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Kenneth Mouré and Martin Alexander, Eds., *Crisis and Renewal in France, 1918-1962*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2002. vii + 312 pp. \$75.00 U.S. (cl). Notes, list of contributors, and index. ISBN 1-57181-146-X.

Review by Irwin Wall, University of California, Riverside.

Any compendium of essays presents unique challenges to the reviewer, and this one is no exception. The hardest part is finding a unifying theme. Of course the authors offer one: they argue that unlike Stanley Hoffmann's lament about the 1930s, when the "stalemate society" caused France to collapse, today France has met the challenges of the modern era: it is a stable industrial democracy with a high standard of living, one of the few very privileged countries of the world. The essays in the volume are devoted to showing how particular challenges or crises did or did not result in the necessary "renewal" in the political and social development of modern France, with the implied happy ending. There is a sub-text, too, purporting to demonstrate that where crisis was not met, and change was successfully opposed, crisis nevertheless served to break down resistance to renewal. But nations are almost always in crisis, and they are always responding to crisis and attempting renewal; it would seem that is what politics is all about. France had 120 cabinet "crises" alone during the seventy years of the Third Republic's existence. Crisis was endemic and permanent in all walks of life; it provides the broadest and hence least meaningful of conceptual frameworks, and yet it still is not enough to unify the essays, for the authors only episodically frame their essays in terms of crisis and renewal in the first place. These caveats duly noted, it should also be said of this volume that almost all the essays are worth reading, and some make very distinctive and important contributions to our understanding of modern French history. I can think of no other way to deal with them, however, than to discuss them in turn.

The volume was conceived as a tribute to John Cairns, and it opens with Philip Bell's discussion of Cairns's "landmark" article of December 1955 on Great Britain and the fall of France. According to Bell, Cairns gave us the first even-handed historical analysis of the defeat of France in 1940, highlighting the nation's defeatist government, failures of military conceptualization, and absence of communication between government, military command, and the front. I remember Cairns well, and he certainly deserves tribute; he ranked in my mind, perhaps undeservedly, with the giants who did French history when I was entering the field, on a par almost with the likes of David Pinkney and Gordon Wright. Cairns's article on the fall of France was indeed a fine article. But it seems a slender reed on which to hang his reputation: somehow I managed to come to my own comprehensive understanding of the French collapse without giving it much attention. Marc Bloch's *Strange Defeat* was and somehow remains for me the starting point of all inquiry into the Battle of France.

Sally Marks addresses the Ruhr crisis to lead off the more serious essays in the volume, and there is nobody more qualified to do so. Her point of departure here is that "Poincaré-la-guerre" as he was popularly referred to was rather "Poincaré-la-peur" in that his Ruhr policy was weak and vacillating, undertaken with the unrealistic expectation that it would ultimately win the support of France's Anglo-Saxon allies and without a plan for how to cope with German passive resistance and runaway inflation as a response. Caught without a plan, Poincaré allowed the British and the Americans to resolve the crisis, and they managed to snatch defeat for France from the jaws of victory. For Marks, the Ruhr was

the prelude to the appeasement of Germany in the 1930s and defeat in 1940. Somehow this leaves me unconvinced. A military invasion, however much consideration and debate went into it, is hardly an indecisive policy once undertaken, and statesmen normally act without fully anticipating the consequences of their actions. They can hardly do otherwise: witness George Bush and Iraq. Nor did the Ruhr crisis end so badly for France: the mark was stabilized, reparations resumed a regular schedule, and Locarno followed, precisely the result, arguably, that France was seeking before the crisis began. And contrary to Marks's implied argument, France needed to appease Weimar; the tragedy was it did not appease the German Republic enough. Appeasement of Hitler was the error, and that did not have its roots in the Ruhr.

William Irvine addresses women's rights in the Third Republic with particular reference to the activities of the League of Rights of Man and Citizen, one of the Republic's most prestigious organizations whose name of course bespeaks the problem. However much "Man" in the name of the organization was meant to indicate humankind, the League showed little concern for the rights of women. France did not give women the vote until 1944, and de Gaulle did it by executive fiat; it was never legislated by parliament. What Irvine shows us here in terms of the general theme of the essays is that there was no crisis perceived in the matter of women's suffrage and hence no response. Women's organizations were weak, despite an alleged total membership of 350,000 in the interwar period. Unlike Britain in 1913, suffragettes were not chaining themselves to the gates of public buildings and jails. All politicians were ostensibly in favor of the vote for women but none were willing to do what was necessary to implement it. The left political parties feared that women would vote disproportionately for parties of the right, and the right was uninterested in precipitating action on the issue. The League of the Rights of Man was made up of politicians of the left who obeyed their parties first and the League second if at all. Even if it were more active than it was on the issue, the League would not have made a difference, and it had enough to occupy it with the struggles for peace and anti-fascism. All this is very well, but I doubt that because of it the League deserves Irvine's condemnation as an example of the "bankrupt and hypocritical political culture of the Third Republic." This is a harsh judgment for the League and the Republic it defended. France was a functioning, if imperfect, democracy in an age of dictatorship until of course it fell in military defeat. As Irvine admits FDR did nothing to broaden the voting rights of African-Americans in the American South either. In some ways the Popular Front outdid the New Deal as a response to the crisis of the 1930s. It is curious the authors did not seek a reconsideration of it for this volume.

Kenneth Mouré addresses the myth of the gold standard in interwar France. The gold myth had great staying power in France even after the Second World War, and de Gaulle advocated a return to gold as late as the 1960s. Mouré examines the building blocs of the myth, all of them false: gold was not a smoothly-functioning system because all countries used it differently; it was not "automatic" or at least should not have been, or France would not have allowed so much of the world's supply to flow into its coffers in 1932; and the myth was sustained not by its self-evident truths but by an elaborate propaganda machine. The result was that when the depression finally hit, France remained mired in it for a longer time and more deeply than elsewhere, and the Blum government devalued too little and too late in its vain efforts to restart the economy. Gold, says Mouré, was the problem rather than the solution. Again, no perceived challenge, and no response.

Joel Blatt examines a genuine challenge to the Third Republic, the Cagoule. This fascist group, usually treated briefly in accounts of the period, mounted the most serious attempt by the extreme right to seize power in France in the 1930s. It was heavily financed by the magnates of Michelin, Citroen, and Renault; it had foreign backing and was able to build up a large cache of arms, mostly purchased from Germany; and it was responsible for the assassination in France of the exiled anti-fascist Rosselli brothers in June 1937, carried out at the behest of Mussolini. Among its recruits were high military officers, including Marshal Louis Franchet d'Esperey and Major Georges Loustaunau-Lacau (who later claimed never to have joined), and Marshal Pétain was aware of the group's existence but revealed

nothing of it to the authorities. A plot aimed at seizing power, set for 15-16 November 1937, was broken up by the police, however, and the group's leader, Eugene Deloncle, was arrested. The army remained loyal to the Republic, which still had sufficient vitality to prevail. Blatt's judgment is that this most lethal of right-wing challenges to the regime did in some manner sap the Third Republic's resiliency, helping to bring about the collapse of 1940, but this assertion is not, and perhaps cannot be, demonstrated.

Just as important sectors of public opinion abandoned the regime from within France, its major props of support against Germany failed it from beyond the frontiers: this is, at any rate, the argument of Talbot Imlay, who reappraises French power and policy in Eastern Europe before the war. Unlike Chamberlain, who trumpeted "peace in our time" after Munich, Daladier saw the results of the conference as a disaster. France was fully cognizant of the importance of supporting the Czech army, which had thirty-eight well-trained armed infantry divisions and four mobile divisions along a heavily fortified frontier with Germany. It was estimated that Germany would need from thirty to sixty divisions to defeat the Czechs; if their power disappeared the result would clearly be a major shift in the European balance of power, a point made elsewhere by Williamson Murray.^[1] How, then, did the French allow this to happen? There was, of course, no plan for an offensive to help the beleaguered Czechs from behind the Maginot line, and despite spirited opposition France had to accept a "diktat" from the British at Munich whom they had failed to win over to their point of view. Nor had Paris assured itself of Russian support, and it was materially and psychologically unprepared for war in 1938.

Yet France did decide in favor of resistance in 1939. After Munich, Foreign Minister Georges Bonnet tried to accommodate to German hegemony in Europe and with Daladier's assent followed a policy of "Imperial Retreat;" France would fall back on its empire to assure its defenses. But the Italian clamor for French colonial concessions ended this idea, and even before Hitler seized Prague, which the British had promised not to allow to happen, Daladier had managed to rally most of the Right to the defense of East Europe from further Nazi encroachment. This necessitated a Russian alliance, and Talbot Imlay thinks France did everything to get one, including a late offer to the Russians to restore the Curzon line at the expense of its allies, Poland and Rumania. But the French had no military conception of how the Russians might help materially, and again, the British dragged their feet in the Russian negotiations, a point Imlay overlooks. But for what it is worth his central point is well-taken: the road to war ran as much through Paris as through London in 1939. Whether in fact Whitehall rather followed the French in deciding to resist Hitler than the reverse is more debatable.

This makes Norman Ingram's examination of French pacifism between the wars especially pertinent. If the right and the fascist Cagoule sapped the resiliency of the Republic, so did the pacifism of the left. Ingram identifies three strands of pacifism (liberal, radical, and feminist), although they are not fleshed out in the essay—in particular feminist pacifism is alluded to but not discussed. Pacifism was fueled by four major impulses: the belief that the Versailles treaty was unduly harsh; the sense that France must accommodate Germany; visceral anti-communism; and "ties of friendship" that allowed pacifism through the personal ties of politicians to permeate the entire political system. It was a short jump from guilt over the Versailles treaty to the query, "Why die for Danzig?" which was heard far beyond pacifist circles in September 1939. Yet it still remains surprising and shocking how many French pacifists appeared willing to compromise with, accommodate, and support the Vichy regime. Politicians, perhaps, should not be judged by the company they keep.

It is a leap in any case from French pacifism to Sarah Fishman's study of France's juvenile justice system in terms of French challenges and responses or lack of same during the Third Republic. In the 1930s wayward boys were consigned to *maisons de correction*, which were administered as part of the penal system. These were much criticized, especially by nationalists fearful of France's demographic decline, but also by reformers and muckrakers in the press. The Popular Front tried to separate the *maisons* from the prisons but failed; curiously it was the Vichy regime that accomplished the reform and steered the

system away from the punitive and toward the rehabilitative and therapeutic. A new juvenile code in 1942 created special courts for adolescents and reformed the *maisons*, re-baptizing them as Institutions Publique d'Éducatons Surveillées. The Provisional Government took this reform over as its own in 1945, and further changes over the years brought them more liberal administrations and staffing by professional psychologists, while a system of halfway houses for "juvenile delinquents" took hold in the 1970s. France developed an "intrusively therapeutic" system for adolescents and so joined the modern era with enthusiasm in this respect. This challenge, if it was one, was met.

Herrick Chapman tackles a good deal more than the pivotal role of the Liberation government in establishing the modern juvenile correction system as he casts the Liberation as a crucial moment in the history of French "state-making." But was it state-making or simply the reestablishment of state power on behalf of the Algiers Provisional Government? De Gaulle, for his part, rejected the notion that he was doing anything else but see to the continuity of the legal regime of the Republic which, he argued, passed through the Free French and not Vichy. Hence his refusal to proclaim the Republic from the Hotel de Ville as many urged him to do. The Republic still existed and did not need to be proclaimed anew. De Gaulle set out to reconquer on its behalf the central institutions of the state, the bureaucracy, and the army, and he did this by aggressive action, purges of high officials tainted by the Vichy regime and carefully scripted public ceremonies that made it clear that the new-old order was to be characterized by the return to authority of the traditional bureaucratic organs of the state and not the newly-minted Departmental Committees of Liberation upon which many on the left pinned their hopes for social revolution. But the internal Resistance had long since declared its allegiance to de Gaulle, and he arguably enjoyed the support of 90 percent of the population in 1944, just as Pétain had done in 1940. Chapman ends up retelling a familiar story. The Communists collaborated in doing de Gaulle's bidding; on his return from Moscow Thorez helped dissolve the local militias and absorb their personnel into the regular army, and he helped transfer power from the Committees of Liberation to the Prefects. Stalin wanted no trouble in France, and he didn't get any from the French Communist Party.

Even the newly-minted *Compagnies Républicaines de Sécurité*, more democratic in their recruitment than any previous forces of order, became bastions of state power. To be sure some Departmental Committees of Liberation resisted the transfer of authority, and Prefects had to negotiate their way back into office. But popular seizures of the assets of collaborating firms by workers hoping for the millennium turned into nationalizations that gave further scope to the reassertion and reinforcement of state power, while food riots protesting the severe conditions of scarcity led in turn to further government controls on pricing and distribution through rationing. The government shrank back from the most radical economic measure of all, a recall and forced exchange of over-issued bank notes as advocated by Pierre Mendès France. This would have amounted to the expropriation of illegitimately garnered profits while it strangled inflation and further reinforced the power of the state, but de Gaulle feared the measure would prove too unpopular, and the Communists opposed it for similar demagogic reasons. Nor could the general prevent the reassertion of the traditional political parties that ultimately led to his resignation. Chapman argues that the combination of strong state and weak party system left a "vacuum" that was partially filled by Jean Monnet and the technocrats of the Monnet Plan, while tensions between local authorities and the state remained largely unresolved. But as Alan Milward has shown, not only in France but throughout Europe states after the war played larger roles than ever before in the lives of their citizens through the expanded powers of the welfare state, while these increased responsibilities paradoxically in turn became a force for European integration.

This would logically lead us in turn to William Hitchcock's analysis of European integration as a facet of modernization, but sticking to the order of the essays in the volume requires us to detour first through Paula Prestwich's study of the role of women in the *Mouvement Républicain Populaire* (MRP). The story she has to tell is not much brighter than Irvine's analysis of the lagging salience of the women's suffrage issue. The MRP was a Christian Democratic party oriented to the left, and it promised to give full opportunity for women to work within its structures. Still, of 158 MRP deputies elected in

1946 only nine were women, and by 1951 there were only three left. The party boasted the first woman minister in French history—Germaine Poinso-Chapuis, who was Minister of Health and Education—but her career was abruptly terminated after ten months in office when the Prime Minister, Robert Schuman, issued a decree instituting clerical funding for Catholic schools in her name and over her objections. In the ensuing political storm she was obliged to take the heat for the government and resign. The first woman minister became a sacrificial lamb. Prestwich nevertheless manages to find a positive role for MRP women who advocated innovative policies within party structures. They advocated separate feminine spheres of activity and believed in the physical and psychological differences of women from men. But they believed their femininity had a positive role in politics: women brought "heart" to the solution of social problems; they understood that "peace without love is not peace." MRP women fought for dual roles for women as mothers and wage earners, and they pressed the party to flank the Communists on their left by advocating freedom of choice. They pictured themselves as practical problem-solvers who would clean up politics, "*techniciennes*," and through their *Journées nationales* for women in politics they recruited women and drafted sample legislation. They established a more inclusive and modern approach to the women question in politics, says Prestwich, even as they suffered disillusionment and bitterness as their voices were drowned in the MRP's growing conservatism and decline.

William Hitchcock almost alone in the sequence of essays is able to hit the nail on the head: he manages to deal with a clear case of crisis and response. These are in fact not difficult to find in the history of the Fourth Republic, which arguably was much more successful a regime, despite its brevity, than historians have wanted to recognize. The Republic, much disparaged for its repeated political crises and instability, left France a distinguished technocratic elite presiding over a successful economic planning structure, accomplished a shift in popular attitudes toward modernization (with American influence), presided over the start of a rather extraordinary spurt of economic growth that lasted for 30 years, and pursued an impressive if not imposing number of innovative and aggressive and successful policies summed up in the Monnet Plan for economic development, the Schuman Plan for a European coal and steel community, and the European Economic Community, the ancestor of today's robust European Union.

Hitchcock examines a particular crisis, Suez, and its role in the launching of the Common Market, and I want to say at the outset his findings warm my heart since they correspond to the conclusion I came to independently in my recent book.^[2] The Suez crisis, in which France and Britain jointly launched a failed military invasion designed to retake the canal that the Egyptian dictator Gamal Abdul Nasser had recently nationalized, was the catalyst for the resolution of Franco-German differences that allowed the EEC negotiations to go forward toward the Treaty of Rome. This thesis is, of course, original for neither of us: it was enunciated by Pierre Guillen at a colloquium in 1987 on the re-launching of Europe, and it was criticized at once by former French Foreign Minister Christian Pineau on the same occasion.^[3] Nor does Hitchcock mean to imply in supporting Guillen that Guy Mollet was not a good European or that France did not pursue European integration for the usually cited reason: containing Germany by anchoring it in a European structure, a motive that still underlies Franco-German policy today. France at first was more interested in Euratom, the European Atomic Energy Pool idea, through which it hoped to finance its own uranium enrichment plant. But economic planners in France were coming around to the idea that the French economy needed to be export-oriented and competitive to grow, which made the EEC idea more attractive.

However, negotiations were hung up in September 1956 over French demands that Euratom not be allowed to constrain French plans to develop the atomic bomb, that France enjoy safeguards against any shock the treaty might cause its economy, and, most interestingly from my point of view, that French Africa be included in the Common Market which would establish a fund for the economic and social development of the French empire. The French were pursuing the myth of Eurafrique here (my emphasis here rather than Hitchcock's), of which Algeria was to be the linchpin and Paris the capitol. In France, Suez was really about Nasser's support for the Algerian rebellion, and the EEC was meant to

secure European investment to assist French imperial motives. Of course, the U.S. forced a halt to British-French operations before they could succeed, although the Israelis, with whom the French and British had conspired, managed to get hold of the Sinai desert, and the British repudiated their role and reverted to a policy of acting as the U.S. junior partner, a policy that Tony Blair indefatigably pursues even today. Adenauer, however, was furious at American interference and was in Paris just as word of the American veto on the Franco-British operations took place. At once the sticking points in the EEC negotiations were overcome, with Germany promising to provide the bulk of a projected \$581 million fund for French African development. Suez, Hitchcock says rightly, did not create EEC, but it provided the conditions under which agreement could take place: the EEC was pursued in France as a means of opposing American influence in Europe in the long run. The French response to the crisis of Suez in that same long run, Hitchcock might have noted, was the foreign policy of Gaullism. Be that as it may, he says, crisis as a tool for governance (if that is what it was) failed the Fourth Republic in May 1958.

The volume ends with two articles on the agony of Algeria. Martin Alexander reprises the lament for France's "lost soldiers." For historians, this term has come to mean that France's army was dispirited and demoralized following the defeats of 1940 and Indochina, and the army suspected that the Republic would "betray" it once again by negotiating a cowardly peace in Algeria. Curiously, de Gaulle had a different explanation at the time for the army's disobedience: he blamed NATO and the fact that French troops had been put under an integrated command, which caused them to lose sight of their primary duty to defend their homeland. Be this as it may, Alexander sets out to discover just who were the real "lost soldiers," for ultimately 2.5 million French served in Algeria, the vast majority conscripts and reservists, and these were hardly "lost." In fact, they wanted nothing more than to return home. The lost soldiers were the elite formations of warrior professionals who had won their spurs in Indochina and developed the doctrine of *guerre révolutionnaire* in Algeria; they took control of the war in 1959-60 after de Gaulle came to power and arguably won it on the ground. When de Gaulle nevertheless opted for negotiations under the impact of internal opposition to the war and foreign, in the main American, pressure, they mounted a die-hard opposition to him that finally sputtered out in the dramatic Algiers insurrection of April 1961. Alexander compares them to abandoned children whose anti-social traits they seemed to incarnate. He seems to me on more solid ground citing their fierce loyalty to the harkis, the Algerians who fought for France and whose interests the French state, in leaving Algeria, was to shamefully betray, not to mention the settlers, all of whom fled to France, abandoning their homes and birthplaces when Algeria became independent.

But the reality of Algeria was that it was a jail for the conscripts who rallied to de Gaulle and disobeyed their rebellious officers in April 1961. De Gaulle took over a disintegrated, unreliable army that he mastered by returning it to Europe, disengaging it from NATO, and giving it nuclear weapons. Only in this way was the army able to overcome its malaise and de Gaulle able to rid himself of the Algerian albatross, which he came to see was a drag on his foreign policy ambitions. Alexander is right to put de Gaulle's shift in strategy to ending the war in late 1960-early 1961. He ignores how much de Gaulle's vain prior effort to hold Algeria by first coming to power with the support of France's "lost soldiers" and then giving them free rein to pillage and destroy the nation in their effort to win the war cost in terms of lives and suffering. Algeria is still paying the price for that today, if France has gone on to bigger and better things.

No surprise then, as Neil MacMaster and Jim House show, that France has twice "massacred" the Algerian protesters against the war, once on 17 October 1961 and a second time by effacing the memory of that event. "We now know," thanks to released archives and film footage, that over 50 Algerians died during that ugly night, while thousands were savagely beaten while under mass arrest in Paris's sports stadia. France, however, and the left rather remembered the eight Communist militants who were crushed by the police trying to escape their blows at the blocked entrance at Metro Charonne on 8 February 1962. The latter were white, of course, and the former part of the still almost invisible emigration of racially stereotyped inhabitants of the ghettos or "bidonvilles" of Paris's industrial

suburbs. When Algerians took to the streets the French police, unleashed by the likes of Maurice Papon, then Paris Prefect of Police, who we also "now know" deported innocent Jews to Germany during the war, took their revenge on innocent Arab demonstrators for the battle of Algiers. But it was a difference in degree, not in kind. Paris police had been harassing and beating Arabs for many years, and Papon honed his sharp counter-terror tactics in Morocco before he arrived in Paris.

MacMaster and House put the massacre in the context of the peace negotiations then in progress: the talks had been halted during the summer of 1961 but resumed on October 18 after de Gaulle conceded that the Sahara was indeed part of Algeria. De Gaulle wanted, following this concession, to negotiate from strength, in fact to demonstrate unmitigated harshness. Papon had put a curfew on Algerians in Paris while the radicalized FLN wanted to break the curfew as a demonstration of their hold over the Arab masses in Algeria and the metropole. Papon did not plan the massacres: he rather condoned a police riot, leaving the racist police to act with impunity. After the confrontation the government seized newspaper accounts and film footage and put out the word that only two people had died. For less obvious reasons that MacMaster and House do not make clear, the FLN colluded in the cover-up, but the popular memory of the massacre remains alive among the immigrants and their children, and the issue surfaced in the 1980s and became a weapon in anti-racist struggles of the very recent past. Thus does history live and the memory of the forgotten, or as Freud put it "suppressed" ugliness of the past, resurface to plague us anew.

In all one would have to conclude, based on the essays of this volume, that the story of the modernization of France and its successful meeting of its crises and challenges lies elsewhere, much of it perhaps in the history of the Fifth Republic with which the volume does not deal. The essays reward the reader, but whether they are suitable as companion pieces to a text on modern French history is debatable, since many of them seem marginal to what most instructors might consider questions of central concern to undergraduates. Only aspects of the Popular Front, Vichy, women's history, and the Algerian war are dealt with in the volume: the essays on the Liberation and the Fourth Republic alone appear to tackle central questions head on. As free-standing articles in journals one suspects that some of the pieces in this collection might have stood a better chance of getting the readership they deserve.

NOTES

[1] Williamson Murray, *The Change in the European Balance of Power 1938-39: The Path to Ruin* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984).

[2] Irwin M. Wall, *France, the United States, and the Algerian War* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

[3] Pierre Guillen, "La France et la négociation des Traités de Rome," in Enrico Serra, ed., *Il relancio dell'Europa et i Trattati di Roma* (Brussels and Milan: A. Giufré, 1989).

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(en) Joel Blatt, « The Cagoule Plot, 1936-1937 », dans Kenneth Mouré et Martin S. Alexander (dir.), *Crisis and Renewal in France, 1918-1962*, New York, Berghahn books, 2002, VII-312 p. (ISBN 1-57181-146-X , présentation en ligne [archive]), p. 86-104. Although it was widely believed at the time that communists had set the bombs, the government took no official action against the French Communist Party, to the disappointment of Cagoulards; the Cagoule tried to infiltrate the International Brigades for the same purpose. <https://www.dissertationsenligne.com/Religion-et-Spiritualité/Tpe-1Es/12658.html> Par Roi 16 Janvier 2012 1 775 Mots (8 Pages) Dissertations on Line.