

What does the arrest and release of Emile Borel and his colleagues in 1941 tell us about the German occupation of France?

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Abstract

The Germans occupying Paris arrested Emile Borel and three other members of the *Académie des Sciences* in October 1941 and released them about five weeks later. Drawing on German and French archives and other sources, we argue that these events illustrate the complexity of the motivations and tactics of the occupiers and the occupied. While Borel and his colleagues were genuine members of the Resistance, and those who arrested them were full participants in a brutal Occupation, both sides respected a bargain, of no small importance to the Vichy regime, that allowed the university to pursue its work if its members avoided overt acts of opposition.

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1 Introduction

In late 1941, the German occupiers of Paris detained for about five weeks four elderly members of the *Académie des Sciences*. The most politically prominent of the four was the mathematician Emile Borel (1871–1956). The others were the physicist Aimé Cotton (1869–1951), the physiologist Louis Lapicque (1866–1952), and the mineralogist Charles Mauguin (1878–1958).

Borel's wife, recounting the events in her 1968 autobiography, admitted that she had no clue about the thinking behind the Germans' actions. In this article, we provide some information on this point, primarily from documents the Germans left behind when they fled Paris. These documents were explored by a number of historians in the 1990s, especially Thalmann [49], Michels [31], and Burrin [7]. They were thoroughly cataloged in 2002 [3]. But they have not been previously examined with an eye to the arrests of the academicians.

The German documents we examine are now in the AJ/40 series in the French national archives in Paris.³ This material was originally in the archives of the *Militärbefehlshaber in Frankreich* (Military Command in France), known

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by the acronym MBF. We also draw on French documents from various sources, including the national archives, the archives of the *Académie des Sciences*, and the archives of the French police. There may be further relevant information in these archives and in the German archive at Freiburg [27].

We originally set out to understand the October 1941 arrests as an episode in Emile Borel's life. Borel remains central to our story; we still know more about the context for Borel than for the other three academicians, and this context includes a revealing episode after the war, when Borel sought to revisit the 1942 decision by the *Académie des Sciences* not to risk antagonizing the Germans by electing him permanent secretary. The archives indicate, however, that the Germans were no more interested in Borel than the other three academicians, and were not very interested in any of them as individuals. Their importance was more as a symbol of the French academic elite. The archives show just how divided the Germans were on the question of how to deal with this elite. The four academicians were arrested by the German intelligence service in Paris. But the arrest came in the context of efforts by other German services to rid the French professoriat of elements they considered undesirable, and in the context of rivalries among the German services and tensions between them and the French government. The discussions preceding the release involved the MBF, the SS, the German navy, and the German embassy.

To set the stage for the story of the arrest and release of the four academicians, we review Borel's life and career prior to World War II (Section 2), the complexity of the German occupation of Paris (Section 3), and how the Germans dealt with the French academic elite earlier (Section 4). We then look at what the German archives tell us about the arrest and release and at what other sources tell us about French and international reaction (Section 5). We then discuss the further arrests of academicians in 1942 and Borel's attempt after the war to reverse the 1942 election in the *Académie des Sciences* (Section 6). In a brief conclusion (Section 7), we discuss the significance of the German treatment of the French academic elite for our understanding of the Occupation and the Collaboration.

Pierre Laborie has written eloquently about how difficult it has been for the French to find the distance to write dispassionate history of their interaction with the German occupiers (p. 182 of [22]):

The judgements passed on the collective attitudes and behaviors of the period between 1940 and 1944 are characteristic of this mixture of respectable intentions, fearfulness, and anxiety over all that is at stake in the realm of memory. The extraordinary variety of personal experiences passed on by friends and family, as well as the topic's sensitivity and its popularity—everyone has an opinion on the matter—limit the dispassionate perspective of historians and their efforts to explain what happened. When these perspectives stray too far from what is touchily guarded as 'memorially correct' to a particular group or community, they are poorly received, and sometimes even suspected of insidiously striving to justify the unjust-

tifiable. The troubling question of behaviors during the Occupation is a recurring central theme in a debate that has been more about pronouncing judgement than about dealing with the issues and understanding their complexity. Such questions are ! deeply relevant to our times because of their moral dimension, and yet too often they are reduced to the level of excessive generalizations, simplistic alternatives, or even summary judgments of the ‘all guilty, all collaborationist’ variety.

In the case of science, this analysis often applies even to those who are not French, for the emotional ties between scientists and their historians easily cross temporal and geographic boundaries.

The persecution of the Jews was incontestably the greatest shame of Vichy France. As a condition for keeping their own jobs, almost all the decision makers in France, French and German, helped implement or at least accepted the dismissal of Jews from most employment, facilitating the murders that followed. But we will minimize our commentary on this moral dimension, in the hope of avoiding the pitfalls that Laborie points out and obtaining some degree of access to the ambiguous context, for scientists as for others, of life in this troubling period.

2 About Emile Borel

Emile Borel was born in a middle-class Protestant family in Saint-Affrique, in Aveyron in the center of southwest France. He kept close ties with Saint-Affrique throughout his life. After brilliant secondary studies, he went to Paris to prepare for the competitions leading to the *Grandes Ecoles*, the schools where the French scientific and administrative elites are trained. There he studied under the famous teacher Boleslas Niewengłowski along with the son of the mathematician Gaston Darboux, and he later recounted that it was at Darboux’s home that he discovered his passion for scientific and especially mathematical research. The *Ecole Normale Supérieure* was the place to pursue this passion.

Borel immediately specialized in mathematics at the *Ecole Normale*, beginning fundamental studies on divergent series, for which he introduced different modes of summability. This soon led him to fundamental work on the measure of sets, which cleared the way for Lebesgue to construct his integral and revolutionize analysis [18]. Measure theory also led Borel, starting in 1905, to focus on probability. He was a leader in renewing mathematical probability at the beginning of the 20th century, and in French eyes, his work established the elements for the axiomatization of probability using measure theory.⁴

Borel saw the mathematician as a citizen, and he put this conception into practice with works of popularization and philosophy [6]. From early in his

⁴This axiomatization was completed by Kolmogorov in his *Grundbegriffe der Wahrscheinlichkeitsrechnung* in 1933, but Kolmogorov credited Maurice Fréchet for the main idea, and Fréchet in turn credited Borel [20, 43].

career, he engaged in an active social and public life, especially through circles connected to the family of his talented wife Marguerite and his father-in-law, the mathematician Paul Appell. Marguerite wrote fiction under the pen name Camille Marbo (for MARguerite BOREL). In 1913, she won the Femina prize for her novel *La statue voilée*. In 1905, Borel and Marbo founded a monthly journal, the *Revue du Mois*, which for 10 years was a leading general intellectual outlet for the moderate French left. Borel was active, along with Paul Langevin, in the *Ligue des Droits de l'Homme*, which had become well known for its support for Alfred Dreyfus.⁵ In 1911, Borel and Marbo harbored Marie Curie in their home when Curie, then a widow, was under attack from the right-wing press over her affair with Langevin.⁶ They also spent time in the summers on the coast of Brittany at the hamlet on the Point of Arcouest, where other left-wing French scientists, including the Langevins, the Curies, and the Perrins, also owned cottages; Louis Lapicque, the physiologist arrested along with Borel, was the first to have settled there.

During World War I, Borel was a leader in putting the French technical and scientific elites at the service of the military. In 1915, at the age of 44, he volunteered for the army himself in order to test acoustical devices for locating guns on the battlefield. The same year, the mathematician Paul Painlevé, then Education Minister, asked Borel to head a new office devoted to assessing and implementing inventions that could be used in the war [29].

Having been close to centers of power during World War I, and having been personally devastated by the war's slaughter of young graduates of the *Ecole Normale*, where he had been deputy director, Borel turned increasingly to politics after the war. Determined to work for greater social justice and more understanding between nations, he became prominent in the radical-socialist party, a very moderately leftist party that attracted many scientists and other scholars, so much so that its role in French governments between the wars led the journalist Albert Thibaudet to call France *the republic of professors*. In 1924, Borel was elected mayor of Saint-Affrique and member of parliament from Aveyron. When Painlevé became Prime Minister, he named Borel minister of the navy, a position he held only for a few months.

Having been elected to the French *Académie des Sciences* in 1921, Borel was also keen to use his political influence to help develop science and its applications. He played a fundamental role in the creation of several major institutes of higher education, most importantly the Institut Henri Poincaré (IHP), inaugurated in Paris in 1928, which became the principal research center in France for mathematical physics and probability. The IHP hosted the leading mathematicians and physicists of the 1930s, including German refugees fleeing the Nazis and Vito Volterra, the great Italian mathematician and physicist who lost his post in Italy because of his opposition to Mussolini [45].

Borel was still director of the IHP at the outbreak of World War II, and he quickly obtained funding to add two new laboratories, a ballistics laboratory

⁵See [16]; [21], pp. 253–254.

⁶See [17], pp. 74–79.

under Henri Lebesgue and a new laboratory for mechanical calculation under Louis Couffignal. Louis Lapicque worked on calculations related to retinal vision. The staff of the institute expanded from 45 people at the end of 1939 to 64 in June 1940.⁷

In January 1940, the University of Paris celebrated Borel's scientific jubilee, the fiftieth anniversary of his entrance to the *Ecole Normale*. All the great names of French mathematics and physics of the time were present, joined by foreign scientists who could come to Paris in spite of the war with Germany that had been declared in September 1939. The local newspaper of Aveyron, *Journal de l'Aveyron*, celebrated him on the front pages of its 21 and 28 January 1940 issues. In June 1940, when the French army collapsed and the Germans occupied Paris and northern France, Borel was in Paris. He and Marbo returned to Saint-Affrique, in the non-occupied zone, that summer, but they were back in Paris in the autumn of 1940, after he was dismissed from the mayoralty of Saint-Affrique by the new Vichy government.

3 The German presence in Paris

To a large extent, the Germans reproduced in Paris the complexity of the Nazi regime in Berlin, where various bureaucracies and militarized services competed for power without clear lines of authority among them. This overview of the picture up to early 1942 draws on work by Burrin [7], Frank [13], Nielen [34], and Thalmann [49]. We discuss the German services that were most involved with the French university in the first year of the occupation and in the arrest and release of Borel and his colleagues: the MBF, the German ambassador Otto Abetz, the SS, and the German intelligence service in Paris, the *Alst*.

3.1 *Militärbefehlshaber in Frankreich*

The MBF, headed from October 1940 to February 1942 by General Otto von Stülpnagel (1878–1948), was the most substantial German presence in Paris. It was headquartered in the Hotel Majestic, near the *Arc de Triomphe*. It consisted of a security division and an administrative division, the *Verwaltungstab*. The *Verwaltungstab*, consisting of 22,000 people in German military uniforms, was charged with overseeing the French governmental bureaucracy. Its senior staff, numbering about 1,500, were mostly professionals detailed to Paris from various German government agencies, companies, and professional organizations. It was divided into three large sections, a section responsible for coordination and personnel, an immense section responsible for economic matters, and a section responsible for other administrative matters, the *Verwaltungsabteilung*.

In 1941, the *Verwaltungsabteilung* was headed by Werner Best (1903–1989), a prominent member of the SS. It was organized into more than ten groups, charged with supervising domains of the French bureaucracy ranging from the

⁷See [33], pp. 62–77; [5], pp. 22–23.

police to the veterinary service. We will be interested mainly in Group 4, responsible for schools and culture (*Schule und Kultur*). In the discussion of the arrest of the four academicians, this group was represented by war administration adviser (*Kriegsverwaltungsrat*) Dr. Dahnke.⁸

Group 4 did not order the arrest of the four academicians, but it played a role in their release, and its archives are our most substantial source of information. When the Allies arrived in Paris, they found that most German archives had been burned or removed. Group 4's archives were an exception,⁹ and they are among the archives now preserved in the AJ/40 series at CARAN.

The MBF's primary assignment was to put the French economy to work for the German war effort as effectively as possible, with a minimal expenditure of German manpower. It achieved this through its control of the French governmental bureaucracy, by directing the allocation of raw materials and requiring French companies to fill orders for the German military. The armistice agreement Marshall Philippe Pétain signed on 22 June 1940 gave the Germans the right to require payment for the cost of the Occupation, and as they controlled the amount of this payment, they could pay French companies with money from the French treasury.

The armistice agreement authorized Pétain to move his government to Paris, but the Germans never allowed this. Pétain remained isolated at Vichy, in the southern zone. He was represented in Paris by the *Délégué général du Gouvernement Français dans les Territoires Occupés* (DGTO), through which all French government communication with the Germans had to be directed. During the period we are studying, this office was headed by Fernand de Brinon. The southern zone was not occupied by the Germans during this period, and even after November 1942 when it was occupied, German permission was required for travel between the two zones. The MBF required that Pétain obtain its approval in advance for sensitive legislation and appointments, and it supervised the French bureaucracy, in Paris and in the prefectures, to make sure measures it cared about were implemented to its liking.

3.2 Otto Abetz, the German Ambassador

A second center of power in Paris was the German embassy on Rue de Lille on the left bank. Otto Abetz (1903–1958) held the rank of Ambassador and represented the German ministry of foreign affairs. In theory, Pétain's government was still at war with Germany, and the two countries did not have diplomatic relations. In practice, Abetz was responsible for German relations with Vichy, overseeing Pétain's supposed authority to legislate for France and appoint the ministers in charge of the bureaucracy in Paris.

⁸Dahnke is identified only by his last name in the documents we have seen, and his first name is also absent from the secondary literature on the Occupation. Almost certainly, however, he was Heinrich Dahnke, a bureaucrat with the German Education Ministry [25]. According to Thalmann, the same Heinrich Dahnke served after the war in the ministry of cultural affairs in Lower Saxony ([49], p. 102), where he assessed and supported claims for restitution by victims of the Nazis [47].

⁹See [34], p. 47.

Abetz was charged by Hitler to manage the politics of France. He received his instructions directly from Hitler at the beginning of August 1940, when he was summoned to Hitler's summer home in Berghof. Germany's immediate goals, Hitler explained to him, were to keep France weak and isolated from its neighbors. It should have an authoritarian government, because this would help isolate it from England and the United States. But there should be no real support for *völkisch* and nationalist forces. Abetz should support both the left and the right in French politics, leaning at any time whichever way would maximize division. The communists should not be wiped out, but they should not be allowed to become too strong, and in the immediate future the socialists should be supported as a counterweight to them. Abetz shared these instructions with Werner Best, who passed them on to his lieutenants.¹⁰ Abetz and Best, both long-time Nazis, considered the military leadership of the MBF too conservative and too soft on the French.

Abetz was an accomplished student of French history and literature, and he saw the conflict between Germany and France in intellectual terms. French culture should be purged of its degenerate elements, just as the Nazis had purged German culture, and the French needed to renounce their own claims to universalism and recognize the leadership role of German culture.¹¹ Abetz's ideas for improving France were never embraced by Hitler, who valued propaganda but was skeptical about changing the French and thought it better for Germany that France should continue to degenerate.

Abetz's organization in Paris had two main branches, a propaganda section and a cultural section. The propaganda section organized and funded collaborationist groups, competing with and sometimes coming into conflict with Goebbels's *Propaganda-Abteilung*. It funded and largely controlled the French press and radio in the occupied zone. The cultural section, which was involved in Borel's detention, was headed by Karl Epting, whom Abetz had also put in charge of the German Institute at the Sagan Hotel, also on the left bank.

Following Hitler's instructions, Abetz supported collaborationist groups in Paris with roots on the left as well as ones with roots on the right, and he used these groups to put pressure on Pétain as the need arose. He was especially supportive of Pierre Laval. Laval had limited interest in Pétain's national revolution but sought to convince the Germans that France had a future as a subservient junior partner. He made unilateral concessions to the Germans while serving as Pétain's minister of state during the first six months of the Vichy regime, and Pétain dismissed him in December 1940, replacing him with Admiral François Darlan. While Borel and his colleagues were under arrest, in October and November 1941, Laval was in Paris under Abetz's protection.

¹⁰Thalmann [49], pp. 42–43, citing a German report in CARAN AJ/40/443: *Lagebericht* MBF III, December 1940–January 1941, 31 January 1941.

¹¹This German claim to cultural leadership mirrored claims that French intellectuals had made during World War I, especially after 1914, when 93 prominent German scientists signed a proclamation that identified the German cause with defense of its civilization. Outraged French intellectuals responded by identifying the French cause with the defense of civilization in general. Borel was a leader in promoting this point of view; see [29], pp. 40–41.

When Laval returned to Vichy as Pétain's prime minister in April 1942, he further aligned the regime with Germany.

3.3 The SS

At the outset of the Occupation, the German military hoped that the SS, headed by Heinrich Himmler and Reinhard Heydrich in Berlin, would not play an important role in France, and so they included a small secret police unit within the MBF itself, in Section Ic. But Himmler and Heydrich quickly found ways to convince Hitler that their agents were needed in France. In June 1940, Himmler dispatched a small commando to Paris, under the command of Helmut Knochen (1910–2003). This group's archives were probably destroyed, but documents in the MBF archives show that the group was involved in the investigation of French academics in 1940 and 1941. Andreas Biederbick (born 1909) represented Knochen's group in the deliberations concerning the four academicians. Both Knochen and Biederbick had doctoral degrees, Knochen in English literature and Biederbick in history.

The SS (*Schutzstaffel*) was an organ of the Nazi party, not of the German state, and individuals could be deployed anywhere in the state bureaucracy while remaining SS officers; Werner Best is an example. But by the time of the war, the German state police was fully integrated into the SS. The intelligence service (*Sicherdienst*, or SD) and the secret police (*Geheimes Staatspolizei*, or Gestapo) were just two of its many units.

In October 1941, Knochen's unit was still small, and it was supposedly subordinate to the MBF, but it was increasingly coming into conflict with von Stülpnagel. On the night of 2 to 3 October, a right-wing French group led by Eugène Deloncle used explosives supplied by Knochen to blow up seven Paris synagogues, wounding two German soldiers in the process. This incident, and the fact that Knochen hid the SS's involvement from him, enraged von Stülpnagel and brought him into conflict with Heydrich.¹²

Von Stülpnagel was also brought into conflict with Berlin by his concern that the French population was being alienated by the increasing harshness of the Occupation. Attacks on German soldiers by French communists began after Hitler broke with Stalin and invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941, and Hitler ordered mass executions in retaliation. A German officer was killed in Paris in late August 1941, and in early September the Germans killed more than twenty people in retaliation. Hitler thought this too moderate; he demanded that at least a hundred French be killed for every German. This added to the terror of the arrest of the four academicians on 10 and 11 October. On 20 October, while they were still under arrest, a German officer was assassinated in Nantes; on 22 and 24 October, the Germans killed nearly a hundred French political prisoners, many of them selected from the prison where the academicians were held. Revulsion over these murders was important in shifting French public opinion towards de Gaulle and the Resistance.

¹²See [7], pp. 96–97 and [36].

Von Stülpnagel and Abetz, keenly aware of negative impact of the killings, wanted the French public to perceive them as being directed towards communists and Jews, not towards the French population in general. For this reason, the MBF mobilized its staff in September 1941 to identify potential victims who could be identified as communists. When Dahnke returned to his office in Group 4 of the *Verwaltungsabteilung* in late October, after an absence of five weeks, he found a circular dated 18 September from his colleagues in Group 8, responsible for German oversight of the French courts, asking for names to be added to the hostage lists. Students and professors were among the groups that were to be considered. In his report for the week of 20–26 October,¹³ Dahnke conceded that many French natural scientists were radical leftists and could be held responsible for inspiring communist subversion. But, he pointed out, if the Germans shot one of them as a hostage, the act would be held against them in the university community for a very long time.

Von Stülpnagel's reluctance to alienate the French more than necessary did not carry the day with Hitler. In early 1942, von Stülpnagel resigned as military commander in Paris, and the authority of the MBF was reduced while that of the SS was strengthened. Carl-Albrecht Oberg was named top SS commander (*Höherer SS- und Polizeiführer*) in Paris, and von Stülpnagel's cousin, Carl Heinrich von Stülpnagel, took over the now reduced role of military commander.¹⁴ This reorganization marked a turning point towards repression for both the German forces and the Vichy government. It was followed by Laval's return to power, the appointment of René Bousquet as general secretary of the French police, and intense negotiations between Oberg and Bousquet concerning what the French police would have to do in order to avoid being brought under direct German command. The *Verwaltungsabteilung* was shrunk, leaving the MBF even more focused on the economy. Werner Best was sent to oversee the government of occupied Denmark.¹⁵

3.4 The *Alst*

Borel and his colleagues were arrested by the *Abwehr*, the branch of the German military responsible for espionage and counterespionage. The *Abwehr* had been created in 1921, and it was headed from 1935 to 1944 by Admiral Wilhelm Canaris. During the war, the *Abwehr*'s headquarters in Paris, the *Abwehrleitstelle* (Central office of military intelligence), was located at the Hotel Lutetia on the left bank. It was headed by Colonel Friedrich Rudolf, and its counterespionage section was headed by Lieutenant Colonel Reile. In German documents, *Abwehrleitstelle* is often abbreviated to *Alst*.

In 1941, the *Abwehr* was still relatively independent of the SS, which had

¹³In CARAN AJ/40/568.

¹⁴Carl Heinrich von Stülpnagel remained in this position until 20 July 1944, when he participated in the unsuccessful plot against Hitler. He was convicted of treason and hung on 30 August 1944 in Berlin. Otto von Stülpnagel was arrested by the allies after the war and committed suicide in 1948.

¹⁵See [50], p. 611.

long coveted its operations, even though Hitler was already disaffected with Canaris. For arrests and police actions, the *Abwehr* relied on the military secret police, the *Geheime Feldpolizei*, which was also independent of the SS. In May 1942, after the arrival of Oberg in Paris, the *Geheime Feldpolizei* in France were put under the authority of the SS, and the *Alst* lost much of its authority. In February 1944 Hitler dismissed Canaris and integrated most of the *Abwehr*'s operations into the SS. Canaris was shot by the Nazis on 9 April 1945, after a lengthy imprisonment.

After several years in Allied prisons following the war, Lieutenant Colonel Reile worked in West German intelligence and then, starting in the 1960s, wrote extensively about the *Abwehr*. In his books on the *Abwehr*'s operations in France during the war [40, 41], he explains that the *Abwehr* cooperated with the SS but that the goals of the two agencies sometimes conflicted. Whereas the SS sought to eliminate as many enemy agents as possible as quickly as possible, the *Abwehr* sought to gather intelligence and prevent attacks on German troops and installations, and this often required leaving in place for as long as possible networks of the Resistance that they had infiltrated and even partially controlled. By Reile's account, the *Abwehr* sometimes even aided the escape of relatively harmless Resistance members for humanitarian reasons.

From June to October 1941, the *Alst* infiltrated the Hector network, a large but loosely organized network of the French Resistance that was secretly funded by Vichy's air force. The network was in contact with London through the British embassy in Lisbon. The *Alst* called their infiltration and dismantling of the network the Porto affair (*Fall Porto*), after the Portuguese wine. Oscar Reile recounted details of the affair in his memoirs.¹⁶

According to Reile, the Hector network collected extensive and significant intelligence about German military installations for transmission to London, and by September they were impatiently awaiting orders from London to undertake acts of sabotage. The German infiltrators, who were controlling the communication with London, managed to minimize what London learned and stall any significant sabotage, intending to delay action against the network as long as possible in order to learn as much as they could about its capacities and intentions. But after attacks on German officers in Paris on 10 and 15 September, Reile became concerned that the network might already be passing to action and persuaded Colonel Rudolph that the time for arrests had come. On 9 October, they launched a crackdown of unprecedented scale, engaging all the units of the *Geheime Feldpolizei* in France and Belgium. Within a few days, 962 individuals were behind bars.

Reile launched an immense judicial process, involving correspondence with local authorities all over France, to decide the fate of those arrested. Those for whom there was clear evidence of espionage or sabotage were referred to military tribunals;¹⁷ others were released. Reile planned to recruit some of those who were to be tried as double agents, and in order to give them cover, he planned to

¹⁶Especially [40], pp. 141–176, or pp. 98–199 of the French edition.

¹⁷Dossiers on those referred to tribunals are in CARAN AJ/40/1500–1521 ([3], pp. 510–512).

arrange for the eventual release of hundreds of the least guilty of those convicted. But on 7 December 1941, Hitler signed his notorious *Nacht und Nebel* decree, authorizing the disappearance of opponents in the occupied countries; they were to vanish without a trace, and no information was to be given about their fate. Those who had been arrested in the Porto affair and not yet released or tried quickly disappeared in this fashion. In Reile's opinion, the sudden arrest of nearly a thousand French saboteurs and the continued assassinations in spite of the crackdown had panicked the authorities in Berlin, who erroneously feared that the French population was about to stage an insurrection that the thinly spread German forces could not have contained.

Documents prepared by the MBF's Group 4 tell us that Borel, Cotton, Lopicque, and Mauguin were arrested by the *Alst* on 10 and 11 October 1940, at a time when all the police forces at the *Alst*'s disposal were engaged in the Porto sweep. We have not been able to find documents directly giving reasons for the arrests of the academicians, but the dates make it clear that they were swept up as part of the Porto crackdown, either because they were implicated in the affair or because the *Alst* decided to extend the arrests to others who had already been under investigation by the *Alst* or the SS. Reile does not mention the academicians in his memoirs, but the MBF documents make it clear that he was personally involved in deciding on their release. Archives of the *Alst* now at Freiburg in Germany ([27], pp. 243–248) may contain additional relevant information.

4 French higher education under the Occupation in 1940–1941

The arrest and release of Borel and his colleagues in the fall of 1941 raised issues that had already been discussed by the Germans in the fall of 1940, when they had arrested Paul Langevin and then exiled him to house arrest far from Paris. After Langevin's status had been settled, the Germans continued to debate whether they should take revenge on both left-wing and right-wing French professors for their past hostility to Germany and whether they could stem the rising resistance among students by punishing the professors who were surely encouraging them. Here we review their attempts to purge the French professoriat and their continuing investigation of the French academic world during this period. We also discuss the important role played by Jérôme Carcopino, who was the French minister of education during most of 1941, and we review Borel's activities during 1940–1941.

4.1 Purifying the professoriat

Beginning in the summer of 1940, Pétain launched his National Revolution by promulgating a series of laws that facilitated the removal of undesirable individuals from education and other branches of the civil service. The first, dated 17 July 1940, authorized the removal of civil servants without cause.

A law of 13 August 1940 prescribed that Freemason lodges be closed, their properties impounded and sold. Civil servants and public officials were ordered to break any links with the dissolved lodges and not to affiliate anew if they were reconstituted. Other laws forbade government employment of individuals of foreign origin and restricted government employment of women. The most notorious law, promulgated on 3 October 1940, forbade government employment of Jews. Later legislation further discriminated against Jews and Freemasons.

The law excluding Jews allowed for exceptions, and the French thought this was important. Some hoped exceptions would minimize the law's effects, or at least permit the separation of the wheat from the tares, as Darquier de Pellepoix, Laval's zealous *Commissaire aux Questions Juives*, put it. Others were outraged that exceptions were possible. But the Germans saw to it that there were no exceptions. According to Singer [46], the Vichy government authorized exceptions for fourteen leading Jewish professors at the University of Paris, but the Germans vetoed all fourteen.

As the academic year 1940–1941 drew near, the Germans obtained lists of professors from the French bureaucracy and gathering intelligence to decide which ones should be eliminated. Their deliberations were a three-way affair, involving Group 4, the embassy, and the SS. The first discussions seem to have centered on the *Institut libre des sciences politiques*, a private school, and the *Collège de France*, a prestigious government institution ([49], p. 103).

On 30 October 1940, before any recommendations had been made to von Stülpnagel, the secret police arrested Paul Langevin (1872–1946), a member of the *Collège de France*, at the request of Abetz's lieutenant Karl Epting. Langevin was well known both for his left-wing political activity and for his accomplishments in physics. According to Group 4's report for 18–24 November,¹⁸ Langevin was not accused of continuing his political activity under the Occupation, but Epting wanted to make an example of him, to intimidate those in the university who might want to resist the occupiers, and to encourage those interested in collaboration.

Langevin's arrest came as the German forces, coordinated by Group 4, were involved in two tests of will with the *Collège de France*.¹⁹ On 16 September, the MBF had informed the school that results from research in nuclear physics being conducted with the school's cyclotron by Frédéric Joliot-Curie together with German researchers would be exclusively for German eyes and could not be communicated to French authorities. On 21 October, the MBF had informed the school that Langevin's presence on their faculty, along with that of two of his left-wing colleagues, Ernest Tonnelat and Henri Wallon, was incompatible with German interests and prestige.

For all we know, Werner Best and Group 4 at the MBF were complicit in Langevin's arrest, but von Stülpnagel was not pleased that such a step had been taken without his knowledge. According to Group 4's report for 18–24 November, von Stülpnagel had been consulted neither before nor after the arrest. Best

¹⁸In CARAN AJ/40/563.

¹⁹See the archives from the French Education Ministry in CARAN F/17/13385.

was obliged to call together Epting, SS-commando Biederbick, and representatives of other secret police units to make it clear that no arrests of political significance were to be undertaken without consulting the MBF. He also made it clear that political activity before the war was not grounds for measures against French scientists; von Stülpnagel wanted to be very cautious about interfering in personnel matters in French higher education. It was quite another matter if Abetz, through diplomacy with Vichy, could get the French government to impose measures on which the embassy and the MBF were agreed.

On the morning of 11 November, the anniversary of the armistice of 1918, students mounted an impressive anti-German demonstration on the *Champs Elysées*. This demonstration, often considered a turning point in French opinion, was violently repressed. The Germans arrested 150 demonstrators, mostly lycée students. Gustave Roussy, the rector of the Academy of Paris,²⁰ was dismissed, and the university was closed. Roussy was replaced as rector by Jérôme Carcopino, a distinguished classicist and personal acquaintance of Pétain's, who had been director of the *Ecole Normale* since August.

Group 4 was instructed to continue their investigation, with Epting and Biederbick, of the politics of French academics, in case the reopening of Paris higher education could be made conditional on personnel changes. The outcome of this investigation was explained by Dahnke in a Group 4 report dated 13 December 1940.²¹ Even though Abetz's hand was strengthened by a new decree from Hitler, on 20 November 1940, giving the embassy exclusive authority over political matters and telling the MBF to attend to its military duties,²² Abetz and Epting did not manage to mount a purge of non-Jewish professors. As Dahnke explains, Epting prepared a list of academics to be excluded, and then Biederbick and Group 4 pared it down by omitting some of the non-Jews. The result, published in 1991 by Thalmann,²³ includes (with some repetitions) names of 109 individuals identified as Jews and 16 identified as non-Jews. But on 7 December, the embassy contacted Group 4 orally to withdraw the suggestion that the French be required to exclude the 16 non-Jews before the university was opened, because not enough consideration had been given to excluding right-wing as well as left-wing enemies of Germany. So on 8 December it was decided to demand only the expulsion of Jewish faculty members. Harald Turner, representing the MBF, informed the Education Ministry that the MBF expected the French laws excluding the Jews to be applied without exception²⁴ to higher education and that Jewish teachers also be excluded from private schools. Consideration of measures against academics because of their

²⁰The Academy of Paris included the university faculties (science, letters, law, etc.) and the lycées in Paris; its rector was responsible for all faculty appointments in these institutions.

²¹In CARAN AJ/40/567.

²²Group 4's report for the week of 25 November–1 December 1940, dated 2 December, CARAN AJ/40/563.

²³See [49], pp. 354–361.

²⁴“... der Miltaerbefehlshaber die restlose Durchfuehrung des franzoesischen Judengesetzes an den franzoesischen Hochschulen und ausserdem die Entfernung der juedischen Lehrkraefte in Bereich des Enseignement libre erwartet.” The word *restlos* is usually translated as “complete”, but its literal meaning is “without anything remaining”.

political past, especially those on the right, would have to await further study and an appropriate occasion, Dahnke concluded.

Although Borel had not yet retired from the university when these lists were prepared, his name does not appear on any of them. Epting's list included the name of Frédéric Joliot-Curie, but the list approved by Group 4 did not. The lists contain many errors, suggesting that the Germans and their informers were not yet very knowledgeable about the French academic world. The mathematicians Maurice Fréchet and Georges Darmois, for instance, are identified as Jews. A French Germanist active with Epting's institute is identified as anti-German. In some cases, there are remarks about the political activity of which the individual is accused. Some are labelled, probably erroneously, as Freemasons. Others are labelled *Kolonialaufruf* (colonial call); perhaps this indicated that they supported de Gaulle's call to continue the fight against Germany from the French colonies.

As for Langevin, the Education Ministry dismissed him from the *Collège de France* on 19 November, under the authority of the law of 17 July, and the Germans released him from prison and put him under surveillance at Troyes, 180 kilometers from Paris, on 7 December. Tonnelat and Wallon were eventually allowed to resume teaching at the *Collège de France*. On 18 January 1942, the MBF wrote to the French government to insist that it had exclusive rights under the Hague convention to the research in Joliot-Curie's laboratory because it was a military installation. On request, however, it would inform the chief of state (Pétain) about work currently in progress.²⁵

Also relevant to our story is the launching of the clandestine newspaper *l'Université libre* by three young communists, Jacques Decour, Georges Politzer, and Langevin's son-in-law Jacques Solomon.²⁶ The first four-page issue, in late November 1940, protested Langevin's arrest and dismissal, denounced the inadequacy of the university's protests against the arrest, and reported nearly unanimous reprobation for the government's antisemitic measures. Joliot-Curie, it reported, had suspended his collaboration with the Germans in protest of Langevin's arrest, and the Faculty of Sciences, with only the physicist Eugène Darmois dissenting, had voted that all its members should continue to teach regardless of their "race".²⁷ The three founders of *l'Université libre* were arrested by the French police along with others in late February and early March 1941, turned over to the Germans, and executed in late May 1941, but *l'Université libre* continued to appear irregularly until the Liberation, publishing altogether 104 issues.

In the spring of 1941, the SS extended their attention to the academies in the *Institut de France*.²⁸ On 15 April 1941, the SS addressed a memorandum

²⁵Much has been written about Joliot-Curie, who managed to participate in the communist Resistance while conducting his research in collaboration with the Germans. Metzler [30] discusses the Occupation's impact on Joliot-Curie's scientific standing and gives additional references.

²⁶See Favre [12], pp. 175–178; Racine [37]; Raphael [38], p. 722.

²⁷The quotation marks are in the original. This issue and other issues of *l'Université libre* have been posted by the *Conservatoire des mémoires étudiantes* at www.cme-u.fr.

²⁸The *Institut de France* consists of five academies. The most prestigious is the *Académie*

to the MBF²⁹ making two unrelated accusations concerning these academies:

1. A council of the *Académie française* had held a vote on collaboration, in which the anti-German forces had a narrow majority.
2. Two members of the *Académie des Sciences*, Aimé Cotton and Charles Mauguin, had been involved in distributing *l'Université libre*.

Cotton and Mauguin were arrested along with Borel the following October. According to documents preserved by the MBF, the SS continued its investigation. In a brief note for the week of 1–13 May 1941,³⁰ the SD reported that the *Académie des Sciences* did not have any distinct political orientation as a whole. In an undated memorandum stamped with the date 24 May 1941,³¹ SS Major Biederbick reported that *l'Université libre* was being distributed in the Latin Quarter by professors who were Freemasons, including Cotton, Mauguin, and Joliot-Curie.

The 15 April 1941 memorandum concerning the supposed vote on collaboration in the *Académie française* claimed that three members had voted for collaboration and four against. The three reported to support it, Cardinal Baudrillart (1859–1942) and the writers André Bellessort (1866–1942) and Abel Bonnard (1883–1968), were indeed well known supporters.³² The four reported to oppose it were the writers Georges Duhamel (1884–1966) and Paul Valéry (1871–1945), the physicist Maurice de Broglie (1875–1960), and the mathematician Emile Picard (1856–1941).

The case of Emile Picard illustrates the difficulty the Germans had in dealing with their right-wing opponents. Picard was known for anti-German outbursts during World War I and for advocating ostracism of Germany afterwards [23, 29]. He was also very well known for his right-wing views. The memorandum of 15 April 1941 shows that the SS was confused by this; it erroneously identifies Picard as a member of the French Popular Front of the 1930s.

From Vichy's point of view, Picard was a natural ally. In August 1940, the *Journal de l'Aveyron*, falling in line with Vichy's national revolution, wrote at length about the educational reforms needed to undo the damage from the radical and anti-clerical conceptions that had prevailed during the previous regime and led to the disaster. Never mentioning the name of their native son Emile Borel,³³ they quoted Picard, who had no connection with Aveyron, at length. But Nazis who were aware of Picard's past had no use for him. In a report on the prospects for collaboration with French mathematicians, dated 20 December

française. Another is the *Académie des Sciences*.

²⁹In CARAN AJ/40/566.

³⁰In CARAN AJ/40/567.

³¹In CARAN AJ/40/567.

³²Baudrillart and Bellessort both died in 1942. The official website of the French Academy says of Bellessort that he had been permanent secretary of the Academy for too short a time for his openly collaborationist views to damage the Academy. Bonnard later became minister of education.

³³The *Journal* made no mention of Borel's arrest in October 1941 or his release in November 1941.

1940, the Nazi mathematician Harold Geppert, who edited the *Zentralblatt für Mathematik und ihre Grenzgebiete* during the war, mentioned Picard’s leadership of the International Mathematical Union, from whose quadrennial meetings the Germans had been excluded in the years following World War I, and which had not met since 1932.³⁴ According to Geppert, the Germans had decided to create a new international organization for mathematics rather than reviving the Union.

So it is useless to look for what remains of the earlier minutes of the Union, which are presumably in the hands of the permanent secretary of the *Académie des Sciences*, Prof. Emile Picard, who is the intellectual leader of the Union and a thoroughly anti-German scientific polemicist. So the idea of undertaking a search of P.’s house has been dropped.

Picard’s attitude towards collaboration was nuanced. According to Audin [2], Picard argued, in a discussion in the *Académie des Sciences* in November 1940, that efforts to distribute its *Comptes rendus* should not involve any direct relationship with the Germans. Yet in correspondence with Alfred Lacroix, his fellow permanent secretary of the *Académie des Sciences*, he maintained that Pétain had rightly agreed to a “very general” collaboration, necessary for an indefinite time in order to avoid France’s being completely crushed.³⁵ Because he died in December 1941, he did not see where Pétain’s policies led. Members of his family took different paths. One of his sons-in-law, Jean Villey, was caught by the French police on 13 October 1941 in the act of distributing Gaullist propaganda, delivered to the Germans, and condemned to two years in prison.³⁶ Another, Louis Dunoyer de Ségonzac, who was close to the extreme-right *Action Française*, was faulted after the war for accepting appointment to Jean Perrin’s position at the Sorbonne in 1941, after Perrin had joined his son in the United States.

4.2 Jérôme Carcopino (1881–1970)

As Pétain repeatedly shuffled his cabinet during the first year of the Occupation, four Education Ministers³⁷ came and went:

1. Albert Rivaud (1876–1956), who left the post in July 1940, when Laval became Vice President of the Council,
2. Emile Mireaux (1885–1969), who left the post in September 1940,

³⁴A copy of this letter is in CARAN AJ/40/567. For more on Geppert’s role, see Siegmund-Schultze [44].

³⁵Audin concludes, on the basis of the correspondence with Lacroix, that Picard was an antisemite of the ordinary French variety (as opposed to the Nazi variety) and that he was almost a collaborationist.

³⁶See CARAN AJ/16/7117.

³⁷Even the title and scope of the ministry varied. Emile Mireaux was *Ministre de l’Instruction publique et des Beaux-Arts*, while Carcopino was *Secrétaire d’Etat à l’Instruction Publique et à la Jeunesse*.

3. Georges Ripert (1880–1958), who left the post in December 1940, when Pétain dismissed Laval, and
4. Jacques Chevalier (1882–1962), who left the post in February 1941, when Darlan became Pétain’s vice president.

Chevalier, Pétain’s godson and a clerically-minded philosopher, ran into resistance with his plans for religious instruction in the primary schools, and Darlan replaced him with Jérôme Carcopino, who had demonstrated his ability to negotiate with the Germans and keep the peace as director of the *Ecole Normale* from August to November 1940 and then as rector after the 11 November 1940 demonstrations. Carcopino remained Education Minister until Laval returned to power in April 1942 and replaced him with the well known author and journalist Abel Bonnard (1883–1968), an avowed collaborator but less effective administrator, who remained minister until the Liberation.³⁸

Stubbornly loyal to Pétain, Carcopino implemented Vichy’s measures against Jewish teachers and students and appeased the Germans as he found necessary. In 2008, after reviewing Carcopino’s communications with the Germans in the MBF archives, the historian Alan Mitchell opined that collaborationism had no more fervent advocate [32]. According to *l’Université libre*, Carcopino had been a *Gauleiter* as rector; as minister he tried to be more flexible, more hypocritical, and more demagogic than his Vichy predecessors.³⁹ The collaborationist press in Paris praised Carcopino at the outset of his tenure but soon found plenty to criticize. When he softened Chevalier’s proposals to strengthen religious instruction, the anti-clerical papers that had decried the measures fell silent, while the pro-clerical papers derided him.

In his memoirs, Carcopino complained bitterly about *l’Université libre*’s attacks, but he acknowledged that the Vichy government in 1941 was a military dictatorship, with each minister exercising immense power within his own domain so long as he retained Pétain’s and Darlan’s confidence.⁴⁰ One power Carcopino exercised was to review dismissals made under the 17 July 1940 law. He used the review to purge teachers considered incompetent or corrupt. He also restored some individuals to their positions; even *l’Université libre* conceded that he rehabilitated a few Freemasons.⁴¹ According to his own account after the war, he recognized merit regardless of political opinion, and he found reasons to dismiss individuals whose collaboration with the Germans threatened the university’s independence. This is documented not only in his memoirs but also in the criticism of the Paris press. In the archives of the MBF, for example, we find a clipping of an article from the 28 August 1941 issue of *Le cri du peuple* that deplores Carcopino’s appointment or retention of a whole list of individuals: Charmoillaux, Maurain, Piobetta, Luc, Masbou, Chattelun, Santelli,

³⁸Bonnard had been elected to the *Académie française* in 1932. Abetz had pushed for Bonnard’s appointment as Education Minister in February 1941, when Carcopino received the appointment. Bonnard lived in exile in Spain after the war.

³⁹See Issue 14, 1 April 1941.

⁴⁰See [8], pp. 298–299.

⁴¹See Issue 18, 15 May 1941.

and Hatinguais, and his dismissal of another, Jeanneret. In its weekly reports, Group 4 took note of such articles matter-of-factly, as if they expressed public opinion.

In February 1941, when Carcopino had left the Paris rectorship to become minister, he postponed the problem of finding a new rector acceptable to the Germans by putting Charles Maurain in the position temporarily. As dean of the Faculty of Sciences, Maurain had been taking his turn as vice president of the university council, and Carcopino reasoned that he was therefore in line to step in as president of the council, or rector. But, Maurain was due to retire at the end of September. Carcopino himself had been appointed to the Paris rectorship after the student demonstrations of 11 November 1940, and his success in calming the students while satisfying the Germans had led to his appointment as minister. Who could follow this act?

According to a report in Group 4's archives,⁴² Carcopino went personally to the German embassy and proposed three names: Paul Hazard, Olivier Martin, and Pierre Renouvin. Abetz rejected all three. The comparative literature professor Hazard and the law professor Martin were unacceptable because they knew nothing of Germany. Renouvin, a historian, was unacceptable because he had written about the causes of World War I from the French point of view. In Abetz's view, German cultural-political goals in France required a Paris rector with personal and professional connections with Germany.

Faced with an impasse, Stülpnagel asked Abetz to make his own suggestions. Abetz found it difficult to respond. Did anyone in the university with the stature and skill to serve as rector satisfy Abetz's desiderata? In the 1930s, Abetz had become acquainted with French journalists and literary figures who were interested in Germany and whose political and intellectual attitudes he had found congenial. Some of them, Abel Bonnard for example, had influence and stature. In Germany, they might have been university professors. But in France, where the social sciences still hewed much more closely to the rationalism and empiricism of the natural sciences, public intellectuals were not likely to be university professors [39].

Abetz was reduced, it seems, to looking for potential rectors in the natural sciences and mathematics, where there was at least a healthy respect for German accomplishments. By 8 September, the only name Abetz had suggested to the MBF was that of a mathematician, Albert Châtelet (1883–1960). Châtelet had been rector at Lille from 1924 to 1937, and then worked in the education ministry until 1940. Abetz's argument for Châtelet was that he had promoted French-German exchanges while rector in Lille.

The appointment needed to be made before Maurain left the rectorship, so von Stülpnagel agreed to meet with Carcopino to settle the matter. In the meeting, Carcopino explained that Châtelet was on the extreme left and therefore unacceptable to the French government. Carcopino had dismissed Châtelet from the rectorship in Caen, and to reinstate him now would undermine his au-

⁴²Report for the weeks 25–31 August and 1–6 September, dated 8 September 1941, in CARAN AJ/40/563.

thority with the students by making it clear that he was acting on the order of the Germans. Carcopino made a new suggestion: Gilbert Gidel, who was highly regarded by Friedrich Grimm, a German professor who visited France regularly to lecture, assess the situation, and advise Abetz. Von Stülpnagel agreed to Carcopino's appointing Gidel. Group 4's report for December 1941–January 1942 states that Gidel had been received by von Stülpnagel and pledged his loyalty. Gidel's report on the meeting⁴³ puts the matter differently: Gidel was committed to keeping the university calm and creating an atmosphere of work.

After being replaced by Bonnard as minister, Carcopino returned to the *Ecole Normale*, where he was director until the Liberation. After the war, he was tried for collaboration and cleared on the grounds that he had made up for what he had done as a minister by his assistance to the Resistance afterwards. He was elected to the *Académie française* in 1955.⁴⁴ Gidel remained rector until the Liberation, then returned to teaching law; he died in 1958. Châtelet finished his academic career as dean of the Faculty of Sciences at Paris and then went into politics; he was a candidate for President of the Republic in 1958.

4.3 Raymond Voize and Albert Peyron

Of particular interest to our story is Carcopino's dismissal of Raymond Voize, a 51-year-old professor of German at the lycée Louis le Grand. Voize's personnel file⁴⁵ indicates that he was an individual of ability and industry. Born in 1889, he worked in commerce until he was 16, but then he managed to study at the lycée Voltaire, the Sorbonne, and the University of Halle. He passed the *agrégation* in German on his first attempt in 1913. He also studied law and was interested in political science. He was seriously wounded during the war, obtaining a 75% disability pension. His *agrégation* entitled him to a position teaching in a lycée, but he refused assignments outside of Paris, teaching in a private school and working in a center for "social and political documentation" until finally being assigned to a Paris lycée in 1936. In 1939, he ran into trouble with his superiors for using the name of his lycée, Louis le Grand, to promote courses he was teaching during the holidays. He remained in his position at that time in spite of exchanging very nasty letters with the Paris rector, Gustave Roussy, but ! in late 1940 his superiors became nervous about his relations with the German authorities. One note in his file indicates that he had unloaded such a mass of denunciations on the Germans that they had not hidden their disgust from the French authorities.

According to a vicious article in the Paris newspaper *l'Appel* on 7 August 1941, Carcopino forced Voize to retire in July 1941 because of his connections with the Germans. Carcopino happily confirmed this in his memoirs.⁴⁶ Also on

⁴³In CARAN AJ/16/7117.

⁴⁴The ambiguities of Carcopino's action continue to fascinate French historians [9]. A recent assessment of his directorship at the *Ecole Normale* credits him for finding ways to allow the Jewish students already there to complete their studies but faults him for barring the admission of additional Jews [19].

⁴⁵In CARAN AJ/16/6176.

⁴⁶See [8], p. 351.

7 August 1941, Voize published a long article in the weekly *La Gerbe* proposing a high commission for French-German intellectual relations, which would award books on Germany to prize-winning French students. He began with a diatribe against the prospect that Carcopino might bring Roussy back to the rectorship in Paris. When Roussy had been ousted as rector in the aftermath of the 11 November 1940 demonstrations, he no longer held a chair in the Faculty of Medicine. Carcopino, by his own account,⁴⁷ had no intention of trying to reverse Roussy's removal from the rectorship, which had been signed by Pétain, and he did not have the means to return Roussy to the Faculty of Medicine. But he had wanted to appoint him director of the Institut Pasteur, and he had dropped the idea in April 1941 only because Roussy had reacted angrily at being offered so little. In Carcopino's view,⁴⁸ Voize's article was the crudest and most unfair attack the Paris press ever made on him; he saw Abetz's hand behind it.

In his attacks on Carcopino and Roussy, Voize had an ally in Albert Peyron (1884–1947), a distinguished scientist at the Institut Pasteur who also fell victim to Carcopino's willingness to dismiss those who threatened the university's independence by their dealings with the Germans. A dossier on Roussy in the German archives contains both letters of accusation and letters defending him from "Peyron and Voize's calumnies".

Voize's article was noticed by the MBF's press service, which considered it outstanding. It was also praised by Edmond Pistre-Caraguel, the new Aryan Commissioner-Administrator for the publishing house Fernand Nathan under the German ordinance of 18 October 1940.⁴⁹ On 11 August 1941, Pistre-Caraguel wrote to the *Propaganda Abteilung Frankreich* to ask them to grant Voize an opportunity to present his idea for a commission. Such a commission, Pistre-Caraguel argued, would give his own mission better support than he was getting from the Education Ministry.⁵⁰

Voize was soon in contact with Group 4. On 6 September 1941, he wrote to Dahnke at the MBF⁵¹ that he wanted to go into private work instead of heading his proposed High Commission and wanted to see Dahnke again about creating an "Institute for Languages and Culture". Dahnke responded on 20 September 1941⁵² that he had not yet found the means for creating the institute and that he would be out of the office for five weeks, but that Voize should contact him again at the end of October.

We may surmise that Voize and Peyron were both in contact with Dahnke at the end of October, because the MBF archives include a memorandum,⁵³ signed by Dahnke and dated 1 November 1941, that lists 15 individuals they had ac-

⁴⁷See [8], pp. 351–352.

⁴⁸See [8], pp. 550–551.

⁴⁹Pistre published under the name Caraguel. His anti-English book *Angleterre contre la paix* was republished with additional chapters in 1940. He died in 1942, and his book was banned in 1944.

⁵⁰In CARAN AJ/40/563.

⁵¹The letter, in CARAN AJ/40/563, is addressed only to "Monsieur", but Dahnke annotated it and responded to it.

⁵²In CARAN AJ/40/563.

⁵³In CARAN AJ/40/567.

cused of being “representatives of the Freemason and Bolshevist view in higher education and the administration of public education.” Gustave Roussy heads the list, and Dahnke reports a claim by Peyron that Carcopino told him personally that he wanted to make Roussy rector again.⁵⁴ Next are seven individuals whom Carcopino had appointed or retained even though their collaborationist bona fides were suspect: Hippolyte Luc, Maurice Guyot, Edmée Hatinguais, Marcel Masbou, César Santelli, and Lucien Chattelun, and an eighth, Ludovic Zoretti, whose outright dismissal by Chevalier he had changed to retirement.⁵⁵ These are people Voize and the Paris press had been denouncing since August. Then Frédéric and Irène Joliot-Curie. Then our four academicians: Mauguin, Cotton, Lapicque, and Borel. And then Gustave Monod, who had been in the Education Ministry before the war, had been demoted to teaching in a lycée because he refused to enforce the expulsion of Jews, and had then retired [24].

Voize and Peyron surely knew in late October that Borel, Cotton, Lapicque, and Mauguin had already been arrested. Was Dahnke, catching up on his work after returning to Paris, compiling information that Voize and Peyron had provided to him or others earlier? Or did Voize and Peyron (or Dahnke) add names of individuals who had already been arrested in order to make the accusations against Carcopino more persuasive? It is noteworthy that the document cites individuals for their opinions, not for actions against the occupiers. Except for Frédéric Joliot-Curie, who was a member of the Communist Party, “Bolshevist” was a wild exaggeration, but they were all on the left.

Were those named Freemasons? Louis Lapicque was a Freemason [35], but this seems to have been unusual for a scientist. On 11 August 1941, a new law

⁵⁴As we have already noted, *l'Appel* denounced the possibility of Roussy's return as rector on 23 October.

⁵⁵Among the scientists whom Voize and Peyron denounced to Dahnke at the MBF in 1941, Ludovic Zoretti (1880–1948) was the only unequivocal collaborationist. His trajectory illustrates how those on the left in the 1930s could come to this role, and the bitterness with which Voize regarded him illustrates the depth of the rivalries within the Collaboration.

In his youth, Zoretti had brilliantly launched a mathematical career at the *Ecole Normale*, coming to Borel's attention and contributing regularly to the *Revue du Mois*. His translation into French of Volterra's 1901 *Prolusione* at the University of Rome was the very first article in the *Revue*. A specialist in the theory of functions in Borel's style, Zoretti was proposed for the Peccot lecture in 1908–1909 and became a professor at Caen, but his mathematical career was damaged by criticisms by L. E. J. Brouwer. He joined the SFIO in 1914 and became a labor organizer, very active in the CGT. In the 1930s, his militant pacifism led to his expulsion from the SFIO and suspension from teaching. The Vichy regime dismissed him completely from teaching, replacing him at Caen with Robert Fortet.

During the Munich crisis in September 1938, Zoretti created a stir by accusing Blum of risking a war that would destroy a civilization in order to make life easier for a hundred thousand Jews. In December 1938, he went back to denouncing Nazi atrocities and supporting the international league against antisemitism. But during the Occupation, he aligned himself with Marcel Déat, a collaborationist leader who had also participated in the pacifist movement. In 1941, Zoretti published a nationalist and antisemitic pamphlet *France, forge ton destin*. His late conversion was mocked by the collaborationist *Je suis partout* ([11], pp. 215–217, 264). In the spring of 1944, after Déat became Minister of Labor, Bonnard and Déat gave Zoretti the task of creating a workers' university. He went into hiding when Paris was liberated. Condemned for collaboration, then arrested in June 1946, tried again, and sentenced to eight years in prison, he died in the 1948 at Camp Carrère in the Lot.

was promulgated stipulating the publication of lists of Freemasons in the *Journal Officiel* and directing that civil servants who had been Freemason dignitaries would automatically lose their jobs. Huge lists of names were published in the subsequent weeks, and many did lose their jobs. Borel was not on any of the lists, but Voize himself, who was a Freemason before returning to Catholicism, was.

As Jean Guéhenno noted in his diary in 1941, the lists of Freemasons refuted the myth of the Freemasons' power, for hardly anyone prominent in the Third Republic was on the lists.⁵⁶ Carcopino noted that there was only one Freemason among the 80 members of the faculty of letters at the University of Paris.⁵⁷

4.4 Emile Borel in 1940–1941

Borel turned 70 on 7 January 1941, and so 1940–1941 was his last year at the University of Paris. He officially retired at the end of the academic year, 30 September 1941.⁵⁸ In retirement, he remained active in the *Académie des Sciences*, and he remained Borel, to whom others in the French higher education would turn for advice on appointments and prizes in mathematics.

Although we know little about Borel's activities at the university during 1940–1941, his last year there, we catch a glimpse of him in a story told by Carcopino in his 1953 memoirs. Carcopino's account, if it is to be credited, is an interesting example of the solidarity that existed, at least at that date, within the French establishment. In Borel's eyes, it seems, Vichy's Education Ministry was not the enemy. The story takes place in a monthly meeting of the university's council in which Carcopino, as rector and president of the council, sought to obtain the council's support for his opposition to a change in governance decreed by Jacques Chevalier, then Education Minister, on 20 January 1941. The rector served as president of the council, but its vice presidency was rotated among the deans of the five faculties. Chevalier had proposed a change: a permanent vice president would be appointed by the Education Minister. Carcopino saw this as a dangerous encroachment on the independence of the university, and all his colleagues on the council agreed, except Borel. According to Carcopino, Borel thought that the appointment of a vice president by the government would have more advantages than disadvantages, because it would give the university administration greater unity and continuity.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ "Vichy, pour orienter la haine des Français, a fait publier les noms des francs-maçons. Mais la publication n'a pas eu l'effet espéré. On ne pouvait mieux faire pour détruire la légende de la puissance de la franc-maçonnerie. Cette liste montre avec évidence qu'être franc-maçon pouvait assez bien conduire à être instituteur, voire percepteur, mais presque aucun des grands noms de la troisième République ne s'y retrouve..." [14], p. 155, entry for 11 October 1941.

⁵⁷ "La Faculté des Lettres de l'Université de Paris, à laquelle j'ai eu l'honneur d'appartenir, n'aurait compté, en 1941, sur plus de 80 professeurs, maîtres de conférences, et chargés de cours, qu'un seul franc-maçon." [8], p. 378.

⁵⁸ In theory, French professors must retire by their 70th birthday, but in practice they are allowed to work until the end of the academic year. The decree extending Borel's service to 30 September 1941 was signed by the Education Minister on 17 May 1941.

⁵⁹ "M. Emile Borel opina que la nomination, par le pouvoir central, d'un vice-président du

It is plausible that Borel would have seen advantages in having a permanent vice president, but it is also understandable that Carcopino should have remembered their exchange as he did, for it underlines his own insistence on the independence of the university, which he needed to document in every possible way to refute accusations that he had conceded too much to the Germans. And information in Borel’s personnel file⁶⁰ gives us some reason to doubt that he was present at the Sorbonne for the meeting. Carcopino placed the meeting on the morning of Monday, 24 February 1941, more than a month after Chevalier’s decree and on the very day Vichy announced Carcopino’s appointment to succeed Chevalier as Education Minister. On 22 January 1941, Borel had requested a leave of six weeks, from 20 February until the Easter vacation, saying that he hoped to obtain by 20 February a pass to cross the demarcation line so he could rest at Saint-Affrique. An attached note from his physician states that he has a bad cold, complicated by acute pulmonary congestion, and recommends convalescence in the south of France for three months. He was granted the leave he requested on 5 February 1941. There is no indication in his personnel file that he returned to the Sorbonne to teach after this official leave expired.

On the other hand, the Germans did not hand out the needed passes readily, and we have no other evidence that Borel was in Saint-Affrique in 1941. In the little she says about 1940–1941 in her autobiography, Borel’s wife does not mention any trip to Saint-Affrique. She does report that the couple moved within Paris, from their elegant apartment on Boulevard Hausmann, where her mother and husband were shivering for lack of fuel, to a small apartment in Montparnasse, where Borel could be close to an intellectual milieu. She recalls that after a brief vacation south of the Loire at the beginning of the summer, they had returned to Paris, where Borel had made contacts [*où il a pris des contacts*]. The wording suggests that the Germans were right to suspect that this 70-year-old man, however poor his health, was plotting resistance.

5 Arrest and release of the four academicians

The four members of the *Académie des Sciences* were arrested by the *Alst* on 10 or 11 October 1941, imprisoned at Fresnes, and released on 13 November. No explanation was ever given by the German or French authorities for their arrest or their release.

We will recount first how these events looked to the French at the time and then what we know from the German archives.

Conseil de l’Université qui serait permanent, présentait moins d’inconvénients que d’avantages et munirait l’administration universitaire de l’unité et de la continuité qui lui manquaient dans le système actuel. Ce petit discours de l’ancien ministre de la Marine démontrait uniquement, par un exemple personnel, que chez un savant, longtemps mêlé à la politique, l’homme du gouvernement primait l’universitaire. Son intervention m’avait surpris et son argumentation choqué. Mais dans les dispositions où je me trouvais, il me déplaisait d’ouvrir une discussion avec le grand mathématicien qu’est M. Emile Borel. . .” [8], pp. 273–274.

⁶⁰In CARAN F/17/24854.

5.1 How it looked to the French

In an autobiography published a year before her death in 1969, Borel's wife Camille Marbo gave a five-page account of her husband's imprisonment ([26], pp. 299–304). A German officer, accompanied by four soldiers and a sergeant, came to their apartment at 2:00 in the afternoon, searched it, and then took Borel away at 5:00 with no explanation. Marbo's brother managed to learn that Borel was in the prison at Fresnes, south of Paris, only by taking a package there and getting it accepted. Borel was never allowed visitors, but Marbo's packages, including clean clothes, were sometimes accepted.

Marbo does not tell us the exact date of Borel's arrest, but it was almost certainly either 10 or 11 October 1941. According to documents in the archives of the French Education Ministry,⁶¹ Mauguin was arrested at the university on 10 October. The next day the ministry contacted DGTO, asking them to find out from the Germans where Mauguin was being held and whether the arrest had any bearing on the university as a whole. Two days later, they contacted the DGTO again to add that Borel and Cotton had been arrested on 11 October.

News of the arrests spread quickly. In the 12 October 1941 entry in his diary, Jean Guéhenno writes that Borel has been arrested and that Langevin has been arrested anew. The new Paris police commissioner, Guéhenno says, is boasting of having arrested 1100 communists and anglophiles, and the Gestapo has declared the whole university suspect.⁶² Langevin's biographers confirm that he was arrested at second time while at Troyes, interrogated, and then released after a few days. Biquard places the arrest on a Wednesday at the end of September, and notes that the local German forces who arrested and interrogated him were not aware of his scientific stature.⁶³

As Marbo's account indicates, the French police were not involved in Borel's arrest. All they could do was check after the fact on whether it had happened. A report in archives of the Paris police,⁶⁴ dated 16 October 1941, states that they investigated the reported arrests of Langevin, Lopicque, Mauguin, Borel, and Cotton. They confirmed the arrests of Lopicque, Mauguin, and Borel, giving 10 October as the date in each case. They visited the address in Paris where Langevin had lived, but learned only that he was retired and now lived in Troyes. A subsequent report in the same police archives, dated 7 November 1941, inveighs against communist militants whom it accuses of using the arrests to stir up fear and anti-German feeling to the detriment of France.

The arrests soon came to international attention. On 18 October 1941, an article on occupied France in the London Times concluded with the comment, "No reason has so far been given for the arrest in Paris by the German authorities

⁶¹In CARAN F/17/13385.

⁶²"Le nouveau préfet de police, un amiral, bien entendu, se vante d'avoir dès maintenant fait arrêter onze cents communistes ou anglophiles. Langevin, qui était en résidence surveillée, est de nouveau emprisonné. Borel (soixante-seize ans) [sic] est aussi arrêté. La Gestapo déclare toute l'université suspecte." [14], p. 154.

⁶³See [4], p. 95. Labérenne gives January 1942 as the date of the second arrest ([21], p. 302), but this is surely an error.

⁶⁴In Dossier BA 1789.

of the well-known mathematician Emile Borel, a former Minister of the Navy.” Two days later, on 20 October 1920, the Times devoted an entire article to the arrests. As this article tells us, the reasons for the arrests remained a matter of speculation.

From Our Special Correspondent, French frontier,⁶⁵ Oct. 19

The Vichy Government today confirmed the arrest in Paris by the German authorities of five prominent professors of the University – namely, MM. Borel, Langevin, Lapicque, Mauguin and Cotton.

According to some sources they are charged with spreading de Gaullist propaganda, according to others with pro-British sentiments, while some newspapers lay emphasis on the fact that the political activity of MM. Langevin and Borel has been well known since the time of the Front Populaire. The brother of the former Prefect of the Seine Department, M. Villey, has also been arrested, together with his son and daughter, on a charge of alleged de Gaullist activity.

Judging by opinion in Haute Savoie, these arrests are causing bewilderment, as even the former political opponents of these scientists cannot believe that they have been arrested on account of their personal views. Some light may be thrown on the affair by a recent article published by Laval in his newspaper the *Moniteur du Puy-de-Dôme*. In this he says that now that Germany has conquered her enemies, who are those of France, the latter must conquer her disorder and errors and hold out her hand to Germany – the Queen of Europe. Laval then declares that all French persons who are still imbued with anti-German prejudice should be at once dismissed from public offices. He adds that this prejudice now exists mainly among the intellectuals, where it may be regarded as a remnant of anti-Fascism.

In Haute Savoie the view is expressed that the above ‘ultimatum’ by Laval inspired the Vichy Government to act accordingly, as the French authorities certainly lent a hand in the arrest of the Paris professors.

Although the *Times* correspondent was mistaken to believe that the French government had a hand in the arrests, the collaborationist press was loudly supporting Laval’s demand. On 23 October 1941, for example, in a violent article opposing Roussy’s return the university, *l’Appel* asked how Roussy could be allowed to hold his position when Professors Lapicque, Cotton, Mauguin, Borel, Villey, and Saintelagüe had been locked up for Bolshevist Gaullism.

While the academicians were imprisoned, the Germans escalated their terror in a way that shocked the French population. Following the assassination of a German officer in Nantes on 20 October, they shot 48 prisoners on 22 October

⁶⁵References to Haute Savoie suggest that the correspondent was stationed in Switzerland.

and published the names of the victims on 23 October. Another assassination in Bordeaux on 21 October was followed by a mass execution on 24 October. Marbo remembered the terror that she and the wives of the other imprisoned academicians experienced at every announcement of an execution or deportation.

Marbo hoped that the *Académie des Sciences* would petition for their members' release, and she marshaled support from three members, Maurice de Broglie, Elie Cartan, and Paul Montel. But the leadership of the Academy feared that speaking out would risk the Academy's abolition. Marbo also went to talk with Carcopino; he told her his hands were tied. Carcopino confirms this is his 1953 memoir, where he writes of feeling sad and helpless when she told him about Borel's not getting the blankets she had brought to the prison for him.⁶⁶ He also recalls that in November 1940, when he was rector and Georges Ripert was Education Minister, Ripert had asked him to approach the Germans about Langevin. Neither the *Collège de France* nor the other institutions where Langevin worked fell under the rector's jurisdiction, but Ripert appealed to Carcopino for help because of Carcopino's reputation for dealing with the Germans. Dissuaded from approaching the MBF directly by officials at the DGTO, Carcopino asked the scientist and industrialist Georges Claude, the most outspoken proponent of Collaboration in the *Académie des Sciences*, to talk with the Germans about Langevin. Claude told Carcopino he would but changed his mind after finding that the permanent secretaries of the *Académie des Sciences* would not lend their names to the effort.⁶⁷

During the period when Borel and his colleagues were imprisoned, the representative of the Education Ministry at the DGTO was Maurice Roy. Born in 1888, Roy had been a professor of German at the Lycée Saint-Louis until being promoted to the rank of inspector in 1940. He was delegated to the DGTO in March 1941. According to Carcopino's biographer Stéphanie Corcy-Debray⁶⁸ Roy intervened with the Germans routinely on behalf of students and professors who had been arrested, at the same time as he worked on many other conflicts involving education and youth movements. It was his job, for example, to submit legislation and regulations to the German censors before they were published by the French government. He was doubtlessly in contact with the Germans about Borel and his colleagues as soon as their arrests were known to the Education Ministry.

In her biography of her husband Emile Cotton [10], Eugénie Cotton states that the four prisoners were released on 13 November, and this date is confirmed by a handwritten note on an MBF document prepared in February 1942.⁶⁹ Other information is consistent with this date. Marbo tells us that Borel fell ill with double pneumonia the day after he was released. By 19 November he was

⁶⁶See [8], p. 472.

⁶⁷For Carcopino's account, see [8], pp. 347–349. According to Corcy-Debray ([9], p. 231), Claude's letter to Carcopino explaining the refusal of the permanent secretaries to be involved is in CARAN 3W122.

⁶⁸See [9], p. 76.

⁶⁹In CARAN AJ/40/567.

writing a note to his colleague Albert Lacroix.⁷⁰

We have not found any account of Borel's recollections about his interrogation. The biologist Maurice Caullery, a fellow member of the *Académie des Sciences* and friend of Borel, Cotton, Mauguin, and Lapicque, stated in his own memoirs that the interrogation of the four was a sham.⁷¹

5.2 The intervention of the German Navy

The earliest mention of Borel's name that we have found in the MBF archives comes in a letter dated 25 October 1941, from the office of the Commanding Admiral of the German Navy in France to the secret police section of the MBF.⁷²

Here is the body of the letter in English translation:

The research section of the naval weapons office at the Headquarters of the War Navy is currently working in Paris on important problems of nuclear physics together with the Parisian "Curie" Institute. The German scientists depend on collaboration with the French scientists in this work. To be named, among others, are the mathematician Prof. Borell [sic], the physicists Prof. Langevin and Cotton, the crystallographer Prof. Mauguin and the mineralogist Prof. La Picque [sic], the last two of the Sorbonne.

According to information from the representatives of OKM at the Commanding Admiral in France, the forenamed French scientists have been under arrest for some time. Because the collaboration between the German and French scientists will be very difficult under these circumstances, and the continuation of the military scientific research may become impossible, we would like to be advised about whether the misdeeds committed by the arrested French scientists are so serious that their arrests must be upheld.

It seems unlikely that Frédéric Joliot-Curie and his French assistants would have been getting help from their aging colleagues in Paris, let alone from Langevin in Troyes, or that Joliot-Curie could have convinced the German scientists in the laboratory that this was the case. But it is plausible that the German scientists would have solicited this letter as a gesture to Joliot-Curie. Joliot-Curie's role in obtaining Langevin's transfer from prison to Troyes in December 1940 is documented by Burrin ([7], pp. 315–322).

⁷⁰The letter is preserved in Borel's file in the archives of the *Académie des Sciences*.

⁷¹When he himself was imprisoned at Fresnes on 2 April 1941, Caullery recalled that "... mes amis Borel, Cotton, Mauguin et Lapicque, arrêtés ainsi en octobre 1941, étaient restés à Fresnes plus d'un mois, avant d'être relâchés après un simulacre d'interrogatoire." About a dozen academicians, including Caullery, were held for two days, 2 April to 4 April. See [48], pp. 239–243, and Section ?? below.

⁷²In CARAN AJ/40/558.

5.3 How it looked to the MBF

By 10 November, at least, Dahnke knew that the academicians had been arrested. On that day he writes:⁷³

The *Alst* arrested professors Mauguin, Cotton, Lapicque and Borel (see the attached note of 1 November 41), and lycée teachers Aubert and Cazalas (see the attached memorandum). I have gotten in contact with the *Alst* (Major Dr. Reile), spoken with the expert in charge of the file, Captain Krüll,⁷⁴ and transmitted to him the note of 1 November 41 in order to bring connections of which he had been unaware to his attention. He intends to extend his investigations to this circle.

In a handwritten note added on 18 November to the memorandum of 10 November, Dahnke reports that Borel, Cotton, and Mauguin had been released in the meantime after a note from Roy. This is surely a reference to Maurice Roy, Carcopino's liaison with the Germans.

Dahnke seems to have been meeting with the *Alst* weekly. In his next report, he writes:⁷⁵

Consultation with Captain Krüll on 25 November 41. He released Professors Mauguin, Cotton, Lapicque and Borel. Their interrogation showed that all of them, especially Cotton, still candidly stand by the political ideas they advocated before and during the war. They openly declared that they expect England and America's political system to rescue France. But they emphatically denied that they had in any way acted on their views, especially with students. The intelligence service is not in position to prove such activity, though our informers claim it has taken place. In particular, it is impossible to arrange a confrontation with students from the circles these professors were supposed to have influenced, because the informers did not identify any such students by name.

During a consultation between this expert, Dr. Epting, and Dr. Biederbick, we considered putting the four professors under police surveillance outside Paris, as was done with Langevin in Troyes. In view of such a political attitude on the part of the four professors, who are described by rightist circles as the center of extreme leftist and anti-German tendencies in the Sorbonne — see the references in the newspapers — it cannot be expected that they will refrain from expressing their opinions in French scientific circles. This would justify a measure of this kind, even if it is impossible to produce witnesses to prove their political activity. No active participation by Langevin was proven either. But we must deliberate carefully before

⁷³Memorandum in CARAN AJ/40/567.

⁷⁴“Schürr” has been crossed out, with “Krüll” written in by hand.

⁷⁵Dated only November 1941, again in AJ/40/567.

implementing such a measure; I have therefore asked Dr. Epting to personally discuss the matter at the Embassy as soon as possible.

We are left to conjecture that Abetz decided that it was not worthwhile to exile the four academicians from Paris.

We learn a little more from documents prepared by Group 4 in early 1942, when Charles Mauguin again came to the Germans' attention. Mauguin was elected to the council of the university, and the clandestine press, noting that a collaborationist had also stood for the post, celebrated the election as a defeat for the Collaboration. Group 4 duly looked into the matter, and in a report to the *Verwaltungsabteilung*'s police section, dated 11 February 1942,⁷⁶ they noted that Mauguin had been accused by his right-wing opponents of being close to the communists but that no proof had yet been found; they would investigate further. A handwritten note on this report states, with reference to the archives of the *Alst*, that Mauguin had been already been arrested in October 1941 and released on 13 November 1941.

Why did the *Alst* arrest the four academicians as they were sweeping up the Hector network? Were they implicated by some of those arrested on October 9, the first day of the sweep? Or were they arrested because of the earlier evidence gathered by the SS concerning professors who were likely to be encouraging students in the Resistance? The fact that Dahnke reports communicating Voize and Peyron's accusations to the *Alst* after the arrests of the academicians suggests that these accusations were not responsible for the arrests. We must remember, however, that Dahnke was making a record for his superiors in the MBF, and that von Stülpnagel had expressly forbidden the SS to take action against prominent scientists without consulting him. Von Stülpnagel had formal authority over the SS agents in France, but he had no authority over the *Abwehr*'s counterespionage operations in France. It is possible that the SS had pushed the *Alst* to take an action that they themselves could not take because of von Stülpnagel's opposition, and that Dahnke was to some extent complicit.

The German documents give us a clearer picture about the reasons the four academicians were released. They tell us repeatedly, in a variety of contexts, that von Stülpnagel was not willing to punish French scientists who could not be proven to have taken action against the Occupation, because to do so would interfere with keeping order in the university.

Perhaps the intervention of the German Navy had some influence, but on the whole, we must take at face value Dahnke's report that the *Alst* released the academicians for lack of evidence that they were actively resisting the Occupation. According to Gilbert Gidel's account of his meeting with von Stülpnagel on 15 December 1941 as Paris rector,⁷⁷ von Stülpnagel made explicit the bargain the Germans were offering university authorities: the Germans would refrain from harsh measures so long as students and professors stuck to their academic business.

⁷⁶In CARAN AJ/40/567. This report was not prepared by Dahnke; it is signed "P."

⁷⁷In CARAN AJ/16/7117.

Dahnke's reports do not tell us that his communication with the *Alst*, reported on 10 November, played a role in the prisoners' release on 13 November. No do we have records of correspondence between the DGTO and the Germans about the arrests. But as we have already mentioned, Maurice Roy, the DGTO official concerned with the arrests of professors and students, intervened routinely on their behalf with the MBF, and Dahnke would surely have been aware of French concerns when he consulted with the *Alst* about the fate of Borel and his colleagues.

6 Reverberations in 1942–1944

We know, from Marbo's autobiography, that Borel was briefly arrested for a second time. The second arrest may or may not have been part of a second wave of arrests of academicians that took place in April 1942 and played a part, in Carcopino's opinion, in Laval's return to power in the Vichy government at that time. Another reverberation from the October 1941 arrest was the failure of Borel's candidacy for election, in early 1942, to be permanent secretary of the *Académie des Sciences*. Borel contested this decision, unsuccessfully, after the Liberation.

6.1 Borel's candidacy to succeed Picard

Emile Picard died on 11 December 1941 at the age of 86. Borel, a relative by marriage,⁷⁸ would normally have attended the funeral. But he seems not to have done so, perhaps because he was still recovering from his ordeal or perhaps out of prudence. The published list of those who attended the funeral lists Marguerite Borel as a member of the Appell family.

Picard had been one of two permanent secretaries for the *Académie des Sciences*, the other being the mineralogist Alfred Lacroix (1863–1948). As permanent secretary, Picard had represented the mathematical sciences, which had subsections for geometry, mechanics, astronomy, geography, and physics. On 2 February 1942, the academy elected the physicist and Nobel laureate Louis de Broglie to succeed him.

Had he not been arrested, Borel would have been a natural successor to Picard, as the post had been held previously by the academy's most senior pure mathematician. Jacques Hadamard was more senior than Borel, but he had fled to the United States because he was Jewish.

The file at the academy's archives for its meeting of 2 February 1942 confirms that de Broglie's election was a delicate matter. A letter from the ministry, dated 30 December 1941, reveals that in response to the ministry's official condolences to Picard's widow, Lacroix had mentioned the vacancy of the post of permanent secretary and the academy's intention of proceeding to an election to fill it, and

⁷⁸Borel's father-in-law Paul Appell and Picard had both married nieces of the mathematician Joseph Bertrand.

asking for an appointment with Carcopino. He met with Carcopino on the morning of 7 January 1942.

The next day, Lacroix wrote to the members of the academy laying out how the new permanent secretary would be elected, with reference to documents going back to 1803, when the post had been introduced. There would be nothing out of the ordinary about such a notice, but the circumstances seem to have required supplementary documentation. Perhaps someone had suggested leaving the post vacant, because Lacroix cites an article of the regulations that had been amended in 1816 to state that the academy would *not deliberate about whether or not to elect someone to the post* (Lacroix's emphasis) but would elect a commission of six members from the section (mathematical sciences in this case), which would produce a list of candidates in consultation with the academy's president. Lacroix then proposed a calendar for the process: the commission would be named on 19 January, it would name the candidates on 26 January, and the election would take place on 2 February if a quorum! of 40 could be assembled; failing the quorum the election would take place on 9 February by simple majority of those present. The file also contains a tally showing that there had not been a quorum at any of the meetings for December 1941.

Another document, in Lacroix's hand, indicates the results of a secret committee meeting on 12 January that chose the commission members to be elected by the assembly the following week. The commission consisted, naturally, of the most senior members of the five subsections: Borel for geometry, Villat for mechanics, Deslandres for astronomy, Bourgeois for geography, and Cotton for physics, along with Maurain as the most senior of the other members of the section. At the bottom of the document is a discreet acknowledgement of Hadamard's existence: *It is a matter of the most senior members present in Paris.*

The two candidates proposed by the commission on 19 January were Louis de Broglie and Elie Cartan. In his January 7 notice, Lacroix had prescribed that the commission would not make a report, on the surprising grounds that its work concerned a competition among colleagues.

On 2 February, 41 members of the academy were present, and 39 voted: 22 for de Broglie, 15 for Cartan, and two with blank ballots. The same day, Lacroix sent Carcopino an excerpt of the minutes proclaiming de Broglie's election and asking him to confirm the choice. The published minutes of the following week's meeting⁷⁹ records the confirmation and reproduces de Broglie's very proper acceptance speech. He merely affirmed that the *Académie des Sciences* had to play its role in the difficult times being endured for the sake of the country's recovery. Such rhetoric would have been completely satisfactory from the viewpoint of the Vichy government, which always insisted that it was working for the restoration of the country and for its future triumphs.

⁷⁹See CRAS 214, 16 February 1942, p. 294

6.2 The arrest of academicians in April 1942

On 2 April 1942, the Germans arrested and imprisoned for two days a dozen members of the *Institut de France*, including two members of the *Académie des Sciences*, Aimée Cotton, who had been arrested with Borel in October, and the biologist Maurice Caullery. Carcopino's liaison at the *Militärbefehlshaber* was told by the Germans that the academics were arrested because they had been receiving the clandestine periodical *La France Continue*. Caullery, who compared notes with the others who were arrested, confirms that the Germans accused them all of receiving clandestine material. Caullery told them that this was true; he had received the material in a sealed envelope, had not known who sent it, and had destroyed it. Caullery conjectured that the Germans' only evidence against those arrested was the presence of their names on a distribution list for the clandestine material. Aside from the questioning when they were arrested, the academicians were not interrogated further before being released on 4 April.⁸⁰

According to Carcopino the arrests were discussed by Pétain and his ministers. Pétain tried at first to minimize the significance of the arrests, observing that none of those arrested were in the *Académie française*. But Carcopino countered that some of them were Pétain's own colleagues in *l'Académie des Sciences morales*. Pétain was persuaded to act on behalf of the prisoners in a way he had not in previous cases: he told Darlan to have de Brinon intervene with the Germans. When the prisoners were released on April 4, Carcopino rejoiced in the effectiveness of Pétain's action, but he later concluded that the Germans had released the prisoners because the arrests had achieved their goal of bringing Pétain around to changing his government. If the Germans' purpose had been to attack the Resistance, Carcopino reasoned, they would have arrested more members of the *Académie des Sciences*, the citadel of the Resistance within the *Institut de France*, rather than arresting eight or nine members of Carcopino's own academy, the *Académie des Inscriptions*. After the war he found support for this opinion in telegrams from the German Embassy in Paris to von Ribbentrop in Berlin, one on 21 March 1942 proposing that the crisis created by the fiasco of the Riom trial be used to oust Carcopino and other undesirable ministers, a second on 3 April 1942 indicating that Pétain had now conceded to Laval the departure of Carcopino and the minister of agriculture.⁸¹ By the middle of April, Carcopino had left the government, returning to the directorship of the *Ecole Normale* in Paris, and Laval was in charge at Vichy.

According to Marbo's memoir, Borel was arrested again in 1942, this time by two French policemen, who returned him home after three hours, reporting that the German officer to whom they had taken him had rejected him as a prisoner because of his age. Marbo does not give a date for this second arrest. Was it on 2 April when the other academicians were arrested? Perhaps, but Marbo's testimony that the French police executed the arrest may count against

⁸⁰See [48], pp. 239–243.

⁸¹See [8], pp. 560–565; [9], p. 232.

this, as accounts of the other arrests on April 2 suggest that the Germans acted without French help.

The second arrest persuaded Borel and Marbo to return to Saint-Affrique. They did so, after obtaining the necessary permission for crossing the line of demarcation, in October 1942. According to Marbo, they worked with the Resistance in Saint-Affrique. Borel's contribution was to allow the Resistance to use a forest he owned, but Marbo, thirteen years younger and in better health, did what she could to feed and otherwise help Jews and other fugitives. By the spring of 1944, Borel and Marbo were back in Paris, where they stayed with Marbo's brother Pierre. Marbo helped him deliver messages for the Resistance. On D-Day, Borel and Marbo were staying clandestinely in a clinic in the Passy district of Paris, where Borel underwent surgery.⁸²

6.3 Borel's remonstrance at the *Académie des Sciences*

The Liberation of Paris disturbed the activities of the *Académie des Sciences* very little. The assembly did not meet during the week when the Liberation took place, but they did meet the following Monday, August 28, starting late because of the difficulties experienced by the trains, and unanimously voting to join the other academies of the *Institut* in congratulating the provisional government and thanking the allied troops and French forces⁸³ The following week, on Monday, 4 September, they went into secret session and decided to expel Georges Claude, the scientist and industrialist who had been so vocal a proponent of the Collaboration.⁸⁴

Soon thereafter, on 23 September 1944, Borel wrote to Lacroix proposing a reconsideration of the election of de Broglie as permanent secretary. In this letter, Borel recounts what Jean Vincent, president of the academy, has told him about the Academy's actions in 1941. Vincent had opposed appealing to the Germans to release the four prisoners, because de Brinon had persuaded him that such an appeal would be dangerous both for the prisoners and the Academy itself. For the same reason, Vincent had opposed Borel's selection as permanent secretary, and he now agreed that Borel would have been elected had he not been arrested. At the beginning of 1942, Borel had thought he had enough votes to be elected in spite of Vincent's opposition, but as Lacroix very well knew, Carcopino had forced him to withdraw his candidacy. In light of this history, Borel felt that he was owed "reparation"; Louis de Broglie should resign, and Borel should replace him. Borel had already talked to his friends of Louis and his brother Maurice, and he thought they could be persuaded that this was appropriate.

Borel's plan seems to have gotten off the ground. He wrote to Lacroix again on 6 October 1944, saying that he had a good conversation with Maurice and was convinced that Louis would indeed resign. But Louis did not resign, and Borel never became permanent secretary. We have no further evidence concerning the

⁸²See [26], pp. 306–309.

⁸³See CRAS, 219, p. 225.

⁸⁴See CRAS, 219, p. 264.

attitudes of the de Broglies and other members of the Academy, but it is easy to imagine them hesitating to revisit decisions made during the Occupation. Did reparation mean an admission of fault? Who else might deserve reparation? If Borel had a claim, did Hadamard also have one?

After the war, Borel resumed his activity in Paris and served again as mayor of Saint-Affrique,⁸⁵ from 1945 to 1947. He died in Paris in 1956. Camille Marbo died in 1969.

7 Conclusion

The German Occupation of France was ruthless in its persecution of the Jews,⁸⁶ but remarkably hesitant to deal similarly with some of its other opponents in the French academic elite. Focused on the economic exploitation of France and acutely aware of how difficult it would be to control the country if French students and intellectuals united against their occupiers, the German military administration resisted pressure from intellectuals in the SS and the German embassy who aspired to reshape the French mentality by eliminating left-wingers and other opponents of German intellectual leadership.

Borel, Cotton, Lapicque, and Mauguin were probably guilty of encouraging students to engage in resistance and espionage. The German military administration and German intelligence had every reason to believe it, but no proof. The release of the four academicians demonstrates the importance to the German military administration of their bargain with the leaders of the French university, under which the university would be left to run itself if it kept its students and professors from making trouble for the Occupation.

This fundamental bargain was not challenged even by those like Borel and his colleagues who sought to support the Resistance in secret. The ministry of education under Vichy was not seen as the enemy by Borel, and the *Académie des Sciences* followed the minister's guidance on how to avoid any appearance of active opposition to the Occupation.

We should also not underestimate the importance of this bargain to the French government. Carcopino's analysis of the events of April 1942 may have exaggerated his own importance. But Vichy was a government of technocrats more than any other in French history, and Pétain expanded its ranks more than any other French leader. Vichy's propaganda emphasized the virtues of *la France profonde*, but its practice also put great emphasis on the renewal of the elites. They were to be brought back from their decadence, purged of the influence of Jews, Freemasons, and communists, restored to bring France back to its glory. By rushing to expel Jews and Freemasons from government service, Pétain had sought to establish a corps of functionaries reliably subject to his

⁸⁵According to Marbo, it was always she rather than Borel who actually did the work of mayor.

⁸⁶More is becoming known about Jewish academics who nevertheless managed to survive and continue working in France during the Occupation; see for example Audin's work on Jacques Feldbau [1].

authority, committed to the Collaboration, and therefore relatively shielded from Hitler's brutality. But the arrests of the academicians demonstrated the fragility of the shield. Emile Borel and his other ! aged colleagues in the *Institut de France* were surely of little practical importance to Vichy or to the Germans, but they symbolized Vichy's vulnerability.

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