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Article (Published Version)

Kedward, H R (1999) Resiting French resistance. Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, 9. pp. 271-282. ISSN 0080-4401

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RESITING FRENCH RESISTANCE

By H. R. Kedward

READ 27 MARCH 1998 AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX

EXCEPTIONS, minorities, non-conformities, individual refusals and small group actions, these are words with which historians of the French Resistance learn to live. The words allow social detail to flourish, but they stand in the way of general social conclusions and question the kind of class representation which seems so convincing in René Clément's film of the resistance of railway workers, *La Bataille du rail* (1946), but which cannot be sustained for the working class as a whole.¹ Is there a social history of the Resistance? Are all generalities suspect? The French nation as a category is far too large, so is the working class, and equally so the bourgeoisie and the peasantry: it has often been argued that social and political categorisation of the Resistance is nothing but a captivating mirage, tantalising every new interpreter who sets out to give much needed structure to empirical research.

Happily social history is more than a passion for generalisation, and in the last ten years historians of the Resistance have learnt not only how to live with discrete details but also how to approach a social history of the Resistance through an insistent emphasis on *spécificité*.² The rigour which this gives to current research, as the archives alternately disappoint and surprise, cannot be overestimated. Discovering what is specific to those places, groups, events and institutions, which created or sustained resistance, has replaced the search for generalised categories; and, of course, specificity operates also in the other direction. To take an emblematic example: the focus of Vichy's compulsory labour service was sharpened by Pierre Laval on 13 February 1943 in the form of the STO (Service du Travail Obligatoire), which targeted twenty-to-twenty-two-year-old male youths and eventually led to tens of thousands of *réfractaires* who sought refuge in the countryside. The specificities of the legislation and its complex mechanisms provoked several forms of resistance both among those who refused to go and those who gave them refuge: conversely, these

¹For a detailed analysis of the film, see Martin O'Shaughnessy, 'La Bataille du rail: Unconventional Form, Conventional Image?', in H. R. Kedward and Nancy Wood (eds), *The Liberation of France: Image and Event* (Berg, 1995), pp. 15–27.

²A social history of the Resistance was finally deemed to be possible in 1997. See Antoine Prost (ed.), *La Résistance, une histoire sociale* (Editions de l'Atelier, 1997).

forms of resistance had their own specificity which helps to explain why certain rural areas were actively involved, some only passively, and others not at all.³ It is still surprising to realise that it is only recently that this question of what resistance had to offer to certain places and people has come to supplement the previously dominant question of what places and people had to offer to resistance. The shift of perspective entrains whole new areas of knowledge and theory. The history of the Resistance is now far more than an empirical catalogue of more or less dislocated actions: its denotations may be too scattered and fragmented for some historians, but its connotations within the layered history of France, which now includes the history of memory, offer to the historian a deep and rich vein of intellectual possibilities, more than compensating for the absence of general social categories.

A comparative study of resistances, across time and place, and moving beyond national frontiers, has begun to suggest itself as analogous to the older study of revolutions. The decades of East European resistance to the pathology of Stalinism, modified but perpetuated under Brezhnev, or the long years of resistance against apartheid in Southern Africa, allow models of clandestine activity to emerge, which fit closely with paradigms of resistance within Nazi-occupied Europe. As Vladimir Kusin and Gordon Skilling have shown for Czechoslovakia,⁴ many of these models are cultural in origin and expression, and such is the diversity of cultural practice within these different societies that there must be a turn to anthropology for new discipline and enlightenment. This step has been taken; so that alongside the search for specificity within the details of French experience of the Occupation there exists a search for wider and more generic categories of motivation, cultural practice and behaviour. Taken together, these two prongs of resistance research, specific and generic, break new ground: they turn over the soil, much of which has lain undisturbed since the war, through design or neglect.

Memory, collective and individual, public and private, has been a key player in the debates which have accompanied the growth and application of these two methods of approach: it has enabled explorations to be undertaken far beyond the previous confines of resistance historiography. It is, for example, localised memory which has enabled historians to reconstruct the ways in which communities with specific cultural traditions were instrumental in fashioning ways of resistance.

³ See François Marcot (ed.), *Lutte armée et maquis* (Annales littéraires de l'Université de Franche-Comté, 1996), and H. R. Kedward, *In Search of the Maquis* (Oxford University Press, 1993).

⁴ Vladimir Kusin, *Intellectual Origins of the Prague Spring* (Cambridge University Press, 1971); Gordon Skilling, *Czechoslovakia's Interrupted Revolution* (Princeton University Press, 1976).

In a recent conference paper, the historian of Greek resistance, Riki van Boeschoten, has suggestively utilised Bourdieu's concept of the 'habitus' to contrast different cultural systems which operated within the northern Pindus during the German Occupation. She finds that the truly collective expression of the resistance was not the habitus of the mountain brigands and outlaws, the klephts, with its apparently direct issue in the formation and actions of the maquis, but the day-to-day village habitus of autonomy and struggle against the personal power of elites. It was this that created the new habitus of resistance. If there was continuity with the klephts in the region of Grevená, she says, it was only in the idealised public image of the klephts as national heroes of 1821. The more significant social values and structures of resistance derived from schoolteachers, peasant smallholders, the lower echelons of the Communist and Agrarian Party and salaried employees. Memory from these social milieux stress co-operation and shared civic attitudes within the resistance (EAM), and emphasise the aspiration towards an egalitarian society based on local self-rule.⁵

Conflict within this specific memory lies between its own collective model of society and models imposed from outside and above. The communities of Protestant resisters in French villages of the plateau Vivarais-Lignon and the Cévennes have emerged from oral evidence in the same way. Pastor André Bettex of the village of Le Riou confirmed that the hiding of Jewish refugees on the plateau was a direct expression of a religious culture in which parents taught their children through the Psalms to love the Jews, and transmitted the biblical imperatives to give food and shelter to those in need.⁶ 'Every Protestant of the plateau', argues François Boulet, 'is something of a historian, a guarantor of the heritage of memory.'⁷

At the Toulouse conference on 'Les Français et la Résistance' in 1993, the first of six international conferences with the aim of locating French resistance within a comparative framework, I indicated how relevant I found the anthropological concepts of James C. Scott and David Lan and the writings in *Subaltern Studies* in assessing the significance of cultural traditions in both the practice and memory of resistance.⁸ Scott uses the phrase 'weapons of the weak' to designate

⁵Riki van Boeschoten, 'Pour une géopolitique de la résistance grecque: le cas du Pindus nord', in *La Résistance et les Européens du sud* (Pré-actes du Colloque d'Aix-en-Provence, UMR Telemme, 1997), no pagination.

⁶Oral contribution to a discussion at the 1990 Conference at Le Chambon-sur-Lignon, published in Pierre Bolle (ed.), *Le Plateau Vivarais-Lignon. Accueil et Résistance 1939-1944* (Société d'Histoire de la Montagne, 1992), p. 434.

⁷*Ibid.*, p. 427.

⁸James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak. Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (Yale University Press, 1985); David Lan, *Guns and Rain. Guerrillas and Spirit Mediums in Zimbabwe* (James

the day-to-day methods employed by the Malaysian peasants of the Kedah in their struggle against impositions by landlords and external authority. Such methods comprise 'foot-dragging, dissimulation, false compliance, pilfering, feigned ignorance, slander, arson, sabotage'. 'The peasantry', he adds, 'has no monopoly on these weapons, as anyone can easily attest who has observed officials and landlords resisting and disrupting state policies that are to their disadvantage.'⁹ He could easily have pointed to civil resistance against all unwelcome forms of occupation in the Second World War, in situations where more military forms of resistance or classic forms of industrial action were not available. Exactly the same methods were employed.

Claudio Pavone gives evidence for such comparisons in his attempt to delineate civil resistance in Italy, to distinguish it from passive resistance and from the 'grey zone' of survivalism which he borrows from Primo Levi's writings on the concentration camps. Civil resistance he defines as actions which do not in principle exclude violence, and may in fact have recourse to violence as the ultimate necessity, but which mainly include 'acts of support for those in need and the persecuted (soldiers, escaped allied prisoners, wounded partisans, Jews), refusal of obedience, small acts of sabotage within factories and public administration, refusal to surrender agricultural produce to official collection depots, and finally the provision of burial rites for the dead, withheld or forbidden by the German and Fascist authorities'.¹⁰ He admits that his list does not solve definitional problems occasioned by the similarity of some survivalist actions and some actions of *double-jeu*, but it is a list which all national and local histories of resistance produce, regardless of the nature of the enemy.

The adoption of the concept of the 'habitus' and the work mentioned on resistance in Greece, the Protestant Vivarais, peasant Malaya and Italy, all depend on memories, oral and written, which the anthropologist and the historian have collected or found available, but equally they focus new research on the function of memory *at the very time* of the resistances which are being studied. There is endless polemic inside and outside France about the nature of resistance memory in the years since 1944, and we shall return to this, but it is barely recognised that historians are now asking probing questions about the content of memory and the process of oral transmission during the Occupation itself. I was drawn into a new understanding of the subtlety of oral

Currey, 1985); Ranajit Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India* (Oxford University Press, 1983).

⁹James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak*, pp. 29–30.

¹⁰Claudio Pavone, 'Les objectifs de la Résistance: le cas d'Italie', in *La Résistance et les Français: villes, centres et logiques de décision* (Actes du Colloque international, Cachan, IHPT, 1995), p. 456.

transmission by David Lan's anthropological study, *Guns and Rain. Guerrillas and Spirit Mediums in Zimbabwe*. With astonishing insight Lan demonstrates how the spirit mediums in the Dande district of the Zambezi valley gave legitimacy to the guerrilla resistance against the British in the 1970s by providing them with access to the spirits of the chiefs of the past, the *mhondoro*, at a time when the chiefs of the present were widely felt to be too compromised with the colonial authority. It was not, argues Lan, the decision of the mediums or the guerrilla leaders to turn from the present to the past, but rather it was the ordinary people themselves whose memories prompted them to shift their allegiance backwards in time. This shift gave new and unexpected power to the mediums, and established an alternative discourse of power, located in the past but expressed in the present, which challenged the authority of the colonial state.¹¹ An amazingly similar process of story-telling, memory and empowerment operated in parts of France during the Occupation, when generations of local history, rural knowledge and tactics were transmitted by peasants and villagers to the *réfractaires* and to the maquisards during the autumn and winter of 1943 and the spring of 1944. This is memory as cognition.

The memories harnessed by the resistance in this way are there to be studied as representations and images of the past which prevailed at the time of the Occupation, and the historian has to be careful not to confuse them with post-war representations which come later. In avoiding this confusion we are on familiar conceptual ground, trodden by Paul Thompson in *The Voice of the Past*, by Pierre Nora in *Les lieux de mémoire* and by Pierre Laborie in *L'opinion française sous Vichy* and in several theoretical articles by Laborie on resistance and representations.¹² There is also some methodological confusion with the genre of history which focuses on the understanding of the 'imaginaire social', society's representation of any phenomenon at any given time or place. Luc Capdevila, a Breton historian, has recently completed a thesis on the 'imaginaire social' of the Liberation in Brittany between the summer of 1944 and the winter of 1945/6: it will, I am sure, become a classic of this genre, and he makes it clear in his opening pages why his methodology excludes an oral investigation which he might easily have undertaken. He explains that he did not seek or use the oral testimonies of those who experienced the period of the Liberation, his main concern being the unsatisfactory ethics of any oral interview that

¹¹ David Lan, *Guns and Rain*, pp. 136–53.

¹² Pierre Laborie, 'Opinion et représentations: la libération et l'image de la résistance', *Revue d'Histoire de la Seconde Guerre Mondiale et des Conflits Contemporains*, no. 131 (1983); 'Sur les représentations collectives de la résistance dans la France de l'après Libération et sur l'usage de la mémoire', in Robert Frank and José Gotovitch (eds), *La Résistance et les Européens du Nord (Pré-actes du Colloque de Bruxelles, GREHSGM/IHTP, 1994)*.

he might have conducted. The interviewer, he writes of himself, 'would have been looking for representations, while the witness would have been confiding his or her memory'. He calls this 'an involuntary but inherent ambiguity, created by the very aim and problematic' of his research.¹³ In these words he is articulating the accepted and scrupulous distinction between representations of the Liberation produced at the time and those produced subsequently by memory.

But there is, none the less, a viable function for oral history in researching the representations and memories which were significant at the time, and this is no different from its conventional function in exploring events and actions. In short, it is one of the pre-eminent functions of oral history to provide the historian with hypotheses of what the past contained, whether in terms of action, thought or memory. The hypotheses are constructed from the whole scenario of the *témoignage*, from its location, content, language and gestures, and from the very process of transmission which is consciously staged in the historian's presence, or, more often, autonomously and independently. Extrapolating ideas and hypotheses from the process itself has enabled us to envisage resistance roles and behaviour more clearly, particularly in cultural and gender terms. Arriving to interview old maquisards in rural areas of the south of France in the 1970s, I found that the process was remarkably similar from one household to the next. I was given a seat opposite the maquisard with the tape-recorder on the table between us. The wife, sister or daughter brought drinks to the table and positioned herself at the doorway, intervening with corrections to the story when the man's memory failed or distortions crept into his account. It gradually seemed probable, and then certain, that this had been the rural woman's household position at the time of the Occupation, and indeed, once I started looking for corroboration of this hypothesis in police reports, I found endless archival evidence of the woman at the doorway, prolonging police enquiries, misleading their search, feigning ignorance, covering tracks. As a vantage-point of power, this otherwise marginalised position came into its own in the resistance.

¹³'En ce qui concerne le champ des représentations, ils n'apportaient pas un complément aux sources écrites, la mémoire s'étant constituée pour l'essentiel au moment de l'événement. Quand il s'agissait de vérifier des points précis, les souvenirs des témoins se révélaient peu fiables; certes, leurs silences, leurs tâtonnements, leurs erreurs avaient du sens. Mais le problème le plus délicat concernait l'éthique de l'entretien: l'enquêteur guettait des représentations et les témoins confiaient une mémoire. Cette ambiguïté, involontaire, mais inhérente aux entretiens (en raison de la problématique de cette étude), décalait le chercheur par rapport à son interlocuteur, ce qui n'était pas satisfaisant.' Luc Capdevila, 'L'Imaginaire social de la Libération en Bretagne (été 1944-hiver 1945/1946). Contribution à une histoire des représentations mentales.' (Thèse nouveau régime. Université de Rennes 2, 1997), p. 16. I wish to thank the author for his kindness in sending me a copy of this excellent thesis.

Its specific significance under the Occupation had been missed by historians, perhaps because it was culturally so accepted and so conventional a part of gender relations.¹⁴ It operated in places other than the home. The widow of Count Michael Sobanski told Janine Ponty of the café in Warsaw where from twenty to thirty bourgeois women acted as waitresses. All understood German, and their role was to listen from their vantage-points to the conversation at the tables, memorising information exchanged after heavy drinking by officers of the Wehrmacht. They were essential links in intelligence networks, playing out their accepted gender roles.¹⁵

A summary of these recent departures in the specific and the generic location of French Resistance would seem to indicate that a certain resiting has been in progress. It is not so much a move away from military and political history as a widening of the social and cultural matrix within which resistance is seen to have originated and developed, and a burgeoning of an interdisciplinary area which might well set up its own canon of texts and enter academic practice as 'resistance studies'. Given the importance of memory in both history and in anthropology it can at least be claimed that memory *within* resistance and memory *of* resistance must have a position of some significance in this new constellation of research. And yet curiously enough the relationship between memory and resistance in France appears to be more problematic at the present time than at any other point since the war. This needs its own historical and contextual explanation.

It is not memory itself which is at issue in France but rather individual memory or *témoignage*. Studies of national myths, collective memories and representations have flourished: Pierre Nora's volumes, *Les lieux de mémoire*, published between 1984 and 1993, were a cultural watershed, and Henry Rousso's *Syndrome de Vichy* made it imperative to understand Vichy in terms of its post-war representations.¹⁶ In-depth analyses of

¹⁴ Laurent Douzou took up this concept of 'the woman at the doorway' and developed it with reference to the interviews with Alexis and Louis Grave in the film by Marcel Ophuls, *Le Chagrin et la pitié*, where the wife of Alexis positions herself precisely 'au seuil de la porte'. See his article 'La Résistance, une affaire d'hommes?', in *Les Cahiers de l'IIHTP: Identités féminines et violences politiques*, no. 31 (1995), pp. 11–24. Hanna Diamond's wide range of evidence from women in one locality is available in 'Women's experience during and after World War Two in the Toulouse area, 1939–1948: choices and constraints' (DPhil thesis, University of Sussex, 1992); Margaret Collins Weitz has successfully structured the details of women's memories in *Sisters in the Resistance. How Women Fought to Free France 1940–1944* (John Wiley, 1995). See also Claire Gorrara's perceptive literary study, *Women's Representations of the Occupation in Post-'68 France* (Macmillan, 1998).

¹⁵ Janine Ponty, 'Être résistant dans une ville de Pologne', in *La Résistance et les Français: villes, centres et logiques de décision*, p. 112.

¹⁶ The whole corpus of Nora's work is in Pierre Nora (ed), *Les lieux de mémoire* (Paris, Gallimard, 7 vols, 1984–93). See also Nancy Wood, 'Memory's Remains: *Les lieux de mémoire*', in *History and Memory*, vol. 6, no. 1 (1994), pp. 123–49. Henry Rousso's *Le syndrome*

the Vichy regime preoccupied contemporary historians in France throughout most of the 1980s. In 1993 the Institut d'Histoire du Temps Présent (IHTP) turned its research to a similar multiple study of the Resistance, by which time the new theories of memory and representation had already ensured a collective view of resistance memory and an enumeration of myths, most prominently the Gaullist myth of 'la nation résistante' and the Communist myth of 'le parti des fusillés'. These were seen to have disputed public consciousness throughout most of the post-war years, and a strong drive within the programme of *spécificité* was towards demythologising resistance memory. Ex-resisters, attending the international conferences as participants, but also as non-historians, offered their memories to clarify or dispute points of fact. The rejoinder from authoritative historians was repeatedly the same: memory does not constitute history; it constitutes representations of history. In reply the most persistent of the *témoins* continued to insist that their memories and presence be treated with more academic respect. This led to some caustic exchanges across the floor, and most recently to the staged discussion of Raymond and Lucie Aubrac's memories by five leading IHTP historians and Daniel Cordier, the biographer of Jean Moulin, on 17 May 1997. The newspaper *Libération* published a twenty-four page transcription of the whole exchange between the Aubracs and the historians, with an introduction which claimed its singular importance as an event in oral history, giving 'an exciting insight into the process of memory and the profession of the historian'. In effect it led to the realisation that the historians control the appellation and evaluation of both representation and fact. In the context of public accusation and litigation which has surrounded the history of the war years in France, this is disturbing.

The prolonged presence of the judicial dossiers, trials and detection relating to Leguay, Bousquet, Barbie, Touvier, and, lastly, René Papon, has pushed academic historians into courtroom drama and heightened the burden of proof which lies at the heart of archival, historical work. Memory is not proof enough: hence the constant reminder that memory must be located as representation, shading into memory as mythification, or media-conscious commemoration, the very stuff of Nora's *lieux de mémoire*. This has excitingly prioritised public memory, but it has made it difficult for many French historians to know what to do with individual memories. The law both cherishes and interrogates the individual witness. Historians can do no less; but they are seen to

de Vichy, 1944-198... (Seuil, 1987, updated 1990) is now a classic, and of all Rousso's shorter writings on the subject I particularly like the small piece he did in 1991 looking back on his own contribution, and rethinking certain aspects of memory in the widest sense of the word: 'Pour une histoire de la mémoire collective: l'après-Vichy', *Les Cahiers de l'IHTP. Histoire politique et sciences sociales*, no. 18 (1991), pp. 163-76.

do more. To discover the guilt or innocence of players under the Occupation, the law and the media need access to the archives: the expert is the historian. The media and the law expect historical research to have the answers, and as a result the historians have become the prime witnesses. They decide not just how and why memory is influential as representation; they now feel they have to replace individual memory with their own statements of fact. The law and the media expect it of them. They have come to expect it of themselves. In the last twenty years in France it is the professional historian who has claimed to be the shaman, the spirit medium, the raiser and guardian of the dead, the voice of the past.

This is precisely the role which historians should leave to the actors, the *témoins*, the story-tellers at the evening *veillées* round the fire or over a glass of wine at the café. We know that oral transmission of the past to the present happens everywhere, with or without the presence of the historian. Actors (*témoins*) transmit the representations of the past which continually form attitudes and opinions and influence actions. It is they who are the spirit mediums. They link the past and the present; they facilitate the understanding of experience, the workings of representation, the power of images and previous histories, the oscillation between continuity and change. Why usurp their role? There now exists a prestigious academic approach to memory studies, to commemoration and to monuments of the past, and within this the role of oral history is more or less clear. Resiting French Resistance has made this specific place more, and not less, valuable to the historian's research. The courtroom mode endangers the separation of roles on which both testimony and history depend.

Finally, to return to the minority status of resistance, there is a politics in the theory of oral history, and in the generic search for patterns of resistance, which coincides with the function of much resistance testimony. The vast literature in France of local publications dedicated to resistance memories, accounts, commemorations, biographies and diaries, constitutes an immense archive of individual memory. Taken together they constitute a singular process of remembering, adapting and overcoming, which is place and time specific. The process is a clear sign of what Nora calls the democratisation of the commemorative spirit, which signifies, he believes, 'the democratization of history itself, for history is no longer the privileged domain of the historian'.¹⁷ Whereas Nora is ambivalent about the value of this development, there is little doubt in my mind that a widespread determination to record specific resistance experience in local pamphlets

¹⁷ Pierre Nora, 'Le présent', in J. Le Goff *et al.* (eds), *La nouvelle histoire* (Editions CEPL, 1978), p. 470.

and publications is a perpetuation of the nature of resistance itself, and accurately reflects the sense that resistance elevated the ordinary individual's choice and commitment to a level of moral and historical meaning that few, if any, other national events have achieved. Its distinctiveness, compared with the experience of the First World War, lay in its voluntarism and its minority status. However unfocused at the Liberation it had seen people taking charge of their own lives at all levels of society and this essential force of democratisation has chimed precisely at local level, if not always at national level, with the enabling practice of oral history.

A keen awareness that resistance had never been a unifying property of the whole nation informs much of the local literature and many of the individual testimonies. There can be endless dispute about what is public and what is private in this democratic process of history-making, with obligatory references to the collective memory theory of Halbwachs. But it is precisely the complex fusion of private and public that is the domain of resistance experience and memory, a conscious fusion which has never surrendered its minority consciousness.¹⁸ Tassoula Vervenioti, investigating the memory of Greek women organised into resistance by EAM and the Greek Communist Party, stresses the move from traditional gender roles in the period 1941–3 to a more public role after the surrender of Italy and the onset of widespread armed struggle. 'It was the first time', she writes, 'that the social context gave women the chance to enter the public sphere. But the historical conjuncture was not sufficient to subvert old traditions ... Organised women were thought to be "disgraced" and "corrupted" because EAM's organisations were mixed.'¹⁹ It is a form of post-war protest against continued confinement to the private sphere that those she has interviewed give priority to their first encounter with social equality.

In France, equally, women's memories of resistance repeatedly underline a certain felt equality within organised resistance, even though the gender inequalities can be easily perceived. 'Although the historical record appears to be different,' Paula Schwartz notes in her classic article of 1989, 'women activists remember the Resistance as an experience of equality with men: they shared tasks, responsibilities and risks.' She sharply exposes the inequalities but she also analyses with great subtlety the element of gender displacement in the organised

¹⁸Note the astute comments on the post-war discourse of ex-resisters in Olivier Wieviorka, *Une certaine idée de la Résistance: Défense de la France 1940–1949* (Seuil, 1995), pp. 397–410.

¹⁹Tassoula Vervenioti, 'Les résistantes grecques, membres des organisations du Front national de la Libération (EAM) et les contraintes imposées à leur action (1941–44)', in *La Résistance et les Européens du sud*, no pagination.

Resistance which helps to explain 'why women report that there was little or no distinction between men and women in the underground'.²⁰ They did, indeed, report and recollect in this way, and the notion of equality was given its most expressive form in the 1975 conference and publication *Les femmes dans la Résistance*, initiated by the Union des Femmes Françaises and held at the Sorbonne, a high point in women's reclamation of their resistance history. The evidence of Camille Tauber, the first woman on the Conseil Général of the Haute-Garonne, reconstructed the political assertiveness of women resisters in Toulouse at the Liberation, and stated that women's memory of these actions became an educative force in the civic instruction of women across the region in post-war France.²¹ As in Greece, the equality remembered was equality demanded. It is not just in academic conferences that ex-resisters have become assertive. Remembering resistance in France has frequently been a conflictual process, and many of the recurrent conflicts are with dominant social and political practices which have failed to fulfil the democratic expectations of change.

This political agenda in much of resistance testimony points to the need for a cautious note to accompany the resiting of French Resistance within a larger field of resistance studies. In generic terms, resistance as conflict is not the monopoly of any one political creed or cause, and it is instructive to see how Dominique Venner's memoirs of his political involvement in the minority defence of *Algérie française*, recuperates the moral prestige of resistance action for the extreme Right, to the point where he claims that the rebellious OAS, in its resistance to decolonisation, derived its legitimacy from the political Right under Vichy which he credits with creating and leading the national resistance to the Germans.²² Apart from the outrageous bravura of its revisionism, which has become the characteristic style of those seeking to rehabilitate Pétain and Vichy, the perspective of Venner is challenging to those historians who are not willing to problematise the wider notion of resistance. It is crucial from the outset of any research to insist that generic descriptions of resistance behaviour, whether in terms of clandestine revolt, local community practices or transgressive weapons of the weak, are complementary to historical and political analysis, and not a substitute. The structural insights of anthropology both illuminate

²⁰ Paula Schwartz, 'Partisanes and Gender Politics in Vichy France', *French Historical Studies*, vol. 16, no. 1 (1989), pp. 138-9.

²¹ Camille Tauber, 'Evolution de la participation des femmes à la vie civique, telle qu'elle apparaît à la Libération', in *Les Femmes dans la Résistance* (Éditions du Rocher, 1977), pp. 286-9.

²² Dominique Venner, *Histoire critique de la Résistance* (Pygmalion, 1995). See the review article by Hugo Frey on this and Venner's *Le Cœur rebelle: guerres d'Algérie* (Belles Lettres, 1994) in *Modern and Contemporary France*, vol. n.s. 4, no. 4 (1996), pp. 509-12.

the workings of resistance behaviour, and allow the resistance memories of ordinary people to be situated within cultural parameters. They provide means of comparative study which allow resistance studies to range imaginatively across time and continents, but each precise historical setting, with its specific politics, its function and its legacy, still has to be located. Mapping the specific sites still falls to the historian. It follows therefore that that the resiting of resistance reflects something in which we are all involved, the constant resiting of history.