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Article

From Politics to Nostalgia: The Transformation of War Memories in France during the 1960s–1970s

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Maud Anne Bracke

University of Glasgow, UK

Abstract

This article discusses changes in collective memory of World War Two in France during the 1960s–1970s on the basis of a contextualized discussion of three films, all of which adopt, it is argued, a self-conscious politics of memory. The films are taken as examples of a particular relationship to World War Two that was historically possible in a given political context. As in most of the literature, ‘the 1968 years’ are taken as a moment of change, but it is argued here that they constituted the end rather than the start of political challenges to collective memory of World War Two. During the 1970s representations of World War Two in cinema as well as public discourse more generally were increasingly historicized and disconnected from contemporary society, and thus de-politicized.

Keywords

‘1968’, France, French cinema, memory, World War Two

Wars and Memories

Memory and remembrance of World War Two in European societies is a topic much commented upon in academic literature and the broader public arena. In France, most of the debate has pivoted on the arguments put forward by Henry Rousso in *Le syndrome de Vichy*, published in 1987.¹ Rousso has proposed a socio-psychological understanding of the historical development of collective memory and public remembrance of World War Two, the resistance, collaboration, the deportation of the Jews and the Vichy regime. While highly influential, his views have since been criticized; the present article, too, aims to contribute to a more refined understanding of the conditions and forces leading to a transformation in

Corresponding author:

Maud Anne Bracke, University of Glasgow, UK

Email: m.bracke@history.arts.gla.ac.uk

collective memory in post-war France. Like much of the literature, I see the social and political mobilization around 1968 as a key moment of change, but I understand its significance differently. I argue that while before ‘the 1968 years’ a political narrative of World War Two was of central importance to the main political actors as a source of political legitimation, in the following decade collective memories of World War Two were historicized and de-politicized, despite the ‘obsession’ with the War in the popular media during the 1970s, which is described by Rousso.² I use the Baudrillardian notion of simulacrum to illustrate how images and discourses of World War Two became increasingly disconnected from contemporary politics, and I argue that they instead fuelled a relationship with the wartime past characterized by nostalgia.

The argument is based on a reading of three influential films: *Hiroshima mon amour* (Alain Resnais, 1959), *Le chagrin et la pitié* (Marcel Ophüls, 1969) and *L’affiche rouge* (Frank Cassenti, 1974). While different in many ways, the three films share the fact that they interrogated the French audience regarding specific questions of the wartime past, and that they were deliberately intended as reflections on the mechanisms of remembering and forgetting. The films were self-conscious of their memory politics in a way that other, more naïve cinematic representations of World War Two were not. Having been produced within a distance of 15 years from each other, the three films illustrate the changes with regard to representations of the War that occurred in France during this period. The films are not studied as expressions of individual memory or for what they reveal about World War Two as a historical event. Instead, each of the films is taken as one of a ‘plurality of possible representations’³ of the past in a given context, and as such, as part of collective memory. By identifying the shifting boundaries of the kinds of images and narratives of the War which were historically (im)possible and (un)available to the producers of these films as well as their audiences, the importance of change over time, in this case between the late 1950s and late 1970s, is assessed.

The films are considered as part of ‘collective memory’, understood here as a multitude of narratives of a past event which are accepted in the public domain.⁴ This concept is based on what Peter Burke has termed the ‘social history of remembering’: representations of the past, such as the ones presented in films, find their origins in the identities and self-understanding of social groups.⁵ A specification is however needed: the approach to social memory applied here is a *political* one. The films are closely connected to the political context in which they were produced, and are read in terms of their aim to question established, powerful narratives of World War Two and to give voice to alternative ones. I understand collective memory as the site of power relations and socio-political conflict: some narratives will be more powerful or widely diffused than others, and many of them will contradict or exclude each other. The public articulation of these narratives is always political and conflict-ridden, whether proposed by the state, an individual, or a social or political group. Representations of the past are always aimed at creating *legitimacy* and at giving credibility to one’s claims to represent the relevant

group – be it the nation and its history and destiny, or other groups such as ideological and religious ones.⁶

Collective memories of a particular war need to be understood in relation to other wars which the society or nation experienced previously or simultaneously.⁷ I identify this phenomenon as the *layering of memories*: when a given society experiences war, civil war or intense socio-political conflict, memories of past conflicts will re-merge and will serve to give meaning to the present conflict. The notion of ‘return of the repressed’, taken from psychoanalysis and used by Rousso and others in relation to collective memory, is useful, but only if it is recognized that the ‘repressed’ (in this case memories of the Vichy regime and collaboration) are transformed through this process. In the case of 1960s France, two developments more than anything else provoked disruptions in hegemonic memories of World War Two as of the late 1950s: the military intervention in Algeria (1958–1962), and the shift from ‘high’ Cold War to East–West détente in which Gaullist France was a major actor.

While important work has been done on the ways in which the Algerian war helped transform public debate in France on World War Two, connections between collective memories of World War Two and changes in the Cold War are an understudied topic for France and Western Europe as a whole.⁸ War memories changed profoundly during the period of détente, and in the French context they should be seen as both cause and effect of détente and its domestic implications. Détente, understood here as starting around 1962 and ending around 1979, was characterized in France by what can be termed the erosion of the classic Cold War identities, Gaullism and French communism. Charles de Gaulle’s formations (the *Rassemblement du peuple français*, followed by the *Union pour la République nouvelle* in 1958 and the *Union de démocrates pour la République* in 1967) on the one hand, and the *Parti communiste français* (PCF) on the other, were political and socio-cultural identities which based their legitimacy on the vision of a Manichean political struggle between good and evil. This struggle was understood as a battle on both the international and the domestic level, and as the necessary continuation of the ideological battle that was World War Two. In the 1960s these classic Cold War identities experienced a gradual loss of support and credibility. This loss was closely related to the rise of East–West détente, in that it became increasingly difficult for political leaders, whether conservative-Gaullist or communist, to present to the public a clearly defined, monolithic Cold War enemy.⁹ It was one factor leading to the massive social and political protests of 1968, directed at the authoritarianism of not only the state under President de Gaulle, but also of the PCF. The fact that both Gaullism and communism experienced difficulty regaining political legitimacy in the 1970s reflected the fact that World War Two had lost much of its immediate political relevance.

The issue of periodization is central, as it teases out questions regarding the conditions in which certain narratives of the past become hegemonic, are transformed, or are deconstructed.¹⁰ Much of the literature on War memories in Europe has interpreted 1968 as a key moment of change.¹¹ I too take the years around

1968 as pivotal, but understand them to be an ending rather than a beginning. The late 1960s and early 1970s witnessed the disintegration of previously hegemonic memories of World War Two – communist and Gaullist – but this was the outcome of a process of socio-political change rather than a starting point. Immediately following the 1968 protests, the contours of new orthodoxies were drawn and attempts at new consensus made. The establishment of new orthodoxies with regard to World War Two should be seen as an integral part of the *retour à la normale* or restoration which the country witnessed following the disruptive events of May 1968. However, before looking into the disruptive events of the late 1960s, the politics of remembering World War Two in early Cold War France requires brief discussion.

Résistancialisme and its Undoing

All West European countries were faced in 1945 with a power vacuum and with the absence of a political elite untainted by World War Two. Creating a new official memory of the resistance became a matter of reconstructing national identity and unity; memory of the resistance thus helped in reconstructing the ‘legitimacy of the majority’,¹² in a sometimes complete absence of such legitimacy. While West European governments came to align themselves with ‘Atlanticism’ in its political, military, economic and cultural aspects,¹³ official discourses of World War Two and the resistance were attuned to the new dominant political cleavage, namely, pro-Western, market-based liberal democracy versus Soviet-style communism. This stance led to the denial or at least downplaying of the role in the resistance played by the radical left and the Soviet-aligned communist parties. In turn, the latter proposed their own reading of World War Two history, through which they mythologized their own role in the anti-Fascist resistance. This required a number of historic falsifications; in the case of France, these included the silencing of the PCF’s position in 1939–1941 when it followed Moscow’s line of alliance with Nazi Germany,¹⁴ and the negation of de Gaulle’s contribution to the resistance.

France’s specificity in the West European context needs to be noted. In Italy, despite the fierce Cold War battles developing in the aftermath of the War, a number of themes were common to the accounts developed by the most political actors on the left, centre and the right: specifically the tendency to see Fascism as a digression, located, in a sense, outside the history of the Italian nation, and a phenomenon which had found only limited support among the Italian people.¹⁵ The dominant political actors – from the Christian Democrats to the leaders of the *Partito comunista italiano* (PCI) – proposed a historical narrative according to which 1945 was a moment of positive break and renewal. In the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) too, the 1950s official narrative of World War Two was one that emphasized historical discontinuity. Historical continuities, for example with regard to the elites, were taboo.¹⁶ The non-engagement with some of the most pressing historical questions raised by Nazism and the Holocaust was possible in the context of a national culture based on the belief that the Nazi defeat of 1945

constituted the most profound break, and that after it, the Federal Republic of Germany was new and cleansed.¹⁷

In France, the dominant post-war narratives played a different role, highlighting the essential *continuity* of the French nation and its history. The Vichy regime was presented in such a way to fit in with a longer-term view of the heroism and righteousness of the French nation. Following the exit from government of the PCF ministers in 1947 and the start of the global and internal Cold War, political elites in France displayed the first signs of what Rousso has termed *neo-Vichyisme*, a political project aimed at rehabilitating Marshal Philippe Pétain and the authoritarian Vichy regime. The Vichy regime was understood here as having resisted the German occupation as much as it possibly could. This understanding went hand in hand with the ending of the brief era of punishment of former collaborators and Vichy officials. The majority of cases of violence and legal punishment against (real or assumed) collaborators occurred before 1945, and official punishment of former collaborators largely came to an end in 1951, with a law that granted them partial amnesty. This shift was epitomized by Pétain's publication of *La guerre franco-française* in 1950, in which he denounced not violence between collaborators and resistance during the War, but the repression against former collaborators. Unsurprisingly, blame was placed in this account solely on the PCF.¹⁸

That de Gaulle related to *neo-Vichyisme* in an ambivalent way was evident when he became President of the Fifth Republic in 1958. De Gaulle used his narrative of World War Two, the resistance and his role in it, as a central source of political legitimation. His self-representation as the incarnation of not only the actual historical resistance, but on a more abstract level of the notions of republican citizenship, resistance to foreign interference and eternal 'Frenchness', were central to his power. However, unwilling to alienate the post-collaborationist elites, de Gaulle proposed a political project which Rousso has termed *résistancialisme*: the notion of resistance was placed at the centre of France's national identity but disconnected from the actual historical phenomenon that was the resistance during World War Two. The meaning of resistance was thereby expanded to absurd lengths to include the Vichy regime; it was rendered abstract and disconnected from any notion of violence or conflict among Frenchmen and women.¹⁹

Also, to the PCF, resistance became an abstract notion, to some degree de-contextualized and made impersonal. PCF discourses of the resistance centred on the ideological notion of anti-Fascism, and on the contribution made by the (anonymous) working classes and (abstract) people, rather than on choices made by individuals in complex circumstances. The PCF had its own variant on the Gaullist myth of national unity, namely, the notion of *peuple français*, built on a double meaning: people as class and people as nation.²⁰ As in the case of Gaullism, the party hereby claimed to represent the nation as a whole. The PCF attempted to achieve exclusivity in its appropriation of the resistance, by defining de Gaulle as Fascist, or 'paving the way to Fascism'.²¹ Following 1958 it became an unsuccessful strategy, and the party's 1960s discourses on the War, collaboration and resistance, were more than ever repetitive and sterile.²²

It would be mistaken, however, simply to understand the 1950s and early 1960s as a period during which these two monolithic sets of war memories remained unchanged, as important challenges to these hegemonic memories occurred in those years.²³ The breakdown of these hegemonic narratives was caused in a first instance by the war in Algeria (1954–1962) and the political conflict created by it in France. At the outbreak of the Algerian War, de Gaulle and the conservative elites were forced to reinforce the myth of *résistancialisme*, turning it into a something that resembled a caricature. The Algerian War interfered with established narratives of World War Two on a number of levels, on the left as well as the right, creating new cleavages and political identities.²⁴ The links between the two wars consisted, firstly, in the fact that both wars provoked debates on the nature of the nation as either a territorial/ethnic entity or an abstract political idea. Further, the French Empire had been invoked as a justification for the choices made both by the Vichy regime and by de Gaulle. Finally and crucially, the war in Algeria and specifically the torture practices used by the French army brought up difficult questions regarding the legitimate use of political violence, and the *devoir d'obéissance/devoir de résistance*. It was when it was compared with World War Two that the political and moral illegitimacy of the Algerian War could be questioned. The French public, and even some army officers, implicitly equated the Algerian resistance with the French *maquis*, and the French army in Algeria with the German army in France.²⁵ This is not to argue that the majority of the French public was opposed to the war in Algeria – on the contrary, all analyses demonstrate the lack of public support for Algerian independence up to at least around 1960. Rather, the overall sentiment was embarrassment and the start of the deconstruction of a number of inherited national values and discourses. Thus, following the Algerian conflict, the causes and methods of the French army could not be glorified without questioning the myths of France's wartime past.

The questioning of inherited narratives of World War Two in this context can be read from a number of highly influential films. In productions such as *Hiroshima mon amour* (1959, screenplay by Marguerite Duras), director Alain Resnais effectively undermined *résistancialisme*. This is so not only because he dealt with the themes of remembering and war, but, crucially, because he related World War Two to his own times, and specifically to the nuclear threat. In *Hiroshima*, World War Two was *not* historicized; instead, it lived on in the present, and Resnais transmitted this message in a number of ways. It was the immediacy of the War in *Hiroshima* which turned the film into a powerful political challenge to officialized memories of World War Two.

To better understand Resnais' memory politics in *Hiroshima*, it is necessary first to look briefly at a number of his other films dealing with the Algerian War. In these too, Resnais powerfully undermined dominant narratives of World War Two, by closely relating it to the Algerian War and thus placing it in the immediacy of French contemporary society and politics. *Les Statues meurent aussi* (1953) dealt with the appropriation and therefore destruction of African art by French colonizers. Although Resnais denied there was an anti-colonial or anti-racist message in

the film, in 1968, when the French public was first able to see the formerly banned film, it came to be understood in this way.²⁶ Also his next documentary film, *Nuit et brouillard* (1955), dealing with the deportation of Jews from France, receives its full meaning when understood as a film not only about the Holocaust but also about France during the Algerian war. To the contemporary audience, the harsh treatment and assembling of Jews by the German occupiers and by the French army automatically yet unspeakably evoked images of the persecutions of Algerians by the French army, both in Algeria and in France itself. In 1963 Resnais made a film dealing explicitly with the Algerian war: *Muriel où le temps d'un retour*. The film has recently been interpreted as less politically courageous than it might seem at first sight: while the suggestion of torture of Muriel by the main character, Bernard, is omnipresent in the film, actual evidence or images of torture are missing from it. This absence, it is argued, suggests Resnais' own reluctance to be explicit about torture practices in Algeria, and more generally his implicit acceptance of de Gaulle's policies.²⁷ My interpretation is that, first, the film needs to be read in a context in which censorship remained an adamant fact, and one of which Resnais had been victim on a number of occasions.²⁸ Secondly, it needs to be related to his oeuvre more generally: what all films mentioned here investigated were the mechanisms of denial and the impossibility of forgetting. Resnais displayed the politics of taboo, ambiguity and deception of characters such as Bernard not in order to make these acceptable, but as a denunciation of contemporary French society. In doing so, he revealed the extent to which memory was a matter of manipulation.

On the most basic level, *Hiroshima* tells the story of an unnamed French woman in her mid-30s ('Elle') on a visit in Hiroshima to play a role in a film about peace, and her love affair with a Japanese man of about the same age ('Lui'). Although complex and ambiguous in its treatment of the themes of innocence and guilt, trauma and memory, the film carries two rather straightforward political messages: firstly, its rampant attacks on the collective denial of the wartime past in France, and secondly, its denunciation of mass murder and destruction through nuclear weapons. While in Europe, the US and Japan many were scandalized by the film, it was at the same time hugely influential, to the point where for an entire generation in France and Europe its images of Hiroshima became constitutive of the imagery of the city, the country and the effects of nuclear war.

In *Hiroshima*, past and present blend into each other, as did wartime Nevers (the provincial town in the Loire where Elle grew up) and devastated Hiroshima. Eventually, the distinction between Lui and Elle's wartime lover, a German soldier shot at the end of the War, also vanishes. Resnais herewith aimed at two things: firstly, to relate France's role and experience in the War to Hiroshima's suffering, and secondly to locate the past in the present. The first was achieved in a number of ways. For example, the opening scenes of the film, shots of the extreme suffering and devastation provoked by the dropping of the nuclear bomb on Hiroshima, explicitly evokes images of the concentration camps. By displaying the destruction inflicted upon the people of Hiroshima, Resnais raised a question unspeakable in the Cold War context, namely, how far the use of nuclear warfare by the USA to

defeat its opponents had been justified. Renais problematized the dropping of the bomb both as the method to end the War and as the fatal beginning of the nuclear age (as Elle says during the opening scenes, 'la stupeur qu'on y avait osé, la stupeur qu'on y avait réussi'). The USA and its allies are denounced here for their use of the nuclear bomb, reflecting the end of the first Cold War and the dismantling of the Manichean worldview. This denunciation is framed in a more universal political reflection. As Elle puts it, to a background of images of deformed children in post-nuclear Hiroshima: 'l'inégalité posée en principe par certaines peuples contre d'autres peuples, par certaines races contre d'autres races, par certaines classes contre d'autres classes', and '... ça recommencera ...'.²⁹

This method was one way in which Resnais forced France to reflect upon its national myths of innocence and righteousness in World War Two. He challenged these myths further by questioning notions of guilt and victimhood in relation to collaboration and post-war repression. Elle painfully tells her Japanese lover the story of her punishment – the shaving of her head, her 'insanity' and confinement – for having had a love affair with a German soldier. She is presented as a victim, and the act of vengeance against her is thus at least questionable. It is emphasized that she, her environment and the town where these events take place are in no way unusual but, to the contrary, ordinary, normal (as Elle puts it, 'Nevers, tu vois, c'est la ville du monde'). The story can therefore have taken place anywhere in France, involving any French woman, any community. Elle represents France itself: the seduction of sections of the French population by Germany and Nazism, and the forgetting and denial of this seduction after the War. The film turned the French myth of victimhood on its head, stained officialized memories of the resistance, and more generally denounced a provincial-bourgeois culture based on hypocrisy.

The film is above all an investigation into the mechanisms of forgetting and remembering. Central to Elle's painstaking soul-searching is the fact that she could neither remember nor forget, while desiring to do both. As she says early on in the film, 'Nevers, c'est la chose du monde à laquelle je rêve le plus, et c'est la chose du monde à laquelle je pense le moins'. Lui and Elle reflected in dialogue: 'Comme toi, moi aussi j'ai essayé de lutter avec toutes mes forces contre l'oubli. Comme toi j'ai oublié ...'. Yet the past is impossible to shed, as revealed by Elle when she says 'regarde comme je t'oublie, regarde comme je t'ai oublié', while her Japanese lover and the memory of the German soldier blend into each other. The immediacy of the past in the present is also suggested through the fact that Elle tells her wartime story in the present tense and addresses Lui as if he were her German lover. Moreover, in many of the images of her confinement in Nevers, Elle is the middle-aged woman she is in Hiroshima and not a 20-year old girl. Elle *is* her past, as France is. Lui puts it thus: 'C'est la [Nevers] ou il me semble avoir compris tu as du commencer être qui tu es encore aujourd'hui'. If neither forgetting nor remembering are fully possible – and indeed the characters in the film seem eternally suspended between these two states of being – it is because neither are free of guilt. Like Elle, France as a nation is guilty, for its complicity in the nuclear ending

of the War and above all for the violence that occurred among Frenchmen and women. If after *Hiroshima*, it became impossible for French society to continue wearing the mantle of innocence, this was so because Resnais situated the past in the present.

May '68

By the 1960s, both hegemonic narratives of the resistance had ceased to capture the imagination of the younger generations. After 1962, de Gaulle aimed to reinvigorate the resistance myth and distance it from any malaise regarding Algeria. The 1964 anniversary of the liberation of Paris and the ceremony surrounding the transfer of the ashes of resistance hero Jean Moulin to the Pantheon, can be seen as Gaullism's final, and failed, attempt to rally the nation around a myth of *France éternelle* of which his person was the embodiment. The attempts at now full appropriation by the state, in a highly explicit and officialized way, of the resistance myth, went together with the de-politicization of narratives and memories of World War Two, as the state aimed at silencing political confrontation on the issue.³⁰ And the ambivalence of *résistancialisme* vis-à-vis Vichy was more evident than ever, as in 1965–1966 de Gaulle proceeded to grant pardons to Jacques Vasseur and Klaus Barbie, both leading figures of the Gestapo in France.

In May 1968, in the context of a broad questioning of political legitimacy, both the PCF and Gaullism were attacked by a generation of young radicals as well as by the new left for their blunt political instrumentalization of the memory of the resistance. The young protesters, new left intellectuals and far-left *gauchistes* used wartime narratives and symbols to equate the Gaullist regime with Fascism and Nazism ('CRS = SS'), thereby going well beyond a critique of the regime's appropriation of the resistance. Related to this was the desire to break the taboos surrounding collaboration, the Vichy regime and, though only to some extent, the Holocaust.³¹ It was intrinsically related to generational conflict and a categorical diffidence of authority, as expressed through slogans such as 'don't trust anyone over 30'. However, challenges to inherited memories of the War by the 1968 generation were limited in two respects. They were limited, first, by the fact that rather than scrutinizing the history of World War Two and its impact on French society, the young radicals employed images and discourses that evoked collaboration, Fascism and the resistance as revolutionary symbols rather than complex historical problems. The young radicals invested the resistance myth with an alternative historical interpretation, and this new resistance myth was now used against those who had first created it. According to *gauchiste* orthodoxy, European history in the twentieth century was characterized by the growing contradictions of capitalism, leading to the excesses of Fascism, and following the latter's defeat, resulting in class collaboration by parties of the centre-left in the West and the establishment of state capitalism by communist parties in the East. However, the attention of the young protesters and the intellectuals of the new left was not focused on historical investigation or debate; rather, they used the themes of

Fascism and resistance as broad, largely unspecified themes to undermine the political legitimacy of both Gaullism and communism. The specificities of French history during the War remained often under-discussed; while, for instance, slogans in which the 'SS' featured were ubiquitous, the historical detail of the Vichy regime or the deportation of Jews from France were hardly commented upon.

Secondly, the '68-ers' attack on established War memories was limited in the sense that it did not call into question views about the essential continuity and 'eternity' of the French nation; quite on the contrary, the notion of French modern history as a long revolutionary cycle was explicitly adhered to. The view on national continuity was re-articulated into a narrative of the resistance as the start of the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism, radical at the grassroots but nipped in the bud by the post-war elites, including communist leaderships. Yet despite these limitations, narratives of the resistance were used in a way fundamentally different than those of the communists and Gaullists: no longer was the resistance a source of political legitimacy within the framework of parliamentary competition, it was a revolutionary dream, outside of everyday politics. This shift *historicized* the resistance and World War Two in an entirely new way, projecting it into a mythical and distant past where 1789 and 1871 were also located.

In particular, a comparison with the situation in West Germany can illustrate the fact that the French students' challenges to officialized memories remained contained within a series of myths of national purpose and the French revolutionary tradition. In West Germany, the young radicals undermined their parents' views of Fascism and Nazism as situated outside the national historical continuum and about 1945 as a fundamental national renewal. Young people were most relentless in denouncing the grave historical responsibilities of their parents' generation, and it is here that '1968' was most clearly a generational conflict. The students' exposure of the failed de-Nazification was culturally and politically prepared by a shift in public attitudes as of the late 1950s, referred to as the *Verhangenheitsbewaltung*. Against the background of the Auschwitz trials and other important trials, critical media and literature in the 1960s were dominated by a popular-psychoanalytical discourse on the 'repression' of the wartime past in German culture. The radical students investigated especially the implications of the Nazi past for the political nature and socio-cultural premises of the Bonn Republic.³² Thus, unlike the French students, German students were unable to perpetuate any resistance myth.

Just as official memories of World War Two had been central to the post-1945 political consensus, a new consensus in the aftermath of the dramatic social and political crisis of 1968–1969 across (Western) Europe required the reconstruction of hegemonic War memories. In France a degree of consensus on World War Two was regained by the mid-1970s, and while far from receiving full support, it was achieved more easily than in Italy and the Federal German Republic. The relative swiftness with which new narratives of World War Two gained broad public acceptance by the mid-1970s can be understood as one reason for France's relative political stability in the decade following the turbulent events of '68, which

contrasts with the enduring political instability in the FRG and especially Italy. According to Rousso, the early 1970s gave way in France to an 'obsessive' proliferation and diversification of memories of World War Two, which was a legacy of the '68 protests. In the late 1970s, he argues, the memory of World War Two was transformed into a *mode rétro*, characterized by nostalgia for the wartime period.³³ But I would suggest that the start of the shift to nostalgia should be located earlier, in the early 1970s, and be understood as an integral part of the broader political process of post-1968 restoration. It is clear that, as discussed by Rousso, the 1970s was a period of recurrent scandals and affairs revealing the dubious wartimes pasts of public and political figures. However, during this phase the memory of World War Two ceased to constitute a generalized challenge to the elites in power and the political order. When, following 1968, 'trauma revealed itself in political, social and cultural life',³⁴ it did so in conjunction with political mechanisms which sidelined fundamental questions regarding the bases on which political legitimacy had been rebuilt after the War.

The most revealing debates occurred following the 1969 documentary film *Le chagrin et la pitié* by Marcel Ophüls with André Harris and Alain de Sedouy. It was produced in 1969 but shown in cinemas only in 1971, and banned from television until François Mitterrand, newly elected President, had it broadcast in 1981. Before that, the film received international recognition in 1972 with an Oscar for Best Documentary. The four-hour film was at the time and has been ever since referred to as iconoclastic: indeed, *Le chagrin* shattered many of France's cherished myths and inherited wisdoms regarding World War Two. It systematically deconstructed *résistancialisme*, through a detailed revising of the military and political conditions surrounding France's defeat in 1940 and the establishment of the Vichy regime, and by exposing the widespread support for Petain, especially among the bourgeoisie. It was based on a case study of the town of Clermont-Ferrand, and through interviews with former resistance members, former Vichy supporters, as well as a number of key British and German figures including Anthony Eden and Helmut Tausend, the SS senior officer stationed in Clermont-Ferrand. The film powerfully denounced the defeatism of the French population and elites in 1940s, the popularity of Marshal Petain, the complicity of the elites in the deportation of Jews, and the motives – at times material and banal, at times deeply ideological – behind various forms of Fascist collaboration. One of the film's achievements was that it questioned the political and cultural traits of bourgeois France, through an investigation into the origins of Fascist authoritarianism, collaboration and anti-Semitism.

While the first part of the film ('The collapse') reviews some of the key events and controversies surrounding France's defeat and the establishment of the Vichy regime, in the second part ('The Choice') the themes of resistance and collaboration are explored. Ophüls set up the interviews in such a way as to highlight the key ideological bases underpinning the various manifestations of enthusiasm for Vichy, that is, anti-Semitism and aversion for the left. Part of his intention was to demonstrate that there was a class basis behind people's motivations, and that support

for Petain was particularly strong among the upper middle class and bourgeoisie. As recounted by Denis Rake, a British agent sent to France as radio operator, the bourgeoisie was 'very neutral' vis-à-vis Vichy and the Germans. Aristocrat, communist sympathiser and leader of the *Libération* resistance group, Emmanuel d'Astier de la Vigerie, emphasizes in his testimony that the resistance was experienced as 'a classless society'. Further, the PCF's role in the resistance is granted much attention, through interviews with its members Jacques Duclos, former *maquis* member, and Georges Bidault, president of the National Council of Resistance Movements. While the film thus to some degree perpetuated the resistance mythology of the PCF, it did depart from it in important ways. The resistance as a whole is taken down from its moral pedestal, and given a human, at times vulnerable and un-heroic face, and the diversity of resistance members' backgrounds and motivations is thrown into sharp relief. Rather than 'the working classes', the resistance fighters in the film are peasants, workers, aristocrats, even criminals. What they all shared, in the words of d'Astier, was their being 'un-adapted to bourgeois society'. The motivations mentioned range from ideological and patriotic ones to a fascination with adventure, or simply having 'nothing to lose' (d'Astier). Highlighted also are the divisions within the resistance, and tensions between all resistance factions and London are hinted at. The resistance is de-sanitized: Jacques Duclos, leading figure of the PCF and former resistance organizer, discusses it as a matter of guerrilla warfare where 'people had to get used to killing on a daily basis'.

As Attack has suggested, the film, while highly effective in destroying inherited myths of World War Two, voiced the *soixante-huitards*' own political myths and agenda, notably the idea of national liberation (as connected to 1960s anti-imperialism) and a less than critical portrayal of the (communist and non-communist) left.³⁵ I would argue that its limitations lie elsewhere too, and that the seeds of a new consensus were present in immediate reactions to the film and to some extent in the film itself. Despite the provocative and often-noted absence of de Gaulle in the film, the General's claims to have represented and indeed saved the nation during the War were in no way questioned. While it is true that the film announced the post-Gaullist era by not representing him directly, it did not make him irrelevant, quite the contrary. De Gaulle, who died in 1970, is here historicized, and his legacy assessed in a positive light. This process takes place through the presence of Pierre Mendès-France, whose testimony is central to the film's narrative and politics. Mendès-France is here promoted as a new national and consensual leader, able to carry forward the General's legacy, and, like the general, fit to legitimize his political role in wartime commitment to the resistance. Mendès-France served in the Free French Air Force under de Gaulle, and was appointed by him as Minister for National Economy in the provisional government of 1944. An opponent of colonialism, his government in 1954 opened negotiations with the Vietnamese communists and the nationalist leaders of Tunisia. After the fall of his government in the following year, he resigned as minister in the socialist-dominated government in 1956 over the military intervention in Algeria. During the 1960s he was a leading

figure of the new left party *Parti socialiste unifié*, and as such he opposed, and lost to, de Gaulle in the parliamentary elections of June 1968. Despite their intense political opposition from 1958, Mendès-France in *Le chagrin* speaks of de Gaulle in very positive terms, stating that all of his moves during the War had been ‘politically right’.

With Mendès-France’s testimony, Ophüls not only preserved the possibility of national leadership and national unity in the post-*résistancialiste* era, he also restrained the film’s anti-establishment radicalism. In his testimony Mendès-France narrates his trial by the Vichy regime for desertion in 1940s, his subsequent imprisonment and escape to London. He is here presented as at once statesmanlike and also very human. His intervention seems to have a different status than the ones by other statesmen in the film, such as Anthony Eden, in the sense that Mendès-France is much more explicit about his aim to ‘educate youth against propaganda’. While he emphasizes the ubiquity of treason, anti-Semitism and petty profiteering among the population once the Vichy regime was established, he also refers to an ‘other France’ made up of righteous citizens. It includes a variety of actors, from the army officers who testified in his favour during his trial, to the resistance and the left, including Leon Blum, and of course de Gaulle. Thus, while the *résistancialiste* idea of a united, heroic nation in arms against Nazism is here surrendered and replaced with an explicit acknowledgement of the deep divisions in French society, the possibility of a charismatic national leader able to gather broad support on the basis of his wartime record and thus able to project a positive image of the French nation, is saved.

World War Two in the 1970s: History and Nostalgia

Responses to *Le chagrin* were based on a generational logic rather than on classic ideological lines, which announced the emergence of a new, post-1968 re-composition of political identities and their sources of legitimacy. The most painful questions brought up by *Le chagrin* – why did the vast majority of the French in 1940 sympathize with the Vichy regime and how could the persistence of violent anti-Semitism be explained? – were debated only by the communist and extra-parliamentary left. As mentioned above, the French state responded to the film by banning it, and consecutive governments refused to have it broadcast on state television until 1981. It was the political centre, and particularly those belonging to the generation who had lived through the War, which tended to dislike the film and its contents and, with the liberal politician and former deportee Simone Veil, accused it of replacing one set of myths with another.³⁶ The communist and socialist left quickly set out, to some extent successfully, to contain the disruptive effects of *Le chagrin* and the questions raised by it. The PCF moulded the film’s contents to its political needs, which included the portrayal of resistance fighters as outcasts of bourgeois capitalist society and ordinary peasants and workers. The communists benefited from the fact that the film quite explicitly identified the PCF with the resistance, equating Vichyism with anti-communism, and omitting any reference to

the Nazi-Soviet pact of 1939-1941. At the same time, the party was careful not to engage with the film's attempts at demystifying the resistance, its mentioning of the sometimes less than virtuous motives behind the persecution of (alleged) collaborators after the liberation, or its commentary on the at times random use of violence by the *maquis*.

It was chiefly through the acceptance of the *diversity* of war experiences that, to some degree in *Le chagrin* itself, but more clearly in the ensuing debate, the bases of a post-1968 consensus on World War Two were laid out. In one of the last scenes of the film, d'Astier recalled that he had not been shocked when de Gaulle in 1959 paid homage to Petain, because 'this is all part of French history, whether we like it or not'. Although *Le chagrin* was not ideologically agnostic and was generally sympathetic to the left, it did attempt to present wartime France as a country of many ideologies and many values. Through the debate provoked by the film, an attitude of ideological relativism became increasingly prevalent.³⁷ The acceptance of a diversity of experiences and recollections, and the fact that they all made up *French* history and should be accepted as such, facilitated the relatively rapid establishment of a set of new hegemonic discourses on World War Two. The new consensus necessitated the relegation of World War Two to a distant rather than immediate past, and included, further, a shift of attention away from it and towards a more recent, equally consequential and divisive but far less traumatic national event, namely May '68 itself.³⁸ Admittedly, as Rousso argues, the 1970s and 1980s were characterized by a series of scandals and 'affairs', involving politicians and other well-known public figures such as George Marchais (the PCF leader who, it was revealed, had left voluntarily to work in Germany in 1940), and Jean Leguay, a businessman and senior civil servant under Vichy. Yet the public purging, through the media and public debate, of wartime collaborators was a process through which French society cleansed itself by identifying those bearing *individual* responsibility. This process was a move away from the more radical spirit of 1968, when Jean-Paul Sartre had famously declared that 'we are all guilty'. The broader societal causes behind, for instance, anti-Semitism, as they were tentatively investigated in *Le chagrin*, were not part of the discourses surrounding these public purges.

The obsession with Vichy in the 1970s was not simply the 'return of the repressed' as argued by Rousso and others – that is to say, the emergence of a set of historical memories that had previously been tabooed in public debate. When the repressed return, they do so by transformation: Vichy, the War and the resistance were increasingly de-politicized and historicized, and became increasingly less relevant to contemporary political developments. The outcome of this process can be understood in terms of Jean Baudrillard's notion of simulation, where the reality of the object has been superseded by a proliferation of signs. Simulation differs from representation: while the latter implies a relation of equivalence between the object and the sign, in the former case any connection between the two has been lost. While through a process of representation an impact is had on the meaning of the object, through simulation any ambition to transform the meaning of the object

is abandoned.³⁹ Through simulation, meaning is replaced with fascination, the implosion of meaning, and nostalgia. Baudrillard understands simulation to be a key mechanism of post-1968 culture and society, and relates it to the ubiquity of visual culture. Cinema has a particular status in his analysis, as it is where history, as a contemporary form of myth-making, 'finds refuge'.⁴⁰

Memory politics in 1970s France can be understood from this angle. Georges Pompidou, president between 1969 and 1974, attempted to impose his own broad silence on the War on the entire nation. During the presidency of Valéry Giscard d'Estaing (1974–1981), a phenomenon Rousso has referred to as *Giscardovichyisme* came to replace *résistancialisme*. It was a political project, supported by the rise of the far right headed by Jean-Marie Le Pen, in which forgetting the War became quasi-official and dubious pasts were forgivable (as was Valéry Giscard d'Estaing's family record). Crucially, affiliation with the resistance no longer served as a source of political legitimacy. Both Pompidou and Giscard d'Estaing carried out a series of amnesties of former collaborators and *Vichyards*. These were political manoeuvres aimed at undermining those 'old' political identities whose legitimacy was based on the myth of the resistance, and indeed they contributed to a restructuring of the political landscape, specifically on the centre-right, by further weakening the old guard of Gaullists.⁴¹

The establishment of a new consensus occurred not only after debates such as the one surrounding Ophüls' film, but also in historiography. The Vichy myth, according to which the installation of a collaborationist regime had been the lesser evil, was once more abruptly challenged by the publication in 1973 of *La France de Vichy* by Robert Paxton. Among Paxton's findings was the fact that resistance in the early years of the War had been very limited, that the establishment of the Vichy regime had not been a German demand but was instead motivated by French enthusiasm for Fascism, that Vichy had enjoyed widespread support up to 1944, and that Pétain should be understood as a collaborator rather more straightforwardly than before.

While his long-term influence on French historiography is undeniable, in the short term Paxton's work did not disrupt the emerging new consensus. In an obvious closing of the ranks, inspired by nationalism more than anything else, Conservative historians and commentators simply dismissed him as a 'young American historian' and failed to engage with his conclusions.⁴² The traditional left, too, immediately attempted to contain the potentially disruptive effects of Paxton's work. To some extent, Paxton helped the left in its denunciation of de Gaulle's official memory of World War Two and in its attempts at rehabilitating Pétain. The PCF did not, of course, follow Paxton in his de-mystification of the resistance and his scepticism regarding its purposes and methods, and communist commentators systematically chose to ignore this important aspect of Paxton's analysis.⁴³ The result was that PCF historians and leaders were forced into a position where they had to admit that certain revisions of old communist myths were more acceptable than others. The PCF in the 1970s recovered from the (post-) '68 attacks on its sterile anti-Fascism, but imperfectly so, only in the short term and

through a silent closing of the ranks rather than through open debate. Its responses to Paxton revealed the growing weakness of French communism in its ability to represent the nation or to impose a narrative of French history – something it had been able to do with some success until the mid-1950s.

What changed in the PCF's memories of World War Two after 1968, and because of 1968, were not the concrete contents of these memories, but a new awareness of the party's essential dependency on these memories and its now overt willingness to instrumentalize them. The instrumentalization of memories of World War Two became explicit in a wholly new way. Communist-inspired cinema in the 1970s most clearly reflected this shift; it treated World War Two in a manipulative way (which was not new) that was curiously self-conscious (which was new). This can be seen from the most widely debated film made in this period that dealt with World War Two: *L'affiche rouge* by Frank Cassenti (1974), a PCF *compagnon de route*. *L'affiche rouge* was, as Alison Smith argues, an attempt to respond to concerns previously expressed by Michel Foucault and other left-wing intellectuals regarding the possibility of, and need for, a heroic account of the resistance after '68. The film self-knowingly transformed the shattered post-'68 memories of the resistance once again into legend. It deals with the 'Groupe Manouchian', a resistance group, the myth of which was of central importance to PCF memory after 1945 but about which much historical detail remained vague. The aim of the film was not to represent the Groupe Manouchian in a historically accurate way but to suggest ways in which the resistance might be remembered in the post-'68 context. It required that World War Two became *history* in a way it was not before 1968: it was now relocated, and relegated, to a distant past. This is clear also from the opening sentence of *L'affiche rouge*: 'N'oubliez pas que tout cela s'est passé il y a plus que trente ans'. The key message of the film seems to be that it is the legend of the resistance, rather than its actual history, that is relevant to young men and women in France. The historical inaccuracies of which Cassenti was accused did not matter here; what mattered was the full embracing of the legend as legend.⁴⁴ Yet this shift implied the admission of the impossibility of a universal narrative of World War Two. In the presentation of history as shattered, subjective and fragmented, *L'affiche* was remarkably post-modern in its intellectual implications, and visibly influenced by a *soixante-huitard* legacy which the PCF always claimed to reject. But the political agenda was clear: the PCF immunized itself against future battles over memories of World War Two by proclaiming the victory of memory over history.

While the PCF was thus able to delay the immediate collapse of its sources of legitimation without stopping their gradual erosion, during the 1970s the new socialist party emerged as politically victorious from the memory battles. The 1970s saw the gradual recovery of socialism as an important political force in France, after the disarray provoked by the May '68 events. Key moments were: 1971, when François Mitterrand's political club, the Convention of Republican Institutions (CIR), joined the Socialist Party (PS); the signing of the Common Programme with the PCF in 1972; Mitterrand's narrow defeat to Giscard

d'Estaing in the presidential elections of 1974; the ending in 1977 of the united left from which the PS rather than the PCF emerged as the more dynamic force; and finally Mitterrand's election to the presidency in 1981. One key factor making the PS's resurgence possible was the fact that it had been able to immunize itself against the legacy of World War Two and, more generally, that it transformed the French political landscape in such a way that the wartime past ceased to serve as a legitimizing strategy. A new generation of PS leaders were either too young to have played a role in the 1940s or had questionable wartimes records, as was the case for Mitterrand himself, a civil servant for the Vichy regime who had joined the resistance at the end of the War. While Mitterrand's past was a matter of intense media debate during the 1981 presidential election campaign, it could not prevent him from coming to power. This was because political cleavages were no longer based on competing interpretations of the War as they had been during the early Cold War. But by affecting the entire political spectrum, the 'Vichy obsession' failed to serve as a tool for de-legitimizing particular political actors. Moreover, it was now the political exploitation or even mentioning of the War which was considered a problem rather than the actual wartime records. This problem was reflected in the terms of the debate: Mitterrand was attacked by the right not for having served in Vichy but for exaggerating and exploiting his role in the resistance.⁴⁵ Mitterrand evidently had his own memory politics – denouncing once again the collaborationist pasts of the d'Estaing family and of other conservative opponents – but his claims to righteousness were obviously limited. In addition, his decision to have *Le chagrin* broadcast on state television soon after his election, demonstrated more than anything else that he could confidently feel unaffected by the film.

The debate surrounding the publication of *L'idéologie française* by former *soixante-huitard* Bernard-Henri Lévy, again in 1981, demonstrated how World War Two had become a political tool fit for every purpose. Lévy presented Pétainism as the essence of French political culture, the legacy of which was continued, he argued, not by the new far right or post-Gaullism, but by the PCF, *tiersmondiste* currents such as the left-catholic journal *L'Esprit*, and what he referred to as *planisme*. In this context of the second Cold War, the concept of totalitarianism proved readily available for linking the far left to Fascism. While Rousso has interpreted the debate surrounding *L'idéologie française* simply as a recurring 'symptom of nervousness' in France regarding 1940,⁴⁶ it seems to me that the terms of the debate were radically altered with regard to the pre-1968 years. The fact that World War Two was instrumentalized for the benefit of a political agenda – in this case, discrediting the PCF and lending support to the victory of the socialist party – was now more explicit and self-knowing than it had been before. This instrumentalization was explicit to the extent that Lévy's theses were no longer *about* the wartime past, as they did not aim to engage with and have an impact on public and collective memories of the War. Rather, they aimed at contributing to the reconstitution of the French political landscape after 1968, one in which memories of the War no longer constituted a line of cleavage. It was at this stage that World War Two as a theme in literature, arts and political debate,

was used merely as a *motif* that was recognizable to all and assumed an array of functions, but through these uses remained unaffected, as did its memory.

In literature such as *L'ideologie francaise*, or films such as *L'affiche rouge*, World War Two as a theme is merely a setting introduced to make a point about something else. What matters is the self-referring conversation between the 'simulacra which feign a relation to an obsolete real'.⁴⁷ Similarly, the *mode rétro* that pervaded 1970s culture and society and was characterized by a fascination for the 1940s, was a matter of nostalgic commodification of life during the War rather than a political and historical engagement with the legacy of occupation, resistance and collaboration.⁴⁸ This was possible only because World War Two had become a faraway past. It was now a distant country with which one could maintain a relation of nostalgia and loss, rather than seeking ethical and political involvement and reflection.

Notes

1. Henry Rousso, *Le syndrome de Vichy 1944–198*... (Paris 1987).
2. *Ibid.*, 183–231.
3. See Best and Robson's proposition that 'literary and cinematic narratives provide representational spaces in which defining moments for cultural memory in France are played out', Victoria Best and Kathryn Robson, 'Memory and Innovation in Post-Holocaust France', *French Studies*, Vol. 1 (January 2005), 1–8 at 4.
4. A similar approach is found in David Forgacs, 'Fascism and Anti-Fascism reviewed: Generations, History and Film in Italy after 1968', in Helmut Peitsch, Charles Burdett and Claire Gorrara, eds, *European Memories of the Second World War* (New York 1999), 185–201 at 186.
5. Peter Burke, 'History as Social Memory', in T. Butler, ed., *History, Culture and the Mind* (Oxford 1994), 97–113.
6. This concept of political legitimacy is partly based on: Franco De Felice, 'Doppia lealtà e doppio stato', *Studi storici*, Vol. 3 (1998), 493–563.
7. Alain Probst, 'The Algerian War in French Collective Memory', in Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan, eds, *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge 1999), 161–76.
8. See comments in Peitsch, 'Introduction: Studying European Literary Memories', in Peitsch, Burdett, Gorrara, op. cit., viii–xxxi at xv–xvii. See also Passerini's comments, referring to Italy, on the surfacing of a 'delayed memory of the war years' since the fall of the Berlin Wall, Luisa Passerini, 'Memories of Resistance, Resistance of Memory', Peitsch, Burdett, Gorrara, op. cit., 288–97.
9. On the domestic origins and impacts of East–West détente in a number of countries, including France, see Jeremi Suri, *Power and Protest: Global Revolution and the Rise of Détente* (Cambridge, MA 2003).
10. A similar point in Peitsch, op. cit., xxiv.
11. See for example Forgacs, op. cit., and Margaret Atack, *May 68 in French Fiction and Film: Rethinking Society, Rethinking Representation* (Oxford 1999).
12. Pieter Lagrou, *The Legacy of Nazi Occupation. Patriotic Memory and National Recovery in Western Europe 1945–1965* (Cambridge 2000), 35.

13. For a definition of Atlanticism see M. Kaldor, *The Imaginary War. Understanding the East–West Conflict* (Oxford 1990).
14. N. Racine-Furland, '18 juin ou 20 juillet 1940: Bataille de mémoires', in Stéphane Courtois and Marc Lazar, eds, *50 ans d'une passion française. De Gaulle et les communistes* (Paris 1991), 197–215.
15. In the interpretation of liberal historians such as Benedetto Croce Fascism was an 'unfortunate parenthesis' in the nation's history; according to the *Partito comunista italiano* Fascism had artificially been imposed on a population the majority of whom were anti-Fascist.
16. Alex Schildt, 'The Long Shadows of the Second World War: The Impact of Experiences and Memories of War on West German Society', *German Historical Institute Bulletin* (May 2007), 28–49 at 29.
17. Kansteiner, 'Losing the War, Winning the Memory Battle: The Legacy of Nazism, World War Two and the Holocaust in the Federal Republic of Germany', in Richard Ned Lebow, Wulf Kansteiner and Claudio Fogu, eds, *The Politics of Memory in Post-war Europe* (Durham, NC 2006), 102–45.
18. Rousso, *Le syndrome*, 61–6; Henry Rousso, *Vichy, l'événement, la mémoire, l'histoire* (Paris 1992), 361.
19. Rousso, *Le syndrome*, 38–50.
20. Marc Lazar, 'Forte et fragile, immuable et changeante. La culture politique communiste', in Serge Berstein, ed., *Les cultures politiques en France* (Paris 1999), 215–42.
21. Serge Berstein, 'Le PCF et de Gaulle sous la IVth République', in Courtois and Lazar, op. cit., 79–95; Maud Bracke, *Which Socialism, Whose Détente? West European Communism and the Czechoslovak Crisis of 1968* (Budapest 2007), 72–6.
22. Annie Kriegel, 'Le mythe Stalinién par excellence: L'antifascisme', in Marcello Flores, Francesca Gori, eds, *Il mito dell'URSS. La cultura occidentale e l'Unione sovietica* (Milan 1990), 217–23.
23. See for instance Atack on Rousso: Margaret Atack, 'L'armée des ombres and *Le chagrin et la pitié*: Reconfigurations of Law, Legalities and the State in Post-1968 France', in Peitsch, Burdett and Gorrara, eds, op. cit., 160–74 at 162.
24. R. Frank, 'Les troubles de la mémoire française', in Jean Pierre Rioux, ed., *La guerre d'Algérie et les français* (Paris 1990), 604–5.
25. Alain Probst, 'The Algerian War in French Collective Memory', Winter; Sivan, op. cit., 161–76.
26. Emma Wilson, *Alain Resnais* (Manchester 2006), 22–4.
27. Wilson, op. cit., 89–95.
28. The *Comité d'histoire de la Seconde Guerre mondiale*, which had commissioned *Nuit et brouillard*, put pressure on Resnais to cut a scene which showed the French army's complicity in the deportation (Wilson, op. cit., 25–6 and 32–3); *Hiroshima* was withdrawn from the Cannes festival, partly due to US pressure. Naomi Greene, *Landscapes of Loss. The National Past in Post-war French Cinema* (Princeton, NJ 1999), 35.
29. See Greene on Resnais' 'engagement with the human species'. Greene, op. cit., 34–8.
30. A similar point in Atack, *May 68 in French Fiction*, 114.
31. The Holocaust was not as central to the French protesters as it was to their West German counterparts. David Forgacs, op. cit., 200.
32. For 1968 and War memories in Italy, see Forgacs, op. cit., 185–201; and Richard J. B. Bosworth, 'Film Memories of Fascism', in Richard J. B. Bosworth and Patrizia

- Dogliani, eds, *Italian Fascism: History, Memory and Representation* (London 1999), 102–21.
33. Rousso, *Le syndrome*, 141–6.
 34. Greene, op. cit., 51–66.
 35. Atack, *May 68*, 169–70.
 36. Rousso, *Le syndrome*, 125–6.
 37. I would not go as far as to argue, as does Greene, that the interviews with collaborators such as Christian de la Mazière were too compelling and thus prepared the ground for neo-Vichyisme (Greene, op. cit., 71). It would appear that rather than making collaboration acceptable, the film revealed how widespread collaboration was in wartime France.
 38. Atack, 'L'armée des ombres', 164.
 39. Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacres et simulations* (Paris 1985), 1–4.
 40. *Ibid.*, 43–4.
 41. Rousso, *Vichy*, 418–21.
 42. Moshik Temkin, "'Avec un certain malaise": The Paxtonian Trauma in France, 1973–1974', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 38, no. 2 (2003), 291–306.
 43. Roger Martelli, in *Cahiers d'Histoire de l'Institut Maurice Thorez*, simply dismissed Paxton's work as misinformed. Temkin, op. cit., 303–4.
 44. The form of the film, characterized by a *mis en scene* atmosphere, corresponded to this message. Alison Smith, *French Cinema in the 1970s. The Echoes of May* (Manchester 2005), 175–202.
 45. Rousso, *Le syndrome*, 195–7.
 46. Rousso, *Le syndrome*, 193.
 47. Steven Best, 'The Commodification of Reality and the Reality of Commodification: Baudrillard, Debord and Postmodern Theory', in Douglas Kellner, ed., *Baudrillard, a Critical Reader* (Oxford 1994), 41–87 at 51.
 48. See Rousso's important though under-theorized comments on the *mode rétro* in the 1970s and 1980s, Rousso, *Le syndrome*, 141–6.

Maud Bracke obtained her PhD from the European University Institute, Florence, in 2004. She is the author of *Which Socialism, Whose Détente? West European Communism and the Czechoslovak Crisis of 1968* (Central European University Press 2007), and of a number of articles on the 1968 protests, the Prague Spring, West European communism, and memories of World War Two in France and Italy. She is currently working on a book on 1970s feminism in Europe.