



The Alsatian dialect in the post-WWII period

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Abstract

The French region of Alsace, bordering Germany, has always been highly disputed between the two countries, and culturally tends towards a unique blend of the Latin and the Germanic. However, the dominant dialect of the region is very much a German tongue, and in the first half of the 20th century was the dominant language of the region. After the Second World War, when France was reeling from the physical and psychological effects of war, Alsace was an anomaly. The Alsatians could not be trusted—they had spent too much time as Germans, and not enough as Frenchmen.

I knew there were numerous causes for this “mistrust”. Historically and geographically, the region has been closer to the German states than to Paris. Culturally and politically, it is very different from France, and only marginally dissimilar to Germany. All of these factors were open to my investigation with the help of my extended family who live in the region. They were able to grant me access to books on Alsace that were written by esteemed French and Alsatian historians over 50 years ago. My removed cousin—very much a history buff—was delighted to be able to contribute to my work in the form of interviews and references to other books and websites. The Internet also provided valuable information on legal matters, the Second World War, the status of the dialect, and the whole of Alsace.

After much intensive research, I came to the conclusion that the dialect of the region was but one of many factors that contributed to French mistrust of the Alsatians after the Second World War. Nevertheless, the dialect did much to exacerbate new and existing problems and to create the potential for such deep mistrust as there was at that time.

Table of Contents

1) Front Page	1
2) Abstract	2
3) Table of Contents	3
4) Essay	
a) Part I, Introduction	4
b) Part II, Defining Mistrust	5
c) Part III, Not Wanting to be French	6-7
d) Part IV, Wanting to be German (including Alsatian Dialect)	8-11
e) Part V, Conclusion	12
5) Methodology	13-15
6) Bibliography	
a) Books	16
b) Interviews & Visits	17
c) Websites	17-19
7) Appendices	
a) Appendix 1 – Maps	20-22
b) Appendix 2 – Interview Notes	23-26
i) French Notes	23-24
ii) English Translation of Notes	25-26

How important was the Alsatian dialect as a factor of French mistrust of the Alsatian people in the post World War II period?

I. Introduction

*“Il y a eu, dans la période d’après guerre, un souci d’uniformisation dans toute la France. Le gouvernement voulait qu’en Alsace il y ait un sentiment d’identité française, et non allemande.”*¹ Why was this? Basically, because the French government during the post-1945 years feared that it had “lost” the region of Alsace to Germany. A region of Germany from the loss of the Franco-Prussian war in 1871 to its return in 1918 as a result of the Treaty of Versailles, Alsace had had only 20 more years experience of being French before it was once again absorbed into the German *Reich*. The Nazi annexation of Alsace had led to a lifestyle for the people of the region that was extremely different from that of the people living in occupied France. They had been considered Germans by the Germans themselves. How could a nation recovering from a terrible occupation and war not fear, not have even a trace of mistrust for a people who had been accepted by the enemy?

The French mistrust of Alsations in the years following the Second World War took many forms, as we will see. Once we have defined this, we will be able to group the factors that contributed to it into two types. The first type explains the reasons the French may have had in that period to fear that the Alsations did not want to be French. The second overwhelmingly more significant type includes the elements that would have caused the Alsations to want to be German. This is where the element of the Alsatian dialect comes in. Even though it is clear that there were many factors besides the Germanic-based Alsatian language in causing the French mistrust of the Alsatian people, this one must be weighed against all of the others in order to find out how important it truly was as a factor of French mistrust of the Alsatian people in the post WWII period. Therefore this essay will identify the characteristics of French “mistrust” of the Alsatian people, and then look at the factors that would have pushed the Alsations away from France, followed by those elements which would have attracted Alsace to the German state—including the Alsatian dialect. The conclusion will bring all of this together.

¹ “In the post-war years, there was a need to create uniformity all over France. The government wanted a French, rather than German identity in Alsace”. D Kayser interview 2004, Appendix 2 p.23 & p.25

II. Defining Mistrust

The policies adopted by the French government towards the Alsatian people in the after-war years do not by themselves define the term mistrust in this context. As in most cases, the word expresses a deeper, less defined, and wordless emotion that leads to defensive policies, but also a simmering resentment that is divisive and disruptive.

The first type of mistrust was originally expressed by General de Gaulle, when he signed the ordinance of the 13th of September 1945. This document permitted only the publication of French and bilingual newspapers in the region of Alsace and Moselle, with the bilingual newspapers obliged to contain at least 25% articles in French and supervised by a local government representative. This was only a short step away from the “indefinite suspension”² of the teaching of German in primary schools and of the use of it in government workplaces across Alsace immediately after the German defeat.

Public outcry of the people *de l'intérieur*³ about the language of the region was based on media condemnation and suspicions of collaboration of all those who spoke German, or a German dialect, rather than French. Such was the case of a major part of the Alsatian population, of which few spoke French as a first language.

The ultimate expression of fear and mistrust of the Alsatian people came during the *première épuration*⁴. Though it has since been proved that the number of collaborators in Alsace was equivalent to that of any part of Vichy France, the deep fear of continued German support in the area during the trials led to the reopening of the nearest concentration camp, renamed “internment camps” to hold the accused.

² Maugué p.151 & Appendix 2, Interview p.23 & p.25

³ “of the interior”, Alsatian reference to the French of the regions in central France, Maugué p.112 & Farmer p.18

⁴ “the first purge”, the first round of trials of collaborators in France, Neville p.95 & <http://theses.enc.sorbonne.fr/document140.html>

III. Not Wanting to be French

Many French *de l'intérieur* had always felt that Alsace was not content to be a region of France, and it was this deep fear that allowed the flourishing of the belief that Alsace wanted to be German.

The basis of this fear was that the region of Alsace had always been geographically isolated from the capital and its decrees. Louis XIV had recognised this with his command “*Il ne faut pas toucher aux affaires d’Alsace*”⁵. Alsace was on the *plaine du Rhin*, which was delimited by the *Forêt Noire* to the south and the Vosges to the north⁶, and, in terms of practicality of communication, was more open to German influence than French. This was compared to the drastically different region of Lorraine, which, thought it had shared the fate of Alsace for the previous century, had historically been more open to Paris and its influences.⁷

A more recent factor was the relocation of the entire population of the area of Alsace between the Maginot Line and the German border. Though this had been planned since the creation of the Line in the event of German mobilisation, it had been carried out chaotically, forcing 430,000 people to exchange their homes and livelihoods for temporary accommodations far from their homes. These places tended to be deep in South-West France, in places that were completely foreign to the Alsatians. They moved to towns such as the ill-fated Oradour-sur-Glane, where locals disdained them because of their desire for a religious education for their children⁸ and because of the strong accent of those 20% who actually spoke French⁹. They were nicknamed the derogatory term *ya-ya*, from the way they said “yes”, and were never fully integrated into the communities to which they had fled.¹⁰ The result was that almost half a million Frenchmen had been made refugees before the war had even begun, and all to open up a line of defence which was to fail pitifully in the first few days of the war. As we will see later, Hitler had realised this and ordered the refugees to return in a filmed ceremony to promote his kindness and understanding towards the Alsatians.

Added to this was the strong support for the long-standing autonomist movement of Alsace, which, though it did not seek complete separation from France, aimed to

⁵“ Keep out of Alsatian affairs”

⁶ Appendix 1, map 1 p.20

⁷ Appendix 2, Interview p.24 & p.25

⁸ <http://theses.enc.sorbonne.fr/document140.html>

⁹ ...les classes moyennes et le peuple continuaient à parler le dialecte, the middle classes and the people continued to speak the dialect, <http://perso.wanadoo.fr/alain.lorange/als/LCRA/lang/lang2.htm>

¹⁰ Farmer p.18

achieve increased recognition of the unique culture of Alsace, and more local management and legislation that would reflect how the Alsatian people were different from the French. For example, the autonomists thought that a secular government did not represent the Alsatian people, to whom religion had always been a very important part of their lives, despite the increased secularity that had happened in the rest of France since the Revolution.¹¹ Any changes affecting religion were deemed an attack on the culture of Alsace itself. Groups promising different aspects of autonomy would unite for elections, some promising “*indépendance culturelle et administrative*”¹² for the region, while the Catholic UPR group¹³ would bring its constant constituency. This was how the autonomist movement triumphed in the 1928 elections, at a time when Alsace was still reeling from the post-WWI trials for *haute trahison*¹⁴. These pro-clerical and slightly right-wing parties had always had huge support within Alsace, and even more worrisome, had been supported by the Germans on the eve of the Second World War¹⁵, even as the French government was cracking down on them in an effort to promote the “*politique d’assimilation*”¹⁶, policies that would Frenchify all parts of Alsatian society as much and as fast as possible.

¹¹ <http://perso.wanadoo.fr/alain.lorange/als/LCRA/lang/lang2.htm>

¹² “Cultural and administrative independence”, Hoffet p.140

¹³ UPR, *Union Populaire Républicaine*, Popular Republican Union

¹⁴ “High treason”

¹⁵ Called *une presse subventionnée de l’étranger*, “subversive foreign press”, Dollinger and Oberle p.213

¹⁶ Hoffet p.44

IV. Preferring to be German

The fact that Alsace had been treated as a disruptive German region for the duration of the German occupation was the basis for a great amount of distrust of the Alsatian people by the rest of France. As people with experience as both French and German citizens, which did would they prefer, despite the defeat of the latter?

Upon the fall of France and the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine, Hitler began his plan to *Germaniser*¹⁷ the two regions. After all, for many Germans, the areas were simply pieces of Germany in which the people had been subject to French influence, and all that was needed was to restore their responsibilities as Germans for them to once again feel as such. This idea was carried out to extremes, and instead of turning the Alsatian people into faithful Nazis, encouraged French patriotism and resistance movements. In terms of public life, the Alsatians were bombarded with Nazi propaganda, and membership in the *Hitlerjugend*¹⁸ for young people and *Deutsche Arbeitsfront*¹⁹ for workers was encouraged, and though many French may have forgotten it, was finally made compulsory. Films were made of the Alsatians who had moved from the Maginot Line returning to Alsace, with no mention to this having been done by force. Banners in German welcomed the refugees to their German Fatherland. These recordings were circulated around France to show German support and kindness, but angered many French towards the Alsatians and their lifestyle.

The “witch hunt” for collaborators which swept through France in the after-war years was especially severe in Alsace, though trials soon proved that there were no more cases of collaboration in annexed Alsace than in any region of occupied France. However, one should question the definition of collaboration which was used to condemn or absolve accused collaborators. People who “actively set out to help the enemy”²⁰ were tried and often executed. Young people who joined the S.S. or the S.A. during the war were executed if there was not sufficient evidence of having been coerced by the Nazis.²¹ But what about those, especially in Alsace, who simply continued their normal lifestyle—as far as that was possible? Were teachers who taught a curriculum that was changed from French to German Nazi to French again

¹⁷ “Germanise”, Dollinger & Oberle p.214

¹⁸ Hitler Youth Movement

¹⁹ German Workers Front

²⁰ G Agullo, *Musée de la Résistance* visit

²¹ Hoffet p.155

considered collaborators? What about doctors who continued to practise under both governments, or civil servants who continued their functions, only representing one country rather than another? However, German and *Résistance* sources agree that those who showed any sign of resistance by trying not to work for the Germans were hunted down and sent to labour camps. Those who collaborated could be said to have succumbed to the “River Kwai syndrome”²² and felt that France had to “play a role in the maintenance of public order” within her own borders.²³ This had made many post-war policy-makers understand how virtually impossible it was to include working for the Germans as collaboration without condemning most of the French population, both in annexed and occupied regions. Despite this, many factory owners who produced weapons or gear for the German military, even if they had done so previously for the French, were the main source of condemned “collaborators” in Alsace²⁴.

There was little post-war French mistrust of the Alsatians based on the deportations of Jews to the concentration camps of *Schirmeck* and *Struthof*²⁵, as this embarrassing fact was true even throughout Vichy France. However, many French ignored the fact that a great number of Alsatian resisters who were infamous to the Germans for spiriting away deserters and prisoners of war ended up in these camps, as well as any members of communist or socialist parties, or people who appeared to resent German rule. This extermination of opposition was carried out in Alsace on a level with the German purges, promoting the idea of Alsace as just another German region.

Nor can many French forgive the fact that Alsatians were conscripted into the German army. It was these forces that participated in the massacre at Oradour-sur-Glane²⁶; it was thousands of these men who fought in Russia. However, many have forgotten that these were the “*Malgré Nous*”²⁷, forced to join the German army under threats on their families’ lives. These were the men who were shot for desertion or died in Soviet prisoner-of-war camps when they willingly gave themselves up.

²² A. Sauvy from Jackson p.182

²³ Jackson p.182

²⁴ Hoffet p.155

²⁵ L’Huillier p.119

²⁶ Mangué p.124

²⁷ “Despite Ourselves”, the name given to Alsatians conscripted against their will into the *Wehrmacht*

However, in the years immediately after the war, the rest of France could only remember Alsatians in Nazi uniforms. In fact, most Frenchmen even resented the fact that French soldiers in German prison camps would be released if they could prove either German or Alsatian ancestry. Even worse for French confidence in the Alsatian people, renowned sociologists agree that conscription “came to be seen as one of the ‘pillars of the democratic state’ [...], an essential bond between citizen and state”²⁸. As conscription was much more enforced in Alsace under the Germans than the French²⁹, would the Alsatians become more bonded to the German state?

The point at which the “Germanisation” of Alsace was rendered ridiculous to the Alsatians may also have tipped the scale of the French belief that the region was overly German and therefore untrustworthy. To immediately eliminate any traces of French culture from Alsace, Hitler had ordered that all French names be rendered German. This applied to place names as well as people’s first and last names. Even French inscriptions on graves were scratched out, and the use of the Basque *béret* was outlawed.³⁰ When de Gaulle arrived in Alsace and found only German sounds and names, there was no doubt that he feared the place was too much under German influence, which led to his laws banning the use of German after the Liberation.

Similarly, the French worried that so many Alsatians at the end of the war were of German citizenship, without realising that this had been imposed on certain groups of people, such as the families of draftees. The French government at that point felt strongly that citizenship was part of the “ties that bind”³¹ individuals to their nation, that it is a “requirement of a shared civic identity”³², and ignored the effects of its own laws during the inter-war years, in which identity cards had been imposed on the Alsatians, based on their ancestry, and limiting their travel rights.³³

The Alsatian dialect appeared to some French people as being yet another sign that the Alsatians were not comfortable as Frenchmen. To their eyes, it was traitorous that the language was a derivation of German, a German dialect just as much as

²⁸ Shaw/Giddens p.316

²⁹ <http://www.nithart.com/unpeuhil.htm>

³⁰ <http://www.verdammi.org/index.html>

³¹ Kymlicka p.173

³² *ibid* p.174

³³ Card A for the *français de l'intérieur* and those whose parents were born Alsatian; Card B for people who had one German parent; Card C for foreign born Alsatians; Card D for those Germans who hadn't been deported. Hoffet p.146 & <http://www.nithart.com/unpeuhil.htm>

*zurichois*³⁴ and worse yet, that most Alsatians chose German over French as their second language³⁵. It seemed disgraceful that much of the Alsatian resistance was carried out in German, and it appeared that simply by using their German based dialect, the Alsatian people were denying their French roots in favour of their German ones. French travellers and politicians travelling in Alsace after the Second World War were horrified that the locals spoke what sounded like German in every part of their daily life, as well as in schools and government offices. In fact, German had stayed the language of religion, which was abnormally powerful in Alsace compared to the rest of France. The dialect that had long been a symbol of their autonomist goals suddenly condemned all of its users as collaborators, and made the fear that Alsatians truly preferred German rule appear to be true.

³⁴ The dialect of Zurich, Hoffet p.53

³⁵ http://geogate.geographie.uni-marburg.de/parser/parser.php?file=/deuframat/francais/5/5_2/pletsch/kap_32.htm

V. Conclusion

The factors contributing to French mistrust of the Alsatian people in the post-World War II years are numerous, and the Alsatian dialect is but one of them. However small a factor it may seem, it greatly compounded other issues, and increased the probability of those issues being accepted as true, and of creating fear and mistrust of the Alsatian people.

The long-existing dialect of the region of Alsace therefore can be seen as an important factor, in that it catalysed the fear among the French people that the measures taken by the Nazis to Germanise the Alsatians had been accepted by a population that appeared highly German to begin with.

Methodology

The question on the importance of the Alsatian language as a factor in French mistrust of the Alsatian people in the post Second World War period has been the source of a great number of debates. This is mainly because, as part of the highly sensitive topic of collaboration with the Nazis, many historians feel the need to investigate the matter, and either defend or condemn those people whose patriotism is in question.

With relatives in this region whom I regularly go to visit, I have been given the opportunity to investigate their unique culture first-hand. Their French, the source of many jokes in the rest of the country, is obviously not the first language of the older generations. It intrigued me that this region, with a once highly contested nationality, remained French, yet not French. This was clearly of interest to many historians since Alsace was last returned to France. The fear that the Alsatians, having been Germanised as opposed to occupied, had gone beyond individuality and into collaboration.

Therefore, the books I was able to find always posed this question, but, as they were written by respected historians, generally addressed the question of how much the Alsatians are French, and how much they are German. Most—including the prominent psychoanalyst F. Hoffet—concluded from the information that was available to them at the time that the Alsatians truly had been “*Malgré Nous*”³⁶ in all aspects of life in a German Alsace. However, Hoffet differs from other historians in that much of his analysis of the people and the region is based on extensive travels within Alsace and interviews with many locals, rather than just source-based historical work.

This type of personal recollection was very poignant for me, especially because I knew people who had lived through the post-war period in Alsace, and who resented, yet understood the reasons for French mistrust of the Alsatian people. My main source of oral history was Daniel Kayser, son of Josephine Kessler Kayser, both of whom felt great pleasure at being able to pass their knowledge and experience on to the next generation. Though them, I was able to realise how much the horrors of Oradour-sur-

³⁶ “Despite Ourselves”

Glane, so discreetly referred to in French history books³⁷, still haunt the Alsatian people. Because I am not relying solely on oral history for the basis of my work, my subjects do not tend to fall under the categories of “unreliable sources” that P Catterall described in “Oral History”³⁸. Indeed, they are typical Alsations, one of whom lived through German Alsace, and the other of whom became a history enthusiast in an attempt to understand his own culture. The latter, D Kayser, was not influenced in his answers towards what I wanted to hear, but more towards self-justification and perhaps inflated importance of the Alsatian people in the *Résistance* movement. However, as a work more of Social history than anything else, this essay was greatly enhanced by the knowledge of the interviewees who helped “to recreate the atmosphere of the situation or period”, rather than “[reconstructing] in great detail specific events”³⁹.

In fact, it was through the interview with D Kayser that I realised how important was the geographic isolation of Alsace from the rest of France as a factor of mistrust. Through a simple comment and explanation of this idea from the interviewee, to whom this seemed a simple statement of a fact known to all Alsations, I was able to search out more information on the topic, including physical maps⁴⁰ and descriptions of the region’s layout. Little research was needed to find information such as Louis XIV’s “*Il ne faut pas toucher aux affaires d’Alsace*”⁴¹. Historically isolated from France, both sides had understood this separation, but did it not cause some worries among the French?

A major problem, however, was that certain topics may have held greater personal importance to the interviewees than others, creating a distortion of the importance of certain changes in their lifestyles due to French mistrust of them. However, I agree with W.F. Whyte in that stepping back from the interviewer’s place and allowing D Kayser to tell me about what he say as the defining moments in Alsatian history opened new vistas of research ideas to me and stimulated my curiosity on the matter.⁴²

Because the types of mistrust I decided to focus on for my essay were mostly reflected in laws towards and regulations of the Alsations, it was also possible to find

³⁷ Dollinger and Oberle p.223

³⁸ Catterall and Jones p.25

³⁹ *ibid* p.27

⁴⁰ See appendix 1 p.11-13

⁴¹ “Keep out of Alsatian affairs”

⁴² W.F. Whyte “As I sat and listened, I learned the answers to questions I would not have had the sense to ask if I had been getting my information solely on an interviewing basis.”, McNeill p.77

very respectable legal websites that elaborated on this facet of my research. Some were Internet versions of laws such as the *Loi Deixonne*⁴³, others, a short history of the region, generally unbiased for a clear, concise recounting of policies, being either amateur historical analyses⁴⁴ or online history courses on the subject⁴⁵. However, it is undeniable that a wide spread of biased websites exist on this subject, some as strongly anti-Nazi pages defending the Alsatians⁴⁶, or others seeking to condemn the Alsatians as collaborators. This does not mean that these sources are completely useless. Indeed, it was on one of these pages that I was able to discover that there was only one concentration camp in France (the others were “internment camps”)⁴⁷, which was located in Alsace. Further research on more factual sites revealed that the 22nd of November 2004 was the 60th anniversary of the liberation of *Struthof*, the only death camp in France.⁴⁸

Where people become more agitated is on the subject of conscription of young Alsatian men into the German army, which was carried out ruthlessly and enforced on pain of death. The result among many Alsatians is a strong bitterness towards conscription into the *Wehrmacht*. Still, the fear of the accusation of “collaboration” persists, as L Jordanova explains.⁴⁹

There is also continued bitterness towards de Gaulle’s laws that had forbidden the use of German, and finally of Alsatian, in the whole country. This actually made it more difficult to clearly distinguish the Alsatian language from other factors of French mistrust of the Alsatians, but once this was done, evaluating it against other issues became much clearer.

However, the Alsatian people are not known for holding grudges, and to a certain extent understand the policies made against them in the years following the war. This is reflected in the Alsatian websites and general opinion of the period, which makes investigating their culture so fascinating.

⁴³ <http://www.culture.gouv.fr/culture/dglf/lang-reg/lang-reg4.htm> & http://www.tlq.ulaval.ca/axl/europe/france_politik_minorites.htm

⁴⁴ http://geogate.geographie.uni-marburg.de/parser/parser.php?file=/deufram/francais/5/5_2/pletsch/kap_31.htm

⁴⁵ <http://perso.wanadoo.fr/dmcatala/COURS/C.%20TROISIEME/6.%20FRance%20pendant%20WWII/France%20pendantWWII.html> & <http://lemondedelilly.chez.tiscali.fr/chapitre2partie8.html>

⁴⁶ http://www.liberation.fr/page_forum.php?Template=FOR_MSG&Message=107848

⁴⁷ http://www.visit-alsace.com/where_is_it/ou_c_fr_pays_montdet.html

⁴⁸ *ibid*

⁴⁹ “Feelings on the subject continue to run high—the very notion “collaboration” implies moral taint, all the more so in what is widely regarded as a “just war”. Jordanova p.46

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<http://www.nithart.com/unpeuh1.htm>

Les quatre cartes d'identité après 1918

Les Incorporés de force d'Alsace et de Moselle

Petite histoire du service militaire en France et en Allemagne

Verdammi

<http://www.verdammi.org/index.html>

Le dialecte à travers l'histoire

Depuis 1945: répression et renouveau

Appendix 1 – Maps

Map 1



D'Alsace en Lorraine – Histoire de familles

<http://www.robert-weinland.org/dialec.php>

This map shows the geography of the Alsace region and denotes topographical information such as the placement of the Vosges Mountains and valleys as mentioned in the interview with D Kayser.

Map 2



L'histoire en ligne

<http://lemondedelilly.chez.tiscali.fr/chapitre2partie8.html>

This map is typical of a French school-book. The redrawn borders of France recognise that the region of Alsace has been annexed and not occupied.

Map 3



D'Alsace en Lorraine – Histoire de familles

<http://www.robert-weinland.org/dialect.php>

This linguistic division of Germany includes information on the Germanic dialect spoken in Alsace and part of Lorraine.

Map 4



Fachbereich - Géographie

http://geogate.geographie.uni-marburg.de/parser/parser.php?file=/deuframat/francais/5/5_2/pletsch/kap_31.htm

A German linguistic map of France which also includes information on the boundaries of France prior to WWI. Notice the border from the Franco-Prussian War to WWI includes Alsace, Lorraine, Moselle and a strip of land that according to this map is not German speaking.

The map includes information on the type of German spoken in the region: Alsatian and “Moselle-french”.

Appendix 2 – Interview Notes

Full sentences have been constructed from certain notes, others have been left in the form in which they were originally taken. The personal pronoun will vary from the 1st to 3rd persons of the singular, depending on whether there is a direct quotation or notes by the interviewer.

Notes from a telephone interview with Daniel Kayser, 2004

Dissertation sur l'importance du dialecte alsacien en tant que cause de méconnaissance du peuple alsacien par les Français

Après la guerre de '39, lois contre la langue alsacienne :

Dans toutes les écoles, punition pour les enfants

- Un objet (chez lui, une clé) qui était donné à l'enfant qui parlait alsacien
- Cet enfant devait le passer à un autre si celui-ci parlait alsacien
- *Etcetera etcetera*
- A la fin de la journée, l'enfant qui avait la clé était puni (devoirs en plus, nettoyer une salle...)

Lui l'a vécu (Daniel), de 1960 à 61

+ suspension indéfinie des cours d'allemand

Dans la période d'après-guerre, « souci d'uniformisation » dans toute la France. Le gouvernement voulait en Alsace un sentiment d'identité française, et non allemande => pour unir la France, pour pouvoir soigner les blessures et les divisions qu'a créées la guerre.

Complexe => accent germanique, c'est parfois embarrassant de parler français – tu l'as peut-être entendu, mais nous avons un petit accent, nous, alsaciens. Nous stressons un petit peu la première syllabe de chaque mot, comme en allemand.

La Lorraine, je sais qu'au nord ils ont un patois, mais je n'en sais pas plus

L'Alsace est *très* différent de la Lorraine, depuis des centaines d'années. Dans les années 1600, durant la guerre de 30 ans, des Lorraines ont été recrutés comme

mercenaires et ont envahi l'Alsace. Depuis, nous sommes très méfiant les uns des autres + l'un n'aime pas être prit pour l'autre.

Historiquement & géographiquement => Alsace isolée de la France

Plaine d'Alsace délimitée par les Vosges à l'Ouest et la Forêt Noire au nord

=> donc plus ouvert aux influences germaniques que françaises

Tandis que la Lorraine est plus ouverte à Paris.

Besoin historique

=> le meilleur moyen d'assimiler un peuple est de l'empêcher de parler sa langue.

Aujourd'hui

=> les communautés Alsaciennes sont fermées, pas aussi bien intégrées.

Translation of notes from telephone interviews with Daniel Kayser, 2004

Essay on the importance of the Alsatian dialect as a cause of mistrust of the Alsatian people by the French

Post WWII period, laws against the Alsatian language:

In every school, there was a punishment for children

- *An object (in Daniel's school, it was a key) was handed to a child who was heard speaking Alsatian*

- *This child had to give the object to the next child if he heard him speak Alsatian*

- *Etcetera etcetera*

- *At the end of the day, the child who ended up with the object was punished (extra homework, cleaning up a classroom...)*

Daniel experienced this in school, from 1960 to 61

+ indefinite suspension of German language lessons

In the post-war years, there was a need to create uniformity all over France. The government wanted a French, rather than German identity in Alsace => to unite France, to tend to the wounds and divisions that war had made

Complex => with our Germanic accent, it's sometimes quite embarrassing to speak French – maybe you've noticed my little accent. We stress the first syllable of each word, just like in German.

About the Lorraine, I know they have their own dialect in the northern parts, but I don't know much more about them.

Alsace is very different from Lorraine, for centuries. In the 1600s, during the 30 years war, Lorrainians were recruited as mercenaries and invaded Alsace. Ever since then, we've been a bit wary of each other + we don't like to be mistaken for the other.

Historically & geographically => Alsace isolated from the rest of France

Alsatian Plain limited by the Vosges mountains to the West and the Black Forest to the north

=> therefore more open to Germanic influences than French

=> *whilst Lorraine has been more open to Paris*

Historical need

=> *the best way to assimilate a people is to keep them from speaking their language*

Today

=> Alsatian communities are closed, not as well integrated