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To be a Jew and Champion in Vichy's France: Alfred Nakache – From the Swimming Pool to the Nazi Camps (1940–44)

Doriane Gomet and Thierry Terret

Set against the background of France's cultural history during the Second World War, this biographical study concerns Alfred Nakache, a swimming champion of Jewish origin. Through his conditions of existence, the study amply demonstrates the exclusion, followed by the extermination, of Jews in France. At a time when the 'Révolution Nationale' (National Revolution) had been established as political dogma, it also demonstrates the bipolarity of the swimmer's identity, as both an emblem standing for the 'New Man' in the eyes of the 'Commissariat Général à l'Éducation Générale et aux Sports (CGEGS)' (commission for general education and sport) and a member of an inferior race for the Nazi occupiers and the 'Commissariat Général aux Questions Juives (CGQJ)' (administrative body concerned with French policy towards Jews). Although temporarily protected by his rank as an athlete and his network of contacts, the hardening of German policies, together with widespread collaboration during 1943, led the leading actors of the sport world to curtail his sport achievements, thus marking the beginning of progressive anonymization which, in turn, finally ended in his deportation in January 1944.

Etre juif et champion dans la France de Vichy: Alfred Nakache – de la piscine aux camps Nazis (1940–1944)

Ancrée dans une histoire culturelle de la France durant la Seconde Guerre mondiale, cette étude biographique porte sur Alfred Nakache, champion de natation d'origine juive. Elle met en exergue, à travers ses conditions d'existence, l'exclusion puis l'extermination des Juifs de France. Mais, à une époque où la Révolution Nationale est érigée comme dogme politique, elle porte aussi sur la bipolarité de l'identité du nageur, à la fois emblème de l'homme nouveau pour le Commissariat Général à l'Éducation Générale et

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aux Sports, et membre d'une sous race pour l'Occupant nazi et le CGQJ. Protégé un temps par son statut d'athlète et son réseau de relation, le durcissement de la politique allemande doublé d'une radicalisation de la collaboration courant 1943 conduit les principaux acteurs de la sphère sportive à empêcher la poursuite de ses exploits sportifs, point de départ de son anonymisation progressive, ce qui aboutit à sa déportation en janvier 1944.

Ser judío y campeón en la Francia de Vichy: Alfred Nakache, de la piscina al campo de concentración nazi (1940–1944)

Este estudio biográfico, situado en el contexto de la historia cultural de Francia durante la Segunda Guerra Mundial, se centra en la figura de Alfred Nakache, un campeón de natación de origen judío. A través de los avatares de su existencia, el estudio prueba ampliamente la exclusión, seguida por el exterminio, de los judíos en Francia. En una época en que la Révolution Nationale había sido establecida como dogma político, también demuestra la bipolaridad de la identidad del nadador, como emblema del "Nuevo Hombre" a los ojos del Commissariat Général à l'Education Générale et aux Sports (CGEGS), pero también como miembro de una raza inferior para los ocupantes nazis y para el Commissariat Général aux Questions Juives (CGQJ). A pesar de que estuvo temporalmente protegido por su rango de atleta y por su red de contactos, el endurecimiento de las políticas de los alemanes, junto con la expansión del colaboracionismo durante 1943, llevaron a los principales actores del mundo del deporte a restringir sus actuaciones deportivas, condenándolo así a un progresivo anonimato que acabaría desembocando en su deportación en enero de 1944.

Jude und Sieger sein in Vichy-Frankreich: Alfred Nakache—Vom Schwimmbad in die Nazilager (1940–44)

Vor dem Hintergrund der französischen Kulturgeschichte während des Zweiten Weltkrieges befasst sich diese biographische Studie mit Alfred Nakache, einem erfolgreichen Schwimmer jüdischer Herkunft. Anhand der Entwicklungen seines Lebens erläutert die Studie umfassend den Ausschluss, gefolgt von der Vernichtung der Juden in Frankreich. Zu einer Zeit als die „Révolution Nationale“ (Nationale Revolution) als politisches Dogma etabliert war, wird auch die Bipolarität der Identität des Schwimmers veranschaulicht, sowohl als Sinnbild für den „Neuen Mann“ in den Augen des „Commissariat Général à l'Education Générale et aux Sports (CGEGS)“ (Ausschuss für allgemeine Erziehung und Sport) und als Mitglied einer aus nationalsozialistischer Sicht unterlegenen Rasse und dem „Commissariat Général aux Questions Juives (CGQJ)“ (Verwaltungsbehörde zur französischen Politik gegenüber Juden). Obwohl er zeitweise durch seinen Rang als Athlet und durch das Netzwerk seiner Kontakte geschützt war, führte die Verschärfung der deutschen Politik zusammen mit weitläufiger Kollaboration dazu, dass die führenden Akteure des weltweiten Sports seine sportlichen Errungenschaften herabsetzten, was gleichsam der Beginn der schrittweisen Anonymisierung war, die schließlich in seiner Deportation im Januar 1944 endete.

成为维希时期法国的犹太人和冠军：阿尔弗雷德·纳卡车—从游泳池到纳粹集中营（1940-44）

蒂埃里·泰瑞特

这个传记式研究以第二次世界大战期间的法国文化史为背景，主要关注一个叫做Alfred Nakache的犹太血统的游泳冠军。通过对他的生活状况的考察，这个研究充分揭示了对法国犹太人惨无人道的隔离与杀戮。在“国民革命”被视为政治教条的时期，它显示了游泳运动员身份的两极化，他既是教育与体育委员会眼中的“新人”的象征，又是纳粹统治者和法国对犹政策管理部门眼中的劣等种族中的一员。虽然Alfred Nakache因他的运动成绩和人际关系而受到了暂时的庇护，但是由于德国政策的日益严苛以及1943年期间的普遍通敌情形，导致体育界的领导人士设法阻止他的运动成绩上升，进而让他的名气逐步缩减，并最终在1944年1月将他驱逐出境。

A stunned France underwent unprecedented political reorganization in the aftermath of the blitzkrieg. [1] The Vichy Government was built upon the ashes of the infamous Third Republic which was accused of pushing the country into the abyss. Driven by a powerful desire to fight the multifaceted decadence which had led to defeat, Maréchal Petain, the French Head of State from 11 July 1940 onwards, quickly traced the general contours of a new policy which would go down in history as '*Révolution Nationale*'. [2] While no doctrine was clearly set up, numerous were the laws and decisions taken in order to fight all forms of moral decay and thus to re-establish law and order, discipline and morale. They focused on the education system and policy concerning families, as well as on sport and physical education. [3] Going further than these legislative measures, the Vichy regime also designated those responsible for this shameful defeat. Jews, Protestants, Freemasons and communists were thus rapidly stigmatized as domestic enemies.

Alfred Nakache belonged to the heterogeneous Jewish community of around 330,000 people living in France before the war. [4] Born on 18 November 1915 into a traditional and pro-sports family of Constantine origin, his swimming successes led him to live in Paris from 1934 onwards. French champion for the first time in July 1935 and member of the French Olympic Games' team in 1936, Alfred Nakache belonged to the French swimming elite of the interwar period. Although his successes in breaststroke under Vichy at the beginning of World War II and his world record in 1942 made him a sporting hero and an emblem of the *Révolution Nationale*'s 'New Man', his Jewish confession took another direction and he was classified as being irremediably part of the Maurassien anti-France movement. [5]

The works of Mangán, Eisen and Marten have already amply characterized the place of Jewish athletes within Nazi ideology. [6] The approach proposed here is complementary in two ways. First, it is based on biographical work as defined by Jaques Le Goff. [7] Second, it examines the case of France, where the question of relationship between Jews and sport in a totalitarian context is totally absent from historiography. More specifically, it is about understanding the consequences of

political transformation in France under Vichy for social definition of individual identity and permeability within sport circles. In this perspective, the conceptual framework established by Max Weber [8] concerning the sociology of power offers a solid basis for the understanding of the mechanisms which redefine Alfred Nakache's identity according to categorization/identification processes. The works of Hilberg, Marrus and Paxton, Kaspi and Poznanski offer a decisive, analytic framework concerning the evolution of the situation of Jews in France. [9] Those of Bernett demonstrate the history of Jewish sport under the Third Reich while those of Gay-Lescot explore French sport policies under Vichy. [10] This historical work is essentially supported by three different sources: archives, the press and oral depositions. [11]

Alfred Nakache – From Anti-Semite Measures to Resistance Movements

As well as developing a sport career, largely aided by his parents [12] who made it possible for him to join the Racing Club of Paris in 1935, Alfred Nakache continued studying during the interwar period in order to become a physical education teacher, and came fifth at the end of the first part of his teaching studies in 1939. [13] When war was declared, he was affected to the 201st battalion of the Ain Ornat in Setif on 8 September 1939. [14] Demobilized on 26 July 1940, he came back to a country shocked by defeat, with its capital under German occupation. [15] Nevertheless, no immediate repercussions were apparent in his daily life at the beginning of September. He resumed his sport, scholastic and professional activities and began the second part of his physical education studies at the 'Ecole Nationale d'Education Physique (ENEP)' (French state school for training sports teachers) while working at the *Janson de Sailly* high school.

However, the policies implemented by the Vichy government quickly became tainted by anti-Semitism. From the summer of 1940 onwards, Jews became victims of discriminatory measures coming from both French laws and German measures in vigour on German soil, which were transferred to France. [16] The first German order concerning Jews was thus published on 27 September 1940. [17] Apart from the fact that it defined what a Jew was and obliged a census of their presence in the occupied zone, it also forbade any Jew who crossed the demarcation line from returning to the occupied zone. These measures were associated with other texts issued by Vichy. In particular, the end of August saw the abolition of the Marchandau law which forbade racist and anti-Semitic attacks in the press. [18] The law on Jewish Status of 3 October 1941 established a stricter definition than that of the German order. It also limited Jews' access to civil service professions, including teaching, and gave those already employed two months to leave their post. [19] Alfred Nakache was thus obliged to resign from his job at *Janson de Sailly*, as were 2911 colleagues in the France's state education system. [20] During the two-month waiting period allowed by the new legislation, he continued his studies at ENEP, itself undergoing transformation, which allowed him to validate a part of his studies.

[21] As far as the census of Jews in Paris was concerned, it would seem that he was not affected as no trace of his name is to be found in what is commonly called today the 'fichier juif' (Jewish file). [22] These emerging difficulties forced him, along with numerous other Jews, to cross the demarcation line in December 1940 to live in the non-occupied zone. [23] Arriving in a new town was, for many emigrants, a real ordeal. [24] The status of 'refugee' and 'Jew' hindered access to decent housing and paid work, and this was exacerbated by the fact that measures excluding Jews from public sector work and of aryanization were also in vigour in the southern zone. Alfred Nakache succeeded in escaping from the torments of this forced desocialization. He had many contacts in Toulouse, the south-western town he had chosen, and the local swimming club, the DTOEC (Dauphins du Toulouse Olympique Employés Club), welcomed him 'warmly'. [25] As well as giving him the opportunity to train, the club's support also extended to his professional life, as was proved by the fact that he could use, by courtesy of Monsieur Morin, member of the DTOEC, a gymnasium called 'Académie' to work as a physical education teacher. [26] As demonstrated by his particular case, social reinsertion, even though depending on numerous factors, [27] was also considerably facilitated if one could count on a network of pre-war relations. Whereas anti-Semitic policies reached a new level of persecution in 1941 with the promulgation of a new Jewish status and a new census, Alfred Nakache's lifestyle did not deteriorate during these first years. [28] He effectively benefited from a 'niche de protection', or protective umbrella, within a social refuge, to use the terms of Renée Polonski. [29]

Even if, according to his brother Robert Nakache, he felt safe in Toulouse, this did not stop him from taking part in the fight against the occupier in two very different ways. [30] At a time when the resistance in France was in its early stages, [31] the southern zone saw the development of Jewish networks such as the 'Armée Juive' (AJ) (Jewish Army), led by David Knout, Abraham Polonski and Lucien Lublin and headquartered, as it so happens, in Toulouse. [32] Alfred Nakache supported this organization in its preparation of young future combatants. The movement advocated Jewish self-defence and, from January 1942 on, it recruited young people with a view to placing them in combat units. Alfred Nakache participated in the physical and military preparation programme that was introduced by organizing physical education training sessions. Abraham Polonski reveals Nakache's presence in an account given to Annie Latour: 'There was a man called Nakache, a well-known sportsman in France at the time, and he trained the first of these groups'. [33] Simon Cohen, a further member of the group, gave more precise details concerning the swimmer's activities:

I have been instructed to go to rue du Languedoc, to the Academy of the famous champion Albert Nacache (...) We will dress in light clothing and, with him in charge, do one hour of exercises and games etc... [34]

Albert Cohen also shed more light on the level of Nakache's involvement. 'Nakache was a sympathiser, but never a member of the AJ'. His involvement took a further form

as member of another resistance group. Joining up with his swimmer friend Roger Foucher-Créteau in a small resistance group called '*Les légions françaises Anti-Axe*', Alfred Nakache thus became involved in anti-Nazi propaganda, in particular by distributing tracts in public places. [35] The account of Rachel Cheigam, an active member of this group, and her deportation file confirmed these activities. [36] More specifically, her file contained a request for the status of '*deported member of the Resistance*' in which can be found a letter by Roger Foucher-Créteau, dated 13 January 1947, which states:

Alfred Nakache entered the Resistance in 1941 and belonged to the Anti-Axis network as member n° 6. I myself was at the head of this network and I worked with Nakache and other members of the Toulouse network on numerous assignments.

Alfred Nakache, Consummate Athlete and Model for Sports Institutions and the Media

Now living in Toulouse, Alfred Nakache used the winter period to train intensively, particularly in breaststroke, under the supervision of Alban Minville. [37] Results were quick in coming: after having beaten the European 100 m breaststroke record held by the German Balke, he broke the French 200 m record on 27 June 1941 and the following weekend, in Marseille, he carried off the world 200 breaststroke record in 2'36'' 8/10. The record was confirmed by the Fédération Française de Natation (French Swimming Federation) a few months later. [38] In one-and-a-half years Alfred Nakache thus found himself back among France's elite titleholders and reconquered his pre-war status of champion. While anti-Semite policies continued to be implemented in numerous areas of French life, policies which could have compromised his chances of participating in the French Championships if they were to take place in the occupied zone, he became, on the contrary, a celebrated athlete and a popular hero in sporting circles, as demonstrated in the French sports press and particularly in the daily *L'Auto*, despite its being under German control. [39] As soon as he returned to serious competition, the media constantly praised the champion and related each of his performances. Journalists emphasized his qualities as '*consummate athlete*', his physical capacity and moral strength. Via the journalist V. Kedroff, *L'Auto* spoke of Nakache's '*combativity*' and referred to him as '*a world record holder who is as determined and courageous as can be*'. [40] The same themes were taken up by *Le miroir des sports* in July 1941, backed up by photos of the champion: '*his strong muscles and invincible energy allow him to perform such athletic swimming*'. [41]

What happened to Nakache in France during the first phase of the occupation differed in every way from what was in store for German Jewish athletes after Hitler came to power. Convinced of the existence of a superior race – the Aryan race – Hitler looked for ways of creating the conditions for its expansion and domination. Using old texts such as those of Joseph Arthur Gobineau and Houston Chamberlain, or the famous '*Protocol of the Elders of Zion*', he was moreover convinced that Jews

were not only an anti-race, but also constituted an evil force and a veritable threat to Aryans. [42] The fight against all things Jewish began as soon as he was appointed Reich Chancellor, as shown by the publication of a definition of 'Jew' and their exclusion from the civil service following the decree of 7 April 1933. [43] Reserved for dignified representatives of the Aryan race, sport became, in this context, a veritable training tool working for the Nazi myth.[44] From April 1933 on, German sports clubs were forbidden to Jews and Jewish clubs were permanently stopped as from 1938. [45] Known Jewish sports champions from the Weimar era lost, moreover, all legitimacy and were no longer considered for national selections, as was clearly illustrated by the Berlin Olympic Games. [46]

The ideological differences between French sport instances and those of the Third Reich explain, at least partially, the difference in status between the French champion Nakache and the German Jewish champions. The 'Commissariat Général à l'Éducation Générale et Sportive', run by the tennis player Jean Borotra, aimed in particular to develop sport for the physical and mental benefits that would be gained by the population within the context of the Révolution Nationale. [47] Propaganda campaigns were carried out to this effect, and sport heroes were placed in the limelight. Seen as a consummate athlete, Alfred Nakache, in the same way as the great champions of other disciplines, became henceforth a symbol of '*health, courage and discipline*' [48] for the young and a model for the '*imperial policy*' [49] being implemented by the 'Commissariat Général'. His talent and performances were the subject of eulogistic articles in the 'Commissariat's' official publications from summer 1941 on. For example, his photo was to be found on the front page of the paper *Tous les Sports* on 12 July 1941, together with details of his sporting achievements. [50]

The considerable support lent by Emile-Georges Drigny to Alfred Nakache must also be taken into consideration. [51] Drigny held a number of responsibilities in the brand-new organisation of sport in France and was influential in all spheres of the 'Commissariat's' action: President of the French Federation of Swimming from 19 December 1941 thanks to Jean Borotra, he also presided over the 'Syndicat National de la Presse Sportive' (French national syndicate for the sport press), was editor-in-chief of the bi-weekly *Tous les Sports*, which came out for the first time on 5 July 1941, member of the 'Comité National des Sports (CNS)' (French national sports committee) from 1940 and finally a member of the management committee of the CGEGS's sports equipment section (more precisely, he was head of mission for actions involving Information-Press-Propaganda). [52] It is thus clear that Drigny, aided by his different institutional functions, reinforced the legitimacy of Alfred Nakache as a model for the Révolution Nationale at a time when he could not have been unaware of the anti-Semitic policies which were beginning to multiply. [53]

'Our champion Nakache has once again demonstrated that his fighting spirit, his will to win, could overcome not only youth, but also the lack of formal style which characterises its swimming, and he carried off the day with his customary ardour,

beating his younger and less experienced rivals who were much less equipped in terms of tenacity, confidence and endurance'. [54]

It was true that the two men had known each other very well since the interwar period. They experienced the 1936 Olympic Games together – Drigny as an official and Nakache as a member of the French 4 × 200 relay team which finished fourth, ahead of the German team. [55] As early as 1941, however, the stance taken by the sporting authorities, articles in the sport press and Alfred Nakache's popularity began to concern French anti-Semitic papers such as *Le Pilon*:

'And what about this formidable, marvellous, extraordinary swimmer, this supernatural man, this half-god with frizzy hair and wide nostrils, as they like to describe him in a large Parisian daily? This is the Jew Artem Nakeche, member of the Zionist association Maccabih, laureate of Jewish Olympics'. [56]

The will to stigmatize the 'racial' origins of Alfred Nakeche before the public was evident here. This portrait sets him apart, indubitably and in cynical fashion, from the Aryan ideal that sport was supposed to help to create in order to, on the contrary, reaffirm the racist theories of A. Gobineau. [57]

The Illusion of an Unchanged Situation During the Implementation of the Final Solution

The resolution of the Jewish problem was one of the main thrusts of Hitler's policies. After having imagined that it could be done through emigration, the possibility of a more radical solution was considered during the year 1941. The Wannsee conference of 20 January 1942 marked a turning point and the beginning of the inexorable process of Jew elimination in Europe. [58] Presided by Reinhard Heydrich, the conference determined the modalities of deportation and extermination for the eleven million Jews estimated to be living in Europe. In France, the process of deportation was openly engaged in summer 1942, as the negotiations of June 1942 and the ensuing '*Rafle du Vel d'Hiv*' (round-up or raid of the Vel' d'Hiv, from the French abbreviation for winter velodrome) clearly demonstrated. [59] It was part of a larger policy of unfailing collaboration with the occupant, [60] and was reinvigorated by the return to power of Laval on 18 April 1942, the nomination of René Bousquet as General Secretary of the Police and the replacement of Xavier Vallat by Darquier de Pellepoix at the '*Commissariat Général aux Questions Juives*'. [61]

Several things lead one to believe, however, that Albert Nakache's life during 1942 was hardly changed, if at all, by the implementation of the 'final solution'. He participated in that summer's competitions, as shown by his five French champion titles obtained in Lyon at the end of August 1942, [62] at the same time as large-scale round-ups were being organized in southern towns. [63] His relative serenity, confirmed *a posteriori* by his brother, [64] was no doubt due to numerous and more or less evident factors. First, Toulouse had a sizeable Jewish

population which was relatively confident about the policy concerning them. [65] Besides, the favourable reaction of the clergy towards Jews, following the example of the Archbishop of Toulouse Mgr Saliège, confirmed the humanist intentions of at least a part of French society, which were quite openly expressed and which the Jews wanted to believe in. [66] Nakache also enjoyed a reputation that the press continued to contribute to, as well as various sources of support in high places, such as Drigny. [67] Moreover, nothing contained in the decisions taken by the newly installed 'Commissaire Général à l'Éducation Générale aux Sports' (commissioner for general education and sport), Colonel Pascot, [68] indicated any foreseeable changes concerning him given that he continued to be invited to various organized propaganda events, such as the North African tour which took place from 5 to 13 September 1942. [69]

The negotiations of June 1942 between the main French and German officials, as well as the resulting agreements of July 1942, seemed to confirm his impressions: stateless Jews and foreigners were the first targets of deportation measures. [70] Nevertheless, a letter from the 'Commissariat Général aux Questions Juives', dated 30 March 1942, hinted at his vulnerability. [71] It can be ascertained by reading the letters exchanged that he had not escaped from the measures of surveillance put in place for the Jewish population. He was explicitly asked by the Commissariat to undergo census verification following a report from the General Governor of Algeria:

(...). Amongst them, I have found the name of Mr. Nakache Alfred fredj, born on 18/11/1915 and who should be living in Toulouse with his daughter (...). I would be obliged if your services could carry out an enquiry in order to determine whether or not the persons concerned have been subject to the law concerning the census of Jews. [72]

So it was that the sport sphere, which had been untouched up to then in France, finally found itself concerned by the anti-Semitism of the occupant in summer 1942: the ninth German order, dated 8 July 1942, forbade access to public places to Jews. [73] Acting upon this order, the CGEGS delegate in the occupied zone, Venturini, sent a note to regional directors in the occupied zone asking them to exclude Jews from sport events, whether they be spectators or participants. [74] Effective application of this measure after consultation at the CGQJ resulted in the eviction of Jews from all sporting events attended by non-Jews. [75]

First a Jew, Then a Champion

The situation of Jews in the south of France deteriorated markedly during the winter of 1942. *The Wehrmacht* and the *Gestapo* had occupied the whole of French territory since 11 November. The law dated 11 December 1942 increased the pressure upon the Jewish population by imposing that identity and food rationing cards in the southern zone be marked 'Jew'. [76] This did not seem to have an effect upon the status of Nakache at first. Moreover he, along with two of

his DTOEC partners, beat the French 400 m 3-style record in February 1943, [77] a record which was again celebrated in the '*Bulletin Mensuel*' (monthly bulletin) of the 'Commissariat Général'. [78] However, this sport exception vis-a-vis anti-Semitic policies led to a recrudescence of criticism in anti-Semitic newspapers. Jean Dauven, for example, strongly denounced the absence of radical measures in sport circles, as well as the guilt and complicity of the French federation of swimming. [79]

Nakache became aware of the first direct questioning of his French champion status during the propaganda tour of Northern Africa in September 1942. His presence within the French team exasperated the anti-Semites who openly expressed their disapproval through insults and racist tracts. This episode is recalled by Gay-Lescot when he describes the '*hostile crowd*' and by the anonymous tract cited by Bernadette Deville-Danthu. [80] These initial outbursts of hate were to be amplified at the beginning of 1943 by anti-Semitic newspapers: '*Nakache is effectively the least defensible of Jews, the most specifically Jewish of all Jewry*' could be read in *Je suis partout*. [81] His French nationality was directly questioned: '*Officially, since the abolition of the Crémieux decree, [82] Nakache, a Jew born in Algeria, is no longer French*'. [83] Seeing as they could not totally write off the champion's performances, articles tried to minimize them following the example of Jean Dauven. [84] Rumours were eventually spread about his schooling, his military service record and his sympathy towards resistance networks. [85] It goes without saying that Alfred Nakache was not an isolated case. He was just one victim among others of a propaganda campaign launched by Bousquet at the end of summer 1942 and managed by Darquier de Pellepoix at the CGQJ. The campaign was intended to implement the sweeping measures of persecution aimed at the Jewish population and imposed by the occupying forces. [86] Moreover, the *Je suis partout* journalist concluded his article on Nakache with these words: '*A vile individual who should be, at the very least, in a concentration camp*'. [87]

Despite everything, Nakache began the summer swimming season in relatively normal fashion. He swam at the 'Pyrenees Championship' during the second weekend of July 1943, then at two events with the 'Pyrenees' selection during which he produced the best European performance of the year in the 200 m breaststroke which he swam in 2'40. [88] On 4 August, the paper *L'Auto* published the names of the principal athletes who were to participate in the French championships. [89] Yet, during the week of 4–11 August 1943, Nakache found himself obliged to withdraw from the competition, a decision he commented upon in *La dépêche du Midi*:

I am an extremely distressed man ... I will not be able to defend my French titles on Sunday (...). I would have loved to swim this 400 m ... and beat them all ... I'm in such good condition. [90]

Looking back on the depositions taken during the submission of further evidence at the Pascot trial, it seems that the *Gestapo* was behind his eviction. [91] Was this

a result of the criticisms in anti-Semitic newspapers? One cannot be certain, but it is obvious that *Je suis partout* campaigned fiercely both against holding the French championships in Toulouse and Nakache's participation. [92] A further fact can shed light on the conditions surrounding the *Gestapo's* intervention. A propaganda evening was held in Toulouse on 1 July 1943 to present the new sport sections of the budding militia in the presence of the departmental head of the militia and Mayor of the city, Mr Haon. [93] The swimmer and militia member Jacques Cartonnet [94] was also present in order to '*define the role of sports and physical education for men in the Révolution Nationale*'. [95] This meeting represented yet another occasion to affirm in public the need for sport to '*comply with the demands of current policies, it cannot remain indifferent to the very life of the country*'. [96] It may be useful to remember that Jacques Cartonnet had been one of Nakache's main swimming rivals since the interwar period. Furthermore, when Nakache changed from crawl to butterfly, he had beaten his adversary in his own speciality in 1941, thus taking the French record for 100 m and 200 m, as well as ridiculizing him during duels proposed by the militiaman in 1942 and 1943. [97] The fact that he or his wife intervened in order to keep Nakache away from the podiums cannot be excluded. [98]

Whatever the reasons, the exclusion of Nakache needed the ratification of the 'Commissariat Général' as well as its implementation by the FFN. As it happened, the Federation's policies had been heavily criticized by the anti-Semitic press during the entire summer and, as a result, its room for manoeuvre was limited. [99] Colonel Pascot, as head of the CGEGS, was convinced that the sport world should be more respectful of the outlines established by the Government and that there should be more synergy between the different political entities. [100] This point of view brought him into contact with Bousquet, who was heavily implicated in the process of deporting Jews from France, and their joint creation of a 'Centre Régional d'Education Physique et Sportive' (regional centre for sports and physical education) at the National Police's final training school in Périgueux allowed them to get to know each other. [101] They found themselves together during the closing formalities of the first police physical education training course [102] which they presided together in April 1943, i.e. one week after Bousquet had signed the collaboration agreements between police forces with the SS Oberg against '*terrorists, communists, Jews, Gaullists and foreign agents*'. [103]

The reactions of the sport world after the eviction of Nakache were also rich in information. The unanimous condemning by DTOEC leaders as well as the refusal not only of 26 club swimmers but also of 8 swimmers from other clubs [104] to go to the qualifying rounds were a reflection of the general indignation of the French population concerning the injustices done to Jews, particularly in cases where they were direct witnesses. [105] This was not a general attitude, however, and if certain swimmers preferred to participate in order to protect Nakache from even worse consequences, [106] others competed unaffected by these events. Faced with the generalized disaffection of Nakache's club, the CGEGC and the FFN appeared to react

firmly after the competitions: absent swimmers were suspended and the President of the DTOEC was banned from his job for life. [107] These decisions were naturally well received by the anti-Semitic press. [108] At the same time, the re-integration of all the swimmers by the Federation (including Alfred Nakache and his wife Paule), announced on 31 August 1943, [109] suggests that the FFN was trying to strike a balance between German demands and aspirations of another nature which were nearer the universalist line it had followed until then. At the end of the competition, moreover, Drigny launched an '*appeal for unity and sporting discipline, with the regret that circumstances had kept our North African swimmers from competing in the events*'. [110] However, he no longer seemed able, be it via his articles or public actions, to offer the slightest protection to Nakache; he no longer mentioned his name in any public communication, during or after the competition.

This censorship was also clearly evident in the sports media. The reasons for Nakache's absence during the competition were suppressed. Articles concentrated on either the performances of those athletes present or on the scandal surrounding the absence of DTOEC swimmers. In the end, only the clandestine paper of the sports section of the Patriotic Youth Front *sport libre* openly decried the absence of Nakache. '*The best French freestyle swimmer since Jean Tari and the best European breaststroke swimmer recently found himself forbidden from participating in the French championships*'. [111] The anti-Semite press, on the other hand, was quick to comment on the event, using cynical and even smutty language:

The Jew Nakache, brilliant representative of France in swimming, did not participate in the French qualifiers. Was he injured? Where is the injury? In his foreskin? Was it an unfortunate accident with a pair of secateurs? [112]

The 1943 French qualifiers' episode represents a fundamental change in the media diffusion of Nakache's public identity. Although perceived for a long time by anti-Semites as being primarily a Jew, his exclusion from the sport event, the silence of the media and the added handicap of the CGEGS all took away his champion status as well as other support he could count on until then. Known to the Germans, he found himself in a position of serious precarity, even more so given that from the middle of 1943 on any Jew, French or foreign person could be deported. The *Gestapo*, aided by the French Militia, was putting increasing pressure on Prefects in order to obtain lists of Jews and then deport them as quickly as possible whatever their nationality. Moreover, it was the *Gestapo* who arrested him and his family on 20 December 1943. They were all transferred to the camp of Drancy on 4 January 1944, as mentioned in his deportation file. [113] Forms filled in by the Nakache family upon their arrival at Drancy also seem to confirm this date. [114] They also contain crucial information which helps to understand the process of depersonalization to which Alfred Nakache and his family were subjected as soon as they entered the concentration camp system. For example, numbers were attached to their names: 10677 for the daughter and 10675 for the swimmer. No mention was made on the forms concerning the sporting

past of Alfred Nakache, apart from the term 'PE teacher', used to summarize his profession. On 20 January 1944, they left the station of Bobigny aboard convoy n° 66, destination Auschwitz. [115] Although Alfred Nakache survived the ordeal, his wife and daughter died after being selected for the gas chambers, no doubt as soon as they arrived at Birkenau.

Upon his return, Alfred Nakache explained his arrest in the following terms: 'Arrested and interrogated by the Gestapo, I found myself charged with anti-German propaganda because I continued to beat the records of German swimmers'. [116]

Conclusion

The analysis of Alfred Nakache's life between 1940 and 1944 allows the updating of ideas and mechanisms concerning the history of sport under the Vichy government on the one hand, as well as that of the history of Jews in France on the other. First, the study offers, seen through the life of a top-level swimmer, an example of the measures taken against Jews in France. The solid collaboration of Vichy in the exclusion process aimed at Jews, as ordained by the Nazis and officialized by the law of 3 October 1940 among others, represented the beginning of the social isolation of Albert Nakache. It meant the end of his studies at the prestigious ENEP and the end of his hopes of becoming a Physical Education teacher. His sporting achievements did not protect him from the legislation being enforced at the time. His arrest in December 1943 and his ensuing deportation were part of a totally new facet of Vichy's contribution to German anti-Semitic policies: that of the extermination of part of the French population, which the Oberg-Bousquet Agreement on the co-operation of police forces highlighted and the Militia helped carry out. Here also, despite his renown and the efforts of members of his swimming club after his arrest, nothing could stop his deportation.

The fate of Alfred Nakache also allows us to revisit the history of sports institutions and emphasizes the transformation which took place during 1942. During the initial period of the occupation the CGEGS, just like the French Federation of Swimming, was a kind of neutral territory, hermetically sealed from outside events. Jewish athletes were not excluded from competing and Albert Nakache dominated French swimming. This neutrality even took on the form of a kind of engagement in favour of sporting humanism and Olympic ideals, as can be seen by the actions led by Drigny. Using his honoured position and his numerous publications, Drigny allowed Nakache to become, even though Jewish, a popular icon of the 'Révolution Nationale'. This policy, followed by both the institutions that Nakache depended upon, ended with the political changes of 1942. Faced with the injunctions of the authorities, the level of freedom was slowly eroded and ended with the eviction of Nakache from the 1943 French Championships. However, the last-ditch decision by Drigny to rehabilitate all the suspended swimmers shortly after the Championships must be emphasized. On the other hand, it would seem that the CGEGS adopted a completely different approach by a much clearer alignment to the policies of the regime in place.

As far as French public opinion is concerned, it seemed to be divided into two contradictory attitudes. A large part of the population saw in Nakache the champion he had been before the war, in spite of the propaganda campaign carried out by the CGQJ. Shocked but passive when it came to the treatment reserved for Jews, this same population reacted to the exclusion of the swimmer while, at the same time, doing nothing to stop the deportation process. On the other hand, a smaller group expressed all its feelings towards the Jewish population and participated in the process of exclusion, arrest and deportation. The fate of Nakache cannot be dissociated from either anti-Semite articles or the attitude of the militia Jacques Cartonnet.

The richness of Alfred Nakache's story lies in the fact that he was one of the models used by the 'Révolution Nationale' and a symbol of the rebirth of France while, at the same time, being stigmatized and considered as having a defect in the form of his Jewish confession. Both a figurehead and an enemy of the same policies, his destiny thus underlines their level of ambiguity. This dual-sided identity, unimaginable in Nazi Germany because of the principle of defending the Aryan race, posed no problem at all in France between 1940 and 1942. On the other hand, the radicalization of German policies led to the redefinition of his identity at the beginning of 1943. He may have been a champion, but it was exactly that which no longer existed and was no longer mentioned, to be replaced by the fact that he belonged to the race of sub-beings. The process of anonymization thus rendered him vulnerable, to the point where he and his family became victims of the 'Shoa' (holocaust). The fact that a Frenchman won in German swimming pools was, without a doubt, not the reason for which the *Gestapo* arrested him. He was arrested most of all because he questioned the Nazi world order.

Notes

- [1] Expression from Rémond, *Notre siècle 1918–1988*, 269.
- [2] Paxton, *La France de Vichy 1940–1944*, 185–286.
- [3] Gay-Lescot, *Sport et éducation sous Vichy 1940–1944*.
- [4] Poznanski, *Les Juifs en France pendant la Seconde Guerre mondiale*.
- [5] Principal figure of national catholicism, Charles Maurras developed a very influential anti-Semitic platform in French intellectual circles during the interwar period.
- [6] Mangan, 'Blond, Strong and Pure: Proto-Fascism, Male Bodies and Political Tradition'; Eisen, 'Jewish History and the Ideology of Modern Sport'; Marten, 'Racism, 'Social Darwinism, anti-Semitism and Aryan Supremacy'.
- [7] Le Goff, Jacques 'Comment écrire une biographie aujourd'hui?'
- [8] Weber, *Economie et société*.
- [9] Hilberg, *La destruction des juifs d'Europe* ; Marrus and Paxton, *Vichy et les juifs*; Kaspi, *Les juifs pendant l'Occupation*; Poznanski, *Les Juifs en France pendant la Seconde Guerre mondiale*.
- [10] Bernett, Sportpolitik im dritten Reich et Bernett, *Der jüdische Sport im nationalsozialistischen Deutschland 1933–1938*; Gay-Lescot, *Sport et éducation sous Vichy, 1940–1944*.
- [11] Concerning archives, this means the Archives Nationales (AN), the Archives of the Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine (CDJC), the archives of the Préfecture de police de Paris, the archives of l'Institut National du Sport et de l'Education Physique (INSEP) and the Archives

- départementales de Haute Garonne. Press analysis concerned the sport press (*L'Auto*, *L'Echo des sports* and *Miroir des sports*), the press under the control of the CGEGS or the Comité National des Sports (Tous les sports, Bulletin mensuel du CGEGS) and the anti-Semitic press (*Au pilori* and *Je suis partout*). Finally, several interviews were conducted in 2006 and 2007 with Alfred Nakache's brother (Robert), ex résistants and ex deportees from Nazi camps.
- [12] Eisen, 'Jewish History and the Ideology of Modern Sport: Approaches and Interpretation'.
- [13] School records of Alfred Nakache, non-referenced document, Archives de l'ENEP, INSEP, Paris.
- [14] Archives Nationales d'Outre-mer, military dossier of Alfred Nakache.
- [15] Ibid.
- [16] This dual responsibility is studied by Michaël R. Marrus et Robert O. Paxton, *Vichy et les juifs*.
- [17] Order of 27 Septembre 1940 concerning measures taken against Jews, published by VOBIF 30 Septembre 1940, 92–93.
- [18] Law dated 27 August 1940 published in the Journal Officiel de la République Française (JORF) on 30 August 1940, 4844.
- [19] Law concerning Jewish status dated 3 October 1940 and published in JORF on 18 October 1940, 5323.
- [20] Denis Peschanski, 'Les statuts des Juifs du 3 octobre 1940 et du 2 juin 1941', 32.
- [21] School records of Alfred Nakache, student details, archives de l'INSEP, Paris. Non-referenced document.
- [22] The family records of the préfecture de Paris contain no declaration in the name of Alfred or Paule Nakache.
- [23] Kaspi, *Les Juifs sous l'occupation*.
- [24] Poznanski, *Les Juifs en France pendant la Seconde Guerre mondiale*, 139.
- [25] Term from Robert Nakache, interview dated 23 May 2006.
- [26] Two newspaper articles attest to this: '*Champion d'hier, Homme d'aujourd'hui ... Alfred Nakache*', non-referenced document which appeared in the press compiled by the city of Montpellier for the inauguration of the swimming pool Alfred Nakache on 24 November 2003; the anti-Semite newspaper, *Au pilori* dated 4 March 1943, in which Jacques Montlouis writes: "We are not trying to find the reasons which inspire certain people to subsidise the physical culture hall of Nakache."
- [27] Poznanski, *Les juifs en France pendant la seconde guerre mondiale*, 159.
- [28] Law n° [41]–2332 which replaced the law of 3 October 1940 on Jewish status, published by the JOEF on 14 June 1941, 2475–76. Law n° [41]–2333 obliging census of Jews, published by the JOEF on 14 June 1941, 2476.
- [29] Poznanski, *Les Juifs en France pendant la Seconde Guerre mondiale*, 175–213.
- [30] Testimony of Robert Nakache, 23 May 2006 in Toulouse.
- [31] Dreyfus, *Histoire de la Résistance*.
- [32] Latour, *La résistance juive en France*.
- [33] CDJC, Fonds Annie Latour, DLXI–77, Testimony of Polonski, p. 8, et A. Latour, *La résistance juive en France*, Paris, Stock, 1970, p. 103 for the paragraph concerning Alfred Nakache. The name is spelt such as the author himself spelt it.
- [34] Testimony of Albert Cohen et of his brother Simon Cohen, 3.
- [35] Créteau, *Écrit à Buchenwald 1944–1945*.
- [36] Testimony of Rachel Cheigam, 28 August 2006, as well as Archives des victimes des conflits contemporains, file n° 66.091.
- [37] *Champion d'hier, Homme d'aujourd'hui ... Alfred Nakache*.
- [38] *L'Auto*, 23 juin 1941 et 28 juin 1941; *Tous les sports*, n°14, 4 octobre 1941.
- [39] Denoyelle, 'La presse sportive'.
- [40] *L'Auto*, 5 septembre and 8 septembre 1941.

- [41] *Le Miroir des Sports* n° 15, 14 juillet 1941.
- [42] Gobineau, *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines*, 1853; Chamberlain, *Genèse du 19^{ème} Siècle*, 1899; Marten, 'Racism, Social Darwinism, anti-Semitism and Aryan Supremacy'.
- [43] Hilberg, *La destruction des Juifs d'Europe*, 1, p115 et 116.
- [44] Krüger, 'Breeding, bearing and preparing the Aryan Body: Creating Supermen the Nazi Way'.
- [45] Bernett, *Der jüdische Sport im nationalsozialistischen Deutschland 1933–1938*; Krüger, 'Allemagne'.
- [46] Guttman, Les 'jeux olympiques Nazis' and the American boycott. Controversy.
- [47] Gay-Lescot, 'Le Commissariat Général à l'Education Générale et aux Sports', report submitted to Marie-George Buffet, 27–66.
- [48] The terms have been taken from a text by Pétain, 'L'éducation nationale', *Revue des Deux mondes*, 15 August 1940.
- [49] End-of-year report on the activities of the Commissariat Général since its creation, published in *chronique du commissariat général*, n° 1 of 15 March 1942, 3–6.
- [50] *Tous les Sports*, n° 2, 12 July 1941.
- [51] On Drigny, see Terret, *L'Institution et le Nageur*.
- [52] AN, F44 113, *Organisation provisoire pour la zone occupée*, dated 10 October 1941.
- [53] The law of 2 June 1941 in the FFN executive committee report of 23 June 1941 (*Tous les Sports*, n° 1, 5 July 1941).
- [54] *Tous les sports*, 13 Septembre 1941.
- [55] *Olympic Official Report Berlin*, volume 2, part 5, p. 941 et 957.
- [56] *Au Piloni*, n° 57, 7 August 1941.
- [57] Mangan, 'Blond, Strong and Pure: Proto-Fascism, Male Bodies and Political Tradition'; Marten, 'Racism, Social Darwinism, Anti-Semitism and Aryan Supremacy'.
- [58] Hilberg, *La destruction des juifs d'Europe* 1.
- [59] The negotiation process between Laval, Bousquet Darquier and, to a lesser extent, Leguay for the French, Oberg, Knochen, and Dannecker for the German side is described by Klarsfeld, *La shoah en France, 1. Vichy- Auschwitz*, 69–141.
- [60] Azéma, Bédarida, *La France des années noires* 2.
- [61] Joly, *Vichy dans la solution finale. Histoire du CGQJ*.
- [62] *L'Auto*, 31 August 1942. This information can also be found in *l'Annuaire des sports de 1944* edited by the Comité National des Sports, 460–62.
- [63] Klarsfeld, *La shoah en France, 1. Vichy-Auschwitz*, 170–71.
- [64] Testimony of Robert Nakache, 23 May 2006.
- [65] Estèbe, *Toulouse 1940–1944*.
- [66] Posnanski, *Les Juifs en France pendant la Seconde Guerre mondiale*, 353–64; CDJC, DXLII 10. Fonds Yad Vashem (Article on the solidarity of the inhabitants of Toulouse in the newspaper *J'accuse* in November 1943).
- [67] *L'Auto*, 31 August 1942.
- [68] Lassus and Lamy, 'Le commissariat du colonel Pascot' et Lassus, 'Des pelouses de rugby aux salons de Vichy: le colonel Pascot, commissaire général aux sports'.
- [69] *Bulletin mensuel du CGEGS* n° 5, octobre 1942.
- [70] Burrin, *La France à l'heure allemande 1940–1944*, 150–64.
- [71] Archives départementales of Haute-Garonne, non-referenced document.
- [72] Letter from CGQJ addressed to the Prefect of Haute Garonne, dated 30 March 1942. Non-referenced document, Archives départementales of Haute-Garonne.
- [73] Neuvième Ordonnance of July 1942 published by the VOBIF on 15 July 1942, 414–15.
- [74] AN, 3 W 274, pièce 609: 'all sporting events, either as competitors or spectators, are from now on forbidden to Jews, as is access to beaches and swimming pools'.

- [75] CDJC, XXVIII, Pièce n 74. Exchange of correspondence between the CGEGS and CGQJ dated 16 September 1942.
- [76] Law n° [42]–1077 relative to “Jew” being marked on identity documents issued to French and foreign Israelites, published in the JOEF of 12/12/1942, 4058.
- [77] *L’Auto*, 15 February 1943.
- [78] *Bulletin Mensuel* du CGEGS n° 10, March 1943.
- [79] Dauven J., «Pitres du sport» supplément au magazine *Revivre, Le grand magazine illustrée de la race*, 1943, 23.
- [80] Gay-Lescot, *Sport et éducation sous Vichy 1940–1944*, 114; Deville-Danthu, *Le sport en noir et blanc*, 198–9.
- [81] *Je suis partout*, n° 596, 8 January 1943.
- [82] Law of 7 October 1940 on the abrogation of the National Defence Government Decree of 24 October 1870 which established the status of indigenous Jews from the departments of Algeria, completed by the decree of 20 November 1940 on the status of Algerian Jews (JORF of 22 November 1940).
- [83] *Je suis partout*, n° 596, 8 January 1943.
- [84] Dauven J., *Le cahier jaune*, n° 12, January 1943, 20–21 and Dauven J., Pitres du sport, 4.
- [85] ‘*Embusqué de 39–40. Je suis partout*, n°624, 23 juillet 1943; ‘*He would recount, to whoever wanted to listen, the horrible sufferings that he would inflict, with the aid of Timochenko and Roosevelt, upon the evil French fascists.*’ *Je suis partout*, n° 596, 8 January 1943.
- [86] Joly, *Vichy dans la solution finale. Histoire du CGQJ, 1941–1944*. 655–697; Poznanski, *Les juifs en France pendant la seconde guerre mondiale*, 451–5.
- [87] *Je suis partout*, n° 596, 8 January 1943.
- [88] *L’Auto*, 19 July and 2 August 1943.
- [89] *L’Auto*, 4 August 1943.
- [90] *La dépêche du Midi*, 11 August 1943.
- [91] AN, 3W274.
- [92] *Je suis partout*, 23 July 1943 and *Je suis partout*, 13 August 1943.
- [93] Giolitto, *Histoire de la Milice*.
- [94] Rachel Cheigam confirms that Jacques Cartonnet is a member of the French Militia and that he works with his wife in the Militia offices in Paris, in the sports department.
- [95] *La Dépêche du Midi*, 1 July 1943.
- [96] Speech by M. Collomb.
- [97] *L’Auto*, 28 December 1942 ; *L’Auto*, 22 February 1943. The journalist is quite hard with Cartonnet: ‘*so as not to appear in competition before the public and an adversary like Nakache just to make such an exhibition of himself.*’
- [98] Hypothesis by Rachel Cheigam who spent time with him at the newspaper *Paris-Soir*.
- [99] *Je suis partout*, 23 July 1943 and *Je suis partout*, 13 August 1943.
- [100] Pascot J. P., *Politique et doctrine sportive, Commissariat Général à l’Education Générale et aux Sports*, Paris, 1944, 111–13.
- [101] *Bulletin Mensuel* du CGEGS n° 12, May 1943.
- [102] *Bulletin Mensuel* du CGEGS n° 12, May 1943 and Monthly Bulletin n° 16, September 1943.
- [103] Collaboration agreement of 16 April 1943 (cited by Klarsfeld, *La shoah en France, 1. Vichy-Auschwitz*, 254).
- [104] *Tous les sports*, n° 110, 28 August 1943.
- [105] Poznanski, *Les Juifs en France pendant la Seconde Guerre mondiale*, 354–5 and 454–8.
- [106] Prêtet, ‘La mémoire’ 176.
- [107] *L’Auto*, 16 August 1943.
- [108] *Je suis partout*, 20 August 1943.

- [109] *L'Auto*, 31 August 1943.
 [110] *Toulouse soir*, 16 August 1943.
 [111] *Sport libre*, Septembre 1943.
 [112] *Au Pilon*, 26 August 1943.
 [113] Archives of victims of contemporary conflicts, dossier n°66.091.
 [114] AN, F195746 (registration forms-Drancy children) and AN, F1915718 (registration forms-adults).
 [115] Klarsfeld, *Le mémorial de la déportation des Juifs de France*.
 [116] Archives of victims of contemporary conflicts, file n°66.091.

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