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Robert Gildea, *Fighters in the Shadows. A New History of the French Resistance*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016. xiv + 594 pp. \$35.00 U.S. (hb). ISBN 9780674286108.

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This new history of the French Resistance is a highly informative and readable synthesis of existing scholarship. It also enhances the subjective dimension of this complex and conflicted story by drawing on testimonies collected since the Second World War. Robert Gildea brings from the shadows stories that complement and contradict the Gaullist myth of a self-liberating "eternal France" that triumphed over the "handful of scoundrels," to borrow de Gaulle's famous words, who chose the road of collaboration. The resisters here are a minority, but one from a rainbow of different milieux.

Hence, we learn of the diverse and usually tragic experiences of communists and Action française supporters, Zionists, women and foreign fighters, notably veterans of the Spanish Civil War. Their motivations are diverse—from anti-German patriotism to anti-Fascism to a desperate struggle against the extermination of one's own people, the "war within the war"—and their entry into the shadows comes at different times and in different circumstances. Occasionally, contingency plays a role: it is public humiliation by a German officer that triggers the young Madeleine Riffaud's conversion to the role of killer-poetess. We are also given a sense of the role of the various centres of this disparate and fractious underground movement. Paris, Lyons and the Vercors plateau are well-entrenched in Resistance memory, but Gildea reminds us of the importance of Toulouse, not only for its "red" resisters (Spanish and German, as well as French), who threatened to take power at the Liberation, but also for the Jewish Army, which answered only to the Haganah.

There are moments when the narrative seems to lurch from one fascinating and instructive individual story to another, but, overall, Gildea fluently navigates murky episodes of this story, notably the difficult mission of Jean Moulin to unite the various factions of the internal resistance, the ambiguous position of the United States vis-à-vis Vichy—it loathed De Gaulle and kept an ambassador in Vichy till late in the day—then the crucial power-plays in the "hinge" of North Africa.

Liberation is shown to be a fraught affair which quickly led to disillusionment for some, while returning deportees tried to rebuild their lives in a nation which had little place for it in its rapidly mythologised recent history. Spanish Republicans saw their decisive contribution ignored in a country that, in the context of the Cold War, soon cuddled up to Franco. Romanian, Czech and Polish communists who returned to the new eastern bloc were considered with suspicion by their Muscovite masters, and sometimes executed. Back in France, those communists, like Charles Tillon, who started resisting in spite of the Nazi-Soviet pact were an embarrassing irritant for PCF leaders who towed the Comintern line.

Important attention is also given to the aftermath of the Resistance and the battle for its soul, which continues to this day. The Pantheonisation of Moulin, in 1964, could be seen as the apogee of the

unifying Gaullist myth, which had been badly tested during the Algerian War, when former resisters divided into patriotic partisans of French Algeria and opponents of methods, notably torture, that were redolent of the dark years. Soon afterwards, the contestation, then death of De Gaulle, plus the waning influence of the French Communist Party, encouraged challenges to the "Resistantist myth" and the emergence of other stories, notably those of Jews and women. It is telling that the *Compagnie de la Libération*, founded by De Gaulle in 1940, counted only 5 percent foreigners in its membership and a stunning 0.6 percent women. Spaces eventually emerged for alternative voices, notably those who had spilt the blood of others. The role of anti-communism is also shown to be influential in revisionist approaches to the history of the Resistance, and could be said to persist to this day: the Pantheonisation of four resisters in 2015 was a triumph for gender parity, but still shut the door on PCF martyrs.

Another important contribution of this book is that it reminds us we are dealing, above all, with fighters. There has been a recent tendency to emphasise the Holocaust, and to transform Jews into victims and resistance into a humanitarian narrative of rescue. Instead, the individual stories recounted here show resisters, many of whom were Jewish (although they often did not define themselves as this at the time), taking the battle to the Nazis and their collaborators, and all too often losing their lives. Gildea also brings from the shadows the role of *le peuple*, notably in the Liberation of Paris. Just as the regular French Army, shamefully following the diktats of the US ally, applied *blanchiment* to its troops, so De Gaulle dismissed the role of predominantly working-class FFIs in the insurrectionary wave of late summer 1944.

Methodologically, Gildea's book reflects changes in the way the French Resistance has been remembered and historicised. At first, sensitive archival sources were very difficult to access, while the Committee for the History of the Second World War gathered oral testimonies which tended only to provide syntheses that confirmed the official narrative. This provoked a backlash, led notably by Frederic Bédarida and Daniel Cordier (Moulin's radio operator), which insisted on the primacy of written archival sources, as they slowly became available. However, outside the academy and outside the "royal road" of Resistantist resistance emerged new testimonies and memoirs, notably those by children of resisters delving into and coming to terms with their parents' past. Even Daniel Cordier was led to publish his own memoirs, remarking: "If a diary is by nature limited, it is nevertheless incomparable: it is a snapshot of the past that brings to life lost passions" (15).

Gildea's work is squarely based on testimony. One might say that such insistence on the paramount importance of individual testimonies should be treated with caution: his own book shows how partial and contentious these narratives can be, notably on the Moulin affair and the liberation of Paris. What is more, his belief that the story of the French Resistance is central to French identity probably holds less true than at any time since 1944. What resonance does Guy Môquet's last letter to his parents really have on French schoolchildren in a multicultural France under a state of emergency in the early twenty-first century, when disinformation is rife on the internet? But this scholarly and absorbing text will certainly be a key reference for all those interested in the "fighters in the shadows."

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