



National Regeneration in Vichy France: Ideas and Policies, 1930–1944

Caroline Campbell

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exploring the trajectories of diasporic artists from the perspective of cultural organisations in the North. It also balances this by examining how voluntary organisations in the South work together with those from the North in a manner that challenges the notion that such interactions generally involve the North helping the South.

Due to the scope of their work, Kiwan and Meinhof's book is likely to be of interest to ethnomusicologists and also those who study diasporic issues in a French and Francophone context, as well as perhaps in more general terms. It will be interesting to see how it influences future approaches to the study of how African artists participate in and interact with transnational networks.

JONATHAN ERVINE

Bangor University

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National Regeneration in Vichy France: Ideas and Policies, 1930–1944

DEBBIE LACKERSTEIN

Farnham and Burlington Vermont, Ashgate Publishing, 2012

267 pages, \$124.95, ISBN: 978-0-7546-6721-6

In this intellectual history of the Vichy government's National Revolution, Debbie Lackerstein emphasizes the continuities in French political culture during the 1930s and 1940s and the competing ideas for reform proposed by those who were disillusioned with the Third Republic. As the first study along these lines, Lackerstein seeks to fill a gap in the historiography on Vichy by analyzing the "origins and aims"

of the National Revolution "as a whole, rather than a collection of parts (4)." Lackerstein's analysis is primarily based upon published sources written by a range of reformists who believed that France was crippled by decadence and in desperate need of regeneration. These included left-leaning nonconformists disillusioned with republican materialism and rationalism like the leaders of *Ordre Nouveau*, Robert Aron and Arnaud Dandieu, fascist political groups intent on revolution such as Jacques Doriot's *Parti Populaire Française*, individuals torn between fascism and other forms of radical action such as Thierry Maulnier, leading collaborationists like Marcel Déat, and a vitriolic press, best represented by Alphonse de Châteaubriant's pro-Nazi *La Gerbe*. These sources were replete with a striking set of catchwords that revealed the mindset of a significant segment of the French population. Many believed that France had fallen into "decadence" (although they differed on what constituted decadence) and that national regeneration needed to proceed along the lines of "order," "action," "realism," and creating and sustaining "the New Man." While these catchwords were at the heart of the National Revolution, men from the traditional, authoritarian, and fascist right used them so often that the meanings shifted according to context. Thus, the National Revolution was characterized by incoherence and competing agendas – especially between conservatives in Vichy and collaborationists in Paris – which contributed its failure.

Lackerstein organizes her study with chapters on how the five catchwords were used in the 1930s and during Vichy. This thematic organization emphasizes how different groups conceived of and sought

to use order, action, and realism as sources of national regeneration. In terms of policy, Lackerstein contends that Vichy leaders sought to end decadence and bring about regeneration by creating “the New Man” through educational and youth programs such as the compulsory *Chantiers de la Jeunesse* and the leadership school at Uriage. Vichy not only focused on creating “the New Man” at the expense “the New Woman,” but sought to defend him by excluding anti-French forces, especially Jews, from the national community. Readers interested in the key role that women played in shaping these debates over decadence and regeneration will need to look elsewhere, towards scholarship on the millions of women who were concerned about these same issues and thus joined social Catholic groups and far right leagues. Overall, this book is a valuable contribution to the growing literature on French political culture in the 1930s and 1940s. The writing is clear and the inclusion of useful biographical and historiographical background in the footnotes make the book accessible to non-experts and experts alike.

CAROLINE CAMPBELL

University of North Dakota

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Violette Nozière: A Story of Murder in 1930s Paris

SARAH MAZA

Berkeley, University of California Press, 2011
352 pages, \$55.00, ISBN: 978 0520260702

In Paris late in the evening of 21 August 1933 in a working-class neighbourhood

of the 12th *arrondissement*, a quiet but horrendous crime was executed. Eighteen-year-old Violette Nozière had administered, under the guise of medication, strong doses of poison to her parents and then departed to spend the night in a mundane hotel in the Latin Quarter. She returned home not long after midnight on 23 August to release gas from the apartment’s stove and announce her parents’ suicides to neighbours before slipping away again into the night.

These events marked the critical acts in what would spin out a web of intrigue and speculation about the imprudent directions taken by an apparently fashionable young woman. Violette’s father died, but her mother survived to play a key perverse role in the judicial cases which followed and later in the reconstruction of her daughter’s life. Had the teenage Violette fallen into the practice of plying sexual favours in an attempt to rise above her station in life? Was she driven to depravity and then revenge by overbearing parental pressures which may have strayed beyond the pale, into the realm of incestuous relations?

Sarah Maza’s well-researched exposition of this scandalous case is both intriguing and captivating. The overall story of the family is impressively tragic. Germaine and Baptiste Nozière escaped from France *profonde* for an aspiring middle-class family existence in Paris. Baptiste through diligence and a regimented work ethic rose through the ranks to become a well-respected locomotive engineer on the Paris-Lyon-Marseille line. He held on to his working-class background in part by maintaining membership in the Communist CGTU trade union. Germaine Hèzard, a few years