

Jacques Adler (1927–2017)

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On 10 December 2017, Jacques Adler died in Melbourne after a short illness. Born in Paris on 28 November 1927, Jacques brought his experience in the Resistance to the study of history and used it in his pioneering PhD. In an ironic twist of fate, he found in Melbourne a vantage point from which to study the history of France in which he had participated. His career is truly a career in Franco-Australian Relations.

Jacques' parents emigrated from Poland to France after World War I. In 1941, his father was arrested by the French police and deported (ultimately to Auschwitz). Jacques joined the Jewish Communist underground in Paris and was active throughout the war. He was involved in a wide variety of clandestine activities, increasingly dangerous as the war progressed. During the Liberation, Jacques was involved in the Resistance takeover of the offices of the *Union générale des israélites de France* (UGIF), the organisation which the Vichy regime forced French Jews to create and pay for in order to control the Jewish community. It was to the UGIF records that Jacques would turn when he began research for a PhD.

In 1947, he came to Melbourne with his mother and sister (his father had been killed in Auschwitz). The need to support his family frustrated his quest for learning until the 1970s, when he retired and embarked on a BA at the University of Melbourne, where Peter McPhee, Alison Patrick and I were among those who had the pleasure of teaching him.

Jacques then undertook a PhD, of which John Foster and I were the supervisors, submitting in 1982. In 1985, Calmann-Lévy published a version as *Face à la persécution : les organisations juives à Paris de 1940 à 1944*.

In 1987, OUP published another version as *The Jews of Paris and the Final Solution: Communal Response and Internal Conflicts, 1940–1944*.

It was in this work that Jacques brought to bear his experience in the underground, in a meticulous study using the records of the UGIF. One might almost say that he was destined to write this work. It was not, however, without its difficulties. The leaders of the UGIF were generally from the Jewish establishment and were often accused of looking down on immigrant Jews. They undertook the work in the naive hope that they could palliate the regime's implementation of anti-Semitic measures. Jacques had made the other choice, that of resistance, and he had many reasons to be critical of the leaders of the UGIF.

Typically, however, Jacques undertook his work in a spirit of what the eminent historian H. R. Kedward (1991, *English Historical Review*, vol. 106, 749–50) called 'objective scholarship ... , enormously enhanced by the threads of remembered history,' particularly on the thorny questions of the relations between native and immigrant Jews and between the UGIF leaders and the Resistance. 'Adler had good reason, as a resistance activist, to condemn all those who took part in the hypocrisy of Vichy's institution [UGIF], but he does not do so; rather he leaves the reader to decide whether Jewish compromise with Vichy was avoidable or not.'

In later years, Jacques continued research. With similar generosity of spirit he sought to understand the wartime position of the Catholic Church and of Pope Pius XII (1939–1958), refusing to take the easy path of simply condemning them.

Members of his family carry on Jacques' intellectual endeavours. His daughter Louise Adler is the Director of Melbourne University Publishing. His grand-daughter, Mira Adler, completed a PhD in 2014 under the supervision of Peter McPhee on a subject dear to Jacques' heart: 'Collectivism or cooperation? The contest for meaning in the French socialist movement 1870–1890'.

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For a more detailed account of Jacques' wartime experience, see Louise and Paul Adler, 'Teenager risked his life to resist the Nazis,' *The Age*, 13 October 2017.

Works by Jacques Adler

- Adler, Jacques, 1982, *The Jews of Paris and the 'final solution': communal response and internal conflicts, 1940–1944*, (Ph.D.), University of Melbourne.
- Adler, Jacques, 1985, *Face à la persécution : les organisations juives à Paris de 1940 à 1944*, translated by André Charpentier, Paris, Calmann-Levy.
- Adler, Jacques, 1987, *The Jews of Paris and the final solution: communal response and internal conflicts, 1940–1944*, in *Studies in Jewish History*, New York, Oxford University Press.
- Adler, Jacques, 1997, 'The Nazi-imposed Jewish Councils: a Critical View,' in *History on the Edge; Essays in Memory of John Foster (1944–1994)*. ed. Mark Baker, Melbourne, University of Melbourne History Department.
- Adler, Jacques, 2000, 'The French Churches and the Jewish Question, July 1940–March 1941,' in *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, vol. 46, issue 3, 357–377.
- Adler, Jacques, 2003, 'The Jewish press in wartime Europe: France, a case study on the role and limitation of the legal and clandestine press in the struggle for survival, 1940–1944,' in *Why Didn't the Press Shout? American & International Journalism during the Holocaust*, ed. Robert Moses Shapiro, Jersey City, New Jersey, Yeshiva University Press in association with KTAV Publishing House.
- Adler, Jacques, 2016, 'Rome's Resistance [Book Review],' in *First Things: A Monthly Journal of Religion and Public Life*, issue 262, pp. 58–61.

Erratum: In the Micheline Giroux obituary (*The French Australian Review* n° 62) the sentence 'From 1951 to 1960, she pursued her career as an English teacher in French high schools, first in the north at Lens, near the Belgian border, then in the south at Gourdon, overlooking the Mediterranean Riviera' should have read 'From 1951 to 1960, she pursued her career as an English teacher in French high schools, first in the north at Lens, near the Belgian border, then in Gourdon, in the Bourgogne region of Eastern France.'