



# The Shameful Peace: How French Artists and Intellectuals Survived the Nazi Occupation

*Frederic Spotts*

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The German occupation of France from 1940 to 1945 presented wrenching challenges for the nation's artists and intellectuals. Some were able to flee the country; those who remained—including Gide and Céline, Picasso and Matisse, Cortot and Messiaen, and Cocteau and Gabin—responded in various ways. This fascinating book is the first to provide a full account of how France's artistic leaders coped under the crushing German presence. Some became heroes, others villains; most were simply survivors.

Filled with anecdotes about the artists, composers, writers, filmmakers, and actors who lived through the years of occupation, the book illuminates the disconcerting experience of life and work within a cultural prison. Frederic Spotts uncovers Hitler's plan to pacify the French through an active cultural life, and examines the unexpected vibrancy of opera, ballet, painting, theater, and film in both the Occupied and Vichy Zones. In view of the longer-term goal to supplant French with German culture, Spotts offers moving insight into the predicament of French artists as they fought to preserve their country's cultural and national identity.

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