

'For Their Own Good': Civilian Evacuations in France and Germany

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'Every means of defence will be put into action to stop enemy aircraft. However, some may get through [...] If nothing holds you back, as soon as the threat arrives, LEAVE! [...] LEAVE with your family. DO NOT WAIT. *LEAVE.*' [\(1\)](#)

Such was the advice given in France 1934, in anticipation of future bomb or gas attacks. Citizens were forewarned to travel to less exposed regions. Were the French unusual in this early approach to planning for evacuation, or was their eastward neighbour also counselling its inhabitants to make a pre-emptive dash for safety? And did the advent of war prompt changes to policy? In this comparison of civilian evacuation in France and Germany during the Second World War, Julia S. Torrie answers both questions, and many more besides, in a book which sheds light on the wartime relationships between civilians and the state.

In Britain, the story of evacuation is well rehearsed; indeed, it is a key anchor in this country's popular memory of its own war. On the BBC archive of wartime memoirs contributed (unsolicited, uncorroborated, but enormously enthusiastically) by the public, 14,336 entries concern 'Childhood and evacuation', compared to 'only' 2,911 on the Blitz or 1,295 on rationing. [\(2\)](#) While our present interest in the grand adventure of evacuation may be rooted in nostalgia, recent analysis has given a more nuanced view, making significant use of qualitative sources. Child evacuation is a frequent subject of academic study in Britain and elsewhere. [\(3\)](#)

In other countries, however, the evacuation of civilian populations – adult and child – barely appears. The AHRC-sponsored project *Bombing, States and Peoples in Western Europe, 1940-1945* (4) will soon publish two books featuring evacuation in France and Italy. Torrie rightly points out that evacuation is an ‘under-researched’ field (p. 6) in France and Germany. She cites three works on civilian evacuation in Germany (5), and none for France where, she notes in her conclusion, ‘the experience of evacuation [has] passed, like that of the bombing itself, into the shadows of war memory’ (p. 176). Evacuation, she says, gets a mention (like bombing) in studies of the home front, but there is little else on France, save mentions by Laura Lee Downs in her book *Childhood in the Promised Land*, and her article on childrearing in France and Britain (the latter unlisted by Torrie).(6)

Why is civilian evacuation an important topic of study? First, there is a matter of scale. During the civilian exodus of 1940 (included in Torrie’s study as an example of evacuation) 2 million Belgians fled into France, and a further 7 million French people took to the roads (p. 39); by late October 1944, 1.2 million French people were displaced (p. 159) and 4 million bombed out (p. 168), while in Germany in February 1945, it was estimated maybe 17 million people were displaced (p. 160), 12 million evacuated by the state (p. 2). Second, evacuation had a powerful qualitative impact on the lives of evacuees; the social and psychological afterlife of evacuation, however, is beyond the remit of the work under review. The book has three aims (although I would argue it does more). Torrie uses evacuation to examine the interaction of authoritarian regimes and their citizens, particularly issues of consent and coercion. Second, as air war is ‘rarely discussed’, particularly in France, parts of the civilian experience of total war remain unexplored in historical terms; thus Torrie intends to open them up for investigation. Finally, she seeks to bring the German occupation of France ‘into better focus’ by studying the ‘ground level interaction’ between the occupying and French authorities.

But there is much more. Torrie brings to the stage a wider range of actors than might appear if her home-front focus were broader. Thus we see women (mothers, wives, workers), children (infants, schoolchildren, adolescents), men (fathers, husbands, workers, soldiers, POWs), importantly too, the elderly; we see the ill and the mentally ill, we see persecuted populations including Jews and ‘asocials’; we see rural and urban life; and we meet administrators at many levels. A second theme is charity and social welfare, evacuation requiring a vast programme of assistance which put the welfare of millions into the hands of the state. Linked is the status of evacuation as a policy with an essentially humanitarian aim; Torrie guides us through the maze of exclusions which cast shadows over this policy that echoed Nazi eugenic and racial policies. A fourth thread is the nature of victimhood, and evacuees’ status – or lack thereof – as victims of war. Torrie reveals that evacuees were a highly politicised group who later turned ‘victimhood and vulnerability into powerful claims for basic rights’ (p. 74). Finally, much attention is given to the role of the family in societies at war.

The book is clearly structured, broadly chronologically, but with three central thematic chapters on evacuee problems, family ties and selection policies. In chapter one, ‘Preparing for air war’, Torrie examines the wide contrast between German and French attitudes towards evacuation in the inter-war years. Germany used an ‘anti-evacuation’ model, equipping urban populations to remain steadfast under the bombs. France, Torrie writes, subscribed to a ‘pro-evacuation’ model, which saw it as the key means of protection, in which ‘each person can go when he wants, where he wants’ (p. 22). There was criticism inside France, some commentators looking enviously towards Germany (Torrie says ‘a minority’, although many civil defence manuals the reviewer has examined made reference to Germany), others bemoaning ‘lax’ planning, and most disagreeing on the best course of action (pp. 20–1). How rigorously was the pro-evacuation model upheld? A fleeting reference (p. 25) to French faith in the army hints at the unexplored contradictions underlying war preparations in France: was it necessary to plan evacuation when the nation was so well defended? Furthermore, by refusing to analyse civil defence preparations (shelters, blackout, gas masks, etc) taking place during the 1930s *inside French towns* (p. 26), there is no way of assessing a ‘preference’ for evacuation over staying put, when so many pages of civil defence literature were dedicated to the latter.(7) Torrie’s sharply-drawn contrast is further blurred by mention near the end of the chapter of German pre-war plans to evacuate civilians living up to 20 kilometres from the Rhine (p. 28); evacuation was envisaged,

then, under certain circumstances.

Chapter two, 'Order and chaos', builds on the positions just outlined, showing that the Germans' could not be maintained once war began. It treats the initial evacuations in France and Germany in 1939, followed by the civilian *exode* in France of May/June 1940. Torrie demonstrates the profound impact of the latter on future evacuations in both countries, in her most convincing example of the reciprocal influence of the neighbouring nations. She describes the problems which arose from the 1939 German border evacuations as characteristic of *all* others which followed: a poor welcome, flawed planning, local improvisation, hasty departures, attempts to impose order, civilian drift-back and popular non-compliance (pp. 34–6). She mentions the 1939 evacuation of children from 'vulnerable areas such as Paris' (where else?) (p. 37), which demonstrated, for a country supposedly prepared for evacuation, a lack of planning. She devotes more space to the evacuation of Alsace and Lorraine to south-west France and the ensuing cultural clashes of language, religion, and so on. Torrie's depiction of evacuees' terrible journeys (crammed into freight wagons for up to 60 hours, p. 37) prefigures the unsettling parallels she later draws between evacuation and deportation. The German volte-face concerning attitudes to evacuation needed dressing up in new clothes to dissociate it from weakness: the 1940 exodus became the new model of French incompetence and atomised individualism, strongly contrasted to orderly German evacuations, and the paternalistic, well-organised work of the Nazi welfare organisation, the *Nationalsozialistische Volkswohlfahrt* (NSV) (p. 49). Torrie dovetails the opposing positions again, maintaining the contrast between French and German models.

Chapter three, 'Organising evacuations', considers the development of state policies, the work of charitable organisations and the politicisation of war relief. Major policy changes took place in spring 1942 following the bombing of Boulogne-Billancourt in March, and of Cologne in May (p. 50). Children in Germany were sent on the *Kinderlandverschickung* (KLV), a scheme originally designed to ameliorate poor children's health (like the *colonies de vacances* in France (8)). Now, older children were housed collectively by the Hitler Youth, and three to ten year olds with host families; infants and their mothers, and pregnant women, were also billeted with host families as part of the NSV's *Mutter und Kind* programme. By the end of 1942, whole schools were evacuated collectively. Two million children were sent on state evacuations, most to distant locations (pp. 54–5). French evacuations were broadly similar, but Torrie's argument rests on crucial differences which enable her to explain the French population's less volatile response. First, French evacuations were run by local government which could negotiate with the occupiers on behalf of the population (p. 62). Second, French evacuations were shorter in duration. Third, French evacuees were sent to rural locations closer to home (p. 61). Fourth, the French authorities took family 'more into account' (p. 51). The third and fourth of these reasons are at the heart of Torrie's position: how widespread were they as national principles? The author states that most reception areas were within 200 kilometres of home towns. My own research found that *where possible*, rural areas of the home *département* were 'filled up' first, but saturation occurred swiftly. Children were evacuated from the Parisian suburb of Boulogne-Billancourt to at least 15 *départements*; only those sent to the Loir-et-Cher were within 200 kilometres; many were over 500 kilometres away. Around 8,000 evacuees from Brest went to designated reception *départements* (Loir-et-Cher and the Sarthe) 400–600 kilometres away.(9) Torrie also states that there was a 'clear preference for placing children with foster families' in France. This may have been the case in Normandy, but not always elsewhere. Any evacuation of children in the Nord *département* had to be done under the guise of a health colony; such children went to group accommodation.(10) When schools closed in Brest in 1941, and during the formal evacuation of 1943, boarding-school style solutions were common. Yet, as Torrie points, out younger German children went to foster families. So a stark contrast should be blurred.

In chapter four, 'Our stay here gives us no pleasure', Torrie looks at evacuees' problems – poor welcome, incompatibility of lifestyle, work-related issues, morale and morals – and the states' solutions. Because of its comprehensive welfare programmes, Torrie writes, the Nazi party believed that people had 'unlearned' the social skill of mutual assistance: within the *Volksgemeinschaft* the strongest links were not between the community members, but between individuals and party. However, in France, with a more recent individualist tradition, but also a stronger emphasis on family relationships, pre-dating Vichy (11), citizens were better able (and encouraged) to provide mutual aid. Nonetheless, evacuees still faced a cool welcome.

While I might not agree with Torrie that evacuations sought to ‘strengthen’ existing social structures, particularly the family (p. 89), in France, she is right to emphasise a French insistence on family compared with the German one on community, pointing out that the German scheme intended to *create* new ties to the regime. Unlike their neighbour, the French produced little propaganda especially for evacuees, and tried to avoid ‘making them into martyrs’; this was, of course, easier for Nazi propagandists, given that Germany was bombed by an obvious enemy (p. 90). The French position was more ambiguous. This chapter is also comprehensive in its treatment of women evacuees, notably concerning work and morality.

Chapter five, ‘If only family unity can be maintained’, uses two case studies, a protest by the evacuees of Witten, contrasted with the smoother evacuation of Cherbourg, to demonstrate the centrality of family separation to evacuees’ concerns. German policymakers underestimated the significance of family (pp. 94–5). In Witten a group of evacuees launched a protest against their forced evacuation away from their husbands, who remained doing essential war work. Their protest succeeded, and the withholding of ration cards for ‘wild returnees’ was abandoned. In Cherbourg, Torrie writes that the Germans wished to impose similar measures, separating spouses, but that the ‘French authorities fought the German occupiers [...] on behalf of the French citizens’ (p. 112), permitting wives to stay to support husbands at home. The Witten example is strong, but two minor comments might shake the French one. First, to describe French evacuations as ‘family friendly’ (p. 96) because the spousal relationship was maintained ignores other integral parts of a ‘family’ obliged to leave: children and grandparents. Second, the insistence upon the role of ‘the French government’ as a ‘buffer’ between the Germans and the population is also perhaps overdrawn. In other towns not considered by Torrie, we find local administrators working *against* the ‘needs and preferences’ (p. 116) of local people (as in the unpopular decision to close schools in Brest in 1941 to force the evacuation of children), while the German attitude (not making evacuation compulsory 1943) chimed with popular attitudes. However, this chapter convincingly demonstrates the importance of family ties in influencing the behaviour of evacuees, which policymakers were forced to take into consideration.

Chapter six, ‘On the basis of selection’, shows that the protection evacuation brought must be seen as a *privilege* not a *right*, and furthermore, a privilege accorded only to parts of the population. This chapter contributes to understanding relations between individuals, groups and the state in these countries and brings to our attention the blurred nature of evacuees’ status as victims of war. The chapter concerns the treatment of Jews, the mentally ill and ‘asocials’. Torrie focuses on the strange similarities between evacuation and deportation (differentiated by intention and result) (pp. 131–2), and notes that Jews were deported faster from areas where the housing crisis was greater, to make space for bombed-out members of the *Volksgemeinschaft* (p. 132). In some cases, city hospitals were evacuated to rural mental institutions, and their patients switched, the mentally ill sent to urban areas vulnerable to bombing (pp. 140–1); others were moved to euthanasia camps. Evacuees committing criminal acts could also be sent back to cities. The Nazis thus turned ‘Allied bombs into tools for genocide’ (p. 128), or ‘tools for eugenics’ (p. 147). Members of the *Volksgemeinschaft* were privileged in the competition for housing and healthcare that bombing provoked. Torrie’s evidence for similar policies in France is a little sparse. She connects the German case and French use of deported Jews’ apartments for bombed-out civilians, an operation run by the Comité Ouvrier de Secours Immédiat (COSI) (an anti-Semitic, German-funded organisation that became directly linked to the French government only in 1944 (12)), although this properly concerns despoliation and not evacuation. The only example that leads to her conclusion of ‘the *refusal* to evacuate Jews in France and Germany’ (p. 131, my italics) is of four ‘Israelites’ crossed off a list planning evacuation from a Parisian school in 1943. I do not debate evident French anti-Semitic policies, and would find it surprising were Jews permitted to evacuate; but Torrie gives no policy to support her example. Concerning the mentally ill in France, I would have also liked stronger evidence of policy. Torrie describes how Normandy’s psychiatric patients were moved around as the Germans requisitioned their hospitals *not* because it was felt they needed protection (p. 142). While the difference of intention is important, the example does not show an equivalent victimisation of this population to that in Germany. Finally, concerning ‘a-social’ evacuees in France – here, criminals – Torrie notes that French policy was ‘more lenient’. They were evacuated to locations with police stations; indeed, Torrie even says some were evacuated ‘as a punishment’ to separate them from urban troublemakers (p. 149). Thus such people were not excluded from evacuation. The chapter is fascinating in tracing how

those excluded from each 'national community' were shunted around (in Germany, often to their deaths) and neglected in preference to those deemed valuable; it does not illustrate the convincing equivalence of policy concerning evacuation and 'undesirables' in both countries that Torrie's conclusions imply (see, for example, p. 144).

The penultimate chapter, 'Reponding to chaos', moves once more into a position of contrast between France and Germany, treating evacuation in each country's last year of war. There are points of convergence in each nation's experience, notably an 'increasing need to evacuate and a growing impossibility of doing so' (p. 152). Accommodation and transport were increasingly scarce; in both countries, Torrie says, the treatment of civilians was characterised by compromise and improvisation (p. 156). The meat of the contrast, however, comes from a difference in scale between France and Germany. For evacuees in Normandy, Torrie writes of 'unpleasant experiences' which were 'rendered bearable' as they were short term: this evacuation, she says, usually amounted to 'a few days on the road' (p. 158). An idea of mild upheaval perhaps emerges from the contrast with Germany where the scale of disorder was immense, or perhaps from the Norman case study; Torrie rather plays down the French experience. Yet during the siege of Brest (August-September 1944), for example, 22,000 new refugees clogged local roads, with little welcome, for at least two months. Given that 80 per cent of all buildings in Brest were destroyed, many had nothing to return to; only in 1959 did local authorities begin dismantling Brest's temporary housing. Given the levels of destruction in Norman towns such as Le Havre, I find Torrie's picture of the French 'evacuation' (or refugee) crisis of 1944 surprising; perhaps qualitative material might have highlighted the *impact* of the situation, because in quantitative contrast to Germany, it could appear slight. The scale is striking: 1.2 million displaced people in France in late 1944, but maybe 18 million on the roads in Germany. Torrie cites thousands of children separated from their parents for months in evacuated billets or centres (similar examples in France are ignored by Torrie's analysis) (p. 165), but also the influx of eastern Germans fleeing the Red Army, competing for resources in bombed cities. Clearly, the German case was desperate, and the scale, coupled with the administrative divisions of occupation, made repatriation arduous. Torrie concludes that 'orderly evacuations' broke down under this pressure, although immediately counters her point by saying it is hard to consider evacuations in either country to have *ever* been particularly successful (p. 165). Her statement that 'evacuations work best when the battle is going well for those involved' (p. 151), therefore, is surprising: never in this book do we see an evacuation that really 'works', regardless of how 'well' the 'battle' is going; 'best' is an extremely relative term.

The final chapter, 'Evacuation's aftermath', raises important questions about evacuees' status as war victims. It begins by looking at evacuees' claims, in Germany (the point cannot be made for France), concerning the 'right to reside' in former hometowns, and how this set them up in 'competition' with other displaced people, notably those returning from concentration camps and the expelled from the east (p.168). Evacuees were low down the 'pecking order' of victims. After lobbying by interest groups, laws were established to assist German evacuees, but they were never 'equal' victims to those persecuted by the Nazis (p. 173). The French case is a thought-provoking comparison: to smooth over divisions, apart from notable collaborators, the French 'preferred to view victims as equals' (p. 174): the cracks between victims and perpetrators were papered over (p. 172). It could be argued that this has been at the root of the French 'obsession' with Vichy ever since, for time, history and society have *not* judged all victims as equal. Nor should they have done. Yet certain 'victims' (or people who suffered, perhaps) were thus written out of French wartime history as their claim to victimhood could not compete with others: *prisonniers de guerre*, *les fusillés*, and clearly, *les déportés*. The politics of victimhood accounts for much of how history is written; those victims of the Holocaust will never disappear from memory. But Torrie's book goes a long way to reinstate the experiences of a swathe of civilians in France and in Germany whose lives were turned upside down by war.

“*For Their Own Good*” provides new insights into civilian life in France and Germany, but it poses the a few technical challenges. There is much in the book to admire, not least the author’s use of local archival detail to flesh out examples, and her rigorous structuring of the comparison between the two countries. There are three broad reservations.

Regarding terminology, near the beginning of the book (p. 11) Torrie alerts the reader to her usage of the word ‘evacuation’ and ‘evacuee’. Not only did the French initially use the word *évacuation* only under certain military circumstances, and three other terms, *repliement*, *dispersion* and *éloignement*, but the French government frequently referred to its evacuees as *réfugiés* (*réfugié* meant any displaced person). The Germans used a variety of euphemistic terms, notably *umquartieren* (being quartered or housed elsewhere), and phased out *Evakuierung*, reserved exclusively for the deportation of Jews and others. While I fully understand Torrie’s desire, for her readers’ ease, to stand by one term, in doing so she loses certain nuances of experience, turning her evacuees into ‘an amorphous mass’ (to steal her own expression) (p. 90), when there are important distinctions that affected their activity, motivation and treatment. She chooses ‘evacuee’ because such people were ‘deliberately displaced’, and not the refugees of ‘an accidental confluence of events leading to flight’ (p. 9); yet a large number of those who feature in this study might be better described in the latter terms. There is a difference between those who were evacuated to specified (or self-chosen) locations *pre-emptively* and those who fled before an invading army (both in 1940 and 1944 in France, and in Germany in 1945), or because home was destroyed by bombing. Placing participants in *a posteriori* evacuees in the same category as *a priori* evacuees belies interesting and complicated differences. It is hard to force people to leave if they are not expecting calamity to strike; however, those whom it has struck flee voluntarily. People whose houses are not destroyed are more easily repatriated than those bombed out. In chapter six the problem of terminology was particularly difficult as it seemed that *all* people on the move – whether banished, swapped, deported, bombed-out, in flight, or more recognisably evacuated (see pp. 150–1) – were termed ‘evacuees’. While too many terms might confuse, Torrie could have been more systematic in identifying types of displaced person.

A second reservation contains a contradiction: I am delighted to see these two countries’ policies towards evacuation presented in comparison, and I understand the motivation for their choice. Yet the enormous difference of scale in bombing, its damage and its motivation makes the comparison awkward at times. Torrie writes that ‘the same difficulties afflicted both countries’ (p. 71); they did not. She sometimes seems keen to hunt down similarities and differences in evacuation policy based on national *ideologies* rather than the vastly different circumstances of war which also shaped government and civilian action. This is not just a question of tonnage and death tolls: when they bombed France, the Allies aimed at military, industrial and transportation targets, among others. The population was well aware that the bombers sought such targets, and that homes and lives bodies were unintended casualties. With a (sometimes misplaced) faith the bombers’ accuracy, localised or no evacuation at all was a more viable option. The Allies’ motivation was different in Germany: ‘dehousing’ the working population aimed to break morale and destroy the manpower behind the German war machine (i.e. kill civilians).

Torrie emphasises the contrasts that support her argument (e.g. French ‘pro-evacuation’ vs German ‘anti-evacuation’; French short distance vs German long distance; the ‘unpleasant experience’ of 1944 in France vs the catastrophe of 1945 in Germany), but her own evidence often supports a more nuanced view. Conversely, tracking down similarities can also mislead. For example, she paints the *Secours national* as an emulation of the German NSV which the Germans tried to make supply ‘Nazi-style war relief’. While the *Secours national*, which was never neutral (p. 68), nor was it pro-Nazi; it was always pro-Pétain, and its collaboration stemmed from there. It did not embrace the Germanophile workerism of the COSI (or the *Entr’aide d’Hiver*), and implemented war relief according to Vichy’s moral code of ‘Travail, famille, patrie’. She ignores the animosity between the COSI and both local government and the *Secours national*, integrating it too neatly within the mainstream of French war relief. Likewise, Torrie wonders whether French policymakers desired children in school centres to wear uniforms ‘in an effort to make [them] more like the *KLV*’ (p. 67). Instead of seeing the French gaze fixed only across the Rhine, Torrie could have looked too at long traditions of scouting and uniform-wearing youth organisations in France, or in private

(Catholic) schools (and many evacuation centres were staffed by religious personnel). In her desire to find similarities and support her thesis of ‘cross national interaction, observation, and imitation’ (p. 71), Torrie decontextualises evacuation policy from the events of war. She herself notes instances where French policy developments preceded German ones, reacting to external events of the war (e.g. regarding policy alterations in France after the March 1942 Renault raid followed by German ones in May 1942). There was imitation; but often policy altered more pragmatically the wake of external events.

Concerning case study locations, Torrie describes Normandy as ‘the best illustration of the French situation’, although notes that it is not ‘typical, but used here to best expose the dilemmas of evacuation (p. 4). When a single case study is used, generalisations about a ‘national’ picture must be made carefully. Were the case study a ‘typical’ location, perhaps national-scale deductions would be possible. It is arguable whether any location had a ‘typical’ experience of war; some may have had experiences ‘representative’ of a number of other places; but an extreme or critical case should be used carefully. Normandy underwent events not shared elsewhere. A case study approach is fascinating, lively and perhaps the only way of ‘getting at’ ground-level experiences. Yet Torrie’s conclusions, based on the Norman case, contradicted those which emerged from my own work, which used other cases.

Such reservations should not detract from this useful, well-crafted book. Torrie was constrained to find a way to be clear about evacuation; adding extra case studies is often beyond a historian’s means; any bi-national comparison will face difficulties of the incomparable. It is skilful to attempt one, and Torrie’s succeeds. I wanted more contextualisation of events, however, and a greater role accorded to a nuanced, chronologically varied, French state. In the end, Torrie largely achieves her aims: we are more enlightened as to the relations between people and state in authoritarian regimes, and have developed ideas of belonging, rights and privileges. The book is a worthy contribution to a growing literature on the civilian experience of air war in Europe.

Notes

1. Archives Municipales de Lille, 5H3.1: ‘Lille et le Nord sous les gaz : recommandations officielles à la population civile’, 1934 (Paris). The reviewer would like to emphasise that her expertise lies in the French case of this comparison rather than across both countries, which is why supplementary examples are drawn from events in France.[Back to \(1\)](#)
2. ‘Childhood and evacuation’ is by far the largest number of entries; a distant second place goes to memories of the British Land Army, with 6,364 stories. See <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar/> [2]> [accessed 25 February 2011].[Back to \(2\)](#)
3. Torrie (p. 6) notes the influence of Richard Titmuss, yet contemporary interest pre-dates his *Problems of Social Policy* (begun 1942, published 1950 (London)); she could also have mentioned the pioneering research of Anna Freud and Dorothy Burlingham on evacuated children (D. Burlingham and A. Freud, *Young Children in Wartime* (London, 1942) and *Infants without Families* (London, 1944)). British-based psychologists and social workers during the Blitz focused much attention on problems of bombing and evacuation; see for example, W. M. Burbury, ‘Evacuation and air raids: effects on children’, *British Medical Journal*, 8 November 1941, 660–2; F. Bodman, ‘War conditions and the mental health of the child’, *British Medical Journal*, 4 October 1941, 486–8; E. Glover, ‘Notes on the psychological effects of war conditions on the civilian population’, part iii, ‘The “Blitz” – 1940-41’, *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 23 (1942), 2–37. In a recent article on children and war, Barenbaum *et al* cite eight wartime psychological studies on evacuation (Barenbaum, J. *et al*, ‘The psychosocial aspects of children exposed to war: practice and policy initiatives’, *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 41, 1 (2004), 41–62, 48). More recent scholarly work includes, for example, M. Parsons and P. Starns, *The Evacuation: the True Story* (Peterborough, 1999), S. Wheatcroft, ‘Children’s experiences of war: handicapped children in England during the Second World War’, *Twentieth Century British History*, 19, 4 (2008), 480–501; six out of 26 chapters in the anthology, *Children: The Invisible Victims of War* deal with the evacuation of British children, and another four with evacuations in different countries.[Back to \(3\)](#)

4. See <<http://centres.exeter.ac.uk/wss/bombing/index.htm> [3]> [accessed 25 February 2011]. Web exhibition forthcoming. C. Baldoli and A. Knapp, *Forgotten Blitzes: France and Italy under Allied Bombs, 1940–1945* (London, forthcoming 2011); *Bombing, States and Peoples in Western Europe, 1940–1945*, ed. R. Overy *et al* (London, forthcoming 2011). The latter contains chapters by Michael Schmiedel and Elena Cortesi on evacuation in France and Italy respectively. [Back to \(4\)](#)
5. C. Baldoli and A. Knapp, *Forgotten Blitzes: France and Italy under Allied Bombs, 1940–1945* (London, forthcoming 2011); R. Overy, *op. cit.* The latter contains chapters by Michael Schmiedel and Elena Cortesi on evacuation in France and Italy respectively. [Back to \(5\)](#)
6. L. L. Downs, ‘Milieu social ou milieu familial? Theories and practices of childrearing among the popular classes in twentieth-century France and Britain: the case of evacuation (1939–45)’, *Family and Community History*, 8, 1 (May 2005), 49–65; L. L. Downs, *Childhood in the Promised Land: Working Class Movements and the Colonies de Vacances in France, 1880–1960* (Durham, NC, 2002). [Back to \(6\)](#)
7. On interwar civil defence publications destined for popular consumption, see L. Dodd and M. Wiggam, ‘Civil defence as a harbinger of war in interwar Britain and France’, *Synergies Royaume Uni et Irlande* (forthcoming, 2011). [Back to \(7\)](#)
8. See Downs, *Childhood in the Promised Land*, *op. cit.* [Back to \(8\)](#)
9. Archives Municipales et Communautaires de Brest, 4H4.25, ‘Incidences des principaux bombardements subis par la Ville de Brest au cours de la guerre’, 10 Apr. 1946; 4H4.36, Adjoint-Mayor of Brest to Abbé du Petitcorps, 4 Oct. 1963. [Back to \(9\)](#)
10. Official evacuation outside the Nord had been forbidden by the occupier, so under the guise of ‘health colonies’ (although now specifically targeting ‘child victims of war’ rather than poor or unhealthy children), thousands of children were sent away from urban centres for stints in the countryside, in and out of the school holidays. (Archives Départementales du Nord, 25W.38180: Head of Refugee Services for the Interior Ministry to all departmental refugee services, 27 Nov. 1941; Archives Municipales de Lille, 5H6.6: *Le Grand Echo du Nord*, 17 Oct. 1941.). [Back to \(10\)](#)
11. On family policy in pre-war France, see V. de Luca, ‘Restoring the notion of family in France: pronatalist and pro-family propaganda in schools and army barracks (1920–1940)’, *Population (English Edition)*, 60.1/2 (2005), 11–35; A. Prost, ‘Conservatives, population, and the family in twentieth-century France’, *Population and Development Review*, 14 (1988), 147–64; and P. V. Dutton, ‘An overlooked source of social reform: family policy in French agriculture, 1936–1945’, *The Journal of Modern History*, 72, 2 (2000), 375–412. [Back to \(11\)](#)
12. J.-P. Le Crom, ‘De la philanthropie à l’action humanitaire’, in *La protection sociale en France sous le regime de vichy* (Rennes, 2001), pp. 183–230, p. 226. [Back to \(12\)](#)

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[4]

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