basis of consensual republican values.⁵⁵ These two interpretations of contemporary French political culture—one sceptical, the other faithful towards the continuing validity of republicanism—underpinned the ideological conflict over the Vél' d'Hiv'.

The suspension of debate after the speech by Chirac in 1995 suggests that the Vél' d'Hiv' effectively fulfilled the function of a site of memory as the 'regulation of conflicts.' However, this process of historicisation did not result merely from the passage of time, as Nora's selection of already 'regulated' issues in *Les Lieux de mémoire* (primarily from the nineteenth century) implies. It would be similarly misleading to suppose that the Vél' d'Hiv' marked the transition of Vichy from the realm of 'real' to 'mythic' memory, terms used by Benedict Anderson to explain how the memory of distant crimes, such as the 'Saint Barthélémy massacres' of Huguenots in 1572, was integrated as 'French' or 'our own.'⁵⁶ In contrast, the preliminary historicisation of Vichy experienced during the 1990s was only partially a result of structural changes

such as the passage of time and generations, or the transition to myth; the Vél' d'Hiv' served primarily as a backdrop for the politically motivated reinterpretation of deportations in the form of an architectural symbol, the historical 'grafting' of the issue of exclusion, and the rehabilitation of Gaullist ideals.

Since no positive identification with the crimes of the Vichy regime is possible, and since these crimes cannot be integrated into a coherent narrative of the nation or canon of national symbols or sites of memory, Chirac solemnised the nation's crimes as a negative example in order to forcibly reaffirm alternative positive traditions. In approximate accordance with Reese-Schäfer's definition of 'negative nationalism', Chirac thus reasserted republican values and the myth of the nation's origin in 1789 as the negation of the violation of these values in 1942. By further defining the presidential election of May 1995 as the end of an 'era' and the beginning of a 'new generation',⁵⁷ he interpreted 1995 as a historic moment: the end of the fiftieth anniversary commemorations, the arrival of a generation of political leaders too young to have been personally involved in the Vichy regime, and therefore a signal to revitalise in moral terms the heritage of Vichy. The Vél' d'Hiv' nevertheless remains an ambivalent site of memory. Today, the annual wreath-laying ceremony at the Vél' d'Hiv' monument on the first Sunday following 16/17 July occurs immediately after the celebrations of 14 July. This ritual juxtaposition of two of the most memorable historical origins of the French nation—one positive and celebratory (the storming of the Bastille on 14 July 1789), the other negative and grievous (the round-up and deportation of Jews from occupied Paris on 16/17 July 1942)—poignantly recalls the debate over the Vél' d'Hiv' as a memorial process of reconciliation in its own right.

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Notes

1. 'Journée nationale commémorative des persécutions racistes et antisémites commises sous l'autorité de fait dit "gouvernement de l'Etat français" (1940–1944)', marked annually by a wreath-laying ceremony at the Vél' d'Hiv' monument (see Fig. 2) on the first Sunday following 16 July.
2. Cf. Annette Wieviorka, *Mémoire et génocide. Entre la mémoire et l'oubli* (Paris: Plon, 1992), p. 356.
3. Henry Rousso speaks of a tension between the claims of the 'national and international collectivity' and of 'communitarian' interests. Cf. Rousso, interview with Philippe Petit, *La Hantise du passé* (Paris: Les éditions Textuel, 1998), p. 33.
4. In order to avoid confusion between the generic term 'Etat français' (French state) and the official name of the Vichy regime (also 'Etat français': French State, the term used in state documents from 1941 instead of 'Republic'), some commentators speak of 'l'Etat français de Vichy'. References to 'l'Etat français' during discussions in the 1990s were therefore often ambiguous.
5. For analysis of methodology in the field of 'identity' and 'memory', see Richard Handler, 'Is "Identity" a Useful Concept?', in John Gillis (ed), *Commemorations. The Politics of National Identity* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), pp. 27–40; and Susannah Radstone (ed), *Memory and Methodology* (Oxford: Berg, 2000).
6. Cf. Pierre Nora (ed), *Les Lieux de mémoire* (7 vols), (Paris: Gallimard, 1984–1993).
7. Pierre Nora, "Das Abenteuer der *Lieux de mémoire*", in Etienne François et al. (eds), *Nation und Emotion* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995), p. 83.
8. Pierre Nora, interview with Emmanuel de Roux, *Le Monde*, 29 November 1994.
9. Walter Reese-Schäfer, 'Universalismus, negativer Nationalismus und die neue Einheit der Deutschen', in Petra Braitling and W. Reese-Schäfer (eds), *Universalismus, negativer Nationalismus und die neue Einheit der Deutschen* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1991), p. 46.
10. Siegfried Jäger, *Kritische Diskursanalyse* (Duisburg: Duisburger Institut für Sprach- und Sozialforschung, 1993), p. 157.
11. James Young, *The Texture of Memory* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 1993), p. 90.

12. This has already been done by Serge Barcellini and Annette Wieviorka, *Passant, souviens-toi! Les lieux du souvenir de la Seconde Guerre mondiale en France* (Paris: Plon, 1995); and Eric Conan and Henry Rousso (see notes 13 and 14).
13. Henry Rousso, *Le Syndrome de Vichy 1944–198 ...*, (Paris: Le Seuil, 1987).
14. Eric Conan and Henry Rousso, *Vichy, un passé qui ne passe pas* (Paris: Fayard, 1994).
15. Full inscription: 'Les 16 et 17 juillet 1942/13152 Juifs furent arrêtés dan Paris et sa banlieue/déportés et assassinés à Auschwitz/Dans le vélodrome d'hiver qui s'élevait ici/4115 enfants/2916 femmes/1129 hommes/furent parqués dans des conditions inhumaines/par la police du gouvernement de Vichy/sur ordre des occupants nazis/que ceux qui ont tenté de leur venir en aide/soient remerciés/passant, souviens-toi'. Cf. Serge Barcellini and Annette Wieviorka, *Passant, souviens-toi! Les lieux du souvenir de la Seconde Guerre mondiale en France* (Paris: Plon, 1995), p. 477.
16. Full inscription: 'La République française/en hommage aux victimes/des persécutions racistes et antisémites/et des crimes contre l'humanité/commis sous l'autorité de fait/dite "gouvernement de l'Etat français" (1940–1944)/N'oublions jamais'.
17. *Vichy, un passé qui ne passe pas*, 2nd ed (Paris: Gallimard, 1995), p. 451.
18. Cf. Gilles Bresson, 'Chirac: la France complice des nazis', *Libération*, 17 July 1995, pp. 10–11.
19. 'Un appel est lancé à M. Mitterrand pour que soient reconnus officiellement les "persécutions" et les "crimes de Vichy contre les juifs"', *Le Monde*, 17 June 1992, p. 10.
20. 'Le Comité Vél' d'Hiv' 42: l'Etat est "sourd"', *Le Monde*, 16 July 1992, p. 8.
21. All references to Chirac's Vél' d'Hiv' speech of 1995 are from *Passages*, July–August 1995, pp. 35–40.
22. 'Un appel est lancé à M. Mitterrand [...]', *Le Monde*, 17 June 1992.
23. Comparison with other monuments here reveals the specificity of the Vél' d'Hiv': whereas controversy over the Vél' d'Hiv' focused on rhetoric, for example, that over the 'Holocaust Memorial' in Germany focused on sculptural form.
24. For commendations by public figures such as Joseph Sitruk, Henri Hajdenberg, Serge Klarsfeld, Jean-Marie Lustiger and André Rossinot, see 'Le président du CRIF salue "le discours que l'on n'attendait plus"', *Le Monde*, 18 July 1995, p. 6.
25. Annual presidential declaration of 14 July by Mitterrand, 'De mauvaises moeurs se sont répandues partout, y compris dans la justice', *Le Monde*, 16 July 1992, p. 7.
26. The term 'Etat français' was substituted for 'République', and the republican motto 'Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité' replaced by 'Travail, Famille, Patrie'. Cf. Mona Ozouf, 'Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité', in *Les Lieux de mémoire III*, Les France 3, pp. 583–629, p. 623.
27. Cf. Robert Paxton, *Vichy France. Old Guard and New Order*, (London: Berrie and Jenkins, 1972), p. 329.
28. *Vichy, un passé qui ne passe pas*, p. 39.
29. Rousso, in a debate between Nathalie Heinich and Henry Rousso, *Le Débat*, 89, March–April 1996, pp. 191–207, p. 199.
30. Ibid.
31. Bresson, 'Chirac: la France complice des nazis'.
32. Cf. Rousso, interviewed by Annette Lévy-Willard, *Libération*, 17 July 1995, p. 11.
33. The Vél' d'Hiv' affair is one in a series of public apologies for crimes of the Second World War, including that of the French Catholic church (September 1997), the French police force (1997), and the conditional apology of the Vatican (March 1998), rendered official in March 2000.
34. Charles de Gaulle, *Mémoires de guerre*, 6 vols, vol 1: *L'Appel 1940–1942* (Paris: Plon, 1976), p. 1.
35. The political uses of ambiguity in political symbolics are explored in depth by Robert Meadow, in *Politics as Communication* (New Jersey: Ablex Publishing Corp., 1980), pp. 35ff.
36. Cf. Jean-Christian Petitfils, *Le Gaullisme* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1977), pp. 18ff. The idea of *rassemblement* is echoed in Chirac's appeal to the memory of André Malraux as a consensual, apolitical cultural icon in a speech at the ceremony to transfer André Malraux's remains to the Panthéon in 1996: 'Vous incarner mieux que tout autre le gaullisme tel que le voulait le Général, ni de droite ni de gauche, mais de France', *Le Figaro*, 25 November 1996, pp. 6–7.
37. Chirac's speech of 18 July 1986 is printed in the brochure of the Commission du Souvenir du CRIF (Representative Council of Jewish Institutions of France): 'Inauguration de la Place des Martyrs Juifs du Vélodrome d'Hiver. Grande Rafle des 16 et 17 juillet 1942'.
38. Cf. Debate between Heinich and Rousso, *Le Débat*, 89, 1996, p. 207.
39. Cf. Jean Charlot, *Pourquoi Jacques Chirac?* (Paris: Fallois, 1995), p. 144f.

40. Ibid., p. 280.
41. Robert Frank, 'A propos des commémorations françaises de la deuxième guerre mondiale', in Alfred Wahl (ed), *Mémoire de la Seconde Guerre Mondiale*, proceedings of conference from 6 to 8 October 1983 (Metz: Centre de Recherche Histoire et Civilisation de l'Europe Occidentale, 1984), p. 290.
42. Charlot, pp. 54, 77f.
43. The debate over the 'sans papiers' began in 1996 when a group of asylum-seekers occupied the St. Bernard Church in Paris. For details of the nationality code of 1993, see Danièle Lochak, 'Usages et mésusages d'une notion polémique. La référence à l'identité nationale dans le débat sur la réforme du code de la nationalité 1985-1993', in CRISPA and CURAPP (eds), *L'Identité politique* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1994), pp. 306-323.
44. Stéphane Trano, 'Le Grand Pardon', *Tribune Juive*, 27 July 1995, pp. 14-17, p. 16f.
45. See interview with Le Pen in: Nicolas Domenach and Maurice Szafran, *Le Roman d'un président*, (Paris: Plon, 1997), and report by Douglas Johnson, 'French Anti-Semitism Revisited', *The Spectator*, 15 March 1997, pp. 18-19.
46. Le Pen was quoted in the media as having said that 'il était plus confortable de résister à Londres que de résister à Paris'. Cf. Pascale Robert-Diard, 'Philippe Séguin se distingue de Jacques Chirac au sujet de Vichy', *Le Monde*, 21 October 1997, p. 6.
47. Quoted in Jonathan Marcus, 'Advance or Consolidation? The French National Front and the 1995 Elections', *West European Politics*, 2, 1996, pp. 303-320, p. 316. Cf. note 36.
48. Séguin, 'Assez! Assez! Assez!', *Le Figaro*, 21 October 1997, p. 6.
49. E.g. Edwy Plenel, 'La République et l'oubli', *Le Monde*, 19/20 July 1992, p. 1.
50. The notions of transcendence, voluntarism, historical action and social unity in a projected future are not unique to Gaullism, and occur in universalist ideologies elsewhere. Cf. Bernhard Giesen and Kay Junge, 'Der Mythos des Universalismus', in Helmut Berding (ed), *Mythos und Nation* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1996), p. 40.
51. Cf. Gaffney, 'Language and Politics: the Case of Neo-Gaullism', in J. Gaffney and E. Kolinsky (eds), *Political Culture in France and Germany*, (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 95.
52. Cf. *Vichy, un passé qui ne passe pas*, 2nd ed, pp. 440-443.
53. Cf. *Le Syndrome de Vichy 1944-198 ...*, pp. 54-61.
54. Michel Wieviorka (ed), *Une société fragmentée? Le multiculturalisme en débat* (Paris: La Découverte, 1996).
55. The political scientist Serge Bernstein directly opposes Michel Wieviorka by arguing that a 'renaissance of republican culture' has occurred in France since the 1980s. Cf. Bernstein, 'Le retour de la culture républicaine', *Vingtième Siècle*, 44, October-December 1994, pp. 113-120, p. 117.
56. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revised edition (London: Verso, 1991), pp. 199-201.
57. See note 39.