

Touvier Trial

Trial in 1994 of Paul Touvier, who served as the intelligence chief of a pro-Nazi militia (*Milice*) active in France during the final year of the Nazi occupation. Some 50 years after the fact, a French court convicted Touvier of ordering the execution of seven Jewish hostages in Rilleux-la-Pape during the war. The execution was an act of retaliation for the murder of a Vichy regional minister named Philippe Henriot.

An extreme antisemite, Touvier had been convicted of war crimes in 1946 and 1947. During the 1970s he was pardoned by French president George Pompidou; this led French courts to reopen the case in 1973. Originally, Touvier had been accused of 11 different crimes, but none besides the murder of the seven hostages could be proved so long after they had occurred. Touvier was found guilty and sentenced to life in prison. He died in jail of cancer in 1996.

Touvier's trial was followed carefully throughout France, and brought up many issues that were debated by the French public, such as the responsibility of the Vichy government for the deportation and murder of French Jewry, and the accountability of many Frenchmen in standing by while innocent people were annihilated. (For more on Vichy, see also France.)