

The Muddled Middle Ground:
Capturing the Grey Spaces between Collaboration and Resistance
on the German Occupied Channel Islands, 1940-1945

By
Samantha C. Smith

Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of the
Department of History of Vanderbilt University
In partial fulfillment of the requirements
For Honors in History

April 2019

On the basis of this thesis defended by the candidate on April 29, 2019
we, the undersigned, recommend that the candidate be awarded Highest Honors
in History.

Arleen Tuchman
Director of Honors – Arleen Tuchman

Michael A. Bess
Faculty Adviser – Michael Bess

Thomas Schwartz
Third Reader – Thomas Schwartz

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To my mom, who shared my Channel Island journey both home and abroad,
and to my family, who taught me to appreciate the best and worst of life's trials.

...

To the Guernsey people who extended their friendship and insights and welcomed me into their
spaces, homes, memories, and spirit.

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Introduction

“May this occupation be a model to the world—on the one hand tolerance on the part of the military authority and courtesy and correctness on the part of the occupying forces, and on the other, dignity and courtesy and exemplary behavior on the part of the civilian population...”
— Sir Ambrose Sherwill¹

As two-year-old Peter-John Bachmann innocently played with the epaulettes of the man’s uniform, his mother was keenly aware of the possibility they were being watched. Kitty Bachmann and the Cherub, as she nicknamed her son in her diary, were picking flowers on his second birthday when one of Hitler’s soldiers had approached them. When the officer had lowered himself to a knee and the young boy had run into his open arms, Kitty could feel the eyes of her fellow Channel Islanders judging her and preparing to spread rumors of her fraternizing with the enemy. Kitty had a choice to make.

“Say good afternoon,” Kitty instructed her two-year-old son. “Now say good-bye.” Peter-John obeyed reluctantly, and the German officer set him down. Rather than taking offense at this resistance, the German appeared “quite abashed.” Clicking his heels together, he offered, “Heil Hitler,” and continued on his way. In the wake of his embarrassment, Kitty felt confident. She wrote in her diary, “in case of possible witnesses, only the most gossip-starved could have made anything of the incident.”² Kitty refused to allow suspicion of collaboration to come on her family.

Through her diary entries, Kitty wrote to her mother. When Kitty’s oldest child, Diana, was about ten years old, she and Kitty’s mother had evacuated the Channel Islands to Britain

¹ Sir Ambrose Sherwill quoted in Alan and Mary Wood, *Islands in Danger: The story of the German Occupation of the Channel Islands, 1940-1945* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1956) By arrangement of the Trustees of the Imperial War Museum, 66.

² Cheryl Jorgensen-Earp, *Discourse and Defiance Under Nazi Occupation: Guernsey, Channel Islands, 1940-1945* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2013), 11-13, 125.

with almost 30,000 others in anticipation of the imminent German Occupation.³ German soldiers filled nearly every space an evacuee left behind.⁴ Diana's diary entries recorded the daily choices faced by Channel Islanders confronted with the reality of living with their enemy. Like the other residents of the Channel Islands, Kitty's action, including how she allowed family to behave, determined if she would be labeled a collaborator or resister when the Occupation ended.

Kitty, like her fellow citizens on the Channel Islands, made daily decisions about how she would interact with the surrounding Germans. During the course of the German Occupation of the Channel Islands, German soldiers missed their own children, showing pictures of them to locals and taking a liking to those young Island children who had remained on the Islands either because of a failure to evacuate or from being born during the Occupation like Peter-John. The Germans would buy the children ice cream, play games with them, or simply offer a hug, not unlike the one offered by the soldier who had interrupted Kitty and Peter-John Bachmann. One misstep by Islanders, even exchanging civilities with homesick men, could be misconstrued by other Islanders as fraternization with the enemy and set the label of collaborator. In the same places where civil greetings and mild conversation could label you a collaborator, not acknowledging a German soldier, refusing to step aside when sharing a sidewalk, and refusing the soldier the affection of your child became a form of resistance.

The Channel Islands have been dogged with accusations of collaboration while other historians have rushed to their defense and sought to contextualize the Islanders actions in ways that emphasized their resistance. However, these two labels of collaboration and resistance are

³ Willmot, Louise. "The Channel Islands." In *Resistance in Western Europe*, edited by Bob Moore, 65-124. Oxford: Berg, 2000.

⁴ In occupied France, approximations put the ratio at one soldier for every one hundred twenty civilians. These ratios varied throughout the Occupation. From Hitler's interest in the Occupation, the German troops were reinforced in 1943 to as many as 40,000 soldiers, larger than any other division of the German Army. Phylomena H. Badsey. "Occupation and Humanitarian Aid— A Case Study: The Channel Islands 1944-1945." (International Forum on War History: Proceedings, 2013), 29. <http://www.nids.mod.go.jp/english/event/forum/pdf/2013/03.pdf>

too rigid and continue to silo Islander actions and their legacy. They fail to capture the totality of the Channel Islanders' lived experiences under Occupation. In this thesis, I argue that the conceptual structure of this dichotomy misses deep nuances of the events as they unfolded. While some events fit the polar extremes, the vast majority falls in the grey areas in between. This thesis elucidates that muddled middle ground.

Historical Overview

The Channel Islands are recognized dependencies of Britain, despite their location off the coast of France in the English Channel. The archipelago consists of the Bailiwick of Jersey, the largest island, and the Bailiwick of Guernsey, which includes the islands of Guernsey, Alderney, Sark, and several smaller islands. The Channel Islands came under British protection with the Norman Conquest of 1066, but French influences were common.⁵ French invasions of the Islands occurred regularly and conflict between British and French governments for control over facets of the Channel Islands continued into the twentieth century, usually ushering in economic development. Transitioning from colonies to official dependencies in 1801 after the Napoleonic war, the Islands saw government restructuring in the mid-nineteenth century, yet these technical changes did little to alter the realities of Island life. The English language grew in popularity over time, especially as British military retired to the Islands after the Napoleonic war. Despite official Island adoption of English in the early 1900s, the Islanders continued to use Norman French, as well as Jèrriais and Guernésiais, Jersey and Guernsey's respective French languages.⁶

⁵ Islanders take pride in distinguishing themselves as “more British than the British” since they were conquered first as the Normans made their way from the continent to England.

⁶ David W. Moore, *The Other British Isles: A History of Shetland, Orkney, the Hebrides, Isle of Man, Anglesey, Scilly, Isle of Wight and the Channel Islands*. Jefferson: McFarland & Company, Inc. 211-236.; Jèrriais is also referred to as Jersey French, and Guernésiais as Patois, Dgèrnésiais, Guernsey French, and Guernsey Norman French.

The Island residents' mixed heritage persisted into the twentieth-century war years. During World War I, 14,000 Islanders signed onto the British war effort, and 2,000 Islanders enlisted in the French Army before 1915. Following the Great War, agriculture and tourism prevented the large-scale Depression evident elsewhere in the world, but modernity lagged in many ways compared to Britain.⁷ Sark banned automobiles, amateur lawmakers continued to run legislative bodies, and a slower pace of life prevailed as war broke out in Europe again. In September of 1939, Britain declared war against Germany, which was followed by the eight-month quiet period of limited military action known as the Phony War. By the spring of 1940, the Islands had begun to advertise their peaceful shores and picturesque landscapes as an escape to boost morale and experience the "perfect place for wartime holidays."⁸ As a number of young men left the Islands to join the war, the ensuing German occupation was widely unexpected.⁹

After standing alone in fierce dissent from the remainder of the War Cabinet, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill allowed the demilitarization of the Channel Islands. His administration had determined that Guernsey, Jersey, and their neighboring islands in the English Channel were not strategically valuable enough to defend. After demilitarization in June 1940, about 30,000 Islanders evacuated to Britain, while roughly 60,000 stayed behind to live five years with their enemy.¹⁰

The German military oversaw the running of the Occupation, although much of the administrative work was left to the Island governments. At the onset of their Occupation, the local governments adjusted their archaic, oligarchical representative government structures

⁷ France extended similar rights decades later.

⁸ Moore, D., *The Other British Isles*, 234.

⁹ As dependencies rather than part of the United Kingdom, the Islands are not obligated to send men to battle and cannot be conscripted. However, the maritime legacy of pirating and militaristic history of the Islands readied soldiers to join the forces. Leonard Tostevin, Interview with author, May 27, 2018.

¹⁰ Willmot, Louise. (2000). "The Channel Islands". *Resistance in Western Europe*, ed. Bob Moore. Oxford: Berg. 65-66.

through the creation of new bodies for streamlined and flexible decision-making.¹¹ Bailiff Alexander M. Coutanche served as President of Jersey's Superior Council, while Major Ambrose Sherwill presided over Guernsey's Controlling Committee until his deportation in October 1940 for his role in the Nicolle and Symes affair. Rev. John Leale replaced him in the presidency.¹² Throughout the Occupation these men interacted consistently with the Germans, and their actions were heavily scrutinized during and after the Occupation.

The Occupation saw various regulations placed on Islanders, from German lessons in schools to the confiscation of vehicles. Perhaps the most extreme order occurred in 1942, when the Germans required the deportation of British born Islanders and sent around 2,000 Islanders to the continent.¹³ During the Occupation, the Islands avoided the direct bombings seen elsewhere in the war, and one Islander called the Islands "safest place in all of Europe to live" since neither the British nor the Germans would attack them.¹⁴ Nevertheless, the Germans believed the Channel Islands would be a vital stepping-stone across the English Channel and imported forced labor to build extensive fortification on the Island, many of which still stand today. The Islands remained under enemy occupation for five years from June 30, 1940 to May 9, 1945.

Historiography

¹¹ A Crown-appointed Bailiff oversaw both the Assembly of the States on Jersey and the States of Deliberation on Guernsey. Despite having these representative government bodies, the delegates were often not directly elected but instead appointed by the Crown or unpaid "jurats" leading locals to distrust this oligarchical nature of politics.

¹² The Nicolle-Symes affair resulted when British commandos and Guernseymen Hubert Nicolle and James Symes were sheltered on Guernsey during a raid that was a part of Operation Ambassador. Sherwill attempted to aid the men by changing their uniforms to that of the Guernsey militia so they would be treated as Prisoners of War rather than executed as spies. Nevertheless, Sherwill is often accused of being too naive and cordial with the Germans. For more information see Durand's *Guernsey Under German Rule* (2018) and Cruickshank's *The German Occupation of the Channel Islands* (1975).

¹³ Willmot, "The Channel Islands," 67.

¹⁴ Leonard Tostevin, Interview with author, May 27, 2018.

Despite serving as Hitler's idealized "Model Occupation" and a heavily fortified link in his Atlantic Wall, the Islands have been left off of the pages of most World War II histories. When historians do mention the Islands' Occupation, they do so infrequently and in generalizations with other locations, rather than as something worthy of note unto itself.¹⁵ For example, in Henri Michel's work on resistance, he dismissed the notion of "British resistance" simply because "the Channel Islands were the only parts of Great Britain to be occupied."¹⁶ In doing so, he implies there was no resistance substantial enough to study simply because these islands were too insignificant to the rest of the war. Outside of these broader studies, the Channel Islands' Occupation history lives on thanks to a small, but passionate, group of researchers.

Most works on the Channel Islands attempt to convey the entirety of the Occupation in an account that surveys the whole experience. Historians like Alan and Mary Wood (1956) and Charles G. Cruickshank (1975) refer to resistance and collaboration, but their focus remains on providing a series of events that tell the story of what happened.¹⁷ Nevertheless, knowledge of the broader war context and other occupations taint many of these Channel Island histories, even when the Channel Islands Occupation is at their focus. Modern knowledge of Nazi violence and the Holocaust interfere with our ability to understand the experiences the Channel Islanders had with Germans. Many authors in the field include Islanders themselves who have also written full surveys of the Occupation. The Bailiff of Guernsey commissioned Islander Ralph Durand from the Priaulx Library to write the first account of the Occupation, *Guernsey Under German Rule*. Durand's work combined his own experience along with special access to the Controlling

¹⁵ Henri Michel mentions the Channel Islands only twice and never as a distinct point of focus in the war. Michel, *The Second World War*.

¹⁶ Henri Michel, *The Shadow War: Resistance in Europe 1939-1945*. Translated by Richard Barry (London: André Deutsch Limited, 1972) 11.

¹⁷ Alan and Mary Wood, *Islands in Danger: The story of the German Occupation of the Channel Islands, 1940-1945* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1956) By arrangement of the Trustees of the Imperial War Museum; Charles Cruickshank, *The German Occupation of The Channel Islands* (London: Oxford University Press, 1975).

Committee's documents. Other individuals who have lived on the Islands and been immersed in the Occupation's controversial legacy have also produced their own accounts such as Peter Tabb's *A Peculiar Occupation: New Perspectives on Hitler's Channel Islands* (2005) and William M. Bell's *Guernsey Occupied But Never Conquered* (2002).¹⁸ It is hard to believe that these studies are not biased, especially when they have personal forewords and commentary from Islanders who lived through or are the family of those who lived through the Occupation. Nevertheless, these historians have provided valuable accounts of the overall Occupation.

On the fiftieth anniversary of the Channel Islands' Liberation, the historical narrative shifted to more firmly emphasize Islander collaboration. Although these sentiments were present since Liberation Day, new research made them widespread throughout Britain. With the self-proclaimed goal of studying the reaction and communal memory of small, interconnected communities as they respond to a traumatic event, Madeline Bunting in *The Model Occupation: The Channel Islands under German Rule, 1940-1945*, provides a harsh judgment over the Channel Islands during this time.¹⁹ Describing the Occupation as the stain on Churchill's "unblemished record," Bunting writes,

But the Channel Islanders did not fight on the beaches, in the fields or in the streets. They did not commit suicide, and they did not kill any Germans. Instead, they settled down, with few overt signs of resistance, to a hard, dull but relatively peaceful five years of occupation, in which more than half the population was working for the Germans.²⁰

When Bunting does offer sparse compliments and sympathy, she quickly follows them with clarification or further criticism. With moments of passive understanding and empathy, Bunting tells the story of the Occupation; however, she emphasizes to her audience the failure of the

¹⁸ Peter Tabb, *A Peculiar Occupation: New Perspectives on Hitler's Channel Islands* (Hersham: Ian Allan Publishing, 2005); William A. Bell. *Guernsey Occupied But Never Conquered*. (Exeter: The Studio Publishing Services, 2002).

¹⁹ Madeline Bunting, *The Model Occupation: the Channel Islands under German rule, 1940-1945* (London: HarperCollins, 1995) 4.

²⁰ This statement is made in open and direct attack of Churchill's famed "We shall fight on the beaches" speech given to parliament in 1940 to embody the British war spirit against the German enemy. *Ibid.*, 315-316.

Islands to resist. She asserted that their fear of judgment resulted in their reluctance to praise those who did resist for fear of being found lacking in comparison, and she demanded judgment against the Islanders for their failure to recognize those sacrificed (such as the Jews or forced laborers) for the overall welfare of the Islands.²¹ In emphasizing the Islanders' shortcomings, Bunting belittles the resistance efforts made and favors the promotion of more provocative and scandalous ideas of widespread collaboration. For her, these Islands lived through a time when collaboration ruled.

The Occupation has become a core aspect of Islanders' identities, yet they remain uncertain as to their role and agency in that Occupation. This tension both disrupts and unifies Islanders because "Since the war, [their social] fabric has been darned and patched, and its unity has been reconstituted by the development of a collective memory which erases divisions, and formulates a past most can accept."²² Bunting found that some Islanders resented the questioning and judgment of outsiders and refused to share their stories or only provided partial accounts.²³ She asserts that this bitterness stemmed from two origins: they have grown irritated by outsiders' misunderstandings and critiques of their experiences that they see as an unfair judgment of acting too amicably toward the Germans, or alternatively, they have held personal grievances with the Occupation history. Bunting states it simply: "they feel guilty—they judge themselves. The man who demands 'Would you English have done any different?' exposes his belief that the islanders did indeed do something wrong."²⁴ Historians chose to uphold these assumptions by outside judgments, which caused even further resentment and internal judgment by Islanders. Likely due

²¹ Ibid., 333, 336.

²² Ibid., 4.

²³ While some Islanders felt this way, many other Islanders must have trusted her with their personal histories and memories as they provide a vital source base for her work. In my own time on the Islands, Islanders proved exceptionally accommodating and willing to share; however, as will be discussed later, the memory of the Channel Islands and its meaning to the Islands continues to fluctuate.

²⁴ Bunting, *Model Occupation*, 5.

in part to this increased strain between Islanders and outsiders, the opposing school of thought took longer to develop. This alternative group of historians asserted that methods of defiance were present and have been too often downplayed and forgotten.

As a key promoter of the Occupation's resistance history, Louise Willmot rejects the arguments in *The Model Occupation* in favor of a story of resistance in her article "'Nothing was ever the same again': public attitudes in the occupied Channel Islands, 1942."²⁵ Willmot calls the picture painted in *The Model Occupation* an "unflattering portrayal" of widespread collaboration that historians have unjustly upheld. Instead, Willmot asserts that the Islands' resistance remains an unanalyzed and "neglected topic."²⁶ Resistance elsewhere in Western Europe relied on a change of the general tone of the public, which Willmot believed occurred similarly on the Channel Islands; however, this "distinct change in atmosphere" occurred months behind other countries in late 1942.²⁷ Willmot does not reject "the conventional view of the passivity of the Channel Islanders during the first months of occupation," but proposes three policies imposed on the Islands shifted them to resistance later. These policies include the confiscation of radios in June 1942, the importation of slave labor in August 1942, and the deportation of British-born Islanders in September 1942. In six months, these policies from Berlin helped fear and resentment fester among Islanders, and in turn, small but meaningful resistance developed.²⁸

²⁵ Louise Willmot, "'Nothing was ever the same again': public attitudes in the occupied Channel Islands, 1942," *Local Historian*, 35(1), 9-20.

²⁶ Willmot, "'Nothing was ever the same again,'" 9.

²⁷ Willmot notes that Hitler originally demanded the deportation of Islanders of the "British race" to Germany a year earlier. When he later insisted again, he was against his own occupation authorities. In *Hitler's Empire*, Mark Mazower (2008) discussed an ongoing debate on how to run occupations among National Socialism leadership with Hitler and others insisting on harsh punishments, while other leaders advocated for occupations run by local governments. Additionally, Hitler's orders for fortifying the Islands were not necessarily in time with his orders either. Hitler particularly feared retaliation in the West for his attack on the Soviet Union in Operation: Barbarossa, but his orders to fortify the Islands in October 1941 were never completed. For example, under the supervision of Oberslt von Marnitz only 9 of the 22 proposed observation towers on three of the islands were completed. Discussion of the fortification can be found in Forty's *Channel Islands at War* (1999).

²⁸ Willmot, "'Nothing was ever the same again,'" 10.

Willmot joined Gilly Carr and Paul Sanders to write a thoughtful and complex analysis of Channel Island-specific resistance, but the reassessment of actions according to the Islands' context has been best exemplified by Cheryl Jorgensen-Earp in her work *Discourse and Defiance Under Nazi Occupation: Guernsey, Channel Islands, 1940-1945*. In this work, Jorgensen-Earp aims to broaden the definition of resistance even further to the benefit of the Islanders.²⁹ She asserted a belief that the best categorization of resistance on Guernsey is as “forms of rhetorical resistance” since they all “involve the manipulation of discursive or nondiscursive symbols” and were intended to “induce to attitude or action.”³⁰ Historically, these forms of resistance acted as “an appetizer or side dish to the main course” of taking up arms and full revolution.³¹ However, Jorgensen-Earp asserts that rhetorical resistance on the Channel Islands stood as a long-term and valuable form of opposition in an extreme power differential between the occupying force and general public. She “reveals a quiet defiance and a rhetorical insurgence of depth and nuance” that demonstrated “a subtle resistance” from Guernsey.³² Jorgensen-Earp and other recent historians tend to write more favorably of the Islands, finding methods of resistance tucked away in the notes of diaries and various other everyday activities.³³

Jorgensen-Earp's “rhetorical resistance” broadens the scope of resistance to take a more inclusive perspective on this Occupation history. Collaboration, like resistance, similarly varies in degrees, with some collaborative actions proving far more heinous and obvious than others. For either of these two conversations to be fully understood, they must step out of a dichotomous

²⁹ Gilly Carr, Paul Sanders, and Louise Willmot. *Protest, Defiance, and Resistance in the Channel Islands: German Occupation, 1940-45*. (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015); Cheryl Jorgensen-Earp, *Discourse and Defiance Under Nazi Occupation: Guernsey, Channel Islands, 1940-1945* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2013).

³⁰ Jorgensen-Earp, *Discourse and Defiance Under Nazi Occupation*, 4.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 6.

³² *Ibid.*, 16.

³³ Jorgensen-Earp, *Discourse and Defiance Under Nazi Occupation*, 4.; Carr, Sanders, and Willmot. *Protest, Defiance, and Resistance in the Channel Islands*.

categorization of “resistance” or “collaboration” and instead be united, gauging reaction to Occupation on a spectrum that includes the under-developed notion of coexistence. This is only possible by understanding the Islands according to their own unique context.

Drawing Comparisons

The Islands maintain a unique culture through the combination of their long-standing relationship with Britain and France. This complicated connection has developed into a form of ambivalence to the United Kingdom for many Islanders who pray for the monarch at church and then return home to criticize the power, social conflict, and other afflictions of mainland Britain.³⁴ The duality of their cultural identity creates a space in which the Channel Islands’ Occupation can be compared against the wartime experience of Britain and France, as opposed to other less related locations.

As enemy troops walked freely onto the beaches of these British dependencies to begin their five-year stay with ease, Germany came as close to the occupation of Britain as they would in all of World War II. While Britain takes pride in its sterling reputation of resisting German forces, historians like Bunting have selected the story of this Nazi Occupation to analyze in contradiction to Britain’s post-war image of itself. In emphasizing the failures of Islanders, Bunting also asserts that the British would have collaborated with the Germans if German troops had invaded the rest of the British Isles. Bunting and similar scholars gesture to the German Occupation of the Channel Islands as their proof. The Islands’ dependency on Britain, their shared culture, as well as historians’ tendency to extrapolate conclusions about a theoretical Occupation of Britain from the Channel Island history all necessitate contextualizing the Channel

³⁴ Madeline Bunting, *The Model Occupation: the Channel Islands under German rule, 1940-1945* (London: HarperCollins, 1995) 8-9.

Islands through comparison with British war history. Though London was bombed and moved into the war effort, civilians did not come face-to-face with the enemy like an occupied space. To understand an occupation-specific setting, other historians have set a comparison with Vichy France, which helps illustrate the uniqueness of the Channel Island Occupation through a culturally and geographically related setting.

A comparison between the Channel Islands and France builds off shared aspects of their histories and culture, as well as similarities of their occupations, to illuminate distinct difference in their WWII experiences. In these regions, as well as in other strategically important territories like Belgium and Greece, the occupied nations answered to the military authority.³⁵ Both of these areas maintained their own governments, which continued to function in conjunction with German oversight. Vichy France ran the administrative aspects of the Nazi occupation, significantly increasing the ease by which the Nazis could maintain their version of order. A similar occurrence appeared in the neighboring Channel Islands. Unlike France whose entire government became implicated in collaboration schemes, the Islanders retained their association with Britain, which provided an authority beyond their local governments.

The Islands' allegiance to Britain, which was fighting resolutely against the Germans, diminished the influence of local Island officials. Robert Paxton's *Vichy France: Old Guard and New Order, 1940-1944* unveils the collaboration latent in French society and especially its government. Paxton shows that Vichy's collaboration extended well beyond simple administration, and instead, it pushed the agenda of the national revolution to make France a partner in Hitler's new world order.³⁶ In contrast, Prime Minister Churchill atop the British

³⁵ Henri Michel, *The Second World War*, Translated by Douglas Parmée (New York: Praeger Publishers, Inc., 1975), 246.

³⁶ Robert O. Paxton, *Vichy France: Old Guard and New Order, 1940-1944* (New York: Columbia University Press 2001).

authority directed the Island government officials to remain in their posts while he simultaneously led the charge against Germany elsewhere. In order to uphold their orders from Britain, these officials remained on their own Islands, forced daily not just to interact but to work with their enemy. Thus, the Island governments' actions working alongside an occupying force also presents as a patriotic spirit. The study of resistance efforts in France contrasts the Channel Islands against the full-fledged collaboration of Marshal Pétain's Vichy government.

Unlike on the Channel Islands, France's Occupation began with many tangible causes for the French population to immediately despise the Germans outside of moralistic reasons. These motives began with the embarrassing location of the armistice signing (that recalled the German armistice signing in 1918 that ended WWI), and extended to soldiers sent to Germany as hostages, massive payments made daily to the German government, and a general push of the French population into poverty. These events were followed by unemployment, rationing, and nearly two million prisoners transported across Europe. Hardships rendered segments of the French population unable to "imagine any realistic means to oppose an all-powerful Reich," leading initial public compliance that was furthered as "the Vichy régime encouraged a wait-and-see policy."³⁷ Similarly, the British government's open surrender of the Islands and the local governments' subsequent interactions with the German occupiers could have caused a comparable passivity, in which the population needed to wait out impending change.

In France, growing apathy of the larger organizing parties (political parties, churches, etc.) and hardships eventually prompted resistance on an individual level. However, the French were not alone in their fight and soon had contact with Britain and partners in the Special

³⁷ Ibid., 127.

Operations Executive (SOE) dedicated to their cause.³⁸ From 1942 to 1944, at least six branches of the SOE dealt directly with France and provided money and funds for resistance.³⁹ These resources paired with direct contact to the German war effort allowed resisters to destroy railways and sabotage factories, in addition to disseminating leaflets and spreading underground news. Conditions on the Channel Islands were starkly different. In the words of Jerseyman Norman Le Brocq, “We should have taken up our arms and gone to the mountains to fight. But Jersey has no mountains and we had no arms.”⁴⁰ The small commando raids to the Islands had limited influence, and the RAF dropped leaflets only a few times. The Islanders were left to their own severely limited resources. In addition to not having the materials to conduct similar resistance efforts, they also lacked equivalent targets for such actions. Despite an array of German construction and fortifications, the Islands lacked locations of industrial significance, and Islanders were reduced to smaller, less influential attacks. The very nature of the Islands limited the development of resistance from these factors which included geography, lack of targets, scale of German presence, level of German restraint from punitive violence, and the ongoing administrative role of the Islands’ governments. Thus, to measure Island resistance against the French resistance standard alone proves unreasonable.

While Britain and France both serve as valuable comparisons by which to understand the Occupation, they fail to capture the Occupation entirely as there is no direct parallel experience in all of World War II. As Bunting set a comparison to unoccupied Britain, Willmot drew

³⁸ Under the direction of Minister of Economic Warfare Hugh Dalton, the Special Operations Executive (referred to by a number of names including the “SOE,” “The Baker Street Irregulars,” and the “Ministry of Ungentlemanly Warfare”) was a clandestine organization designed for the purpose of conducting sabotage, espionage, and other secret actions during the war.

³⁹ Paxton, *Vichy France*, 130.

⁴⁰ Norman Le Brocq quoted in Willmot, Louise. “The Channel Islands.” In *Resistance in Western Europe*, edited by Bob Moore, 65-124 (Oxford: Berg, 2000) 71.

distinctions against France.⁴¹ However, Willmot recognized that the Occupation is not equivalent to the occupations of mainland Europe. She reimagined norms of resistance to the Islanders' own standards, so that seemingly small acts of resistance like listening to the BBC on banned radios can be more appreciated in the eyes of history. Jorgensen-Earp broke out of these same European comparisons, stating that even the military occupiers viewed the Occupation differently. To further distinguish this occupation, Jorgensen-Earp specifically avoids WWII comparisons and looks to other forms of resistance, like those evident in African-American and women's history, to break the cognitive limitations of perceiving the Occupation through the standard lens of other WWII locations.

Instead, historians must assess the Islands from an alternative perspective that eliminates counterfactuals. The history of Nazi Occupation of the Channel Islands requires contextualization to a degree further than Willmot and Jorgensen-Earp's approaches. To do so, the Islands shared culture with Britain and France can be used to contrast the Channel Islands' Occupation to other WWII experiences, while emphasizing the uniqueness of their context.

The present study seeks to understand the Channel Islanders on their own terms and breaks out of standard conceptual structures. In doing so, resistance and collaboration become nuanced by the context of the Channel Islands to appreciate the missing middle component of coexistence that bridges the two together in a way unlike other WWII locations. While comparisons to other spaces are necessary to understand the uniqueness of the Channel Islands' Occupation, they cannot be used to fully measure the Islanders' actions in their own setting.

A Spectrum Approach

⁴¹ Louise Willmot, "The Channel Islands." In *Resistance in Western Europe*, ed. Bob Moore. 65-124 (Oxford: Berg, 2000).

Coexistence remains a largely ignored state of Islander-German interaction during the Occupation. While historians have factored in the effects of living alongside one's enemy in their consideration of other judgments of resistance and collaboration, they generally fail to accept coexistence as a reality unto itself— the reality of enemies living together with neutral value actions that by their intention and effect neither benefit nor hurt the German Occupation efforts. Perhaps historians have taken coexistence for granted as the status quo; however, historical study cannot accept such a sudden and unusual circumstance of enemies living together as baseline when it was neither ongoing leading up to the time of study nor a comfortable state of being throughout the period. Unlike Vichy France, this Occupation presents as comparatively mild, warranting coexistence as a state unto itself rather than merely a sufficient condition for collaboration. Furthermore, there remains too much grey space between collaboration, coexistence, and resistance to extend the current dichotomy (collaboration vs. resistance) to include a third category. When saying “hello” to a German and informing on one's neighbor are both labeled collaboration and sabotage and rumor both fall under resistance, the middle ground between the two becomes muddled. This thesis explores the benefits of establishing a spectrum on which to place the Channel Islanders' actions.

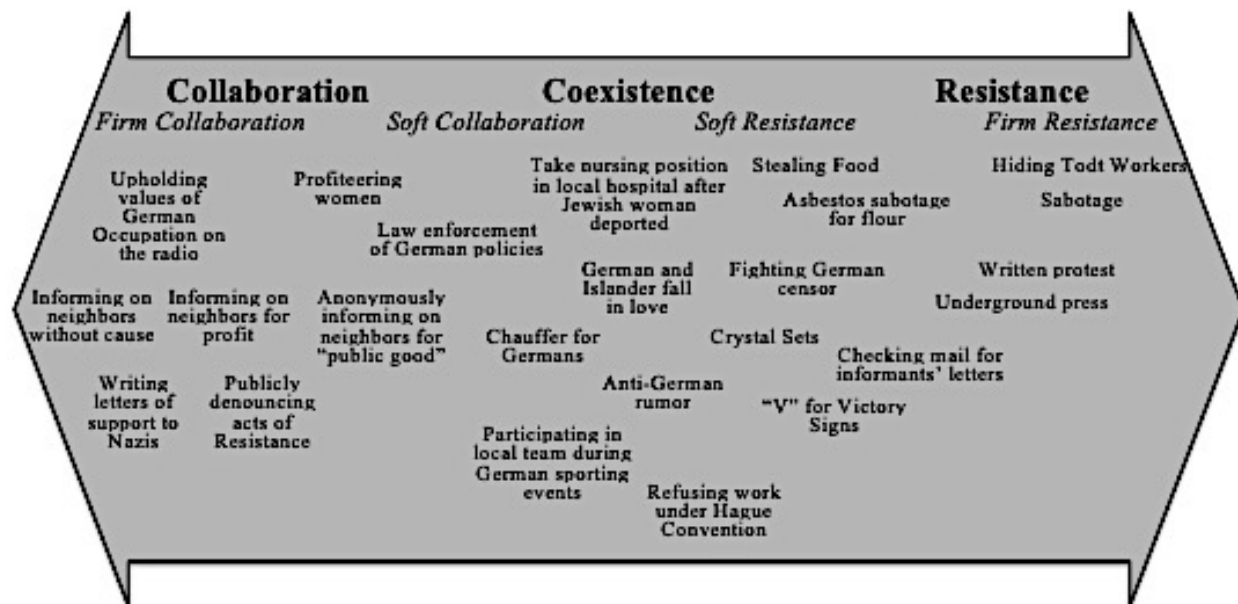
Historians continually silo Channel Islands studies to collaboration or resistance, only mentioning the other for context or, more frequently, as a reason for their own study. They have waded through a mess of grey, ambiguous actions that fall on the border for inclusion in either category, and they have drawn arbitrary lines to distinguish the breadth of their study. These lines, limitations, and attempts (purposeful or not) to keep a black-and-white binary both discredit the experiences of the Islanders and inhibit the room for new historical study. Until historians are willing to capture the totality of the Occupation in the Channel, the experience of

Channel Islanders will be left too divisive for further studies of the Occupation. There is, of course, room and need to study resistance and collaboration as independent entities. These fields of study are of great significance to understanding action during World War II. However, when an entire nation of people has been characterized by the debate between the two, it becomes of pressing importance to bridge them together. Accusations of collaboration and defenses against resistance have been assumed as identities for the Channel Islands, but the spaces between them can provide insight into their communities.

The idea of combining the gradations for collaboration and resistance in a spectrum is not a new concept, but it remains under-utilized and only passively referenced. Charles Cruickshank (1975) writes, “There is a broad spectrum stretching from active resistance to active collaboration; and the intermediate bands—passive resistance, reluctant co-operation, and so on—shade into one another with all the delicacy of the colours of the rainbow.”⁴² Historians have explored and relabeled these different gradations. When authors like Paxton and Jorgensen-Earp reject the dichotomous situation established in occupation histories, they focus on adding color to the gradations of either collaboration or resistance. They fail to address the actions that fall between the two, which is necessary to understand the entirety of the Island situation and the events of a five-year occupation. Without analyzing the middle ground, you cannot fully appreciate either end of the spectrum.

⁴² Charles Cruickshank, *The German Occupation of The Channel Islands* (London: Oxford University Press, 1975) 157.

Figure 1



The spectrum model spans from one end, collaboration, to the other end, resistance, with coexistence in the middle (See *Figure 1*).⁴³ As the severity of actions increases, their location along the spectrum approaches their respective end, becoming “firmer” acts of collaboration or resistance. Moving from the ends of the spectrum inward, actions become “softer” as they approach coexistence. Rather than “active” or “passive,” “reluctant” or “cooperative,” I have employed the language of firm and soft to emphasize the unique context of the Channel Islands where even passive actions carried great influence and more active methods may have been less available or successful. The middle ground, coexistence, supports those actions that occurred through daily-lived experiences in the presence of the enemy. These centrally placed actions are no less colorful and suggest a different perspective than the value judgments traditionally placed on actions of resistance and collaboration. The benefits of this approach to the Channel Islands, which the following chapters will emphasize, extend beyond including coexistence itself and especially allows for the scaling of different actions to encompass both the most conventional

⁴³ The direction of the sides will be used for reference throughout this thesis. I.e. the left equates to collaboration for its left-sided placement on the figure of the spectrum (see *Figure 1*); right to resistance for its right-side placement on the spectrum. The language of “firm” and “soft” is also directional but for movement along the spectrum from the outside inwards, respectively.

perspectives of that category (for example, sabotage as a form of resistance) to the subtlest, most intricate or underappreciated actions (like those of Jorgensen-Earp's rhetorical resistance). Thus, the spectrum works to capture the whole of Islander experience, acknowledging previously overlooked daily actions and reevaluating and reincorporating those actions most discussed into a more all-encompassing conversation. While authors grapple with selecting actions to include in the categorization of resistance or collaboration, they must draw hard cuts and choose those actions that conveniently forward their assertions; the spectrum model takes a more holistic approach. The greatest advantages of this model stand as its appreciation for the whole of the Occupation experience, and in doing so, it provides a new method of studying this Occupation that can advance how historians approach this piece of Channel Island history.

By adopting the spectrum framework, the conversation of collaboration and resistance invites discussion of the context and significance of the actions and where on the spectrum they should fall, rather than debating the merit of drawing a hard line on whether to include a given action within the categories of resistance or collaboration at all. It allows studies to progress in conversation with one another. In the following three chapters, I demonstrate the use of the spectrum approach with an emphasis on the Channel Island experiences in Jersey and Guernsey. These islands are the biggest in size and population, providing the greatest number of available resources. Through the study of government records, newspapers, diaries, memoirs, personal interviews with Islanders, and the other sources, I explore the daily actions of Islanders, emphasizing the range of collaboration, resistance, and coexistence as understood in the unique context of the Channel Island Occupation.

In Chapter One, I begin with the theme of collaboration, applying the spectrum model to this early label placed on the Channel Islands. This chapter emphasizes how placement on the

spectrum depends upon both the aid provided to the enemy and the intention behind the Islanders' actions. Collaboration cannot rely solely on how much the enemy welcomed the action but by how much it could have or did benefit the historical actor and entire Island community.

In the second chapter, I explore the intricacies of resistance and similarly place evidentiary and exemplary actions along the spectrum. In resistance, the larger the action, the higher the risk to the individual involved and the greater the potential consequences both against the enemy and in punishment against the perpetrator. In its effects, resistance includes not only this risk to one's self and the degree of counteraction achieved against the enemy's plans, but it also encompasses the motivating gain to be achieved for the individual and community, as well. By dosing resistance with an appreciation of patriotism, smaller actions of resistance, especially those of a rhetorical nature, find a place on the spectrum as a softer form of resistance that edge closer to coexistence. In doing so, we can see the limitations of firmer forms of resistance like sabotage and grow in appreciation for softer actions performed routinely by Islanders.

The third and final chapter precedes from the previous two and bridges the two ends of the spectrum. This chapter explores the grey, middle ground of coexistence that previous scholarship has underappreciated by diving into those factors that made this Occupation unique and how they influenced the daily experiences of Islanders. This focus on context provides a third vector to the intention and effect discussed in the previous two chapters, and it demonstrates the need for identifying the middle ground of coexistence. Between Chapter One and Chapter Two, actions of similar natures, such as those taken by the local government, will reoccur. In this third chapter, I revisit them for a third time in light of coexistence, thus weaving together the complicated narratives and thematic elements that have appeared on both ends of the spectrum with actions that are inherently defined by their relationship to the two poles of

resistance and collaboration. Not intended to dilute the reality of World War II and Nazi occupation, this chapter explores not only those actions that managed to retain a semblance of normalcy but also those situations that were entirely of wartime circumstance. In doing so, coexistence allows for a final, encompassing section of the spectrum to capture the lived experience of Islanders under Occupation.

This work neither intends to forgive action of collaboration nor disparage acts of resistance. In contrast to some of the previous authors on this subject, I do not believe it is the place of the historian to offer any such forgiveness or denigrate any such efforts.⁴⁴ Instead, my aim is to provide a more encompassing history, which appreciates all actions—big and small, good and bad—in their own context and provides a new perspective by which to understand one of the most unusual wartime occupations in history.

⁴⁴ In their work, *Islands in Danger* (1955), Alan and Mary Wood set out to uncover what occurred “during the five secret years” of the Occupation, which up to the point of their publication was largely a history based on rumor. They similarly concluded their preface stating, “we have tried to set [the detailed facts] out as plainly as possible, without passing any judgment: for no one who has not lived under an enemy occupation should pass judgment on those who have.” They end by posing a question to the reader to determine how Britain, America, or the reader themselves might act in response to such an occupation. This thesis is not meant to be a practice in relaying an entire history nor in speculation. Thus, to clarify, historical analysis is itself a type of judgment, yet value is inherently tied to that judgment when dealing with collaboration and resistance. However, my judgment laid forth in this thesis is intended as an analytical valuation of those facts that other historians have laid out and their effects, not of judging the value of those people who lived them.

Chapter 1

Collaboration

“At times I did not feel very proud of being a Guernseyman...”— L.E. Bertrand¹

Norah M. Pickthall wrote to the German Kommandantur. A self-proclaimed fascist, the Island woman had only her thanks to offer. But that did not stop her from attempting to give more. Her letter came as she prepared to return to Sark, where she planned to teach the German soldiers English. She was “very happy” with the opportunity since there was little else for her to do besides “keep [her] eyes and ears open, and never let a chance go by, of saying something to help the simple people understand the real causes of the war.” She found this to be a difficult task. Struggling to teach her fellow citizens “who have had their minds poisoned” by Jewish influence, she suggested “a series of talks” to explain everything to the people of Sark. She continued her suggestions, but this time she turned her focus to Guernsey and its schoolchildren in particular. She offered her services to develop a school under German direction, underscoring the dangers of Jewish influences on education. She would be “proud and glad” to help this cause, which would benefit the minds of the children. The students might then help their parents understand and “gradually, be fitted to take however small a part in the New Europe.” Despite her active effort to provide services to the Germans, “it was apparently ignored by the Nazis.”²

While collaboration sometimes took the form of the personal support expressed in Pickthall’s letter, other methods involved the spreading of German propaganda and orders to the public, as accomplished by the local newspapers. Stories headlined, “President Roosevelt is

¹ Bertrand, L.E. “1940/1945 Guernsey Active Secret Press (G.A.S.P.)” Unpublished manuscript. Priaulx Library. St Peter Port, Guernsey.

² “Copies of Documents from the National Archive. Various documents from the National Archive file KV 4/87, produced by the British Security Service MI5 by Colonel JR Stopford and Captain Denning,” L/F/437/A7/1, Jersey Heritage, Jersey Archive, St Helier, Jersey. All emphasis by underlying comes from the original text.

either ill or insane” and “CHURCHILL OUTLINES PROGRAMME OF TERROR.”³ The *Jersey Evening Post* printed newspapers in German for the Germans stationed there. In the attempt to keep a locally run news source operating, the Island presses spouted what the German censor required and wanted readers to see. The loaded headlines and critical tone helped readers to know not to trust the material for accurate updates; yet, it succeeded in spreading the messaging of the Nazi regime.

The press also relayed the words of the local government as those administrations worked concurrent to the German Occupation and were accused of collaboration. However, these outward publications failed to convey the complexities of the collaborative decisions they faced. The President of the Controlling Committee on Guernsey, Ambrose Sherwill, wrote his memoir of the Occupation years later and gave more attention to their personal challenges with their position. In recalling one crucial decision, he noted, “A vital principle was at stake even if no human being on Guernsey was actually affected.”⁴ His own reaction had left him “ashamed.”⁵ As Sherwill and others had gathered for this fateful decision one fall day only four months into the Occupation, he had already been informed that all the Jewish residents of the island had left Guernsey during the evacuation. Days earlier, the Germans had requested information of all resident aliens, and the States provided a list of 407 names and the solicited details “with the notable exception of religion.”⁶ The Islanders knew of the disgusting anti-Semitic attitudes being espoused from the heart of Nazi Germany, but now on October 23, 1940, the German Occupation leadership put forth “The (First) Order relating to Measures against the Jews,”

³ Jorgensen-Earp, *Discourse and Defiance Under Nazi Occupation*, 133.

⁴ Ambrose Sherwill, *A Fair and Honest Book - the Memoirs of Sir Ambrose Sherwill*. Quoted in Bunting, *The Model Occupation*, 106.

⁵ Ambrose Sherwill, *A Fair and Honest Book - the Memoirs of Sir Ambrose Sherwill*. Quoted in Bunting, *The Model Occupation*, 106; Jorgensen-Earp, *Discourse and Defiance Under Nazi Occupation*, 158.

⁶ Jorgensen-Earp, *Discourse and Defiance Under Nazi Occupation*, 157.

requiring the registration of all those who fell under the German classification of Jewish.⁷ Involving local leadership, Germans set registration at police Inspector Schulpher's office. But Jewish residents had safely evacuated to other parts of the U.K., like the schoolteachers and children. Sherwill and his committee falsely believed the order "would harm no one on the Island." The newly established Controlling Committee, untrained, uncomfortable, and unfamiliar with working under German Occupation, expected the Germans to "[march] in armed soldiers" if they refused.⁸ They wanted to protect the population still present from backlash. Thus, they agreed to the German order that Jews must register themselves.⁹ When he turned in the names, Inspector Schulpher had a list of four women who responded to the order, all of whom registered voluntarily and two of whom, Elisabeth Duquesmin and Elda Brouard, listed themselves under the Church of England.¹⁰

When group deportations began in 1942, the other two women, Therese Steiner and August Spitz, and another Jewish woman, Marianne Grunfeld, were among those ordered to leave Guernsey on April 21, 1942.¹¹ On July 20, 1942, these women and 821 other Jews would leave France in cattle cars and arrive at Auschwitz three days later. Therese, August, Marianne, and around one million other prisoners at Auschwitz would not survive the Holocaust.¹²

...

⁷ Jorgensen-Earp, *Discourse and Defiance Under Nazi Occupation*, 157.

⁸ Ambrose Sherwill, *A Fair and Honest Book - the Memoirs of Sir Ambrose Sherwill*. Quoted in Bunting, *The Model Occupation*, 106.

⁹ Credit should be given to Sir Abraham Lainé who, according to Sherwill, "openly and categorically refused his assent and stated his grave objections to such a measure...this courageous act of his should never be forgotten." Ambrose Sherwill, *A Fair and Honest Book - the Memoirs of Sir Ambrose Sherwill*. Quoted in Bunting, *The Model Occupation*, 106.

¹⁰ Jorgensen-Earp, *Discourse and Defiance Under Nazi Occupation*, 157.

¹¹ Marianne Grunfeld had not registered herself in 1940, so historians are not certain how she came to be known as Jewish. She was on the State supplied list of aliens, and Jorgensen-Earp suggests her last name may have stood out as Jewish to the Germans; Jorgensen-Earp discusses on pages 162-163 of her work the attempts to intervene and prevent their deportation.

¹² Jorgensen-Earp, *Discourse and Defiance Under Nazi Occupation*, 163.

It is within the natural response of the human condition to hide shame. We slink back from the things we regret or the choices that others might harshly judge. This instinct muddles the study of collaboration. The defensive tone of the Island residents, the unthinkable massacre of the Jewish population, and the fragmentary understanding of other occupations have tainted the way historians approach notions of collaboration on the Channel Islands. In the Jersey War Tunnels, a German underground complex that has been reclaimed as an Occupation museum, visitors experience this defensive tone when they enter an exhibition room that forces the Occupation's hard choices onto them.¹³ A soldier offers you, a child, ice cream, missing his own children back home. Would you accept it? He tries to discuss a shared love for music. Do you talk with him for a while? Addressed by cyborg mannequins of German soldiers with talking computer-screen heads, museumgoers face their own reactions to given scenarios. According to Cheryl Jorgensen-Earp in *Discourse and Defiance Under Nazi Occupation* (2014), "it is not difficult to come up with the patriotic, 'correct' response foregoing the extra rations, or the pleasure of the nice German soldier's company and a stimulating discussion of music."¹⁴ While she goes on to discuss rightly how the Islanders' forced interactions with the Germans complicated collaboration, Jorgensen-Earp's quick dismissal of finding the "correct" response undermines the very point she aptly acknowledges. In theory, upfront denial of the Germans appears easy and obvious as an option; however, the exhibit's design builds in the discomfort of the Islanders' situation. One is not asked to clear out a ghetto or fire the executioner's gun; instead, you are sharing interests or appreciating the beauty of your home island. "Correct" blurs.

¹³ Construction on the Jersey War Tunnels began in 1941 to withstand Allied air raids. Built by forced labor, Hohlgeangsanlage 8 (Ho8), as the Germans called this particular set of tunnels, became known as the German Underground Hospital in 1973 when Operation Overload, the Allied invasion of Europe became inevitable. Today, it details the Occupation history for tourists.

¹⁴ Jorgensen-Earp, *Discourse and Defiance Under Nazi Occupation*, 50.

Are you able to agree with one mannequin and not the other? Were you supposed to say “no” to all of them? Collaboration cannot be seen as so obvious as to remain undefined.¹⁵

Despite ongoing discussions of collaboration, its legacy, and its growing acceptance as Island history, the actual constitution of collaboration remains unclear. Evidence of collaboration generally relies on the accusations of others more than the ready admission of guilt. Regardless of an unclear delineation of what constitutes collaboration, this form of evidence—accusation—is not elusive. Indeed, Islanders accused one another so freely that British officers who came to evaluate Islander actions after the war readily recorded collaboration in their report to the Home Office in August 1945. In addition to these allegations, Madeline Bunting (1995) asserts that the Islanders’ hesitancy to discuss resistance implied that they collaborated.¹⁶ Under Bunting’s broad rubric, Islanders who did not resist and those unwilling to discuss resistance later must have been collaborators. Confusing matters further, World War II and Channel Island Occupation historians generally discuss collaboration with an assumption that the reader shares their understanding of the term. With this presupposition, historians take for granted the contours of the concept, which especially mislead when attempting to understand the scale of the Channel Islands.

The comparatively smaller-scale collaboration that occurred on the Channel Islands allows a more magnified view of the spectrum of acts of collaboration and what defines them. By applying a microscopic view of the Channel Islands, historians can view the nuance and complexities of collaborative acts. We can then see both the support of letter writers, as well as the effect that support caused on the running of the Occupation. We can see not only a government working with an occupying force, but also the ways in which those actions were

¹⁵ Interestingly, this exhibition room is separate from another room located deeper in the tunnels that is specifically designed to discuss resistance and collaboration. Thus, the complicated realities of daily actions become evident to viewers. The spectrum of actions emerges when these early exhibit rooms already manifest defensiveness and uncertainty.

¹⁶ Bunting, *The Model Occupation*, 8-9.

intended to protect the public. A spectrum appears, ranging from the most obvious, malicious and self-serving forms of collaboration to more well-intentioned deeds for a more encompassing definition (see *Figure 1*).

Occupation studies already allude to the gradations of collaboration but neglect to define well or articulate explicitly this idea. In discussing Vichy France, Robert Paxton describes:

First, one must distinguish between active participation in the regime and mere favorable opinion. Within favorable opinion, one can further distinguish among varying degrees of warmth and among fear of war and revolution, enthusiasm for the National Revolution. Even those who grumbled at the regime without doubting its basic legality or doing anything positive against it helped swell the tide of acquiescence. All these groups, from lukewarm to fervent, were ‘collaborators’ in a functional sense, for they provided the broad public climate of acceptance that lent legitimacy to a more active participation.¹⁷

The span he notes of “lukewarm to fervent” falls within the spectrum. Yet, the spectrum extends beyond active participation and favorable opinion to incorporate nuanced actions. Collapsing these gradations under one heading of collaboration diminishes the range of activities and responses Islanders experienced as part of daily living alongside Germans and general detachment from the war itself. It also renders less significant those actions constituting resistance by failing to provide a balanced antithesis of equal nuance to the current resistance scholarship. Embracing the spectrum of actions under the collaboration umbrella allows a transition into the conversation of resistance through those actions that blur the area between both categories.

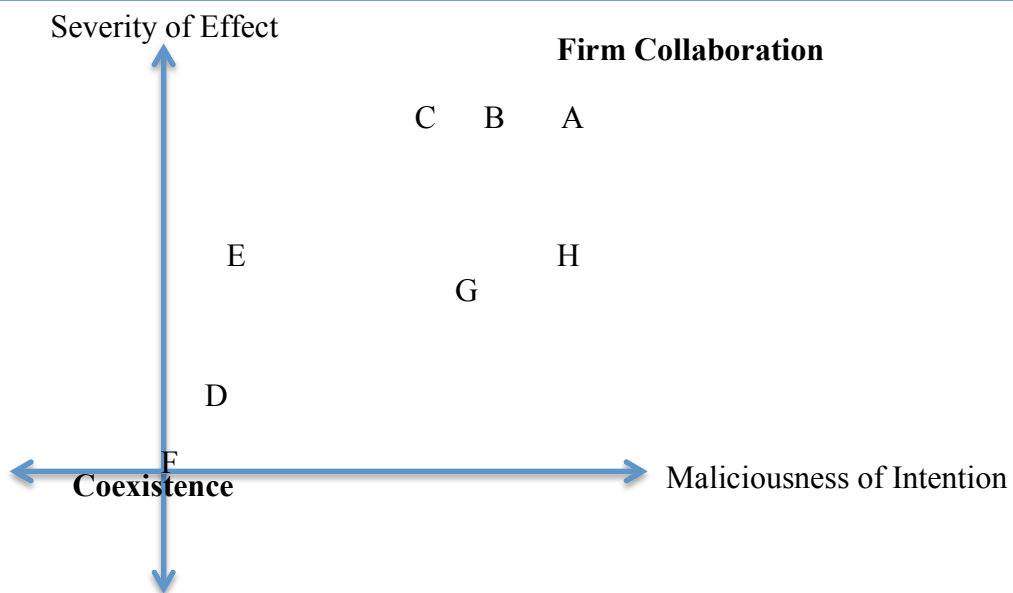
Defining Collaboration

Direct aid to the enemy is the heart of collaboration and where the definition must begin. Actions fall under scrutiny for the degree to which they aided and improved the daily working of the German occupation and its military. The firmer the collaboration, the more the guilty party

¹⁷ Paxton, *Vichy France*, 23.

did not merely disown his country and cause but acted in support of the enemy. His actions were pro-Nazi, significantly aided German occupation aims, and/or occurred in a malicious way that reflected and promoted Nazi brutality seen elsewhere in Europe. This support, though, is two-fold. First, the effect of the action measures the meaningful consequences of the act by how it aided the enemy. However, the reality of an action's effect can in stand stark contrast to its intended effect. Therefore, the second measure is the intention, which encompasses the purpose of their action and whether it was aimed to provide enemy support. Firm collaboration begins to soften when the action failed to cause an effect or was motivated by good intentions. These softer actions are still collaboration and need including, but they cannot be viewed as equivalent

Figure 2. A visual representation of how the two vectors of intention and effect scale collaboration. Action location on the graph is based on relationship to the other actions rather than incremental values.



- A: Informer who turns in neighbor without cause for spite
- B: Informer who turns in neighbor without cause for profit
- C: Informer who turns in neighbor out of fear of consequences for the community
- D: Chauffeur driving Germans to regular daily activities
- E: Printing German propaganda
- F: Woman in love with a German
- G: Woman entertaining German for perks
- H: Pickthall's pro-Nazi letter that was unwelcomed by the Germans

to all firmer forms of collaboration. Intention and effect become the vectors by which to measure and define the allusive term, collaboration (See *Figure 2*).

Pickthall's letter writing, described at the beginning of this chapter, embodies firm collaboration that has been somewhat softened from its moderate effect. Her support for the Nazi party and her motivation firmly aligned with standard views of collaboration. Despite only engaging in the banal action of letter writing, she offered great extents of her time, energy, and service to the school's development, demonstrating her willingness to take action for the Nazi cause. While her intention aligns firmly with collaboration, her effects were moderate. The Germans seemed to ignore her letter, so she was unable to bring about any effect through cooperative action moving forward. Nevertheless, her open acceptance of German rule, her anti-Semitic attitudes, and her willingness to improve German influence on Islanders all promoted an unpatriotic attitude and acceptance of Occupation among fellow Islanders, furthering the German efforts. She embraced German rule and therefore actualized German goals. Therefore, Pickthall demonstrates how the variation in aid to the enemy complements the intention to provide aid.¹⁸

Intention extends beyond the strict definition of desiring to aid the enemy. Some actions were intended to provide greater benefit to the actor than they ever could have supplied to the Germans. Rather than creating tangible benefits to the Germans, these intentions effectively furthered the spirit of the Occupation and German authority. In a post-war report by the British Security Service, Captain Denning noted that a man by the name of Cort was "among the six most serious cases of collaboration in his area" for a letter similar in nature to Pickthall's.¹⁹ He wrote asking for a letter to be sent to Mr. Joyce at Hamburg Radio Station to inquire about Sir Oswald Mosley and his Nationalist Movement. Like Pickthall, his letter explicitly contained anti-Semitic

¹⁸ "Various documents from the National Archive file KV 4/87," L/F/437/A7/1, Jersey Archive.

¹⁹ "Various documents from the National Archive file KV 4/87," L/F/437/A7/1, Jersey Archive.

and pro-Nazi rhetoric. Yet, Cort offered nothing but his theoretical support, instead asking for information for himself. In doing so, one of Captain Dening's most appalling cases of collaboration discovered by Britain provides nothing but fan mail. Despite not actively providing any action or information to benefit the German war effort, this ardent spirit of participation for personal gain still constitutes collaboration. Therefore, collaboration becomes more than a matter of the intention to supply aid. It includes the intention to profit personally. Intentions vary further still, though. While his actions provide for his personal wellbeing, another may act in a collaborative manner in order to spite a neighbor or benefit the greater society.

When people have been judged harshly, their character as British people called into question, and their moral standing with the Allied war effort generally dismissed, intention can stand as the most important factor for studying actions and their implications for one's character, spirit, and morality. Like the Kohlberg's psychological study of moral development, these motivations can be assessed in terms of a moral hierarchy.²⁰ Kohlberg's final stage of meta-ethical development questions the morality of the action itself; thus, those Islanders who acted in sympathy with and in order to advance the Nazi party's agenda prove the most obviously collaborative. These actions accept the Nazi party's agenda as a proper standard for action. Although we cannot be certain that Pickthall and Cort's letters laced with support are not instead written merely out of the lowest levels of moral development (self-preservation or accepting a new standard of social norms under the German administration), the strength of their letters and, especially, Pickthall's willingness to act on such support can make us more confident. On the other hand, meta-ethical moral development also values those actions taken for a perceived

²⁰ Kohlberg created a model for moral development of three stages, each with two subsets. He theorized that all people develop along this model, though not all people reach the final stage. The stages are pro-conventional, conventional, and post-conventional. The seventh and ultimate step is the theoretical meta-ethical development stage.

greater good of society. Despite their collaborative tones, these well-intentioned actions become softer collaboration by striving for a greater moral good.

Many individuals acted to the benefit of the Germans in order to protect loved ones, sustain public order, or provide for a perceived public benefit. In the second anecdote in this chapter's introduction, the Islands' presses effectively spread German propaganda. The Islanders intended to keep the press running, believing it was better to fight the censor and publish propaganda than to relinquish all control to the Germans. The effectiveness of this action will be discussed further in Chapter 2, "Resistance," as the outlandish headlines and stories often served as warning signs to the Island readers. Regardless of how the press forewarned their audiences, they aided the Germans in spreading the news that they desired to have in front of the public. While the effect on the Island population itself may have been minimal, the beneficial effects to the overall running of the Occupation were more moderate. The press maintained a relatively smooth function of a key WWII weapon, propaganda, to which the Germans then did not need to allocate resources. Thus, a moderate level of effect paired with good intentions softens the press's level of collaboration.

Unlike the previous two examples introducing this chapter, the third regarding the deportation of the Jews had a much more severe effect. Like the actions of the press, the intention here was to protect the population—but it turned out to be at the cost of the Jewish population. The guilt Sherwill recognized was likely both an acknowledgement of sacrificing his values and a reflection of years of learning about the Holocaust after the Occupation. He specifically wrote in his memoirs that he "had no premonition of the appalling atrocities which were to be perpetrated on them by the Nazi regime."²¹ Although this ignorance is suspect and

²¹ Ambrose Sherwill, *A Fair and Honest Book - the Memoirs of Sir Ambrose Sherwill*. Quoted in Bunting, *The Model Occupation*, 106.

likely a personal shield against accusations of collaboration, his belief, as stated earlier, that Jewish residents had evacuated and his ignorance of their presence are plausible based upon records of similar feelings from other Islanders and his interactions with a prominent Jewish doctor who evacuated.²² Therefore, he sincerely based his intentions in consideration of the best interest of the population. However, this action placed the Channel Islands in the heart of Nazi prejudice, terror, and violence through interaction with the Holocaust. The effect was severe. Although Jorgensen-Earp provides several reasons to believe these women would have been discovered and deported regardless of their willing registration, that notion is still only an assumption. The effect of the State accepting the German order was the Jewish identification and subsequent death of two women.²³ The best intentions paired with the worst consequences demonstrate the ambiguity of collaboration, and the grey space between firm and soft actions.

Ranges of Intention: Scaling Informers

Informants provide a unique subset of collaborators. These Islanders accused others of such actions as illegally using wireless radios or hiding Germany's forced laborers, two predominant and highly punished forms of resistance discussed in the next chapter. Despite all informers sharing in the same action with generally the same effect, they reveal different intentions: Nazi sympathy, personal profit, public interest, or spite.²⁴ Their singular effect was to

²² Diverging from the firm collaborative take of authors like Bunting, Jorgensen-Earp provides a thorough and convincing analysis of why we can accept Sherwill's account of ignorance as true rather than a cover-up for guilt felt after the Holocaust. This final scenario shows the complexity surrounding this history and, in turn, demonstrates the value to a spectrum approach on which acts of collaboration can easily move along a scale with changing analysis, rather than having to be entirely recategorized.

²³ This analysis of the local officials' culpability in the deportation of Jews spotlights the experiences on Guernsey. My source material prevents me from conducting a similar analysis for Jersey.

²⁴ There is an account of two maidservants who sent in a false anonymous letter against their employer, Mrs. Sherbrooke as a practical joke. As this is the only account I have observed of this type of naïve action, I have not included the intention to perform a prank as part of this broader analysis. Durand, *Guernsey Under German Rule*, 111.

uphold—through acknowledging and exercising— the authority of the German Occupier by German punishment of those accused of breaking Occupation orders. In doing so, they solidified German power through its ability to both benefit and punish individuals. The effect of informants' actions was so powerful that the level of their intention diminishes in comparative importance. Thus, all of these actions fall securely on the “firm” end of the spectrum, and their intention distinguishes their placement from one another across that left-most section.

The first two intentions reflect those seen in the letter writing of Pickthall and Cort. Like Pickthall, some informants supported the Nazi cause and wanted to offer their aid. The second of the four intentions was the profit-motive. Islanders confirmed that rewards were granted, in one case of £100 (One Hundred Pounds Sterling) and additionally those informants “had to [sign] to receive the money.”²⁵ Therefore those who laid claim to the reward, may have acted in this way to reap the financial and material benefits of the reward or secure favor with the Germans. Like Cort's letter, the intention was purely selfish and invokes a firmer form of collaboration. This categorization could also include those women who took up with German soldiers and informed on others to protect their reputation from disparagement. Much like a profiteer, the selfish intentions of increasing social capital firms the actions of these women.

Many informers sent in letters anonymously. As anonymous informers then could not collect a profit, the profit motivation is replaced either with public interest or a personal vendetta. Those acting for the supposed benefit of the entire population believed that individuals disrupting peace with the Germans by willfully disobeying orders were risking the wellbeing of the other Islanders. While this idea of public interest holds theoretical merit since the Germans made Island-wide threats for disobedience, the Islanders themselves did not see this as the primary motivation after the Occupation. Instead, they favored the alternative of enmity. Mark

²⁵ “Various documents from the National Archive file KV 4/87,” L/F/437/A7/1, Jersey Archive.

Bright described them in the *Guernsey Star* as “that lowest form of animal life, the anonymous letter-writer, who shopped his neighbour or his brother with equal avidity and who greatly simplified the Gestapo’s activities.”²⁶ Likewise, Ralph Durand who published the first account of the Occupation in 1946, *Guernsey Under German Rule*, offered little pity for the anonymous informer as he wrote: “Inevitably we must suppose that they did it merely for sheer hatred of their neighbors.”²⁷ With this degree of pessimistic speculation, concern for the public interest likely peaked with the informant’s consideration of themselves as one among the public.

As the act of informing on another occurred with forethought and deliberation, the level of flagrancy involved in intention subdivides informants further. This flagrancy specifically emphasizes the difference in culpability for informing with reason (i.e. they had a genuine action to report) and falsely reporting on their neighbors. High flagrancy of turning in Islanders without reason demonstrated the most pernicious intent of accomplishing their purpose at the sake of another. Indeed, this action falls to the left-most edge of the “collaboration” scale by most emulating the Nazi terror regime of malicious punishment to innocent populations.

Undoing Normal: Romance and Government Actions during Occupation

Unlike the actions of an informant, those of women fraternizing with the enemy were not inherently incorrect.²⁸ Similar to how adultery is wrong because one or more of the individuals is committed to someone outside the act, the context in which these relationships occurred made

²⁶ Reports conflict, but most likely there were not actually Gestapo on the island. There may have been German military that were trained as Gestapo at one point. See “Various documents from the National Archive file KV 4/87,” L/F/437/A7/1, Jersey Archive.

²⁷ Durand, *Guernsey Under German Rule*, 279.

²⁸ Though addressed separately, many of the women fraternizing with the enemy used their standing to inform upon others. Sometimes these actions were sharing petty gossip with their boyfriend but others would make false accusations of Islanders in the company of Germans to gain favor, cause trouble for a nemesis, or from revenge for comments made about their relationships. This importantly demonstrates the distinction of actions apart from people. Different actions are labeled on the spectrum, but any person could make a variety of actions across the entirety of the spectrum.

them unaccepted. The extent to which the relationship is “normal” is informed by the motivations of the women and, in turn, the “effect” of the relationship in the gains received in either the form of affection and emotional connection or financial and social benefits. These women, referred to under the derogative label of “Jerrybags,” range from that of the profiteer to that of the romantic.²⁹ The Jerrybag stereotype was that of the selfish girl who used her male suitor to gain access to social events, food, clothing, cosmetics, and other gifts.

Cases like that of Pearl Joyce Vardon, expose the real dangers of this so-called “horizontal collaboration.” Vardon fell in love with a German, applied to go to Germany, and gained employment at the German European Broadcasting Station in Luxembourg. Described in her record as holding “a relatively unimportant job at this station,” investigators found it “abundantly clear that she worked willingly in the position in which the Germans thought that she could best serve them.” Moreover, multiple people who provided statements in her investigation “describe her as a keen Nazi and a hater of all things English.” Although perhaps her pro-Nazi point of view aided the romantic attraction, nothing in her record noted any sympathies with the Germans prior to her relationship. Therefore, fraternization with the enemy, in some cases, turned the Islanders against their own countrymen.³⁰

This potential disloyalty to Britain is one possibility in a series of unclear effects of these actions. At minimum, their actions made Germans more comfortable on the Islands. Still, the Germans’ attempt to dissuade it evidences its disadvantages to their Occupation efforts. Germans ordered against fraternization and even brought French women to the Islands to service the soldiers. Nevertheless, Islander-German relationships brought to life the overall aim of the German Occupation by demonstrating a world where the Germans were the most desirable,

²⁹ Jerry was used as a name for a German.

³⁰ “Copies from the National Archive. Copies of documents produced by the MI5 on the investigation of Pearl Joyce Vardon.” 08 October 1944 to 25 June 1947. L/F/437/A/7/2, Jersey Heritage, Jersey Archive, St Helier, Jersey.

especially when the women had husbands or boyfriends away fighting in the British military. With this range and ambiguity of effect, the intention of the women to love, to secure material goods, or to gain favor with the Germans becomes the most reliable method by which to scale these actions from soft to firm, respectively.

Just as women's roles in relationships suddenly took on a new tone, the local government administrations met criticism by the nature of having to work alongside an Occupying force. The role of the government spans across those orders that more explicitly upheld the Nazi regime, like those against the Jews previously discussed, to more mild daily administration. Additionally, orders from Britain to retain their post would have meant the Bailiff of Jersey, Guernsey, and other government officials would have violated the trust of Britain if they abandoned office.³¹ Under the structure of the Channel Islands' military occupation, though, foreign rule necessarily ran concurrently. Here lies the dilemma. Two governments in an unequal power dynamic oversaw the same population yet were to do so without working together. Actions' collaborative nature muddled as government decisions occurred in tandem with the German authority and could then seem to qualify all actions as collaboration. Recognizing their instruction from Britain as an order, the government officials' questionable actions must be evaluated in terms of how they intended to fulfill expectations for their civic services.

Paxton addresses government officials' maintenance of public order in Vichy France. He describes the appeal of the Vichy government:

At bottom, however, the decisive reason holding men to the Vichy solution was an instinctual commitment to public order as the highest good. Public servants continued to obey the state. Even more, as the state came under challenge by Resistance vigilantism, a commitment to the ongoing functioning of the state reinforced the weight of routine. Other members of the elite chose the known over the unknown: the possible future risks

³¹ Jersey War Tunnels.

of discredit over the certain present risks of resistance. Resistance was not merely personally perilous. It was also a step toward social revolution.³²

Paxton expounds on how some people perceived that the Allied victory might overthrow or threaten social order more than German Occupation, which then led to increased levels of collaboration by some in Vichy. Paxton's notions cannot be applied to the Islands to the same degree as France, though sympathizers with the mission and values of Nazism were present.

While some Channel Island government authorities may have benefitted personally from the power of preserving public order, others wanted to protect their neighbors from drastic changes or ill-treatment by the Germans. The Islands were bound to Britain, so unlike France, their national defense was still part of the fight against the German regime. The actions of the government provided for maintenance of the Islands and its inhabitants until that time in which Britain could come to liberate them. Head of the Department of Labour Edward Le Quesne demonstrated this intention throughout his Occupation diary. On Friday, March 19, 1943, he wrote about a meeting with other Islanders and the German occupiers. He said, "Unfortunately, I received little help from these gentlemen, some of whom are amongst the severest critics of the States. Confronted by the Germans they behaved like a lot of tame mice. ... I was compelled to offer 100 men employed by the Dep. Of Labour and this to prevent the Germans immediately entering shops and requesting labour indiscriminately."³³ He hoped collaborating could protect local businesses, but he nevertheless provided workers for the Occupation. By maintaining their posts, local officials aligned administrative control with the intention to protect the public and remain loyal to the direction of Britain. Concurrently, these same administrations also bolstered the German intention to maintain local order and keep the overall society functioning.

³² Paxton, *Vichy France*, 286.

³³ "Occupation Diary of Deputy Edward Le Quesne" L/C/205/A1/4, 1943, Jersey Archive.

Moreover, the small-town nature of these islands allowed for corruption and lack of faith in the government to occur without necessarily overthrowing the social order. A select class of the social elite constituted the high ranks of Island government, and many Islanders deemed it an ineffective and self-serving system. If these same governments became corrupt under German influence, the general population likely would not have had an overwhelming reaction since many Islanders already perceived this problem. They already conducted quotidian activities largely independent of the administrators' personal actions. Additionally, corruption within the government did not originate through relations with the Germans and was already present through the islands' "honorary system of appointments."³⁴ The scathing report of the British Officers to the Home Office highlights the stories of individual accusations against local officials. Hidden among these accusations (usually supported by little to no concrete evidence) and calls for a government overhaul, a few of the interviewed residents noted feelings of continuity, explained by one as "this idea of necessary reform already existed before the war, but it took occupation by the enemy to actuate it."³⁵ Therefore, any misaligned intentions may not have had as significant an influence on changing the morale of the local population that already stood unsatisfied with the public order. If they could not find solace in their local governments, Islanders could still turn their resolve to the British government. Britain may have remained intangible and indirect to the majority of Islanders beyond attempting to listen to Churchill on the radio, but Britain's fight in the war remained constant and provided a sense of oversight from afar. Thus, the Island governments could continue to function in administrative roles while receiving passive judgment and resentment from Islanders who looked to Britain.

³⁴ "Various documents from the National Archive file KV 4/87," L/F/437/A7/1, Jersey Archive.

³⁵ "Various documents from the National Archive file KV 4/87," L/F/437/A7/1, Jersey Archive.

The role of the Islands' governments creates a uniquely complicated judgment because of the collaboration intrinsic to their role, the reception of Islanders, and their social structure. While many of the local governments' actions fall decidedly under the umbrella of collaboration, the degree of their collaboration remains debatable and can be best examined through the spectrum approach. In his report, Captain Denning records "...it is a remarkable fact that they found that not the slightest attempt had been made by any official whatsoever to accumulate any information which might have been of value to the Force, nor to prepare the ground in the way that might have been expected if they had been wholeheartedly zealous British Officials."³⁶ However, the lack of certain forms of information does not guarantee collaboration. Instead, their active choices, like dismissal of the petty acts of resistance discussed in the next chapter, highlight the governments' more pragmatic approach to Occupation. They accepted their current position, recognized there was little to nothing they could do to benefit the Allied war effort, and attempted to better the lives of the general population in the face of German rule.

Collaboration emerges as a method of gaining credit with the enemy in order to maintain some semblance of authority and influence over their actions on the Islands. For example, the governments' statements against resistance efforts seem to necessitate firm collaboration. From newspaper inserts to addresses from the Bailiff, "The people of Guernsey were warned to beware of these and similar stupid rumors that might bring about a deterioration in the relations between the German troops and the civil population."³⁷ While they did warn against resistance, the governments were more dismissive of those actions they felt merely irritated the Germans and jeopardized the wellbeing of the Islanders without impacting the actual course of the war, such as

³⁶ "Various documents from the National Archive file KV 4/87," L/F/437/A7/1, Jersey Archive.

³⁷ "Under the Swastika in Jersey: The Experiences of a University Student by W. J. Le Quesne," 14 June 1940 to 31 December 1940, L/D/25/M5/1, pg. 32, Channel Islands Occupation Society (Jersey) Collection, Jersey Heritage, Jersey Archive, St Helier, Jersey.

petty sabotage. By minimizing some resistance efforts, the government gained good repute from the German authorities so the States could then suggest alterations to their plans and orders, such as negotiating rations or punishments.³⁸ In this way, collaboration made way for a form of resistance. Additionally, the governments passed legislation for the benefit of the population during this challenging period. Thus, collaborating with the Germans allowed some Islanders to gain the trust and respect of their occupier; in turn, these Islanders fashioned themselves protectors of the local population. This intention softens the collaborative involvement.

The enforcement of the German dance policy demonstrates the compromises between public benefit and giving in to German wishes in instances of seemingly little importance. As a matter of public health, the Germans banned social dances for a period on Jersey. In a manner of resistance on Jersey, Islanders framed a dance at the Chelsea Hotel as a class to circumvent the ban. In a letter to the field commandant, the Attorney General wrote from the Office of the Bailiff of Jersey and recognized the nature of the dance as defiant of German orders. He said, “I have great difficulty in believing, having regard to the number of persons present, that the dancing which is going on is in the nature of a dancing class. Rather does it appear to me to be an attempt at the evasion of the prohibition of ‘all dancing for pleasure.’”³⁹ While this action may have uplifted local spirits, it did not provide any wartime benefit beyond public morale; however, it could precipitate German retaliatory actions. As punishment, the Attorney General offered that dancing could no longer occur at the Chelsea Hotel. Once this sanction was enacted, the local government followed the order to completion to verify it was eventually lifted. The government was willing to enact small punishments on those citizens who willingly jeopardized the safety of

³⁸ For examples of this beneficial pushback, see Chapter 2: Resistance.

³⁹ “Private pupil dance classes at the Chelsea Hotel, ban of all dancing to be enforced by the police force,” 7 August 1943 to 15 September 1943, B/A/W50/96/1, Bailiff’s Chambers: Occupation Files, Jersey Heritage, Jersey Archive, St Helier, Jersey.

all; however, because the action putting the population at risk defied German orders, the government collaborates by effectively subduing resistance. With this combination of standard governmental duties in protecting the whole population from retaliation and punishment with the general upholding of German orders, the government oscillated between a collaboration and coexistence amid occupying forces and the civilian population.⁴⁰

While government officials were instructed to stay in their posts, local Islanders had marginally more freedom to choose their own course of work. Living beside the enemy made it difficult to work without interacting in a business capacity. Moreover, as the Germans took over more Island functions, they had more means to control the labor force, making it necessary for many Islanders to work for Germans in order to make a living and survive.

Working toward Collaboration

Guernseyman Ronald Arthur Langmead worked as a driver for the Germans at the age of sixteen. When his family was deported as “undesirables” likely to perform resistance actions, the work he received from completing automotive repairs and driving for Germans allowed him to pay rent with a neighbor and provide for himself.⁴¹ He mostly drove Mr. Isler, the owner of the Hotel De Normandy. Isler, fluent in German, French and English, was called upon to provide translations since the Germans’ first appearance on the Islands. His hotel was closed, except for the bar on occasions, and his wife was evacuated, so he was available to communicate between Islanders and Germans. However, his work provided key details and understanding for the success of the Occupation in a similar way to Langmead’s aid as a driver. Some of Langmead’s

⁴⁰ “Private pupil dance classes at the Chelsea Hotel, ban of all dancing to be enforced by the police force,” 1943, B/A/W50/96/1, Jersey Archive.

⁴¹ His father had been imprisoned for receiving stolen goods, which caused German suspicion to fall on his family and their eventual deportation.

occasions driving Isler included visiting a German billet to confirm their supplies and rations were correct and attending the Regal Cinema to interpret British news reels. On separate occasions, Langmead transported German soldiers and their girlfriends or took officials around the island as a van and cameras created a propaganda film of wineries and farms.⁴²

In many ways, Islanders could not choose to avoid working for the enemy. The Home Office report acknowledged 4,000 Islanders indirectly working for the Germans and 5,000 directly working for them. Denning's report, which readily finds collaboration, also admitted that though "undoubtedly an appreciable portion of these people worked for the Germans because of the extra rations and money" this fact should not "be held against the Islanders."⁴³ This acquiescence exists from acknowledging the Islanders "could not very well do otherwise, particularly in view of the fact that the wages offered by the States were insufficient to support their existence."⁴⁴ With German control over so many aspects of daily life and industry, Islanders inevitable had to work for Germans in some form in order to make a salary. It was noted that it remained unlikely anyone contradicted the Hague Convention, which agreed that the labor force of an occupied nation cannot be made to work against their own country; therefore, Islanders did not aid the German war effort against Britain. Regardless, their work could still benefit the enemy in achieving a smooth occupation. These actions then were driven by the intention to earn a wage, but they varied in their effect. Langmead's action of chauffeuring shifts along the spectrum according to the benefit it provided the enemy, which depended on the different individuals and outings with which he participated. Indirectly assisting in the rationing process

⁴² Ronald Arthur Langmead, "The German Occupation of Guernsey 1940 to 1945," *Memoirs of Ronald Arthur Langmead*, Priaulx Library. St Peter Port, Guernsey, 3-5.

⁴³ "Various documents from the National Archive file KV 4/87," L/F/437/A7/1, Jersey Archive.

⁴⁴ "Various documents from the National Archive file KV 4/87," L/F/437/A7/1, Jersey Archive.

that also affected the Islanders' reception of rations is softer collaboration than allowing officials to follow the production of propaganda that was used in Europe for the greater war effort.

The extreme range of negative activities during occupation raises the question whether any daily activity could remain without a value judgment. Quotidian actions like driving and car repairs took intrinsically different tones, while still others actively engaged the enemy. Regardless, people around the Islands asked for the punishment of the perpetrators, those that had betrayed their Islands and the British people. These punishments largely failed to come to fruition after the war since "...it was unfortunately very difficult to obtain prosecution in view of the fact that the Defense Regulation did not apply to the Channel Islands under German occupation, and that therefore the only machinery for trying these persons was the Treason and Treachery Act, which demanded the death penalty."⁴⁵ This lack of punishment resulted from the combination of a multitude of accusations as each man deflected accusations to someone else, as well as a lack of reliable evidence. As a result, the historian's perception of the Islanders' own scale of collaboration skews and an understanding of what they were willing to punish or forgive cannot be fully factored into measuring collaboration.

Upon Liberation, a leaflet entitled "MAKE LIBERATION DAY A DAY OF PROTEST!!" insisted upon punishment for collaboration. It called for remembrance despite their celebration saying, "We must not allow the excitement and joy which we feel blind us to the facts of our States maladministration during the past four years. We must remember that the states are still in power to continue their corrupt and incompetent practices." Thus, the history of collaboration was settled even before their official liberation so that those in power could not rewrite their actions in the eyes of history. The passionate writing, "Are we to forget the many grievances and injustices of the Occupation? Fellow –Islanders! We must not forget!" resonates

⁴⁵ "Various documents from the National Archive file KV 4/87," L/F/437/A7/1, Jersey Archive.

today as the Islands face decades of judgment for collaboration. While they did not succeed in enacting any type of punishment or responsibility on the government for their actions beyond shaming, this leaflet and the voices of others succeeded in branding the islands with a legacy of collaboration and have tainted the perception of their islands indefinitely.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ “Original copies of notices released by various movements,” 1942-1945, L/D/25/A/10, Channel Islands Occupation Society (Jersey) Collection, Jersey Heritage, Jersey Archive, St Helier, Jersey. All emphasis is true to the original text.

Chapter 2

Resistance

“We found that quite a lot of people were willing to help in all sorts of ways without asking questions.”— Norman Le Brocq¹

The surrender of arms was not enough; Nazi Germany also required populations to surrender their books. The Channel Islands were no different, and German soldiers followed their orders, confiscating materials from librarians and booksellers. One day during the Occupation, an armed group of Germans entered Guernsey’s Priaulx Library. Feigning eager compliance, the librarian promptly presented two H.G. Wells novels and his apologies that he had nothing else to give. He offered a set of Heine’s works, suggesting he should be among the confiscated. Apparently ignorant of the Jewish German poet, the officer rejected the offer and the group departed. The librarian, who was saved the easy task of replacing his Heine collection and would only need two shillings to restock the Wells novels, set to work. For the following hour, he hid all of his forbidden books.²

The actions of the librarian display the minute ways in which Islanders demonstrated significant resistance. Without the means to substantially injure the German war effort, resistance proved more dangerous to the actor in potential punishments than effective in harming the Germans. Islanders found themselves relying on acts of resistance that were often of a smaller scale but intended to maintain their patriotic spirit in the long five years of Occupation. Historians have been keen to label this resistance in various ways, referring to them as “subtle” or “passive.” However, those terms draw comparisons, implying that the resistance was not overt or active. If the entirety of their resistance was subtle, but they still committed outright acts of

¹ “Transcript of a speech given by Norman Le Brocq,” 4 April 1988, L/D/25/A/41, Channel Islands Occupation Society (Jersey) Collection, Jersey Heritage, Jersey Archive, St Helier, Jersey.

² Durand, *Guernsey Under German Rule*, 259.

sabotage, then their actions appear subtle compared to French Resistance or that of other occupied nations. Instead, the firm to soft scaling of resistance that ranges from the firmly well intentioned and effective methods to those more akin to coexistence captures the totality of Islander specific resistance.

...

Introducing the compilation of articles in *Resistance in Western Europe* (2000), Bob Moore addresses the complicated nature of defining resistance. He states, “it is important to recognize that the nature of what has been interpreted as ‘resistance’ and the motivations of those involved are many and various and do not tolerate rigid categorization, either in relation to Germany itself or for any of the occupied countries.”³ He accurately expressed the challenges of studying resistance, stating, “In spite of all the published research on the topic, creating typologies of resistance has remained problematic.”⁴ Moore places the burden of the problem on the historians contributing to his book to redraw the frameworks and remold the levels of resistance to their nation of study.⁵ While each author in the collection (including Willmot in her chapter on the Channel Islands) redefines what constitutes resistance for their specific location, they maintain a stage-by-stage developmental model that attempts to neatly categorize resistance.

Alternatively, employing a spectrum model allows these grey areas to remain part of the model rather than a hindrance or caveat to a definition of resistance. Moreover, the spectrum model does not discredit a developmental theory, as the same actions that develop overtime could fall along the spectrum. Essentially, the actions that progressed toward one end of the spectrum would follow the same order as actions listed chronologically. However, the spectrum

³ Bob Moore, “Introduction: Defining Resistance.” In *Resistance in Western Europe*, edited by Bob Moore, 1-26. (Oxford: Berg, 2000), 1.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 2

⁵ *Ibid.*, 3

is more encompassing of smaller actions, like those necessary to resistance in the Channel. These resistance actions are otherwise discredited in the typical stage-by-stage model where more significant delineations between subcategories of resistance are established instead of accepting a blurrier picture; or, historians have broadened the type of actions that fit each subcategory to stretch and maintain the model. The Channel Islands provide a case study in which this scaling of resistance best services the nature and development of resistance in their unique occupation.⁶

Madeline Bunting, a great critic of the Islands' lack of resistance, assesses aspects of their resistance history in *The Model Occupation* (1995). She addresses Islander defensiveness toward accusations of low resistance, noting the methods of their defenses, which included "facts such as the high ratio of Germans to islanders, the lack of escape routes and the strategic irrelevance of the islands."⁷ Islanders also pointed out that such actions would not aid the war effort but instead "would have provoked terrible retaliation on the part of the Germans," leading them to ultimately ask, "what would have been the point?"⁸ If Bunting's analysis of their attitudes stands both correct and representative, then historians must confront the Islanders' own confession that a resistance *movement* was indeed minimal. However, such acceptance does not admit that *resistance* itself was uncommon. While continuously referring to the Occupation as an "embarrassment" for the Channel Islands, Bunting admits that the Islands stayed in early phases of resistance because they found themselves in a different context than other wartime locations. In her chapter on resistance, pessimistically entitled "Resistance? What resistance?" she acknowledges resistance stories of several women, a handful of communists, and a couple locals,

⁶ In Henri Michel's *The Shadow War; Resistance in Europe 1939-45* (1972), he addresses the Channel Islands in his introduction saying, "we shall obviously not deal with the ['British resistance']—the Channel Islands were the only parts of Great Britain to be occupied." This dismissal captures the unique nature of the Islands, as the British crown had not capitulated. This unusual circumstance does not deny the possibility of resistance but instead provides a more complicated lens from which to view their decision-making.

⁷ Bunting, *The Model Occupation*, 191-192.

⁸ Bunting, *The Model Occupation*, 191-192.

as well as reasons for their neglect.⁹ She points to a few identifiable individuals who spearheaded obvious resistance efforts, overlooking those resisting in less celebrated ways.

On the other hand, Jorgensen-Earp (2013) attempts to broaden the definition of resistance to capture attitude and feeling expressed in more subtle methods of resistance in *Discourse and Defiance Under Nazi Occupation*.¹⁰ Appreciating the gossip and rumor present on the Islands throughout the Occupation, Jorgensen-Earp emphasizes the value of “rhetorical resistance.” With this mindset, the resistance, although largely nonviolent, involved a “battle for psychological control.”¹¹ Jorgensen-Earp bases her arguments on the use of discourse, symbols, and sharing of information through different mediums to emphasize that resistance can be more than violence. These methods of communication, such as gossip, propaganda, and code talking, transferred information and empowered a population against the occupying force. She establishes that a subtle resistance is an existent one, and on a smaller-scale occupation, an effective one.

While critics cite a lack of recognized resistance actions like sabotage, and supporters highlight underappreciated behaviors like gossip, the spectrum model allows both sides balanced consideration. To compare these actions, resistance, like collaboration, can be analyzed through the lenses of effect and intention. Those actions furthest right on the spectrum, “firm” resistance, hold merits as acts of resistance that are solidified in other historical narratives because of their more extreme effects (See *Figure 1*). The actions themselves draw few questions as to whether they constitute resistance by their nature but, instead, inquiries about their lack of frequency. As one’s location on the scale moves inward toward the center of the spectrum, methods of resistance become “softer” actions, like gossip and rumor. These actions are not inherently

⁹ Bunting, *The Model Occupation*, 191-192.

¹⁰ Jorgensen-Earp, *Discourse and Defiance Under Nazi Occupation*.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 16.

rebellious actions, but the situation of the Channel Islands allows for historians to view them as such due to the intention of the historical actor and the context of the Occupation history.

Historians will often consider the gravity of resistance measures by the potential outcome to the culprit if the enemy caught them. Would they be sentenced, shot, or deported? While thought provoking, this line of questioning proves insufficient because it fails to capture the nuances experienced within German-occupied Europe, particularly on the Channel Islands. Islanders' actions that were met with relatively small punishments instead ended in dire retaliation during parallel occupations, with such outcomes as execution or imprisonment at concentration camps. Nevertheless, the Islanders could still see their own punishments as harsh, unaware of the malicious consequences they largely avoided. Threats that included decreased stipends, imprisonment, deportation, or execution forced acknowledgement of the German presence and power over the Islanders regardless of the frequency of their enactment. Although they may neither have witnessed regular executions nor committed frequent large-scale sabotage, one struggles to maintain that no "real" resistance occurred when the Guernsey Prison, built to hold thirty-eight prisoners, stayed near capacity "and offenders sometimes had to wait several months before their sentence."¹² In this way German punishment as a measure for the effects of resistant actions, though a useful thought-experiment, does not wholly capture the variety of levels of resistance on the Islands.

Moreover, some of the resistance actions widely acclaimed by Islanders today appear so subtle that their intentionality must be questioned. If one stole food to supplement their unsatisfactory rations, were they outright defying the Germans, or were they simply hungry? Individuals drove their cars into their barns and touselled mounds of hay over them to avoid vehicle commandeering. Were they making a point to keep their belongings out of the hands of

¹² Guernsey Occupation Museum.

the German, or did they simply want to retain their property for themselves? The prior justification aligns more with resistance than the latter. Similarly, the gossip of Jorgensen-Earp's rhetorical resistance evolved out of the Island culture rather than intentionally undermining German orders, programs, and status. However, it nevertheless succeeded in undermining them. Some of these methods upheld as resistance never confronted the enemy directly but instead motivated the public interest and patriotism. While exploring intentionality and effect are both important by their own merits, analyzing them together helps inform historians of the type of resistance that occurred on the Channel Islands.

The "V" for Victory symbolism found on the Islands exemplifies the intersection of intentionality and effect, particularly in the V's appearance as a lapel pin. Islanders wore these hand-shaped metal pins not on their lapels, as expected of such an accessory, but under them. In doing so, Islanders quietly maintained and demonstrated their patriotism. By wearing their pins, they purposefully demonstrated resistance to each other and themselves. Concurrently, they actively hid this demonstration from the enemy, intentionally preventing their oppressor from acknowledging the resistance and, in turn, retaliating against it. In this way, the Islanders' intentional action of resistance was designed specifically not to have a direct effect on those whom they resisted. Consequently, the value of resistance is dichotomized as either valuable for whom it protects or whom it defies. The "V" pins protect the spirit of the Islanders, but they disregard prevention or counter measures to German rule.¹³

In dealing with the balance of effect and intentionality, the spectrum model provides a clearer image when we consider the middle ground of coexistence. Those actions done to provide a patriotic spirit without outright actions against the Germans rest closer in concept to

¹³ For more information, see Gillian Carr's "The Archaeology of Occupation and the V-sign Campaign in the Occupied British Channel Islands" (2010) and Carr, Sanders, and Willmot's *Protest, Defiance, and Resistance in the Channel Islands* (2015).

coexistence than the far end of firm resistance. Whether Islanders' actions reminded them of normalcy, boosted their own morale, or directly combated the Germans, the intention of any one of these is positive toward resistance. However, a wide range of actions bridged the gap between coexistence and outright resistance of the German military presence. In this way, the scaling of resistance along the spectrum is more determined by effect and complemented by intention than its counterpart collaborative actions.

Understanding Firmer Resistance

Under floorboards, in basements, attics, and false-backed armoires, Jews, Dutch, and other persons sought by the Nazi regime hid during the Holocaust. The action of hiding a wanted person, whether in occupied Europe or other historical settings, stands among the most obvious and indisputable forms of resistance, introduced to many in elementary education in reading the *Diary of Anne Frank*. Organization Todt, also known as Todt or OT, was the compulsory labor system responsible for the German war construction and notoriously known for forced labor. In the small cottage homes of native Channel Islanders, escaped Todt workers would be kept in silence, living off a share of the household's meager rations.

Some Islanders took sympathy on these slave laborers, whose treatment constituted the extent of Islander understanding of Nazi terror.¹⁴ Unlike other camps on the Continent, Todt workers on the Islands generally did not live under absolute confinement. Unless they were caught or failed to return to their camp by the start of work the next morning, many would—without punishment—escape in the night to comb through gardens and brush for any potatoes,

¹⁴ Islanders' interactions and understanding of Nazi violence will be addressed further in Chapter 3.

pets, or other potential food source within reach.¹⁵ While some Islanders were deported for religion or race (in this case, as part of the British “race”), Islanders did not know the fate that awaited some of these deported in French or German prisons, or worse at, Biberach, Laufen, Ravensbrück, or other concentration camps.¹⁶ Islanders feared punishment but with only a limited understanding of what it entailed and its extent outside of their islands. However, Islanders did watch the Spanish, Soviet, Ukrainian, and other workers march to their posts, fall under beatings, and starve for scraps of food. In turn, many acted against it.

One such brave individual, Dr. Mackinstry, secured safety for Soviet Todt runaways through the use of his ambulance. He even provided for one worker in his own home “[nursing] him back to reasonable health”¹⁷ Although many acts of sheltering or aiding Todt workers were spontaneous moments of kindness or sympathy, the risk was notably great. German authorities published statements asking for their [turnover], and other Islanders’ fates demonstrated the risk of not cooperating. Islanders like Mrs. Louisa Gould would be deported for their kindness in sheltering workers. Gould died at Ravensbruck, women’s concentration camps in 1945.

The hiding of OT workers saved lives and protected individuals, while also being met with severe punishments; meanwhile, acts of sabotage happened on the Islands but with a size scaled down proportionately. While the intention of sabotage undoubtedly falls under the heading of resistance, the context of the Islands made the actions less effective than sabotage that occurred elsewhere. One act of sabotage reported to the Bailiff involved “strewing sand in the

¹⁵ Missing household pets would be attributed to starved individuals taking them for food. Wild dogs and cats also taken for food were likely pets of escapees or deportees that were set loose rather than put down.

¹⁶ The Islanders’ level of awareness regarding religion-based deportations is unclear at this point. In my interviews, an uncomfortable atmosphere emerged around the idea, and one interviewee claimed to be aware that Jews were specifically deported. However, this discomfort and knowledge could be attributed to modern knowledge of the Holocaust and individuals who experienced it. During the Occupation, at least one woman made a point to not register herself as a Jew and survived the war, but the available source material does not express why she made this choice; Islanders were sent to serve their sentences in French and German prisons, and while some were taken from the prisoners and forced into the camps, other individuals did return after serving their time.

¹⁷ “Transcript of a speech given by Norman Le Brocq,” L/D/25/A/41, Jersey Archive.

engine of a lorry belonging to the forces.”¹⁸ The action, which the Germans determined had been completed by or under instruction of a specialist, could have been blamed entirely on the Cleveland Garage who left the vehicle unwatched on the street after alterations. However, the garage was only instructed to repair the car without compensation for failing to “exercise due care.”¹⁹ Similarly, the act of cutting two telephone wires on Jersey, an “unquestionable one of Sabotage” according to the German Notice, was punished without a culprit by ordering the civil population to guard the cable.²⁰ When no one came forward to claim the crime, sixty men selected from five local parishes spent twelve hours each night on watch, in silence, without cigarettes, and under police surveillance. Although the Islanders believed this punishment was in conflict with International Law that bans collective punishment for individual actions, they acknowledged the “ridiculous nature” of the punishment and its intention to humiliate the population into compliance “like making a naughty child stand in a [corner] of a room.”²¹ Despite any annoyance or humiliation felt by the Islanders, these acts of sabotage met with little punishment in comparison to the Nazi terror regime on the Continent. The Germans were acting more unreasonably than they were behaving cruelly. The acts themselves, though, were of a much smaller nature than many seen elsewhere and did not have equal effect on the war.

Sabotage in many ways was limited to the physical targets available for attack; however, resistance does not have to take a physical nature. Beyond hiding people or breaking cars, simply speaking tirelessly against the enemy equally asserted opposition. Peaceful resistance, like that on Guernsey by Salvation Army protester Major Marie Ozanne could equally irritate and disrupt

¹⁸ “Sabotage to a German lorry,” 26 July 1941 to 28 July 1941, B/A/W50/25, Bailiff’s Chambers: Occupation Files, Jersey Heritage, Jersey Archive, St Helier, Jersey.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Durand, *Guernsey Under German Rule*, 120; The Germans frequently enacted general punishments, such as the band on radios, for actions that could not be assigned to specific perpetrators or were too frequent to do so.

the Germans as evidenced by her time imprisoned. Ozanne protested the ban on Salvation Army uniforms and meetings by standing in silence outside the closed doors of their meeting building and carrying her Salvation Army bonnet in her hand around town. After she appeared in her full Salvation Army uniform and badges, her uniform and other Salvation Army symbols were confiscated.²² She then began writing letters. Ozanne attempted to meet with the German Commandant and wrote him multiple times in protest of the ban on uniforms and group meetings that disrupted “God’s work.”²³ In these letters she stated directly, “I cannot comply with your orders, because if I did so I would lose a good conscience, and I would rather die than do that.”²⁴ The series of letters continued, opposing the persecution of the Jews and calling for reform in the treatment of forced laborers. She invited punishment, even that of execution, upon herself for the acts of resistance by other Islanders as “opportunities to serve humanity” and “a way for [her] to serve [her] fellowmen.”²⁵ She plainly informed the Commandant of her plans to reopen the Salvation Army Hall, even providing the time and address. She wrote, “I rebel against the regime of hatred and oppression that you are introducing everywhere you go,” while also offering her prayers for the salvation of the Germans’ souls.²⁶ When arrested, Ozanne’s sanity was tested, and the Germans pronounced her “fully responsible” but “a ‘religious maniac’ seeking martyrdom.”²⁷ During her time in prison, she both fell ill with appendicitis and was declared delusional.²⁸ From Jorgensen-Earp’s perspective, the Germans wanted to avoid the hassle of her care and the potential of a Christian martyr, though it is unclear if the label of mental illness was the only way

²² Jorgensen-Earp, *Discourse and Defiance Under Nazi Occupation*, 190

²³ “Copies of Marie Ozanne’s Letter to the German Commandant,” Priaulx Library. St Peter Port, Guernsey.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid

²⁶ Ibid

²⁷ Jorgensen -Earp, *Discourse and Defiance Under Nazi Occupation*, 190

²⁸ Ibid., 190; “Island Archives Acquires the Occupation Diaries of Major Marie Ozanne,” GOV.GG, September 26, 2017, <https://www.gov.gg/article/162021/Island-Archives-Acquires-the-Occupation-Diaries-of-Major-Marie-Ozanne>.

the Germans could rationalize her efforts or a method of subduing her resistance.²⁹ Ozanne succumbed to sickness in 1943, denied the chance to die in place of her countrymen but nevertheless a martyr for Guernsey's resistance efforts.³⁰ Though only one woman, Ozanne continues to hold a special role in the narrative of island resistance, which was dominated by individual action; nevertheless, organized resistance, though comparatively minimal, did occur and demonstrated various levels of resistance and participation.

The Jersey Communist Party's actions exemplified the variety of firm resistance methods as well as how these larger actions depended on softer forms of resistance by others. As a small gathering of individuals met in secret in Norman Le Brocq's aunt's front room and discussed life after Britain won the war, the Jersey Democratic Movement formed. Over time, though, there were those who grew bored of mere talk at these illegal meetings (meetings of over three people were banned) and developed a need to act. With the simple desire "to start doing something now," a group of young men unsatisfied with the current state of island affairs "formed, of course, a very illegal body," the self-named Jersey Communist Party. Growing from seven at its conception to about eighteen people by Liberation, the party consisted of young adults who felt "the urge to do something about the Nazi presence on the Island." Le Brocq acknowledged their early ineffectiveness, as they sketched German military installations around the island "with the sort of vague idea that if British troops ever landed we would give them all sorts of military information." He admits the notion was "a very romantic idea" and not "very practical in actual

²⁹ Jorgensen -Earp, *Discourse and Defiance Under Nazi Occupation*, 190

³⁰ "Copies of Marie Ozanne's Letter to the German Commandant," Priaulx Library. St Peter Port, Guernsey; "Occupation Diaries of Marie Ozanne" 1942-1943. AQ 1139/21-22. *Occupation & Evacuation Diaries*. State of Guernsey Island Archive, St Peter Port, Guernsey.

fact.” Acknowledging, “Open, armed resistance was obviously not on,” this humble, naïve group started their first consequential actions by organizing aid for escaped Ukrainian slave workers.³¹

Accomplishing their goals of “an aid organization” required many more beyond the eighteen in their party, and they grew a network of need-to-know individuals who aided their efforts without pause. Not only did “a lot of local people, very heroically, [shelter] such escapees,” but also others helped feed them, provide them with documentation, and protect the locals sheltered them. In some cases, these actions extended beyond the escapee’s survival. Mrs. Metcalf offered English lessons, and escapee Mikhail Khrokin “was taught sufficient English to wander around” and act as the “distribution messenger” for the organizations’ activities. Nevertheless, the communist party’s actions went beyond hiding prisoners who had escaped and extended to the distribution of information to those still interned.³²

LeBroq and his coconspirators printed illegal leaflets for the Jersey Democratic Movement, as well as their own leaflets, copies of BBC news, and other materials “to keep up morale in the camps.” They managed to smuggle these illegal leaflets into all eleven camps on the island. Ironically, their paper supply came not only from the Jersey State department, but some originated from the Organisation Todt. From a contact in town hall who could provide blank identity cards and another in the official photographer’s office who could take legitimate ID photographs, they “managed to get for people like Khrokin not fake identity cards, but perfectly genuine identity cards, with perfectly genuine photos of them stapled on the identity cards, and with the town hall stamp across the photograph.” Ultimately, these measures relied on more than LeBroq and his immediate organizational team, as he upheld the actions of his fellow citizens saying, “It wasn’t just our little group of a dozen people who were involved in this. We

³¹ “Transcript of a speech given by Norman Le Brocq,” L/D/25/A/41, Jersey Archive.

³² “Transcript of a speech given by Norman Le Brocq,” L/D/25/A/41, Jersey Archive.

had all sorts of contacts with all sorts of people who were willing to help.” Their aid extended even beyond the island population and into the prison and military populations, as well.³³

The ability of Islanders to form resistance not only among themselves but also with new populations on the Islands demonstrates the extent to which they were willing to risk their safety in order to rebel against their enemy. Working alongside communist Spaniard laborers, who moved in and out of the camps to work at an OT hospital during a typhus outbreak, the Jersey Communist Party gained access necessary to infiltrate the camps with their leaflets. Additionally, Paul Muhlback stands as one of the most prominent figures in the party’s history. An industrial chemist whose father was killed in Dachau after Hitler invaded the Rhineland, Muhlback had “no love for the Nazis.” He spoke out against the Nazi party at the beginning of the war, and he was interned as a prisoner. However, Germany pulled prisoners from their camps to fight on the Eastern front against the Soviets. Afflicted with frostbite, wounds, and a limp after the advance on Kiev, he was relocated to the Channel Islands in a noncombatant role in the German forces where he “was always talking against Hitler and seemed to be trying to question people as to their attitudes.”³⁴ In a farewell letter to the party at the end of the Occupation, he wrote, “I have tried consistently to make contact with the civil population, in order to carry on underground activity against the Nazis, as I had already done in France with the support of the ‘Marquis.’”³⁵ In 1944, Muhlback claimed to be “part of a Soldiers Committee working for a mutiny against the garrison,” and Le Brocq and party leadership hesitantly agreed to meet with him.

³³ “Transcript of a speech given by Norman Le Brocq,” L/D/25/A/41, Jersey Archive.

³⁴ “Transcript of a speech given by Norman Le Brocq,” L/D/25/A/41, Jersey Archive.

³⁵ “Original copies of notices released by various movements,” L/D/25/A/10, Jersey Archive.

Muhlback indeed stirred mutinous feelings among the soldiers, as well as aided Islanders in anti-German resistance efforts.³⁶ With knowledge of eleven languages, in five of which he was fluent, he assisted in the translation of leaflets for distribution to different ethnic groups in the various camps. The leaflets he intended for the German forces to read “caused a mutiny of the garrison and contained up-to-date news of ...debacle that was going on for the Nazi armed forces” toward the end of the war. In February 1945, these letters urged his fellow German soldiers, “The war is lost, we can do nothing here to avert the total disaster” but instead suggested, “we shall show that not all Germans are blind to their destiny.” He concluded his rallying call in a simple and powerful manner: “Death of all Nazis; Long live a free Germany!”³⁷ In his farewell letter, he summed up their actions simply saying, “There is no need to say much about our work, except that it was through our efforts that the fighting spirit of the German soldiers here was destroyed months ago” and proudly asserted their “example of International Solidarity.” In repayment of his anti-Nazi efforts, the Jersey Communist Party helped him desert, set him up with a bicycle, a cottage in his name, alterations to his physical appearance, and a cover identity (where he took on the role of an Irishman who had lived in Brazil to cover up his odd English accent). Moreover, they completed all these provisions in a timely manner, so he could escape from the German camps with an act of sabotage as his final farewell. In his escape, he arranged to set off an explosion at the Grosse Lager, the work area where he was stationed. The plan involved exploding his own hut as he ran, but “Unfortunately the fellow soldiers who brought the explosives also brought Czech detonators and Paul said to [Le Brocq] afterwards, ‘We knew the bloody Czech detonators were sabotaged but we had no others.’” Despite only

³⁶ Muhlback and his group of mutinous Germans was responsible for a bombing of the Palace Hotel, a major German headquarters, which was one of the largest acts of sabotage. Norman Le Brocq, Interviewed by Conrad Wood. Imperial War Museum. 1987. Audio.

³⁷ “Original copies of notices released by various movements,” L/D/25/A/10, Jersey Archive.

igniting “a few small fires” that night, he spent the remainder of the Occupation free on the Island working with the party. Liberation day came before a mutiny they planned could be enacted.³⁸ Thus, the risk willingly accepted by the Jersey Communist Party to confront a German soldier about the possibility of resistance sparked a force of organized resistance and rebellion among Islanders, forced laborers, and the German forces.

While the party’s actions of harboring runaways and actively spreading patriotic leaflets obviously point to more firm resistance measures, they also demonstrate softer forms of resistance. Their initial meetings broke German protocols and restrictions for the sake of merely discussing a future British victory. Moreover, those extended contacts beyond their immediate party members played vital roles in supporting resistance efforts, whether by sparing a piece of bread for a runaway or stamping an identity card. Sometimes unconventional, less glamorous, or less risky, this nevertheless was resistance.

Softer Resistance and Scaling Intention

As the spectrum progresses inward toward coexistence, convoluted forms of resistance emerge. These actions, like stealing food, complicate views of resistance since their intentions are harder to determine. Theft, particularly of foodstuffs, occurred throughout the occupation, and a variety of people, including Island police officers, Todt Workers, and Germans were guilty of the act depending on the point in time during the Occupation. Because of the multiple characters involved in this behavior, these practices were likely driven from necessity rather than resistance to the governing powers. The self-preservation intentions soften the resistance.

The “asbestos” sabotage, as named in the German Occupation Museum, demonstrated the confusion between resistance with the intention to hurt the German war effort and resistance out

³⁸ “Transcript of a speech given by Norman Le Brocq,” L/D/25/A/41, Jersey Archive.

of necessity. When in 1942 French milling machinery imported by the Germans to aid in flour production failed to start “due to a deliberate fault in the mounting of the electrical starter,” a French electrical engineer, Mr. Lambert, was promised a sack of flour to repair the equipment. Rigging the machine with a piece of asbestos to break every couple months, “This presented a wonderful opportunity to get flour off of the Germans.”³⁹ In this way, sabotage prevented German production and used up their supply, while it also provided a local with food. The reward of receiving flour effectively undermined the German authority and its strict allocation of resources, and this intention resonates with firm collaboration. Nevertheless, the action softens so long as his intention was to supplement his rations more than to undercut German authority.

A similarly complicated intention for resistance was that behind suicide. Following the order for deportation of British-born Islanders, “Rather than obey [the deportation orders] a husband and wife carried out a suicide pact, and a man killed himself rather than subject his wife— who if he died would escape deportation— to the hardship that he feared for her.” While in one sense, this seems like an ultimate form of resistance, as they would rather give their lives than obey the orders, it also melds into self-protection similar to food preventing hunger.

Softer resistance is likewise evident in daily occurrences like one’s employment. Some laborers, for example, refused German employment on the grounds of holding the Germans accountable to internationally recognized standards. In asserting their internationally recognized legal rights and refusing the employment the Germans offered them, they put their patriotism above their paycheck and themselves at risk of imprisonment. On the wall of the Department of Labor hung a sign reinforcing this fact for the entirety of the Occupation, reading, “In accordance with the Hague Convention It is not permitted to compel the civil population in an

³⁹ According to the information at the Guernsey Occupation Museum, Mr. Lambert “was the French consular agent in Guernsey. In addition to the ‘asbestos’ sabotage Mr. Lambert hid a French boy and used a transmitter while cycling around Guernsey. He was never caught.”

occupied territory to work on military objects especially if these are against their own country. The enrolment of Civilians for these purposes must be entirely voluntary.”⁴⁰ Indeed, these words turned to action as recorded in the diary of the head of the Department of Labor, Edward Le Quesne who wrote, “Of the 1,300 men working in our stores only eight volunteered to leave us for the Germans, despite the bribe of double pay and double rations. The very next day the eight volunteers were back with us. College House is very angry at the whole incident. They say I am sabotaging their peaceful work schemes and that I can expect reprisals.”⁴¹ Thus, the Germans themselves defined sabotage to include not only outright destruction of property but even more subdued actions that inhibited the progress and power of the occupying forces. If the Germans saw these actions as sabotage, historians cannot discredit or underestimate their implications but only scale them against other resistance efforts.

The distribution of leaflets entitled “Bulletin of the British Patriots” similarly cited their rights under the Hague Convention in order to maintain their property. In a humble admission to the status of Island affairs, the first bulletin, written in 1942, stated that throughout the occupation, the people on Jersey “have done all in our power to maintain peaceful relations with the enemy” without performing “one single hostile act of the population... We have, in fact, carried pacification to the point of seriously compromising our honour.”⁴² However, it turned to then assert the refusal “to comply with the confiscation” of bicycles, wireless sets, or other personal property as protected by Hague.⁴³ The pamphlet continues to caution “be careful to give the German authorities no cause for offence in your dealing with them; under all circumstances,

⁴⁰ “Copies of the Jersey Evening Post series of article relating to the Occupation memoirs of Edward Le Quesne,” 1 November 1982 to 5 November 1982, L/C/239/C/6, Burges Family Collection, Jersey Heritage, Jersey Archive, St Helier, Jersey.

⁴¹ College House was the commandeered residence of the leading German official and therefore became a central place of German authorities’ operations and planning; “Occupation Diary of Deputy Edward Le Quesne,” L/C/205/A1/3, 1942, Jersey Archive.

⁴² “Original copies of notices released by various movements,” L/D/25/A/10, Jersey Archive.

⁴³ “Original copies of notices released by various movements,” L/D/25/A/10, Jersey Archive.

be coldly polite, be tactful and discreet. Thus you will give them no justification to take reprisals against you or the remainder of the population.”⁴⁴ The back-and-forth nature of the letter appeals to the fighting spirit beneath their fear or attempts at normalcy; it attempts to compromise between personal protection and patriotism. Once they requisition their radios, the Germans shift the balance of their coexistence, and the Islanders make a parallel shift toward resisting these changes to their daily lives.

When the Germans banned radios, resistance evolved into the use of crystal sets. In order to maintain a relationship with Britain and stay up-to-date with the war, Islanders made crystal radios from common materials in order to tap into radio broadcasts. Threatened punishments for such sets were severe, and neighbors informed on fellow neighbors for this frequent act of patriotism. In reality, punishments varied immensely. While an arrest record for listening to a crystal set prioritized some Islanders in the British-born deportation, others had far different experiences. One family, who was listening to the radio when an unexpected German visit occurred, threw the crystal set into the evening’s soup. The Germans made their examination of the house and left. Shortly after, one of the soldiers happened across a member of the family on the street and knowingly remarked on the family’s “lumpy soup.” Their resistance actions were motivated out of patriotism to Britain, and the initial act of hiding the set evidences their fear. These moments of German kindness, sympathy, or leniency complicated choices of resistance and collaboration and how history interprets them today.

News of resistance efforts spread mostly from German retaliation and notices or small-town chatter rather than the press. German censors checked every issue, but they were met with resistance from editor Frank Falla and the local presses. Falla and others undertook pointed movements to develop underground sources of news, such as the Guernsey Underground News

⁴⁴ “Original copies of notices released by various movements,” L/D/25/A/10, Jersey Archive.

Service (G.U.N.S.) and the Guernsey Active Secret Press (G.A.S.P.), that would print and distribute war updates received over the BBC.⁴⁵ Islanders would distribute copies, as occurred with the Jersey Community Party, and keep them in stores where informed Islanders could ask for them with a code word. However, intention likewise softens the underground news since some of the appeal was caused “because forbidden fruit is sweet.”⁴⁶ At the time that their new sources were restored, some Islanders felt as though “a certain spice had gone out of life when we no longer had to get news by stealth and could discuss it without furtively looking sideways for possible eavesdroppers. Life became more placid—but much less exciting.”⁴⁷ In this way, this softer form of resistance intended to support the Crown and Allied war effort, but at other times filled a need for entertainment.

The official presses faced their own complication with resistance. Guernsey editor Frank Falla would purposefully arrange his newspapers the same way to help notify readers which articles were German propaganda. As the Germans used the beginning of the paper for their press, many Islanders would skip to the middle. Here, Falla would always add any overflow from the German articles to the fifth column, so readers could easily recognize German propaganda.⁴⁸ Moreover, editors would leave English grammar errors made by German translators.⁴⁹ These language mistakes made obvious which articles were German written and which were Islander.

From the beginning of the Occupation, the news served as a vital function during the war. During the evacuation, journalists were among those listed by the State as necessary positions that were required to stay on the island. While these papers still printed and published German

⁴⁵ Frank Falla, *The Silent War*; L.E. Bertrand, “Guernsey Active Secret Press,” Prialx Library. St Peter Port, Guernsey.

⁴⁶ Durand, *Guernsey under German Occupation*, 107.

⁴⁷ Durand, *Guernsey under German Occupation*, 107.

⁴⁸ Falla, *The Silent War*, 30-31.

⁴⁹ The Jersey War Tunnels.

news, they undertook specific efforts to minimize the extent of German propaganda in stories of interest. They peacefully resisted by attempting to negotiate German censorship, although not always successfully. Falla was often forced to fold his position, but he maintained that the population was better off with locals fighting the censor rather than relinquishing the power of the press to the German authorities entirely.⁵⁰ Having to abide by German censorship, their role of spreading propaganda could be seen in one way as collaboration as discussed in Chapter 1; however, to entirely embrace this categorization fundamentally overlooks the fight they constantly made with the censor. Actions like these taken by the newspapers provide further evidence of softer resistance by completing day-to-day activities with an underlying patriotism and a thorny attitude toward the German occupiers.⁵¹

As the very appearance of the daily news carried hidden resistance, painted and pinned visual aids also illustrated signs of resistance, in a similar manner of patriotic encouragement rather than German confrontation, the “V” for Victory insignia made its way across the Islands in “the Battle of the Vs.”⁵² Beginning in Occupied France as “Victoire” the symbol travelled to the Islands by French crews delivering supplies from Granville and from British overseas radio reports.⁵³ Beyond the Islanders’ hidden lapel pins, a painted “V” appeared on doorframes, sides of buildings, and the design of gardens. Islanders frequently opened doors and windows to play Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony where Fate’s knocking on the door is symbolized by three short notes and a long note, Morse Code for the letter “V.” They would knock on doors with three

⁵⁰ Falla *The Silent War*, 21.

⁵¹ Conversely, sometimes what Islanders failed to report provided resistance. While people informed on their neighbors for hiding Todt workers or listening to crystal sets, Post Office sorters began to steam open letters intended for the Commandant. Delaying the letter’s arrival for twenty-four hours, they often warned the informant’s victim who then had time to prepare for investigations. Many of these letters never made it to the Germans at all.

⁵² Durand, *Guernsey Under German Rule*, 123.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 123

light taps and one heavy one, and they would clean out their pipes, tapping them against their boots with the same pattern. In spite of German orders against them, rewards for information on



Figure 3 Victory badges (left) and other various “V” insignia appeared around the Islands. The pins were typically worn under lapels. Germans reclaimed the iconography by adding the laurel embellishment. (German Occupation Museum)

perpetrators, and the threat of deportations, the “V” continued to appear. While “it would probably have died a natural death as soon as the novelty wore off,” the German reactions stirred recurrent action instead.⁵⁴ It was “a battle waged by [Islanders] with lighthearted futility and by the Germans with the ponderous strength of a blacksmith swatting flies with a sledge-hammer.”⁵⁵ Germans eventually opted to reclaim this resistance by adding a laurel under the “V” to imply a German victory.⁵⁶ The Germans staged a more elaborate appropriation by dressing German soldiers in tunics with a “V” embroidered on the left sleeve and issuing detailed propaganda. These reports suggested the letter was worn on brooches in Holland, inspired the renaming of Prague’s main roadway from “Vokstrasse” to “Viktoria Street,” embossed on small tokens dropped over Poland, and found on the Eiffel Tower in Paris.⁵⁷ The German reaction initially instigated further use of the “V” symbolism; however it eventually caused it to subside in

⁵⁴ Ibid., 123.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 123.

⁵⁶ German Occupation Museum.

⁵⁷ Durand, *Guernsey Under German Rule*, 128.

frequency since “there is little satisfaction to be gained by hitting a giant who shows no signs of consciousness that he has been hit.”⁵⁸ The V-campaign effectively reallocated German time and attention to a major propaganda stunt, which, for a time, motivated Islanders by its petty attacks and ridiculous nature. While many perpetrators of the “V” were never caught, a range of punishments was enacted, including six months or a year imprisonment in Germany.⁵⁹

Coexistence Turned Resistance

While some actions had inherent resistance qualities, female relationships, local governments, and daily conversations took on resistive functions from their context when they otherwise would have been everyday occurrences. As discussed in Chapter 1, women have been harshly judged for relationships with Germans throughout the Occupation, and some of these “jerry bags” indeed profited off the war. However, some women, often still criticized for their actions, took advantage of their enamored German suitors in order to provide for their families. They brought home to their hungry siblings the rest of the bread from the dinner their sweetheart presented them. Providing for their starving families while potato peelings ran low, rations ran out, or the men responsible for family oversight were away fighting the war, these women exploited relationships with Germans for survival. The judgment of their neighbors, the potential of becoming pregnant, and the risk of falling in love came second.⁶⁰

Besides women, history has most harshly accused the Island governments of collaboration, but their actions frequently allowed for resistance. Similar to the press’s fight against the censor, the Island governments would counter some German directives in order to protect their population. In early 1942 this rebellion annoyed the Germans on Jersey, and they

⁵⁸ Durand, *Guernsey Under German Rule*, 129.

⁵⁹ German Occupation Museum.

⁶⁰ See “Interpretation of Women’s Conduct” from “Women and Resistance” Louise Willmot in *Protest, Defiance, and Resistance in the Channel Islands: German Occupation, 1940-45* (2015).

began to disfavor the Island authority. When in one particular meeting between governing powers the German leadership tried to establish their authority as the government of the island rather than the island's Superior Council, "Without another word, the Bailiff picked up his hat and left the room."⁶¹ Writing in his diary, Edward Le Quesne, the Head of the Department of Labor, continues, "I did likewise but no sooner had we reached the hallway than an officer ran out and requested us to return. The Kommandant, who appeared to have great difficulty keeping himself under control, brusquely told the Bailiff that the Islanders could have a further four weeks' milk rations before the position was reviewed."⁶² In response the Bailiff replied to the Kommandant that "it was obvious that his demands and the Island's wishes would always remain at variance."⁶³ Their differences were inherent to their role, but the Islanders' ability to enact influence directly challenges the German authority.

Regardless of their disagreements, the Island authorities maintained a degree of autonomy over regular administrative duties, such as Edward Le Quesne in the Department of Labor. In doing so, they could enact small policy changes that slipped past the Germans but improved quality of life for islanders. Such an incident occurred on February 27, 1941 when they not only passed compensation for men who went sick on their jobs at the same rates as those injured at work but "also brought in a scheme for old-age benefits, without legislation and without the knowledge of the Germans who would certainly have squashed it."⁶⁴ In Le Quesne's own words, "It is remarkable that we have made this advance in social understanding in these traumatic times."⁶⁵ By working alongside the Germans, the government was able to maintain

⁶¹ "Copies of the Jersey Evening Post series of article relating to the Occupation memoirs of Edward Le Quesne," L/C/239/C/6, Burges Family Collection, Jersey Archive.

⁶² "Occupation Diary of Deputy Edward Le Quesne," L/C/205/A1/3, 1942, Jersey Archive.

⁶³ "Occupation Diary of Deputy Edward Le Quesne," L/C/205/A1/3, 1942, Jersey Archive.

⁶⁴ "Occupation Diary of Deputy Edward Le Quesne," L/C/205/A1/2, 1941, Jersey Archive.

⁶⁵ "Occupation Diary of Deputy Edward Le Quesne," L/C/205/A1/2, 1941, Jersey Archive.

their administration in ways that opposed the will of the Germans. These intentions to aid the public simultaneously upheld the German authority by working with them but concurrently defies German power.

Among the softest form of resistance, gossip and rumor serve as the starting point of Jorgensen-Earp's expansion of resistance, which builds to also include V-campaigns, wireless radios, underground news, and other forms of resistance. These rhetorical elements find a place on the spectrum by further expanding a rally of British patriotism and anti-Nazi sentiment throughout the Occupation. However, the cultural prevalence of gossip fails to allow for appropriate intentionality to maintain gossip's position as wholly on the side of resistance. Instead, the acts of gossiping moves along the spectrum to and from resistance and collaboration, as Islanders attempted to maintain autonomy and normalcy while coexisting with their enemy. Some informants acting out of petty spite, as seen in Chapter 1, carried the tradition of gossip and rumor to a dangerous extreme. On the other hand, rumor established trust and warned against collaboration. Gossip, Jorgensen-Earp explains, "serves as an efficient weapon for those who have in other ways been disarmed" by teaching acceptable behavior and policing current actions.⁶⁶ Through the use of informants, Germans hoped to benefit from lateral surveillance. Instead, gossip allowed Islanders to reclaim lateral surveillance as a method of self-protection and way to resist German control.⁶⁷

The use of humor was equally resistive. Miss Gaudin ran a bookshop on Guernsey where frequent customers could find forbidden war news. However, the general customer, whether local or German, would be met with her outward cheerfulness and her inner war spirit. One day, a German asked for a guidebook of the island. With a smile, Gaudin "sailed up to him with the

⁶⁶ Jorgensen-Earp, *Discourse and Defiance Under Nazi Occupation*, 108.

⁶⁷ Jorgensen-Earp, *Discourse and Defiance Under Nazi Occupation*, 104-105, 108-109.

book, chirping gaily, ‘Here you are! But you’re the first tourist we’ve had this season. It’s rather a pity because you won’t be able to get any fishing or bathing—the Germans have put a stop to all that!’⁶⁸ The German was left speechless. Humor enabled the continuation of the community spirit at the cost of the Germans and the legitimacy of their Occupation.⁶⁹

If humor is a device to cover up and alter feeling, then even more directly resistive was the coded language employed in Red Cross letters, street conversation, and religious sermons in order to avoid German censorship. “Tommy” was interchanged for the army and “Jack” for the navy.⁷⁰ “Sam” shortened “Uncle Sam” to describe American action and “Joe” replaced “Joseph Stalin” for the Soviet Union.⁷¹ Reverend Ord not only sent cryptic messages to Biberach concentration camp using bible verses, but he also used biblical references to describe war movements during his sermons. On September 18, 1942, Ord combined his preaching on Isaiah with a reference to Napoleon’s 1799 retreat out of Egypt to communicate that Rommel would make Shepherd’s Hotel his headquarters after taking Cairo.⁷² Even these boldest forms of theoretical resistance had a limited but powerful effect by maintaining a patriotic, fighting spirit rather than succumbing to their current situation.

The softest form of resistance was the mere patriotism seen in the population in its own right. While outright resistance actions demonstrate rebellion, a fighting spirit may teeter on the edge of a desire to return to a usual way of life. Island loyalty was directed to the Crown, but now they were “Heil”-ing Churchill. In my first interview with an Islander, I was promptly corrected when I called the Islands “British.” The patriotism of the Islanders for the British war effort must in itself be some form of resistance as they are choosing to align themselves with a

⁶⁸ Jorgensen-Earp, *Discourse and Defiance Under Nazi Occupation*, 167.

⁶⁹ Jorgensen-Earp, *Discourse and Defiance Under Nazi Occupation*, 167.

⁷⁰ Jorgensen-Earp, *Discourse and Defiance Under Nazi Occupation*, 178.

⁷¹ Durand, *Guernsey Under German Rule*, 192.

⁷² Jorgensen-Earp, *Discourse and Defiance Under Nazi Occupation*, 178-179.

country they readily identify themselves against. In their most basic political arrangement, Britain provides their defense and serves as their military. Their brothers, husbands, and children were fighting for Britain and the Allied war effort was their only hope for salvation, but they were also abandoned at the beginning of the war. Their ongoing support not just of the Allied war effort but also of Churchill's speeches, a reliance on British parliament to send aid, and optimistic tone for British superiority in the war shifted their tone and aligned them with Britain in a new way. This subtle shift indicates the absolute individuality of the context of the Islands' Occupation and the need to capture the totality of it. Resistance encompasses everything from violence to loyalty and sabotage to gossip in varying shades of grey.

Chapter 3

A Complicated Coexistence

“At this time—the most difficult time within the memory of every islander—it cannot be too strongly impressed upon all that our watchword should be CARRY ON”¹

As he reviewed the proposal to send food assistance to the Channel Islands, Winston Churchill scribbled in the margins, “Let ‘em starve. No fighting. They can rot at their leisure.”² When he wrote his marginalia on September 2, 1944, the British Prime Minister was surely thinking of the 28,500 German troops occupying the Channel Islands, but the implications for the 62,000 civilian Islanders were undeniable. Churchill would see the Germans starve before their “dear Channel Islands” fed.³

Unwilling to do anything that might help the Germans maintain their position, Churchill was determined not to supply them with resources. If sending aid would allow Germans to assume civilian rations, then Churchill would withhold aid at the expense of the Islanders. However, on November 7, 1944, Churchill changed his mind. In the days after Christmas, the Red Cross ship *SS Vega* cruised into port on the Channel Islands, brining much-needed food supplies from Canada and New Zealand. An eager crowd of Islanders gathered expectantly around the harbor, and they celebrated their salvation. Meanwhile, the green uniforms of the Germans had grown increasingly baggy in fit, hinting at their malnutrition. Just like the watchful Islanders, these Germans were starving. But they were the enemy. They were demons. They

¹ “De Putron scrapbook of press cuttings and diary notes” AQ 0282/02 and 01. *De Putron and Robilliard diaries*. State of Guernsey Island Archive, St Peter Port, Guernsey.

² Winston Churchill quoted in Charles Cruickshank, *The German Occupation of The Channel Islands* (London: Oxford University Press, 1975) 264.

³ Quoted from Churchill’s speech to announce the liberation of the Channel Islands: “Our dear Channel Islands will be freed today.” Liberation actually occurred a day later on May 9, 1945 (the announcement was made on V-E Day) with the signing of unconditional surrender on the HSM *Bulldog* and the arrival of British troops. If Churchill had actually failed to send provisions, many Islanders would not have lived to hear that speech and its measure of British affection.

were famished; yet, they abided by Red Cross and International law and did not take the aid for themselves.⁴

Churchill's resistance to aid emphasizes the unique context in which this Occupation existed. The Islanders found themselves occupied, but the Crown was unconquered and their defense military was still fighting the Axis powers, unlike France, Poland, and other occupied spaces. Their patriotism was tested during a five-year occupation lived in constant, direct contact with their enemy. During this time, the Islanders made daily decisions that would forever mark the legacy of their Occupation. To historians, their every interaction constituted resistance or collaboration. Yet, these interactions cannot be understood out of the unique context of the Channel Island Occupation itself.

...

During the Occupation, Islanders would have woken up every day to the realization that they would encounter their enemy. They would have walked past men forcing them to grow potatoes rather than herd sheep, men whose country their brothers and fathers were away fighting, and men who caused them to separate from their children. They would have cooked whatever small ration of food they had; they would have strolled to whatever form of employment earned them a wage—either working with the Germans or realizing their work was limited according to German orders—and they would have returned home in accordance with the regulated roads and times. For the Islanders, their quotidian activities became tainted. The German military presence invaded not just their land but their daily lives; yet, these same

⁴ Alan and Mary Wood, *Islands in Danger: The story of the German Occupation of the Channel Islands, 1940-1945* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1956) By arrangement of the Trustees of the Imperial War Museum, 201; While Churchill's suspicions were partially correct and the Germans limited local food supplies to Islanders once they received aid through the Red Cross, they remained strict on abiding by the distribution policies. Exemplifying the strict order against non-civilian consumption of *Vega* goods, one German who completed yard work for a local woman refused her gift of cigarettes because they came on the *Vega*.

activities continued somewhat similarly to before as Islanders accepted their current situations as inescapable and proudly attempted to be unaffected by the inevitable changes.

Because of the mundane nature of many of these daily actions, scholars fail to employ a unique term to describe them. However, if historians choose to scrutinize the smallest actions and reactions, then the analysis of ordinary experiences become essential and telling. The current scholarship establishes a dichotomy between the previously discussed themes of collaboration and resistance, but, as we have seen, some actions do not fall firmly within either category. There remains an alternative space yet to be defined. For a spectrum to expand in positive or negative increments, there must be a middle ground from which the spectrum shifts in either direction. This space is coexistence.

Coexistence proves a valuable category because it captures the distinguishing aspects of this occupation history. The context in which Islanders found themselves limited the effects of their actions, as well as shaped their intentions, becoming a third and crucial factor to understanding Islanders' actions. These contextual differences, particularly those affecting the Channel Islanders' understanding of both the war abroad and the enemy among them, created an unavoidable state of coexistence as they lived side by side with their enemy for five years.

Carry on and Coexist

Coexistence included both ordinary, daily activities and atypical, occupation-specific experiences. In the histories of Nazi-occupied Europe, these activities are often seen as forms of collaboration, especially in places like Vichy France. In his analysis of the French Occupation, Paxton writes that in leading up to Vichy France, "the government, no less than its citizens, itched to get back into some settled routine." This desire led to "a kind of tacit accord between

Hitler's hopes for an economical armistice and French longing for a quick return to orderly life. The Armistice rested upon that shared interest." "Collaboration" appears in the armistice document itself through the provision that "the French government assist the German authorities in exercising the 'rights of an occupying power'" and that "French officials and public services 'conform to the decisions of the German authorities and collaborate faithfully with them.'" From Paxton's perspective this initial agreement of "the most elementary promptings of normalcy in the Summer of 1940, the urge to return to home and job" set the French on a long-term course of "everyday complicity that led gradually and eventually to active assistance to German measures undreamed of in 1940." Paxton emphasizes their faults: "Fateful Word. Collaboration, a banal term for working together, was to become a synonym for high treason." The same daily actions seen on the Islands, such as postal services, infrastructure repairs, and running schools that "restored France to tranquility and order fulfilled the tacit Franco-German bargain to withdraw France from the war, socially intact, and to turn her energies inward." While these actions of soft collaboration can still benefit the enemy, the unique and isolated nature of the Channel Island Occupation emphasizes how daily actions of doing "nothing" may have in fact been more neutral than similar actions in France and elsewhere in Europe.⁵

To begin considering how these quotidian actions occurred in this specific Occupation, historians should be draw parallels not with France or other occupied territories but instead to Britain. These Islands that claim from their Norman history to be "more British than the British" were accused of acting in a completely non-British way when reports of wide-scale collaboration circulated immediately after the war. However, prior to this post-Occupation judgment, the Islanders ironically held to the sentiment of the British war mantra "Carry On." Leading up to and during the war, British citizens in England were reminded to maintain their fortitude and

⁵ Paxton, *Vichy France*, 19.

endurance and urged to “carry on” while bombshells hit and rubble rained onto the streets. Victorian stoicism in the British attitude was tried, as a stiff-upper lip became the everyday citizens’ combat against the psychological warfare of the Germans and a war that continued year after year. This sentiment of “carry on” fit the Channel Islands. Without methods by which to physically further the war effort, the Islanders were left with a fighting spirit. As large-scale resistance efforts were unavailable and petty smaller resistance seemed unnecessarily risky for their reward, stubbornly ignoring the surrounding enemy provided a British alternative. They carried on with their lives, not allowing the Germans to receive any pleasure from the superiority of sensing a subjugated spirit among them, while they also succumbed to German policies.

As discussed in Chapter 2, despite their generally Island-centric focus, most Islanders understood that their islands had a meager influence on the overall course of the war and thus reasoned that resistance efforts would not disrupt the Axis war effort beyond their shores. This limited agency was reflected in their approach to daily living because they felt they were biding their time, stalled until liberation came. In a 1944 diary account, one Islander recorded,

So our life has meandered on from day to day and occasionally when we look back at the passage of time we are a little frightened at its unmarked appearance. What have we to show for it? nothing at all; and yet each day our only thought is to wish more time away as quickly as we can, until that grand day of liberation show we can pick up the threads again and live our life. Everybody regards these past four years as just a suspension of our life and every plan we now make must automatically date from that day of freedom.⁶

Such monotony was disrupted by the excitement of resistance efforts and the gossip surrounding and stirring rumors of collaboration. For many Islanders, these excitements provided a semblance of homegrown entertainment in these island nations, since they fed small-town gossip and rumors and were acknowledged as accomplishing no wider purpose in the global war.⁷

⁶ “De Putron Scrapbook of press cuttings and diary notes” AQ 0282/02 and 01. *De Putron and Robilliard diaries*. State of Guernsey Island Archive, St Peter Port, Guernsey. Typed papers page 11.

⁷ Ralph Durand, *Guernsey Under German Rule*, 268-269.

Diaries regularly present expectations of a nearing end to war and the impending liberation that they anticipated occurring in days, weeks, or a few months. These hopeful claims appeared in diaries as early as 1940 and as late as 1945 just before Liberation Day, reappearing in all the years in between. Their hope for the end and the swift exit of the Germans from their lives likely influenced what actions they considered to be reasonable options. Why would you have risked your life and wellbeing for the small sabotage of a commandeered car or similar action if the war ended tomorrow (and no quicker by the effect of your action)? Thus, Islanders may have taken an optimistically pragmatic, “make the most of it,” approach in order to “carry on” as best as possible despite being occupied and having no satisfactory or effective way to resist it. Guernsey newspaper editor Frank Falla sums up these realized limitations saying, “There was nothing we could do but accept our fate and try to make the best of it.”⁸ This attitude does not imply a passive acceptance that falls to the will of the enemy, but it instead emphasizes an appreciation of their current predicament, the limitations on their actions and an otherwise determined will to maintain their spirit against these circumstances.

Mary Toms captured this tenacious spirit through the window of her shop in Guernsey’s Commercial Arcade. A simple placard placed in the window leading up to the Occupation read, “There is no depression in this shop and we are not interested in the possibilities of defeat.”⁹ This placard “would have invited heavy-footed German reprisals” after the occupation and was replaced with “Blessed are the cheerful in heart for they lighten the road for themselves and their fellow-travellers.”¹⁰ Toms captured the same sentiment to remind her fellow-travelers, those Islanders lasting the voyage of a five-year enemy occupation, to keep their fighting spirit. However, she did so in a way that would not threaten her or her message. Tom’s placard

⁸ Frank Falla, *The Silent War*. 21.

⁹ Durand, *Guernsey Under German Rule*, 266.

¹⁰ Durand, *Guernsey Under German Rule*, 266.

becomes an exemplary model of the Islander's lasting patriotism for Guernseyman and Occupation historian Ralph Durand, who wrote,

It was this spirit that the majority of the Guernsey people faced the troubles and anxieties caused by the German occupation, both in the early days and when with the passage of years our troubles and anxieties increased. The contribution that any of us could make towards winning the war was now infinitesimally small but there was a general feeling that anyone who kept a stiff upper lip and made light of our misfortunes was doing his or her duty towards the British Empire.¹¹

In addition to acceptance of their ineffectual position in the broader war, the Islanders remained limited in their understanding of the extent of World War II overall. This limited worldview must be addressed in order to understand how it might have influenced how Islanders formed their intentions and viewed the effects of their actions.

The Nazi Narrative of Violence

Historians are often prepared to judge the actions that occurred on the Channel Islands according to their understanding of the Nazi terror regime. However, the Islanders' limited understanding of the ongoing war would have prevented them from acting and responding in what hindsight might now suggest to be more appropriate. By recognizing the limited perspective of the Islanders, historians can better understand the extent of any negligence or maleficence in their intentions.

Peter Tabb's *A Peculiar Occupation: New Perspectives on Hitler's Channel Islands* begins to grapple with the unique nature of this Occupation and the ways it qualified the Islanders' experiences in a broader global context.¹² Though many historians would cringe at his choice to emphasize and to probe at hypotheticals, the history he provides explores expectations

¹¹ Durand, *Guernsey Under German Rule*, 266.

¹² Peter Tabb, *A Peculiar Occupation: New Perspectives on Hitler's Channel Islands* (Hersham: Ian Allan Publishing, 2005).

and realities of this singular occupation and its “alien nature.”¹³ Thereby, he highlights the issue of a “German” occupation as opposed to “Nazi” rule. Basic changes such as the renaming of locations differentiate the Channel Islands’ Occupation from the continental war. The German renaming of locations with German titles did not faze Islanders whose dual cultural history already lent them both French and English names for island locations; the Islanders simply did not adopt the new German alternatives.¹⁴ In stark contrast to areas like Poland where “by decrees what had once been Polish became German overnight,” there was little to no evidence of this “Germanisation” on the Islands.¹⁵ In this way, a German military occupation with ideological and political disparities may have stood incongruent in the Islanders’ minds from the morally despicable Nazi terror regime evident in other occupied nations.

The defining difference of the Channel Islands occupation was the comparative lack of violence demonstrated by the German occupiers. Mark Mazower, in his work *Hitler’s Empire: Nazi Rule in Occupied Europe*, discusses the reasoning and methods adopted by Hitler and the Nazi party to enforce violently German nationalism through imperial pursuits.¹⁶ Occupation became so intertwined with the Nazi program that roughly a quarter of German war resources were allocated to it. Mazower asserts, “one reason the Germans failed to think deeply about Europe was that for much of the war they did not need to: Europeans fell into line and contributed what they demanded anyway.”¹⁷ Whether delayed resistance efforts in France or parallel occupations led by Italy, the fall of other nations to German influence was widely ignored and erased from national memories after the end of the war. Various factors drove collaboration, from the hopes of Germany reuniting Europe to simple resignation. However, the

¹³ Ibid, 12.

¹⁴ Ibid, 207-209.

¹⁵ Ibid, 207-209.

¹⁶ Mark Mazower, *Hitler’s Empire: Nazi Rule in Occupied Europe* (London: Alien Lane, 2008).

¹⁷ Mazower, *Hitler’s Empire*, 6.

notion that other governments looked to Germany with fear and obedience and “existed fundamentally to serve the interests of Greater Germany” remained the underlying “essence of a colonial policy.”¹⁸ Though large-scale resistance efforts did evolve out of other occupations, Germany’s success in dissuading universal resistance is surprising.

Mazower associates European hesitancy to resist with both the “disorientation” caused by the enemy occupier as well as the German tendency to murderous violence.¹⁹ According to the first of these theories, enemy occupations made evident the weak cohesion of national identities. In keeping with Mazower’s mindset, the heritage of the Channel Islanders and their complicated relationship to Britain could serve as a weakening factor of their nationalism that led to collaboration. This same past stems from a history of French invasions during which the Channel Islands learned what it meant to be occupied; therefore, their societies would not be equally unraveled or disoriented. However, differences across Island parishes and between the more rural parts of the Islands and the town hubs were emphasized in the difference of their wartime experience and the more frequent interaction with Germans in town centers; the reaction of locals to the elitist government system after the war likewise demonstrated potential social failings heightened by the Occupation.²⁰ On the other hand, the Channel Islands did not widely experience the violence innate to Nazism at the levels present elsewhere in Europe.

The violence of the regime is captured in the systematic approach to concentration camps and forced labor. In his work *KL: A History of the Nazi Concentration Camps*, Nikolaus Wachsmann finds the *Konzentrationslager* schema epitomized the Nazi regime, and he states, “Terror stood at the center of the Third Reich, and no other institution embodied Nazi terror more fully than the KL.” The KL reached across Europe and even into the Channel Island of

¹⁸ Mazower, *Hitler’s Empire*, 7

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 8.

²⁰ Leonard Tostevin, Interview with author, May 27, 2018.

Alderney.²¹ However, in a discussion of “The Outside World,” he also expresses the evolving nature of information about the KL system available to individuals outside the Third Reich. The cracking of the Enigma code at Britain’s Bletchley Park in late 1940 allowed the Allies a greater— albeit, still limited— sense of the level of terror used by Hitler’s henchmen.²² Since the Islands were occupied in June of 1940, Islanders must have remained unfamiliar with Nazi methods and brutality and instead have relied on an evolving understanding of Nazism directly from their own Occupation. Moreover, the more violent acts they experienced like deportations occurred without an understanding of their broader significance since Hitler’s “Final Solution” was not developed until the beginning of 1942. The Jewish women discussed in Chapter 1 were deported in the summer of 1942, placing them among the first Jewish persons transported to the Auschwitz-Birkenau camp from Western Europe.²³ British-born Islanders were deported that fall to Germany with expectations of “separation from loved ones, and the bad food, isolation, and other rigors of prison camp—rather than mass execution.”²⁴ Jorgensen-Earp emphasized the ignorance of Islander stating, “If there had been *any* knowledge, or even solid rumor, of death camps operating in the Third Reich, there were enough people slated for deportation to Germany in September 1942 that some pockets of physical resistance (or mass attempts to flee the Island) would have been likely.”²⁵ Tabb argues the evidence combined shows how “it is clear that the Channel Islands, with the unhappy exception of Alderney, were spared the extreme manifestation of Nazism.”²⁶ Even in terms of policing and day-to-day terror, the Islands saw neither the Nazi’s

²¹ Wachsmann, *KL: A History of the Nazi Concentration Camps*, 22.

²² *Ibid.*, 492.

²³ Jorgensen-Earp, *Discourse and Defiance Under Nazi Occupation*, 164.

²⁴ Jorgensen-Earp, *Discourse and Defiance Under Nazi Occupation*, 165.

²⁵ Jorgensen-Earp, *Discourse and Defiance Under Nazi Occupation*, 165.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 206.

State Central Security Office, Security Service, nor *Gestapo*.²⁷ Such contrast may have become more obvious with changing German policies over the course of the occupation, but in all, these experiences differed drastically from those experienced in occupations elsewhere in Europe.

This is not to say that the Channel Islands were immune to Nazi brutality. The Islanders experienced unnecessary violence and cruelty. Most frequently they witnessed Todt workers treated unfairly, but they also experienced small daily acts, such as Germans harassing young women or defecating on the floor of homes they were vacating. One young girl hugged her dog as its blood poured down her dress from a German officer shooting it in the leg.²⁸ The ultimate demonstration of Nazi violence in the Channel occurred on Guernsey's neighboring island of Alderney.

Alderney experienced near total evacuation to Britain or Guernsey prior to the Occupation. Along the course of the Occupation, Alderney, renamed "Adolph" by the German occupiers, was transformed into an internment camp unlike anything seen on the other islands. It experienced the internment of four to five thousand forced laborers in multiple concentration camps, including at least one run by the SS.²⁹ Estimations and reports on the number of deaths vary significantly, ranging from less than four hundred to around five thousand people. While occasional interactions occurred between Guernsey and Alderney, none of these experiences demonstrated to the Channel Islanders the level of barbarity occurring on their neighboring island, and Islanders remained largely ignorant of this manifestation of Nazi terror.³⁰

²⁷ While different sources contradict one another regarding the presence of these groups, the contradiction itself implies if present, they were not the prominent presence seen elsewhere. See the National Archive Files with the MI 5 Reports, Forty's *Channel Islands at War* (1999), and Bunting's *The Model Occupation* (2002).

²⁸ Jorgensen-Earp, *Discourse and Defiance Under Nazi Occupation*, 48. For other examples of daily cruelty, see Durand's *Guernsey Under German Rule*.

²⁹ These concentration camps are distinct from the labor camps on the other islands.

³⁰ A lack of further elaboration on Alderney in this thesis is not a dismissal of the atrocities that occurred there. Instead, its limited discussion is intended to emphasize the violence on one particular island as distinct and so different from the rest of the Channel Island Occupation history that it cannot be addressed in full in the limited

Islanders rejected or skeptically received news that would have altered this misconception as a result of their mixed relationship with propaganda. Caught in the middle of a publicity war from both German and British news sources, the Islanders dismissed some reports of German brutality that they themselves had not observed with justifiable doubt. Recognizing that they were both subject of and subject to German propaganda, the Islanders were fully aware they were being fed false information. Concurrently, Islanders had reasons to meet British propaganda with skepticism.

From World War I, the Allies maintained a legacy of exaggeration in their propaganda of wartime atrocities. Britain held a reputation of having practiced exceptionally skilled propaganda in the previous global conflict. Their effectiveness was recognized and established to the extent that Hitler used them as a model. However, this Great War legacy also meant that the British public would have reason to receive their news with skepticism.³¹ Supplementing this WWI experience, Islanders recognized exaggerations throughout the course of the new world war. When on October 7, 1940, only a few months into occupation, a plane dropped copies of the *Daily Sketch* and *Daily Mirror*, the Islanders saw not just a feature on Island escapees but also “a somewhat exaggerated account of conditions in Guernsey under the Germans.”³² Similarly, as Islanders gathered to listen to the nine o’clock news, “It brought shame and annoyance as we listened to a British propagandist... exaggerating and fabricating the evils of the Nazi administration of occupied territories, evidently regardless of the happiness of all in their

space of this work. However, to better understand Alderney’s experience, see Goergia Ivanovitch Kondakov’s story as a Russian forced laborer in *The Island of Dread In the Channel: The Story of Georgi Ivanovitch Kondakov*, ed. Brian Bonnard. For further information on Alderney and its Occupation history, see references to Alderney in *The German Occupation of the Channel Islands* by C. G. Cruickshank (1975) and *A Peculiar Occupation* by Peter Tabb (2005).

³¹ Lynette Finch, “Psychological Propaganda: The War of Ideas on Ideas During the First Half of the Twentieth Century,” SAGE Publications 26, issue 3, 367-386, 2000.

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0095327X0002600302>.

³² Durand, *Guernsey Under German Rule*, 91.

countries who had friends or relatives in occupied countries.”³³ Concerned for the unnecessary cruelty these false reports inflicted in worry and concern for the Channel Island refugees, the author of these views, Ron de Putron, emphasized that the falsehoods extended unnecessarily to all occupied countries. Thus, de Putron demonstrated an ignorance that their Occupation stood any different. This misunderstanding was not necessarily a willful ignorance, trying to block out the possibility of brutality to protect their own worldview. Instead, the combination of their recent past and recognition of falsehoods underscores a legitimate skepticism from Islanders. In this way, the Islanders’ mindset and understanding of the extent of the ruthlessness was likely more akin to their knowledge of the Great War their parents and grandparents fought rather than any other nation’s reality of WWII. Daily interactions became crucial to forming opinions of the Occupation as a civilian.

Their misconceptions become more evident when reviewing their daily complaints. Some of their complaints in wartime diaries appear shallow and apathetic when held against the horrors and hardships faced elsewhere. One Islander penned, “When communication with England is restored, people over there will think we’ve been very lucky to have our three meals a day. So we have, but let those people have even one day of our menu.”³⁴ Some complained about not having access to the latest fashions and other negatives, all of which were associated with war circumstances more so than the Germans.³⁵ They did not appreciate nor have the means to appreciate the severity of the war elsewhere so they viewed aspects of their occupation as particularly trying and worthy of distinct contempt.

³³ “*Under the Swastika in Jersey: The Experiences of a University Student* by W. J. Le Quescne,” L/D/25/M5/1, pg. 31, Jersey Archive.

³⁴ “De Putron Scrapbook of press cuttings and diary notes” AQ 0282/02 and 01. *De Putron and Robilliard diaries*. State of Guernsey Island Archive, Typed papers page 13.

³⁵ “*Under the Swastika in Jersey: The Experiences of a University Student* by W. J. Le Quescne,” L/D/25/M5/1, pg. 27, Jersey Archive.

Receiving positive correspondence from internees at camps also directly contradicted the claims of violence experienced in Europe. This correspondence not only undermines their potential to understand violence, but it also provided them an outlet of comfort. They were able to maintain philanthropy during their own struggles by donating to the prisoners interned at Castle Cornet, an 800-year-old fortress standing guard of St. Peter Port's harbor. From sports equipment to tobacco, the prisoners welcomed "comforts of any description."³⁶ Records tell us that even British Fighting Forces that were interned on the Islands, not just Islanders, "spent much of their time playing games and were visited by their wives three times a week—such confinement is not very tedious, and was obviously more nominal than in the spirit of punishment."³⁷

Possessing the ability neither to procure weapons, to influence the war, nor to hide from the violence, the residents of the Channel Islands were essentially under house arrest. They did not know the brutality of the enemy abroad may warrant fuller resistance on their small islands. Instead, they witnessed at times a spirit of benevolence and generosity from their occupier.

Understanding the Enemy as a Neighbor

The extended time and cohabitation of the Channel Islanders and Germans provided opportunities for them to see one another outside of the context of their Occupation labels as enemies. Instead, Islanders witnessed acts of kindness, anti-party attitudes, and humane treatment from the men who were supposed to be their enemy. These experiences countered the acts of violence they did witness to prove that their enemies were human at their core.

³⁶ "De Putron Scrapbook of press cuttings and diary notes" AQ 0282/02 and 01. *De Putron and Robilliard diaries*. State of Guernsey Island Archive.

³⁷ "Under the Swastika in Jersey: The Experiences of a University Student by W. J. Le Quescne," L/D/25/M5/1, pg. 21, Jersey Archive.

In living beside the enemy, Islanders were privy to an appreciation of daily interactions and manners practiced by the Germans. The many accounts of initial occupation cite Germans going into towns and shopping in stores like they were on holiday. As they paraded onto the Islands, they bought goods without force or manipulation. Their good behavior was described as having “not only paid for everything but represented their money at its right value.”³⁸ Beyond business interactions, the Germans extended to Island women the chivalric manners expected of decent men of the period, such as opening doors and carrying groceries. Right treatment and mutual respect extended beyond daily manners and into more Occupation-specific matters.

Despite Islanders detest of Germans issuing them orders, early orders appeared rational and, in some cases like curfew, better than the terms already in place on the Islands. In reference to the July 2 orders first published, a young Jersey man, W. J. Le Quesne, home from university wrote, “Perhaps a longish list, this! But not such a tedious one.” They acknowledged the usefulness of these orders as a reasonable expectation during war or necessity for distribution of resources. Banning alcoholic spirits was an understandable requirement of an occupying power since “riots nearly always take place under the influence of drink.” Similarly, the Germans gave them opportunity to turn in any remaining weapons and took control of the fuel supply “for more important uses.” They maintained the value of money, and “the ban on profiteering naturally was for the benefit of the man in the street.”³⁹ At their initial introduction to the Islands, the Germans, for all their flaws, appeared as rational occupiers. Moreover, Islanders acknowledged their own shortcomings and where this resulted in German regulation, such as the restrictions placed on biking when tandem riders caused multiple accidents.⁴⁰ Simply put, Islanders admitted, “...the

³⁸ “*Under the Swastika in Jersey: The Experiences of a University Student* by W. J. Le Quesne,” L/D/25/M5/1, pg. 18, Jersey Archive.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 28.

Germans are not as tyrannous as propaganda would suggest,” once face-to-face with them in these interactions.⁴¹

Like the attitudes of Islanders, this reasonable treatment on the part of the Germans, especially in the earliest exchanges and policies, may have been influenced by the legacy of the First World War. The first German Kommandant on Jersey, Hauptmann Gussek, returned to the island having been a prisoner of war himself on Jersey during WWI. Although his time on the island occurred early in the Occupation and was limited to initial administration and oversight, he signed the first notices and set the initial tone for the five years of occupation to come. His good treatment of Islanders is ascribed to his own treatment as a prisoner of war on Jersey where he escaped the brutality of World War I for modern conveniences like electricity that even the rest of the island went without.⁴²

While these initial orders were mild, some Germans were apathetic in enforcing more severe orders throughout the war, suggesting a shared disinterest in the Occupation or respect for their neighbors on the Islands. “It is possible,” wrote Durand, “that if they had received no help from informers no Guernseyman would have been detected in possession of a radio.... But they would have been exceptionally negligent if they had not acted on information conveyed in anonymous letters giving them the names and addresses of persons alleged to have retained their wireless sets.”⁴³ These letters were “usually produced as their justification for searching houses,” so their lack of enforcement stemmed either from sympathy with their neighbors and their understandable desire to listen to the radio or the requirement to produce evidence for house searches. Neither the sympathy nor the rational means of addressing crime were traits of the Nazi party elsewhere.

⁴¹ Ibid., 21

⁴² Historian Heather Morton, interview with author, 2018, on research for her book *Traces of War on the Dunes*.

⁴³ Durand, *Guernsey Under German Rule*, 278.

The honorable actions of these Germans even surprised British Prime Minister Winston Churchill. In 1944 when the Islands were entirely starved, Germany finally admitted the Red Cross to send a ship of supplies.⁴⁴ Churchill refused, believing that the Germans would take the food and supplies for themselves. Nevertheless, he eventually allowed the Red Cross to supply the Islands, and as the *S. S. Vega* cruised into port in December 1944, Islanders wrote songs in homage of her salvation.⁴⁵

After the Germans unloaded and distributed the packages to the Islanders, violent theft of the *Vega* goods and other items did sometimes occur. The German policy stood that their soldiers would not take any of *Vega*'s supplies for themselves and this stance was enacted to the extent of the oversight; therefore, the theft that did occur, was prompted by the actions of starving men, not military policy. Just as Todt workers crawled through gardens for food, so too did Islanders find Germans looking for scraps by the end of the Occupation. The German administration did not turn a blind eye and ignore all these actions, but they instead saw them punished.⁴⁶ Furthermore, punitive consequences for German misconduct were no less severe for their own countrymen. The Germans executed their own soldiers for military offences; on the other hand, only one non-German received this punishment on the Islands, a paroled French soldier who led a group of his comrades on an escape mission from France.⁴⁷ While from a modern perspective execution may appear a harsh punishment for this Frenchman's actions, "breaking parole was an offence all sides recognized... Indeed there is every likelihood that, had the situation been reversed, and the escapers been paroled German soldiers, all might well have found themselves

⁴⁴ Cruickshank, *The German Occupation of the Channel Islands*, 263.

⁴⁵ Durand, *Guernsey Under German Rule*, 278.

⁴⁶ "De Putron Scrapbook of press cuttings and diary notes" AQ 0282/02 and 01. *De Putron and Robilliard diaries*. State of Guernsey Island Archive.

⁴⁷ Tabb, *A Peculiar Occupation*, 205-206.

in front of a British firing squad!”⁴⁸ Therefore, this action of brutality likely matched the Islanders’ expectations of the violence of wartime. Although the specific case of executions on the Islands does not rule out brutality, the use of execution as punishment for their own men implies more equitable and fair punishment for Islanders. German treatment of Islanders was mild and more rational compared to the new age of violence Nazis enacted elsewhere.

As relationships formed among locals and Germans who passed each other in daily activities, it became more apparent that these men had families, girlfriends, wives, children, and homes. They were all together human. Durand ends his account of the Occupation with a story of a German airman who sought friendship with a local. This German’s home in Hamburg had been bombed and left in smolders, and as he spoke “his voice broke with emotion as he told the frantic search of any trace of his wife and children...of how as he did so he was tormented by the smell of burnt flesh” and of his relief when he discovered the smell was, in fact, merely cellared rabbits. Durand writes of hearing this story “told without any sign of animosity against the airmen who had wrecked his home and made his wife and children homeless.” With the man having vocalized, “the relief it gave to his feelings to talk more freely to one who was technically his enemy than he would dare to talk to any stranger among his own countrymen,” Durand expresses the impossibility of then seeing him “with hatred as on an enemy” or the “contempt as an accomplice of Hitler’s war guilt.” This German turned words into actions, fully demonstrating his communion with the local community when, unable to see his own children on Christmas, he provided a local man funds for the impoverished local children in Guernsey. Durand concludes the entirety of his work by acknowledging this special insight into the humanity of their enemy:

That man frankly admitted that, though he was a German and proud of being a German, he looked forward eagerly to a British victory that would free the German people from the tyranny that oppressed them. One could but feel that the Allies were waging war not

⁴⁸ Tabb, *A Peculiar Occupation*, 206.

only for their own safety but also for the welfare and liberty of all decent Germans. Such at any rate was the conclusion arrived at by one person at least who lived for over four years under German domination—one in whom dislike almost amounting to hatred turned gradually to a more tolerant attitude, and one who, realizing that no one is able to choose the land of his birth, grew ever more grateful to Providence for granting him, through no merit of his own—unless perhaps it were merit acquired in a former existence—the blessing of birth into a free nation.

In this conclusion, Durand demonstrates a recognition that nationalism does not equate to patriotism, an idea brought up by this anti-Nazi German but something that must resonate within the fabric of an island nation granting patriotism to Churchill. Moreover, he exposes sympathy for his enemy of lesser fortune. While the Nazi party practices measure of exterminating those seen as lesser than themselves, Durand's empathetic perspective shows the British view of saving the lesser Germans from themselves and restoring their human freedoms.⁴⁹

Beyond seeing the Germans as human, Islanders could view some of them as allies. In addition to the more rebellious actions of the communist Paul Muhlback in Chapter 2, other occupying forces expressed a disinterest in the Nazi regime in word and action. Individual Germans had personal grievances with the Nazi party and openly expressed support for Britain. Paul Baumer, a deputy to news censor Goettmann, was someone the newspaper staff found an ally in and “came close to liking” since they shared a mutual detestation of the Nazis and an appreciation for the other's hatred. Baumer, who had married a Canadian woman, was in Canada at the start of the war while his wife and children visited his family in Germany. The Germans extorted him: he could choose to stay in Canada while his family was detained in Germany or he could return to Germany and join the German forces. Falla wrote, “He joined the Wehrmachy, but his hatred of the Nazis was the most bitter that I ever encountered in a German.”⁵⁰ Even less personal judgments of the party's efficacy were evident among the occupiers. When Hitler

⁴⁹ Durand, *Guernsey Under German Rule*, 321-322.

⁵⁰ Falla, *The Silent War*, 41.

promoted himself to the command of the Nazi forces, “laughter and sniggers were common.” On the day when “Hitler’s take-over” was announced, a “party of Nazi officers had scheduled a private birthday dinner-dance at the Hotel de Normandie” but in disgust of Hitler’s announcement they cancelled the party.⁵¹ The officer who informed the hotel “admired the table-setting for his 24 friends, walked across the room and turned the portrait of Hitler face to the wall in disgust. After this fading interest in the Fuehrer’s birthday was noticeable.”⁵² These actions and attitudes represented broad sentiments among the Germans,

Had it been possible to ascertain the feelings of each individual German amongst us it would probably have been found that only a very small proportion were whole-hearted disciples of Hitler and were eager for Germany to fight to the bitter end.” The remaining Germans either had grown apathetic when victory was not immediate, and simply hoped for an end to the war and a return their previous lifestyles, or alternatively they “were opposed to the war from its inception and hoped for an Allied victory that would overturn Hitler and give Germans their freedom again rather than a German victory that would perpetuate Nazism.⁵³

These actions directly undermined their German patriotism, while other actions at minimum devalued it in sake of more important virtues.

Others in the German forces prioritized alternative principles over allegiance to Germany. Dr. Albert Kowald, a Luftwaffe medical doctor, was stationed in Guernsey for roughly two years beginning in 1942. Valuing his medical profession over his nationalism, Kowald was imprisoned in April 1945 for supplying medicines to the civilian population. On December 5, 1945, the day before his departure, sixteen islanders signed a letter to thank him for his service. They wrote “heartfelt thanks” for his “many kindnesses,” saying, “[we] shall also remember how good you were to us in th[e] supply of medicines especially at the time when these were unobtainable through our own local doctors. We little knew the risk you were taking when you were giving us

⁵¹ Falla, *The Silent War*, 118.

⁵² Falla, *The Silent War*, 118.

⁵³ Durand, *Guernsey Under German Rule*, 265

the medicines, & we greatly regret that you had to suffer imprisonment through helping us in [] ways.”⁵⁴ Other letters were passed at the end of the Occupation wishing, “a happy future” and hope to be reunited, sometimes with pages blotted with the mark of a dried teardrop.⁵⁵

Risking one’s life and wellbeing for another man whether enemy or ally did not end with one’s profession. As Germans and Channel Islanders fought and killed each other abroad, instances occurred on the Islands where they instead demonstrated appreciation for one another’s lives. In one instance, a German soldier drowned in a heavy undercurrent while bathing despite “the valiant attempts” of both an officer and a local to save him.⁵⁶ During another instance, Germans and some Guernseymen under German employment were working at the airport when a British plane unloaded a fire of bullets. As the men ran for protection, an Islander tripped and remained fallen, prostrate on the ground. Remarking “the airman meant his bullets for Germans, not for his own countrymen,” a German private covered the Guernseyman as a human shield.⁵⁷

Beyond risking their lives for Islanders, they also honored the war dead. More striking, the Germans conducted military funerals for British soldiers. On October 23, 1943, a German torpedo struck the HMS *Charybdis* and HMS *Limbourne* roughly 50 miles southwest of the Channel Islands. Shortly after, the current carried 21 bodies of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines onto the Guernsey shore. The occupying forces provided full military honors for the soldiers at Le Foulon Cemetery in the capital of St. Peter Port. The Germans allowed Islanders to leave over seven hundred wreaths in honor of the fallen soldiers, and their inscriptions uncensored, read, “They died that we may be free.”⁵⁸ Similarly, on Jersey, six Luftwaffe carried

⁵⁴ German Occupation Museum

⁵⁵ German Occupation Museum

⁵⁶ “*Under the Swastika in Jersey: The Experiences of a University Student* by W. J. Le Quesne,” L/D/25/M5/1, pg. 23, Jersey Archive.

⁵⁷ Durand, *Guernsey Under German Rule*, 318.

⁵⁸ Wood, *Islands in Danger*, 170.

a coffin draped with the Union Jack. Calla lilies protruded out of wreathes of flowers, shadowing a swastika-adorned ribbon labeling them a gift of the Luftwaffe. The honored soldiers, RAF sergeants Butlin and Holden, were shot down over Jersey, and they, too, received full military funerals.⁵⁹ Though the speculation that such actions were taken to appease and suppress local outcries remains a possibility, such dignified courtesies did not align with Nazi practices elsewhere. Moreover, these events notably boosted morale among islanders and reaffirmed their strength to keep fighting for the Crown.⁶⁰ In rejecting or manipulating these acts of humanity, historians have shaped the Channel Island Occupation history into a dichotomy that does not leave room to appreciate the unique perspective of Islanders.

With the historiography embedded in the current dichotomy between collaboration and resistance, historians have used this variety of experiences specific to the Channel Island Occupation to point to one option or the other. To Bunting (1995), the unexpected good manners of the Germans have women falling at their feet. Conversely, Jorgensen-Earp (2013) uses the presence of anti-party Germans to further a case for resistance. While instances of cruelty and mistreatment did occur on the Islands, that narrative is firmly embedded in Nazi history and, though the true extent of that cruelty was unknown on the islands, they expected more barbaric soldiers than they totally received. As a whole, the scholarship generally fails to appreciate deeply that at a time of unprecedented violence and struggle, these Islanders experienced genuine human interaction with their enemy. The Islanders were surprised to find the men depicted in their imagination as monstrous and ghostly appeared not too different from themselves. Nevertheless, surprise does not guarantee a positive or negative effect, and therefore coexistence

⁵⁹ “Photograph of German Luftwaffe personnel carrying a coffin...” 6 June 1943, L/C/150/B4/2, Frank Stone Clements, Jersey Heritage, Jersey Archive, St Helier, Jersey.

⁶⁰ “HMS Charybdis and HMS Limbourne,” The Royal Court of Guernsey, <http://www.guernseyroyalcourt.gg/article/1940/HMS-Charybdis-and-HMS-Limbourne>.

is necessarily a neutral middle ground widely forgotten on the spectrum of resistance and collaboration.

Coexistence in Action

The unique context of the Channel Islands necessitates a middle ground of coexistence in which Germans and Islanders interacted without inherently resistive or collaborative interactions. The instances of women building romantic relationships with Germans, workers engaging in professional encounters, and government officials maintaining heavy associations, have been established thus far as forms of both collaboration and resistance, firm and soft depending on intentionality and effect. To shift in either direction, these relationships have a neutral state of coexistence made possible by their unique Occupation environment.

For the defamed “horizontal collaborators,” coexistence rests on the complicated notions of youth and love. The intricacies of attraction create a fine line between taking advantage of the enemy, prospering with them, and falling in love. In some instances, one led to the other. W. J. Le Quesne described the natural emergence of relationships, saying, “Just as cosmetics are a great help to the female before seeking a mate, so is a uniform to a man... A fortnight before, girls in their best attire were seen at street corners, winking at or waiting for British Members of the Forces: now the only difference lay in the fact that the soldiers wore, inconspicuously enough, the swastika.”⁶¹ For many young women, they were bored and wasting their youth. They did not see the opportunity for patriotism but instead the social engagements and excitement.⁶² While the uniform may hold an initial attraction, after five years of encounters, emphasized by moments of kindness and affection as discussed, some relationships formed naturally.

⁶¹ Jorgensen-Earp, *Discourse and Defiance Under Nazi Occupation*, 19.

⁶² Jorgensen-Earp, *Discourse and Defiance Under Nazi Occupation*, 121.

At the time, these love affairs were among the worst offenses, and the vigilante barbers brutally punished them. Even more levelheaded accounts of the Occupation like Durand's harshly judge and disapprove of these women. Nevertheless, over time, the entertainment industry has exposed the general public's own sympathies and admiration for these unlikely engagements. Such courtships have become great romances, not something judged but something desired as "almost every fiction account of the Channel Island Occupation (book or film) weaves in a story of a brief encounter of an 'eternal love' connection between an Island woman and a German soldier" and more often "the young woman in question is actually the heroine of the story."⁶³ Although these scenarios are created in hindsight, their glorification expounds an inner instinct of approval for such actions. The Romeo-and-Juliet styled love affair remains as love's ultimate trump over hate.

Beyond conquering emotions, work also stood unavoidable. Is there fault in taking nonmilitary work under Germans when Islanders' work was otherwise lost in the war? Was it unpatriotic to plant potatoes when directed—potatoes which ended up providing a vital food source for the Islanders? Was selling goods to Germans who paid a fair price treason when needed to make a wage as a merchant? The Hague Convention stands as the point of coexistence, defining what work remains admissible under Occupation. Islanders' abidance by regulation proves their attempts to act in accordance with the expectations of a patriotic but occupied zone. It is in denying or upholding these standards that the Islanders collaborated or resisted.

The experience of Langmead, the chauffeur driver, emphasized the fair practices of this employment in such instances as going to get groceries. As seen in Chapter 1, chauffeuring spans across levels of collaboration with an intention to earn a wage but an effect dependent on the rider and what the ride helps them to accomplish. In one occasion, Langmead recounts driving

⁶³ Jorgensen-Earp, *Discourse and Defiance Under Nazi Occupation*, 118.

German airmen from personal shopping of items like cigarettes and chocolate to their planes. He recalls, “I helped them load the goods on to the aircraft and realized they were quite human when one man gave me three shilling and another gave me four shillings,” which was equivalent to about seventy percent of his weekly wage at the time.⁶⁴ These actions are banal, from the purchase of unremarkable goods to a fair and decent payment. They had no real bearing on the German war machine but helped a young man keep employment and therefore fall under the middle ground of coexistence.

The government stands as an entity highly representative of coexistence as they too continued their work. Through the lens of collaboration, statements like “Help the Control Committee to help you” feel beguiling, offering false security and stifling resistance for the Germans. However, approaching similar statements through the lens of coexistence, an emphasis appears on the government’s attempts to maintain daily life and protect their community. Jurat Leale’s statement, published in the local Guernsey newspaper *The Star*, reads,

We have got to fight hard if we are to survive. The sole objective is to feed, clothe and shelter the people. We should plan our consumption as well as our production, and put up with many inconveniences... in every household throughout the island. We need the workers of this island we never needed them before.⁶⁵

Reading this statement without preconceptions of collaboration or resistance, “survival” calls up less concern about repercussions from Germans. Instead, the “sole objective” to provide vital necessities paired with a realistic goal to “plan our consumption as well as our production,” resonates with echoes of strategic planning for a community’s endurance through hard times.⁶⁶

The statement to “put up with many inconveniences” trivializes the concerns of early Islanders

⁶⁴ Ronald Arthur Langmead, “The German Occupation of Guernsey 1940 to 1945,” *Memoirs of Ronald Arthur Langmead*, Priaulx Library. St Peter Port, Guernsey, 3.

⁶⁵ Jurat Leale in *The Star*, July 24, 1914, “Scrapbook of press cuttings and diary notes,” AQ 0282/02 and 01. *De Putron and Robilliard diaries*. State of Guernsey Island Archive.

⁶⁶ “*Under the Swastika in Jersey: The Experiences of a University Student* by W. J. Le Quescne,” L/D/25/M5/1, pg. 35, Jersey Archive.

regarding curfews and other predictable regulation to emphasize the greater threat to employment, resources, and other needs brought by an occupation.⁶⁷ Out of the context of Nazi occupation, this passage represents a government's attempt to honestly invigorate community participation in a time of great need. Within the context of this Occupation and through a lens emphasizing *co-existence*, it represents a government equally responsible to its station.

Importantly, coexistence involves all aspects of daily life. While the government may have been working alongside the Germans to keep pre-Occupation functions going, jobs in place, and alleviate any extreme measures opposed to the local way of life, locals themselves faced daily choices influenced and determined by the course of an Occupation. A key example comes from Brenda Hervé, who experienced the Occupation as a young woman at 18 years old. Part of the St John Ambulance, a charitable, first aid association, she and her colleagues were approached and asked if anyone had interest in nursing at the hospital. Hervé raised her hand.

The job vacancy opened when the previous nurse had to report to the Germans. They had discovered she was Jewish. The Islanders later learned this nurse and two other Jews were deported to Auschwitz.⁶⁸

Studying another Occupation, Hervé's willingness to step into Therese Steiner's role would likely be labeled as collaboration, but the nature of her work deserves consideration. Hervé's role at the hospital served Islanders needing care and attention, especially as food and medical supplies ran low and conditions worsened. The hospital did not preference the Germans in care and though there were many German doctors on the Islands, only English or local doctors worked at this location as the Germans had their own hospital. Though she recalled the thud of

⁶⁷ Ibid., 35.

⁶⁸ Brenda Hervé, Interview with author, May 28. 2018.

the Germans' heavy boots up and down the halls as they came to the hospital to visit their babies born of local girls, her job was to care for these women and the other locals within the facility.

Perhaps Hervé best demonstrated the nature of coexistence in the Channel. The most extreme form of collaboration seen in other occupations, the ignoring of or participating in the Holocaust, presents as a daily service to the community more than a crime. These interactions demonstrate how despite differences, a humanity was contained within this Occupation that was missing elsewhere in WWII. As the world saw new weapons of mass destruction, unprecedented number of soldiers and civilians killed in battle, and propaganda that demonized the enemy, these islands saw bitter enemies live in a semblance of peace for five years. While other historians may choose to look at this as Hitler's aims coming to life, a true "model occupation," it can and should be viewed as the ability for opposing populations to live largely in nonviolence. While there were undeniable actions of collaboration and resistance, the general civilian population was able to get along in their day-to-day lives with their enemy, most in suppressed hate and bitterness, some in suppressed and unsuppressed love, but all recognizing the needed compromises to coexist.

Conclusion

Witches, Fairies, and Germans: Telling the Story

“We who have been spared this ordeal may find it difficult to appreciate what living under a hostile domination entails and lack of practical experience may easily give rise to unjustifiably harsh criticism.” – Rt. Hon. Chuter Ede, Home Secretary, 1945¹

People were disappearing from the Jersey hospital. Fourteen-year old Maurice Green was hospitalized on account of his diabetes, which was exacerbated by the shortages of food and insulin. During his hospital stay, he began to notice missing people, and he knew they were dying. Resolved that “if [he] was going to die, [he] wanted to die at home,” he discharged himself and returned to his parents’ house. He would become the only person with diabetes on Jersey to survive the Occupation.²

A German soldier on Jersey had a diabetic mother in Cologne. He had scoured Europe searching for insulin to send her. One morning he appeared at the Green family’s home, asking in French after a diabetic boy the German doctor had told him lived there. “Last week the RAF bombed Cologne, and my mother is dead,” he said. “You use the three bottles of insulin I found.” Green recalled, “I rationed it out at ten units a day and it kept me alive for several months.”³

...

The memory of the Channel Island Occupation has proved problematic since Liberation. The tragedy that occurred on the rest of the continent influenced initial reactions to the Occupation and likely provided inaccurate color to the Occupation records historians now study.

The first official reports out of the Islands (besides those from escapees) came from May 14 to 15, 1945. The Home Secretary had visited the Channel Islands and prepared a review for

¹ Bell, *Guernsey Occupied But Never Conquered*, Xiii.

² Maurice Edward Green, Interviewed by Conrad Wood. Imperial War Museum. 1989. Audio.

³ Ibid.

the War Cabinet.⁴ In the report, the Home Secretary upheld the integrity of the general population, heralding their overall good behavior. He wrote,

Everything that I heard led me to the conclusion that the Island officials had discharged their difficult responsibility during the occupation in exemplary fashion and had succeeded to a remarkable extent in getting the best possible treatment from the German commensurate with the avoidance of any semblance of collaboration...As regards the Islanders themselves, with very few exceptions, their conduct seems to have been exemplary. We were told of no cases of collaboration involving active disloyalty.

He went on to mention that there were fraternizing women, laborers, and a few informers, and the Islanders became increasingly aware of their distance from the rest of the war during his conversations with them.⁵ Just a few months later, however, reports conducted by Colonel JR Stopford and his subordinate Captain Denning for The British Security Service MI5, which served as a basis of the collaboration in Chapter 1, revoked and criticized these ideas in a further investigation.

Stopford, Denning and other outsiders who lived through the violence of WWII held biases in their interpretation of the Occupation. Watching family, friends, and strangers die for years; having homes bombed and in rubble on the streets of London; and working tirelessly for Churchill's government to end the war, one can reasonably understand how they could walk on to the Islands, see little evidence of firm resistance and assume collaboration. This tilt was latent in the MI5 report, which established merit for the collaboration label. He called out the language of "enemy Forces" to describe British forces on one of the Bailiff's notices, failing to appreciate that the notice was likely censored. In testimonies cited in accusations against the Island governments, Denning highlighted those accounts, which placed heavy judgments on the

⁴ "The Home Secretary's Visit Post-Occupation" Copies from the National Archives, Priaux Library. St Peter Port, Guernsey.

⁵ The report specifically calls out the cooperation of Eire citizens and commends the local reaction to this group. The Eire citizens claimed neutrality, having no problem working for the Germans and evading deportation. Island officials worked to ensure that their neutrality meant they were not entitled to Red Cross aid.

government and complained about the “undemocratic nature of the system of election, representation, etc.” Buried in the text among these accusatory accounts, an escaped Jersey resident in November 1944 “praised the work of the Statesmen and considered that they had done the best they could, but he said however that reform of the system was long overdue... This idea of necessary reform already existed before the war, but it took occupation by the enemy to actuate it.”⁶ This insight from an Islander into the context of his own community’s politics helps us understand the deep levels of rumor and gossip on the Islands in a new way. Informal networks of communication encouraged misinterpretation and misinformation of Occupation events after Liberation. Combining Britain’s WWII experience and the Islanders’ use of the Occupation to emphasize ongoing socio-political failings, the Occupation story drifted away from accuracy even in its earliest accounts.

Moreover, the end of the war reminded the Islanders of their independence from Britain, creating a new sense of who the outsider in their community was. As they ended one Occupation, Islanders ironically found themselves again forced under new rule as King George stated, “I feel confident that the Civil Authorities, who have carried so heavy a burden during the past years, will gladly co-operate with [the Commander of the Armed Forces] in maintaining good government...”⁷ In turn, the Islands retook their individual pride and once again identified against Britain. This attitude of independence added yet another layer to the way the Occupation was recorded. The Home Secretary reported from a particular interview “...the informant thinks that the enquiry had better be held by Islanders and not be an outside commission from the United Kingdom, as if ‘foreigners’ are given the job Island jealousy and loyalty may prove

⁶ “Various documents from the National Archive file KV 4/87,” L/F/437/A7/1, Jersey Archive.

⁷ Notice from Buckingham Palace, Signed George R.I., German Occupation Museum.

stronger than the indignation which many Islanders feel against the present oligarchy.”⁸ Their wholehearted association with Britain had ended. British citizens would have to remain ignorant of the Occupation history or come to judge the level of collaboration on the Islands from fantastic stories that came across the Channel. Rejecting the Britons who might misinterpret event of the Occupation, the Islanders came to experience misrepresentation of their roles during Occupation that deepened the chasm between Channel Island and the British Isles.

Just as non-Islanders misjudged the actions of the Islands after the war, historians today have to fight their own assumptions based upon their wartime understandings. The modern reader knows that the Nazis underwent pointed programs to kill off persons with disabilities, and encountering the earlier vignette of Maurice Green, many might conclude Green’s account falls within that same violent history. However, we cannot be certain if Green’s memory intended to reflect this Nazi policy. In his interview, years after the war, Green acknowledged the disappearances as deaths in the hospital, but he did not clarify if he suspected the physicians of murder or whether it was just a consequence of failing medicine. In fact, he recalled the German doctor fondly as someone disassociated with the German war effort. During the Occupation, many Islanders died from scarcity of resources, and the hospital deaths in Green’s memories may have resulted from the lack of insulin Green himself experienced. Our understanding of Nazi programs cannot interfere with an analysis of the Islanders’ understandings in their own time and place. To take the Islanders outside of their context would lead us to misinterpret their actions and intentions.

As we try to reimagine the Islanders’ history in their own context, we still face skewed information within the archives caused by World War II’s legacy on the historical actor’s memory. In the same interview, Green recalled the “white feather attitude” that captured the

⁸ “Various documents from the National Archive file KV 4/87,” L/F/437/A7/1, Jersey Archive.

feeling of shame of civilians giving in to the Germans during the beginning of the Occupation.⁹ Experiencing the Occupation at twelve and with a father sent to Buchenwald concentration camp for hiding a Todt worker, Green's memory could reasonably be expected to have altered with time and increased understanding of the Nazi regime. Therefore, WWII's legacy affected not only the earliest records and studies post-Liberation and historians today, but the memories told by those who lived through the Occupation, as well. Furthermore, the culture of the Islands themselves influenced the accuracy of the historical record. The rumor and gossip that allowed for informants, solidarity, and self-policing were also typical of Island life and found their way into the pages of diaries. Their part of Island culture reflects the intricacies of resistance. Rumors were rebellion, but rumors were also just rumors, skewed truths shared among neighbors. Validating the space to study coexistence, these rumors also challenge accurate interpretation.

From the Islanders' own culture to its misunderstanding by outsiders, the foundation for a narrative of collaboration was set and led the Islanders to be ashamed or defensive of their past, and to bury, it. Now, as an emphasis on resistance allows Islanders to more comfortably reclaim their dismantled legacy, outsiders would still define themselves by their Occupation experience for its good and its bad rather than for its entirety. The Occupation has become such a unique aspect of their history that it has melded into their timeline when once it was blotched out and longed to be forgotten. Islanders openly share stories and have interwoven together the memories of family, friends, research, newspapers, and other sources so that one must wonder how much of their accounts rely on memories, retellings of family tales, faulty memory of a story they once read, or a type of modern folklore.

⁹ White feathers were a symbol of cowardice during the World War era. The association developed when individuals, frequently women involved with the suffragette movement, passed out white feathers to young men who had not enlisted to shame them into joining the forces; Maurice Edwarde Green, Interviewed by Conrad Wood. Imperial War Museum. 1989. Audio.

The Islands have a deep-rooted and long-celebrated folk history. Like the legacy of witches, fairies, and other mysteries whose long lives on the Islands continue centuries later to spot the land today with remnants of superstitious iconography, one questions if folklore has not continued in its own way into the Island's modern history. The Islanders have left, and frequently refurbished, the witches' seats that dot the walls of old cottage homes and protected them from unwelcomed, magical visitors; they likewise repaint the "V" insignia on their homes' facades. By reclaiming the Occupation, they have begun to mythologize it.

Younger Islanders inspired by the stories of their parents and grandparents, aunts, and great uncles are taking more interest in their history. Taxi drivers share family histories and a son arranged an interview for his mother that multiple relatives attended. And they have literally begun unearthing the past. Looking at the Guernsey countryside, one can spot mounds, like small hills, rolling in the island's emerald green grass. These bumps on Guernsey's landscape were once German bunkers that were buried after the Occupation, much like the memories of the Occupation themselves. The Islanders now enthusiastically retell Occupation stories, and some have begun to excavate these bunkers. As these German constructions resurface, so too does Island ownership of the Occupation history. The same rumors that served various intentions during the Occupation continue to live on and have kept the stories alive. Islanders have assumed the legacy assigned to them and taken ownership of it. They use it to build up their tourism by advertising their remarkable occupation and its moments of horrible collaboration, honorable resistance, and uncomfortable life with the neighboring enemy. They inform travellers of their collaboration, and they throw in remarkable, stand-alone practices of resistance, much like Bunting. And they quote Bunting. In an interview, I was asked if I had read her work, and shortly thereafter as he continued his story, the gentleman tapped the cover of *The Model Occupation*

where it rested on the table, as if it were the biblical account of the Occupation. However, acceptance of a history assigned to them does not equate to understanding what actually happened.



Figure 4. Islanders are beginning to unearth these German bunkers that were quickly buried after the war. (Images by Samantha Smith)

The accusations and rumors have created a collective ownership of the memories so that I would hear the same story, without specific names, from multiple sources with the slightest shift in details, and I did not know and could not discern if my sources were describing the same account or numerous instances of a similar action, a significant detail to understanding the extent of Island resistance and collaboration. The post-occupation account by Captain Dening, which emphasizes extensive collaboration, hints at the same problem. Dening consistently comments on the lack of “reliable evidence.”¹⁰ His statements on the extent of collaborative action must therefore be rooted in similar testimony, which would arise from the shared knowledge—that is, both eyewitnesses, as well as gossip and rumor—of the population. Today, this slow bending of information continues, as Islanders tell the stories of their families in slightly different ways than their parents, and they recount narratives they have read in books in slightly different words.

¹⁰ “Various documents from the National Archive file KV 4/87,” L/F/437/A7/1, Jersey Archive.

Moreover, they weave the two together so that their unique stories and those of their own reading and research are told as one united history.¹¹

This mixed history—from the legacy of World War II, the reaction of Britons, the distortion of Islander accounts, the evaluations and reevaluation by historians, and the modern reclaiming by Islanders—has firmly established a partial story, one that bounces between collaboration and resistance and builds off the discomfort of living in close quarters with the enemy. This narrative is not the whole story but what is remembered. As the new mythology of Occupation spreads through the Islanders and their tourist population, it is unclear if the dichotomization of this history can be undone. Yet, for historical analysis of the Islands' Occupation to progress, it must. So long as there are two distinct focuses and conversations, historical study cannot address the entirety of the Occupation. Studies of enemies working together, of providing resources, and of communicating across distances, cannot be appreciated in full until one can enter conversation on the Occupation and not be thrown into a preset narrative of opposing events.

Across the years of Germans and Islanders living and working on the confines of these tiny Islands, interaction was inevitable. In a five-year timeframe, the vast majority of this action fell in the middle of the spectrum—acting in the ways of daily Occupation life that teetered back and forth, inching toward collaboration or resistance. While the majority of their daily actions were not firm collaboration or resistance, history must also remember that five years is a significant amount of time, a time frame in which people can betray their country, enemies can become friends, and a universal humanity can be restored in the passing moments of daily life.

¹¹ One Islander shared his experience of a German coming to his home and interacting with his mother in a remarkably detailed account. He stated that his mother corroborates the story. At the time of the incident, he would have been two years old. Though not impossible, such vivid memory is surprising and may point to the way in which Islanders remember but create, combine, and develop their wartime legacy. Brian Duquemin, Personal Communication to author, May 23 to June 13, 2018.

During a war that stains world history with atrocities, these small patches of land in the middle of the English Channel became a middle ground between enemy and friend and people who lived as neighbors and coexisted.

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