

Printing in Secret

The Role of the Clandestine Press in
the French Resistance Movement of
World War II

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Research Topic

We sought to investigate:

- The print technologies used by the Resistance.
- The manner in which such technologies were used.
- The effect of underground print media on French national unity.

Outline

- I. A brief history of WWII France
- II. The rise of clandestine newspapers
- III. The proliferation of underground French literature
- IV. The effect of the press on the Resistance, national unity, and ultimately the outcome of the war

Setting the Stage

A Brief History of WWII France

The Invasion: May 1940

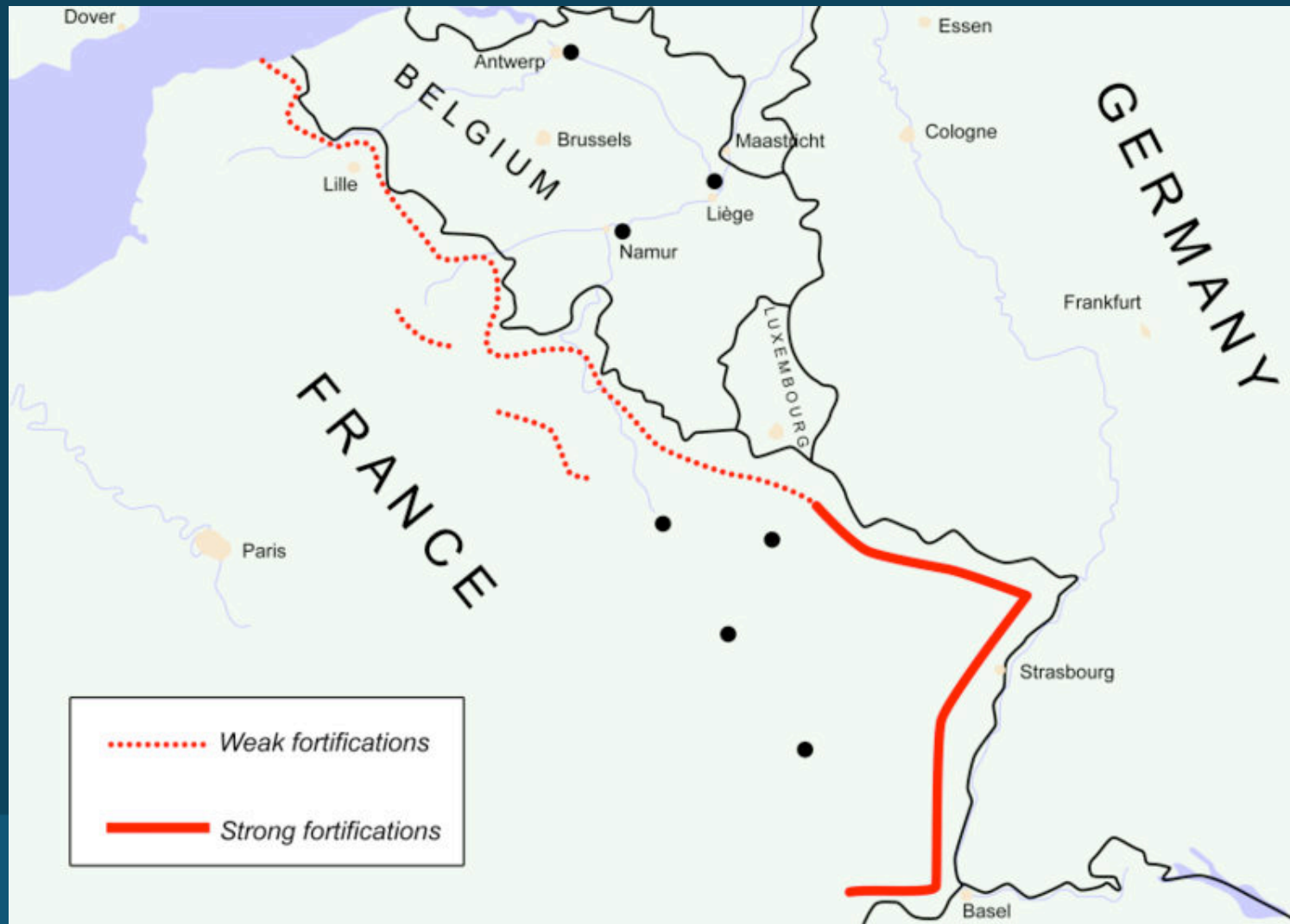


image source: http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/f/f1/Maginot_Line_ln-en.jpg/800px-Maginot_Line_ln-en.jpg

The Armistice



Bundesarchiv, Bild 101-126-0347-09A
Foto: Gutjahr | 14. Juni 1940



image sources: http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d/d2/Bundesarchiv_Bild_101-126-0347-09A%2C_Paris%2C_Deutsche_Truppen_am_Arc_de_Triomphe.jpg
<http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/21/Armisticetrain.jpg>

The Occupation: 1940-1944



Terms of the armistice:

- Division into zones
- Reparations
- Extreme reduction in military forces.

image source: <http://wps.ablongman.com/wps/media/objects/262/268312/art/figures/KISH579.jpg>

Life During the Occupation

- Government control of media.
- Harsh penalties for publishing 'dangerous' literature.



image source: <http://courses.cit.cornell.edu/his452/Alcohol/28-1124a.gif>

II. Newspapers

"In the beginning, active opposition to the authorities was sporadic and carried out only by a tiny, disunited minority. Most French men and women held faith in the Vichy government."

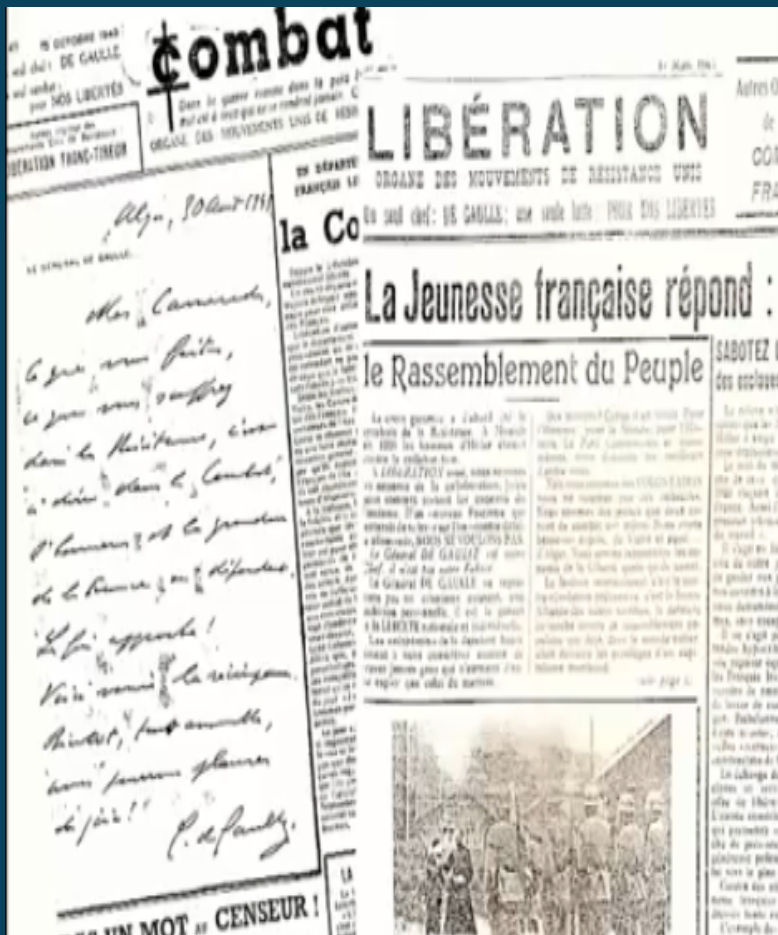
"French Resistance." [Britannica Concise Encyclopedia](#).

Goals

- To counter German propaganda.
- To tell of successful Resistance missions.
- To inform of German defeats and Allied victories.



Charles de Gaulle



"How would we get them distributed? We each set forth our ideas: we'd mobilize our personal friends, our colleagues, and acquaintances we felt sure about for transportation and distribution."

Aubrac, Lucie. [Outwitting the Gestapo](#).

-*Combat* was created in the non-occupied zone of France.

"From its tiny spontaneous beginnings, the underground grew into a vast and complex network that by 1944 could publish several hundred clandestine newspapers with a total circulation of two million, could put a quarter of a million guerrilla-type soldiers into the field, and could provide the personnel for administering liberated France."

Wright, Gordon. "Reflections on the French Resistance (1940-1944)."



Literature and Poetry

"In occupied and Vichy France, language was more than just a weapon, it was itself a permanent battlefield."

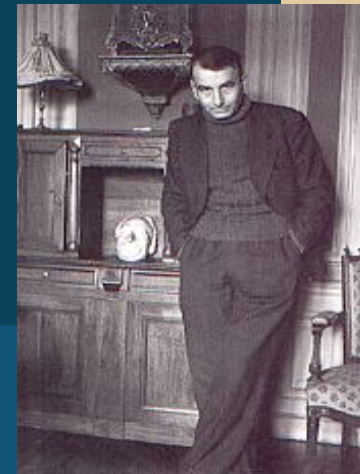
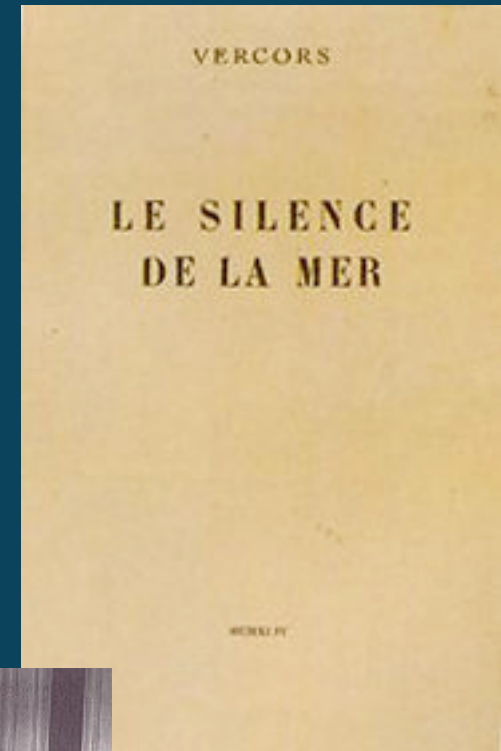
- Roderick Kedward and Roger Austin, in *Vichy France and the Resistance*

- Novels and poetry
- Presses used
- Themes: resistance, liberation, secrecy, and unity.
- Covert and overt messages
- Secrecy and aliases



Le Silence de la Mer

- written in early 1942
- became symbolic of the resistance movement
- published secretly in Nazi-occupied France
- adapted to a film version in 1949



Poetry

Mort à nos ennemis

-Jean Marcenac

Ils ont un dos pour le couteau

Ils ont des yeux pour ne pas voir

Une tête pour oublier

Tout ce qui fait notre misère

Rien ne se lève quand ils parlent

Leurs mots sont perclus Et leur souffle

Ternit nos miroirs nos images



Ce qu'ils ont de vivant en eux
S'est élevé contre la vie
Les signes qu'ils essaient de faire
Comme ils n'ont servi que la mort
Elle seule peut les comprendre

Et le cri qu'ils ont en tombant
Est celui qu'attendait l'aurore

Il la délivre

Conclusion

Information Technology,
Propaganda &
its role in the French Resistance

Clandestine Press.

How effective was it on French Unity?

- The Resistance Movements were born at the end of 1942 and named after Clandestine Newspapers; scattered at this point
- All united in May 1943 under National Council of the Resistance (CNR)
- A great benefit to the Underground Press
 - Financial needs were covered
 - Ability to equip themselves with printing centers in large cities
 - Lyon, Paris, Toulouse
 - Better management; ability to reach more people
- Circulation of newspapers continued to increase
 - 1941: 5,000 - 10,000 copies
 - 1943: 100,000 copies
 - Clandestine periodicals distributed approximately 1.5 million copies/month + hundreds of thousands of tracts
- Impact of Clandestine Newspapers?
 - Information and Support
 - Against the Nazi and Vichy Regime
 - Towards French Unity
 - Ultimately Liberation of France

Clandestine Press. How effective was it on French Unity?

"...the production of underground newspapers, which rapidly gained an audience in all parts of France, gave the resisters a sense of belonging to a powerful organization extending beyond their limited circle of comrades."

-Jorgen Haestrup. European Resistance Movements. -



For Further Research Work

- Consult more primary sources such as literature, poetry, and newspapers
 - Translate them and study what they were saying
- Microfilm libraries
- Other technologies used such as power, transport, and telecommunications network
- Learn French!
- Travel to Lyon, France and visit the Museum of Resistance (Centre d'Histoire de la Résistance et de la Déportation *Center for the History of the Resistance and Deportation*)

Print Press @ the Museum of Resistance; Lyon, France



The End

Questions?