Camus and the Question of Resistance: The Prehistory of 'Combat,' 1942-43

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation re-contextualizes Albert Camus's entry into the Combat resistance movement by analyzing the immediate historical context of the period preceding his engagement. Focusing on the brief, yet crucial time frame between his arrival in Le-Chambon-sur-Ligne in 1942 and his introduction to the organization's clandestine news team in 1943, this study examines how the period prior to his active involvement created the conditions for his resistance. In doing so, it aims to explain the conditions and catalysts of Camus' transition from passive support to active resistance. In order to trace this movement, this dissertation focuses on the social category of networks: the social and political contacts with whom Camus interacted during this period. It was within this span of a year that Camus met and befriended a number of diverse individuals, who, despite their different political affiliations, were all active resisters, unlike Camus at the time. In the months that followed, Camus was to immerse himself in this burgeoning network of contacts, becoming increasingly active in the often intersecting and interconnected maneuverings of resistance milieus in post-1942 occupied France.

The category of "networks," as both intersecting and interconnected provides a valuable lens through which to view the fluid and myriad confluences of Camus' interactions. This study seeks to explain how those interactions influenced his decision to resist and why Camus did not come to resist until November 1943, despite having a certain disposition open to resistance throughout the early war years. This aspect of Camus's journey towards resistance has largely been overlooked in previous studies of his involvement in Combat during the Occupation.

INTRODUCTION[1*]

Albert Camus was stuck. During the late summer of 1942, a flare-up of tuberculosis had brought him to the sleepy hamlet of Le Panelier near Le-Chambon-sur-Ligne in Haute-Loire to recover in high altitude. His plan, though nebulous, had been to spend around two months convalescing there, with the hope of being home before winter arrived.[2] However, the Allied landing on 8 November and the subsequent German invasion of the Free Zone on 11 November left him cut off from his native Algeria and on opposite sides of the war. Faced with the reality that he was indefinitely separated from his homeland, he could not help but feel trapped on the isolated plateau of Vivarais-Lignon that Le Panelier called home. That day, he noted his mood in a rather distraught entry in his *carnet*: "11 November. Like rats!"[3]

This dramatic moment of isolation in November 1942 would begin a period of great flux and rapidity that would set the stage for Camus's entry into the Combat resistance movement nearly a year later. In the aftermath of 11 November, he turned to one of the few recourses available to him under such precarious circumstances: his pre-existing relationships and connections – namely his mentor Jean Grenier and his friend and former colleague Pascal Pia. Through them, he was able to slowly find solid ground and some sense of a pathway forward amidst the turbulence of events; more so, they put him into further contact with a curious array of shifting characters with diverse political and moral dispositions. In the months that followed, Camus immersed himself in this burgeoning network of contacts, who, despite their differences, were all active resisters – unlike Camus at the time. It was by these means that he became increasingly entrenched and active in the often intersecting and interconnected maneuverings of resistance milieus in post-1942 occupied France.

Despite the richness of scholarship devoted to Camus's involvement in the French resistance, previous commentators have largely overlooked the peculiarity of this period towards a more gradual reading of the evolution of his thought towards active resistance. This

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[1*] Due to the difficulty in accessing materials post-COVID, I have consulted both the original French and English translations, as well as different versions of some of the works referenced below. I have made note of which editions have been consulted or referenced. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.

[2] See, for example, Olivier Todd, *Albert Camus: Une Vie* (Paris: Gallimard, 1996), 152; and Herbert Lottman, *Albert Camus: A Biography* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1979), who describes Camus's tentative plans as "[staying] on as long as possible at Le Panelier, getting all the mountain air he could" (263).

[3] Albert Camus. "Cahier IV (janvier 1942-septembre 1945) – Carnets 1925-1948," *Œuvres complètes: Tome II, 1944-1948*, edited by Jacqueline Lévi-Valensi (Paris: Gallimard/Pléaide, 2006), 966. Hereafter abbreviated as *OC II*.

focus has privileged a view of his resistance within the *longue durée* of World War II, moving from the staunch pacifist position he adopted at the outbreak of the conflict, through his hesitations regarding the efficacy of resistance, to his introduction into the ranks of the clandestine team of Combat in 1943 and his immediate postwar prominence as the editor-in-chief of its journal.[4] Important contributions, from Philippe Vanney and Jeanyves Guérin in particular, have lucidly outlined the circuitous route of Camus's path to resistance while placing this activism within the wider history of his political activity and engagement.[5] Likewise, the considerable contribution of Jacqueline Lévi-Valensi in the Gallimard collections of Camus's writings at *Combat*, as well as the meticulously compiled *Pléiade* editions of Camus's *oeuvres*, have given us a good understanding of the basic facets of Camus's navigation of this period. They too, however, have favored explaining Camus's involvement in the resistance within the schema of a longer timeline. Such works, coupled with the scrupulous array of details compiled in Olivier Todd and Herbert Lottman's seminal biographies, have been invaluable in reconciling what appears to be two different versions of Camus – the trenchant pacifist who openly

[4] The scholarship pertaining to Camus's resistance is vast and most works devoted to Camus make some, if not substantive reference to his resistance activities. Of those particularly focused on the details of his involvement, see the collection *Cahiers Albert Camus, Tome VIII*: Jacqueline Lévi-Valensi, ed., *Camus à Combat, éditoriaux et articles d'Albert Camus, 1944-1947* (Paris: Gallimard, 2002), especially her introductory chapters "Un journal dans l'histoire" and "Un écrivain face à l'histoire." See also the seminal Camus biographies, H. Lottman, *Albert Camus: A Biography* (London, 1979) and O. Todd, *Albert Camus: Une Vie* (Paris, 1996) ; Jeanyves Guérin, ed., *Camus et la politique. Actes du colloque de Nanterre, 5-7 juin 1985* (Paris: Le Harmattan, 1986), especially Jean-Pierre Rioux, "Camus et la Second Guerre mondiale," pp.97-107; Guérin, ed., *Camus et le premier 'Combat': Actes du colloque de Nanterre* (La Garenne-Colombes: Editions européennes Erasme, 1990); Guérin, ed., *Dictionnaire Albert Camus* (Paris: Laffont, 2009); Philippe Vanney, "Ce long détour," *Études camusiennes,* no.2 (juin 1996): 62-80; Vanney, "Albert Camus devant la guerre," *Bulletin d'études françaises*, no.19 (1988), 19-55 and no.21 (1990): 1-30; Yves-Marc Ajchenbaum, *À la vie, à la mort: L'histoire du journal Combat, 1941-1947* (Paris: Le Monde-Éditions, 1994). In the anglophone sphere, see Emmett Parker, *Albert Camus: The Artist in the Arena* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1965); Tony Judt, "Albert Camus: The Reluctant Moralist," *The Burden of Responsibility: Blum, Camus, Aron, and the French Twentieth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); J. Edward Hughes, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Camus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

[5] Vanney's study "Ce long détour," *Études camusiennes* (1996), for example, draws its title from the first letter of the *Lettres à un ami allemand* (1943). There, Camus's narrator, as a placeholder for Camus himself, explicates the hesitations he faced in coming to realize the efficacy of active resistance to his German interlocutor, describing this road to justifying resistance as a "long détour." Jeanyves Guérin is also a case in point, placing Camus's resistance within the slower, more progressive timeline of the entirety of his political engagement. See Jeanyves Guérin, *Portrait de l'artiste en citoyen* (Paris: Editions F. Bourin, 1993). Guérin's contribution is especially significant in that he shows how that engagement was shaped and determined not by his role as an "intellectual" (a label Camus rejected throughout his life), but as a "citizen:" "un homme 'solitaire et solidaire de sa cite…" (28).

questioned in 1939 whether "the defense of democracy is worth preparing and waging war"[6] and the committed resister who firmly declared in 1944 that "total war has been unleashed, and it calls for total resistance." They have given us a clear view of *why* Camus came to resist.[7] But less clear is *how* he came to actively participate in resistance and what about the historical situation of 1943 was crucial for his decision to join.

This dissertation adds a new dimension to this substantial literature by examining Camus's move towards resistance within the limited, yet crucial time frame between Camus's exile in November 1942 and his introduction into Combat's clandestine news team in November 1943. Though it is clear, as the main thrust of Camusien scholarship has shown us, that Camus's entry into the active resistance was consistent with a certain disposition he held throughout his life, it was not until this particular point in time that he made the conscious decision to fully commit to the resistance and actively participate. If this cognizance, or to borrow from Robert Gildea, an "awakening to a consciousness that resistance was necessary," was the result of a long and measured process of internal reflection – a "long detour" as we are told – the fact that this process reached its conclusion in 1943 and within the situation of being exiled from his homeland after November 1942 deserves our attention.[8] Retracing this timeline and scrutinizing the manner in which Camus endured a whirlwind of changes and personal encounters is thus crucial for our understanding of how Camus came to resist and what historical conditions contributed to his entry into the ranks of active resistance.

This investigation of the time frame between Camus's exile in November 1942 and his entry into Combat in November 1943 is significant for several reasons. First, it allows us to gain a better understanding of the conditions in which he came to decide to resist and how they might have influenced this decision despite the overall lack of sources we are faced with. Indeed, any historical inquiry into Camus's resistance activities pre-*Combat* is faced with the issue of limited source material. Regarding his resistance, there is a deep and deliberate silence on Camus's part. This is marked at one end by a practical silence – the need to be discrete in the face of a very real and overhanging danger during the time of the Occupation – and at the other by a measured, deliberate silence after the events – a lifelong rejection of the appellation

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[6] Camus, "8 août 1939 - Quatrième Lettre de Vincent Capable, primeuriste: Sur la paix et la démocratie – *Alger-Républicain*." *OC I*, 752.

[7] Camus, "À guerre totale résistance totale *(mars) – Combat clandestin*." *OC I*, 913.

[8] Robert Gildea, *Fighters in the Shadows: A New History of the French Resistance* (London: Faber & Faber, 2015), 77.

résistant under the belief that he had no right to speak of his commitment when others did more and paid the ultimate price with their lives.[9] Of the few pieces we have of direct testimony regarding his engagement, his letter to his wife Francine in August 1944 perhaps most succinctly describes the conditions of his entry into the ranks of active resistance. He wrote,

> After having tried to go to Spain and having given up because it would have entailed many months in a camp or prison and I could not do that in my state, I entered into the Resistance movement. I thought a lot about it and did it with complete clarity for the reason that it was my duty. I worked in Haute-Loire and then immediately after in Paris with Pia, in the Combat movement.[10]

Despite its conciseness, this, and what we have compiled from the occasional interview and details assembled in Todd and Lottman's biographies, are merely snapshots. The most definitive text of his resistance remains the *Lettres à un ami allemand* (1945), but even this falls outside the category of grounded, empirically-based historical source material.[11] So in analyzing Camus's resistance, there remains a certain degree of mystery concerning both his passage into active participation and the means by which this came to be.

In order to address this problem, this study focuses on the social category of networks: the social and political contacts Camus interacted with during this period. The category of "networks," as both intersecting and interconnected, is of particular importance as it provides the most effective lens through which the fluid and myriad confluences of different interactions and influences that Camus would have encountered can be assessed, despite our lack of sources. In rather quick fashion, Camus came to meet and befriend a number of diverse figures active in different segments of resistance in the aftermath of November 1942, ranging from the eccentric Dominican priest Father Raymond-Léopold Bruckberger or Catholic moralist René Leynaud to the former-Surrealist, practicing Communist Francis Ponge. Much of this was facilitated through

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[9] In the rare instances where Camus commented on his involvement in the resistance, he made sure to explicate this point. See, for example, "27 Octobre 1944 – *Combat*." *OC II*. The text was written as a eulogy for Camus's close friend and fellow-Combat member René Leynaud, whose July 1944 death at the hands of the Gestapo had recently been confirmed. He wrote : "L'absurde tragédie de la Résistance est tout entière dans cet affreux malheur. Car des hommes comme Leynaud étaient entrés dans la lutte, convaincus qu'aucun être ne pouvait parler avant de payer de sa personne. Le malheur est que la guerre sans uniforme n'avait pas la terrible justice de la guerre tout court. Les balles du front frappent n'importe qui, le meilleur et le pire. Mais pendant ces quatre ans, ce sont les meilleurs qui se sont désignés et qui sont tombés, ce sont les meilleurs qui ont gagné le droit de parler et perdu le pouvoir de le faire" (412).

[10] Quoted by Francine Camus in a letter sent from Algiers to her mother who remained in Oran, cited in Jacqueline Lévi-Valensi, ed., *Camus à Combat, éditoriaux et articles d'Albert Camus, 1944-1947* (Paris: Gallimard, 2002), 20.

[11] The *Lettres à un ami allemand,* as important as they are in spelling out Camus's evolving thought towards resistance and his own journey towards regarding the merits of actively resisting, remain in essence, a self-reflection to justify his resistance as legitimate.

the well-connected Pascal Pia (who would also serve as Camus's main contact with the Combat movement), but as we shall see, these new acquaintances would also spur the building of further connections and new relationships throughout the year.[12] Therefore, examining the transversal, and indeed confluent, lines of relations that connected Camus with these various figures and assorted resistance groupings is essential to our understanding of the general *mise en scène* of the France that Camus inhabited during this period, and more specifically his progressive immersion into the resistance.

The second point of significance is that this study also considers Camus's resistance within the context of the evolving history of the French resistance. The time frame of 1942 to 1943 at the center of this dissertation coincides with a period of change and growth– a time in which the resistance dramatically expanded and new opportunities were made available for individuals to resist, often in different ways. As we shall further investigate, such external factors were considerably important to Camus's ability to participate in the resistance, regardless of his disposition. In particular, this study utilizes H.R Kedward's notion of "roots" and "routes" to trace the "pathways and narratives" of Camus's resistance within the context of his contacts and the changing nature of his interactions with those individuals.[13] Over the course of this year, Camus was familiarized with a certain culture or practice of resistance that while not directly leading him to resist, certainly influenced him. This latter point is examined through the distinction between active and passive resistance – between Camus's tacit support towards resistance pre-1943 and his active participation post-1943 – and an analysis of the role of his connections and the specific circumstances of Camus being in mainland France in November 1942 in creating opportunities to become more involved and eventually participate in resistance.

In order to make these arguments, this dissertation has made use of Camus's correspondances and his *carnets*. Due to the lack of direct testimony on the subject, it is crucial to read between the lines, to look for where Camus indicates the development of his thoughts and attitudes. His personal letters and notebook entries offer insight into his frame of mind and the ways in which he responded to the changing circumstances and new encounters he experienced. This approach allows for a consideration of Camus's writing as a means of

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[12] See Julian Jackson, *France: The Dark Years, 1940-1944* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001). The process of new acquaintanceship and evolving contacts that Camus experienced is reflected in Jackson's description of the segmented process of contact-building for resisters, beginning usually with connections "to the world before defeat" – namely "old friends or former colleagues" – and further increasing with the occurrence of "new encounters as contacts widened." (406).

[13] H.R Kedward. "Mapping the Resistance: An Essay on Roots and Routes," *Modern & Contemporary France* 20, no.4 (2012): 492.

situating him within a rapidly evolving period, while also tracing the manner in which his contacts and networks evolved and diversified. However, it also requires a careful consideration of Camus's writing, accounting for fluctuations in thoughts and certain word choices such as coded language, euphemism, metaphor, etc. – and how what he says or chooses *not* to say reflects his state of mind. In doing so, this paper complements our existing understanding of Camus's entry into the active resistance by considering the *question* of resistance alongside the *conditions* of resistance.

To analyze the importance of these novel conditions, this dissertation sketches Camus's prewar political disposition and then moves to his status on the eve of November 1942. The German presence in the Free Zone left him stranded in metropolitan France under precarious circumstances and led him to seek some sense of direction through his familiar contacts. This, in turn, saw him be slowly introduced to a number of further contacts who, by the virtue of acquaintance and close proximity, gradually brought him into the orbit of resistance activity at a time when such operations were rapidly expanding. This dissertation concludes by showing how these developments led Camus to adjudge the efficacy and legitimacy of active resistance and finally join Combat in November 1943. Camus's resistance did not come to fruition over the gradual course of the war; it was engendered by the immediacy of the ever-shifting historical conditions of this crucial interim between 1942 and 1943 – the *entre-deux* between a passive resistance and an active one.

I. DEFENDING HUMAN TRUTH: CAMUS'S PREWAR PACIFISM

The context of Camus's prewar political disposition is crucial for understanding his resistance. It shows the progression of his thought regarding political activism as well as the manner in which the upheaval of war fundamentally shaped his conception of "resistance," in both the generic sense of the word as a term used to denote the fight against injustice and the specific circumstances in which it might later be applied. Over the course of his journey towards resistance, Camus moved away from the stringent pacifism he adopted at the outbreak of the conflict. Reflecting on the evolution of his political disposition over the course of the war in 1950, he plainly summarized this transition: "I began the war as a pacifist and I finished it a résistant."[14] Drawing a distinction between his early- and postwar positions, he also passed slight judgement on the starting-pole of that trajectory; his pacifism, he continued, was an error

[14] Quoted by Jean-Paul Déron, "Les varies taches," *Cahier des saisons*, no.20 (1960), 615-16, cited in Vincent Grégoire, "Le pacifisme de Camus, de 1935 aux premières années de la guerre," *Les Lettres Romanes* 60, no.3-4 (2006): 275

– an "inconsistency" as he called it.[15] Removed from the passions of the immediate context of the outbreak of war, he was able to view this position – for which he had sacrificed the life of the newspaper he edited by challenging the wartime censors to the point of forced closure – as a misguided endeavor aided by a youthful idealism and a general misreading of international relations. This was not, however, a suggestion that pacifism was misguided as a doctrine or that he fully renounced its efficacy (Camus would be famously opposed to violence in any form throughout his life), but rather that in the specific context of the war, it became, as we shall see, untenable. But at the onset of war, it was the passionate cause he rallied to.

Overall, in the early years of *militantisme* during the 1930s, Camus adopted a grounded, liberal approach to his practice of engagement. Though the term "liberal" summons a variety of connotations, usually in an ideological sense, it refers here to what Camusien scholars have denoted as Camus's fight for truth, justice, and human dignity within a larger "libertarian," humanistic outlook that denounced authoritarianism in favor of "individual and collective liberties."[16] This began with his initial foray into the political arena with his joining of the *Parti communiste algérien* (PCA) in 1935, through his eventual expulsion from the Party in 1937, to his crusading editorship of *Alger-Républicain* and later its afternoon edition, *Le Soir-Républicain* from 1938-1940. Camus's activism, from its incipiency, was thus predicated upon experience rather than esotericism, favoring practicality over philosophy in the sphere of political engagements. In the political realm, as Guérin contends, Camus saw world events tangibly rather than conceptually, and eschewed theory and the promised future of some doctrine in favor of reality and the present – or, as he would famously put into another context decades later, embraced the "We are" to the "We shall be."[17]

Camus's ill-fated communist adventure was crucially influenced by Jean Grenier, who was then his philosophy teacher. Grenier, according to Olivier Todd, "believed that one must become committed and try the experience of politics" and felt that a communist Camus "would 'play a great political role.'" [18] On his own part, Camus later described his motivation to join as driven by "the taste for justice" and his belief in the communist party's efficacy in fighting for the rights of the working class and, as would come to an ugly head in 1937, the indigenous Muslim

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[15] Ibid.

[16] The adjective "libertarian" is diffuse amongst Camusien scholars of his prewar political activism in the face of injustice. See especially P. Vanney, "Ce long détour," *Études camusiennes*; Vanney. "Albert Camus devant la guerre," *Bulletin d'études françaises.*

[17] Camus, "La pensée de midi," *L'homme révolte* (Paris: Gallimard, 1951), 293.

[18] O. Todd, *Albert Camus: A Life*, translated by Benjamin Ivry (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997), 37.

majority of Algeria.[19] But implicit upon his joining was a deep skepticism of the more theoretically-based tenets of Communism, chiefly the theory of historical materialism, which he described as the ideology's "false rationalism." Camus had no interest in reading Marx or Engels as guides to the "true" nature of reality and viewed their grand theories of class struggle and conflict as overly esoteric; the true allure of Communism, by contrast, was its elucidation of the monotony and humdrum of a working-class life – or as he put it, "It seems more than ideas, it is life that often leads to communism."[20]

Camus may have viewed the potential of activism within the PCA with enthusiasm, but his engagement was always conditional. When the Party adopted a Moscow-directed resolution in 1937 supporting the French Algerian government's suppression and imprisonment of Arab nationalists, who until this point had been active in the Party alongside French Algerians and whose cause the PCA had rallied behind, Camus vehemently and openly objected. When party officials demanded he acquiesce and recount his criticisms, he held his ground, and for that was promptly struck from the Party's register. For Camus, his stance was a matter of principle; it was wrong to abandon the plight of native Algerians and antithetical to the purported fight for justice that the Communist Party espoused. To comply with the colonial regime which had "institutionalized immiseration of the Muslim majority in Algeria" in his view, would be to comply with injustice. [21] For the man who had promised "I will always refuse to put between man and life a volume of *Capital*," such compliance was impossible.[22]

The next great crusade of his early political engagement was his work as an editor in 1938 of the newly-formed *Alger-Républicain*, a leftist newspaper with ties to the Popular Front, and its afternoon edition, *Le Soir-Républicain* (formed in 1939). It was here that he met Pascal Pia, who had arrived from mainland France to serve as the editor-in-chief of the embryonic paper. Pia, whose real name was Pierre Pascal Durand, was to become a constant in Camus's life – a big brother figure of sorts – throughout the war years and immediate postwar scene until they slowly grew apart as they pursued different paths post-*Combat*. [23] Ten years Camus's

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[19] "Questionnaire of Carl A. Viggiani – janvier-juin 1958," *OC IV*, 644, quoted in Chirstian Phéline and Agnès Spiquel-Courdille. *Camus, militant communiste: Alger, 1935-1937* (Paris: Gallimard, 2017), 7.

[20] Albert Camus and Jean Grenier. "21 août [1935]," *Correspondance,1932-1960*, edited by Maguerite Dobrenn (Paris: Gallimard, 1981), 23.

[21] John Foley, *Albert Camus: From Absurd to Revolt Albert Camus: From the Absurd to Revolt* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 30.

[22] Camus and Grenier. "21 août [1935]," *Correspondance,* 22.

[23] For more on Pia's character, see Roger Grenier, *Pascal Pia ou le droit au néant* (Paris: Gallimard, 1989).

senior, he had dabbled in Surrealism but was by then more of a general non-conformist. His literary credentials were impressive, having worked with a number of influential figures such as the authors Louis Aragon and André Malraux, who he counted among his friends, as well as the publisher Gaston Gallimard. In terms of experience, he had worked for an assortment of politically diverse journals, from the radical *La Lumière* in the 1920s to the Communist *Ce Soir* (alongside Aragon) in the aftermath of the Popular Front's victory in 1936. Upon assuming the editorship of *Alger-Républicain*, he sought editorial independence in order to construct "a well-polished lively, independent newspaper."[24]

Pia's outlook and his personal disposition were amenable to Camus's own, and as the newspaper began printing, the pair worked increasingly in tandem. But the paper's run was to fall under the overarching shadow of the worsening international state of affairs and the slide to war. Its launch, in fact, occurred just weeks after the Munich Agreement in 1938. Camus would condemn the agreement in no uncertain terms as likely to have a domino effect that would enable the worst forms of international greed: "The appetite for power drives the appetite for power, hatred kindles hatred, imperialism breeds imperialism, and the Treaty of Versailles is the spiritual father of the Munich Agreement."[25] In his view, not only did the Agreement represent a real threat to the geopolitical stability of Europe, it also reflected the corrupt state of political affairs that had guided Europe (and the Third Republic too for that matter) in which greed, self-interest, and political-expediency guided policy-making at the expense of the citizenry. This view would only be reinforced by the declaration of war in September 1939 and the introduction of wartime censorship in Algeria.

For Camus, the outbreak of war signaled that "the reign of beasts has begun."[26] He viewed the thought of the ensuing bloodshed and pointless loss of life as "an instantiation of the absurd," a pointless exercise of imperial greed that, as he had noted presciently upon the declaration of the Munich Agreement, would only worsen.[27] But even within this enmity towards war, Camus's pacifism, like the other forms of his political engagement, was never one of strict doctrinal compliance, and was explicitly directed at the "evil" that the situation of war brought. In that sense, his position appears somewhat inconsistent, oscillating between a longing desire for

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[24] Ibid, 63-4.

[25] Camus, "Alger républicain, 25 avril 1939," *OC I*, 640.

[26] Camus, "7 séptembre 1940 – Cahier III (avril 1939-février 1942)," *OC II*, 887.

[27] See Colin Davis, *Traces of War: Interpreting Ethics and Trauma in Twentieth-Century French Writing* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2018).

a quick end to the conflict and a strong resolve to be active in the fight against the currents of war and its injustice, noting in markedly fierce language: “Complacency is forbidden for oneself and for others.”[28] Feeling solidarity with the victims of war and especially soldiers, Camus even attempted to enlist, despite knowing he would clearly be rejected because of his medical condition. This was not an empty gesture, but rather an impassioned attempt to earn the right to speak on the war; even in his anticipation of failure, he could then claim “I am in the midst of the war and I have the right to judge it. To judge it and to act.”[29]

This *droit* manifested in Camus’s battle against the wartime censors. Defending “opinion and free expression” against their hatred and lies, he sustained a campaign of defiance and harassment in *Le Soir-Républicain* in which he experimented with a number of styles, including adopting a pseudonym of “Vincent Capable” and reprinting an extract of the dictionary definition of “war” and canonical authors such as Molière. The point was to play the role of the gadfly, to test the limits of the censor’s patience while revealing the truth about the war and the hypocrisies of the general government. He continued on the brink of impudence through snide yet sincere attempts to reclaim “the right to defend human truth” and bring public attention to the lies of war, and try, as he might, to combat the lies and authoritarianism he believed to be threatening the dignity and livelihood of humankind.[30] But as the year ended, and the *drôle de guerre* lagged on, Camus’s incessant and dogged challenging of the military censors resulted in the inevitable: they ordered *Le Soir-Républicain* shut down at the beginning of 1940 and left Camus out of a job.

In the meantime, he continued to write and eventually secured a job on the French mainland at the newspaper *Paris-Soir* through Pia. There, Camus was hired as an editorial secretary, largely concerned with the physical production of the paper. Though this skill would eventually come in handy in regard to his entry into Combat, at the time, his work and experience at *Paris-Soir* was rather uneventful. Arriving just in time for the commencement of the German invasion in the spring of 1940, Camus was witness to the Fall of France. Having lost his job at the end of the year, he returned to Algeria in 1941 and settled in Oran until his health crisis brought him back to the French mainland in 1942. There, his libertarian outlook and contemptuous disposition towards the war would come into contact with external factors that

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[28] Camus, “7 séptembre 1940 – Cahier III (avril 1939-février 1942),” *OC II*, 888

[29] Ibid, 889.

[30] Camus, “6 novembre 1939: Notre Position - *Le Soir Républicain*,” *OC I*, 770.

would allow him to transform this attitude of moral resistance into active participation.[31] But for the moment, Camus had no such plans.

II. BETWIXT AND BETWEEN

1942 was a defining year for Camus. Not yet thirty years old, he was beginning to make his mark on the French literary scene. Through Grenier and Pia, he was well-connected to the Parisian world of letters – notably the writer and activist André Malraux and former *NRF* editor Jean Paulhan, with whom Camus had begun professional correspondence as early as 1941. Their assistance helped bring his work to the reader's room of the publishing giant Gallimard, where it was read with enthusiasm. Reflecting on this process, Camus would attribute his success to the importance of these contacts: "I have been helped by chance and by my friends. Pia and Malraux did it all."[32] Indeed, by the time he arrived in Le Panelier, *L'Étranger* had been published and his essay on the absurd, *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*, was following suit.

While recuperating there, he planned to devote himself to a more ascetic lifestyle, focusing on his health and continuing work on a play tentatively titled *Budejovice* (later *Le Malentendu*) and a novel that would eventually become *La Peste* – though at the time, he was considering calling it, "Les Prisonniers." The choice of location was decided by a familial connection; his wife Francine's aunt Marguerite was married to the actor Paul Œttly, whose mother ran a boarding house in the village. Every twelve days he would visit nearby Saint-Étienne for pneumothorax injections to treat his lungs. In a letter to his mentor Jean Grenier, he outlined his hope of being home before winter arrived, which he believed "would be too harsh" for his Mediterranean temperament.[33]

His initial impressions of Le Panelier were largely consigned to his appreciation of the landscape. Lonely, but enchanting, he found the bucolic atmosphere appropriate for an interim of rest and relaxation. From the village he had a stunning view of the dramatic scenery and as the seasons began to change, he observed the beauty of the fall foliage. "The landscape blossoms with leaves," he wrote, and "[the] plateau is covered with a thousand flames of a

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[31] See Vincent Grégoire, "Le pacifisme de Camus," *Les Lettres Romanes*.

[32] Camus and Grenier, "7 mars [1942]," *Correspondance*, 69.

[33] Ibid, 79.

second spring."[34]Around this time he began preparations for his voyage home and during a trip to Lyon he purchased a ticket for a steamer leaving Marseilles towards the end of November.[35] But this all changed after the events of 11 November. The German presence in the former Free Zone had made such plans impossible and left Camus marooned in metropolitan France under precarious circumstances with no clear sense of direction. This marked a watershed in Camus's experience of World War II. He had been attuned to the reality of the war from its outbreak, but until this point, there had always been some respite from its reach in his daily life. While the war may have been proceeding at full throttle, Camus had still been able to practice some semblance of normalcy, however limited. In Oran, he had met with friends, pursued job opportunities, and enjoyed the freedom of movement – all under the auspices of Vichy and the circumstances of the Occupation. Moreover, before his re-arrival in France, he had been in the close proximity of friends in Algeria who were involved in various forms of resistance activities, from the passing of intelligence to the smuggling of *personae non gratae* of the Vichy regime. Camus was certainly aware of this activity and has even been said to have considered forming some sort of resistance group in Oran; however, he would remain officially uninvolved during this period, at most a tacit supporter.[36] Upon arriving in France, he had no plans for immediate action or resistance. His intentions were to merely seek treatment for his tuberculosis, recover, and return home as soon as possible. But now he was stuck.

Now with his plans (and himself) immobilized, these customs of normal life felt far away. In their place, the confusions and uncertainties of war reigned and pervaded every facet of Camus's day-to-day existence. There was no escape. This was evinced by the physical reminder of his isolation, of being exiled amongst the misty summits and slopes of Le Panelier, which had begun to take the appearance of a mountainous limbo in his mind's eye. He saw the despair of his situation as reflected in the landscape of his isolation:

> Seated atop the prow, I pursue this immobile landscape in the land of indifference. Nothing less than all of nature and this white peace that winter brings to hearts too warm – to appease this heart devoured by a bitter love. I watch widening in the sky this swelling of light, which denies the omens of death. A sign of the future at least, above me to which everything speaks of the past. Be silent, lung! Gorge yourself with this pale and icy air which is your nourishment. Stay quiet. Let me not longer be forced to listen to your slow decaying…[37]

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[34] Camus. "Cahier IV (janvier 1942-septembre 1945) – Carnets 1925-1948," *OC II,* 954.

[35] See H. Lottman, *Albert Camus: A Biography*, 264.

[36] This has been described as Camus "sketching an embryo of resistance," See the section on "Résistance" in Guérin, ed., *Dictionnaire Albert Camus*.

[37] Camus, "Cahier IV (janvier 1942-septembre 1945) – Carnets 1925-1948," *OC II,* 967.

In the aftermath of 11 November, Camus pursued a number of options as conditions changed dramatically and rapidly. Upon arriving in the South, the Germans made way immediately for Lyon, which had become the cultural and resistance capital of France in the aftermath of 1940. Such a role had allowed a number of resistance journals and periodicals belonging to both organized movements and intellectuals to publish despite the risks associated with such endeavors. As the Wehrmacht streamlined into the city, what had already been a dangerous situation became critical. The well-informed Pia, who by this point was well ingrained within the Combat resistance movement under the codename "Renoir," relayed to Camus the intel circulating around Lyon: "The general impression is that German pressure will be exerted and Vichy will put these newspapers on notice to reappear if they do not want to be the subject requisitions."[38] His intelligence was correct; a number of papers shut down nearly immediately, either in principle – so as to not have to submit to the scrutiny of the German censors – or because of practical reasons – their general positions were too dangerous. In terms of Camus's own immediate literary circle, Pia also informed him that their former newspaper, *Paris-Soir*, which had moved south, shut down due to financial issues.[39] The Lyon-based, left-leaning *Le Progrès*, whose trace would later be of importance in Camus's burgeoning networks, also ceased operations rather than have to submit to the Germans. These conditions only served to aggravate the already uncertain conditions that faced Camus. Due to the inherent danger coupled with the lack of opportunities, the likelihood of finding a journalistic job, or anything involved with writing for that matter, was increasingly difficult and improbable.

In the face of such circumstances, Camus pursued a number of options in the following days, often in consultation with Pia. Despite the evident dangers, Camus still harbored a slight hope of escaping the situation and finding a way back home; they considered the possibility of him escaping back to Algeria *via* neutral Spain, as Camus believed that he might be able to contact the founder of *Alger-Républicain* Jean-Pierre Faure, who lived in southwest France near the Pyrenees. Such a plan was eventually deemed too risky an endeavor, particularly with Camus's fragile health, and was promptly abandoned.[40] With it clear that Camus would be remaining in metropolitan France, Pia suggested that he follow Vichy's official advice for all

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[38] Camus and Pia, "14 novembre 1942." *Correspondence 1939-1947*, edited by Yves-Marc Ajchenbaum (Paris: Gallimard, 2000), 111.

[39] As a result of this, Pia lost his job and decided to devote himself completely to his resistance activities.

[40] As we shall see, Camus did not completely abandon the idea of escaping to Algeria through Spain. See O. Todd, *Albert Camus: A Life*, 159.

stranded Algerians: contact the prefect of their location for further instruction.[41] There was also the issue of funds; Camus had no discernable income. Aware of this, Pia contacted both André Malraux and Jean Paulhan, who in turn, relayed this to Gaston Gallimard, the head of his eponymous publishing house. It was eventually agreed upon to provide Camus a monthly stipend and to bring him onto the payroll as a part-time reader.

Pia continued to relay intel to Camus, keeping him informed of developments. In a letter of 23 November, he gave Camus news of the whereabouts of Louis Aragon and André Malraux, both of whom had been forced on the run with the arrival of the Germans in the South. Aragon, as a practicing Communist whose writing was prolific in resistance literary periodicals, had now officially gone underground, while Malraux, already in hiding due to his trenchant and famed pre-war anti-fascism, had moved to an undisclosed location in the Côte d'Azur. Pia passed on this information to Camus in coded language, using the first names of their respective wives in their places in order to protect their identities: thus, "Elsa" (Triolet) referred to Aragon; "Josette and her husband" to Malraux.[42] He also commented on the sighting of the *feldgraus* (German soldiers) in Toulouse and especially in Lyon, as the Wehrmacht continued to solidify the new state of affairs in the Free Zone.[43] Camus may have faced great uncertainty at this point, but it is clear that as early as the weeks following his isolation, he was kept up to date with the situation and of the secretive, clandestine world that his associates occupied.

Overall, there was no specific path for Camus to pursue: his options were betwixt and between. He hoped to eventually make his way to Paris and contacted Paulhan to see if it were possible to find a job there, but for the time being, the financial benefits of remaining in Le Panelier were quite appealing (Mme. Œttly generously split the cost of living with Camus evenly, as opposed to charging him a separate fee), and Camus eventually decided to stay in Haute-Loire. Through the connections of his friend Janine Gallimard, who had befriended during his sojourn in Paris in 1940, he was awaiting the arrival of a pass that would allow him to travel between the militarized border demarcating the Northern and Southern Zones, and thus to Paris.[44]

In the meantime, he turned to the local area. Also situated on the plateau of Vivarais-Lignon was the nearby village of Le-Chambon-sur-Lignon (only 4km from Le Panelier). Though

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[41] Camus and Pia. "14 novembre [1942]," *Correspondance,*109.

[42] Camus and Pia. "23 novembre [1942]," *Correspondance*, 112.

[43] Ibid.

[44] See Camus and Pia. "11 décembre [1942]," *Correspondance*, 119.

circumstance had brought him to the area, the fact that he was trapped in Haute-Loire at this particular point in time was crucial, for Haute-Loire and notably Le-Chambon-sur-Ligne, were active pockets of resistance throughout the Occupation. As a Huguenot stronghold imbued with what has been noted as a religiously-based historical precedent of "resistance" that, translated to the political situation under Vichy, entailed tacit intransigence against the actions of the State in favor of spiritual conscience, described by Caroline Moorehead as an "esprit de frondeur."[45] Guided by a strict code of morality, the Chambonais rescued thousands of French Jews, especially children, and other "undesirables" hunted by the so-called "French state."
Amidst his disconcerted state of existence and his aimlessness, Camus conversed with a number of individuals on the plateau involved in some form of active resistance. There is some contention, however, amongst scholars regarding how much Camus was aware of the violent actions occurring in the area. While Herbert Lottman claims that Camus "was not aware, or was only partially aware"[46] of what was happening in the region, Patrick Henry contends, on the basis of testimony from figures Camus interacted with during this period, that not only was Camus aware of the situation in Haute-Loire, but he was informed about resistance activity in France overall.[47] Camus did not comment on these matters for obvious reasons; Henry's analysis and his interviews offer some of the better primary sources we have available regarding Camus in Le Panelier.[48]

One such figure with whom Camus conversed was André Chouraqui, a Jewish friend from Algeria, who worked clandestinely for the Oeuvre de Secours aux Enfants (OSE), the organization responsible for helping bring Jewish children to the plateau. It is clear in his interactions with Chouraqui they largely discussed the significance of *plague* in the Bible, but as Henry notes from his own correspondence with Chouraqui, it was through him that Camus was

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[45] Caroline Moorehead, *Village of Secrets: Defying the Nazis in Vichy France* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2014), 163. See also Patrick Henry, *We Only Know Men: The Rescue of Jews in France During the Holocaust* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2007); Alicia J. Batten, "Reading the Bible In Occupied France: André Trocmé and Le Chambon," *The Harvard Theological Review* 103, no.3 (2010): 309-328.

[46] H. Lottman, *Albert Camus: A Biography*, 272.

[47] Henry bases this on interviews and memoirs collected from figures such as Pierre Fayol, Oscar Rosowsky, Jean Bouix, and André Chouraqui. See P. Henry, *We Only Know Men*, 134-38.

[48] See also the memoirs of Fayol and Chouraqui regarding their actions on the plateau during the war: Pierre Fayol, *Le Chambon-sur-Ligne sous l'Occupation : Les résistances locales, l'aide interalliée, l'action de Virginia Hall (O.S.S)* (Paris: Les Éditions L'Harmattan, 1991) and André Chouraqui, *L'amour fort comme la morte* (Paris: Éditions Robert Laffront, 1990)

introduced to the larger rescue efforts occurring in the region.[49] A more significant relationship was formed with Pierre Fayol (né Lévy), a local Jewish resistance leader for Combat. Fayol was well-connected to the local leaders throughout the region and it is not inconceivable, according to Henry, that the beginnings of some embryonic connection to resistance activity for Camus may be traced to Le Panelier, especially when considering his 1944 letter and its mention of his activity beginning in Haute-Loire.[50] This is perhaps compounded by the fact that Camus would later share with Fayol a copy of Aragon's *Les Étoiles*, the underground intellectual bulletin attached to the Front National that began its circulation in February[51], reportedly telling him "it's dynamite."[52] An examination of these accounts and relationships reveal that despite the trauma of his exile, he was beginning to build connections in the new world of post-1942 France and immerse himself in the growing world of resistance.

As winter began to set in, he turned towards his writing. But even within the confines of his work, he felt the enormity of the situation creep in. He complained to Pia, "I returned to my work to force myself to escape all this news that has bogged me down…If only I had news of my family!"[53] Equally, he began to heavily incorporate elements of this reality into his fiction; for example, *Budejovice* (later *Le Malentendu*) was given the temporary title of *L'Exilé* and borrowed its mountainous setting from Haute-Loire. More so, *La Peste* was particularly reflective of life in France during this tumultuous period. Camus's detailed outline for the second version of the novel tellingly states[54]:

> What seems to me to best characterize this era, is separation. All were separated from the rest of the world, from those they love or from their habits. And in this retreat they were forced, those who could, to contemplate, the others to live a tragic bestial life. In short, there was no middle.

Camus's thoughts were heavy with the pangs of separation – from his family and friends; from his livelihood; from what he thought had been his life's trajectory. But as his early activities in Le Panelier indicate, Camus had slowly begun to accept the situation and turn towards the creation of a new milieu amidst the uncertainty that reigned around him. Emerging from solitude and the dark mood that had accompanied his exile, Camus began to embrace, as he would later

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[49] P. Henry, *We Only Know Men*, 136.

[50] See Jacqueline Lévi-Valensi, ed., *Camus à Combat,* 20 ; P. Henry, *We Only Know Men,* 137.

[51] See Gisèle Sapiro, *The French Writers' War, 1940-1953*, translated by Vanessa Doriott Anderson and Doriott Cohn (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 403.

[52] O. Todd, *Albert Camus: A Life*, 162.

[53] Albert Camus and Pascal Pia. "11 décembre [1942]," *Correspondance*, 121.

[54] Camus. "Cahier IV (janvier 1942-septembre 1945) – Carnets 1925-1948," *OC* II, 978.

write to Roland Barthes in defense of *La Peste* in 1955, "the senses of solidarity and participation…and the acceptance of future struggles."[55] The next step would be to find some way to express this transition.

III. NASCENT NETWORKS AND FIRST STEPS WITH THE RESISTANCE

It was in the new year that Camus fully began to engage by establishing a new milieu in France through a nexus of pre-existing contacts. Things fell into place rather quickly. On 5 January 1943, he arrived in Paris, having attained the promised pass thanks to the efforts of Janine, for his first major trip away from Le Panelier (apart from his periodic trips to Saint-Etienne for treatment). While there, he made a number of contacts in both literary and social milieus; he finally met Jean Paulhan in person as well as other members of the Gallimard reading room, including the philosopher Brice Parain, and befriended Michel Gallimard, Janine's husband and the nephew of Gaston, and the individual with whom he would share a close friendship until their untimely deaths in a devastating 1960 car accident. Moreover, it was through Michel that he became acquainted with the eccentric Dominican priest and *résistant*, Father Raymond Léopald Bruckberger.

Enamored with the peculiarity of Bruckberger's character, that of a boisterous, womanizing priest with a penchant for Nietzsche, Camus would form a lasting friendship with him and a further tether to the fluid world of resistance. Bruckberger, or "Brück" as Camus would call him in his *carnet*, was the enigmatic "self-styled Chaplain of the Resistance."[56] Having fought under future Milice leader and later Waffen-SS officer Joseph Darnand (with whom he befriended and would later defend after the Liberation), Bruckberger had refused to give the oath of loyal to Marshall Pétain and in the beginning of 1942, made contact with Combat senior figure Claude Bourdet.[57] Bruckberger divided his time between Paris and the Dominican convent at Saint-Maximin-la-Sainte-Baume in Provence, and over the course of the year would meet with Camus where they shared intense conversations on morality, religion, and, as Camus would note, incessantly "on damn Nietzsche."[58]

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[55] Camus. "Lettre à Roland Barthes," *OC II*, 286.

[56] See H, Lottman. *Albert Camus, A Biography* , 1997), 275.

[57] See H, Lottman. *Albert Camus, A Biography* , 1997), 275.

[58] Albert Camus, "Cahier IV (janvier 1942-septembre 1945)," *Carnets II: janvier 1942-mars 1951* (Paris: Gallimard, 2013), 220.

Upon his return from Paris, he stopped over in Lyon, meeting with Pia and befriending the poet and communist resister Francis Ponge. Pia had previously introduced them, having sent Ponge manuscripts of *L'Étranger, Le Mythe de Sisyphe*, and an early draft of *Caligula* as early as 1941, but this was the first time they had met in person. At the time of their meeting, Ponge was a writer and poet active in the Front National, the resistance movement of the Communist party, involved in the distribution of propaganda. In an interview in 1979, he recalled that he traveled to Lyon for the newspaper "*Le Progrès,* because I was a résistant."[59] When the journal ceased operations after the German invasion of the South, he left with a year's salary. With no other sense of direction, Ponge "began then to write and then work in the active resistance," at the behest of the local leaders.[60] Camus was quickly taken with Ponge and his intellectual vivacity, and began corresponding within days after their first meeting. In their first letter, a discussion of the absurd as detailed in Camus's *Le Mythe de Sisyphe* and his reading of Ponge's *Le Parti pris des choses* (1942) within an absurdist framework, Camus included a clear appreciation for the external factors, that until this point had only yielded him sorrow and isolation, allowing him to connect with Ponge: "I am happy that the circumstances have allowed me to get to know you. But in truth, the circumstances owed me this."[61]

Around this time, Camus also made the acquaintance of Michel Pontremoli and René Leynaud in Lyon through Ponge. Both Pontremoli (also "Pontré" or "Pontremo" in Camus's *carnets*), a Jewish resister involved in clandestine activity in Marseilles,"[62] and Leynaud, the head of an intelligence group for the Combat resistance movement, became fixtures of his intermittent travels to Lyon throughout the year.[63] Camus was to become especially close with Leynaud, whose strict moral compass was, in his view, unshakeable. Leynaud was an unpublished poet who had begun his career as a journalist at *Le Progrès* in Lyon. With the outbreak of war, he had been mobilized and upon returning home, had ceased writing in order to completely devote himself to resistance. His sister's home on the Rue Vieille-Monnaie, which was used as an occasional place of refuge for passing resisters, became a gathering place for

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[59] Lois Dahlin. "Entretien avec Francis Ponge: ses rapports avec Camus, Sartre et d'autres," *French Review* 54, no.2 (1980): 272.

[60] Ibid, 273.

[61] Albert Camus and Francis Ponge. "27 janvier 1943," *Correspondance, 1941-1957*, edited by Jean-Marie Gleize (Paris: Gallimard, 2013), 80.

[62] See Jean-Marie Gleize. "Note – 28 avril 1943," *Correspondance*, 105.

[63] Both Leynaud and Pia operated under the same regional leader of the "R.1" Rhône-Alpes division of Combat, Marcel Peck.

this burgeoning network of himself, Ponge, Camus, and Pontrémoli.[64] He and Camus were kindred spirits, and of their many rendezvouses in Lyon and Saint-Étienne, Camus would remember their night-time conversations at the Rue Vieille-Monnaie home with fondness. Remarking on one such night in his elegiac introduction to a 1947 posthumous collection of Leynaud's poems (Leynaud would be executed by the Gestapo in June 1944), Camus wrote:

> It was on this occasion that I was able to measure what particularly distinguished him, the force and quality of his silence, since we then spent more than half an hour side-by-side, apparently busy watching the passers-by, concerned only with following a common thought.[65]

A devout Catholic, whose religion guided his determined sense that the resistance struggle was righteous, Leynaud was perhaps the most influential individual that Camus associated with during this period. Though they would rarely discuss the specifics of their activities, they spoke often of "morality," and being of the same opinion that in "the nights of the Occupation…[one must] do something for it."[66] It was more than fitting then, in Camus's mind, that Leynaud should have the resistance codename of "Clair."

In close proximity to these individuals, he was impressed by their shared intellectual curiosities, their tenacity, and above all, their activism. He wrote to Grenier in a letter dated 3 February 1943, comparing them to eccentric, great figures from the annals of history: "I have been around people as remarkable as Luther and Xavier de Maistre, Paracelse and Clovis Hugues."[67] With such "gens remarquables" counted among his growing circle of contacts, returning to the remote and secluded mountains of Haute-Loire was rather dispiriting. Turning to the dramatic landscape that served as a cruel reminder of his continued exile, he concluded: "Here, the monastic life continues, austerity, silence, solitude."[68]

At the same time that Camus was expanding this network, the effects of the 1942 German invasion of the South continued to reverberate throughout the landscape. In short, it had, as Olivier Wieviorka has noted, "reduced to nothing the French sovereignty Vichy had prided itself on defending."[69] Despite the Germans clearly violating the armistice, Vichy had

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[64] See O. Todd, *Albert Camus: A Life*, 163; Jean-Marie Gleize. "Note – 20 mai 1943," *Correspondance*, 113.

[65] Camus, "Introduction aux 'Poésies Posthumes' de René Leynaud," *OC II*, 709.

[66] Ibid, 707, 709.

[67] Camus and Grenier. "3 février 1943," *Correspondance*, 85.

[68] Ibid.

[69] Olivier Wieviorka, *The French Resistance*, translated by Jean-Marie Todd (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2016), 31.

done nothing; the Germans had marched into the supposedly "zone libre" and Pétain offered no resistance, only acquiescence. Pia had certainly reflected this sentiment in his writing to Camus at the time, remarking that, amongst the immediate fallout, "almost nothing remains of Vichy's sovereignty, but they maintain this fiction."[70] For many, such actions eroded the belief in *le double jeu* (the double game) as a legitimate reading of Vichy's policy aims and by consequence, "a discernible hardening of opposition to Vichy" filtered amongst the population of the Southern Zone.[71] Consequently, there was an increase in receptivity to resistance, allowing it to develop as "a wider social phenomenon."[72] Thus, resistance organizations, which had hitherto been comprised of a small "elite" separated from the anaesthetized masses in their cognizance, gained momentum with 1943 yielding their "fastest expansion."[73]

Such was Camus's case. Writing to Grenier in early March, he expressed an awareness of current events and the exacerbation of tensions in France, developments he could not help but view "avec angoisse." (with anguish)[74] They had caused him to re-evaluate his initial prudence towards active resistance and reconsider the state of his inaction. Whereas before, this inaction was merely an expression of the necessity of caution and discretion in the face of ever-present danger, it now appeared to him as outdated. To do nothing while people suffered was to allow injustice to prosper. This amounted to a tacit acquiescence to the injustices of the Occupation. On the other hand, to place oneself in the "middle of the war," as Camus had sought to do back in 1939, was to refuse such injustice. "When one chooses renunciation in spite of the certainty of 'Everything is allowed,'" he wrote privately that same day, "something remains, and that is we no longer judge others."[75] In Camus's view, the right to make moral judgements, to declare oneself righteous in their cause, required personal engagement. Through his own hardships, he had thus reached the precipice of direct action and realized a

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[70] Camus and Pia. "23 novembre 1942," *Correspondance*, 112.

[71] H.R. Kedward, *In Search of the Maquis: Rural Resistance in Southern France, 1942-1944* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 5.

[72] See Julian Jackson, *France: The Dark Years*, *1940-1944*, 427.

[73] Ibid.

[74] Camus and Grenier, "9 mars 1943," *Correspondance*, 88.

[75] Camus, "Cahier IV (janvier 1942-septembre 1945) – Carnets 1925-1948," *OC II*, 994. Though Camus's conception of the absurd has largely been outside the frame of this study, the theme of rejecting nihilism (the notion that "tout est permis") was central to Camus's evolving consideration of the consequences of the absurd. It would find its expression in *Caligula* (1945), which had been undergoing edits during this period, as well as an essay on "revolt" that Camus began drafting during this time (this would eventually become "Essai sur la révolte" (1945).

late, but necessary understanding: resistance and solidarity were the only logical responses moving forward. “Now,” he continued in his letter to Grenier, “I know that is the country. But it took suffering for me to recognize that.”[76] The delayed path to this understanding, which included further, yet fruitless attempts to return home by way of Spain, became a point of self-critical reference for Camus; it was a hesitation not to his “honor.”[77]

This change in Camus also manifested in a certain perceptiveness towards the rapidly evolving situation. Later in the month, he noted the appearance of the *Maquis* in Haute-Loire, whose ranks had swelled since the introduction of the *Service du travail obligatoire* in February 1943 and contributed to an increasingly violent situation in the rural territories they gathered in. The appearance of these “convalescent warriors who have a good appetite for youth” had coincided with a season of rough weather, which was seemingly endemic to the region, and further turmoil in Camus’s own personal life.[78] Pia had been increasingly absent and through Ponge, Camus learned that he was being hunted by the Vichy police and Gestapo and had fled to Switzerland. Losing his main benefactor and the conduit through which his growing connections flowed was difficult for Camus, but he was settled enough to remain grounded. Moreover, this loss, as significant as it was, was perhaps offset somewhat by the arrival of word from his wife Francine, whom he had not been in contact with since the German invasion of the South.[79]

Camus’s growing involvement in the world of resistance during the first half of 1943 reached its zenith in the form of a false identity card dated 20 May 1943.[80] Reading “Albert Mathé: Born in Choisy-le-Roi and living in Epinay-sur-Orge,” this card confirmed that Camus was finally active in some capacity.[81] That same day, in a letter to Ponge, he practiced the same awareness of the necessity to be secretive that Pia had displayed earlier in his November 1942 letter, where he had obfuscated the names of Malraux and Aragon. Now active in resistance, Camus left things vague. Describing his recent “passage to Lyon” in one short sentence, he

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[76] Camus and Grenier, “9 mars 1943,” *Correspondence*, 88.

[77] Ibid. Camus had continued to consider Spain as an option for returning home, even enlisting the help of Bruckberger and Pia in separate instances. However, like earlier, such a plan was deemed too risky.

[78] Camus and Grenier, “15 mars 1943,” *Correspondance,* 90.

[79] Camus reached her through a mutual friend in neutral Portugal who agreed to forward mail from France to Algeria and back.

[80] See J. Lévi-Valensi, ed., “Un journal dans l’histoire,” *Camus à Combat,* 36.

[81] See O. Todd, *Albert: A Life*, 178.; Jacquéline Lévi-Valensi contends that Camus’s activity at this point-in-time would largely have been involved in propaganda efforts in Haute-Loire, as his 1944 letter to Francine later hinted at.

abbreviated the name of Leynaud as "L."[82] Caution was perhaps advisable; in reality, he was at none other than the house of "resistance" on the Rue Vieille-Monnaie. The ambiguity in his words, coupled with the arrival of his identity card, suggest an awareness of the necessity to now be secretive. Intimate with the *modus operandi* of resistance members, Camus now acted accordingly.

IV. THE END OF THE "DÉTOUR": ENTRY INTO THE RESISTANCE

Camus's formal induction into the active resistance might be considered, if not fortuitous, certainly timely. By the summer of 1943, the enlargement of resistance movements seemed to coincide with the resolve of Camus's disposition towards resistance, creating the perfect set of conditions for his official entry. For Camus, whose tuberculosis would not allow him to undertake any serious work such as gunrunning, sabotage, or intelligence, his options were limited and he was very much confined to the one thing he could contribute: words. This, we shall see, aligned well with the expanding efforts and consolidation of resistance movements and the value they placed on the written word in their outreach efforts.

The importance of propaganda in resistance movements, especially those in the South who were forced to situate themselves to Vichy, cannot be minimized. Although the direction of the war had changed enough to make military action more feasible by 1943, following the Allied landing in North Africa, the German defeat at Stalingrad, and rumblings of a Second Front opening soon, outreach by means of propaganda – mainly through clandestine press – remained of essence. Newspapers were important tools for recruitment, as concrete proof of an organization's existence, and also as means of becoming known. Indeed, the main objective in producing newspapers for those in the South was to stir the general public out of complacency towards Vichy and engender sentiments of the need to "resist."[83] The importance of the clandestine press during this period can be seen in the outcome of the unity negotiations headed up by Charles De Gaulle's emissary, Jean Moulin: the consolidation of the three largest resistance movements in the South – Emmanuel d'Astier de la Vigerie's Libération-Sud, Jean-Pierre Lévy's Franc-Tireur, and Henri Frenay's Combat – into the singular Mouvements Unis de la Résistance (MUR) in January 1943. This saw each organization pool their paramilitary resources into a single, collective entity that would operate under the auspices of the Free

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[82] Camus and Ponge, "20 mai 1943," *Correspondance,* 110.

[83] Olivier Wieviorka, "La presse clandestine," *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome* 108, no.1 (1996): 128.

French in London. Yet, within this agreement, each organization retained exclusive control of their respective newspapers.

Operating out of Lyon, where Moulin had set shop, the MUR looked to consolidate and coordinate their efforts. However, by the summer of 1943, it was clear that the situation had become too dangerous to remain in Lyon. The Gestapo had progressively intensified their efforts to crack down on resistance activity in the city, but it was the arrest and brutal death of Moulin that saw the MUR make the decision to fully move operations to Paris, where some of its *centres de décision* (decision making centers) were already in place. With this decision finalized, the news team of Combat decided to follow suit. Their next step upon arrival would be "to rebuild links, find mailboxes, reinforce teams."[84] This would require a reconfiguration of the newspaper's orientation – its aim, scope, and style, or as Combat executive Claude Bourdet would remember, a necessity to "start from scratch."[85]

A major factor influencing this reconfiguration was the organization's desire to expand its range into "all spheres," particularly the cultural domain in the wake of the German invasion and also the growing popularity of the Front National among writers, especially with the CNE.[86] Central to Combat's reorientation was the man chosen by Bourdet to run the newspaper, none other than Pascal Pia. Recommended for this role by "R.1" leader Marcel Peck, Pia's journalistic experience and resistance credentials were a perfect fit. Returning to France in September, Pia joined forces with the rest of the Combat team that had arrived in Paris, including Jacqueline Bernard, the paper's editorial secretary, and André Bollier, who handled printing and distribution, and began preparation for the paper's ambition of facilitating "the renovation of the world of written information."[87] His arrival coincided with the opening of another position concerning the paper's new direction, which he in turn, recommended a certain Albert Camus. Bourdet, familiar with *L'Étranger* and *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*, was impressed with Pia's recommendation. Camus's background and experience with the physical production of a paper, along with his political disposition, made him an ideal candidate. Rather astutely, he described Camus's engagement as "one of those accidents that determine the lives of individuals, if not societies."[88]

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[84] Y-M. Ajchenbaum, *À la vie, à la mort*, 57.

[85] Claude Bourdet, *L'aventure incertaine* ((Paris: Éditions Stock, 1975), 311.

[86] Ibid, 310.

[87] Y-M. Ajchenbaum, *À la vie, à la mort*, 66.

[88] Claude Bourdet, *L'aventure incertaine*, 310.

Camus's immersion into the more organized facets of resistance was not limited to an official movement. Through Ponge and Leynaud, he had been introduced to René Tavernier, who directed the wartime literary review *Confluences*. A committed resister, Tavernier had been sheltering the underground Louis Aragon and his wife Elsa Triolet in his Lyon home since the beginning of 1943. Camus had finally met Aragon and Triolet sometime in Lyon during the early part of the year. Tavernier's home had become a meeting place for the growing Comité National des Écrivains (CNE), the literary publication of the Front National that Aragon headed. The CNE had formed in December 1941, but after the German invasion of the South in November 1942, the Southern section had been placed under the auspices of Aragon. In taking control of the CNE in the South, he took advantage of what Gisèle Sapiro had called a "politics of openness" in the coordination of intellectuals in the aftermath of 11 November.[89] He sought to utilize networks that already existed under the subversive literary publications in the South in order to link together a field of politically diverse and geographically disparate intellectuals. More so, despite its attachment to *Parti communiste française* (PCF), Aragon sought to maintain a wider appeal and did not emphasize a particular political position in the organization, save the obvious affiliation with resistance circles. Like the MUR, the CNE consolidated its respective field, that of the intellectuals, which became increasingly coordinated throughout the year. Indeed, by July of 1943, the CNE held its inaugural meeting in Tavernier's home.

At this time, Camus also continued to socialize with his Lyon network. Near the beginning of July, he had performed a reading of *Le Malentendu* in Leynaud's home for Ponge, Pontremoli, and Leynaud. Ponge was especially impressed, praising "the intellectual satisfaction it provides" in a letter of 8 July.[90] Their talk was not merely of intellectual interests; in the same letter Ponge wondered about the state of war, asking Camus about the probability of the Allies opening a Second or even Third Front. In response, Camus reflected on the exhausting nature of the situation of the Occupation and its seemingly never-ending difficulties and miseries. "For the moment," he wrote, "it is 'patience' as to conduct, and 'poverty' as to morals," reflecting on the effect that the gloomy countenance of France had on the soul, and the difficulty of relying on patience alone to endure as the morality of the world seemed to fester around him.[91] Camus's appraisal of "le moment," however, should be interpreted in view of his only substantive work concerning the resistance, *Lettres à un ami allemand*. Camus published the

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[89] Gisèle Sapiro, *The French Writers' War, 1940-1953*, 393.

[90] Camus and Ponge, "8 juillet 1943," *Correspondance*, 115.

[91] Camus and Ponge, "11 juillet 1943," *Correspondance*, 130.

first of these four clandestinely written essays in July 1943, around the same time the CNE was holding its inaugural meeting at Tavernier's house.[92] Framed as responses to a rhetorical German friend, they represent the culmination of his long journey to resistance: the path from the stringency of his early-war pacifism, through the vacillation of his sympathetic yet tacit leanings to, finally, the certainty of his active engagement. As "topical writings," written in the midst of this engagement, the *Lettres* justify the conditions of his participation and affirm his *raison de résister*: the discovery, through hardship and struggle, of solidarity and common human values worth fighting for.[93]

The "Première Lettre" opens with a taunt of sorts from the narrator's German interlocutor: "Well, you don't love your country."[94] Having begun from a similar position of recognizing the absurdity of existence, the German friend found meaning in nationalism, which in his view, subsumes all other meanings and allows for the excesses of violence and destruction to be committed in the name of the higher value of the "Nation." The narrator also loves his country, but has rejected the eschatological consequences of the German's conclusion and instead insisted on the necessity of limits ("there are means that cannot be excused").[95] For him, love of country comes with a caveat: the country can only be kept alive "by keeping justice alive."[96] Five years after this conversation, he finds himself battered by the war and Occupation; yet, it is in this position of subjugation that he has reached lucidity regarding the legitimacy of the fight against such subjugation and found its inverse: the affirmation of justice through solidarity.

This five-year journey toward discovering the "sort of greatness [that] keeps us going" was long and full of suffering.[97] But it was precisely a result of that suffering that Camus (and his narrator by proxy), arrived at the conclusion that in the face of sustained violence, "intellectual" resistance alone falls short. One might be dispositioned towards supporting the idea of fighting for justice but wary of the use of violence, of adding to "the frightful misery of this world" as Camus had been, but as he had learned over the course of his year stranded in metropolitan

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[92] The *Lettres* would be collected in an official publication by Gallimard in 1945 and dedicated to René Leynaud.

[93] Camus, "Préface à l'édition italienne – *Lettres à un ami allemand*," *OC II*, 11.

[94] Ibid, 9.

[95] Ibid.

[96] Ibid.

[97] Ibid, 10.

France, force can only be met with force.[98] In order to defeat injustice, one must fight back. From that labored, yet essential pathway, both Camus and his narrator reached the understanding that "the spirit together with the sword will always win out over the sound alone."[99] Thus violence, as an equitable and proportionate response to injustice, was legitimized for Camus.

Conflating his journey with that of the resistance *tout court*, Camus reflects on the pathway he has taken to reach the ranks of active resistance:

> We had to make a long detour, and we are far behind. It is a detour that regard for truth for imposes on intelligence, that regard for friendship imposes on the heart. It is a detour that safeguarded justice and put truth on the side of those who questioned themselves. And, without a doubt, we paid very dearly for it.[100]

This was a "détour" of both solitude and companionship, a lengthy progression that while necessary, had its cost; however late or not, at last he had arrived. And more so, by reaching the end of the detour, by placing himself "in the thick of the fray" and "not above the fray"[101] he had earned the right that he had sought since the war's outbreak: "the right to judge it. To judge it and to act."[102] Through a long, painful journey, he had crossed the boundaries of disposition from internal agreeance into activism and is thus justified in speaking to the German friend and in judging his fight.[103]

This was not merely a metaphysical discovery, but one forged in a historical period of both overwhelming uncertainty and of opportunities that would not have existed otherwise. As Camus navigated this inconstant landscape, he ground himself through a growing array of contacts and networks. Wieviorka has written that "the passage from belief to action reflects the importance of cultures, carried by social groups or political parties, which shaped the forms of engagement and affected its meaning."[104] Camus's passage relied on both the uniqueness of these circumstances and the vast experiences of the diverse society he had assembled around him; and now, he had moved from the periphery into its folds.

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[98] Ibid, 11.

[99] Ibid.

[100] Ibid.

[101] Ibid, 12.

[102] Camus, "7 séptembre 1940 – Cahier III (avril 1939-février 1942)," *OC II*, 888.

[103] Ibid, 12.

[104] Olivier Wieviorka. "À la recherche de l'engagement (1940-1944)," *Vingtième siècle. Revue d'histoire* 60, no.1 (1998): 68.

As summer wound down, Camus spent the early weeks of September at the Dominican convent at Saint-Maximin-la-Sainte-Baume in Provence as a personal guest of Bruckberger. While there, Camus would reflect on the commitment to duty: "Duty is de facto what we know to be just and good – 'preferable.'"[105] But what is preferable, however, is not easy **-** "because even what we know to be preferable, we do it with difficulty," Camus continues.[106] Despite the difficulty to do what is needed, it must be done. The consequences of the alternative, that of inaction, require a timely and unwavering response. After weeks of respite and relaxation, Camus left the convent accompanied by Bruckberger; this would enable him to facilitate the meeting of two of his contacts, Bruckberger and Leynaud in Saint-Étienne. In this meeting of minds, Camus brought together the eccentricity "of an energetic and rebellious Dominican , who said he hates the Christian-Democrats [*les démocrates-chrétiens*] and dreams of a Nietzschean Christianity [*christianisme nietzschéen*] on Bruckberger's part, and an individual "who could only have estrangement from the prudent forms of Christianity, felt interested in this monk-soldier."[107] Here, Camus had actively worked to connect different areas of his network, facilitating as Pascal Pia and many others had done for him.

By the month of October, Camus had finalized plans to move to Paris and had officially received a job offer at the Gallimard office as a permanent reader, as well as a member of the *jury du prix de la Pléiade*. He maintained a double-identity of sorts – burgeoning literary figure by day, engaged resister by night. Camus was by now an established figure in the French literary scene, and more so, an immersed member of resistance circles. Writing to Grenier about the state of things, he believed, with resolution and determination: "I do not believe that the war is finished in any case we haven't been through the hardest part of it. But we'll get by if we are brave."[108] This was a man now committed to the struggle, engaged in the difficulty of "duty" and more significantly, prepared to do something. Such was the case in his appearance at the plenary meeting of the CNE that month, surrounded by illuminary literary figures, including, as Gisèle Sapiro has shown, a delegation from the Gallimard/*NRF* network headed by

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[105] Camus, "Cahier IV (janvier 1942-septembre 1945)," *Carnets II*, 234.

[106] Ibid.

[107] Camus, "Introduction aux 'Poésies Posthumes' de René Leynaud," *OC II*, 709.

[108] Camus and Grenier, "7 octobre 1943," *Correspondance,* 106.

Jean Paulhan.[109] Indicative of both his status and the continued importance of his networks, it is rather significant that he should bring along one of his contacts from the period: Bruckberger.

And so it was that in November 1943, the editorial team of the Combat resistance movement's clandestine newspaper welcomed a newcomer into their ranks. Brought along by Pia to one of their early meetings in Paris, just as they prepared to write their first issues from Paris, Camus joined under the pseudonym "Bauchard" and began contributing to the physical production of the newspaper right away.[110] In a 11 November letter to Pierre and Marianne Fayol back in Haute-Loire, dated precisely one year to the day of his exile, he confirmed his participation: "You know I intended to do some journalism as well. Everything is going well on this side and I am using my little talents to the best of my ability."[111] The message could not have been clearer. Albert Camus was in the resistance.

CONCLUSION

This dissertation has demonstrated how Camus's resistance was *premised* upon a long and measured process of self-reflection that began with the outbreak of war in 1939, but was *produced* by the particular circumstances of the period between 1942 and 1943. In his prewar political engagements he conceptualized a certain understanding of political engagement based upon combating the threats of instantiated injustice through a libertarian, individual rights-focused approach. This disposition, along with his general left-of-center political alignment, allowed him to maintain a certain sympathy or inclination towards the notion of "resistance" throughout the war years. Yet, having a certain state-of-mind amenable towards a certain concept and actually acting upon such leanings are two separate things; while much of Camus' affinities lay with the struggle of resistance, it was not until 1943 that he actively engaged in that fight.

By delimiting the scope of this study to the period between Camus's isolation in metropolitan France in November 1942 and his official entry into the Combat resistance movement in November 1943, this study has shown how Camus's decision to "make the leap" into active resistance was a complex negotiation between character and contingency. It follows

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[109] See Gisèle Sapiro, "Les conditions professionnelles d'une mobilisation réussie: Le Comité national des écrivains," *Le Mouvement social*, no. 180 (1997): 179-191 and Sapiro, *The French Writers' War*.

[110] The precise date of Camus's arrival at Combat is not certain, though Camus's biographers date his first meeting attended shortly after his 30th birthday on the 7th. See H. Lottman, *Albert Camus: A Biography* and O. Todd, *Albert Camus: Une Vie*.

[111] Correspondence with Marianne and Pierre Fayol, quoted in Yves-Marc Ajchenbaum, *À la vie, à la mort*, 67.

that the aftermath of 11 November 1942, which left Camus stranded in metropolitan France under precarious circumstances, created the right set of conditions to which he could apply his sympathetic inclinations towards resistance to active participation. To be sure, this was a time marked by uncertainty and the need to exercise an abundance of caution and prudence in the face of a constantly shifting landscape; but, as we have seen, it was also one that afforded new pathways, new opportunities, and new acquaintances.

Here, the categories of networks and contacts have assumed a monumental importance in this dissertation as the means through which to examine the changing set of circumstances Camus navigated over the course of this crucial year. During this period, he turned to his familiar contacts in the face of an overwhelming uncertainty and through them, was introduced to a number of further contacts, who, in turn, brought him into the often interconnected and intersecting realms of resistance activity. As this activity increased over the course of 1943, Camus became increasingly immersed in the resistance struggle and familiarized with the variance with which the different segments and milieus of the resistance operated. Thus, in November 1943 he finally entered into the ranks of active resistance, joining the Combat resistance movement nearly a year to the day of his exile.

Camus's involvement in the French resistance would put him on the path to instant stardom in the immediate postwar scene. At the Liberation less than a year later, Camus would emerge from the shadows of clandestine resistance to instantaneous celebrity as the young, celebrated author of *L'Étranger* et *Le Mythe de Sisyphe* (both 1942), but more so, as the editor-in-chief of the resistance newspaper *Combat*. He would enjoy "a singular prestige" amongst the men of letters in liberated France, dominating, if only for a brief moment, the intellectual pulse of a France seemingly rejuvenated from the years of Occupation.[112] But such a grand trajectory was far from envisioned by Camus in the immediate aftermath of his isolation in November 1942. In sum, his responses to the challenges of the German invasion of the Free Zone were largely impromptu and *ad hoc*. Like many others faced with the questions of resistance whilst navigating the overwhelmingly uncertainty of the situation of Occupation, Camus acted as best as the circumstances allowed while keeping his options open. To this end, he turned towards the familiar, his preexisting relationships and connections, and the mundane, the small, practical, everyday activities that were feasible. In the face of the larger historical currents of war

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[112] Raymond Aron, *Mémoires* (Paris: Julliard, 1983), quoted in Tony Judt. "The Reluctant Moralist: Albert Camus and the Discomforts of Ambivalence," in *The Burden of Responsibility: Blum, Camus, Aron, and the French Twentieth Century*, Chicago: Chicago University Press (1998), 88. This position, in Tony Judt's words, was an overture to Camus's more profound postwar role as "…the moral voice of his era…"

and occupation, he acted within the constraints placed upon him and approached developments in the only way possible: as they came.

Faced with the heavy weight of history, it was in the day-to-day that Camus located some respite, however limited, and more importantly, found some sense of a pathway forward. And it was through the social category of networks and contacts that Camus navigated the shifting landscape of occupied France and proceeded down the route that would lead him towards resistance. As Camus explained to Grenier in the spring of 1943, "History is turned upside down, but the little life continues."[113]

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[113] Camus and Grenier. "9 mars 1943." *Correspondance,* 89.

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