

# **Heresy** **in** **Twenty-First Century France**

*A case of insubmission  
to the “Holocaust” dogma*

**Georges M. Theil**

**Preface by Robert Faurisson**

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## Editor's foreword

On October 7, 2005, the author was convicted by a court in Limoges, where he had sent his book to two prominent wartime *résistants* and an orthodox historian, of "Holocaust denial" or, as the relevant law puts it, for "disputing... the existence of one or more crimes against humanity as defined by the charter of the International Military Tribunal" at Nuremberg in 1945. His sentence is the heaviest yet handed down under that law, dating from 1990: six months' imprisonment without remission, five years' political ineligibility (he is a former Front National regional councillor), permanent confiscation of everything the police had seized at his house (computer, books, documents) and a fine of €30,000. Also, he was ordered to pay damages amounting to nearly €40,000, and will have to bear the costs of publication of the decision in the national and regional press.

Another, similar judgement befell him on January 3, 2006 in Lyon, where he had given an informal television interview: again, six months' imprisonment, a heavy fine, damages. His appeals in the two cases have been rejected, the penalties upheld. He remains free pending appeal to the highest court, the Cour de Cassation.

Historical revisionists readily admit that all their efforts at denouncing the myth of the Jewish "Holocaust" have thus far met with a crushing indifference on the part of the general public. Yet, in a Europe where numerous countries have anti-revisionist laws, more or less modelled on the French "Fabius-Gayssot Act", in force – and very much so, as is borne out all too plainly by cases like that of Georges Theil's little book, which was never even released for public distribution in France – one fact ought to be obvious enough for everyone: the "System" in place, its Thought Police, the European Soviet Union's political commissars assigned with the task of brutally stifling any attempts to expose the horrid lie, of nipping dissidence in the bud, are anything but indifferent to the question. Could it be they have something to fear?

*In memory of the 9,000 innocent German civilians  
(amongst whom 4,000 children)  
murdered in the Soviet torpedoing of the ocean liner  
Wilhelm Gustloff in the Baltic Sea on 30 January 1945,  
solely because they were German.*

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## PREFACE

Historical revisionism, the great intellectual adventure of the late twentieth century, continues at the dawn of the twenty-first, as perilous as ever.

But what is known of the revisionists? What stuff are they made of, these unsubdued people who, in France or abroad, persist in braving the written and unwritten laws? They are hunted, caught and pilloried, and sometimes their books are burned. The media heap insults upon them without letting them put forth any arguments or defence.

Little by little, these rebels, these recalcitrants, these refuzniks find themselves driven underground; recently they have even been tracked down on the Internet.

In such a state of things, how could the general public get to know them?

The case of Georges Theil offers something of a reply to that question.

Born in 1940, Georges Theil had a rich and solid schooling in provincial France. He even earned himself a reputation as a highly gifted pupil in science and literature. He saw a promising future opening up before him.

However, between the ages of 13 and 22, tragic events came to leave their sombre mark on the existence of the adolescent and youth. At a date well removed, it was revealed to him that in April 1944 his father had been killed in obscure circumstances either by Georgian soldiers in German uniform or by members of the French *milice* fighting on the side of the Germans; the father, an engineer by profession, had been found in possession of a firearm. Already, during the First World War, his father's father had met a tragic death in the Tonkin where, in 1916, he was training local riflemen so that they could be sent to France to "kill the Boche" in the cause of Revenge. Other bereavements struck a family that seemed marked by fate. The young man's reaction was to be an unexpected one. Instead of acting as prompted by a certain conventional imagery and blaming the "Huns" or the "Nazis" for their alleged unleashing of the two world wars, he would question himself about the historical mystery that had made it come to pass that from 1870 to 1945, in the space of three generations, Germans and Frenchmen should kill each other as they had done.

As a Frenchman, it is to the French that he puts his questions on the subject. Having lost a father who himself had been a war orphan, he asks: "Who, in France, could really want that?", or again: "Why were so many Frenchmen sent to their death in an effort to kill Germans?" (Conversely, a young German might ask questions of his compatriots that would be identical but for the fact that, in the case of the Second World War, no German — neither Adolf Hitler

nor any other — had wanted a war with France: it was France who believed she must go to war against Hitler.)

For the young Georges other questions followed, particularly this one: “Why, after the 1945 armistice, was it necessary to dishonour the Germans?” One may well, in effect, wonder what right the butchers of the victorious camp had to judge and convict the defeated in a country that they had reduced to ashes and of which millions of inhabitants in the East were being subjected to an appalling deportation in circumstances quite worse than those which had been experienced by the Jews under German rule.

In the categories of cynicism and phariseeism the Nuremberg trial of 1945-1946 is unbeatable. There, the victor judged the vanquished. The victor’s law was retrospective. He instituted the doctrine of collective responsibility. He was not “bound by technical rules of evidence”. He did not “require proof of facts of common knowledge” (*sic*). Sight unseen, he accorded the status of genuine evidence to thousands of reports drafted by French, British, American, Soviet, Yugoslav, Polish, Czechoslovak “war crimes commissions”,... , and so it was, to cite just one example, that the reports of the Soviet political police acquired the status of genuine evidence admitting of no challenge. For that matter, practically nothing in the accusation’s case could be challenged once the accused was presented as having belonged to a “criminal” organisation; at the most, the individual associated with such an organisation would be allowed to plead that, personally, he had played no part in the crime in question. This is what explains why, from 1945 to the present, we have seen so many Germans or so many “collaborators” accept — or appear to accept — the reality of the crime and at the same time deny any personal participation in it. There was — and there is — no hypocrisy nor any cowardice on the part of the accused but rather the simple forced submission to Article 10 of the IMT charter. There was — and there is — no right to challenge the reality and the operation of homicidal gas chambers at Auschwitz but there was — and there is — the right to say “Personally, I did not see or take part in any gassings”. All counsel for the accused had to follow this calamitous line of defence. Like the defence in the witchcraft trials, who also had no choice but to acknowledge the existence of the Evil One, the holding of the black sabbaths and the veracity of all sorts of Satanic horror stories, they still sought to have the court believe that their clients, who had, however, either been at the scene of the crimes or at least been informed of them, had personally taken no part!

Articles 10, 19 and 21 of the charter, which permitted these ignominies, deserve to be printed one day in letters of infamy in the Almanac of rigged trials, judicial stagings and parodies of justice.

But Article 13 may have surpassed Articles 10, 19 and 21 in the category. It is as clear as the blade of the guillotine. Let's quote it:

The Tribunal shall draw up rules for its procedure. These rules shall not be inconsistent with the provisions of this Charter.

In plain English: the presiding judges are to write their own code of criminal procedure! And they will be able to do so in a practically arbitrary manner since the charter's provisions amount to 30 articles conferring to the accusation the greatest latitude and to the defence a minimum of rights.

The Nuremberg trial proved nothing. It made statements.

The general public are not aware of it but the specialists are: all of the proceedings demanded and obtained by Jewish organisations, over a span of more than half a century, and launched either against Germans or against non-Germans accused of collaboration in persecuting the Jews, have been closely modelled on the Nuremberg trial. At the trial of Maurice Papon in France, Article 10 was brought into play yet again: everyone supposed, without the least semblance of evidence being presented, that the Third Reich had pursued a policy of physical extermination of the Jews; no one challenged, protested or demanded any evidence. The accused's barristers, just like their client, bowed and scraped. Everyone knew that if evidence, one bit of evidence, were demanded, that would trigger a worldwide storm.

In France today the kosher version of Second World War history is officially imposed on all by a legislative provision dating from 13 July 1990 and improperly called the "loi Gayssot", whereas the act in question was prepared and obtained by former Prime Minister Laurent Fabius. As early as the spring of 1986, chief rabbi René-Samuel Sirat, flanked by Pierre Vidal-Naquet and other Jewish personalities, had asked for the institution of a special law in order to bar challenges to the Nuremberg trial's holdings on the subject of "crimes against humanity", that is, to put it clearly, "crimes against the Jews". Laurent Fabius, himself a Jew, was the spokesman and the transmission shaft for this Jewish demand.

A number of intellectuals call for a fight against the institutionalised lie and the unjust power of the law but few, in effect, take the risk themselves. Georges Theil, for his part, has chosen the risk. He has done so in deciding to reveal here how and why he embarked on the revisionist adventure.

*Robert Faurisson*  
April 10, 2002

*My thoughts turn to [Catholic author Georges] Bernanos, to how at ease he is in his monologue with God. When responsibilities weigh upon him, he takes some and leaves the rest. He has a conscience equipped with all the perfections of modern technology, a thermostat-regulated conscience [...]. He rejects Nagasaki with horror; he wails over Hamburg and sets with care the degree of massacre allowed for the defence of the Human Person. It makes me think of a certain propaganda film about the RAF. Shortly before the squadron's takeoff, a priest in his stole advances towards it: he's come to bless the machines that in a quarter of an hour's time will go and crush a few thousand "Hitlerite" women and children. Your defenders of the Human Person are just like that thoughtless priest. They may wear fine stoles, but we don't forget that they have blessed the face of Death. There are no armies of Right.*

Maurice Bardèche, *Lettre à François Mauriac*,  
La Pensée Libre, Paris 1947, p. 131

*Are you trembling, carcass? You would tremble still more if you knew where I was taking you.*

Henri de la Tour d'Auvergne, viscount of Turenne

## I

## An attempt at Murder, with Premeditation, against Germany?

It was in 1967, in the Latin Quarter: I found myself face to face with Jacques Joubert, like me a former maths prep student at the lycée Saint Louis, whom I hadn't seen for six years. He was now an aeronautical engineer. Our paths had diverged; I kept a recollection of him as an assiduous hard worker who, however, was different from the rest of us: he went out into the world a bit, knew about other things besides maths and physics and, what's more, chased girls as no student at *Mathématiques spéciales* ever did, so to speak.

Our encounter lasted only half an hour. When we shook hands to say goodbye, I had the presentiment that we should probably never meet again. He was keen to tell me: "I've got a book to recommend to you. It's the latest Rassinier: *The Drama of the European Jews*. It won't leave you cold."

On the subject in question I had as yet gone no further than Maurice Bardèche's two iconoclastic writings of which I had learnt from a radical-socialist cousin who'd died long before his time: *Nuremberg ou la Terre promise* and *Nuremberg II ou les Faux monnayeurs*, published in 1948 and 1950, respectively. I headed to the Gibert bookshop right nearby and came out with *The Drama of the European Jews*, Paul Rassinier's last published work.

### — Ace, and small slam —

Ten years earlier, the year of the big elementary maths exam, I was what they called an ace, a highly gifted schoolboy, and as soon as I'd passed was propelled to Saint Louis *prépa*, generally known as "la taupe" ("the mole"). After a beginning in fanfare, failure in the entry exam for the prestigious Ecole Polytechnique two years afterwards left me devastated. How could I have failed, I who four years previously had been so brilliant at my first exam, already in the 2nd A form (Latin, Greek, maths), then at elementary maths with the mention "well done"! I who read the Greek philosophers in translation at the age of twelve, never earning a grade lower than 17/20 in maths and physics! The truth was that my "highly gifted" side had indeed disappeared at ages 17-18, and that I refused to admit it. I was, in a way, living on remnants of success that could at times give an illusion, both to myself and those around me. I was perhaps still able to make sparks, but nothing more.

“Somewhat highly gifted”, as my old mathematics teacher of the time was to put it with humour when we met again long afterwards, keen to sum up my case without any fawning.

Those ten years from 1957 to 1967 had made another man of me, in whom there subsisted a will to catch up again, precisely *with those remnants*. A chance meeting had left a mark on me, shortly after my move to Paris: acquaintance with my landlady in the 17th district opened unsuspected horizons with her account of what she and her husband had lived through there in the period of the occupation. She lent me Lucien Rebatet’s *Les Décombres*, which made a strong impression on me. Subsequently I did my 16 months of national service in a NATO unit that saw me work side by side every day with Americans, Germans, Englishmen and Belgians in the indescribable “post-nuclear” context of my battalion.<sup>1</sup>

Once back from the army I was involved in a motorbike accident in Paris that nearly cost me my life and left long lasting after effects. In the same year, whilst still convalescent, I met the beautiful Beatrix; I married her the year after. I had accomplished my professional comeback. Now a junior manager in the civil service, I wanted, as soon as I’d served the required time, to sit my ministry’s special internal exam; passing it would enable me, after a programme including the full 17-month degree course at the Ecole Nationale d’Administration, to enter the corps of the *Administrateurs civils*. And all that came about as planned.

In late December 1971, when I, a joyful Rabelaisian\*, came out through the doors of the ENA, at that time situated in the Rue des Saints-Pères, I dedicated the achievement (my little slam!) to my father, fallen 27 years earlier, because he had had *his* conception of freedom, the conception the man of 27 that he was then could have had in April 1944.

### — Death at 27 —

That 10th of April 1944 my father was at the wheel of a van of the Celtia factory, not far from Neuvic, in the Corrèze region. That plant, manufacturing wooden spools for the textile mills and the yarn trade, had been bought by his uncle, and he was director of technical operations. He had been able that day to undertake his project of going to the town of Brive with a factory foreman in order to buy a particular machine and had suggested to his wife’s sister, my aunt Christine, that she accompany them: a great treat for her in those times when automotive traffic was tightly restricted. For the journey she took along her small boy of four, my first cousin. Whilst approaching the town of

Egletons, after driving about 20 miles, they came to a little bridge at a bend in the road: a German patrol that had set up a roadblock ordered them to halt. It was made up of the Georgian back-up troops (of the Vlassov army) who at the period represented the Wehrmacht in Haute-Corrèze.

Inspection of papers, expert search of the vehicle. “Whose revolver?” asks the sergeant in *feldgrau*, brandishing the weapon that he’s just found under the front passenger’s seat. The three passengers blench and look at one another. My father, a smile on his lips, steps forward. The Georgian takes hold of him: “You, arrested!” and orders the others to turn around and go back to their point of departure, without further ado.

That very evening my father is detained a mile and a half from there in the lycée Albert-Thomas of Egletons, a part of which serves for the quartering of the same Georgians. They keep him in a barricaded room, after installing an army cot. His guards, as he confides to his young wife, are not too bad a lot. He doesn’t even complain about the food, with the notable exception of the bread. He’s informed of his imminent transfer to Limoges about 70 miles away, to appear before the German military court for the zone. On April 14th he tells my mother that he already knows the harsh sentence: forced labour somewhere in the Reich, surely under a severe regime, in an armaments factory, considering his status of engineer.

On that mid-April day, he knows that he’s going to be fetched for the transfer under armed guard. In any case, he’s said as much to his wife. He already sees himself seated between two *Feldgraus* en route for the court. And, just now, here they are! Strangely, it isn’t a military vehicle but a Citroen *traction-avant*, with French civilians inside! They present themselves to the Georgian sergeant, papers in hand. They take my father, to whom the guards have returned his belongings, not forgetting the money that he’d brought along for the transaction in Brive.

The poor devil is soon riding between two henchmen on the back seat; he can tell by their looks that they’re criminals, and understands that it’s neither a military court nor a German factory that awaits him, but death.

In the afternoon of that same April 15th, it is announced at Egletons town hall that three miles away a young man lies dead in a pathway twenty yards off the old Egletons-Limoges road that runs further on through the village of Sarran. It’s my father. Killed by a single bullet in the back of the neck, as the doctor would specify later, but shot from a certain distance by a revolver: without exiting, the bullet had just penetrated the base of the cerebellum. Apart from that, no sign of struggle, a tranquil face, a slight smile, the nape of the neck a bit swollen by a blood clot.

My mother is only 27 years old, and finds herself a widow with two small children: my sister (aged 2) and me (3 and a half).

The next day, she rushes off to the bureau of the German officer who, she's told, is in charge of the sector. He leers down at her from his height of six feet four inches when she dares to ask why *someone* has killed her husband, why *someone* has stolen his money. Making no effort at courtesy he retorts: "*We don't owe you anything, Madam; and I don't even owe you any explanation! We have nothing to do with your settling of scores between terrorists!*"

— Horrifying saturnalia...  
**A thunderous, explosive youngster**  
**A not so ritual slaughter —**

It was difficult, and at school more than elsewhere, being a highly gifted child amongst the "normal" ones.

I sensed it very early on. Already in the classroom, the highly gifted one raises his hand before all the others, on every subject. The teacher grasps this quickly but must pretend somehow not to notice it so as to let the others have their chance and not humiliate them all. I found myself without competition.

At recreation time it often happened that the jealousy of the ordinary and the less clever pupils showed itself openly. Understanding everything before all the others isolated me. However, on some rare occasions I could, in return, enjoy direct conversations with my teachers.

From the upper second form I was at a good Catholic boarding school, a kind of nursery for prospective priestly vocations. Full of fervour for Latin literature, I was able, as early as the third and fourth forms, to read the texts *aperto libro*. I had come by some Latin works that were not on the syllabus and therefore prohibited, since they didn't appear on the restricted list of authorised writings. In the course of a routine search, my copy of Petronius's *Satyricon*, the bilingual edition of Guillaume Budé, was found. I was straight away called before the Superior and copiously reprimanded for being discovered in possession of such a "pernicious" book. *Horresco referens*, they caught me a bit later, at evening study session, reading the *Saturnalia* of Macrobius in the bilingual Garnier edition. This time the Superior was choked with indignation. "But really, you couldn't be unaware of what is meant by the term *Saturnalia*! It designates a period at the end of the year where the Roman people, the populace, openly and unrestrainedly gave themselves over to the worst debauchery! How can you have been attracted by a book with a title like that?"

Quite obviously, the Superior had not read the book, a remark that I ventured to make. I summed up the contents for him. “Macrobius, a man of letters of the late fourth century, had taken advantage of those days of the yearly festival to meet with some learned friends and discuss literature, poetry, science or history, at that fascinating period which would soon see the collapse of Rome. It’s a precious work for anyone interested in those Roman literary figures who still remained attached to the old religion several decades after Constantine’s edict of Milan, and nostalgic for the imperial, radiant Rome”.

The priggish pedant in a cassock cut me off there and informed me that he was going to send a letter to my mother.

I learned a little later that the holy man had in fact had a talk with my mother, ingratiatingly explaining to her that I ought to have been expelled. I was “not pious” (I had disclosed in private to the religion teacher, a good chap at that, that I did not accept certain dogmas of the Catholic faith) and, especially, I had brought into his respectable establishment at least two “unseemly” books. But, considering my remarkable scholastic results, the school wanted to keep me nonetheless.

My passion for classical letters was also, of course, directed at ancient Greek, which attracted me with its immediate graphical beauty, its delicacy, precision, richness; Bailly’s dictionary was my scholarly pastime, by virtue of its wealth of linguistic and philological information, revealing to me the correspondences with the other European languages. Thus did I begin to draw up tables based on original roots that were most likely closest to both Sanskrit and reconstituted Indo-European. I listed the Latin, Greek, Romance, Germanic and Slavic words that could be linked to the primæval “skeleton”. Whilst doing this, I had the feeling of advancing along steep paths leading to mountaintops from which I should discover undreamt of vistas. Later on, of course, I was to acquire Julius Pokorny’s big, fundamental *Indogermanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*<sup>2</sup>, and would be impassioned of philological works on the subject of languages arising from primæval Indo-European.<sup>3</sup>

With my good head for maths I was always first in the class in that subject as well as in physics and chemistry, with a predilection for trigonometry, analytical calculus and inorganic chemistry. Whilst in the fourth and fifth forms I had come by some big chemistry books and lab equipment. With my loads of retorts and Welsbach burners, I carried out chemical experiments with true delight. This went on, in holiday periods, in a shed beside the fine old house where my paternal grandmother lived. Nearly five acres of park adorned that abode, which was heaven to me.

One day in July 1956 the postman, a disquieted look on his face, came

to tell me that two heavy parcels, addressed to me, had been received at the post office but that he refused to deliver them on his round, for they bore bright-coloured labels reading “toxic substance”, “explosive”, “corrosive”. My first order with Prolabo had arrived, containing some basic ingredients. In particular, there were concentrates of sulphuric and nitric acid in smoked-glass bottles isolated in silica powder. I would use these substances in the building of rockets that I wanted to put together at small expense.

I soon became known in the area for my thunderous and explosive experiments that alerted the countryside each summer. My intent was to perfect, even in a rather rudimentary way, the most propulsive chemical mixture possible, whether solid, putty-like or powdery, and whose combustion would be neither too quick nor too slow. One of my first rockets, loaded with at least ten pounds of a powder of my own making, failed to take off and blew up on its wooden “launching pad”. An adjacent oak tree was half defoliated by the blast. A new rocket, which took off but like all the rest was rather badly guided, after a high parabolic trajectory fell right in the middle of a flock of sheep belonging to a nearby farmer called Camille. It hadn’t directly touched any of the animals but one ewe, frightened by the fall of the burning missile that had crashed into the ground beside it, growling and smoking, ran straight into the barbed-wire fence where it slit its throat. The farmer, having observed the scene from a distance, rushed into the field with his servant. The two countrymen, after seizing the big metallic cylinder, dented and still burning hot, railed at me. “You can go and fetch your torpedo... at the police station.” At police court, the magistrate, holding back his laughter, fined me twenty francs for “petty violence” whilst I voiced regrets for my act of negligent ovicide.

— **Heaven, *unter den Linden*** —

The school holidays were the occasion to read and to make notes. My mother had just given me a motor scooter, which became the ideal device for methodically exploring the region. A relative made me a gift of a glass-panelled bookcase (whose contents were to be stolen years later) and I enthusiastically installed it in my new 450-square foot room on the ground floor of the lovely house, which was to remain my solitary retreat until I reached 30.

In those fine days of July 1958 I was not yet 18, with my two *baccalaureates* and an entry ticket to science prep classes beginning in late September. With the two wide-open windows, the comforting buzz of the bees in the ancient linden tree facing my new bookcase, I was overjoyed. I stocked the shelves

in line with my favourite subjects. Now before my eyes was the scientific row, with the fat red Troost of general chemistry (outdated in its contents), Figuiet's *La Terre et les mers*, treatises of algebra, maths and physics exams with explanations of correct answers, specialist works published by Duno and five popularisations by the American physicist G. Ganow, who filled me with enthusiasm. These books introduced me to the theory of relativity and quantum mechanics. I savoured the subtle mystery of mathematics; a pure product of the human brain, the mathematical sciences can just as well live a life of their own as enlist themselves in the service of the material sciences. I had a passion for the calculation of probabilities, the laws of great numbers and their prodigious conclusions ending up in the paradox of certainties being obtainable from chance phenomena. On the subject of gambling and expectations of winnings, one particular demonstration, embellished with integrals and equations "of partial derivatives", opportunely taught me that *of all possible gambling strategies, the best is not to gamble at all*.

Above these volumes, the authors of classical antiquity, shelved between Bailly and Bornecque: the bilingual Budé classics, ochre for the fifteen Greek and brick-red for the forty Latin, the grammars (Petitmangin for Latin, Ragon for Greek, Carpentier-Fialip for English), the studies of place names by Meillet and Dauzat along with the costlier and more academic philological works published by Klincksieck. For the old books section, I had received as a present Tome II (only!) of Montesquieu's *Esprit des lois* in a period leather-bound edition. I already possessed a *Géographie* by Crozat dating from 1794 and Mme de Genlis's *Contes moraux*. There was also an *Albert moderne* in a general edition of the 17th century, a sort of manual of folk medicine whose recipes, made up of witches' ingredients, I enjoyed reciting to the occasional guest.

Under the science shelf I arranged writings of novelists and short story authors: a score of books by Jules Verne, of course, three or four of Balzac's novels, the *Mémorial* by Las Cases, *Don Quixote* in French translation, Chateaubriand with his *Itinéraire*, Poe, Dickens, Stendhal, S. Lagerlöf, Arthur Conan Doyle, H. G. Wells, H. H. Ewers, some Daudet, a Goncourt, Edmond About's *Le Roi des montagnes*, Madame de Staël with her *Allemagne*, tales by Maupassant, two books by Octave Mirabeau, a few by Francis Carco, Paul Morand, Montherlant; no compendium of poetry except Baudelaire's *Fleurs du mal* and an anthology in which I found the hermetic character of Mallarmé intriguing. I'd eliminated a book by Paul Valéry, received as a gift, for it was mind-numbing. I didn't like Victor Hugo and wanted none of him on my shelves. I recall Voltaire's *Candide* and *Dictionnaire Philosophique*,

works by Saint-Simon, Michelet, the *Mémoires du beau Lauzun*. Two books of Nietzsche's in French translation: *Ecce Homo* and *The Birth of Tragedy*. Two of Céline's: *Journey to the End of Night* and *Death on the Instalment Plan*. Amongst the less orthodox books, bequeathed by the radical socialist cousin, *La Fin des religions* by Auguste Dide, Renan's *Life of Jesus* and the two "Nurembergs" by Maurice Bardèche. I thought I could sense a kinship of spirit between Renan's work and Bardèche's. "Are you aware that *The Life of Jesus* is on the Index?" asked my grandmother one day, facetiously. That reflection roused my curiosity. From then on I was "indexed".

In the two lower rows: travels, geographical studies, books on auto and motorcycle mechanics, a medical dictionary of 1911 that prescribed, with insistence, the use of "bismuthous magnesium"; collections of the magazine *Science et Vie*, science fiction books (Jimmy Guieu!), both old and recent issues of *Paris Match* and a few of *Le Crapouillot*, some copies of *Signal*, the French-language weekly published by the Germans during the occupation, with its impressively realistic photos. I was soon to add *The Morning of the Magicians* and the review *Planète*.

At the very bottom, a dozen or so old books that my grandmother had chosen for me from her own collection and that I'd ended up accepting: writings of Gyp, Marcel Prévost, Félicien Champsaur, Paul Bourget and the like, a biography of Madame Steinheil. Not to mention a Bible, a protestant one, in which I'd marked off the particularly shocking passages.

Such was, essentially, the inventory of my treasures at the age of 18.

### — The enigma of death —

Being confronted by death and trying to take stock of it constitute a decisive moment for the child and adolescent. Already, when I was nine, my maternal grandmother had passed on. Many an evening had I marvelled at the tales of Perrault that she could tell to perfection. Next to leave us, much too young, the radical socialist cousin, who had become my legal guardian after my father's death. His last job was that of technical advisor to the staff of Edgar Faure, minister of Justice. I admired him for his knowledge and his experience in life. It was with him that I'd only recently made my first big journey by car, reaching Paris — over 250 miles distant — in a *traction avant*. Also gone was my great uncle Ernest, owner of the Celtia factories, who had nicknamed me "Mr Why"; he knew how to answer all my many queries. I declined to kiss him on his deathbed as I was bidden to do. I was eleven years old.

One day in June 1958 the body of a thirteen year old boy, who'd gone

down like a stone, was pulled up onto the bank of our pond. First our gym instructor, then the firemen with their oxygen bottles, had tried to bring him round. There we stood, silent, contemplating the bluish face, when his parents arrived. His mother fainted and collapsed before our eyes. I perceived death as an enigma.

A few weeks later I heard of the death of my cousin Jean, aged 18. A real athlete, a top swimmer, he had sought to go to the aid of some companions caught in rough waters but he drowned. Only after 18 days was his body recovered. His parents were never to get over this tragic loss.

One August evening in 1962, a young relative, the pretty Agnès, 27 years old, left the Madrid hotel where she used to spend a month each summer. Soon afterwards she was found drowned in the shallow waters of the Manzaneres.

How could these three deaths in the family — my father at age 27, Jean at 18, Agnès at 27 — be explained?

Agnès's sudden death was shrouded in mystery. Was it suicide? Murder? An accident? I managed to get hold of the Spanish dailies and weeklies, all of which mentioned this lovely, elegantly dressed young Frenchwoman who spoke a perfect Spanish and who had just been discovered drowned. She had not suffered any violence.

— **Did you say “In the name of *civilisation*”?** —

All in all, concerning Agnès and my father, neither my mother nor my aunt wanted to know any more than they already did.

For my mother, her husband had simply fallen as a martyr of the occupation, a silent hero, a fighter in the shadows.

As for me, I was caught between all the conjectures that assailed me as soon as I inquired of anybody: once arrested, had my father not probably been denounced to the Germans or the Vichy police as a dangerous *résistant* (which he was not in the least but which could only have made his case worse)? And had a staging of sorts not been organised to have him picked up at his improvised jail in Egletons by some hired assassins, French *Gestapaches*? I was told that the Germans regularly preferred to see “dirty work” done by mercenaries from the occupied lands themselves. Someone offered me another version: my father hadn't wanted to be questioned by the special services who were waiting to see him before his date at the military court and so had tried to flee by breaking out of the *traction avant*. Or still another: the large sum of money that he had on him aroused the envy of the car's occupants, who thus preferred to liquidate him on the pretext that he'd tried to escape. And other

explanations were possible as well.<sup>4</sup>

For my father's mother, her son had let himself be drawn into a quite unwise adventure. Always with a smile on his face, for such was his nature, my father, according to her, had wanted to help those *maquisards*, one of whose chiefs entrusted him with a revolver "just in case", a gesture sure to send him to his death should he ever be caught carrying the thing. My grandmother despised those people, holding them responsible for her son's death. Besides, had the actions of those FFI and FTP moved ahead by a single day the advent of the Normandy landings? Had the blows they'd struck not usually resulted only in reprisals against the innocent? But she often came to the conclusion that her son had acted as a man who was sure of himself and convinced of the soundness of his choice. At such moments she bore the look of a fine, gentle old lady from whom war had claimed the two men who'd had all her love: her husband and her son.

Her husband had been killed in the Tonkin in June 1916. A young officer, he commanded the border post of Lao-Kay, facing the successors of the Chinese river pirates, the *Pavillons noirs* ("black flags"). Before that he had had a "glorious war" facing the Germans at the Aube front, where he led a company of Tonkinese riflemen who nearly all lost their lives either crushed under the German 77 millimetre shells or else overcome by the cold of their first winter in the icy mud of the trenches. Seriously wounded, he had received a promotion and an assignment to Indochina. Then he and his fiancée got married and had a three-week honeymoon in Vichy, after which he left for the Far East, never to return but in a leaden coffin draped in the tricolour. He of course never saw his infant son, my father, who at the age of just three months became a war orphan. And that was to be precisely my lot in 1945.

Could they be called heroic, those two men?

One day my grandmother put a question that made me stop and think.

*Your grandfather the officer had the official job of training those Tonkinese and of making the most efficient, the cruellest possible "Boche-killers" of them. "There are twenty million Germans too many!" Clemenceau said, didn't he?*

*Yes. And just how many "Boches" was your grandfather thus able to get killed? A few, or hundreds? Thousands, maybe? France, our country, sent officers like him 6,000 miles away to train Asiatics to kill Germans, our neighbours, our close kin, as we were well aware; it makes me dizzy. And after all, wasn't your father perhaps the victim of a kind of immanent justice? I often think that an immanent justice struck*

*him down; without knowing it and of course without understanding it, in 1944 he ended up paying with his own life for the criminal error of our rulers whom I saw plunge France into two wars against Germany in less than 25 years. Let's not forget the sorry emperor Badinguet\*\* either; the one who took himself for Napoleon in 1870 and didn't hesitate to declare war on Germany on a frivolous pretext, with the catastrophic outcome that we know, for the chasseur hadn't, all things considered, really worked wonders.\*\*\**

The notion of “immanent justice” left me, and still leaves me, perplexed. And that reflection is still present in my mind whenever I ponder the tragic history of the 20th century.

I had occasion to read some violently anti-German works from before 1914 in what remained of my grandmother's little library. I've kept one of them: *La Menace allemande*, by a certain André Barre. This book, written circa 1908, is a veritable incitement to murder, a declaration of war on the Germany of Wilhelm II, a fervent augury of European war. As if maddened by that Germany's technical and economic progress, the author calls for the mobilisation of the Latins and Slavs against the German empire:

*Within a short span of years the world is to see the following: the German flag will fly over 86 million Germans, and these will govern a territory inhabited by 130 million Europeans. In that vast territory, the Germans alone will exercise political rights [...]. They will then be, as in the Middle Ages, a people of masters, merely condescending to let menial tasks be carried out by the peoples submitted to their domination.<sup>5</sup>*

At the beginning of the 20th century a French engineer with a degree from *Arts et Métiers*, Victor Cambon <sup>6</sup>, wrote several books on what he had seen across the Rhine. After an impartial portrayal of the German people's qualities (love of knowledge, solid work, self confidence, hardy initiative, spirit of organisation, discipline), he sought to understand and explain the astounding development of German industry and research. He attributed it to the country's unique system of training: “Germany's prodigious industrial expansion would remain inexplicable were its description not preceded by a visit to her establishments of vocational instruction.” He noted, moreover, that the fertile ground from which those schools had sprung was a veritable cult of instruction at all levels; the farmers themselves, living as semi-townsfolk (which, he pointed out, “tangibly raises their intellectual level”), had access to it:

*Their dress shows it; in Germany it is difficult to tell a farmer from a well-dressed workman and, above all, one does not come across, as in certain out-of-the-way districts in France, those savage-looking beings in indescribable garb, living by themselves in secluded thatched cottages in the manner of prehistoric man.*

*The result of this legislation and of these mores: not one in a thousand Germans is illiterate. But this remark seems to me insufficient: it matters little that a man has learned to read if, his whole life long, he never reads. However, newspapers and books are to be found in the hands and in the homes of Germans of every station in life.*

Perusing this book the reader plainly senses that it does not take long for the initial admiration, although set forth objectively, to give way to a muffled anxiety.

After some meticulous descriptions of industrial plants, their organisation of production and labour, he reaches this conclusion:

*Certainly, today's Germany fears no manufacturing country as a competitor. [...] One must only ask: does it follow that she will be able to impose her merchandise on the entire world? Shall we not see, pretty well everywhere, the customs officers come onto the scene? The other nations will protect their ageing or burgeoning industries against the mighty Germany. England is already showing an example of this with her law on foreign patents. This reaction, once followed and surpassed everywhere, would become a worldwide embargo. Would it have to be breached by cannon fire? A harsh, but by no means implausible, proposition.*

*These are the difficulties that darken the German empire's horizon; we see them clearly and must, without exaggeration, call them worrisome.*

Here one may already see, as in a premonition, that in our author's eyes it was no great distance from the customs houses to the artillery stations. That century over, we may note with today's hindsight, staying on the economic plane alone, the following actions: in 1923, dismantling and pillage of German factories; in 1943 and 1944, systematic destruction of German cities and industrial sites; in 1945, massive theft of German patents and capture of engineers and scientists involved in nuclear and rocket research, all for the benefit of the victors; from

1945 to 1948 the deportation of about 20 million Germans and the theft of everything they owned; from 1945 to 1990, the enslavement of the 18 million Germans of the Soviet zone (the late German Democratic Republic).

In 1913 the journalist Georges Bourdon, correspondent for *Le Figaro*, made a lengthy stay in Germany, of which he wrote in a series of articles. The complete report that he assembled in a book published that year, *The German Enigma*, showed that what he himself saw beyond the Rhine did not square with the negative image of Germany given by the French press. He recounted, for instance, a talk he had had with the East-Prussian born man of letters Hermann Sudermann, who, in his capacity as a playwright, was in regular contact with the German public. The subject was the two countries' feelings towards each other.

*“Ah!” he exclaimed at my first words, “all you French are the same. When I go to Paris and see to what a degree the sentiments of Germany are misunderstood there, I scarcely know what to say. I should like to shout in their ears, ‘You are mistaken. You believe lies. You lie to yourselves.’ [...] Yes, yes. Everything that you suppose, everything that you believe, is pure delusion. In the whole of Germany there is nothing but sympathy for France and for all that comes from France, and I have never met a single person who would not regard the mere prospect of a renewed conflict as a profound calamity. I give you my word for it. It is the strictest and most absolute truth. Beyond that, everything is fancy and a figment of the imagination.*

*[...] “Germany ill disposed indeed! I ask you to compare our conduct with yours. What role does the German play in your caricatures, your books, your theatres, your cafés chantant? He is repellent, a clown, a surly brute with no manners, he eats like a glutton, and behaves badly; shady affairs, equivocal transactions, dirty tricks are the stage stock-in-trade of the German Jew; in fact, the infamous villain whom everyone scouts, disdains, and abhors is always a German! Now look on the other side of the picture, go from one end of Germany to the other; look into our theatres, our cafés, concert halls, open our comic papers, whether in Berlin, Frankfurt, Breslau, or Munich, and you will find the Frenchman always depicted in an amiable and sympathetic light. Not long ago one of our best novelists, Walther Blöm, published a book, L’Année de fer, of which the action takes place during the ‘great war’ (that of 1870), and among his leading characters is a French officer*

*endowed with every noble quality. I should not have a very pleasant task if I tried to put before you all that French literature has written about us since Maupassant. Indeed, I would rather leave it alone. Well, you may believe me that our literature and our theatre register, whether they know it or not, the feeling and ideas of the great mass of the people. All my generation has been brought up to regard France with sentiments of respect and sympathy, and what I am saying to you is what the whole of enlightened Germany thinks.”*<sup>7</sup>

Already in 1876 a French book by one Victor de Saint-Genis, *L'Ennemi héréditaire*, after trying to demonstrate that France had been threatened by Germanic invasions since 1000 AD (whilst at the same time naively demonstrating that the French realm's territorial progress had been made to the nearly exclusive detriment of the German empire), violently took to task those Frenchmen who had had the courage to recognise the good qualities of the German people, along with the fact that we ought to show a positive interest in our neighbours.

*Who then have propagated in France so many dangerous errors, so many illusions on the character, the genius, the spirit, the appetites of the Germans? Two writers whose talent served mainly their grudges and who flattered Germany only to avenge themselves on the French: Voltaire, who did so much harm to our country with his elegant hypocrisies and the eloquent charm of his slanders; Mme de Staël, ignorant and gullible. We are getting over the effects of these grievous errors a bit late.*<sup>8</sup>

Voltaire, a “bad Frenchman”! What a crime to have admired the great Frederick and his military and political organisation!

I became aware, upon reading all these works, of the great wave of Germanophobia that many French were active in maintaining well before 1914. All of these writings ascribed the very darkest designs to the German empire: a far cry from the admiration that Taine and Renan, a few decades previously, had felt for the depth of the German genius. They seemed to voice an ever-growing anxiety before that country's progress in all areas. People came to wish ardently for war with Germany, a war presented at first as one of necessary revenge for the defeat of 1870 and the loss of Alsace-Lorraine. Then, from 1905 onwards, the order of the day was plain and simple racial hatred. The German had to be physically destroyed for the simple reason that

he was German. There appeared manifold incitements to kill the Germans, which could not fail to permeate a good many minds and to lead finally to the evil joy of August 1914, when the soldiers went off to war.<sup>9</sup>

Soon afterwards some remarks by Auguste, another member of the family, were to leave me still more baffled. This particularly knowledgeable man was esteemed by all. In 1917, whilst working towards his *bac*, he had been called up to serve in an artillery unit at the front. He came back marked for life. Later on he was in the French occupation forces in the Rhineland. More than forty years after the events the assessment that he drew from his two military experiences could be summed up in these terms:

*France in no way deserved to be counted amongst the victors of 1918. That war, which she had ardently desired, had brought her more human hurt and psychological disasters than benefits. In 1919, at the signing of the treaty of Versailles, a monument of iniquity, France doubtless thought she had, with her allies, won the war against Germany.*

*But that Germany had been outnumbered 6 to 1, and France couldn't boast of being superior to her. The opposite was true. In 1923, day after day, I saw with my own eyes the reality of that defeated Germany. I was stupefied.*

*I can say that in the occupation of the Rhineland I took part in a looting expedition. We came to that highly civilised country as dismantlers of factories and pilferers. I saw many German homes from the inside, including those of the most modest employees and workers. The pianos that I sometimes found in workers' houses were not there for show. The love of the fine arts, of music, of reading was omnipresent.*

*Our rulers had dared to hurl us against the Germans allegedly in the name of Civilisation, whereas those people were well ahead of us on a good many levels. That war of 1914-1918 was brought on by a group of nations that were jealous and worried at seeing the Germans develop rather too fast for their liking. Those people outclassed us in almost every field. We Frenchmen were in the forefront of the barbaric nations.*

This kind of talk, as I've said, disturbed me deeply; I sensed something of the great mystery of the 20th century that I have yet to unravel today, for I wonder still about the reasons for the hatred that pushed the West to turn against its true centre of gravity, against its own heart, against itself.

Too often, when Germany is concerned, French historians become hazy. For example, here is how, as late as 1958, two of them, writing a textbook for

the upper sixth form, explained the Germans' responsibility in the sparking off of the First World War.<sup>10</sup>

*The deftness of the [German] travelling salesmen, who abided by the taste of the local clientele rather than imposing their available models, won ever widening markets for the Reich, to the particular detriment of England. If Germany had continued in that way for ten years or so, she would, rather than going to war, have achieved the economic domination of the world. But like the sorcerer's apprentice of Germanic legend, Germany was overcome by the forces that she had let loose.*

These alleged explanations (a bit repetitive, if truth be told) didn't satisfy me. In effect, they all proceeded from a supposition according to which Germany's existence, given the dynamism of her people, constituted a hindrance for the other countries of Europe. The good qualities of this nation — method, technology, the importance attached to well done work and to after-sales service on products, scientific rigour in all fields — would somehow be sources of worry for the others. The flaw naturally accompanying these qualities, namely the self-assurance of the Germans, then brings on accusations of arrogance. Whatever they do, they disturb the rest of the world. In fact, the one at the top of the class is seldom liked: I myself knew something about that. Guilty of being what they are, the Germans are decreed to be “too German” and, by that token, their leaders find themselves in the position of the accused before a sort of permanent international tribunal.

Let's stop here for a moment and imagine, in this trial of Germany, what case she might make against such an indictment. Is Germany a country “gone astray” amidst the other states of Europe? It could be argued in principle that a people living within the community of European nations does not go astray for centuries without there being some fault in the matter on the part of others. It must be agreed to begin with that all equilibrium had been broken by the Thirty Years War, during which the armies of the whole of Europe chased the German populations from pillar to post and left an appalling chaos in their wake. After two centuries of eclipse, during which the victors of 1648 took care to keep Germany in a state of division and weakness, the German people borrowed the modern idea of nationhood from French rationalism and the revolution of 1789. It could be asserted that Germany was then only adopting foreign principles; that, having come late to the realisation of her national existence, she acquired perhaps a more forceful awareness of it and went on to impress the fact of that existence on a Europe which, in part, was quite

reluctant to recognise it. One can quite easily imagine how this argument might continue, what with all its elements having appeared in the German schoolbooks of the National Socialist period. A rather lucid analysis of the question is provided by Albert Béguin, author of a 1946 work that was as anti-German as it was customary to be then:

*The fact remains that we did almost nothing to keep Germany within the union of the European states. The fact especially remains that if we other peoples of Europe had gone about presenting to Germany a more convincing portrayal of our community and better way of life, she would perhaps not have exaggerated our errors to the point of making their very worst aspects apparent. Let us at least be mindful that a more just and more beautiful Europe would have offered to the Germans' spiritual appetite other examples than those which she followed, and other satisfactions than those towards which she eagerly cast herself.*

A. Béguin continued with considerations on National Socialism and the “re-education” of the Germans that was starting at the time:

*National Socialism roused in its followers a heroism, and at times a kind of saintliness, which were of course tainted in the principle that they put Man in the service of humanity, but which despite everything inspired genuine sacrifices. Those young men conquered Europe by means of their blind courage; for twelve years they lived an amazing existence, free, without bourgeois caution, with nothing of the reserved, the safeguarded: the soldier's existence. Then they experienced the immense defeat, they saw that their personal sacrifice had been in vain, that what they sincerely believed to be a revolution and the dawning of a new human world had failed. And now they are expected to listen to professors, to sermonisers in whom they have always seen — and often rightly — people more preoccupied with conserving their social standing, their bourgeois self-respect, their prejudices and their spiritual comfort than with defending sacred values! We may go still further: many of these young men, tricked by a propaganda that abused certain words, pushed sacrifice to the point of sacrilege, that of divesting themselves of their soul [...]. And they would be offered a good little well-behaved life, organised on the model of the peaceful Swiss or Scandinavian democracies! One can be certain beforehand that they will not even understand what their instructors are talking about.<sup>11</sup>*

In her biography of Lenin the historian Hélène Carrère d'Encausse, who is not known for being especially pro-German, writes:

*He [Lenin] was fascinated by the German intellectual model (German philosophy was particularly attractive to the Russian elites at the turn of the century), by German science and technology, and by the German talent for state and military organization. Compared with Germany, Russia represented for him "Asiatic barbarism". He further thought that it was no accident that Marxism had been invented and developed by Germans. When he thought about Russia, he considered revolution the only certain way of lifting it out of its backwardness, its "Asiatic barbarism" and one day, after great effort, making it into a copy of Germany.* <sup>12</sup>

We may also quote Robert N. Proctor, the quite politically correct American professor of the history of science at Pennsylvania State University who, in 1999, wondered, with regard to a particular aspect of medicine under the 3rd Reich (cancer research), about Germany's remarkable advance "decades ahead of other countries in promoting health reforms that we today regard as progressive and socially responsible":

*[...] Nazism took root in the world's most powerful scientific culture, boasting half of the world's Nobel Prizes and a sizable fraction of the world's patents. German science and medicine were the envy of the world, and it was to Germany — the "land of scholars and poets" — that many academic hopefuls flocked to cut their scientific teeth.* <sup>13</sup>

### — The single way of thinking —

*"You ought to quit following this catastrophic bent of yours... If you persist in thinking and talking that way, you'll bring some serious trouble upon yourself. It's not the done thing to speak up for Germany, and that's how it is. Whether you like it or not, the Nuremberg trial after the Second World War settled the matter. Hitler's Germany, Germany full stop even, according to Jaspers, has been found guilty of so many crimes that your research and comments on the 1919 Treaty of Versailles, as valid and relatively objective as they may be, will always seem suspect. The discovery in the spring of 1945 of the Nazi camps, of their living dead and their thousands of corpses, of their gas chambers,*

*demonstrated the enterprise of extermination that underlay Nazism: there'll be no going over it again. Try to understand that."*

That, in substance, was what I might hear when, in the 70s, I risked setting forth my analysis of what I held to be the suicide of the West in the first half of the 20th century.

The wars of 1914-1918 and 1939-1945 appeared more and more to have been a two-stage attempt by a powerful coalition of interests at killing the German people. Moreover, my frequent travels to western Germany from 1967 onwards, and also, despite all sorts of difficulties, to the "GDR", as well as to Austria, Poland and Scandinavia, and my readings of what was being published on Germany strengthened my opinion that that country was innocent of just about everything that had been imputed to her by an incessant hammering of lies.

Even before reading Paul Rassinier, I had got the feeling that with regard to Germany and the two great conflicts of the 20th century, an official history had established itself. Then in the 70s there were, on the one hand, the accounts I heard from the mouths of various Germans little over 25 years after the last war and, on the other hand, the ex-Allies' and Israel's permanent charges against Germany for unprecedented crimes; the latter seemed to me to have become the indispensable consideration needed to veil both the apocalypse of the massive bombing raids on the German population by the Allies and the abominable deportation of some 15 to 20 million Germans from their ancestral homes in Prussia, Silesia, the Sudetenland and Hungary.

All things considered, had Germany not suffered more than any other belligerent? Hadn't the Anglo-Americans tried, with success, to burn alive great numbers of the German civilian population by dropping tens of thousands of phosphorous bombs on residential districts, for example at Hamburg in July 1943? In that instance there were nearly 80,000 dead! Oradour-sur-Glane more than 100 times over! In the space of two consecutive nights and days in February 1945, the Allied aviation perpetrated at Dresden well over 200 Oradours! Shouldn't the instigator of the Dresden attacks, Winston Churchill, assume his place in the ranks of the biggest war criminals ever? <sup>14</sup> How can it be explained that the greatest deportation of all history, desired and planned by Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin, was that of 18 million Germans chased from their homelands in the period of 1945 to 1948, a deportation carried out in conditions so horrible as to cause the death of probably two million amongst them, if not more? <sup>15</sup>

At this point one observation was and remains essential: on these quite real

crimes committed against the Germans, the official propaganda put in place since 1945 — and especially after the Nuremberg “trial” verdict — has nothing to say. It goes on *ad nauseam* about the Germans’ having premeditated and put into operation a policy of physical extermination of the Jews of Europe and having, for that purpose, perfected and used chemical slaughterhouses called “gas chambers”. But where is the material evidence, where are the forensic analyses, the *authenticated testimonies* of direct witnesses? Raul Hilberg, author of *The Destruction of the European Jews*, answers that there simply aren’t any and, in his sole explanation of this absence, asserts that the Germans made the material evidence vanish and murdered the true witnesses.<sup>16</sup>

I was struck by one special aspect of the Germanic character that I discovered in the course of my many visits, journeys, discussions and attempts at crosschecking: the German, the Germanic man, advances through life by his patient labour, his technical skill, his care to see through to the end whatever undertaking he starts, his honesty; there is in him something of the poet, the engineer, the researcher, that abhors lying or the resort to ruse in order to trick people, that instinctively rejects duplicity and cheating in business. It is no accident that Voltaire’s *Candide* is German: there lies his disadvantage in an environment of greed and jealousy. So it is that others will seek to fool him in order to defraud him if possible and exploit him always, from within or without. When he realises this, our German’s wrath can prove formidable.

After the 11th of November 1918, having obtained the armistice, Germany was forced by her opponents to accept anything and everything, including the most monstrous injustices and lies: her guilt, decreed by the Allies, in starting the war, the obligation to pay enormous reparations (the equivalent of 3 ½ times the entire world’s gold reserves!)<sup>17</sup>, the prohibition of political union with Austria who, for her part, demanded that union, the loss, through cession to Poland, of immense territories that had been German for seven centuries, the aberration of the incorporation of 3 ½ million Germans in a new Slavic state arbitrarily pieced together (the late “Czechoslovakia”), the maintaining *after the armistice*, and thus in defiance of international law, of a pitiless blockade, the loss of all her colonies to the victors, who were keen to take advantage of the modern infrastructure installed in those lands by Germany, the outright theft of her ships and submarines, soon followed by the dismantlement and pillaging of her factories and, worse still, the vilest war propaganda lies against her, complacently put about by the same victors. According to their rumours, between 1914 and 1918 the Germans had cut off the hands of small children in Belgium, had raped nuns in their convents and cut off their breasts; they had reduced to soap the fat of their enemies’ corpses, or of their own fallen

soldiers, crucified Canadian airmen who had come into their hands alive; and at least 700,000 Serbs had been gassed by the Austro-Boches.

One grows dizzy at the listing of all these lies which, afterwards, were demolished one after the other.

I had been unsettled by Paul Rassinier's two books, *Le drame des juifs européens* (1964) and *Les Responsables de la Seconde guerre mondiale* (1967), which brought me a singular enlightenment. The desire to know more about it all, to untangle the true from the false, above all to learn the reasons for the concealment of the historical truth about the first half of the 20th century in regard to everything touching on Germany, and thus on our own destiny as Europeans, seemed to me morally and psychologically essential, and a good deal more than just a nonconformist intellectual adventure.

A confirmation of my observations came to me one day in July of 1969. We had rented a house in Brittany for our summer holidays. That day we were invited to lunch by a Parisian couple, friends of ours who had made their summer residence of a refurbished cottage nearby. The man was an ethno-sociologist, already known in that somewhat restricted milieu, and openly conscious of his presumed scholarly merit. His wife, aware of my subjects of interest, had warned us of his sensitivity and of the extreme reactions (leftist ones, of course) that could be expected of him. In our conversations, at his end always ideologically marked, I practically never tried to contradict him. That day he got onto the subject of what he termed the general and underhanded post-colonial exploitation of the peoples of the *so-called* third world by the *so-called* developed countries. I decided to take the plunge. With only our wives present, I put it to him brusquely:

*Perhaps you're right when you speak for Africa, about exploitation of those peoples by other peoples. But there exists in the present-day world an exploitation that you don't breathe a word about, a two-fold exploitation striking a certain people before our very eyes, in 1969 and in Europe itself: — on one side a piece sliced off from Germany, and curiously called "GDR", whose 18 million inhabitants are locked forever behind the most formidable border in the world; these 18 million Germans, as you must be well aware, are guarded by 700,000 heavily armed Soviet soldiers (in other words one red soldier for every 25 Germans!), and bound to forced labour in the service of the Soviet occupiers; their country has undergone a methodical looting, with many entire factories dismantled and carried off to the USSR;*  
 — *on the other side, and this concerns at least all the Germans, an*

*incessantly hammered propaganda accusing the late German Reich of the premeditated putting to death of 6 million Jews between 1941 and 1945. However, apart from the “premeditation” slander, this figure is monstrously bloated, and Rassinier, for instance, proposes, with arguments to back it up, a maximum number of a million Jews dead, having perished during that time of a whole range of causes, classic ones, alas inherent to war itself.*

*Isn't that an additional and most cruel form of exploitation, political or otherwise, of a whole people: wrongly charging them with responsibility for millions of deaths?*

The man blew his top: “If what you’ve just said ever spread about, then Germany would have to be divided not in two or four, but made to disappear in thousands of pieces. Who are you, yourself and Rassinier, not to take the Nuremberg judgement into account?” He got up and left. We could see him walking on the field outside, clenching his fists and lowering his head as if he’d taken something of a blow. “I’d warned you and still you went and provoked him”, said his wife with a smile, adding: “He’ll be back in fifteen minutes or so.”

It should hardly be surprising that such a person was able to lead a brilliant university career, well planned from the start and topped off, I believe, with an appointment to the post of director of studies at the graduate school of social sciences in Paris.

Some time afterwards and in quick succession, three further encounters were to strike me anew.

The first: one day in the course of a family journey, a relative of my wife’s introduced us to a German friend, Gerd. A sprightly 50-year-old, speaking a refined French, he seemed to me a man of culture and consideration. This German was a native of the “lost territories”, the Posen region, now under Poland. I let him understand that I’d like to know more about it all. A few days later he was to give me a staggering account of the conditions in which the expulsion, the *Vertreibung*, had been carried out, and how it had affected him and his family in the autumn of 1945. Subsequently refugees in Brandenburg, they had fled from there shortly after the new communist regime was installed by force under the Soviet occupation in the regions that he called *Mitteldeutschland* (central Germany) rather than “GDR”. At the time of our acquaintance — 1975 — he was living in Rhineland-Westphalia.

I listened to him with interest that day as he developed his analysis of

the reality of the GDR regime (East Germany for us French). He explained that it was one of oppression and organised pillage for the benefit of the Soviets. The number of Jews holding the reins of this “GDR” government was considerable, out of proportion with the presence of their kind in the population. These were Jews who had previously left the Reich because of the Hitlerite laws and who had returned in strength after 1945 “to take hold of the German people in order to exploit them ferociously, whilst at the same time satisfying their Bolshevik fantasies, as was second nature to them. Some had even come back as soon as the late 40s from the wealthy USA to find themselves installed in the ruling positions of that GDR, the better to keep the Germans in servitude.” He listed the names of these “rulers”, specifying their functions. He drew me a diagram of the communist government’s makeup and its structures, rounding it off with the names of Jews at key posts. I beheld this diagram of the “East German” government’s decision-making organisation that he set about finishing with the names of those holding high office. Amongst others I saw those of Hermann Axen, Ernst Bloch, Horst Brasch, Otto Braun, André and Horst Brie, Kurt Cohn, Peter Edel, the Eisler couple, Hans Fruck, Ralph Giordano, Bruno Goldhammer, Herbert Grünstein, the Gysis, Wieland Herzfelde, Stefan Hermlin, Erwin Jacobi, Max Leon Kahane, Heinz Lippmann, Erich Markowitsch. *The diagram of the ruling structure was practically filled up with these names!* He asked me to keep the sheet of paper for my own files.

I pointed out to him, surely in a clumsy manner, that the Jews had their reasons for seeking revenge for their forced exile, the deportation of family members and, I added, the massacres in the gas chambers. He looked at me with a hard stare: “Massacres in the gas chambers? Where did you get that lie from?” I replied, by way of mitigating my remark, that I had read Rassinier, former French deportee and member of parliament, already well known in West Germany, who called the homicidal gas chambers “highly unlikely.”

A bit later Gerd was keen to talk to me about Austria. “The residual Austria of 1919 (your own Clemenceau called it German Austria — the German section of that old Austria-Hungary that he’d dreamed of killing) was undeniably a part of the ethnic German body and, for that matter, still is. For it, reuniting with the Reich was a human, economic and political necessity. Is Brittany not a part of your French nation? The *Anschluss*, so often decried in the schoolbooks, was consolidated by a referendum held in the presence of foreign dignitaries summoned to Austria as observers. Have you ever noticed that this fact is generally passed over in silence? Are you aware that the outcome of the poll, which went on in conditions of perfect regularity, was an overwhelming ‘yes’,

in the order of 98.5%? Do you know what the other 1.5%, the ‘no’ vote, was, typologically speaking? It was very nearly the equivalent of the country’s Jewish population. A striking example of an ‘ethnic vote’, and I’ll let you draw the right lesson from it yourself”.

The second encounter: in Paris we knew a young German woman who worked at the West German embassy, specifically, in the office dealing with claims concerning matters of reparations linked to the wartime deportations and internments. One day she told us — it must have been in 1977 — how surprised she’d been by a number of cases, and went on to describe in detail the most recent one. A man in his forties, a Jew born in Poland, had come to the embassy several times to complain of “Germany’s responsibility” for the ruin of his mental health. He stated that his whole family had been rounded up and deported, then exterminated in a concentration camp located in Poland. He alone, twelve years old at the time (1944), had been able to escape from the convoy. No witness had remained alive for, the man said, “We lived in a *shtetl* not far from Lublin that was razed to the ground by the Nazis, with all the inhabitants deported and exterminated. I am the sole survivor. The Nazis pushed their sadism to the point of burning all the public records. For the last 30 years almost I have practically never slept; if I manage to fall asleep, I’m assailed by nightmares: I see my beloved parents in the gas chamber, then burning in bonfires. My nerves are shattered. You Germans, who have left me handicapped for life, you have to give me financial compensation and pay me a pension.”

Our German friend continued: “In cases like this one, we do statistical research at the International Tracing Service in Arolsen, which centralises information gathered from various sources, notably the camps’ registries of arrivals and departures and the lists of people in the convoys. For this person, Arolsen informed us that there was no sure information in its possession, and even that the indicated date of deportation seemed mistaken in regard to the Lublin region. We notified the claimant of this, and he came to see us again, ranting and raving. Shortly afterwards he produced no fewer than five certificates, all signed by doctors with clearly Jewish-sounding names, and all concurring that their patient presented indisputable signs of grave mental trauma, obviously due to the deportation and death of members of his family. What do you think the final decision of the ‘reparations’ service was? We ended up granting him practically everything he’d asked for. From sheer exhaustion. And we still don’t know whether he really lost his family as he claims.”

Third encounter: in Paris again, a friend of my wife’s introduced us one day to her new boyfriend, a physician called Max Rosen. A Jew of Romanian

origin, born around 1915, he talked to us about the Mauthausen camp where he'd been deported in 1944 "not as a Jew", he liked to repeat, "but as a member of the resistance." His medical degree earned him a posting at the *Revier* (hospital or infirmary), along with the duty of performing various medical or sanitary checks amongst the healthy inmates. "At that job", he added, "I got to know a number of detainees. Still now, more than thirty years on, I remember the names of a lot of Mauthausen inmates." One day he confided to my wife, rather imprudently, that he soon had to go to Düsseldorf to testify before the West German authorities. "I'm going there to certify that I indeed knew the people whose names appear on a list that's been drawn up to enable their heirs and successors to obtain indemnities; I've got to admit to you that these lists are made up of the names of imaginary persons. I'm going to certify that I in fact saw them, knew them personally or even gave them medical attention at Mauthausen 'before they were exterminated in that very camp' without ever having been registered. The Germans caused us so much suffering that I reckon we may well pull this scam on them. I know, though, that it's a risky process."