

LES JOURS SANS

FOOD AND
SCARCITY
IN TIMES
OF WAR



FROM 13 APRIL 2017
TO 28 JANUARY 2018



**CENTRE D'HISTOIRE
DE LA RÉSISTANCE ET DE LA DÉPORTATION**

www.chrd.lyon.fr

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OUVERT DU MERCREDI AU DIMANCHE



La Pierre Angulaire
habitat et humanisme



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THE EXHIBITION

From 1939 to 1949, the French were subjected to an organized system of dietary restrictions that profoundly impacted their relationship to food. For those who lived through the period, one memory dominates: hunger. The experience of lack and privation in these years still resonates, both within families and in the collective unconscious of the French people.

Conceived by the Resistance and Deportation History Centre (CHRD) in Lyon, the exhibition *Les Jours Sans* plunges visitors into the everyday life of the French people during and after the Second World War. It treats various issues: how people dealt not only with the drama and tragedy of war and the humiliation of defeat, but also with shortages of every kind, with mass confiscations by the occupier, and with the general disorganization of the economy in a country that was running out of everything. What were people's survival strategies? How did they act? What were the real and symbolic effects of food deprivation on society as a whole?

During the war, the endemic lack of food was painfully felt by the entire French nation, and especially by the urban population, which during the interwar years had acquired an acceptable standard of living. The French were, in the words of historian Dominique Veillon, totally "overwhelmed by everyday worries". From the beginning of the conflict, a system of ration cards was set up to make food distribution as efficient as possible. As the months progressed, most products were subjected to rationing. Housewives, who in 1942 spent an average of four hours per day in food lines, were continuously confronted with nearly empty grocery stalls. In the face of these shortages, confiscations and the overall disorder of the French economy, social inequalities grew more pronounced. Different sections of the population were affected differently, based on whether one was rich or poor, whether he had access to the black market or family in the countryside, etc.

Les Jours Sans focuses on Lyon, a city that received many refugees during the war. The difficulties of nourishing its inhabitants became all the more pronounced as their numbers swelled with the influx of displaced people. The exhibition offers a rich visual documentation, with material from public and private collections as well as from archives arranged in a scenography that immerses visitors in the history of the period. It transmits historical knowledge in all its aspects, while also inviting visitors to recall their own family memories and experiences.

Les Jours Sans has been produced by a scientific committee comprised of researchers and specialists on the topic. It follows *Pour vous, Mesdames !*, a 2013 exhibition that addressed another theme of daily life during the war: clothing and fashion.

A THEMATIC ARRANGEMENT



ORGANIZING SCARCITY

A COMPLEX SYSTEM

As early as the winter of 1939-40, some food products began to grow scarce, becoming the objects of the first "Days Without" ("Jours Sans") among merchants. Rationing entered into effect on September 23, 1940. A ration card was subsequently introduced: most of the usual foodstuffs were distributed against vouchers or tickets that indicated how much each consumer could receive.

The population was categorized by age and occupation: E (*enfants* - children), J (*jeunes et adolescents* - youth and adolescents), A (*adultes* - adults), T (*travailleurs de force* - heavy laborers), C (*travailleurs agricoles* - agricultural workers), and V (*personnes âgées* - the elderly).

ACCESS TO FOOD

INFLATION AND SUBSTITUTE PRODUCTS

The imbalance between supply and demand generated increasing inflation: it is estimated that real food prices multiplied by a factor of three or four between 1940 and 1944. Amidst widespread shortages, consumers could expect to supplement their supplies with non-rationed food that was sometimes present on the black market: offal, tripe, fish, eggs, low-fat cheese, flourless cakes, as well as fruits and "new" vegetables like rutabagas and Jerusalem artichokes.

At the same time, substitutes, or *ersatz* products as they came to be known in German, were created at the encouragement of the government. The most famous of these was saccharin, the *ersatz* of sugar.



OVERCOMING SHORTAGES

ROSE, GRAY AND BLACK MARKETS

Recognizing the inadequacy of rations, the government began to relax regulation as early as 1941.

Many city dwellers benefited from the “pink market” - food parcels sent from the countryside. The government also facilitated agricultural collectives, as well as work and family gardens in urban areas. At the same time, bartering became prevalent: city dwellers would get supplies from nearby farms in exchange for manufactured goods, or sometimes even for tickets. This came to be called the “gray market”.

Of course, consumers could also supply themselves - illegally - on the black market. This remained the principal parallel food supply until the end of the 1940's.

DEALING WITH DIFFICULTIES

THE CENTRAL ROLE OF WOMEN

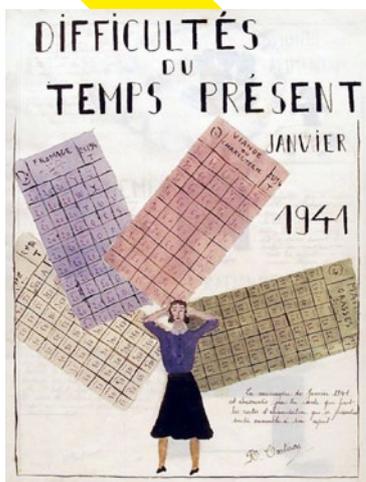
With its National Revolution, the Vichy government sought to impose its vision of the “new” woman: wife and mother, healthy and natural. Expected to fulfill their duties unceasingly, women were tasked more than ever before with running and maintaining their households. Totally responsible for domestic life, they were called upon to show ingenuity and courage, forcing them to adapt their practices to the endemic lack of raw materials. The obstacles were numerous and sometimes insurmountable, beginning with the legislation on supply that forced mothers to struggle with batches of different tickets according to the ages of their children.

SUSTENANCE

POLITICAL STAKES AND PROPAGANDA

Supply became a real political issue under the Occupation. In the first place, it was an essential concern for the government, appearing as a leitmotif throughout the official propaganda. The Resistance also used supply as one of the major subjects of its counter-propaganda, primarily in leaflets and the clandestine press.

Either spontaneously or at the instigation of the Communist Party, women rose up against the harshness of rationing in 1941, participating in demonstrations in Paris and the French provinces. While all faced increasing difficulties, some were actually excluded from official distribution channels. Illegals, members of the Resistance, and Jewish people hiding under false identities had to resort to counterfeit tickets to obtain rations.





MALNUTRITION

A SLOW FAMINE

Imposed by the General Supply and overseen by the occupier, the nutritional level of the official ration was, at the time of its establishment, 1,500 daily calories (compared to the 2,500 calories required to satisfy the needs of a sedentary man). This amount decreased, reaching 1,200 or even 1,000 calories in some places during the winter of 1942-1943.

Doctors regularly expressed their distress, finding in their patients common symptoms of the so-called "scarcity" diseases: scabies, chills, significant weight-loss associated with tuberculosis, back and bone pain, war amenorrhoea and toxicities, and specific psychological conditions referred to as "sustenance psychoses".

While difficult to quantify, there was an undeniable increase in mortality among the most frail, especially the elderly and infants, that can be directly linked to malnutrition. In Lyon, people were often found dead in the streets or in their homes.

DREAMING OF FOOD

FOOD IN TIMES OF DEPRIVATION

Primo Levi wrote, "I already knew the prescribed hunger, that chronic hunger unknown to free men, which makes one dream at night, and settles in all the limbs of one's body". Food in the concentration camps served only to keep men and women alive in the service of the Nazi war industry. Reduced to two bowls of soup and a piece of very black bread per day, rations differed little from one camp to another.

The possession of spoons, knives, and to a lesser extent mess tins came to have a primordial importance in the universe of the concentration camp. Without a spoon, the deportee was condemned to lap his soup like an animal. Stolen, bartered, or manufactured in secret from the most unlikely materials, these objects were essential for survival in the camps. Their conservation, like that of strikingly intact rations of bread, testifies to the extreme hunger and deprivation that deportees endured.

THE SCENOGRAPHY

BY THE ATELIER L+M

Following *Traits résistants* in 2011 and *C'est le débarquement* in 2014, the atelier L+M is producing its third scenography for the CHR.D.

The scenographers have chosen a fluid and linear organization for the exhibition, employing picture rails pierced with holes to evoke the coupons and missing tickets seen on ration cards.

The colors range from blue to pink, recalling those found on the same tickets. Display cases rest on wooden crates, a reference to the shelves of grocery stores from the period.

Graphically, the exhibition's aesthetic is based on a typography that is sometimes compressed, evoking restricted rations, and sometimes stretched, recalling soup endlessly diluted.

The experience is meant to transmit historical knowledge of the subject in all its facets, while also inviting visitors to recall their own family memories and experiences. The exhibition's "immersive" quality is enhanced by its iconographic documentation and audiovisual supports.

The thematic organization of the exhibition space results in a succession of documents and objects that vary greatly in nature and intensity : a jar of green beans from 1942, a series of humorous postcards, a piece of bread brought back by a prisoner at Dachau, and photographs attesting to the malnutrition of patients in the hospitals of Lyon. The scenographers have arranged distinct and immersive spaces, while maintaining a contemporary graphic identity.



GATHERING TESTIMONIALS

WITH THE ASSOCIATION LA PIERRE ANGULAIRE PARTNER OF THE FOUNDATION HABITAT ET HUMANISME

As part of its preparation for *Les Jours Sans*, the CHRD sought the testimonies of people who still recall the years of restrictions and shortages, and whose gestures and habits have continued to reveal the impact of those difficulties long after the war ended. A meeting with members of the foundation **Habitat et Humanisme** highlighted the interest that exists in transforming certain Rhone-based retirement homes into places for recording these exchanges.

A partner of Habitat et Humanisme, **La Pierre Angulaire** is an association created in 2000 to help frail and dependent elderly people. The creation of the network was made possible by the support of religious congregations and by a group of founding members inspired by the same humanistic vision and a concern for those in difficult situations. The association is comprised of a network of social and medico-social establishments guided by the desire to "take care" of people. La Pierre Angulaire directs two Lyon retirement homes, Saint-Charles and Saint-François.

These two sites were therefore chosen for organizing meetings, with the cooperation of the retirement homes' social coordinators and mediators from the CHRD. Sessions for collective exchange presenting the CHRD, its mission and its exhibition on food were followed by the recording of testimonies from residents who wished to participate. Beyond documenting the residents' often painful memories of the war, the purpose of the interviews was to record the impact of nutritional constraints still discernible in people's habits today.

These testimonies are gathered in a single space, full of meaning and emotion, that constitutes one of the exhibition's highlights.

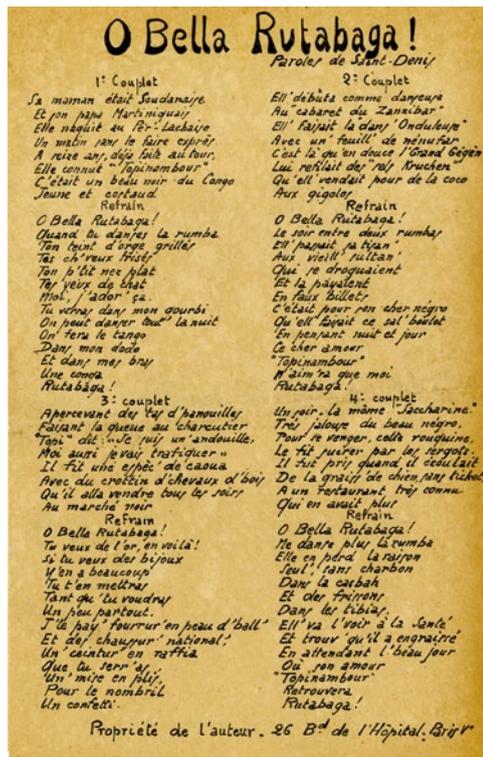
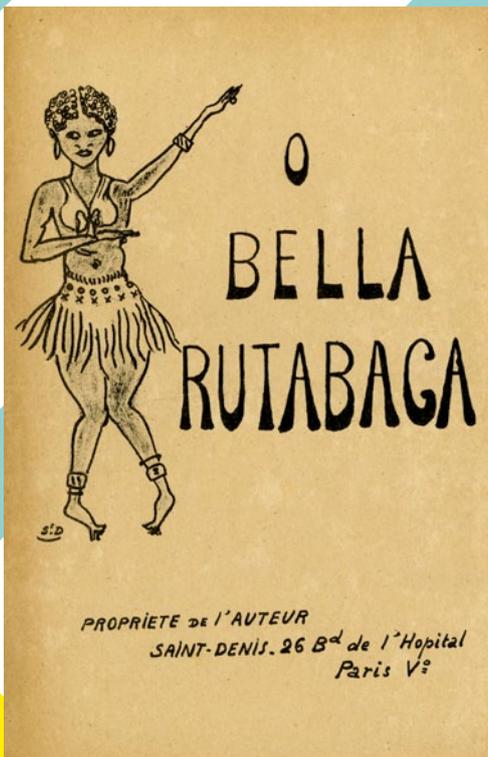
La Pierre Angulaire
Membre du Mouvement
habitat et humanisme 

SETTINGS OF MUSICAL SCORES

BY THE CNSMD - NATIONAL CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC AND DANCE - LYON

The CHRD possesses a very rich collection of musical scores. Among these are many that refer to, or have as their main subject, the difficulties of obtaining provisions during the war years. Often an object for jokes, rationing quickly became a favorite subject for songwriters and music hall composers of the period. Together with the exhibition's namesake, the famous *Les Jours Sans* sung by Fernandel in 1941, there existed a wealth of songs with evocative titles, including *Yes we have rutabaga and Black market, give me what you have, I'll give you what I've got*.

As recordings of these songs are extremely rare, the CHRD asked the singing classes of the National Conservatory of Music and Dance in Lyon to set this vibrant material to voice and music for use in the exhibition. This glimpse into the world of songwriting reveals the humor that served as a means to endure the difficulties of everyday life during this trying period.



CNSMD CONSERVATOIRE NATIONAL SUPÉRIEUR MUSIQUE ET DANSE DE LYON

SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL & LENDERS

SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL

VINCENT BRIAND is an adjunct of conservation at the Resistance and Deportation Museum in Besançon.

ISABELLE VON BUELTZINGSLOEWEN is a professor of contemporary history at the Université Lumière Lyon II and a member of the Rhône-Alps Historical Research Laboratory (LARHRA). In addition to the fate of "fragile" populations during the Second World War, her work focuses on the history of psychiatry and evolutions in the care of mental illness in the 20th and 21st centuries. At the intersection of these two fields of research, she has published *The Sacrifice of the Mad : Famine in French psychiatric hospitals under the Occupation* (Aubier, 2007 and Champs Flammarion, 2009).

CHRISTOPHE CAPUANO is a historian and lecturer in contemporary history at the Université Lumière Lyon II, a teacher at Sciences Po Lyon, at EHESS and at the ENS in Lyon. He is a member of the Rhône-Alps Historical Research Laboratory (LARHRA). A specialist on the Vichy regime and French society under the Occupation, his work has especially focused on living conditions in Lyon during the troubled years: family policy, informants, the fight against abortion and the new "places of politics" that appeared under Vichy. He has published *Vichy and the Family. Realities and False Pretenses in Public Policy*, Rennes, PUR, 2009. He served as historical advisor for Leila Férault's documentary *Bon Papa, A Man Under The Occupation*, Bix films, 2007.

FABRICE GRECARD (b. 1975, Bourges) is a teacher, historian, and author of several books on the period of the Second World War in France, notably relating to the black market, supply and daily life, in addition to the Resistance and the maquis. His principal works include: *France and the Black Market* (Payot, 2008), *Georges Guingouin, A Legend of the Maquis* (Vendémiaire, 2014, winner of the Prix Philippe Viannay-Défense de la France), *Tulle, 9 June 1944 : An Investigation into a Massacre*, and *A Strange Sort of War: The French Entry into the WWII* (Belin, September 2015). His latest work (in collaboration with Jean-Pierre Azéma) is entitled *The French under the Occupation in 100 questions*, Tallandier, 2016.

HERVÉ JOLY is a research director at the CNRS Triangle laboratory (University of Lyon). He works on both the economic and social history of companies and on the sociology of the ruling elite in the contemporary period, with a particular interest in the Second World War. He was the coordinator of the CNRS research group "French Companies under the Occupation" (2002 to 2009). He is a member of the Scientific Council of the CHRD. He has recently published *Lyon's Gillet Family. The Fortunes of a Great Industrial Dynasty, 1838-2015* (2015).

BERNARD LE MAREC is a pediatrician by training and former professor of genetics at the C.H.U. - Rennes. A collector at heart, he ceased all professional activity in 2001 and has since devoted himself to his passion : daily life during the Second World War, and in particular the constraints imposed during the period. He has combined his research into a book, published in 2012 : *France, Rationed*.

CHRISTINE LEVISSE-TOUZÉ is a historian, Doctor of Arts and research director at the University of Paris IV. Since September 1991, she is also director of the Museum of General Leclerc de Hauteclocque and the Liberation of Paris - Jean Moulin Museum. Most recently she has contributed to *Jean Moulin : Artist, Prefect, Resistance Fighter* (co-authored with Dominique Veillon, Tallandier, 2013), and has directed the publication of *Liberating Paris. August 1944* (with Dominique Veillon, Thomas Fontaine, Vincent Giraudier, and Vladimir Trouplin, West-France, 2014).

ÉDOUARD LYNCH is a professor of contemporary history at the Université Lumière Lyon II and a member of the Laboratory of Rural Studies (EA-3727). He is a member of the Committee on the History of Agricultural Offices (France-Agrimer). His work focuses on the political and social history of contemporary French agriculture, with a focus on representations and audiovisual sources. He is the author of an article on food supply in *War, Agriculture, and Food. Rural Europe from the 1930s to the 1950s* (Routledge, 2012). Together with Alain Chatriot and Edgar Leblanc, he co-directed *Organizing Agricultural Markets. The Time of the Founders* (Armand Colin, 2012).

FLORENCE SAINT-CYR GHERARDI is Director of the Resistance and Deportation History Museum of the Ain and Haut-Jura in Nantua. She is co-author of *Propaganda against Propaganda in France 1939-1945* (Museums of the Ain Department, 2006).

DOMINIQUE VEILLON is a historian and director of research at the CNRS. She works on the Second World War at the Historical Institute of the Present Time. She has produced many works on the Resistance and on daily life, including *Fashion under the Occupation*, (Payot, reissued in 2002). She served as curator for the CHRD's 2013 exhibition *Pour vous, Mesdames!*

LENDERS

Museum of the National Resistance, Champigny-sur-Marne

Resistance and Deportation History Museum of the Ain and Haut-Jura, Nantua

Resistance and Deportation Museum, Besançon

Museum of General Leclerc de Hauteclocque and the Liberation of Paris / Jean Moulin Museum, Paris

National Education Museum, Rouen

Municipal Archives of Lyon

Departmental Archives of the Rhône

Archives of the Hôpital du Vinatier, Lyon

Private lenders

THE CULTURAL PROGRAM

DETAILED PROGRAM AVAILABLE IN MARCH

To accompany the exhibition, the CHRD has invited specialists and artists to reflect and exchange on diverse themes.

CONFERENCES / ROUNDTABLES

A cycle of lectures led by members of the exhibition's scientific council and other specialists on the subject..

CINEMA

A cycle of films in partnership with the cinema Comœdia. From October 2017 to January 2018.

GUIDED VISITS

Guided visits by a mediator, every weekend for the duration of the exhibition.

Special visits led by an expert associated with the project *Les Jours Sans*. A chance to meet and exchange while taking a fresh look at the exhibition.

YOUNG AUDIENCE

Visits, workshops and lectures focusing on the exhibition, organized during school holidays.

ACTIVITIES

Lectures, artistic performances, concerts, workshops about food... Various activities will be organized to coincide with different events, including the Nuit des musées (Museum Night), the Fête de la musique and the Journées du Patrimoine (Heritage Days).

THE CHRD THE RESISTANCE AND DEPORTATION HISTORY CENTRE, LYON

Seventy-five years have passed since the tragic events of the Second World War, yet the history of the period profoundly permeates contemporary society: the intense artistic, literary and cinematographic production inspired by the period, as well as the frequent reference to the ideals of the Resistance in the political field, testify to the importance of this past.

The goal of the Resistance and Deportation History Museum is to make this common heritage accessible to all.

For a long time, museum dedicated to the Second World War attached themselves to the formula "never again", as if evoking this history was enough to ensure that it did not repeat itself.

Today, the essential question is undoubtedly that of access to historical knowledge, but this involves a sensitive, intimate approach to a period whose impact has been transmitted across generations within families.

As we enter the "time of history", the CHRD is a tool for reflection and exchange that helps our contemporaries understand the complex world around them.

Incorporated symbolically in the former Gestapo headquarters where Klaus Barbie lived, the museum reveals over a hundred objects and archival documents - most of them unpublished - accompanied by eyewitness accounts of the period presented on multimedia devices.

Visitors also experience the reality of the period in reconstructed spaces, allowing them to tour a house of the 1940s to better understand the atmosphere of the time.

With an important documentation center and a program of events that corresponds to the latest human rights news, the CHRD is also a place of exchange and encounter, a tool that allows everyone to experience the history of the Second World War - a history that remains close to us.



© Pierre Verrier

**Resistance and Deportation
History Centre**
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From Wednesday to Sunday
From 10 am to 6 pm
Entrance fee: 8 € / 6 €
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PRESS IMAGES

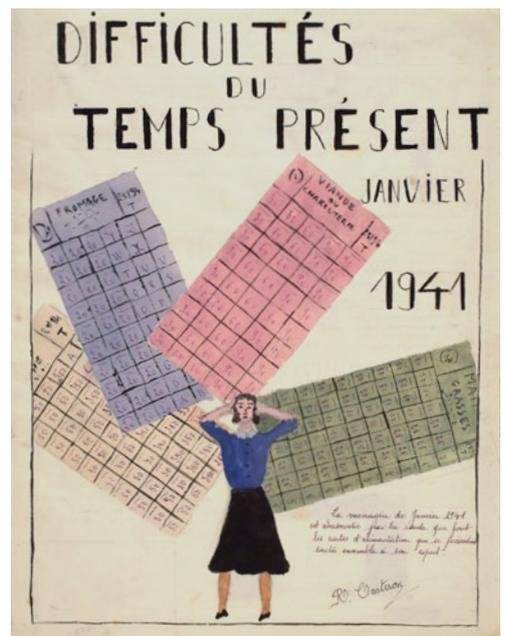
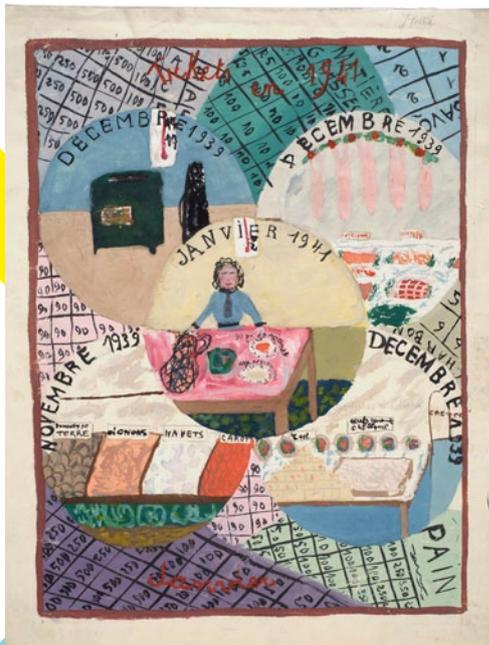


The scarcity on display in shops, here for wine and meat © André Gamet



Delivery of rutabagas to the greengrocer J. Armanet, 10 quai Victor Augagneur, in Lyon
Collection Nouvellet-Dugelay © Charles Bobenrieth

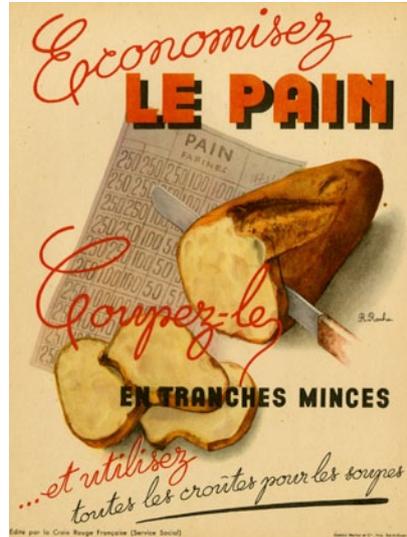
Daily queue for the purchase of a bread ration with ticket, Lyon, 1943
Collection Nouvellet-Dugelay © Charles Bobenrieth



" Tickets in 1941 " by J. Picci

" Difficulties of the present time. January 1941 " by R. Carteron

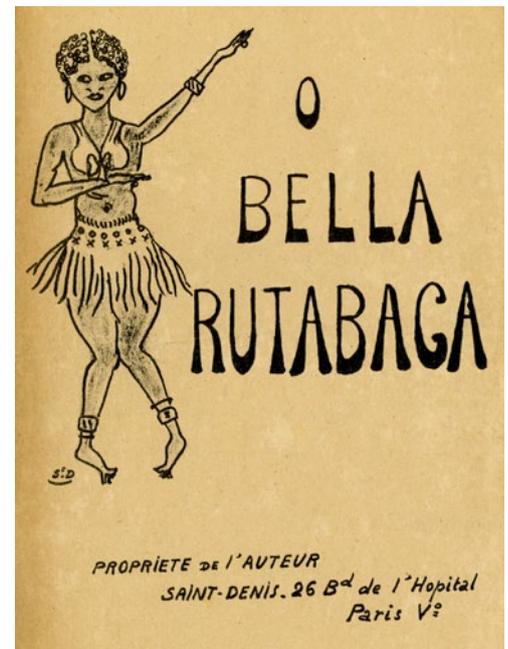
Drawings made in a complementary course at the Girls' School, rue de Patay, Paris.
Réseau Canopé - Le Musée national de l'Éducation



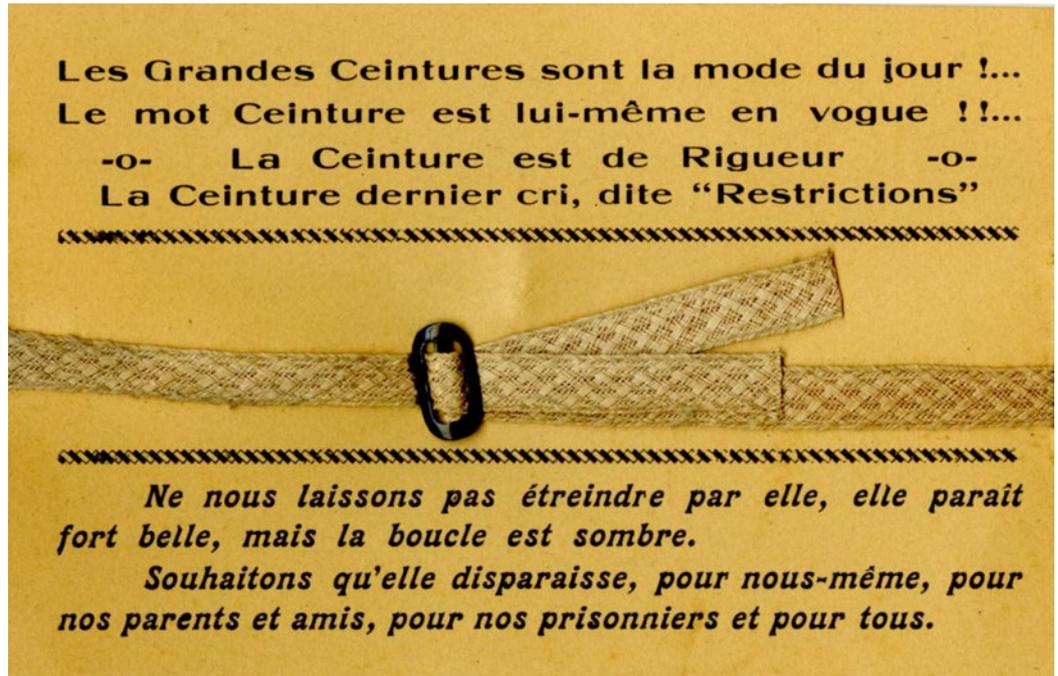
Posters published by the social service of the French Red Cross
Private collection



Poster promoting the solidarity vouchers issued by the Vichy government, illustrated by Jean Colin
Collection CHR



Sheet music for " O Bella Rutabaga "
Private collection



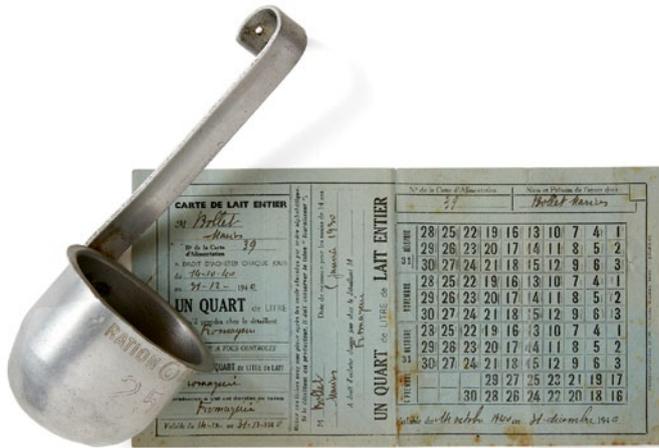
Postcard " Belt "
 Private Collection



Postcard " Send me tickets ",
 illustrated by Lacroix
 Private Collection



Postcard " More tickets "
 Private Collection



1/4 liter measuring cup and milk card, 1940
Private Collection © Pierre Verrier



Pieces of bread brought back from the camps of Dachau and Ravensbrück
Museum of the National Resistance, Champigny-sur-Marne
© Pierre Verrier



Jar of green beans with instructions for canning, 1942
Private Collection and CHRD © Pierre Verrier



Box of cheese biscuits and a 1943 Almanac
Private Collection © Pierre Verrier



"Cigarette Butt Rescue Box"
Private Collection © Pierre Verrier