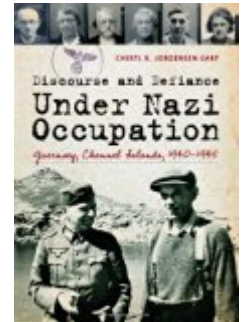


Cheryl R. Jorgensen-Earp. *Discourse and Defiance under Nazi Occupation: Guernsey, Channel Islands, 1940-1945.* East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2013. 320 pp. \$54.95, cloth, ISBN 978-1-61186-082-5.



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Studies of the Channel Islands under German occupation have been slowly eased from the domain of the local historian into the world of academic study of the war. The result has been a slow but steady outpouring of work on all aspects of the occupation, taking advantage of the increasing archival holdings and changes in methodological approach. Despite this, the main work has remained Madeleine Bunting's 2004 work, *The Model Occupation: The Channel Islands under German Rule, 1940-1945*. Published to much popular acclaim, her book has come under fire in scholarly circles for being too harsh on the population of the Channel Islands, expecting a degree of resistance that was frankly impossible given the circumstances and a degree of separation from the occupiers that was equally unlikely. It is unsurprising, then, that Cheryl R. Jorgensen-Earp's study places itself in direct opposition to Bunting's findings, almost from the very outset. Jorgensen-Earp argues that, far from a series of communities too friendly with their occupiers, re-

sistance on Guernsey took an altogether different form, which has been totally ignored by Bunting.

Does Jorgensen-Earp succeed? The answer should be a resounding yes. This work's main strength is applying new lines of methodological probing to Guernsey--and by extension, many of the other Channel Islands--particularly on ideas of resistance and collaboration. To some extent, Jorgensen-Earp's methods are far from new. Philippe Burrin's *La France à l'heure allemande 1940-1944*, published in 1997, to pick but one example, puts occupation of communities into the cold light of day, blurring the lines between collaboration and resistance and examining the ever-present "shades of grey." Yet Jorgensen-Earp applies this methodology for the first time to Guernsey, directly challenging Bunting's conclusions that the Channel Islanders should have resisted far more than they did.

The work combats this idea in a number of ways. Firstly, by addressing the "panoptic" nature of the occupation, Jorgensen-Earp argues that

mass resistance of the type that took place in France or even the Soviet Union was, frankly, impossible. The community was too small, and the occupation too invasive to even contemplate resistance on the scale that Bunting expects. Secondly, Jorgensen-Earp challenges Bunting's narrow definition of "resistance" as a purely military phenomenon. Therein lies the central thesis of the book, which explores resistance as a written and spoken idea. The primary source in doing so is a series of diaries kept during the occupation which revealed the innermost thoughts of the islanders. By exploring what islanders said and wrote, Jorgensen-Earp argues that a *written* resistance was taking place. The very act of diary keeping, often revealing a staunch anti-German stance, should be considered an act of resistance. Moreover, these diaries often revealed small acts of resistance taking place on a daily basis, even at an administrative level. In widening our source base, the work successfully shows that the Channel Islands were far from a "model occupation."

Oral resistance is also considered by the author as paramount if we are to make judgments on how the islanders reacted to the occupation. Rumors are one of the most important sources for this interpretation. In this, the author's background in communication studies stands out, allowing her to explore how rumors develop and what they mean to a community in such circumstances. It was not only the subject of these rumors that were important during the occupation, but also how they were received. Anti-German or pro-Allied rumors were more likely to spread, while rumors about particular members of the community fraternizing with Germans also made their way around the island. The exploration of this idea is a welcome addition to the work and dovetails nicely with more obvious written resistance, such as the V for Victory campaign and the distribution of Allied leaflets and newspapers.

The only real weakness of the book is that Jorgensen-Earp at no point states whether or not the

writing of a diary was forbidden. This seems a strange error as diaries are the author's main source of information. While it is explicitly stated that those keeping diaries would likely find themselves in serious trouble, the author does not make clear whether or not this is because they were keeping a diary at all, or because these diaries often contained anti-German sentiments.

Despite this, the work successfully challenges Bunting's notion that those living on the Channel Islands somehow did not manage to live up to the "standard" of Britons living under German occupation. It should not be thought that the entire work is a philippic against Bunting's conclusions, but since Bunting is the most widely read scholar on the occupation, Jorgensen-Earp naturally comes into conflict with her conclusions on a regular basis. It is a welcome reexamination of conclusions that have too readily been accepted. The book deserves credit not only for this reason, but also because it prompts questioning on how we can define resistance. Even now, with the definition of resistance expanding with every work published on it, Jorgensen-Earp has managed to explore written and oral resistance, a hitherto unexplored subject. In this way, the work will appeal to those interested in the Channel Islands during this period, as well as any historian wishing to study resistance in its widest possible definition.

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