

A CHILD LIVING UNDER VICHY REGIME

The Vichy Regime was an authoritarian regime which was appointed after the defeat of the French army. The signature of the armistice by Marshal Pétain took place on 22 June 1940. After this event France was cut into two parts. The north was occupied by the Germans and the south was called the free French zone.

Who are you ?

My name is Jacques Orel, I was nine years old at the start of the war. My father was a postman and my mother was a housewife. I lived in France, in Nantes. I had two brothers who had left to the war. Three months later I learnt one of them had died.

In 1940 did you understand what this regime was ?

When I was a child I didn't know what this regime was, but when I grew up I understood that this regime was authoritarian and unfree: there were strict rules just like learning German at school; it was forbidden to have a radioset in our house because the radioset was a way for propaganda from the French resistance.



Jacques when was a child Source, Le Petit



Zone Libre source, Wikipédia

How did you enjoy yourself ?

I played much with my parents because I was terrified to lose them and I didn't trust the other children.

I needed to enjoy myself to forget my friends who had left.

I also played board games because at that time there was no TV at home because it was expensive and my parents didn't have much money.

In the park, I played hopscotch with my neighbours.

How did you live during that war ?

My life in that war was really difficult. There was food shortage, the civilians lacked food, there were ration books for everyone to divide equitably the products.

My family searched the replacement products too. Feeding yourself was very hard, a lot of people starved.

What did your parents think about this war ?

My parents thought this regime unequal. They were opposed to that because they worried for my brothers and me.

What were your feelings about this period ?

When I was at school I saw too many children disappearing overnight without knowing why. I was really sad because I lost a lot of friends. After the war I understood why my friends had disappeared. It was because they were Jews.

I didn't try to understand why it was like that because I was just a child and because I was taught to live that way.

I was terrified by the idea of being kidnapped but I trusted my parents.



Les Jours sans source: France info



Les Enfants Juifs à Paris source: l'enfant à la Shoah