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French Jew-Baiters

I will let them find Jerusalem in France.
—Napoleon.

The Jews have done a tremendous amount of harm to my country; we must make sure they can never do it again.
—Pierre Laval.

Despite Napoleon's hospitality, the Jewish population in France was never large. The pre-Hitler total stood at 240,000, and this was subsequently swelled by 100,000 refugees from the Reich and conquered lands. When France fell under the Swastika—and Laval—all of them, rich Rothschild and lowliest Gallic Israelite alike, knew precisely what to expect.

The Nazis quickly extended the dread Nuremberg laws to the occupied territory. Jews lost jobs, businesses, property, liberty, even their lives. They were flung into primitive concentration camps and deported to Polish ghettos. And with them the Nazis brought the usual wave of Jewish suicides.

In unoccupied France they got off easier—at first. Marshal Henri Philippe Pétain embraced anti-Semitism only by degrees. He drew up his own anti-Jewish statute and sent it on to Berlin for the Führer's OK. Its execution was in direct ratio to German pressure for "collaboration." Finally in March 1941 a Commissariat for Jewish Affairs, to function throughout France, was set up under a well-known anti-Semite, Xavier Vallat, pro-Fascist deputy and lawyer. One of his jobs was expropriation of Jewish enterprises, the proceeds of which were to go into a clearinghouse. Ten per cent was allocated to aid destitute Jews.

Last week Vallat lost his post. NEWSWEEK's Vichy correspondent reported the reason: Vallat had turned the expropriations into a racket for himself, pocketing the funds. But in losing its official Jew-baiter France got another who was even worse—the wealthy Darquier de Pellepoix, member of the Paris Municipal Council and publisher of a rabid anti-Semitic weekly called *La France Enchaînée*, modeled after the Reich's notorious *Der Stürmer* of Julius Streicher. Just before the war Edouard Daladier, then Premier, had Pellepoix sentenced to jail for stirring up race hatreds, but he never actually did time.

Pellepoix began his commissariat activities with a raid by his newly organized anti-Jewish brigade on the famous Paris *Marché aux Puces* (flea market), a second-hand mart familiar to most American tourists. There 34 Jews were arrested for lacking proper papers or engaging in "forbidden professions."