

3844
Winter Term Assignment
The Aftermath of World War Two
Due Date: April 1, 2025

The goal of your winter term assignment is to choose a topic that you are passionate about in relation to the end of World War Two and the aftermath period up to 1949. Broad topics might include the end of the war in Germany, violence, retribution and/or assault, the military history of 1945, the dropping of the atomic bombs, the Nuremberg Trials, the rise of the Cold War, the founding of the modern states of India, Pakistan, or Israel, Denazification, and the establishment of a new international order. Within these topics, you should find a sub-topic that is manageable in order to complete the assignment by the due date.

In addition to choice in terms of focus, you also have a choice between four assignment formats. Please choose the one that best fits your interests.

1. Podcast;
2. Documentary (via recorded powerpoint/youtube video);
3. Written essay (8-10 pages)
4. Video game proposal

No matter what format you choose, you are expected to use both secondary and primary sources.

- a. For secondary, at least **two** historians' books should be part of your research.
- b. For primary, you can use some images, but you are asked to use at least 2 **written** primary sources, with 4 primary sources used in total.

Regardless of the format you choose, there is a written component. If you are doing a podcast or documentary, you need to submit your written script/notes that includes all sources used, appropriately cited.

Your sources and arguments will be unique to your chosen project, but I will put a bibliography of sources on the class website and will also list some primary source repositories and published works to aid you in figuring out your topic.

Specific Guidelines for each project:

This assignment will explore a question you have on your chosen topic. It must contain 2 key components:

1. Discussing the scholarly literature. For each of your secondary sources, you need to identify the author's main argument and sub-arguments, the sources and methodologies they use, and how they "speak" to each other – what, taken together, your authors illuminate about the topic you are presenting.

2. Analysis of primary sources: whether they are letters, memoirs, reports, images, or any other kinds of primary sources, you should use them to answer your key question/thesis and provide your reader or viewer with not just a story, but an analysis that leads them to a deeper understanding of the importance of your topic and the larger point you are trying to make.

Option 1: Research Essay:

1. The essay should be approximately 8-10 pages long (about 2,500-3,000 words)
2. You should have an introductory paragraph that outlines your thesis, agenda, and sources you will use;
3. Discuss your two secondary sources by presenting each author's thesis, methodology, and sources, and showing what their value is to your topic (and how your work fits with theirs, or fills in gaps in the existing work)
4. Have three main arguments you are making that support your central argument in well-structured body paragraphs;
5. Use sources effectively and properly cite them using **Chicago Style** footnotes and bibliography;
6. Have a strong conclusion
7. Clear grammar, structure and style throughout
8. Don't forget page numbers. You don't need a separate title page but you should have your name and student number and the paper title at the top of the first page.

Option 2: Podcast:

1. The podcast should be approximately 10-15 minutes long.
2. You should begin with an introduction that presents your central question and the sources you have used;
3. Make use of devices such as music, interviews, narrative moments (reading a soldier's letter, for example), to liven up the presentation;
4. Have a section of your presentation that introduces the historians you have looked at, their arguments and sources, and why their work matters for answering key questions on your topic (and what might be missing from those works that you are addressing)
5. Include informative content that addresses the central question you seek to answer;
6. Present not just a story but also an analysis of why this story matters;
7. Have a conclusion that sums up your central idea, presentation, and historical significance
8. Submit your written notes to e-class, and include all citations and a bibliography.
Chicago style is required.

Option 3: Powerpoint/Youtube Video:

1. This should be about 10 minutes long;
2. You should begin with an introduction that presents your central question and the sources you have used, as well as an agenda;

3. Make use of devices such as music, images, narrative moments (reading a soldier's letter, for example), to liven up the presentation
4. Where you use images or sources, include information about the source (title, origin);
5. Have a section of your presentation that introduces the historians you have looked at, their arguments and sources, and why their work matters for answering key questions on your topic (and what might be missing from those works that you are addressing)
6. Present not just a story but also an analysis of why this story matters;
7. Have a conclusion that sums up your central idea, presentation, and historical significance.
8. Include your written notes that have all of your sources listed **Chicago style** and any required footnotes/endnotes at the end of your presentation.

One final point for option 3: Please try to ensure that the images you use are in the public domain and/or you are allowed to use them. For youtube videos, you can make the link unlisted. You can opt to share only with me, or we can post the link on e-class if you would like to share your work with the class.

Option 4: Video Game Design

The goal with this assignment is to make a historically responsible and engaging video game about some aspect of the last year of the war and/or its aftermath to 1949. You could, for example, make a game of strategy during the early Cold War, or a game of diplomacy in the peace talks, or a first-person character game of experiencing a ruined Warsaw or Berlin, and the rebuilding process – it is up to you. I do ask you to please refrain from violent episodes or topics for this assignment.

I ask that you speak to me directly about crafting this assignment, as it will vary depending on how an individual student might want to approach it.

For an example of a game-making assignment in a history course, see this link:

<https://notevenpast.org/designing-historical-video-games/>

You must include, in your submission:

- 1) Decide what kind of game you want to make and explain the rationale for explaining and immersing yourself in a particular historical topic;
- 2) Explain the historical details you will be including, and how the point of the game presents some form of accurate history of your chosen topic;
- 3) Include a compare/contrast and details from what scholars say on your historical topic: this is your historiography section where you demonstrate scholarly knowledge of your topic so that you can consider their nuanced points when making your game
- 4) Use primary sources to inform your game, for example by having real historical figures as people in your game and then using their own words within the game;
- 5) If you wish, provide a prototype, or simply a written description of how you picture the game would work;
- 6) Explain how video games and history can work together;

7) Include all of your sources in a full bibliography.

Sample Citations for footnotes/endnotes:

You must always cite sources when you use them. You can do this via endnotes or footnotes. Below are a few examples of proper citations:

Book:

Smith, John. *The French Revolution* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), p. 454.

Article:

Martin, Gail, "Harvest Failures and the Outbreak of Revolution in France," in *Journal of French Studies* 2, no. 1 (1998): 24.

After you have cited an author once, if you do so again in a footnote immediately following, you can use "Ibid" but if you cite again a page later, use the author's last name and page number.

Example:

1. Smith, John. *The French Revolution* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), p. 454.
2. Ibid, p. 453.
3. Martin, Gail, "Harvest Failures and the Outbreak of Revolution in France," in *Journal of French Studies* 2, no. 1 (1998): 24.
4. Smith, p. 264.

There is a separate document on the e-class site with a bibliography of secondary sources and I will also be posting a list of relevant primary sources and repositories.

Jocelyn Boyd

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HIST3844

April 1, 2025

France's *femmes tondues*: Punishment, Participation, and Liberation

The *femmes tondues* after the Second World War were women whose heads were shaved as punishment for supposed 'horizontal' collaboration with the occupying Germans. Although this phenomenon occurred in other nations such as Denmark, Holland, Norway, Italy, and Greece, its manifestation in France was unique. These practices have inspired numerous academic studies and cultural representations in films, novels, and songs. These *femmes tondues* ('shorn women') also remain a significant part of the national collective public memory of the Liberation. Over 20,000 women had their heads shaved for collaboration with the Germans throughout the Liberation and beyond; the majority of these were for having had some form of intimate relationship with a German.¹ This is a significant practice that must be contextualized and analyzed in order to understand the reconstruction of the French national identity, the patriarchal structures in place, and the nation-wide reckoning with the war. This essay will examine the *tonte* (the event of the shaving) as a gender-based punishment, the significance of the punishment itself, why this practice was so widespread and visible as well as how it fits into the wider *épuration* and reckoning with national identity occurring in Liberation France.

A critical source for this essay is Fabrice Virgili's *Shorn Women: Liberation and Punishment in Liberation France*. This monograph provides a quantitative analysis of the *tontes* and uses an extraordinary range of primary sources to examine these events. Virgili employs

¹ Fabrice Virgili, *Shorn Women: Liberation and Punishment in Liberation France*, trans. John Flower (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2002), 1.

newspaper articles, government documents and various other sources to build a picture of retribution and the public search for justice, all the while acknowledging with empathy the actual crimes (or lack thereof) of the *femmes tondues* and their experiences. Another significant source to consider is Hanna Diamond's *Women and the Second World War in France, 1939-48: Choices and Constraints*, which provides an analysis of the wider context in which the *tontes* occurred. She examines the Occupation and Liberation, then contextualizes the choices and decisions made by the women and the general civilian population. More recent scholarship on this topic has acknowledged the gendered dimension of this punishment rather than simply another punishment for collaboration. A discussion of this topic is impossible without examining the gendered aspects of the punishment and its widespread use. This essay will build on this argument that the head shavings were a gender-based punishment and represented a male attempt to reappropriate the female body and reassert a patriarchal system and gender roles in the post-war period.

A significant issue in a more profound examination of this topic remains the lack of available written primary sources. Fabrice Virgili notes that “the refusal of victims and perpetrators of this violent act to talk about it” is a major barrier in understanding the women, the people who shaved them, and those who watched.² However, there exists a plethora of visual primary sources in the forms of photographs and videos, and this is often the only contemporary evidence of a practice that is otherwise shrouded in silence.³ These photographs are incredibly valuable sources as they provide insight into the sentiment of the moment and can evoke emotions that would otherwise be incomprehensible. In her article about Lee Miller, a photographer who followed troops in France from D-Day through to Liberation, Claire Gorrara

² Fabrice Virgili, *Shorn Women: Liberation and Punishment in Liberation France*, trans. John Flower (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2002), 5.

³ Fabrice Virgili, *Shorn Women: Liberation and Punishment in Liberation France*, trans. John Flower (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2002), 1.

writes that “such photographers were not innocent bystanders. They frequently acted as witnesses and chroniclers of the act and were the ‘framing eye’ for whom the main male protagonists performed”.⁴ This is critical to keep in mind when using these photographs as primary sources—they may be intentional in what they choose to include or not include, in the cropping or framing of the photograph itself, or in the posing and staging of the subjects.

A fascinating interpretation of the photographs of the *femmes tondues* is provided by Claire Duchén, who writes of the use of these photographs in the wider mythologizing of the Liberation and collective memory of the *tontes*. She argues that this visual documentation made specific women anonymous and generalized the *femme tondu*; therefore the idea of “*La femme tondu* as ‘woman’” emerges.⁵ The shaved women in these photographs begin to be seen as representations for all woman, which “thereby universalizes the feminine associations with collaboration [and] reinforces collective rather than individual responsibility”.⁶ This interpretation of these photographs as part of a public reckoning with collectivity and individual and national identity provide another lens through which to examine these sources. It is a reminder that photographs “impl[y] a story but simultaneously withhold[...] that story”.⁷ The women are unknown, but a specific moment from their life has been immortalized. The viewer becomes uneasily complicit with the crowd. We indulge this voyeuristic intrusion of a vulnerable moment and are confronted with a reckoning of crime, punishment, and victimization.

⁴ Claire Gorrara, “Fashion and the *femmes tondues*: Lee Miller, Vogue and representing Liberation France,” *French Cultural Studies* 29, no. 4 (2018): 332-333.

⁵ Claire Duchén, “Crime and Punishment in Liberated France: The Case of *les femmes tondues*,” in *When the War was Over: Women, War and Peace in Europe, 1940-1956*, eds. Claire Duchén and Irene Bandhauer-Schöffmann (London: Lexington University Press, 2000), 241.

⁶ Claire Duchén, “Crime and Punishment in Liberated France: The Case of *les femmes tondues*,” in *When the War was Over: Women, War and Peace in Europe, 1940-1956*, eds. Claire Duchén and Irene Bandhauer-Schöffmann (London: Lexington University Press, 2000), 241.

⁷ Claire Duchén, “Crime and Punishment in Liberated France: The Case of *les femmes tondues*,” in *When the War was Over: Women, War and Peace in Europe, 1940-1956*, eds. Claire Duchén and Irene Bandhauer-Schöffmann (London: Lexington University Press, 2000), 239.

Photographs are valuable as primary sources for this reason: it allows for a unique glimpse into a particular moment that will never be reproduced. However, they also must be placed within their wider context and employed with the understanding that there are limitations to its use. These limitations are significant to consider when interpreting the visual sources used in this essay.

The Liberation in France evoked a range of reactions and emotions among French citizens. For four years, they had been occupied by German forces and lived under an authoritarian regime. Their national identity had been destroyed; with Liberation began the attempts to rebuild a new sense of patriotism and national pride. Liberation represented a strange space in between war and peace—the occupiers had been removed but they still lacked established political institutions and a transition to normal peacetime. Claire Duchen describes it as “both exhilarating in its celebration and vicious in its recriminations. In the chaos, people wanted order, closure, a clean slate as they entered a new era”.⁸ This desire for a clean slate resulted in the *épuration*: a purging of those suspected of having collaborated with the Germans during the Occupation. There were legal as well as extrajudicial elements and included people in all sectors of work and for a wide range of crimes. Henry Rousso writes that it was a “regime born from defeat” and goes as far as to call *épuration* a “franco-française” war.⁹ *Epuraton* responded to a popular demand for violence and justice, affirmed the power of the people as rebuilders of their nation, and contributed to the larger national reconstruction of French identity.¹⁰ The *femmes tondues* must be understood within the context of the Occupation,

⁸ Claire Duchen, “Crime and Punishment in Liberated France: The Case of *les femmes tondues*,” in *When the War was Over: Women, War and Peace in Europe, 1940-1956*, eds. Claire Duchen and Irene Bandhauer-Schöffmann (London: Lexington University Press, 2000), 233.

⁹ “Le regime né de la défaite”: Henry Rousso, “L’*épuration* en France: une histoire inachevée,” *Vingtième siècle* 33, no. 6 (1992): 79, 84.

¹⁰ Henry Rousso, “L’*épuration* en France: une histoire inachevée,” *Vingtième siècle* 33, no. 6 (1992): 104-105.

Liberation, and *épuration*, an environment in which people were seeking a scapegoat for their suffering.

The *tontes* themselves varied widely in their location, size, and unraveling. These 20,000 events happened all over France but were most concentrated in areas where there had been the heaviest German presence.¹¹ The women who were subjected to these head shavings were typically young, single, and poorly educated.¹² Although there had been some cases in the later part of 1943, the practice exploded with Liberation and there was another slight increase with the capitulation of Germany in 1945 and the return of deportees from concentration camps.¹³ These were decidedly public events: “The punishment is a show and the population is invited to witness its production”.¹⁴ Virgili describes the “showy, festive and collective nature” of the semi-official ceremony of the head shaving, and many sources use words like ‘spectacle’, ‘show’, and ‘celebration’ to describe the *tontes*.¹⁵ He adds that “the attack on the body is made ten times worse by the humiliation of the punishment being carried out in front of the woman’s own people [...] the woman whose head is to be shaved has to be seen”.¹⁶ It was an event that demanded the participation of its spectators. It brought a very private and intimate transgression into a public spectacle of a punishment.

¹¹ Fabrice Virgili, *Shorn Women: Liberation and Punishment in Liberation France*, trans. John Flower (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2002), 42.

¹² Claire Duchén, “Crime and Punishment in Liberated France: The Case of *les femmes tondues*,” in *When the War was Over: Women, War and Peace in Europe, 1940-1956*, eds. Claire Duchén and Irene Bandhauer-Schöffmann (London: Lexington University Press, 2000), 235.

¹³ Claire Duchén, “Crime and Punishment in Liberated France: The Case of *les femmes tondues*,” in *When the War was Over: Women, War and Peace in Europe, 1940-1956*, eds. Claire Duchén and Irene Bandhauer-Schöffmann (London: Lexington University Press, 2000), 234.

¹⁴ Fabrice Virgili, *Shorn Women: Liberation and Punishment in Liberation France*, trans. John Flower (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2002), 188.

¹⁵ Fabrice Virgili, *Shorn Women: Liberation and Punishment in Liberation France*, trans. John Flower (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2002), 231.

¹⁶ Fabrice Virgili, *Shorn Women: Liberation and Punishment in Liberation France*, trans. John Flower (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2002), 187-188.

This photograph (fig 1.) is one of the most known photographs of the shorn women and demonstrates the collective aspect of this practice. It was taken by Robert Capa in August 1944 and has been titled “*La Tondue de Chartres*” (The Shaved Woman of Chartres).¹⁷ In this evoking shot, a woman holding her baby is being paraded through the streets of the town after having her head shaved. Behind her is a large crowd of people, including several children. The presence of uniformed officers is interesting to note: Virgili writes that “By virtue of their normal role and the fact that they were armed and wore uniforms, policemen played a dominant role in the way a *tonte* was carried out: they would be escorts, or guards, make arrests, and even share in the actual cutting of hair”.¹⁸ In this instance, the policeman seems to be leading her forward, although it is ambiguous what the intention behind that is. Everyone in the crowd is turned toward the woman. Many of them are celebrating, smiling and seem to be enjoying the spectacle. Notably, there is a French flag in the background. This connects to the role of the *tonte* as a reassertion of patriotic identity and condemnation of the collaborators as being traitors to the nation.



Figure 1: Robert Capa’s *La tondue de Chartres*, August 1944, Chartres, France.

¹⁷ Robert Capa, *La tondue de Chartres*, 1944, LIFE, Chartres.

¹⁸ Fabrice Virgili, *Shorn Women: Liberation and Punishment in Liberation France*, trans. John Flower (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2002), 95.

The punishment of shaving the women's heads was significant in part because it isolated them from their community. Raymond Frith, in his analysis titled "Hair as Private Asset and Public Symbol", writes that "deliberate shaving of the head, or close cutting of the hair, has taken on a ritual quality, intended to mark a transition from one social state to another, and in particular to imply a modification in the status or social condition of the person whose hair is so treated" and that it "may convey contempt and degradation".¹⁹ It clearly demarks a 'traitor' to the nation and results in their reduced social status and exclusion. The head shaving is seen as a punishment befitting of the crime. It enabled an attack on the woman's "very sexual and seductive being".²⁰ The hair is a symbol of femininity, sexuality, and seduction, so its removal targeted the nature of their transgressions. Frith gives historical and anthropological examples of the belief in the power of female hair to "move male desire and love", which was exactly what these women were being punished for: they had seduced the enemy and betrayed their country, they must therefore be punished accordingly.²¹ The root of crime is addressed; the loss of hair symbolizes sexual and social loss.²²

The head shaving also strips the women their national identity and "Frenchness", emphasizing their betrayal to the nation. Hair was symbol of beauty for the woman, and female physical appearance had become intertwined a sense of national pride throughout the war. Kelly Ricciardi Colvin writes that "French women's national pride was located in retaining one's outward appearances of femininity and traditional beauty in the face of oppression and ugliness,

¹⁹ Raymond Frith, "Hair as Private Asset and Public Symbol" in *Symbols: Public and Private* (Oxon: Routledge, 2011), 288-289.

²⁰ Hanna Diamond, *Women and the Second World War in France, 1939-48: Choices and Constraints* (London: Routledge, 2013), 139.

²¹ Raymond Frith, "Hair as Private Asset and Public Symbol" in *Symbols: Public and Private* (Oxon: Routledge, 2011), 268.

²² Raymond Frith, "Hair as Private Asset and Public Symbol" in *Symbols: Public and Private* (Oxon: Routledge, 2011), 298.

symbolized by German women”.²³ Shaving the heads of “bad” French women distances them from the “good” French women, and associates them even further with the Germans. Their loss of hair, equated with femininity and beauty, therefore strips them of their national identity. Virgili notes that “The body has to reflect an interior moral ugliness, which is thereby denounced”.²⁴ The ‘ugliness’ of these women is seen as befitting their betrayal of the nation and collaboration with the enemy. To this discussion of loss of identity, Luc Capdevila adds, writing that “by betraying the nation, they lost their identity as ‘French women’”.²⁵ Their loss of hair meant not only the loss of their feminine identity, but also their identity as a French woman and visibly demarked as excluded from society.

The *tontes* themselves reflect this public denunciation of the sexual transgressions of the *femmes tondues* and of a punishment befitting the crimes they committed. Figure 2 shows a photo of a woman on a raised platform having her head shaved, taken by Roger-Viollet in 1944.²⁶ In front of the woman is a sign that reads “*Honte a ces femmes amoureuses du Marck*” (‘Shame to the women in love with the Mark’). The spectacle of their punishment contains a public condemnation of their crime. The nature of their collaboration and the punishment are inextricably linked, “the body of the woman who has collaborated bears the sign of the crime committed and takes part in its own condemnation”.²⁷ The large crowd in the back contributes to this: it is essential that this crime is collectively punished. This photograph illustrates the power

²³ Kelly Ricciardi Colvin, *Gender and French Identity after the Second World War, 1944-1954: Engendering Frenchness* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017), 36.

²⁴ Fabrice Virgili, *Shorn Women: Liberation and Punishment in Liberation France*, trans. John Flower (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2002), 195.

²⁵ “perdent leur identité de ‘femmes françaises’ en trahissant la nation”: Luc Capdevila, “La ‘collaboration sentimentale’: antipatriotique ou sexualité hors-norme? (Lorient mai 1945),” *Les Cahiers de l’Institut d’Histoire du Temps Présent* 31, no. 1 (1995): 70.

²⁶ Roger-Viollet. *Honte a ces femmes amoureuses du Marck*, 1944, LAPI, France.

²⁷ Fabrice Virgili, *Shorn Women: Liberation and Punishment in Liberation France*, trans. John Flower (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2002), 189.

of a visual primary source: it locates the viewer in the crowd, it gives us front-row seats at the show. The crowd is such a significant element of the *tonte* that to be placed in it makes the viewer one with the perpetrators. However, this photograph also places the viewer parallel to the woman being shaved. We are at the same level as her, equals, but simultaneously part of the group that is participating in her humiliation.



Figure 2: Roger-Viollet's *Honte a ces femmes amoureuses du Marck*, 1944, France.

The removal of the symbol of female sexuality leads to the desexualisation and subsequent reappropriation of the female body by the public. After the removal of their hair, their femininity and the symbol of their crime has been destroyed. Hanna Diamond elaborates that “the female body was the location of the crime and it was this body which had to be punished, to be de-sexed”.²⁸ After the symbol of her sexual power has been removed, the woman’s body is now subject to the whims of the public participating in her punishment. To this point, Virgili adds that “with the body having been desexualized in this way, the local population can reappropriate

²⁸ Hanna Diamond, *Women and the Second World War in France, 1939-48: Choices and Constraints* (London: Routledge, 2013), 139.

it and forbid the victim to recover those features contributing to a certain idea of femininity”.²⁹

The body of the *femme tondu* which was the site of the crime, has been destroyed and now belongs to the community. This interpretation of the punishment connects to a wider reassertion of male power and attempts to gain social control in this period of intense chaos. This concept of ownership over the body is emphasized by Claire Duchen: “Women are seen as body, and if the women’s bodies are the property of men and of the nation, then they must be punished in the body, by the nation”.³⁰ In this understanding of the actual act of the head shaving, the punishment itself destroys the crime and therefore the enemy, while allowing the public to reassert their dominance over women’s bodies as a whole.

The motivations and reasoning for the extensive public participation in the *tontes* are widely varied, but one primary reason is the collective anger and desire for revenge following the Occupation. Janet Flanner, a journalist for the New Yorker in Paris in 1944, describes this desire for retribution in her journal: “The appetite of many people in France for justice, too, is unsatisfied. Certainly there are families for whom the word “justice” will lose all meaning, except to serve as a mocking epitaph for the tombs of sons, husbands, and even daughters and wives [...] unless some traitor’s life is taken [...] in payment for each patriot’s life”.³¹ This primary source allows us to get a sense of the popular desire for retributive justice. Often, these women who were thought to have had relationships with Germans were the only enemy and “traitor” that could be accessed and punished, which “allowed [the public] to move from being the victims of violence to one where they inflicted it, and thereby reasserted their patriotic

²⁹ Fabrice Virgili, *Shorn Women: Liberation and Punishment in Liberation France*, trans. John Flower (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2002), 186.

³⁰ Claire Duchen, “Crime and Punishment in Liberated France: The Case of *les femmes tondues*,” in *When the War was Over: Women, War and Peace in Europe, 1940-1956*, eds. Claire Duchen and Irene Bandhauer-Schöffmann (London: Lexington University Press, 2000), 236.

³¹ Janet Flanner, *Paris Journal: 1944-1955*, ed. William Shawn (New York: New Yorker, 1965), 7.

identity”.³² This begins to explain the high number of *tontes* as well as the participation of entire communities in these events. This anger also reflected the suffering of the civilian population under the Occupation: these *femmes tondues* were seen as having lived a riotous and plentiful life while the rest of the population suffered. This collective violence reflects this jealousy and anger over the “refusal of shared suffering with their compatriots” which “separates them from the image of the French martyr people”.³³ The *tontes* became an outlet for that fear and suffering under the Occupation as the civilian population targeted the only perceived enemy it could access.

This desire for revenge took on a different nature when it became collective, and therefore became seen as a legitimate form of justice. Virgili eloquently argues that when hatred is a collective matter, it is “raised to the level of a national feeling, it becomes more noble and its archaic and ambivalent nature disappears. When they are appropriated by the Nation, hatred and violence become legitimate because they become used for the purpose of setting people free”.³⁴ This hatred that stems from an individual’s suffering and grief throughout the Occupation becomes part of a collective national reckoning with their shared experience and desired future. An article from the *Daily Mail* in Britain in July 1944 showed photos of the *femmes tondues* and wrote of this collective hatred that these photos were “important because they show in what hatred the Germans and all those who collaborated with them are held by the great mass of French people”.³⁵ This demonstrates that even contemporary sources in 1944 acknowledged the

³² Fabrice Virgili, *Shorn Women: Liberation and Punishment in Liberation France*, trans. John Flower (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2002), 4.

³³ “leur refus de la souffrance partagée avec leurs compatriots, ce qui les sépare de l’image du peuple français/people martyr”: Luc Capdevila, “La ‘collaboration sentimentale’: antipatriotique ou sexualité hors-norme? (Lorient mai 1945),” *Les Cahiers de l’Institut d’Histoire du Temps Présent* 31, no. 1 (1995): 71.

³⁴ Fabrice Virgili, *Shorn Women: Liberation and Punishment in Liberation France*, trans. John Flower (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2002), 165.

³⁵ “And this is Happening in Normandy,” *Daily Mail*, 7 July 1944. Cited in Claire Gorrara’s “Fashion and the *femmes tondues*: Lee Miller, *Vogue* and Representing Liberation France”, 333.

power of the collective, and the legitimacy it lent to the popular and extrajudicial violence in the form of the *tontes*.

Another motivation for participation in this popular violence was the attempt to rebuild a national identity and a reassertion of a newfound sense of patriotism. In particular, the *tontes* were used as a form of violence that “did not come simply to put an end to a painful and immediate past, it was also there and seen by many as a necessary condition for the construction of a better future”.³⁶ It allowed civilians to take distinct action to transition from a past of suffering to a future of hope. The *tontes* were used to ‘cleanse’ the nation of all that represented the Occupation. This idea of purification is seen as necessary before French people can rediscover a renewed sense of patriotism. Hanna Diamond adds that “the parading of women in the streets also acted as a way to reappropriating public space which had been taken over by the Vichy regime and the Germans”.³⁷ These events allowed for individuals to participate in the process of punishing the enemy and moving towards a stable peacetime because “shaved women symbolically represented the nation and thereby served to bear the brunt of all the collaborationist crimes, allowing the country to move towards retrieving its unity”.³⁸ The *femmes tondues* were used as a way to punish all collaborators and as a sacrifice towards a renewed French Republic and national identity founded on strength, purity and morality.

The *tontes* were also used by the population to proclaim their innocence and shift any blame to these women by using them as scapegoats. In his speech at the liberation of Paris on August 25, 1944, Charles de Gaulle spoke passionately of Paris being “liberated by itself,

³⁶ Fabrice Virgili, *Shorn Women: Liberation and Punishment in Liberation France*, trans. John Flower (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2002), 166.

³⁷ Hanna Diamond, *Women and the Second World War in France, 1939-48: Choices and Constraints* (London: Routledge, 2013), 140.

³⁸ Hanna Diamond, *Women and the Second World War in France, 1939-48: Choices and Constraints* (London: Routledge, 2013), 140.

liberated by its people with the help of the armies of France, with the support and help of the whole of France, the France that fights, the only France, the true France, the eternal France”.³⁹ This idea of universal resistance, as portrayed by de Gaulle, contributes to the desire of the population to contribute to this national and collective rebuilding of their nation. To this argument, Duchen adds that “by means of *les femmes tondues*, French society could reconstitute itself as a coherent whole, as a Resistant whole, morally and politically virtuous”.⁴⁰ Focusing on the collaborators and traitors to the nation allowed French civilians to escape any sort of culpability or responsibility for their inaction during the Occupation. The *femmes tondues* are then perceived as the representation of the enemy itself and allows for everyone else to be blameless: “French society pointed at its Other, thereby making the Self innocent”.⁴¹ Participation in the *tontes* allowed for an exoneration of any guilt by transferring the blame to another in a way that “allowed everyone to take part in the action and to have a tiny share in the struggle and with the new authority”.⁴²

A final interpretation of the significant uptake of public participation in the *tontes* is that it was an attempt of the French male population to reassert the idea of the “virile” Frenchman and of a certain social order. After Germany’s rapid takeover, “masculine identity was one of the areas of French life which was the most damaged by the war. The humiliation of defeat, the failure of the men to defend France and protect their women and children, plunged French

³⁹ Charles de Gaulle, “Paris Liberated”, 25 August 1944, Paris.

⁴⁰ Claire Duchen, “Crime and Punishment in Liberated France: The Case of *les femmes tondues*,” in *When the War was Over: Women, War and Peace in Europe, 1940-1956*, eds. Claire Duchen and Irene Bandhauer-Schöffmann (London: Lexington University Press, 2000), 236.

⁴¹ Claire Duchen, “Crime and Punishment in Liberated France: The Case of *les femmes tondues*,” in *When the War was Over: Women, War and Peace in Europe, 1940-1956*, eds. Claire Duchen and Irene Bandhauer-Schöffmann (London: Lexington University Press, 2000), 236.

⁴² Fabrice Virgili, *Shorn Women: Liberation and Punishment in Liberation France*, trans. John Flower (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2002), 240.

manhood into crisis”.⁴³ The *tontes* represented an opportunity for French men to forge a new self-image of a “good Frenchman” who participating in the purification of his nation and contributed to its future, at a moment where failure and humiliation permeated many typically masculine elements of the French identity, such as its shamed military and its lessened capacity as a global power. The war had compromised French masculinity; the *tontes* were used by men to reform the image of a strong French man who protects his nation and people, in this case by ridding France of its traitors. It also allowed men to reassert their dominance and control over women, which was also essential to the restoration of this masculine image.⁴⁴ Taking control over women’s bodies was their strategy to reassert social control and a patriarchal status quo after their failures to protect their nation during the war.

The *tontes* were a complicated social event that encompassed a range of emotions after the war. They represented equally a celebration of freedom, a reassertion of male control, a form of revenge and justice over the supposed collaborators, a purification of the nation, and a public affirmation for a new national identity and patriotic future for France. They occurred in this strange liminal space in between war and peace, Occupation and Liberation, and suffering and hope. The *femmes tondues* were scapegoats for the entire Occupation and were victims of a widely traumatized society that had been subjected to an Occupation and world war. This phenomenon must be understood in the context of the Occupation and Liberation, for it was a unique social trend that represented the fear, anxiety, joy, and relief of post-war Liberation France.

⁴³ Hanna Diamond, *Women and the Second World War in France, 1939-48: Choices and Constraints* (London: Routledge, 2013), 141.

⁴⁴ Kelly Ricciardi Colvin, *Gender and French Identity after the Second World War, 1944-1954: Engendering Frenchness* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017), 52.

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