INTRODUCTION

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ABSTRACT: Arguing that the resistance in France during the Second World War was always transnational in important ways, this piece identifies some of the recent scholarship that has expanded both the temporal and geographic parameters of the French Resistance. It introduces some of the key themes of this collection of articles and underscores the important contributions made by the participating authors. As these articles reveal, we can find sites of transnational resistance by looking at the relationship between the Allies and the resistance, the role that non-French denizens played in the resistance, the politics of cultural resistance, and the circulation of downed Anglo-American aircrews in Europe.

KEYWORDS: French Resistance, space, time, transnationalism, war

Where is war? This question, posed explicitly in Hilary Footitt's recent article about transnational spaces and the translation of identities in those spaces, has been present, if only implicitly, in a great deal of research over the past twenty years.¹ Historians of war have been dealing with the instability of spaces of war and peace for some time now, with the recognition that war zones are not neatly defined by borders. Similarly, we now know that the temporal parameters of war change depending on the perspective and, indeed, that structural differences between wartime and peacetime are not always clear.² It is no coincidence that these kinds of questions have been raised in the context of widening interest in transnational or global histories, and it is unsurprising that historians are mobilizing war as a way to investigate the circulation of ideas, materials, and people across physical and temporal boundaries. Historians of resistance during the Second World War are also starting to highlight these same themes in their work.

Whereas early histories focused on specific resistance groups, individual resisters, or the resistance activities of one region, newer work has expanded our focus. We continue to use the term French Resistance, but

there is an increasing preference to speak of resistance in France, or even resistances in France, as we question the conceptual utility of Frenchness when talking about what happened between 1940 and 1944. French resistance to the German Occupation happened in France, but also in England, Algeria, the United States, Canada, Cameroon, Argentina, Indochina, to name only a handful of places. Scholars have started to investigate this new geography of resistance, with centers other than France, and have also begun to think more concretely about the pre-histories of resistance and its legacy in the postwar world. As Rod Kedward concluded in a recent article, "It is a dynamic paradox that so much specificity in the mapping of resistance should go hand in hand with roots and routes which reach across the demarcations of time and place, *sans frontières*."³ The history of resistance in France has come unmoored from its previous temporal and spatial centers.

For example, Eric Jennings has challenged both the France- and London-centric histories of the past by highlighting how Africa was a vital space for Gaullist resistance.⁴ Indeed, from 1940 to 1943, the Free French cause was sustained in large part from sub-Saharan Africa, and support from Cameroon and French Equatorial Africa was critical to de Gaulle's international legitimacy. Other scholars have similarly noted the international dimensions of resistance, including Guillaume Pollack's article on resistance networks in French Indochina and Géraud Létang's article on Gaullism in Chad.⁵ Free French committees formed all over the world—in Asia, Africa, South and Central America, the Caribbean, and North America. But as Charlotte Faucher and Laure Humbert note in their introduction to a recent special issue, this focus on the Free French and Gaullist resistance means that we are overlooking substantial groups of people who resisted the German occupation of France without necessarily aligning themselves with Charles de Gaulle.⁶

Similarly, this focus on Gaullism, while allowing for an examination of resistance in different parts of the world, sometimes prevents us from studying resistance across locations or traversing national boundaries. The role that de Gaulle played in centralizing, defining, and mythologizing the resisters under his command makes it difficult to separate them from the national circumstances of their resistance work—even when it happened elsewhere. The Gaullist narrative of resistance was grounded within national parameters. Indeed, one need look no further than de Gaulle's claims that the Free French represented the true French government to see this national framing at work. Resistance, in the Gaullist view, was inspired by *French* values and was working in the service of the "real" France. Once we move beyond the strong national narratives associated with de Gaulle and the Free French, we can think more concretely about

the fact that the experience of the French in London (or any of the governments in exile) was a fundamental deterritorialization of the nation-state. This reframing encourages us to think about resistance without politically defined borders.

This collection of articles adds nuance to the national perspective often taken by historians of the resistance. The nature of the Second World War in Europe meant that national boundaries were often disrupted, rather than being reinforced, by the conflict. Potential resisters were found all over the map, both in Europe and beyond, and motives for resistance often had no particular national content. Nazi Germany, after all, was not just a threat to nation-states. Fascism threatened values that many people held dear, including liberal democracy, human rights, tolerance, socialism, and enterprise. Christians resisted for abstract, non-nationally-bound reasons; so too did Communists. Spaniards who found themselves in exile at the end of the Civil War contributed in large numbers to resistance activities in France, motivated in part by an unceasing opposition to fascism in all of its guises, as did many refugees from central and eastern Europe. In many ways, then, resistance was diasporic: there were both French citizens all around the world and non-French denizens in France who supported the cause. Even French resisters who stayed in France often ended up in different cities than the one they called home. And all resisters leaned on networks, whether familial, professional, or social, that radiated outward.

Ludivine Broch's article contributes to our understanding of this diasporic resistance by focusing on people who, while physically present in the Hexagon during the war, were not from metropolitan France. Broch examines the approximately 200,000 people from the colonies who were stranded in the metropole under Vichy: men and women who had been brought to France during the First World War to form labor battalions, or who had come during the interwar period to ease labor shortages. She argues that people of color in France were at the heart of various resistance activities and that their motives were not limited to the persecution that they experienced at the hands of Vichy and the Germans. Broch's analysis shows that resistance was sometimes undertaken in spite of French political concerns, not because of them.

To be sure, the occupation of previously delineated nation-states often formed the backdrop of local resistance and served as a motivating factor for many resisters. But concerns about national territory did not explain all resistance, nor did it shape the resistance that developed. As Olivier Wieviorka makes clear in his contribution, the involvement of the Allies in European resistance activities imposed a kind of Anglo-American logic on the clandestine struggle that was taking place. The Allies imposed a

common strategy and type of organizational structure on resistance movements and networks. Both types of resistance organizations depended heavily on the Allies for supplies, funds, and information and, more often than not, the networks were directly working in the service of the Allies by contributing intelligence and undertaking sabotage efforts for the sake of the ongoing war. The effect of these relationships was an internationalizing of local resistance groups.

Charlotte Faucher also highlights the European framework of resistance activities by focusing on the cultural agenda of the Free French. While the Free French, based in London, sought to use culture to assert its legitimacy as a political movement and to highlight particular elements of the French clandestine war, the British Council (upon which the Free French depended for funding) often diverged in its views on cultural policy. As Faucher notes, the British Council modeled its cultural policies on many occupied nations and their activities did not necessarily correspond to the Free French view of culture. In focusing on culture, along with the complicated relationships between those who were in charge of determining cultural policy, Faucher's work speaks to the multiplicity of actors and the circulation of ideas that are key to understanding the development and impact of resistance during the war.

This circulation, cooperation, and conflict between and among various nation-states returns as a prominent theme in my contribution to this collection. The piece, which deals with Anglo-American evasion in Occupied France, brings together many elements of the other articles in this collection. Downed aircrews were unwitting guests in France, guests who relied on the assistance of local people and the evasion networks that crossed Europe with little regard for the formal boundaries of nation-states. My work investigates the role of non-state actors who not only circulated transnationally, but also thought in those terms. To assist aircrews, one had to behave as though borders did not matter and one had to imagine that there were others, in other countries, who felt similarly. Like the other contributions in this collection, this article argues that ideas, people, organizations, and nation-states beyond France's borders shaped the resistance that took place in France.

Where, then, was war? For people who resisted during the Second World War, it was everywhere. One did not need to be French, or physically in France, to be part of these resistances. Even the resistance that did take place within the traditional borders of France was shaped by forces beyond those boundaries. The routes of resistance extended around the world, and we must look to the circulation within those routes to properly understand the phenomena of resistance in France during the war.

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Notes

1. Hilary Footitt, "War and Culture Studies in 2016: Putting 'Translation' into the Transnational?" *Journal of War & Culture Studies* 9, 3 (July 2016): 209–221.
2. Mary L. Dudziak, *War Time: An Idea, Its History, Its Consequences* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).
3. H. R. Kedward, "Mapping the Resistance: An Essay on Roots and Routes," *Modern & Contemporary France* 20, 4 (November 2012), 501.
4. Eric T. Jennings, *Free French Africa in World War II: The African Resistance* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015).
5. Guillaume Pollack, "Résister sous les tropiques: Les réseaux de résistance en Indochine (1940–1945)," *European Review of History: Revue européenne d'histoire* 25, 2 (March 2018): 295–311; Géraud Létang, "Traque impériale et répression impossible? Vichy face aux Français libres du Tchad," *European Review of History: Revue européenne d'histoire* 25, 2 (March 2018): 277–294.
6. Charlotte Faucher and Laure Humbert, "Introduction – Beyond de Gaulle and Beyond London: The French External Resistance and Its International Networks," *European Review of History: Revue Européenne d'histoire* 25, 2 (March 2018): 195–221.