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Jean Dhombres* (jean.dhombres@damesme.cnrs.fr), Pavillon Chevreul, 3rdFloor, MNHN
CP 25, 57 rue Cuvier, 75231 Paris, France. *What do we know about exchanges in mathematics in
Europe under German control (1940-1944) ?*

A common knowledge from science studies asserts that wars accelerate progress in technology and in the physical sciences, but less is being claimed about mathematics, and particularly pure mathematics. In the case of the Second world war, due to nazi persecutions, another terrible factor occurred due to forced exile for Jews, and so destruction of active schools in Germany. But the Third Reich ruled over some European countries, and mathematicians had to adapt to the circumstances, under the complicated situation that quite often the most brilliant ones had been as post doc or similar positions to Göttingen or to other centers, even late in the Thirties. A typical case would be the Bourbaki seminar, as the first meetings were on operators on Hilbert spaces, a domain which was to be extraordinarily developed by von Neumann, then exiled in the States. The aim of this paper is to discuss what we may know for the epistemological situation in mathematics in France during the Vichy policy of collaboration with Germany (1940-1944), and to try to understand the reason towards a sort of excess of “pure” considerations, to avoid mixing with Vichy policies of applied mathematics. If time allows I would like to compare with the situation in the Netherlands. (Received September 14, 2010)