

# Workers' Participation and the French State, 1944-1948

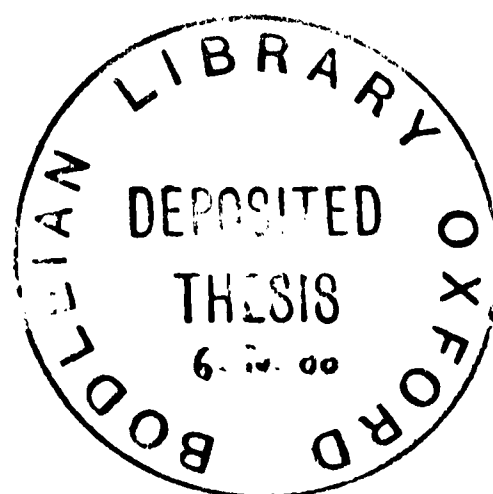
Adam G. E. Steinhouse

Wadham College

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## Abstract

ADAM G. E. STEINHOUSE  
WADHAM COLLEGE

DPHIL SOCIAL STUDIES  
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### Workers' Participation and the French State, 1944-1948

This thesis explores attempts by state officials to enable workers and the principal trade union, the Confédération Générale du Travail, to participate at the workplace and in the French state from 1944 to 1948. At a time of increased state intervention and new social welfare policies, workers gained new responsibilities in the *comités d'entreprises*, or works councils. The regional government, the *commissaires*, helped to initiate worker control experiments, notably at the Berliet truck plant in Lyon. By the end of 1948, however, the strength of the French labour movement had not significantly increased, either at the workplace or in the state. In their demand for greater participation, workers faced resistance from state officials, employers and even unions.

State actors, such as labour inspectors, prefects, and *commissaires*, actively sought social peace and greater productivity in 1944-1946. At the level of the shopfloor, the new *comités d'entreprises* gave workers, for the first time, an official voice in the firm. However, they had no say over production decisions. Nor did worker participation extend to unskilled workers, immigrants, or women.

Worker participation did not go further at the time for three reasons. Employers intensified rationalisation measures at the workplace and refused to accept new powers given to the works councils. The CGT was insufficiently committed to workplace participation. Finally, the power of the centralised state was entrenched in the domain of economic planning but did not influence the workplace sufficiently to support participation, particularly in 1946-1948.

The postwar settlement that led to increased growth in the 1950s was structured around the private sector and the planning capabilities of the state, at the expense of any involvement by labour. The exclusion of workers from planning decisions and the failure of worker control attempts led not only to the strikes of 1947-1948, but to a profound degree of powerlessness that was to mark the labour movement for the next generation.

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## Abbreviations

|        |                                                                                                                        |
|--------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| AFL:   | American Federation of Labor                                                                                           |
| AN:    | Archives Nationales, Paris                                                                                             |
| BIT:   | Bureau International du Travail (ILO)                                                                                  |
| CAC:   | Centre d'Archives Contemporaines, Fontainebleau                                                                        |
| CCN:   | Comité Confédéral National                                                                                             |
| CDL:   | Comité Départemental de Libération                                                                                     |
| CEI:   | Comité Économique Interministériel                                                                                     |
| CFDT:  | Confédération Française Démocratique du Travail                                                                        |
| CFLN:  | Comité Français de Libération Nationale                                                                                |
| CFTC:  | Confédération Française des Travailleurs Chrétiens                                                                     |
| CGC:   | Confédération Générale des Cadres                                                                                      |
| CGP:   | Commissariat Général du Plan                                                                                           |
| CGPF:  | Confédération Générale du Patronat Français (before August 1936:<br>Confédération Générale de la Production Française) |
| CGPME: | Confédération Générale des Petites et Moyennes Entreprises                                                             |
| CGT:   | Confédération Générale du Travail                                                                                      |
| CGTU:  | Confédération Générale du Travail Unitaire                                                                             |
| CII:   | Centre d'Information Interprofessionnel                                                                                |
| CIO:   | Congress of Industrial Organizations                                                                                   |
| CNE:   | Conseil National Économique                                                                                            |
| CNIE:  | Commission Nationale Interprofessionnelle d'Épuration                                                                  |
| CNPF:  | Conseil National du Patronat Français                                                                                  |
| CNR:   | Conseil National de la Résistance                                                                                      |
| CO:    | Comité d'Organisation                                                                                                  |
| CRP:   | Commission de Représentation Patronale                                                                                 |
| CRS:   | Compagnies Républicaines de Sécurité                                                                                   |
| CSEIC: | Conseil Supérieur de l'Économie Industrielle et Commerciale                                                            |
| EDF:   | Électricité de France                                                                                                  |
| ENA:   | École Nationale d'Administration                                                                                       |
| FEN:   | Fédération de l'Éducation Nationale                                                                                    |
| FO:    | Force Ouvrière                                                                                                         |

|         |                                                                       |
|---------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| FTM:    | Fédération des Travailleurs de la Métallurgie / Fédération des Métaux |
| IFHS:   | Institut Français d'Histoire Sociale                                  |
| IGAME:  | Inspecteurs Généraux de l'Administration en Mission Extraordinaire    |
| ILO:    | International Labour Organisation                                     |
| JO:     | Journal Officiel                                                      |
| MEN:    | Ministère / Ministre de l'Économie Nationale                          |
| MPI:    | Ministère de la Production Industrielle                               |
| MRP:    | Mouvement Républicain Populaire (Christian Democratic Party)          |
| ONI:    | Office National d'Immigration                                         |
| PCF:    | Parti Communiste Français                                             |
| PME:    | Plan de Modernisation et d'Équipement (Monnet Plan)                   |
| PTT:    | Postes, Télégraphes et Téléphones                                     |
| RPF:    | Rassemblement du Peuple Français                                      |
| RG:     | Renseignements Généraux (division of the Sûreté Nationale)            |
| RNUR:   | Régie Nationale des Usines Renault                                    |
| SFIO:   | Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière (Socialist Party)      |
| SNCA:   | Sociétés Nationales des Constructions Aéronautiques                   |
| SNCASE: | Société Nationale des Constructions Aéronautiques du Sud-Est          |
| SNCASO: | Société Nationale des Constructions Aéronautiques du Sud-Ouest        |
| SNCF:   | Société Nationale des Chemins de Fer                                  |
| SNECMA: | Société Nationale d'Études et de Construction des Moteurs d'Avions    |
| STO:    | Service du Travail Obligatoire                                        |
| TR:     | Ministère du Travail archives                                         |
| UFF:    | Union des Femmes Françaises                                           |
| UIMM:   | Union des Industries Métallurgiques et Minières                       |

## Chronology

### 1936

|           |                                                            |
|-----------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2-5 March | Toulouse Congress reunites CGT and CGTU                    |
| 3 May     | Popular Front victory in second round of elections         |
| May-June  | Strike wave throughout the country                         |
| 6 June    | Popular Front coalition led by Léon Blum takes office      |
| 7 June    | Matignon Accord: compulsory collective bargaining          |
| June      | Forty-hour working week and two-week paid holidays enacted |

### 1937

|         |                                                  |
|---------|--------------------------------------------------|
| 22 June | Popular Front coalition led by Camille Chautemps |
|---------|--------------------------------------------------|

### 1938

|                |                                                         |
|----------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| 9 March        | Fall of Chautemps government; second Blum government    |
| 10 April       | Right-wing government led by Édouard Daladier           |
| 4 October      | Assembly approves Munich Agreement                      |
| 12 November    | Paul Reynaud, Minister of Finance, extends working week |
| 14-17 November | Strikes, particularly at Renault                        |
| 30 November    | General strike                                          |

### 1939

|              |                                          |
|--------------|------------------------------------------|
| 26 September | Dissolution of PCF and its organisations |
|--------------|------------------------------------------|

### 1940

|             |                                                                                |
|-------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 11 July     | Pétain promulgates the French State at Vichy                                   |
| 16 August   | CGT and CFTC dissolved by Pétain government;<br>Comités d'Organisation created |
| 15 November | CGT and CFTC form the Comité d'Études Économiques et Syndicales                |

### 1941

|               |                                            |
|---------------|--------------------------------------------|
| 26 May-9 June | Strike by miners in Nord and Pas-de-Calais |
| 4 October     | Charte du Travail decreed                  |

### 1943

|            |                                                    |
|------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| 27 May     | CNR founded                                        |
| 3 November | Provisional consultative assembly meets in Algiers |

### 1944

|                 |                                                                                                                                                                              |
|-----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 10 January      | Algiers decrees on <i>commissaires de la République</i>                                                                                                                      |
| 15 March        | CNR Charter adopted                                                                                                                                                          |
| 21 April        | Decree on right to vote for women                                                                                                                                            |
| 22 May          | Ordinance on <i>comités mixtes de la production</i>                                                                                                                          |
| May             | <i>Commissaires de la République</i> named                                                                                                                                   |
| 6 July          | Decrees on <i>commissaires de la République</i> published                                                                                                                    |
| 27 July         | Ordinance abolishing the Charte du Travail                                                                                                                                   |
| 18 August       | General strike begun by trade unions                                                                                                                                         |
| 25 August       | Liberation of Paris                                                                                                                                                          |
| 5 September     | Berliet requisition decreed by <i>commissaire</i> Yves Farge                                                                                                                 |
| 9 September     | De Gaulle government formed, with two PCF ministers<br>(François Billoux, Charles Tillon); Alexandre Parodi is Minister<br>of Labour, Adrien Tixier Minister of the Interior |
| 10 September    | Abolition of Vichy legislation                                                                                                                                               |
| 10-30 September | Salary decrees by <i>commissaires de la République</i>                                                                                                                       |

|                 |                                                                                                                                             |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 5 October       | Right to vote granted to women                                                                                                              |
| 18 October      | CNIE set up by Ministry of Industrial Production                                                                                            |
| October         | CEI reasserts control; salary freeze attempts                                                                                               |
| 7 November      | Second provisional consultative assembly, enlarged to include CNR movements, parties and trade unions                                       |
| 13 December     | Houillères du Nord et Pas-de-Calais nationalised                                                                                            |
| <b>1945</b>     |                                                                                                                                             |
| 16 January      | Renault nationalised                                                                                                                        |
| 23 January      | Paul Haag replaces Raymond Aubrac as <i>commissaire</i> in Marseille                                                                        |
| 22 February     | <i>Comités d'entreprises</i> created in firms with 100 workers                                                                              |
| February-March  | Collective agreements on salary increases; 600,000 unemployed                                                                               |
| 5 April         | Pierre Mendès France resigns as Minister of Economic Affairs                                                                                |
| 10-24 April     | Decrees on salary zones                                                                                                                     |
| 29 April/13 May | Municipal elections                                                                                                                         |
| 8 May           | Surrender of Germany                                                                                                                        |
| 14-16 May       | Strikes in Lyon                                                                                                                             |
| end May         | New decrees on salary zones                                                                                                                 |
| 22 June         | Creation of the École Nationale d'Administration                                                                                            |
| 26 June         | Air France and Air Bleu nationalised                                                                                                        |
| 21 July         | Maurice Thorez speech to miners at Waziers launches "battle for production"                                                                 |
| 4-5 September   | First CCN of CGT: Benoît Frachon and Léon Jouhaux are the general secretaries                                                               |
| 15 September    | Henri Longchambon replaces Farge as <i>commissaire</i> in Lyon                                                                              |
| October         | Salary freeze and pay reclassification                                                                                                      |
| 4/19 October    | Ordinances on creation of Social Security                                                                                                   |
| 21 October      | First constituent assembly elections: PCF 26%; MRP 24%; SFIO 23%                                                                            |
| 21 November     | Ambroise Croizat becomes Minister of Labour; four other PCF ministers named (Maurice Thorez, François Billoux, Charles Tillon, Marcel Paul) |
| 2 December      | Banque de France and four deposit banks nationalised                                                                                        |
| 12 December     | Strike by civil servants                                                                                                                    |
| 21 December     | Commissariat Général du Plan created, led by Jean Monnet (officially decreed 3 Jan 1946)                                                    |
| <b>1946</b>     |                                                                                                                                             |
| Winter          | Demonstrations for "ravitaillement et épuration"                                                                                            |
| 1 January       | CNPF officially created; actual start 12 June                                                                                               |
| 20 January      | De Gaulle resigns                                                                                                                           |
| 26 January      | Tripartism: PCF-SFIO-MRP; Félix Gouin, Premier, enacts salary freeze; André Le Troquer Minister of the Interior                             |
| 21 February     | Reestablishment of forty-hour law and overtime pay                                                                                          |
| 16-19 March     | First meeting of the Conseil du Plan                                                                                                        |
| 19 March        | CGT rally for demands on Champ de Mars                                                                                                      |
| 26 March        | <i>Commissaires de la République</i> abolished                                                                                              |
| 8 April         | Électricité de France and Gaz de France nationalised                                                                                        |
| 8-12 April      | 26th CGT Congress                                                                                                                           |
| 16 April        | <i>Délégués du personnel</i> statute                                                                                                        |
| 25 April        | Big insurance companies nationalised                                                                                                        |
| 26 April        | Houillères de France nationalised                                                                                                           |
| 5 May           | First constitutional referendum defeated: Yes 47%; No 53%                                                                                   |
| 16 May          | <i>Comités d'entreprises</i> extended to firms with 50 workers                                                                              |
| 17 May          | Law creates Charbonnages de France                                                                                                          |
| 29 May          | CGT declaration on salary increases                                                                                                         |

|                  |                                                                         |
|------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2 June           | Second constituent assembly elections: MRP 28%; PCF 26%; SFIO 21%       |
| 7/9 June         | SFIO opposition to CGT demands                                          |
| 18 June          | CFTC wants restricted set of demands                                    |
| 22 June          | Electricity and gas personnel statute                                   |
| 23 June          | Georges Bidault government; Édouard Depreux is Minister of the Interior |
| 4-22 July        | Palais Royal conference on salaries and prices                          |
| 19 July          | Big CGT demonstration for higher salaries                               |
| 30 July-4 August | National PTT strike and split in CGT Federation of PTT                  |
| 6 August         | Law on family allowances                                                |
| 12 September     | Law on old-age pensions                                                 |
| October          | Success of Renault 4CV at Salon de l'Auto                               |
| 5 October        | Civil service general statute adopted                                   |
| 13 October       | Referendum on second Constitution: Yes 53.5%; No 46.5%                  |
| 27 October       | Law on Conseil Économique (Economic Council)                            |
| 10 November      | Legislative elections: PCF 28%; MRP 26%; SFIO 18%                       |
| 18 November      | Interview with Maurice Thorez in <u>The Times</u>                       |
| 24 November/     | Council of the Republic elections                                       |
| 8 December       |                                                                         |
| 27 November      | Monnet Plan adopted                                                     |
| 16 December      | Léon Blum government; Daniel Mayer is Minister of Labour                |
| 20 December      | Government austerity measures (big price increases)                     |
| 23 December      | Law on collective bargaining                                            |
| 29 December      | CGT demands 7000 franc minimum salary                                   |
| <b>1947</b>      |                                                                         |
| 1 January        | Social Security plan comes into effect                                  |
| 2 January        | Blum decree imposes 5% price reduction                                  |
| 14 January       | Bills to nationalise Berliet fail in Assembly                           |
| 16 January       | Vincent Auriol becomes President of Republic;                           |
|                  | Blum government resigns                                                 |
| 22 January       | Paul Ramadier government; Croizat is Minister of Labour                 |
| 5 February       | Strikes in the ports                                                    |
| 24 February      | Second 5% price reduction                                               |
| 10 March         | Meeting of the CGPME                                                    |
| 25 March         | CGT ( <i>unitaires</i> ) demonstrations against salary freeze           |
| 31 March         | Minimum (vital) wage created                                            |
| 7 April          | Founding of RPF                                                         |
| 24 April         | Social Security Board elections: CGT 59%; CFTC 26%;                     |
|                  | and elections to Family Allowance administration                        |
| 25 April-16 May  | Renault strike                                                          |
| 1 May            | Bread ration is 250g per day                                            |
| May              | U.S. Congress adopts Taft-Hartley Act                                   |
| 5 May            | Communist ministers excluded from government;                           |
|                  | Daniel Mayer returns as Minister of Labour                              |
| 5 June           | U.S. Secretary of State George Marshall announces aid to Europe         |
|                  | (Marshall Plan) at Harvard commencement                                 |
| 6-12 June        | SNCF strike                                                             |
| 5-27 June        | Strike wave throughout country                                          |
| 17 June          | France and Great Britain accept Marshall Aid                            |
| 26-28 June       | Miners' strike                                                          |
| 1 July           | Metalworkers' strike (1 million strikers)                               |
| 2-19 July        | Bank strike                                                             |
| 6 August         | Government rejects CGT-CNPF agreement on 11% salary rise                |
| 27 August        | Bread ration 200g; 10,000 on strike at Peugeot-Sochaux                  |
| 28 August        | New CGT-CNPF agreement; Brest dock strike                               |

|                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 September     | Strike at Michelin in Clermont-Ferrand                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 9-11 September  | Brief but large strikes in many departments                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 11-12 September | Violent incidents during demonstrations at Le Mans                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 22-27 September | Communist parties meet in Poland to launch Cominform                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| 14-20 October   | Transport strike in Paris                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 19/26 October   | Municipal elections                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 10 November     | First strikes in Marseille                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 12 November     | Violent incidents in Marseille                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 14 November     | Big price increases in gas, electricity and transport announced by government; dockworkers go on strike in Marseille; Léon Delfosse removed from Conseil d'Administration des Houillères and start of coal strike in Nord and Pas-de-Calais |
| 17 November     | General strike in Marseille and protest movement throughout country                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 17-18 November  | Strikes in Marseille, Nord mines and Paris metalworking                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 19 November     | Ramadier government resigns                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 23 November     | Strikes throughout country                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 24 November     | Robert Schuman becomes premier; Jules Moch is Minister of the Interior, René Mayer Minister of Finance                                                                                                                                      |
| 9 December      | End of strikes                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 19 December     | The five FO <i>minoritaires</i> resign from CGT Bureau Confédéral                                                                                                                                                                           |

## 1948

|                       |                                                                                  |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 4 January             | De Gaulle speech to Saint-Étienne miners on need for capital-labour associations |
| 17 February           | Second attempt to nationalise Berliet fails to pass                              |
| 7 April               | Appointment of first IGAMEs or "super-prefects"                                  |
| 13 April              | Creation of CGT-FO (constitutive congress)                                       |
| 13 April              | Strike of Paris metalworkers                                                     |
| 21 April              | Coal strike in Nord and Pas-de-Calais                                            |
| 21 May                | IGAMEs created                                                                   |
| 1 June                | Bread ration at 250g                                                             |
| 16 June               | Incidents at Clermont-Ferrand (Michelin) and Nevers                              |
| 19 June               | CGT strike call                                                                  |
| 6-13 July             | Strike by civil servants                                                         |
| 26 July               | André Marie government                                                           |
| 27 August             | Strikes in the metal industry                                                    |
| 5 September           | Robert Schuman government                                                        |
| 11 September          | Henri Queuille government                                                        |
| 15 September          | Strikes in the metal and aircraft industries                                     |
| 19 September          | Decrees by Robert Lacoste, Minister of Industry                                  |
| 4 October             | General coal strike                                                              |
| 9 October             | Queuille condemns strikes as "insurrections"                                     |
| 11 October            | Call-up of CRS and army reservists                                               |
| 11-15 October         | 27th CGT Congress                                                                |
| 2 November            | Troops clear the mine shafts                                                     |
| 13 November           | General strike in the Paris region                                               |
| 4 October-29 November | Violent strikes (dockworkers, PTT, SNCF, miners)                                 |

## Sources:

Documents de l'Institut CGT d'histoire sociale, Les Comités Confédéraux Nationaux de novembre 1947 et de janvier 1948, Paris, no date; Jean-Pierre Rioux, The Fourth Republic, 1944-1958, Cambridge and Paris, 1987; Philip Williams, Politics in Post-War France, London, 1954.

## Chapter I                      Introduction

This thesis reasserts the role of worker participation in French trade union history and analyses the preponderant role of the state in post-Liberation industrial relations in France. Worker participation here refers to attempts by workers and their organisations to involve themselves in the management and control of the workplace -- to have a voice in decision-making.<sup>1</sup> These attempts took different forms, ranging from outright worker control experiments to advice given to state labour inspectors. State officials favoured two types of worker participation in the immediate post-Liberation period: at the workplace and in the state itself, such as taking part in commissions and national bodies. This study is mainly concerned with the first type, because of the weight and orientation of the supporting evidence garnered in the archives, however allusions are also made to the second type of worker participation. The term "state" refers throughout the study to three elements: the ruling government of the day; government administration, including departmental prefects and regional *commissaires*; and government-run economic and social institutions.

The study has three aims: to explore the role of state officials in both promoting and hampering workers' participation in France in the immediate post-Liberation period; to assess the state efforts of promotion against the sizeable constraints on participation then apparent; and to make a contribution to the literature on theories of the state and worker collective action.

I argue that state officials did make attempts to incorporate workers' participation at the workplace along certain, limited lines; however, these efforts failed owing to entrenched employer opposition, the role of the main union, the CGT, and the structure of the state itself. After the Liberation, the role of the state increased significantly, but, by 1948, workers were effectively excluded from the decision-making process at the workplace. From a theoretical point of view, the post-Liberation situation in France contrasts the capacity of state power to resolve conflicts and decision-making discrepancies versus the collective action capacity of workers and their organisations to bring about change. My work brings together these two strands of material and their literatures in order to show the need to consider the role of the state in any analysis of workers' interests.

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<sup>1</sup> This notion follows that developed by Stephen Bornstein and Keitha Fine, "Worker Control in France: Recent Political Developments," in G. David Garson, ed, Worker Self-Management in Industry: The West European Experience, New York, 1977, p.153: Participation is "worker involvement at some level of decision-making."

The four-year period of 1944 to 1948 is so fundamental in French labour history because it set in place the "rules of the game" of industrial relations for the entire postwar era. The French administration -- unlike in most other European countries -- did not set up a centralised system of industrial relations, in part because trade unions were too weak and employers refused to acknowledge the principle even of collective bargaining, but also owing to the limited reach of the state at the workplace. French exceptionalism in industrial relations consists mainly in the exclusion of labour from both firm and national decision-making. Extensive use of archives reveals the initial efforts of state representatives, particularly in 1944-1945, to fashion a new role for workers both at the workplace and in the state and also the later tailing away and redirection of these attempts, in 1946-1947, as social conditions worsened and polarisation between management and labour set in.

The study begins in 1944, echoing the hopes of the Liberation: repressive Vichy legislation was repealed; trade unions were legalised again; and a fresh start was promised. The immediate post-Liberation period of 1944-1948 was marked by nationalisations of leading industries such as mining, electricity, railways, the Renault car plants and much of the banking sector. It was a time of extreme material deprivation, hyperinflation, a flourishing black market, and a collapsed economic infrastructure. French Communist Party (PCF) ministers were part of the government from 1944 until 1947, first under de Gaulle's premiership and then as part of a tripartite government of the centre and left, in 1946-1947. There was a Communist Minister of Labour, Ambroise Croizat, during most of the period from November 1945 to May 1947, when the PCF ministers were excluded from the government. The study ends in 1948 because the huge and violent strike waves of 1947 and 1948, the split of the CGT in December 1947, and the CGT withdrawal from the state planning agency all marked a turning point in French labour history and industrial relations. The weakness of the labour movement and the state-business partnership in economic planning ensured that labour would remain excluded from power and decision-making in both the state and the workplace.

The Liberation, in 1944, also offered perhaps the most promising case before 1968 for bringing in greater worker participation in the workplace and in the state. The three main opportunities for advancing the cause of worker participation before 1968 all came at times of unusual working-class mobilisation -- at the end of the First World War (1919-1921), at the election of the Popular Front (1936), and at the Liberation (1944). On each occasion, the unions, the CGT chief among them, benefited from a recent mass influx of untried, impatient new members who were not easily organised in

the short period of euphoria before failure supervened. In 1919-1921, enhanced working-class militancy faced a right-wing administration, which, in that early period, broke the more easily a general strike launched not only against it, but as a part of the factional battle to control the CGT. In 1936, the strike wave in May-June followed the victory of a divided left on 3 May, though it preceded the actual formation of Léon Blum's government on 6 June. The break-up of the political coalition of the left was again marked by a general strike, in 1938, which mobilised on industrial grounds, but which was also aimed at the Munich Agreement as well as the continuing factional struggle for control of the re-unified CGT.

In 1944, the political left and the CGT emerged reinforced from the Resistance; the political right and the employers weakened and discredited from their cooperation with Vichy during 1940-1944 and collaboration with the enemy. The unions were seen to be essential by the provisional governments of 1944-1946 for restoring and sustaining production in a war-torn country. Worker participation figured in the Conseil National de la Résistance (CNR) Charter, adopted by the Algiers provisional government in March 1944. In October 1945, the Communist and Socialist parties obtained nearly half the vote. And yet once again employers, especially from 1946, were able to mount a successful resistance to most -- though not all -- radical measures. For example, the initial ordinance on the *comités d'entreprises* of February 1945, which applied to all firms with one hundred workers, was extended in the law of May 1946 to those firms employing at least fifty workers -- a gain for the labour movement, but compensated for the employers by the fact that the scope of the *comités* had not been significantly widened.

The failure to introduce a greater degree of worker participation in France, despite its continuing appeal to important sections of the working class, has to take account of the roles of employers, the state, and the trade unions. It is the interaction of employers, unions, and the state machine, which forms the bulk of the thesis.

This study draws on archival sources in order to explore in detail the role of state officials in industrial relations in the crucial four-year post-Liberation period. The work bears the influence of Gérard Noiriel's dictum: it is necessary, he argues, to use concrete detail, especially archival evidence, to avoid too much abstraction and to establish the essential role played by the state in the contemporary world.<sup>2</sup> I do this in the thesis by fine-grained analysis of archival reports filed by labour inspectors, departmental prefects, and regional *commissaires*. My research includes all extant reports from 1944 to 1948 for the following departments: Bouches-du-Rhône (for

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<sup>2</sup> Gérard Noiriel, *La Tyrannie du national*, Paris, 1993, p.19.

Marseille); Haute-Garonne (Toulouse); Loire (Saint-Étienne); Loire-Inférieure (Nantes, Saint-Nazaire); Meurthe-et-Moselle (Nancy); Moselle (Metz, Thionville); Nord (Lille, Douai, Roubaix, Tourcoing); Pas-de-Calais (Arras, Calais); Rhône (Lyon, Vénissieux); Sarthe (Le Mans); and Seine (Boulogne-Billancourt, Saint-Denis). These departments were chosen to present a cross-section of all significant industrial sites for the period. As well, compilation reports from the Ministries of Labour and the Interior provided other relevant evidence.<sup>3</sup> I concentrate on the French administration and not on parliament, ministers, or political parties, because I am interested in the point of contact between workers and the state -- a focus which allows a day-to-day record to be established and that can complement a more party political orientation.<sup>4</sup> The specific chapters outline the argument as follows.

Chapter II examines the roles of the major actors in 1944-1948: the state, the CGT, and the employers. The period of the immediate post-Liberation saw major changes for each of these actors. State officials oversaw increased government intervention in the economy; the CGT tried to balance the representation of workplace demands with support for the PCF, during the party's time in government from 1944-1947; and employers pushed for intensified rationalisation measures at the workplace. The key development of the period was increased government intervention in the economy. The chapter studies the legacies of the Popular Front, the Vichy regime, and the Resistance movement in changing the economic orientation of the state in France after the Liberation. State administrators now included planners who treated government intervention mostly as a business-state partnership. Although the CGT did not gain large decision-making powers either in economic planning structures or in the workplace, it did have unique access to the government, owing to the inclusion of Communist ministers from 1944 to May 1947. However, neither the CGT nor the PCF encouraged new participatory structures for workers except if they led to raised production, despite the fact that worker participation was a basic demand mentioned in the CNR Charter. In the workplace, suspicious employers and poorly implanted unions meant that capital and labour did not fashion a working compromise in industrial relations. This chapter provides the macroeconomic and large historical framework for the specific relations in the workplace and on the ground studied in the next two chapters.

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<sup>3</sup> See the full listing in the bibliography of archival sources.

<sup>4</sup> See Philip Williams, Politics in Post-War France: Parties and the Constitution in the Fourth Republic, London, 1954; Richard Vinen, Bourgeois Politics in France, 1945-1951, Cambridge, 1995; Andrew Shennan, Rethinking France: Plans for Renewal, 1940-1946, Oxford, 1989.

Chapter II also reviews relevant literature and useful theoretical approaches for understanding worker participation during the period. I argue that the representation of workplace demands can best be located in the interplay between the industrial and political arenas. In particular, the role of the state in fashioning and constraining the collective action capacity of workers is crucial. The double nature of European trade unions -- arguing for immediate benefits and the need to transform society -- was shown in France to be contingent not just on the nature of the labour movement but also on the form of the state. French state officials both promoted and hindered additional rights for labour in the workplace and in the state. It is precisely in uncovering the micro-level dealings between state officials and workers at this time, the subject of the next chapter, that one can distinguish the future pattern of labour exclusion in France.

Chapter III considers the encouragement of workers' participation by state officials, such as *commissaires de la République*, prefects, and labour inspectors. I argue that they desired to integrate workers and unions more systematically at the workplace in order to achieve increased production, social progress, and public order. This strategy changed, however, in 1946-1947, as political conditions also varied.

Labour inspectors, for example, were in place across the country to enforce labour legislation, settle industrial conflicts and prevent strikes. They were responsible to the Ministry of Labour, but were based in the various departments. Their role changed quite explicitly after the Liberation, in 1944. Instead of just acting as arbitrators in labour disputes, they were also expected to establish social peace and to bring workers into new state and workplace structures. My archival research uncovered numerous examples of the inspectors' great impact on workers. For example, labour inspectors played a crucial role in assuring the success of the new *comités d'entreprises*, or works councils, by actually setting them up. The inspectors furnished documentation to the *comités*, so that they would be able to give an informed opinion to the managers of the firms. The inspectors held that workers had a right to participation on the *comités* and that they should prepare to take on more decision-making responsibilities in the workplace. In the absence of more far-reaching central government efforts, however, these attempts by local state authorities did not permanently alter industrial relations. By 1946-1947, these state officials had reverted to previous administrative roles and were no longer encouraging worker participation.

Chapter IV follows up the state officials' efforts to promote worker participation in the workplace by focusing on the *comités d'entreprises* and the Berliet *comité de gestion* experiment. The *comités d'entreprises* were instituted in the ordinance of February 1945 and gave workers the formal opportunity to express their perspectives at

the workplace via elected representatives. The *comités d'entreprises* were seen by the government and Ministry of Labour officials as being helpful for raising industrial output and altering the traditional attitude of confrontation between the *patronat* and unions. Employers, however, were reluctant to cede any managerial control to the *comités d'entreprises*, particularly about access to production decisions and company financial information. Workers, too, were suspicious of the *comités d'entreprises*, at first, because of their perceived links with Vichy industrial relations policies, such as the *comités sociaux d'établissement*, and their initial limit to firms employing at least one hundred workers, a figure considered too high. After May 1946, despite a new law widening the coverage of the *comités* to include firms having a minimum of fifty workers, state officials were no longer as receptive on the ground to promoting worker participation, owing to a changed political and industrial context.

A more extended form of worker participation occurred during this period, starting in 1944, at the Berliet truck firm in Lyon, where a director ran the firm in association with a worker-led *comité de gestion*. Even this experiment, however, was constrained by the attitudes of state officials and the CGT itself, let alone by the former management that was trying to return. The next three chapters explore these wider factors constraining full participation in the workplace and in the state. I highlight three factors: employer opposition, the role of the CGT, and the state structure.

Chapter V looks at entrenched employer opposition in the workplace and changing workplace practices over the period of 1944-1948. After the Liberation, employers only reluctantly agreed to concessions in their dealings with state administrators. Instead, they sought increased managerial control at the workplace, by carrying out rationalisation initiatives, fighting tenaciously against the provisions of the legislation on the *comités d'entreprises* and refusing to release company financial records to the *comités d'entreprises*. At the same time, employers became well-organised at the national level: they re-launched a national employers' association, the CNPF, in June 1946. Employers encountered few problems in representing themselves both in the workplace and in the state and in opposing every extension of workers' participation.

Chapter VI scrutinises the role of the CGT regarding worker participation. The CGT was committed to promoting work and production, not necessarily to altering relations at the workplace. The confederation showed little flexibility in dealing with the possibility of new decision-making capacities at the level of the workplace. The CGT maintained strong ties with the PCF and took up the party's "battle for production." The CGT also tried to target the state after the Liberation and did obtain

some notable early successes, such as job guarantees, worker statutes, and social security legislation. Semiskilled, unskilled, immigrant, and women workers did not share equally in these entitlements and also faced constraints on participation at the workplace. It should be noted, though, that this study does not dwell on different CGT strategies for representing workers' demands -- done elsewhere<sup>5</sup> -- nor does it have space to consider at length the place of the CFTC in the labour movement.<sup>6</sup> Apart from the paucity of archival union documentation for the period,<sup>7</sup> my emphasis on state records highlights the possibilities then present at the workplace.

Chapter VII details the effect of state structure on worker participation. The centralised state became more entrenched: central government officials acted against local initiatives, including efforts by the *commissaires* to promote worker participation experiments. However, state administrators -- unlike in most other European countries at the time -- were incapable of setting up a centralised system of industrial relations. In the aftermath of the Liberation, the instances of increased worker participation were not generalised by the administration, even when advised of their success. After their initial efforts in 1944-1945 to promote worker participation at the workplace and in state institutions, central state officials soon acceded to the different priorities of social order, expansion of investment and productive capacity in the Plan (officially decreed in January 1946) and partnership with big business.

The introduction of the *commissaires de la République* in 1944 did not result in significantly greater decision-making power at the regional level or in more responsiveness to workers' demands. Their essential function was to restore law and order and republican legality in the chaotic circumstances of the Liberation. When the *commissaires* were abolished in May 1946, the state structure reverted to its traditional form, although the Ministry of the Interior was now subject to the dictates of economic planning.

The concluding chapter argues that micro-dealings between state officials and workers and their representatives are the key to understanding this crucial period. While many labour inspectors, *commissaires*, and prefects wanted to extend the attempts by workers and their organisations to involve themselves in the management of the workplace, these state administrators were limited by the state structure, employer opposition, and the CGT itself. Also, closer scrutiny of the workplace relations brings out the historical legacy of exclusion of workers and their organisations

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<sup>5</sup> See Annie Lacroix-Riz, *La CGT de la Libération à la scission, de 1944 à 1947*, Paris, 1983.

<sup>6</sup> See Frank Georgi, *Soufflons nous-mêmes notre forge: Une histoire de la Fédération de la métallurgie CFTC - CFDT, 1920-1974*, Paris, 1991.

<sup>7</sup> This was indicated to me by the chief archivist at the Institut CGT d'Histoire Sociale in Paris.

from decision-making in the firm, as suspicious employers and poorly implanted unions at the workplace did not fashion a lasting working compromise.

The study of efforts to promote worker participation in the workplace enables a better assessment of the central theoretical claim of this thesis, that the representation of workplace demands can best be located in the interplay between the industrial and political arenas. During the 1944-1948 period, the CGT accepted the decision-making capacities of each level of government and the administrative influence of state officials. Yet the confederation also maintained an ambivalence towards the centralised state. In France, the weakness of the trade unions meant that their capacity to bring about change, to argue effectively for worker participation, depended on the form of the state itself. However, the CGT's support for established political forms from 1944 to 1947 did not, as Claus Offe and Helmut Wiesenthal might suppose, give rise to any external support for the confederation.<sup>8</sup> The CGT was unable to guarantee the united compliance of the workforce in exchange for a political guarantee by the government. As a result, France fits with difficulty into the corporatist model of industrial democracy, especially as found in northern and western Europe.<sup>9</sup> Instead, the French model was distinctive because of "the exclusion of labor from a voice in economic decision-making."<sup>10</sup>

There was no priority given to a centralised system of industrial relations, although the state became the main guarantor of union goals. The postwar settlement was to lead to a sustained period of economic growth in the 1950s but it was structured around the private sector and the planning capabilities of the state, at the expense of any involvement by labour. This thesis illustrates the importance of the relationship in 1944-1948 between all the actors -- employers, union, and state officials -- in order to understand worker participation in both the workplace and the state. This frustration of worker demands contributed not only to the strikes of 1947-1948 but to a profound degree of powerlessness that was to mark the labour movement for the next generation.

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<sup>8</sup> See Claus Offe and Helmut Wiesenthal, "Two Logics of Collective Action," in Claus Offe, Disorganized Capitalism, Cambridge, 1985, p.217.

<sup>9</sup> See Colin Crouch, Industrial Relations and European State Traditions, Oxford, 1993, especially on northern Europe, where the circumstances of industrial relations have been very different than in France.

<sup>10</sup> Chris Howell, Regulating Labor: The State and Industrial Relations Reform in Postwar France, Princeton, 1992, p.54.

## **Chapter II                    The State, the CGT, Employers: Actors and Theories**

### **1. Introduction**

This chapter presents a description of the major actors and themes pertaining to the 1944-1948 period and a review of relevant literature and useful theoretical approaches that have influenced the central argument of the thesis. The description and literature review are presented in tandem on the following aspects of workers' participation: the state; the CGT; employers and the workplace. Following a summary of the literature review, the final section of the chapter considers relevant theoretical approaches for understanding the links between the main actors during the period.

The chapter brings out how increased government intervention in the economy was central to this period. The legacies of the Popular Front, the Vichy regime, and the Resistance all resulted in a marked change in the orientation of the state in France in the 1940s, directly after the Liberation. The administrative apparatus of the state now included planners who treated government intervention as a technical truth rather than as a process of political negotiation. Trade unions were mostly shut out from any decision-making authority, as investment in the economy was largely a business-state partnership. Although the CGT, in particular, did have unparalleled access to the government, which included Communist ministers from 1944 to 1947, neither the CGT nor the PCF encouraged new participatory structures for workers except if they led to raised production, despite the fact that worker participation was a basic demand mentioned in the CNR Charter.

The review of the substantive literature in this chapter is presented with an eye on how each major historical actor is connected to the theme of worker participation during the 1944-1948 period. In trying to account for the exclusion of unions in this period, the literature has focused on state-led development at the expense of labour; theories of weak union presence in the workplace; the political effects of the Cold War and the overly close ties between the CGT and the PCF; the composition of the workforce itself; and management policies of rationalisation at the workplace. These explanations can tie together and inform a study of worker participation in the state structure and at the workplace if the state and the workplace are considered in a uniform analysis.

French exceptionalism in industrial relations consists mainly in the exclusion of labour from both firm and national decision-making. Suspicious employers and the weak presence of unions at the workplace meant that capital and labour did not fashion

a working compromise; unions were too weak and employers refused even to acknowledge the principle of collective bargaining. Elsewhere in Europe, state officials worked for a corporatist outcome, whereby labour acquired political rights in exchange for industrial peace. The double nature of European trade unions -- arguing for immediate benefits and the need to transform society -- was shown in France to be contingent not just on the nature of the labour movement but also on the form of the state. It is precisely in uncovering the micro-level dealings between state officials and workers at this time, the subject of the next chapter, that one can distinguish the future pattern of labour exclusion in France.

In the theoretical section, I show how my conceptual orientation stems from two distinct bodies of work: theories of the state, on one hand, and theories of worker action/participation, on the other. My research is an attempt to put together these two approaches, in order to illustrate the importance of the role of the state in the determination of workers' interests.

## **2. Background: France 1944-1948**

The background for these aspects of worker participation is the specific historical context of the immediate post-Liberation period. The years 1944-1948 were marked by extreme material deprivation, with hyperinflation and a flourishing black market. Where it had not been destroyed, France's industrial infrastructure was largely exhausted:

"Less than half the rail network was serviceable; and ... the average age of surviving French machine tools was at least twenty-five years, creating a situation in which a given task required eight times the number of workers to perform it as it did in America."<sup>1</sup>

In 1946, the Ministry of Reconstruction estimated the cost of a return to normality at 4900 billion francs, the equivalent of about two to three years' prewar national income.<sup>2</sup> Maurice Larkin notes that the harsh winter of 1944-1945 and the cold spring of 1945 exacerbated shortages of food and fuel; infant mortality in Paris increased by forty per cent over the previous winter; black-market prices rose to three to four times the legal level.<sup>3</sup>

The crucial popular demand was for more food. Annie Lacroix-Riz states: "Le ravitaillement des populations urbaines redevient le premier centre d'intérêt, éloignant

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<sup>1</sup> Maurice Larkin, *France since the Popular Front: Government and People, 1936-1986*, Oxford, 1988, p.117. See also Alan Milward, *The Reconstruction of Western Europe 1945-1951*, London, 1984.

<sup>2</sup> Jean-Pierre Rioux, *The Fourth Republic, 1944-1958*, Cambridge and Paris, 1987, p.19.

<sup>3</sup> Larkin, p.117.

souvent -- voire supplantant -- les questions politiques."<sup>4</sup> Statistics reveal the insufficient levels of rationing: 900 calories per adult in Paris in August 1944, 1210 in September, and 1515 in May 1945, compared to a recommended amount of 2400 calories daily.<sup>5</sup> Prefects in their reports to central government often commented on people's perceptions that daily problems were not close to being solved:

"Les problèmes quotidiens qui se posent à la classe ouvrière, comme à la classe moyenne (ravitaillement, habillement, diminution constante de la valeur d'achat des traitements et salaires) ne lui semblent pas près de recevoir une solution."<sup>6</sup>

Another major difficulty in 1944 was the lack of coal, the principal source of energy. Domestic consumption had to be cut back even further than during the war, according to Jean-Pierre Rioux, in order "to avoid company closures and to meet the priority needs of the SNCF."<sup>7</sup> Indeed, industrial production was seriously affected by coal shortages for several years, until the early 1950s. Alexander Werth cites the "coal bottleneck" described by François Goguel in 1947, whereby the shortage of coal and raw materials led to insufficient industrial production and hence to inadequate wages.<sup>8</sup> The end result was to reduce workers' purchasing power alarmingly, especially because of the combined effects of high black market prices and rampant inflation.<sup>9</sup>

Given these circumstances, the level of industrial militancy, in so far as it was revealed in strikes for higher wages, was remarkably limited from 1944 to 1947, owing partly to state pressure on employers and partly to CGT pressure on the workforce to increase output for the sake of the country. Resistance radicalism and suppressed working-class industrial demands found a political expression in renewed demands for worker control. The background of economic difficulties of the immediate post-Liberation period is important for understanding why workers wanted to achieve some measure of security and why they wanted to participate at the workplace and in the state, at a time when government officials were becoming increasingly involved in

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<sup>4</sup> Annie Lacroix-Riz, La CGT de la Libération à la scission, de 1944 à 1947, Paris, 1983, p.39.

Note: all quotations from French sources in this thesis have been left in the original language, except for those works available in published translations in English. French words outside of citations have not been italicised when they refer to a proper noun.

<sup>5</sup> Rioux, p.23.

<sup>6</sup> AN F1cIII 1210, report of Préfet des Bouches-du-Rhône, 15 May 1945.

<sup>7</sup> Rioux, p.20.

<sup>8</sup> Alexander Werth, France: 1940-1955, London, 1956, p.354, citing François Goguel in Esprit, May 1947, p.848.

<sup>9</sup> For more on the hyper-inflation of the period, see Richard Kuisel, Capitalism and the State in Modern France: Renovation and Economic Management in the Twentieth Century, Cambridge, 1981, ch.7 and Charles Maier, In Search of Stability: Explorations in Historical Political Economy, Cambridge, 1987, ch.5: "The Politics of Inflation in the Twentieth Century." Also see below, section 3b)iii, for the political context of the Resistance.

economic decision-making. The next sections consider in turn the main actors, starting with the state.

### 3. The state

#### a. A more interventionist administration

The term "state" as used here includes the government in power; the administration, including departmental prefects, regional *commissaires*, the police, and the judiciary; as well as government-run economic and social institutions.

In the immediate post-Liberation period of 1944-1948, the administration adopted a more interventionist stance than previously and the representatives of the state in the departments and regions, such as the prefects, *commissaires de la République*, and labour inspectors, became a vital link between the government and the population.

The provisional government in Algiers (1943-1944) had issued an ordinance on 10 January 1944 establishing the *commissaires de la République*, eighteen in number, who were to be "the mandated representatives of the provisional government, sent out to inform and guide public opinion and to uphold order and legality."<sup>10</sup> The creation of these new administrative posts reflected, in Andrew Shennan's words, the "absolute priority which the Provisional Government attached to securing its own authority inside France."<sup>11</sup> For Jean-Pierre Rioux, the *commissaires* "had to safeguard a national consensus which was no longer simply that of the Resistance itself; the Jacobin conception of the state they incarnated was to be a vital counter to the fragmentation of the country."<sup>12</sup> The role of these administrators is explored in detail in chapter III, section 4 of this thesis.

During the post-Liberation period, the French state underwent significant change. New political arrangements emerged, including a fresh constitution in October 1946, tripartite government, new economic planning measures, and innovative social welfare policies. There was also, from 1948, increased dependence on American aid, by way of the Marshall Plan, so that the state was the only effective source of much-needed investment. The overall result of these changes was to create a more interventionist administration in the economy.

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<sup>10</sup> Rioux, p.44.

<sup>11</sup> Andrew Shennan, *Rethinking France: Plans for Renewal, 1940-1946*, Oxford, 1989, p.63.

<sup>12</sup> Rioux, p.44. For more on Jacobinism, see below, section 4a)i.

## **b. Increased government intervention**

### **i) The legacy of the Popular Front**

The key development of the years 1944-1948 was increased government intervention in the economy. Conversely, the participation of key groups, such as trade unions, in the apparatus of the state also became more important, so as to legitimate and help enforce the state priorities of increased production and a return to order. Groups sent representatives to sit on state commissions and councils in order to pursue more effectively their own interests or to be closer to the point of change: they wanted to have access to state bodies to effect reform and to influence the chosen priorities of the state, as well as to ensure their effective implementation. Trade unions could participate in the state structure and emerge with guarantees for the workers during this period of heightened state intervention. All political and economic change seemingly came through the state, the arena for workers' and unions' demands and protests.

The active involvement of the state in ensuring the incorporation and representation of labour had started with the collective agreements of Léon Blum's Popular Front government, especially the Matignon Accord of 1936. Even the subsequent Camille Chautemps government of 1937-1938, though not nearly as committed to reform as its predecessor, adhered to this new spirit of closer labour-employer relations: a letter sent in the name of Prime Minister Chautemps himself to Léon Jouhaux, General Secretary of the CGT, and Claude-Joseph Gignoux, President of the Confédération Générale du Patronat Français (CGPF), urged both leaders to work together for a stable [labour relations] regime, increased production, and respect of the law.<sup>13</sup> Gignoux, however, refused this appeal for a "nouvel Accord Matignon"<sup>14</sup>; business remained hostile to proposals designed to bring in labour to the state machinery.

The legacy of the Popular Front period (and some earlier initiatives<sup>15</sup>) resulted in greater acceptance of, and demand for, government intervention in the years 1944-1948, at least by the representatives of labour and by neutral observers. The social security ordinance of 4 October 1945, for example, was drawn up by the 1944-1946 provisional government because most observers in the immediate post-Liberation period, according to Andrew Shennan, saw the need for comprehensive and planned coverage which would correct the "uneven" and improvised nature of earlier social

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<sup>13</sup> AN F60 642, letter dated 9 September 1937.

<sup>14</sup> Michel Margairaz, *L'État, les finances et l'économie: Histoire d'une conversion, 1932-1952*, Volume I, Paris, 1991, p.376.

<sup>15</sup> Notably during the First World War when the Socialist Albert Thomas was Minister of Armaments. See below, section 4a)i.

welfare attempts, such as the limited system of social insurance approved by parliament in 1928 and introduced in 1930.<sup>16</sup>

## ii) The legacy of Vichy

The 1936 Popular Front developments in industrial relations left employers scared and they took advantage of new opportunities in the Vichy period to establish further control at the workplace. The Vichy regime of 1940-1944 provided a strong corporatist foundation for postwar government intervention in the economy and in industrial relations, principally through the introduction of the 1941 Charte du Travail, which abolished trade unions and established corporations for each profession, with labour and the employers both forced to join. As Jeremy Jennings notes, these supposedly autonomous corporations were ignored by the employers and "were, in effect, bureaucratic instruments of State control designed primarily to restrict the demands of the working class and guarantee social order."<sup>17</sup> The previous employers' organisation, the CGPF, had also been liquidated in 1940 by the Vichy regime mainly for propagandistic purposes, since, according to Henry Ehrmann, the subsequent creation of the *Comités d'Organisation* (CO) "permitted French big business to exercise its influence more directly than before."<sup>18</sup>

The first instrument of state control had been set up earlier, in August 1940, when the CO were created to organise production sector by sector. For Henry Rousso, they were "centres de décision qui cumulent pouvoir exécutif et pouvoir législatif sur les entreprises: ils définissent ainsi la politique de chaque branche industrielle sous la coordination de l'État."<sup>19</sup> In April 1941, the *Centre d'Information Interprofessionnel* (CII) was established by the government to provide documentation for the CO and to act as a liaison between them. The CII took over all the resources of the dissolved CGPF and served in part as the new expression of employer views, under the aegis of the state. According to Rousso, the CII resulted in a greater acceptance by the majority of employers of the role played by the state in the formation of employer unity -- indispensable, he adds, for any attempt at capitalist planning.<sup>20</sup> The following year, in October 1942, the *Conseil Supérieur de l'Économie Industrielle et Commerciale*

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<sup>16</sup> Shennan, p.211. Shennan notes, pp.211-212, that the prewar system excluded self-employed workers and artisans and lacked unemployment benefit for most of those without work.

<sup>17</sup> Jeremy Jennings, *Syndicalism in France: A Study of Ideas*, London, 1990, p.207.

<sup>18</sup> Henry Ehrmann, *French Labor from Popular Front to Liberation*, New York, 1947, p.240.

<sup>19</sup> Henry Rousso, "L'organisation industrielle de Vichy (perspectives de recherches)," *Revue d'histoire de la deuxième guerre mondiale*, 116, 1979, p.30.

<sup>20</sup> Rousso, p.37.

(CSEIC) was also created, by Jean Bichelonne, the Minister of Industrial Production, as another forum for reflection and consultation between industrialists, administrators, and trade union officials about the new economic order and the integration of the economic and the social.<sup>21</sup>

Although these creations of the Vichy period were abolished immediately after the Liberation, the pattern of state intervention in economic and employment affairs continued and became a major influence for later thinking on planning, along with the influence of the Resistance, which is explored in the next section.<sup>22</sup>

### iii) The legacy of the Resistance

The dominant legacy of the Resistance on state intervention was the Charter (or "programme of action") of the Conseil National de la Résistance (CNR), adopted in March 1944. The programme called for nationalisations, economic planning, worker participation, a new social security system, and other social, colonial, and educational reforms. Among the necessary economic reforms which the Charter aimed to promote were the following:

"The establishment of a true economic and social democracy ...; the subordination of private interests to the public interest; the intensification of production in accordance with a Plan to be decided upon by the state, after consultation with all those concerned with this production ..."<sup>23</sup>

The 1944 Charter represented a coming-together of many different elements of the Resistance coalition and was meant to smooth the transition process after the Liberation. For Alexander Werth, "The whole subsequent history of the Fourth Republic was largely a struggle between those who wished to see the CNR Charter applied, and those who were determined to ignore it."<sup>24</sup> The French evinced a widespread desire for the implementation of the Charter, according to all reports, in the immediate post-Liberation and in the following year of 1945. For instance, Marcel Grégoire, the *commissaire de la République* at Chalons-sur-Marne, affirmed in his report of 15 April 1945:

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<sup>21</sup> See Rouso, p.38; Kuisel, pp.151-153; and Richard Vinen, The Politics of French Business, 1936-1945, Cambridge, 1991, p.150.

<sup>22</sup> See Michel Margairaz, L'État, les finances et l'économie: Histoire d'une conversion, 1932-1952, 2 volumes, Paris, 1991; Jean-Pierre Azéma and François Bédarida, eds, Le Régime de Vichy et les Français, Paris, 1992; Henry Rouso, The Vichy Syndrome: History and Memory in France since 1944, Cambridge, Mass., 1991; Henry Rouso, "Les paradoxes de Vichy et de l'Occupation," in Patrick Fridenson and André Straus, eds, Le Capitalisme français XIXe-XXe siècle: Blocages et dynamismes d'une croissance, Paris, 1987; Kuisel, Capitalism and the State.

<sup>23</sup> As cited in Alexander Werth, France: 1940-1955, London, 1956, pp.222-223.

<sup>24</sup> Werth, p.222.

"Sur le plan économique, il est remarquable que tous les partis de la Résistance, suivis en cela par une fraction importante de l'opinion publique, continuent à réclamer énergiquement la réalisation du programme du CNR à l'égard des banques, des assurances et des industries-clefs."<sup>25</sup>

In the event, profound differences of opinion were to emerge, especially among the political parties, over the implementation of the Charter and the precise meaning of such general phrases as the "establishment of economic and social democracy." Jacques Chapsal comments: "Les modérés ... trouvaient que l'on allait trop loin; les communistes trouvaient au contraire que cela ne pouvait être qu'un point de départ et que l'on n'allait pas assez loin."<sup>26</sup> However, the primary focus and consensus on socio-economic structural reform and increased government intervention went unchallenged, accepted by virtually all participants in the political process in 1944-1946. Indeed, Guy Groux and René Mouriaux attest that the current system of industrial relations in France at the end of the twentieth century "stem[s] directly from the various themes within the programme of the CNR."<sup>27</sup>

#### iv) The state and employers

As reconstruction proceeded in liberated France, the government found it necessary to respond to the widespread disquiet over the conduct of the *patronat* during the war. The Ministry of Industrial Production set up on 18 October 1944 the Commission Nationale Interprofessionnelle d'Épuration (CNIE), which was charged with investigating the behaviour of the business elite during the Occupation. The aims of this purge, according to Henry Rousso, were to punish, to wipe the slate clean, and to channel the hopes of a new economic and social democracy.<sup>28</sup> For Rousso, there were two entirely different conceptions underlying the work of the CNIE.<sup>29</sup> The CGT wanted to take the opportunity to attack the trusts and the "*deux cent familles*," the principal power-brokers (and formerly the largest shareholders of the central bank), such as the Renault family. On the other side, the big economic ministries wanted to reestablish confidence in the business elite of the country, maintain industrial harmony within firms, and preserve the productive capacity of the nation -- and therefore were

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<sup>25</sup> AN F1a 4028, report of Commissaire de la République à Chalons-sur Marne, 15 April 1945.

<sup>26</sup> Jacques Chapsal, La Vie politique en France depuis 1940, second edition, Paris, 1969, p.75.

<sup>27</sup> Guy Groux and René Mouriaux, "The Dilemma of Unions without Members," in Anthony Daley, ed, The Mitterrand Era: Policy Alternatives and Political Mobilization in France, London, 1996, p.177.

<sup>28</sup> Henry Rousso, "Les élites économiques dans les années quarante," Mélanges de l'École française de Rome, 95 / Italia Contemporanea, 153, 1983, p.31.

<sup>29</sup> Rousso, "Les élites économiques ...," p.33.

resistant to proving any employer guilty.<sup>30</sup> Influential business leaders, such as Georges Villiers, the first president of the CNPF, who had supported the Resistance, had often been protected by Pétainist officials and so protected them, in turn, after the war.<sup>31</sup> As a result of all these factors, the political hostility to big business under the 1944-1946 provisional government was not converted into concrete assaults on business interests.<sup>32</sup>

The attitude of those in the state apparatus was one of caution, since there was a need for legitimate business representatives in the state, as Jean-Noël Jeanneney states: "les pouvoirs publics sont voués à éprouver très vite l'inconvénient de ne pas y avoir d'interlocuteurs représentatifs."<sup>33</sup> Despite the discrediting of business leaders because of their excessive influence during Vichy, Charles de Gaulle and Alexandre Parodi, the Minister of Labour, developed in October 1944 the Commission de Représentation Patronale (CRP), formed expressly for the purpose of providing national business representation. It met with a cool reception from employers, owing to their distrust of government.<sup>34</sup> At the same time, according to Ehrmann, "as long as business was ostracised, the large trade associations, controlled as they were by big business, went quietly about the defence of their interests."<sup>35</sup> For Richard Vinen, the real lesson of Vichy and the Liberation for the *patronat* "was that political popularity was not a necessary condition of commercial prosperity."<sup>36</sup> The CRP lasted until early 1946 when the Conseil National du Patronat Français (CNPF), led by Villiers, was created, at a time when the employers themselves saw the need for a powerful central organisation.

In fact, by 1946, the large employers and big cartels had shown that they could work with state planners and administrators<sup>37</sup>: this arrangement led to heavy concentration of industry and the further political marginalisation of small and medium-sized business (*pme: petites et moyennes entreprises*), who were against increased

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<sup>30</sup> Rouso, "Les élites économiques ...," pp.33-34.

<sup>31</sup> Richard Vinen, *France, 1934-1970*, London, 1996, p.84. Villiers was a metallurgist from Lyon, where he ran a family firm employing 700 workers: Richard Vinen, *Bourgeois Politics in France, 1945-1951*, Cambridge, 1995, p.60.

<sup>32</sup> Vinen, *The Politics of French Business*, p.193.

<sup>33</sup> Jean-Noël Jeanneney, "Hommes d'affaires au piquet: le difficile intérim d'une représentation patronale (septembre 1944-janvier 1946)," *Revue historique*, January-March 1980, p.81. Also see Jean-Noël Jeanneney, *L'Argent caché: Milieux d'affaires et pouvoirs politiques dans la France du XXème siècle*, Paris, 1981, ch.8, p.283.

<sup>34</sup> Rioux, p.77.

<sup>35</sup> Henry Ehrmann, *Organized Business in France*, Princeton, 1957, p.117.

<sup>36</sup> Vinen, *The Politics of French Business*, p.204.

<sup>37</sup> Kuisel, p.235, cites Pierre Ricard, a high official of the CNPF, who praised the work of the state planners in November 1946 "for rendering state intervention coherent and predictable."

government intervention in the economy. Léon Gingembre, the small-business leader of the 1930s and close Vichy collaborator, founded the Confédération Générale des Petites et Moyennes Entreprises (CGPME) in 1944 in order to exploit both "the unpopularity of big business, but also the fear of small industrialists and shopkeepers who saw a wave of communism and state control engulfing them."<sup>38</sup> Big capital and small business were opting for different arrangements, with the latter preferring Vichyite corporatism, featuring strong, discrete economic sectors backed by the state and an emphasis on stability.<sup>39</sup>

#### **v) Advent of the Plan and a technocratic elite**

The foundation of the Commissariat Général du Plan on 21 December 1945 marked a newfound consensus in the state administration around the goals of economic renewal and stability. The aims of the planners, led by Jean Monnet (Commissioner for the Plan), were to shape the economy rationally and to arrange effective business-state partnerships. Industrialists were meant to pursue strategies in line with the Plan, while the state would help to disburse scarce capital and, later, Marshall Aid funds. In a typical postwar commentary, Michel Biays asserts: "Le problème essentiel dans l'économie française de reconstruction n'est pas celui d'une quantité de capital à former, mais celui de l'ajustement des plans des individus, des groupes et de l'état."<sup>40</sup>

Government intervention was considered by civil servants and outside observers as non-ideological, a matter of expertise. After all, the French state bureaucracy had often intervened in economic management.<sup>41</sup> The period of 1944-1948, however, also saw the rise of the new term of "technocracy," which appeared first in scholarly discourse and then in common parlance only after 1945; technocracy affirmed the value of efficiency as a principal goal and endowed it with instrumentality, because it was "a means of achieving economic abundance, social peace, and strong government."<sup>42</sup> This reliance on technical efficiency also underlay discussions about the possibility of employee participation in management, known as co-management: detractors of the idea wanted management largely left to experts, technicians, and

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<sup>38</sup> Ehrmann, *Organized Business in France*, p.117. See also Sylvie Guillaume, *La CGPME: son histoire, son combat, un autre syndicalisme patronal, 1944-1978*, Bordeaux, 1987.

<sup>39</sup> I am indebted to the late Tim Franks, who was writing on business and the state in France, for clarification of this point.

<sup>40</sup> Michel Biays, *Formation du capital et reconstruction française*, Paris, 1952, p.176.

<sup>41</sup> See Frederick Ridley and Jean Blondel, *Public Administration in France*, London, 1964.

<sup>42</sup> Kuisel, p.76.

administrators, with the state assuming responsibility for strategic and investment decisions and the appointment of chief executive officers.<sup>43</sup>

The Resistance call for economic restructuring was quietly giving way to the technocratic neo-liberals' yen for stability. The partisans of radical overhaul, such as Pierre Mendès France, Minister of Economic Affairs, were left in a distinct minority in early 1945, Richard Kuisel writes, adding that few others wanted a strenuous anti-inflation policy combined with economic planning, a central feature of the *mendèsiste* programme.<sup>44</sup> Where Mendès France gave planning a "socialist as well as a modernising character," Jean Monnet introduced an economic plan in December 1945 that won wide support and that lost all of its socialist aspects.<sup>45</sup> In Monnet's hands, says Kuisel, "planning became a rational investment programme channeling American aid to a handful of key industries." As Kuisel adds, "Planning was a neo-liberal triumph."<sup>46</sup>

State administrators, such as the economic planners, were at the centre of power by 1947. The establishment of the École Nationale d'Administration (ENA) in June 1945 also indicated this change in the focal point of privilege, as it became quickly associated with the new technocratic elite. Charles Kindleberger, for one, ascribes postwar economic recovery to the "restaffing of the economy with new men and to new French attitudes."<sup>47</sup> These new men and attitudes pointed to the flowering of the technocratic elite.

Union leaders did not immediately fully comprehend the shift in power to the technocrats and instead condemned the continued control by the bourgeoisie of the state administration. In a speech in April 1948, the CGT General Secretary Alain Le Léap talked of "une emprise réelle de la grande bourgeoisie sur l'Administration" and also suggested that the creation of ENA was part of a strategy to refound an elite civil service, "créer de nouveau un véritable mandarinat administratif."<sup>48</sup> Yet the enemy held in his rhetorical sights here was not the new elite but the "*deux cent familles*," a

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<sup>43</sup> Alain Bockel, La participation des syndicats ouvriers aux fonctions économiques et sociales de l'État, Paris, 1965, p.585.

<sup>44</sup> Richard Kuisel, "The French Left and Economic Renovation, 1944-1947: Socialist Élan and Neo-Liberal Triumph," Europa, A Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies, 5, 2, 1982, p.153.

<sup>45</sup> Kuisel, "The French Left," pp.155-156. Pierre Mendès France resigned as Minister of Economic Affairs in April 1945, after encountering neo-liberal opposition from other ministries (notably those of finance and industrial production). Kuisel, "The French Left," p.155.

<sup>46</sup> Kuisel, "The French Left," p.156.

<sup>47</sup> Charles Kindleberger, "The Postwar Resurgence of the French Economy," in Stanley Hoffmann, et al., France: Change and Tradition, London, 1963, p.156.

<sup>48</sup> Alain Le Léap, speech, in CGT, Untitled brochure: Discours, séance de clôture, 4 avril 1948, Conférences nationales des comités d'entreprises, Paris, no date, pp.11,14.

traditional focus of CGT attacks. Hence Le Léap called for a state administration with roots in the popular classes: "l'on ne redonnera aujourd'hui un dynamisme ... que du jour où cette Administration plongera ses racines dans les couches populaires."<sup>49</sup> This populist message, however, missed the extent of the fundamental changes then occurring in the administration.

The key point, then, about this period was that the Plan and the new importance of the elite at the heart of the state apparatus reinforced the impact of increased government economic intervention.

#### **vi) State control of credit creation**

Government intervention also increased owing to the greater control of investment and credit creation through the nationalisation of much of the banking sector. On 30 November 1945, after the close for the day of the stock exchange, the government published proposals for the nationalisation of the Banque de France and the major deposit banks: "La direction du crédit sera placée sous l'autorité du ministre des Finances et assistée d'un Conseil national du crédit comprenant des représentants de divers groupes économiques, y compris des organisations ouvrières."<sup>50</sup> These proposals were adopted by the constituent assembly without much discussion on 2 December 1945.

The French state acquired, by way of this nationalisation, a powerful tool for public investment with which to encourage industrial development and thus to compensate for earlier slow rates of growth; industry became ever more reliant on public institutions than, say, in Britain, where the financial sector was more internationally orientated.<sup>51</sup> Public funds provided 53 per cent of investment financing between 1947 and 1952, according to Claire Andrieu, and the Banque de France, in particular, played a preponderant role in allocating private investment.<sup>52</sup>

John Zysman contends that state policies were essential for growth because they contained the opposition of traditionalists while promoting the forces of change in the

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<sup>49</sup> Le Léap, speech, p.12.

<sup>50</sup> Valérie-Anne Montassier, Les Années d'après-guerre: 1944-1949, Paris, 1980, p.196.

<sup>51</sup> Peter A. Hall, Governing the Economy: The Politics of State Intervention in Britain and France, Cambridge, 1986, p.267.

<sup>52</sup> Claire Andrieu, "La politique du crédit, frein ou moteur de la modernisation (1945-50)?" in Patrick Fridenson and André Straus, eds, Le Capitalisme français XIXe-XXe siècle: Blocages et dynamismes d'une croissance, Paris, 1987, pp.239,243.

economy.<sup>53</sup> He adds that a small elite within the administration engineered the necessary technical arrangements conducive to economic modernisation:

"These institutional innovations reinforced the capacity of the core bureaucracies -- particularly the Ministry of Finance -- to intervene in industrial affairs selectively and on their own initiative ... The Trésor ... changed from being a bank for the government into being a bank for the economy."<sup>54</sup>

This change from a government bank to a "bank for the economy" did not lead the Trésor necessarily to adopt socially-progressive policies. Sylvie Magniadas states that a different credit policy was not put into effect to respond to the conditions which had prompted the nationalisation:

"[Les banques nationalisées] fonctionnent dans une logique qui ne se différenciera pas de celle du secteur privé. La volonté de démocratisation de l'économie que traduisait la nationalisation a été manifestement détournée de ses buts."<sup>55</sup>

Even in the absence of any such democratic accountability, the nationalisation of much of the banking sector did result in much more effective government intervention; the state now had improved control of credit creation and of public investment.

### **vii) The Marshall Plan**

The Marshall Plan, announced in June 1947 by the U.S. Secretary of State George Marshall, was designed to assist the European reconstruction effort with American economic aid.<sup>56</sup> It came at a time of great strain in the French economy, when the Governor of the Banque de France, Emmanuel Monick, had started to apply a "draconian policy of credit restriction" to counter hyper-inflation and a deteriorating balance of payments.<sup>57</sup> The Marshall Plan cemented the link between the Plan (CGP) and the Trésor and complemented the operation of the Plan in controlling the allocation of credit.<sup>58</sup> Stephen Cohen contends that the Marshall Plan administrators provided the most powerful support for the Monnet planners -- over one-third of planned

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<sup>53</sup> John Zysman, Governments, Markets, and Growth: Financial Systems and the Politics of Industrial Change, Ithaca, 1983, p.101.

<sup>54</sup> Zysman, pp.105,106.

<sup>55</sup> Sylvie Magniadas, "La section syndicale du Crédit du Nord de Paris de 1947 à 1968. Contribution à l'étude de l'activité syndicale dans une banque parisienne," unpublished mémoire de maîtrise, Université de Paris I, 1978, pp.11-12.

<sup>56</sup> See especially Margairaz, volume II, ch.25, pp.881-914 and, for an opposing perspective, Annie Lacroix-Riz, Le Choix de Marianne: Les relations franco-américaines de la Libération au début du plan Marshall (1944-1948), Paris, 1985.

<sup>57</sup> Jean Bouvier, L'Historien sur son métier: Études économiques XIXe-XXe siècles, Paris, 1989, p.389.

<sup>58</sup> Zysman, pp.107,109.

investment in the Monnet Plan in the years 1948, 1949, and 1950 was financed out of Marshall Plan funds.<sup>59</sup>

Apart from these essential investment funds, the Marshall Plan also conferred American respectability on the economic planning process, according to Richard Vinen, and thereby ensured French business support for Monnet.<sup>60</sup> It was after the expulsion of the PCF from the Paul Ramadier government in May 1947 -- owing in part to their presence being a hindrance to funding from the Marshall Plan -- that business support was most forthcoming: the CGT withdrew from the planning working parties and business leaders "now became the only collaborators of the government."<sup>61</sup>

The combined effect of these new economic measures and operations was threefold: to launch France on a path of economic growth; to keep in place the planning mechanism; and to allow for the progressive development of *étatisme*. From 1944, increased government intervention was to feature for the next forty years in France. Moreover, such government intervention was to be largely a business-state partnership, with trade unions mostly shut out from decision-making authority.

### **c. Literature on the state-*patronat* collaboration: The work of Richard Kuisel and Peter A. Hall**

The preceding sections reveal a pronounced shift in attitude by state officials to intervention in the economy. The substantive literature on this change is varied: it includes contributions from political scientists, economists, and historians.<sup>62</sup> The most useful studies are the works of Richard Kuisel and Peter A. Hall,<sup>63</sup> for the way they concentrate on state-led economic development. Kuisel traces the shift from a liberal to an interventionist economy between 1930 and 1950; Hall provides a meticulous institutional history of postwar attempts to govern the economy.

There has been an elaborate academic debate on the role of the state and, in particular, the extent to which the various arms of the state serve directly or indirectly

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<sup>59</sup> Stephen Cohen, Modern Capitalist Planning: The French Model, London, 1969, pp.88,101.

<sup>60</sup> Vinen, France, 1934-1970, p.118.

<sup>61</sup> Robert Gildea, France since 1945, Oxford, 1996, p.84.

<sup>62</sup> Prominent contributions from each of the disciplines include Jack Hayward, The State and the Market Economy: Industrial Patriotism and Economic Intervention in France, Brighton, 1986; François Bloch-Lainé and Jean Bouvier, La France restaurée, 1944-1954, Paris, 1986; and Michel Margairaz, L'État, les finances et l'économie: Histoire d'une conversion, 1932-1952, 2 volumes, Paris, 1991.

<sup>63</sup> Richard Kuisel, Capitalism and the State in Modern France: Renovation and Economic Management in the Twentieth Century, Cambridge, 1981; Peter A. Hall, Governing the Economy: The Politics of State Intervention in Britain and France, Cambridge, 1986.

the interests of the ruling class.<sup>64</sup> At stake is an appropriate conceptualisation of the relationship between state and citizens, in particular the elites. For Hall, what cannot be accounted for in this debate is why a specific governmental policy is carried out, as opposed to another, equally favourable option for the elites, nor why there are such marked differences in policy between capitalist countries.<sup>65</sup> Hall addresses such questions in his delineation of the institutional history of postwar France. He contends that the authority of the French state derived from an emphasis on technical efficiency, as expressed in the Office du Plan. For Hall, the planners "set out to present planning as a search for technical truth rather than as a process of political negotiation,"<sup>66</sup> in order to appeal not just to a specific segment of the population but to the public interest as a whole.

Kuisel shows how the most far-reaching change in the relationship between capitalism and the French state occurred from the late 1930s until 1950, when France passed from a traditional liberal economy to a *dirigiste* and dynamic order committed to economic modernisation.<sup>67</sup> The change was played out first and foremost in the state itself, especially in the key period of 1945-1950, with the establishment of important institutions: the national statistical office (INSEE); the Monnet Plan; nationalisations; the creation of ENA; regulatory powers; productivity missions; the concerted economy; and a dynamic Ministry of Finance.<sup>68</sup> For Kuisel, the state was an instrument of economic change during the immediate postwar period, when it assumed an activist position, with selective advancement of industries and extensive collaboration with organised business interests, in what is referred to as the "concerted economy." The sources of policy initiative in this period were small groups of civil servants, ministers, state services: the struggle for modernisation first took place within the confines of the state, at a political and administrative level, and was then transmitted to the private sector, according to Kuisel.<sup>69</sup>

Kuisel's emphasis on the state as the motor of economic change may be exaggerated. For example, Fridenson remarks in a roundtable critical discussion that Kuisel leaves out the crucial movement of officials between the private and public

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<sup>64</sup> See, for example, Bob Jessop, State Theory: Putting the Capitalist State in its Place, Cambridge, 1990.

<sup>65</sup> See Peter A. Hall, "Patterns of Economic Policy Among the European States: An Organizational Approach," in Stephen Bornstein, David Held and Joel Krieger, eds, The State in Capitalist Europe, London, 1983.

<sup>66</sup> Hall, Governing the Economy, p.178.

<sup>67</sup> Richard Kuisel, in Institut d'Histoire du Temps Présent, "Table ronde: Le capitalisme et l'État," Bulletin de l'Institut d'Histoire du Temps Présent, December 1984, p.16.

<sup>68</sup> Kuisel, "Table ronde," p.17.

<sup>69</sup> Kuisel, "Table ronde," pp.18,21.

sectors existing at the time, exemplified by Monnet himself<sup>70</sup> (who moved from director of the family cognac firm to Commissioner for the Plan). Nevertheless, elements of the state sector did play a critical role in the fashioning of the economy. Hall's and Kuisel's analyses, however, both leave undefined the role of worker/union input in the increased government intervention of the 1944-1948 period. In order to appreciate fully the new possibilities of worker participation in the post-Liberation period, one must examine the role of the CGT, through the literature on French unions and the impact of the Cold War on state-labour relations.

#### **4. The CGT**

##### **a. Historical overview of participation in government**

Workers' organisations in the immediate post-Liberation period adopted a changed approach to their dealings with the French state. With Communist ministers in office from September 1944 to May 1947, including a Communist Minister of Labour and four other PCF ministers from November 1945 to May 1947, the unions, particularly the CGT, enjoyed unparalleled access to the central government. After the initial hopes of the Popular Front and the subsequent reversals of 1938-1939 and the Vichy regime, the unions wanted to see guarantees enshrined in law to protect them against any future losses. It was this search for legal guarantees that was to underlie union and worker participation in the state and to characterise the period of 1944-1948.

##### **i) Pre-Liberation: syndicalism versus participation**

In the nineteenth century and into the twentieth, worker militants and CGT officials regarded cooperation with the state with scorn and defiance. An early remark by Léon Jouhaux, the trade union leader, exemplifies this spirit: "L'État 'ne peut être qu'un ennemi pour la classe ouvrière.'" <sup>71</sup>

The syndicalist view of politics is contrasted effectively with the Jacobin tradition by Jeremy Jennings: the dominant tradition of Jacobinism emphasised the importance of the state, centralisation, and national politics; syndicalism advanced an anti-political vision in favour of the importance of civil society, workers' control, the primacy of labour.<sup>72</sup> Yet there were elements in the labour movement, in my view, asserting both traditions at the same time: workers' control within the context of state participation. Frederick Ridley, in his account of the revolutionary syndicalist

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<sup>70</sup> Patrick Fridenson, in "Table ronde," p.30.

<sup>71</sup> As cited by Bockel, p.13.

<sup>72</sup> Jennings, pp.225-226.

movement of 1902-1914, asserts that the syndicalists did collaborate with government, despite rhetoric to the contrary.<sup>73</sup> Furthermore, unions had little choice but to define themselves in relation to the state: intermediary institutions at the turn of the century were weak and there was a constant threat of armed police intervention. The primacy of politics was well-established for any industrial reform, even if the labour movement then viewed the governing power with outright hostility.<sup>74</sup>

There was a change in official union attitude towards collaboration with the state during the First World War, when the CGT joined the Union Sacrée, the wartime governing coalition which included the Socialist, Albert Thomas, as Minister of Armaments. His appointment, according to Kuisel, was "thought to assure labour's cooperation in war plants."<sup>75</sup> He introduced early in 1917 a system of mixed arbitration commissions and shop delegates in all state plants but he left the government in the autumn.<sup>76</sup> The CGT soon ended its partnership with the government as the wartime industrial relations innovations, including the conciliation and arbitration machinery, were dismantled or lapsed. Laissez-faire practices became once again the orthodoxy after the war and "economic power was returned to those who had wielded it before the war."<sup>77</sup>

Two currents emerged after the First World War in the labour movement. Those who had favoured the Union Sacrée, including Jouhaux, thought it possible to use the state to limit capitalism, as opposed to the perspective of the revolutionary opposition, who saw the state "as merely an agency of the ruling class, a tool of the employers."<sup>78</sup> Alain Bockel writes about the aftermath of the First World War:

"Se sentant chargée de grandes responsabilités vis-à-vis de la nation, se considérant représentant de l'intérêt général, [la CGT] choisit une nouvelle voie entre la collaboration totale, qui n'est plus possible, et la révolution, jugée prématurée, contraignant la minorité révolutionnaire à quitter."<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Frederick F. Ridley, Revolutionary Syndicalism in France, Cambridge, 1970, p.96. The terms, "revolutionary syndicalism" and "syndicalism" are here employed interchangeably, following Ridley's usage: Ridley, p.1.

<sup>74</sup> See especially Tony Judt, Marxism and the French Left, Oxford, 1986. Also: Edward Shorter and Charles Tilly, Strikes in France, 1830-1968, Cambridge, 1974.

<sup>75</sup> Kuisel, Capitalism and the State, p.35. For more on CGT participation in the Union Sacrée, see Michel Dreyfus, Histoire de la C.G.T., Brussels, 1995, pp.84-89.

<sup>76</sup> Kuisel, Capitalism and the State, pp.36-37.

<sup>77</sup> Kuisel, Capitalism and the State, p.62.

<sup>78</sup> Val Lorwin, The French Labor Movement, Cambridge, Mass., 1954, p.30. Jouhaux continued to invoke, however, the revolutionary syndicalism of the 1906 Charte d'Amiens, the prime document of reference for the CGT, which affirmed labour's political neutrality. See Lorwin, p.52.

<sup>79</sup> Bockel, p.13.

The split between the two currents occurred in December 1921, one year after the foundation of the PCF at the Tours Congress. The minority faction, the Confédération Générale du Travail Unitaire (CGTU), close to the new PCF, wanted nothing to do with mixed-power institutions and instead advocated worker control. The CGT, the majority faction, did want to participate in state institutions and joined, for example, the state-run Conseil National Économique (CNE) in 1925, set up at its behest by the new Cartel des Gauches, the 1924-1926 governing alliance of the Radicals and the Socialists.

CGT officials realised that access to state institutions would determine the outcome of trade union struggles. Strikes, for example, were seen at the time to be ineffective: from 1925 to 1935, almost half of all strikes resulted in failure for the workers.<sup>80</sup> Instead, the CGT drew lessons from its lengthy campaign for social security from 1919 to 1930 which succeeded despite concerted employer opposition.<sup>81</sup> The CGT relied on militants specialising in social security who worked in close collaboration with Socialist deputies, senators, and members of special committees.<sup>82</sup> The CGT also proposed, in 1934, an economic plan whereby worker participation would take place at the national level in a Conseil Supérieur de l'Économie.<sup>83</sup>

Although the CGTU condemned the social security legislation, it reversed its attitude to the state in 1934, after the PCF adopted a united-front strategy with the Socialists against fascism. The CGTU dropped its taboo against government lobbying and one union official, according to Herrick Chapman, even called for joint CGT-CGTU delegations to pressure the Ministry of Labour to intervene more aggressively on behalf of workers.<sup>84</sup> Chapman argues that Communist

"militants adjusted quickly to the tasks of lobbying government officials, pressuring the ministries to intervene in labor disputes, and mobilizing workers to direct their grievances to state officials as well as employers."<sup>85</sup>

The significance of the change in attitude of the Communist militants, from refusal to participate in the state to active lobbying of state officials, owing to the changed stance of the PCF, is that it points to a fundamental trait of the postwar CGT --

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<sup>80</sup> Dreyfus, p.142.

<sup>81</sup> Roger Magraw outlines some of the tactics used by the employers: Roger Magraw, A History of the French Working Class, Volume II: Workers and the Bourgeois Republic, Oxford, 1992, p.180.

<sup>82</sup> Dreyfus, pp.143-144.

<sup>83</sup> Shennan, p.190. The plan was not incorporated into the Popular Front programme: see below, p.38.

<sup>84</sup> Herrick Chapman, State Capitalism and Working-Class Radicalism in the French Aircraft Industry, Berkeley, 1991, p.63.

<sup>85</sup> Chapman, p.303.

a balancing act of serving the interests of the Communist Party and of representing workplace demands. To an extent, these were two sides of the same coin, in that the representation of workplace demands could best be located in the interplay between the industrial and political arenas.

The two trade union federations reunited in March 1936 at the Toulouse Congress in the run-up to the election of the Popular Front. At the Congress, there was a debate about what strategy to adopt vis-à-vis the state, with a particular focus on whether or not to support a planned economy. The ex-CGTU leaders did not want to endanger the electoral prospects of the coalition. For them, it was "a matter of choosing between the plan and the program of the Popular Front."<sup>86</sup> Anti-fascist solidarity was at its height and, as Richard Kuisel recounts, the Communist delegates wanted to emphasise basic worker demands such as the shorter working week and increased wages instead of any structural reform of state institutions: the ex-CGTU leaders maintained that nationalisation and planning "would only mislead and disappoint workers," while "the state was still in the hands of capitalists."<sup>87</sup>

Yet many new recruits joined the reunited CGT at this time "precisely because they identified it with a *political* movement, the Popular Front," as Julian Jackson notes.<sup>88</sup> Jackson adds that old syndicalist beliefs about the independence of trade-unionists meant little to the new recruits.<sup>89</sup> These workers wanted to bring about change at both the workplace and at the level of the state. Soon, they were awarded specific collective bargaining rights in the 1936 Matignon Accord along with a forty-hour working week and paid two-week vacations.

The events of the next twelve years, from 1936 to 1948, show that what the workers desired was a series of guarantees to ensure that there were no rollbacks of hard-won legislation. The formation of the Édouard Daladier government in 1938 marked the definitive end of the Popular Front. Once again, the *patronat* were in full control; to the workers, the previous reforms no longer seemed secure.<sup>90</sup> Gérard

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<sup>86</sup> Julien Racamond in CGT, Congrès confédéral d'unité à Toulouse le 2 au 5 mars 1936, Paris, 1936, pp.150-158, as cited in Kuisel, Capitalism and the State, pp.116-117.

<sup>87</sup> Kuisel, Capitalism and the State, p.117.

<sup>88</sup> Julian Jackson, The Popular Front in France: Defending Democracy, 1934-38, Cambridge, 1938, p.223.

<sup>89</sup> Jackson, p.223.

<sup>90</sup> See Patrick Fridenson, "Le patronat français," in La France et les Français en 1938-1939, edited by René Rémond and Janine Bourdin, Paris, 1978, pp.139-157.

Noiriel, in his history of workers in French society, writes about the importance of a *guarantee* for workers during this period of 1936 to 1948.<sup>91</sup>

The entrenched worker-employer struggles of the Vichy period confirmed the fragility of rights already won. On 16 August 1940, the CGT and the CFTC were dissolved by the Pétain government -- "la quasi-totale volatilisation des syndicats qui, quand ils ne disparaissent pas totalement, sont réduits à l'état de squelettes."<sup>92</sup> Both unions reappeared underground, but it was not until September 1943, according to Jean-Louis Robert, that any build-up of unionisation was noticeable, albeit differing widely with regard to region and industry.<sup>93</sup>

## **ii) Post-Liberation: CGT and workers' demands and gains**

Significant guarantees for workers were obtained by the CGT in the post-Liberation period: social security legislation (in 1945) providing protection against unemployment, illness, disability, and old age; and legal statutes for civil servants, workers in public utilities, miners, and dockers, entitling them to basic rights. The miners' statute, for instance, introduced in May 1946, regulated the hiring and firing of personnel, the length of the working day, salary scales, and union rights.<sup>94</sup> The workers also now had the opportunity to vote for representatives on the boards of administration for the general social security system.<sup>95</sup>

When the Social Security Act was passed in the U.S.A. in 1935, it ensured that "all the important industrial nations except France had compulsory unemployment-

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<sup>91</sup> Gérard Noiriel, Workers in French Society in the 19th and 20th Centuries, Oxford, 1990, pp.184-185 (my emphasis).

<sup>92</sup> Jean-Louis Robert, "La modification du syndicalisme français au creuset de la guerre," Le Mouvement social, 158, January-March 1992, p.5.

<sup>93</sup> Robert, p.6. See also Patrick Fridenson and Jean-Louis Robert, "Les ouvriers dans la France de la Seconde Guerre mondiale: un bilan," Le Mouvement social, 158, January-March 1992, pp.117-147.

<sup>94</sup> See Evelyne Desbois, Yves Jeanneau and Bruno Mattéi, La Foi des charbonniers: Les mineurs dans la bataille du charbon 1945-1947, Paris, 1986; Rolande Trempé, Les Trois batailles du charbon, 1936-1947, Paris, 1989; Darryl Holter, "Miners against the State: French Miners and the Nationalisation of Coalmining 1944-1949," unpublished PhD thesis, University of Madison, Wisconsin, 1980; and Augustin Viseux, Mineur de fond. Fosses de Lens: Soixante ans de combat et de solidarité, Paris, 1991, appendix VII.

The dockworkers' statute, which gave them control of hiring conditions, lasted until the 1990s, when the Socialist government introduced plans for port by port negotiation, a new (monthly) salary system, and different employment conditions. (Le Monde, 29 November 1991.) For a British perspective on dockworkers' statutes, see Peter Turnbull, Charles Woolfson and John Kelly, Dock Strike: Conflict and Restructuring in Britain's Ports, Avebury, 1992.

<sup>95</sup> See Lorwin, pp.178-182. These elections and those for the *comités d'entreprises* were "the best periodic assessments of the various unions' relative influence." Lorwin, p.181.

insurance systems."<sup>96</sup> Although the CGT had advocated a social security programme in 1919, this was only partly achieved by the laws of 1928 and 1930 -- the 1945 reforms responded to longstanding claims and demands by the CGT.<sup>97</sup> However, as Andrew Shennan points out,

"in mid-1944 the issue of social security reform was much less central to the French public debate than it was in other countries. ... In the socio-economic democracy that resisters dreamed of establishing, a social security plan came well below nationalization or worker participation in strategic importance."<sup>98</sup>

In 1946-1947, the CGT put forth a cogent list of worker demands: an extended public sector; tripartite union-government-consumer administration over newly-nationalised firms; a degree of decision-making for the recently-established *comités d'entreprises*; and the creation of new social security and welfare bodies, with strong union representation.<sup>99</sup> Above all, the CGT demanded access for workers -- as represented by their unions -- to economic power ("l'accès des salariés au pouvoir économique"), as a letter sent to all Resistance organisations in August 1944, on the eve of the Liberation of Paris, made clear.<sup>100</sup>

Union representatives came to understand that access to the state would determine the outcome of trade union struggles. Alain Bockel writes:

"... le contenu de la participation [syndicale] dépend largement de l'attitude des représentants ouvriers, elle-même déterminée, pour une bonne part, par le sens dans lequel les syndicats comprennent leur accès aux institutions publiques."<sup>101</sup>

How did the workers' movement view its access to state institutions and how did the state respond to the workers' demands?

There was an attempt at a sort of economic parliament with the creation in October 1946 of the Conseil Économique et Social, which replaced the Conseil National Économique (founded in 1925). Léon Jouhaux, the CGT leader, was the first president but, like its predecessor, the Conseil was ignored by successive governments

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<sup>96</sup> John Garraty, *Unemployment in History: Economic Thought and Public Policy*, New York, 1978, p.214.

<sup>97</sup> There were some reforms under Vichy, such as the law of 14 March 1941, giving benefits to older workers but no new funds were accorded; monies were to come from the "ressources normales des assurances sociales." Moreover, different methods of payment were introduced for those affected in January 1945. See AN F60 898, minutes of CEI, January 1945.

<sup>98</sup> Shennan, p.213.

<sup>99</sup> George Ross, "The Perils of Politics: French Unions and the Crisis of the 1970s," in Peter Lange, George Ross and Maurizio Vannicelli, *Unions, Change and Crisis: French and Italian Union Strategy and the Political Economy, 1945-1980*, London, 1982, pp.18-19.

<sup>100</sup> As cited in CAC 860561/3, BIT (ILO): "Collaboration entre les pouvoirs publics et les organisations professionnelles en France," May 1947.

<sup>101</sup> Bockel, p.12.

and remained weak. Employers considered it ineffectual, disliked its public face, and preferred more private lobbying.<sup>102</sup>

The immediate post-Liberation period, a time of deprivation, black market, lack of coal, lack of electricity, in theory provided ideal conditions for the CGT to improve its position: "Bon terrain de propagande pour les opposants les plus dynamiques, même s'il leur arrive de pratiquer le soutien ou même la participation."<sup>103</sup> Despite the intentions of the CGT to gain access to state institutions as the representative of the workers, the unions were not very active in such institutions as the Office du Plan and the Conseil Économique, although a number of national and local commissions did include union representatives.<sup>104</sup> The CGT had more success in the Ministry of Labour, owing to the presence of the Communist Minister Ambroise Croizat, although he did become increasingly isolated within the government.<sup>105</sup>

The Confédération Française des Travailleurs Chrétiens (CFTC), the other major union at the time, adopted a different attitude to participation than the CGT. It preferred independent union action and was much more wary of state intervention, although it did accept the far-reaching proposals of the 1944 CNR Charter, while insisting that they be temporary measures: "[La CFTC] reste cependant réticente devant le rôle important que risque de jouer l'État; elle insiste sur le caractère provisoire du plan [du CNR]."<sup>106</sup> In the aircraft industry, CFTC militants supported the nationalisations, but worried about the effects of state intervention and politicisation on independent trade unionism.<sup>107</sup> The overall attitude was summed up by Édouard Morin, a CFTC militant in Creusot: "la politique [était] au-dessus du syndicalisme."<sup>108</sup>

By 1947, the period of major industrial relations reform was over and workers resorted again to strikes, to put concerted pressure on the state to increase wages.

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<sup>102</sup> See Kuisel, Capitalism and the State, pp.214,258 and Philip Williams, Politics in Post-War France: Parties and the Constitution in the Fourth Republic, London, 1954, pp.297-300. See also chapter III, section 2b.

<sup>103</sup> Georges Lefranc, Le Mouvement syndical de la Libération aux événements de mai-juin 1968, Paris, 1969, pp.20-21.

<sup>104</sup> Refer to the appendix: "Organismes dans lesquels sont représentées les organisations syndicales d'employeurs et de travailleurs," found in CAC TR 13634, no date [end 1948?].

<sup>105</sup> See Annie Lacroix-Riz, "Un ministre communiste face à la question des salaires: l'action d'Ambroise Croizat de novembre 1945 à mai 1947," Le Mouvement social, 123, April-June 1983, pp.3-44 and Jacques Girault, Benoît Frachon, communiste et syndicaliste, Paris, 1989.

<sup>106</sup> Bockel, p.188.

<sup>107</sup> Herrick Chapman, "Les ouvriers, le communisme et l'état: les politiques de reconstruction d'après-guerre dans l'industrie aéronautique 1944-1950," Le Mouvement social, 145, December 1988, p.95.

<sup>108</sup> Édouard Morin, Un Non-conformiste chez Schneider: Édouard Morin, 1897-1967: Journal, Paris, 1984, p.79.

Workers wished to safeguard their gains, as expressed by a delegation of 25 metalworkers to the Ministry of Labour in January 1947: "... la classe ouvrière sera très largement représentée [dans le futur gouvernement] pour la garantie de tout ce qu'elle a acquis et pour la défense de ses légitimes revendications."<sup>109</sup> In another instance, miners in Pas-de-Calais ended a brief strike in June 1947 but then went back on their decision because the advantages which they had obtained from Robert Lacoste, the Minister of Industrial Production, had not been ratified by the government ("n'aurait pas été entérinés par le Conseil des Ministres.")<sup>110</sup> Alexander Werth notes that "It was not enough simply to ask for higher wages ...; it was necessary to compel the Government to make major changes in its economic and financial policy."<sup>111</sup>

Yet the Ramadier government took a hardline stance in the exclusion of Communist ministers in May 1947 and was in a much stronger position to take advantage of the new union divisions at the end of the year, caused by the resignation in December of the five Force Ouvrière *minoritaires* from the CGT Bureau Confédéral. Furthermore, any alliance between various levels of workers and middle managers no longer seemed possible -- as had seemed the case at times during the "battle for production" on which the CGT had embarked from 1944 until the spring of 1947 to ensure reduced dependence on outside goods and resources. The autumn of 1947 would be marked by a major wave of strikes, this time supported by the CGT, in order both to keep its industrial base and to force the other parties to reincorporate the PCF into the governing coalition.

Workplace conflicts in France have often resulted in encounters with the governing power. These conflicts changed the form and nature of the relationship between workers and the state. In the strike wave of 1947-1948, workers in many industries tried to confront their employers at the workplace and grapple with state institutions at the same time: not only did they fail to gain greater access to the agencies shaping government economic policy or to change the governing coalition, but their short-term demands were also largely ignored. The political demands provided the government with the excuse to put down forcibly the strikes by troops and the Compagnies Républicaines de Sécurité (CRS). By the end of 1948, the French labour movement was considerably weaker than prior to the war, during the Popular Front, unlike the situation in most other West European countries, where labour movements were guaranteed increased powers by the state.

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<sup>109</sup> AN F1a 4735, "Questions sociales et syndicales," Ministry of the Interior, January 1947.

<sup>110</sup> AN F1a 4740, "Questions sociales et syndicales," Ministry of the Interior: telegram from Prefect, Pas-de-Calais, 27 June 1947.

<sup>111</sup> Alexander Werth, France: 1940-1955, London, 1956, p.381.

The postwar settlement that was to lead to a sustained period of growth in the 1950s was structured around the private sector and the planning capacities of the state. State institutions worked with big business leaders and on the whole excluded the unions from access to decision-making power. Although some demands were partially met by the state, they were usually rerouted for other purposes. For instance, the *comités d'entreprises* did provide the CGT with an organisational base which it would otherwise have lacked even though they came to be virtually restricted to a social role, in the hopes of fostering in the factories a favourable atmosphere for increased production.

The exclusion of labour in the postwar settlement meant that the French working class, according to Mark Kesselman, withstood integration within dominant state institutions and thus did not have to renounce radical goals in order to take part in political exchange. On the other hand, Kesselman concludes, workers in France have not gained comparable benefits to workers elsewhere.<sup>112</sup>

#### **b. The PCF in government**

In considering the changed approach of workers' organisations to the state in the immediate post-Liberation period, it is important to look at the actions of the Communist Party (PCF), especially while it was in government, since so many CGT policies were predicated upon the PCF line. Closer scrutiny of the CGT-PCF tie will then follow in the next section.

The workers' political organisations faced new pressures and choices in 1944-1945. In addition to the Communist control of the CGT, the PCF was now the principal representative of the working class in the national assembly, having supplanted the Socialists (SFIO) as the dominant party of the left. The policy of the PCF was to extend its appeal and to keep up a search for allies in order to restore a Popular Front, but this time with the PCF itself at its core. The party wanted to gain the confidence of new voters and thus took part fully in the political system. For instance, after it received 28.2% of the vote and nearly five-and-a-half million votes in the November 1946 legislative elections, the PCF proposed its leader Maurice Thorez as the new Premier, and when he was defeated by the new assembly, made the acceptance of François Billoux as the Minister of Defense conditional for its support of a Socialist government. Irwin Wall writes:

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<sup>112</sup> Mark Kesselman, "The French Workers' Movement at the Crossroads," in Mark Kesselman, ed, The French Workers' Movement: Economic Crisis and Political Change, London, 1984, p.2. Kesselman is referring to the work of Claus Offe and Helmut Wiesensthal on collective action and that of Alessandro Pizzorno on political exchange. See below, section 7b.

"The vote for Thorez as Premier and the Defense Ministry for Billoux had the same aim: to bestow symbolic respectability on a PCF that had, it thought, integrated successfully into the existing socio-political structure with its internal party structure intact."<sup>113</sup>

The PCF built political alliances to attain power in order to pursue its vision of a French road to socialism; Thorez could only hope to head a national government, not a single-party government.<sup>114</sup> The party's search for political allies could land it with some strange bedfellows, resulting in the PCF not pursuing necessary economic measures. Seeking to preserve the Resistance union and to avoid alienating rural support, the PCF opposed Mendès France's monetary "*ponction*" designed to strangle the black market and to limit the effects of inflation by forcing exchange of currency in circulation and blocking all accounts. The proposal was aimed at breaking the black market and also at taxing the "illicitly garnered wartime cash profits stuffed in peasant mattresses."<sup>115</sup> By advocating the interests of peasants, the PCF became situated as an ally of the MRP, for example, and, more generally, the right.

The PCF policy of occupying as many ministerial and bureaucratic posts as possible in the government while appealing to as many new voters as were available inevitably led to conflicts of interest regarding the party's traditional source of support in the blue-collar working class. Although the democratic centralist structure of the party precluded any visible opposition, the very fact that the Renault strike broke out in April 1947, under the influence of Trotskyists and against the wishes of both the PCF and the CGT,<sup>116</sup> showed that at a certain point containment of the workers' demands by their own political representatives could rebound in the opposite direction.

The policy of the battle for production underlined the dilemma. Raising productivity, in the eyes of the PCF, ensured for itself the status of a government party. It tried to maintain grassroots support by presenting the productivity issue as an independent, anti-American national policy. The CGT emphasised rationalisation at the workplace for the same reason of French independence.<sup>117</sup> This strategy, however, intended as a claim to governing power, would backfire in a time of crisis: for the party would then obviously not be able to justify its claim that the immediate sacrifices called for were necessary for its vision of a French road to socialism.

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<sup>113</sup> Irwin Wall, French Communism in the Era of Stalin: The Quest for Unity and Integration, 1945-1962, Westport, Conn., 1983, p.47.

<sup>114</sup> Wall, p.46.

<sup>115</sup> Wall, p.35.

<sup>116</sup> See Philippe Fallachon, "Les grèves de la Régie Renault en 1947," Le Mouvement social, 81, October-December 1972, pp 111-142.

<sup>117</sup> Patrick Fridenson, seminar at the Maison Française, Oxford, 9 June 1987.

Moreover, coalition government constrained the claims which Communist ministers could advance for their initiatives. When PCF Minister of Labour Ambroise Croizat extended in May 1946 the *comités d'entreprises* to all establishments over fifty workers -- a measure described by the Communist press as a "landmark on the way to Socialism" -- he explicitly stated that their goal was to encourage higher productivity and that in no way were they to substitute themselves for regular authority in the factory.<sup>118</sup> Likewise, the nationalisations became "less a breakthrough to socialism than an advance toward state economic management and technocratic overhaul," according to Kuisel.<sup>119</sup> The PCF position on the nationalisations was at best ambivalent: in January 1945, the Central Committee monthly publication stated:

"[Les nationalisations] ne constituent nullement des réalisations socialistes et sont seulement des réformes de caractère démocratique indispensables pour hâter la victoire ..."120

By June 1947, in his report to the XIth party congress, Thorez hardly even mentioned the nationalisations.<sup>121</sup>

Instead, the infrastructure of the burgeoning French welfare state that had arisen on the foundation of these reforms provided a potential sphere of Communist influence -- in the public services, mass organisations, price committees, and other bodies.<sup>122</sup> Yet the Communists could not gain a secure foothold in these offices and faced further setbacks and marginalisation in 1947: the PCF ministers were expelled from the government in May and the Socialists withdrew from coalitions with the PCF in the October municipal elections. Soon, the PCF was recognising its failures at the grassroots level by declaring the need for direct mass action. Irwin Wall speculates that this tactic of direct mass action was designed to recapture the Socialist rank and file.<sup>123</sup> Perhaps more important was that the PCF needed to hold on to its core constituency, where it was threatened with being outflanked on the left, as had happened at Renault in the spring, and to show its erstwhile coalition allies that they could not cope without its support. Instead, the CGT and PCF and the working class in general were to be isolated as the defensive workers' demands in the November 1947 strikes were defeated and further workplace rationalisation ensued. By having failed to maintain

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<sup>118</sup> Wall, p.40.

<sup>119</sup> Kuisel, "The French Left," p.157.

<sup>120</sup> Cahiers du communisme, Paris, January 1945, p.66, as cited in Jean-Jacques Becker, "Le PCF," in Claire Andrieu, Lucette Le Van and Antoine Prost, eds, Les Nationalisations de la Libération: De l'utopie au compromis, Paris, 1987, pp.160-161.

<sup>121</sup> Jean-Jacques Becker, "Le PCF," in Andrieu, Le Van and Prost, pp.164-165.

<sup>122</sup> Wall, p.58.

<sup>123</sup> Wall, p.64.

adequate mobilisation potential, the CGT and PCF were left out of the development of the welfare state in 1947-1948 -- the Communists without power and the workers without the required capacities to combat a powerful state and a fully restored *patronat*.

### c. Literature on CGT-PCF ties and the Cold War

In the literature on the CGT, one of the most common interpretations of industrial relations developments in 1944-1948, especially among postwar Anglo-American commentators, is to focus on the politicisation of the labour movement and its "seizure" by the Communists. Val Lorwin typifies this strand when he writes: "The reasons for the frustration of many of [the post-Liberation] reforms and for labour's failure to realise its expected role, are to be found in considerable part in the story of the struggle for political control of the labour movement."<sup>124</sup> There were three distinct periods in post-Liberation union development for Lorwin: Communist seizure and consolidation (from the Liberation to May 1947); realignment and struggle (mid-1947 to late 1948); relative stabilisation of positions (in late 1948 and 1949). Such a schema relies heavily on Cold War notions of a Communist takeover and on the significance of any such action on East-West relations. In addition, the PCF was not the monolith depicted in standard accounts; a certain amount of debate existed within the party. Two critical members were Eugène Hénaff, member of the PCF Central Committee (Commission Syndicale) and leader of the Seine CGT (Union Départementale), who spoke of the PCF as, alternatively, pyromaniacs or firemen ("pyromanes ou pompiers") and Henri Jourdain, CGT representative in the aircraft industry in SNCA-nord (Sociétés Nationales des Constructions Aéronautiques), a member of the PCF since 1936 (and who was to join the PCF Central Committee in 1950), who was independent-minded and very favourable to the *comités d'entreprise* and the *comités mixtes à la production*.<sup>125</sup>

The focus on politicisation in the literature leads logically to the transmission-belt theory of Communist party-union relations, in which, as George Ross states, "the party conceives of the union as a quasi-direct conduit for mobilizing workers around party political goals."<sup>126</sup> As Ross adds: "The primary frame of union reference in

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<sup>124</sup> Val Lorwin, "The Struggle for Control of the French Trade-Union Movement, 1945-1949," in Edward Earle, ed, Modern France: Problems of the Third and Fourth Republics, Princeton, 1951, p.201.

<sup>125</sup> See Annie Lacroix-Riz, "CGT et revendications ouvrières face à l'état, de la Libération aux débuts du plan Marshall (septembre 1944-décembre 1947). Deux stratégies de la reconstruction," unpublished thèse de doctorat d'état, Université de Paris I, 1981 and Henri Jourdain, Comprendre pour accomplir, Paris, 1982.

<sup>126</sup> George Ross, Workers and Communists in France: From Popular Front to Eurocommunism, Berkeley, 1982, p.xiv.

transmission-belt periods becomes, therefore, the rhythms of political life, which are imposed by the party on the union."<sup>127</sup> Ross analyses the Liberation period exclusively in terms of transmission-belt relations between the CGT and the PCF.

Authors such as Lorwin and Ross set out the historical context for understanding the CGT-PCF tie, yet this political element of the story is insufficient for the examination of the issue of worker participation. Their approaches privilege the political arena over the industrial context and they treat the PCF as an organisation removed from the workplace. Herrick Chapman argues forcefully that any organisational approach to the PCF focusing on the "political guile and bureaucratic ingenuity" of the party does not respond to "why so many workers who never embraced the party cooperated readily with its militants at the workplace"; nor does it seem "tenable to assume," he writes, "that ordinary workers ... were the passive, malleable actors that the organisational approach has implied."<sup>128</sup>

I would argue that the above accounts by Lorwin and Ross, on the one hand, and Chapman, on the other, should be seen as complementary, not contradictory. Workers gave allegiance to the CGT, tied to the PCF, because of their action on behalf of workers in the state and, on occasion, against the state -- a legacy, for Julian Jackson, of the Popular Front: "The Popular Front's more durable legacy was perhaps less to integrate the working class into the nation than to turn the PCF into the privileged defender of its interests *against* the state ..."<sup>129</sup> Workers credited triumphs in the immediate post-Liberation era not only to the CGT but primarily to the PCF; as a result, the workers of this generation would remain loyal to both organisations, according to Gérard Noiriel.<sup>130</sup>

Workers credited the PCF because they knew that access to the state became even more important after the war as government officials took an increasingly interventionist line in the economy and in industrial relations. The ties between the CGT and the PCF were reinforced by the actions of the Communist Minister of Labour, Ambroise Croizat. In fact, Eugène Hénaff, at the PCF Central Committee in April 1946, noted an "attentisme" by workers who waited for and depended upon the intervention of the Communist minister: "'on va pleurer au ministère, [...] tirer la sonnette de l'inspecteur du Travail,' au lieu de mobiliser les masses."<sup>131</sup> The

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<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> Chapman, State Capitalism, p.4.

<sup>129</sup> Jackson, p.284.

<sup>130</sup> Noiriel, pp.184-185.

<sup>131</sup> As cited in Annie Lacroix-Riz, "Un ministre communiste face à la question des salaires: l'action d'Ambroise Croizat de novembre 1945 à mai 1947," Le Mouvement social, 123, April-June 1983, p.19.

exclusion of the PCF from the Ramadier government in May 1947, however, did not purge the workforce of the Communist Party.<sup>132</sup> The CGT remained in a strong position in the state sector after the defeats of 1947-1948 because the union militants, according to Chapman, "became adept as advocates in state-managed sectors of the economy."<sup>133</sup> In particular, they protected the hard-earned *statuts* of the Liberation period, which affected civil servants, workers in public utilities, miners, and dockers.

While the effects of politicisation on the labour movement must be recognised, it is also crucial to examine workplace changes. As suggested above, these accounts should be taken together, in a complementary fashion. Jeff Bridgford, for example, encapsulates this perspective in his study of CGT-PCF relations in the 1970s, which moves away from the political focus of previous studies:

"[French trade unions] are to be found at the interface between the industrial and the political, and there is a manifest tension between these differing functions. ... It is only possible to understand the relations between political parties and trade unions in France if both the political and industrial elements of this tension are investigated."<sup>134</sup>

A number of authors have also assessed unions and the workplace and it is to this aspect that we now turn.

#### **d. Literature on unions at the workplace**

Unions in France are described as being weakly implanted at the workplace and stronger at the national, political level. The CGT, for example, has always failed to represent more than 20 per cent of all workers, apart from a few exceptional but brief moments of higher membership, including 1945-1946, as well as 1920 and 1936-1937, when the figure belonging to the CGT may have reached as high as 50 per cent of workers; other unions have always been considerably further behind.<sup>135</sup> The prevailing view of unions' weak implantation at the workplace in France was well expressed by Val Lorwin at a Harvard University seminar in 1951:

- "1. French workers are class-conscious.
2. But they are hard to organize. And as union members, they are poor dues-payers, and are distrustful of authority in their unions.

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<sup>132</sup> Chapman, *State Capitalism*, p.277.

<sup>133</sup> Chapman, *State Capitalism*, p.277.

<sup>134</sup> Jeff Bridgford, *The Politics of French Trade Unionism: Party-Union Relations at the Time of the Union of the Left*, Leicester, 1991, p.2.

<sup>135</sup> Dreyfus, pp.322-323.

3. Unions have been decentralized, poorly financed, without adequate staff, and (with some exceptions) were unable to offer either benefit features or day-to-day services at the plant level. ..."136

Political action is thus often a necessary pendant of industrial activity. This view of politicised, unruly workers has been developed and refined by other writers: Duncan Gallie agrees with the description of French workers as class-conscious, where class radicalism is defined as workers' perceptions of the interconnections between class inequality and the prevailing structure of political power, and he argues that trade union influence is not owing to direct doctrinal persuasion but is the indirect result of efforts to sustain high levels of resentment versus management.<sup>137</sup> Scott Lash, however, contests this view and holds that there is only a tenuous relationship between industrial and political radicalism in France.<sup>138</sup> Still, for most observers, particularly in France, the workers' movement has "traditionally been subordinated to political action," according to Alain Touraine, Michel Wieviorka and François Dubet, who further assert: "expressions of the workers' movement have often been used to indicate the existence of a political force rather than a social movement."<sup>139</sup>

Workers are examined in their political context in Edward Shorter and Charles Tilly's study of strikes. They argue that the strike is an example of a group using industrial conflict to safeguard its own political as well as shopfloor interests.<sup>140</sup> Thus the strength of the labour movement cannot just be determined at the workplace. Similarly, William Sewell urges recognition of the autonomy of the sphere of politics in his study of nineteenth-century dockworkers, instead of imputing workers' politics simply from their economic experiences.<sup>141</sup>

As an alternative focus, Peter Lange and George Ross favour an actor-centred approach which emphasises the choices open to unions and the decisions they make; unions "can be seen as agents with their own ideas, needs, and purposes, and not just as passive institutional entities responding to contextual forces ..."142 In the French

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<sup>136</sup> Val Lorwin, "Outline of introductory discussion of French labor," presented to Seminar on Economics of Collective Bargaining, Graduate School of Public Administration, Harvard University, March 16, 1951.

<sup>137</sup> Duncan Gallie, "Trade Union Ideology and Workers' Conceptions of Class Inequality in France," in Jack Hayward, ed, Trade Unions and Politics in Western Europe, London, 1980, pp.10-32. See also Duncan Gallie, Social Inequality and Class Radicalism in France and Britain, Cambridge, 1983.

<sup>138</sup> Scott Lash, The Militant Worker: Class and Radicalism in France and America, London, 1984.

<sup>139</sup> Alain Touraine, Michel Wieviorka and François Dubet, The Workers' Movement, Cambridge and Paris, 1987, p.283.

<sup>140</sup> Edward Shorter and Charles Tilly, Strikes in France, 1830-1968, Cambridge, 1974, p.345.

<sup>141</sup> William Sewell, "Uneven Development, the Autonomy of Politics, and the Dockworkers of Nineteenth-Century Marseille," American Historical Review, 93, 3, June 1988, p.607.

<sup>142</sup> Peter Lange and George Ross, "Conclusions: French and Italian Union Development in Comparative Perspective," in Peter Lange, George Ross and Maurizio Vannicelli, Unions, Change and

case, however, it is precisely the worker-employer-state interplay which is of most importance.

Herrick Chapman explores these relations in his study of the aircraft industry and argues forcefully that state intervention, working-class radicalism, and employer intransigence toward labour became mutually reinforcing between 1930 and 1950.<sup>143</sup> Chapman's concentration on the aircraft industry, however, with its significant degree of nationalisation, obviates the need to assess fully employers' overall rationalisation strategies at the workplace. In fact, in the private sector, the *patronat* was more powerful than he gives it credit for and the combined productivity efforts of the employers and state officials made attempts by workers for increased participation very difficult.

The literature on unions and the workplace is useful for emphasising workers' politicisation yet it is less helpful in explaining the changed context for participation in the immediate post-Liberation period. This new context for participation must take account of productivity efforts in 1944-1948 and not simply the weak presence of unions at the workplace. The next section looks at the workplace as a site of new methods of productivity and management, in order to locate the desire for participation in its time.

## **5. The workplace**

### **a. Rationalisation; Taylorism; management methods**

French employers have long stressed issues of control at the workplace. Nineteenth-century employers repeatedly tried to reduce the job autonomy of workers. Employers' increased control meant that important decisions over recruitment of skilled labour, enforcement of standards, and labour discipline became their exclusive prerogatives, where once these matters had been controlled collectively by skilled workers.<sup>144</sup> Joan Scott details how miners in Carmaux began to resent the mining company's total authority, as they increasingly depended on it for employment after 1850. The company, she writes, strove "to discipline its workers by giving supervisors the power to fine workers for latenesses and absences."<sup>145</sup>

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Crisis: French and Italian Union Strategy and the Political Economy, 1945-1980, London, 1982, p.218.

<sup>143</sup> See Chapman, *State Capitalism*, especially pp.1-11.

<sup>144</sup> See Ronald Aminzade, "The Transformation of Social Solidarities in Nineteenth-Century Toulouse," in John Merriman, ed, *Consciousness and Class Experience in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, New York, 1979, pp.85-105.

<sup>145</sup> Joan Scott, *The Glassworkers of Carmaux: French Craftsmen and Political Action in a Nineteenth-Century City*, Cambridge, Mass., 1974, p.62.

As John Merriman argues, old worker solidarities in the nineteenth century were under assault and new ones were emerging. The growing power of centralised government and industrial capital increasingly affected workers' lives: they confronted new figures of authority such as *gendarmes*, merchant capitalists, foremen.<sup>146</sup>

The implementation of scientific management, the next stage of worker-management relations, took place in the context of these changing nineteenth-century factory relations. The introduction of scientific management in France could not simply imitate the experience with scientific management in the United States<sup>147</sup>, according to George Humphreys, owing to the greater influence of the French artisanal tradition, which "acted as a formidable obstacle to the subdivision of labour and the elimination of job autonomy that Taylorism demanded."<sup>148</sup> He notes that Taylorism was preceded in France by "several decades of efforts by French engineers on behalf of industrial rationalisation," and refers to the efforts of Henri Fayol at Decazeville in 1888.<sup>149</sup> Fayol's 1916 text, Administration industrielle et générale, is considered by David Harvey to have been more influential in Europe than was Taylor's work:

"With its emphasis upon organizational structures and hierarchical ordering of authority and information flow, [the text] gave rise to a rather different version of rationalized management compared to Taylor's preoccupation with simplifying the horizontal flow of production processes."<sup>150</sup>

In France, the contrast in the reception of Taylor's and Fayol's approaches is revealing. Employers did not favour efficiency, which lies at the heart of Taylorism; instead, they were receptive in Fayol's work to the hierarchical retention of control as the primary factor in production -- just as families eschewed outside funds for expansion, in order not to dilute their control of the firm.<sup>151</sup> The *patronat* were also much less willing than U.S. entrepreneurs to make salary concessions or to revise production methods. For the French employers, the factory reforms -- supported by organised labour -- challenged the fundamental relationships between labour and management. At issue was the participation of the French working class and its representatives in an industrial democracy and the ability of the individual worker to

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<sup>146</sup> See John Merriman's introduction in Merriman, pp.1-16.

<sup>147</sup> See David Montgomery, Workers' Control in America: Studies in the History of Work, Technology, and Labor Struggles, Cambridge, 1979.

<sup>148</sup> George Humphreys, Taylorism in France, 1904-1920: The Impact of Scientific Management on Factory Relations and Society, New York, 1986, p.4.

<sup>149</sup> Humphreys, p.23.

<sup>150</sup> David Harvey, The Condition of Postmodernity, Oxford, 1989, p.128.

<sup>151</sup> See David Landes, "French Business and the Businessman: A Social and Cultural Analysis," in Edward Earle, ed, Modern France: Problems of the Third and Fourth Republics, Princeton, 1951, pp.334-353.

retain a degree of autonomy in his or her profession. George Humphreys writes: "A major force behind managerial experimentation was the desire of employers to exercise more discipline over the French working classes."<sup>152</sup> This wish for control extended to employers' paternalist investments in worker housing, schools, and hospitals, so as to prevent any public initiatives or independent private concerns in the vicinity.<sup>153</sup> There was a crucial link between scientific management and discipline in the factories as new forms of discipline and control were imposed; the nature of work changed fundamentally between 1890 and 1914.<sup>154</sup> It is worth noting as well that workers' organisations were encouraged to believe in technological change by some Socialists: "The machine is the weapon which will emancipate the worker," stated the Reims Socialist journal, La Défense des travailleurs.<sup>155</sup> For Michelle Perrot, the "labouring men were ... becoming integrated into the common model of productivity."<sup>156</sup>

The period between 1906 and 1981 saw France achieve a greater rate of industrial mechanisation than either the United States or Great Britain.<sup>157</sup> Noiriél adds that "this mechanisation was increasingly seen in combination with Taylorism."<sup>158</sup> The Popular Front era increased labour costs and so led to still faster modernisation of work methods, a process which had been occurring throughout the 1930s. There was also an increase in productivity immediately preceding the Second World War, especially in the coal mines.<sup>159</sup>

New technology continued to be implemented during and after the war: specialised machinery was introduced and both qualified and non-specialised workers were shifted around within the factory, as part of new assembly line techniques and deskilling. A woman recounted her training period in a gas meter factory in Montrouge in 1943:

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<sup>152</sup> Humphreys, p.27, citing Peter Stearns, Paths to Authority, 1978, p.29.

<sup>153</sup> Gérard Noiriél, "Du 'patronage' au 'paternalisme': la restructuration des formes de domination de la main d'oeuvre ouvrière dans l'industrie métallurgique française," Le Mouvement social, 144, July-September 1988, p.30.

<sup>154</sup> See Noiriél, "Du 'patronage' au 'paternalisme,'" pp.17-35

<sup>155</sup> La Défense des travailleurs, Reims, no date, as cited by Michelle Perrot, Workers on Strike: France, 1871-1890, Leamington Spa, 1987, p.179.

<sup>156</sup> Perrot, p.179.

<sup>157</sup> Noiriél, Workers in French Society, p.116, citing the work of Edmond Malinvaud.

<sup>158</sup> Noiriél, Workers in French Society, p.116.

<sup>159</sup> Monique Luirard, "Le patronat de la région stéphanoise face à la modernisation," Études d'histoire, Centre de recherches historiques, Université de Saint-Étienne, 1987, p.152.

"La règle de cet atelier est de faire passer les ouvrières à de nombreux postes différents pour qu'elles connaissent l'ensemble de la fabrication et soient capables de se remplacer mutuellement."<sup>160</sup>

The postwar process of deskilling coincided with what even the CNPF termed a move back to paternalism, in explanation of the "'partial failure' of collective bargaining."<sup>161</sup> For Val Lorwin, "increased paternalism may appear an antidote to union encroachment," and he notes the renewed interest among employers in tying the worker to a firm. This emphasis on employer authority, he writes, was also made possible by the predominance of family firms and small and middle-sized plants.<sup>162</sup>

The French lag on the U.S. standard of living was generally seen as arising from lower productivity.<sup>163</sup> By 1949, French missions to the U.S. had begun, after James Silbermann, an employee in the U.S. Department of Labour, declared to French planners that France could easily raise its levels of productivity on the basis of already existing means of production.<sup>164</sup> As a summary report noted later, it was only at this stage that representatives of French business would come to understand the importance of human factors in American productivity: "La grande découverte ... des enquêteurs français, ce fut sans doute le rôle que jouent les facteurs humains dans la productivité américaine."<sup>165</sup>

De Gaulle, too, envisioned more harmonious workplace relations to replace traditional managerial authority: he spoke to Saint-Étienne miners in January 1948 of the need for capital-labour associations that would abolish "both class antagonisms and the old dependence of the worker on the boss, in order to place them on an equal footing ..."<sup>166</sup> He hoped that "this association with the familiar corporative state would renovate both industry and trade unionism and make them professional and 'cleansed of politics.'"<sup>167</sup>

In the immediate postwar years, however, it remained the case that employers did not want to give up any of their managerial authority at the workplace. The next section considers the changing composition of the workforce, in order to complete our

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<sup>160</sup> Cited in Annie Fourcaut, *Femmes à l'usine*, Paris, 1982, p.126.

<sup>161</sup> *Bulletin du CNPF*, 5 February 1953, as cited by Lorwin, *The French Labor Movement*, p.275.

<sup>162</sup> Lorwin, *The French Labor Movement*, p.275.

<sup>163</sup> Richard Kuisel, "L'American Way of Life' et les missions françaises de productivité," *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d'Histoire*, 17, January-March 1988, p.21.

<sup>164</sup> Kuisel, "L'American Way of Life," pp.21-22.

<sup>165</sup> Pierre Bardin, *Aux sources de la productivité américaine: premier bilan des missions françaises*, Paris, 1953, p.37, as cited by Kuisel, "L'American Way of Life," p.26.

<sup>166</sup> François Goguel, *France under the Fourth Republic*, Ithaca, 1952, p.49.

<sup>167</sup> Lansing Warren, "De Gaulle Drafts New Labor Set-Up," *The New York Times*, 5 January 1948.

examination of the workplace as a site of new methods of productivity and management.

### **b. The workforce**

Many unskilled and immigrant workers in heavy industry were at the forefront of the 1947-1948 protest movements; immigrant workers, particularly those in heavy industries such as miners and dockers, gained increased stature and a foothold in society.<sup>168</sup>

Gérard Noiriel divides the history of the working class of the first half of this century into three distinct periods. The first period involved the mechanisation and rationalisation of 1906-1931, including the introduction of Taylorism, leading to great productivity increases and the calling into question of the autonomy of skilled workers and foremen (*contremaîtres*).<sup>169</sup> As a result, the workforce changed in the 1920s and 1930s: the proportion of skilled workers (*ouvriers professionnels*) declined; the numbers of unskilled workers (*ouvriers spécialisés*) increased. There were new skilled jobs, but they still involved more subjection to the will of the manager.<sup>170</sup> Where did the new workers come from? Although there was a rural influx, it was not necessarily into industry. Nor was there a great change in female employment in industry -- a large increase took place in the service sector. Noiriel cites instead massive immigration: in 10 years, from 1921 to 1931, one million foreign workers came to France (two million including families) -- amounting to fifteen per cent of the working class in 1930.<sup>171</sup> Even where they formed the majority of workers, these immigrant workers did not have the right to vote in plant elections -- because they did not have French citizenship - - and despite the fact that they were most numerous in heavy industry, where the profits were highest.<sup>172</sup>

The second period in the history of the French working class was marked by the crisis of the 1930s and, especially, by unemployment. Greater productivity was sought by managers -- as there were not enough funds for more mechanisation, priority was given to scientific management.<sup>173</sup> Far fewer skilled workers were working and there were constant firings and rehiring at lower wages. Noiriel identifies two phases

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<sup>168</sup> Noiriel, *Workers in French Society*, pp.188-189. Also: Eric Venturini, "L'aurore des patriarches: les grèves de 1947 et 1948 dans le pays-haut," mémoire de maîtrise, Paris, 1987.

<sup>169</sup> Noiriel, *Workers in French Society*, pp.116-117.

<sup>170</sup> Noiriel, *Workers in French Society*, pp.118-119.

<sup>171</sup> Noiriel, *Workers in French Society*, p.120.

<sup>172</sup> Noiriel, *Workers in French Society*, pp.122-123.

<sup>173</sup> Noiriel, *Workers in French Society*, p.165.

in the June 1936 strikes: the first included the militancy of skilled workers, especially those in the aircraft and automobile industries -- the mobilisation of the worker aristocracy; the second featured the widespread movement of unrest among unskilled workers.<sup>174</sup> Julian Jackson, too, cites the important shift in the sociological composition of the CGT at the time of the Popular Front: the largest number of new members came from the manufacturing sector and they did not hold the old syndicalist beliefs about the need for trade-union independence from politics.<sup>175</sup> There were also many new women recruits, although their precise role remains in dispute.<sup>176</sup>

The third period was distinguished by the legacy of the Popular Front from the breaking of the 1938 strike and the ensuing repression through to Vichy and the many deaths of resisting workers and on to the violence in the 1947 strikes. This was the time, from the 1930s to the 1950s, when a generation of workers also embraced PCF forms of militancy and organisation.<sup>177</sup>

The Popular Front marked the emergence on the political stage of the industrial working class that had been heretofore marginalised, according to Noiriél.<sup>178</sup> Without traditions, the members of this class accepted the new rules of the game and allegiance to the PCF and the CGT. As at other high points of industrial militancy, such as in 1906 and 1968, writes Noiriél, a new worker "generation" in 1936 without many roots or traditions was at the heart of the most radical conflict. Noiriél concludes that a real working-class tradition has a sense of what can and cannot be obtained through industrial action; the lack of such a long tradition among the French working class, he states, leads the members to believe that all is possible, all at once, at the cost of ever-recurrent disenchantment.<sup>179</sup>

When applied solely to the post-Liberation period, Noiriél's perspective of a generational discontinuity is useful for suggesting the workforce's lack of tradition/history, since it points at new possibilities of participation, especially when combined with the militancy and politicisation derived from the Popular Front. Yet there is a problem in isolating the world of work from its wider context at this time,

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<sup>174</sup> Noiriél, *Workers in French Society*, pp.171-173.

<sup>175</sup> Jackson, pp.222-223. George Ross, *Workers and Communists*, p.10, echoes this point: "The French union movement caught up [in 1936-1937] with changes in the structure of the French working class with a vengeance, massively organizing, for the first time, workers in the mass production sectors of the economy."

<sup>176</sup> See Siân Reynolds, "Women, Men and the 1936 Strikes in France," in Martin Alexander and Helen Graham, eds, *The French and Spanish Popular Fronts: Comparative Perspectives*, Cambridge, 1989, pp.185-200.

<sup>177</sup> See Noiriél, *Workers in French Society*, pp.192-194.

<sup>178</sup> Noiriél, *Workers in French Society*, p.248.

<sup>179</sup> Noiriél, *Workers in French Society*, pp.248-249.

when the role of the state was increasing. It was state officials who were promoting certain forms of worker participation; a full examination of participation at the firm and in state institutions must include all actors -- state administrators, unions, and employers -- against the backdrop of the different historical phases outlined by Noiriel and in light of the workplace changes described earlier.

## 6. Summary of literature review

French labour studies have emphasised one of two aspects of the workers' lives: either the workplace itself or the ties between the unions and the political parties. Concentration at the level of the workplace alone, however, does not explain the differing strength of labour across countries or, especially, across time. It is imperative to take into account the state, particularly in France, where so often struggles over economic distribution have involved repeated encounters with the governing power (as the works of Tony Judt and Edward Shorter and Charles Tilly make clear<sup>180</sup>). Similarly, a focus restricted to the "transmission-belt" tie of the CGT to the PCF (especially prominent in 1944-1948, the years of the current study) leaves aside significant workplace reforms and struggles. The recent surge of works of social history by French labour historians attests to the previous distortions in focus.<sup>181</sup> Nevertheless, the matter of the state in the 1940s was more complex than merely the relationship of the main union to the leading political party of the left. Hall's and Kuisel's analyses concentrate on the institutional framework and history of the French state.<sup>182</sup> This school of thought, however, leaves open the critical question as to how the workers were to fit in at both the level of the firm and the level of the state.

There has been much recent historical scholarship on the immediate post-Liberation period. Andrew Shennan, for instance, provides useful material on the background to the *comités d'entreprises* in his account of debates over policy directions in the 1940s.<sup>183</sup> This general account is complemented by industry-specific studies, such as on aircraft, steel, coal, and electricity.<sup>184</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> Judt, Marxism; Shorter and Tilly, Strikes in France.

<sup>181</sup> Noiriel, Workers in French Society; Dreyfus, Histoire de la C.G.T.; Patrick Fridenson, "Automobile Workers in France and Their Work, 1914-1983," in Steven Kaplan and Cynthia Koepp, eds, Work in France: Representations, Meaning, Organization, and Practice, Ithaca, 1986, pp.514-547. Also see Roger Magraw, A History of the French Working Class, Volume I: The Age of Artisan Revolution, 1815-1871 and Volume II: Workers and the Bourgeois Republic, Oxford, 1992.

<sup>182</sup> Hall, Governing the Economy; Kuisel, Capitalism and the State.

<sup>183</sup> Shennan, Rethinking France, ch.8.

<sup>184</sup> Chapman, State Capitalism; Anthony Daley, Steel, State, and Labor: Mobilization and Adjustment in France, Pittsburgh, 1996; Darryl Holter, The Battle for Coal: Miners and the Politics

This section summarises the material presented in this chapter reviewing the literature about the 1944-1948 period. We have seen how the exclusion of labour from both firm and national decision-making -- the silencing of the workers' voices in attempts at participation -- has been attributed variously to:

- a) state-led development which relied on a collaboration with the *patronat* alone;
- b) theories about weak implantation of the unions at the workplace;
- c) the Cold War and the overly close ties between the CGT and the PCF, especially the transmission-belt theory, linking the union to the party; and union strategies;
- d) social historical factors about the composition of the workforce itself; and
- e) rationalisation at the workplace and other increased turnover-time policies by management.

The question, then, is how these explanations fit together and to what extent they can inform a study of worker participation in the state structure and at the workplace.

Commentators often refer to French exceptionalism to describe industrial relations in the country, for, unlike Germany, Austria, the U.K., and Scandinavia, there was no "historical compromise between capital and labour, either in the 1930s or 1940s," according to Chris Howell.<sup>185</sup> There is an instructive comparison to be made with Sweden, in particular. The Saltsjöbaden Agreement of 1938 between the Swedish trade union confederation and the employers' federation paved the way for a non-conflictual relationship between the negotiating partners -- although state officials had provided the means and the impetus for the agreement by passing various acts establishing the right to collective bargaining.<sup>186</sup> French industrial relations, on the other hand, did not follow this path. The 1936 Matignon Accord did not lead to the same outcome as in Sweden or elsewhere, in part because trade unions were too weak and employers refused to acknowledge the principle even of collective bargaining. Another factor was the limited reach of the state and the lack of a reforming party with a stable majority. Although the state, in 1936 and after 1945, in the words of Joris Van Ruysseveldt and Jelle Visser, was further "brought" in with the new legislation, the unions were unable to capitalise on it and did not reinforce their organisational ability or

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of Nationalization in France, 1940-1950, DeKalb, 1992; and Robert Frost, Alternating Currents: Nationalized Power in France, 1946-1970, Ithaca, 1991.

<sup>185</sup> Chris Howell, Regulating Labor: The State and Industrial Relations Reform in Postwar France, Princeton, 1992, p.37.

<sup>186</sup> Jelle Visser, "Corporatism Beyond Repair? Industrial Relations in Sweden," in Joris Van Ruysseveldt and Jelle Visser, eds, Industrial Relations in Europe: Traditions and Transitions, London, 1996, pp.176-177.

their national standing.<sup>187</sup> French exceptionalism consists mainly in the exclusion of labour from both firm and national decision-making.

The key, then, to understanding the confluence of factors cited above in the exclusion of labour is to consider the inherited form of the state and the type of state-led development in the years 1944-1948. The post-Liberation reforms in France did not open more radical possibilities because they were not strong enough to alter the balance of forces already in place. This line of argumentation follows what Howell asserts: "An oppositional ideology is more a response to, than a cause of, the exclusion of French unions."<sup>188</sup>

Chris Howell also emphasises the dominant form of the state in place at the time when he observes that

"the French model was distinctive not because of highly developed tools for economic intervention but rather because of the close links between the advanced sectors of French industry and the bureaucracy, and the exclusion of labor from a voice in economic decision-making."<sup>189</sup>

Howell is analysing, here, a mode of labour regulation valid, he claims, until the 1960s in France and so he is not concerned with the possibilities open to the immediate post-Liberation period. About this period, he writes that the "'window of opportunity' for the Left in 1945-1947 was too small."<sup>190</sup> Yet it is precisely in uncovering the micro-level dealings between state officials and workers at this time that one can distinguish the future pattern of labour exclusion in France. Also, Howell dismisses the idea of a pull by the state toward integration only because integration for him is associated with Fordism, namely "the translation of productivity gains into wage gains, and hence consumer demand."<sup>191</sup> Howell argues that integration failed to occur because such a translation of productivity gains -- hence the Fordist regime -- did not hold sway, in his analysis, in the 1940s and 1950s. Again, a closer examination of the relations at the time will reveal that some attempts at promotion of participation did occur, but were insufficient, owing to several factors, including the form of the state itself, the weakness of the labour movement, and the entrenched power of the employers.

In summary, the substantive literature covers a broad array of themes: the most interesting concerns the impact of increased state intervention on the unions and

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<sup>187</sup> Joris Van Ruysseveldt and Jelle Visser, "Contestation and State Intervention Forever? Industrial Relations in France," in Van Ruysseveldt and Visser, p.83.

<sup>188</sup> Howell, p.47.

<sup>189</sup> Howell, p.54.

<sup>190</sup> Howell, p.54.

<sup>191</sup> Howell, p.52. Howell's book appeared after I had completed the bulk of the research for this study, which can be seen as complementary to his focus, almost alone among commentators, upon the state. Howell's scope, however, is the entire postwar period and hinges upon the crucial year of 1968.

workers. Yet the subject of worker participation -- and exclusion from decision-making power at the firm and in the state -- cannot be studied solely with reference to the state. The roles of employers, union strategies, social historical factors, weak union implantation, the Cold War all have their place in the post-Liberation narrative. They make for sizeable constraints, which will be examined in the rest of this study. In order to delve beyond the array of factors presented and to appreciate the possibilities of worker participation at the time, my work fashions a micro-level analysis, which scrutinises the actions of state officials, thus determining more precisely the nature of the state-led development on offer in 1944-1948.

## **7. Overview of theoretical approaches**

### **a. The state and the workplace**

This thesis examines the state and workers during the tumultuous years of 1944-1948 -- in particular, the extent to which labour was incorporated or not in the state and at the workplace. As previously mentioned (see above, section 3c), the work of Hall and Kuisel illustrates the changing pattern of state-led development in France from the 1930s to the 1950s; however, it leaves underexplored the role of worker/union input. The challenge, then, is to bring together the state and the workplace in a uniform analysis.

The workplace as a crucial determinant of working-class struggle has long been recognised in writings on the organisation of work. Michael Burawoy writes of the impact of state controls on managerial domination which mean that

"management can no longer rely entirely on the economic whip of the market. Nor can it impose an arbitrary despotism. Workers must be persuaded to cooperate with management."<sup>192</sup>

Burawoy adds that despotism was not a viable system for workers or for capitalists. Workers had no guarantees and so sought protection from the tyranny of capital through collective representation within production and social security outside it. An external body, the state, had to impose these conditions on capital, for the workers to emerge with guarantees of protection.<sup>193</sup>

The way that workers experienced the state and the methods by which the state could effect change were for the most part new avenues for workers to explore. Here social-historical work, such as Noiriel's, is necessary to document the transmission of generational knowledge of the practices of resistance and the requirement for unity.

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<sup>192</sup> Michael Burawoy, The Politics of Production: Factory Regimes under Capitalism and Socialism, London, 1985, p.126 (emphasis in the original).

<sup>193</sup> Burawoy, p.148.

The quest for power became dominant and crucial: a firm and stable hold over political power in the legislative and executive branches of government would ensure that labour could act and take initiatives in the political arena to safeguard its interests in any conflict with capital.<sup>194</sup>

State officials, however, had their own agenda for stability and social peace -- away from the concerns of workers -- even as the state presented itself as the impartial arbiter of the nation's proper direction. The state in France changed markedly in the 1940s, directly after the Liberation; there was a new order and coherence between different subsystems, to cite Claus Offe:

"Order, in the sense of a complex and integrated coherence between different subsystems, is something that is consciously pursued by agents within the [welfare state] system. Of central importance is the capacity of state power to regulate and integrate discrepancies and conflicts."<sup>195</sup>

The state attempted to present itself as the impartial arbiter of the nation's proper direction. State-sponsored liberal political forms, including government policy committees and ministerial commissions,<sup>196</sup> would tend to diminish the collective identity of workers and so smooth the transition from Occupation to Liberation to Restoration/Renewal. Elsewhere in Europe, welfare state officials desired a "political exchange" with labour: political rights were offered in return for industrial peace.<sup>197</sup> In France, however, weak presence of unions at the workplace and suspicious employers prevented such a corporatist outcome. The state, however, was not autonomous from developments in civil society.<sup>198</sup> In order to bridge the gap in our understanding of other forms of political exchange, it is important to examine the micro-dealings between state officials and workers.

I argue that workers did not have space to define matters on their own terms. Workers and their organisations need to be able to define their identity and establish their real interests vis-à-vis both the workplace and the state -- and, preferably, not use one as a springboard for the other. The search for the appropriate form and content of workers' interests ideally occurs in both market and political exchange simultaneously.

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<sup>194</sup> Walter Korpi and Michael Shalev, "Strikes, Power, and Politics in the Western Nations, 1900-1976," in Maurice Zeitlin, ed, Political Power and Social Theory, Volume I, Greenwich, Connecticut, 1980, p.327. See also Colin Crouch, Industrial Relations and European State Traditions, Oxford, 1993.

<sup>195</sup> Claus Offe, Contradictions of the Welfare State, London, 1984, p.257.

<sup>196</sup> Refer to the appendix for a full list of such bodies: "Organismes dans lesquels sont représentées les organisations syndicales d'employeurs et de travailleurs," CAC TR 13634, no date [end 1948?].

<sup>197</sup> Alessandro Pizzorno, "Political Exchange and Collective Identity in Industrial Conflict," in Colin Crouch and Alessandro Pizzorno, eds, The Resurgence of Class Conflict in Western Europe since 1968, London, 1978, pp.277-298.

<sup>198</sup> Howell, p.54.

### **b. The problem of collective action: Offe and Wiesenenthal**

Much of the literature on worker participation examines union/worker strategies but these tend to be fashioned within set structures and ways of organising. Claus Offe and Helmut Wiesenenthal seek to avoid the problem of "false consciousness" faced by Marxist critics of non-political unionism; they argue that workers' organisations have difficulty in defining their proper interests and necessarily exhibit different associational practices from business organisations.<sup>199</sup>

According to Offe and Wiesenenthal, the empirical interests of workers and capitalists vary in the extent to which they are distorted by the market.<sup>200</sup> Capitalists, they say, learn what is expected of them from the market, without having any need to theorise about the make-up of society. Since market mechanisms control contemporary social life, there is little likelihood of distortion of the capitalists' interests. In contrast, workers tend to have to accept the market in order to earn a living while, at the same time, remaining outside the market, owing to their being removed from the ownership of the means of production. "Both the individual and organisational problem," write Offe and Wiesenenthal, "is to find out ... how ambiguities in orientation can be overcome so as to lead to a definition of interest that is 'enlightened' and consistent with itself."<sup>201</sup> Workers and their organisations are constantly involved, then, in a search for their real interests, away from the distortions caused by the market. The logic of collective action of workers is characterised, according to these theorists, by the simultaneous expression and reshaping of the interests of the members -- these interests can only be met to the extent that they are partly redefined.<sup>202</sup>

Offe and Wiesenenthal argue that the interests of the workers, those interests that have been exposed to structural ambiguities and which require a collective discourse for their articulation, are less likely to be voiced within the framework of liberal political forms. There is a class conflict, they say, which exists simultaneously on two levels: within existing political forms and about political forms.<sup>203</sup>

Class conflict on the first level focuses on distributional issues and occurs between those interests sufficiently bureaucratised to be able to play according to certain rules, namely those of a cost/benefit analysis. Political conflict is summed up in the question: "How much does each group get of what it has already defined as desirable

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<sup>199</sup> Claus Offe and Helmut Wiesenenthal, "Two Logics of Collective Action," in Claus Offe, *Disorganized Capitalism*, Cambridge, 1985, pp.170-220.

<sup>200</sup> Offe and Wiesenenthal, p.213.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid.

<sup>202</sup> Offe and Wiesenenthal, pp.183-184.

<sup>203</sup> Offe and Wiesenenthal, p.202.

to get?"<sup>204</sup> The second order of conflict does not include such rigid parameters. Instead, it involves questions about state structures, such as which arrangements would best represent the undistorted interest of various classes. Offe and Wiesenenthal note:

"The purpose of this second type of conflict is, not to 'get something', but to put ourselves in a position from which we can see better what it really is that we want to get, and where it becomes possible to rid ourselves of illusory and distorted notions of our own interest."<sup>205</sup>

Unions face a special dilemma, in having to play by both sets of rules -- on the one hand, they must argue for the benefits within the system in place and, on the other, they must try to fashion a collective identity with broader, far-reaching aims, outside the market-based system.

It is of course in the interest of the state to channel a conceivable second-order conflict about the nature of the political forms into a first-order conflict about distribution. Since the union presents a bridge between the workers and the state by providing fundamental consent to the reproduction of capitalist relations, the state may seek to impose liberal political forms on the union to encourage a corporatist arrangement and instrumental rationality and so to diminish in the workers any sense of collective identity. This attempt by state intermediaries is, for Offe and Wiesenenthal, the "*forced assimilation* of the working class pattern of collective action to the pattern of collective action that dominates any other 'interest group'."<sup>206</sup>

Offe and Wiesenenthal propose three main categories of institutional mechanisms imposed upon labour by the state: the first is the tactic of limiting the types of demands represented by unions thereby furthering the divide between the party (the political wing) and the union (the social and economic wing). The second is to institutionalise non-associational modes of working-class interest representation, such as state agencies and works councils, where there is a dissociation of representation and struggle, so that legal statutes replace organised activity. The third category of tactics involves the statutory increase of diversity within unions, such as the demand for postal ballots.<sup>207</sup>

As long as workers are in the position of neither submitting to the mechanism of the market nor removing themselves from the market, there will be a need for a different form of collective action, which can articulate and shape previously distorted interests.

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<sup>204</sup> Offe and Wiesenenthal, pp.202-203.

<sup>205</sup> Offe and Wiesenenthal, p.204.

<sup>206</sup> Offe and Wiesenenthal, p.208 (emphasis in the original).

<sup>207</sup> Offe and Wiesenenthal, pp.209-213.

Although my study pertains to state officials and, principally, their views and actions concerning worker participation, the political and economic exchange of labour is also important, as seen in Offe and Wiesenenthal's and Pizzorno's work. We can acknowledge the interest of the state to channel a second-level conflict about the nature of political forms into a first-order conflict about distribution. The state also has an interest to use workplace arrangements and unions to impose liberal political forms on workers and thereby to rally workers to the productivist ethos and curtail the workers' collective identity.

The paradox in France in the immediate post-Liberation period is that the CGT operated on a second level in terms of identity formation and interest representation at the workplace but on a first level in its state involvement, largely owing to its ties to the PCF. The CGT did not want to question state structures but also could not accept a cost/benefit analysis in the plant situation. Furthermore, the CGT changed its emphasis over the time period of 1944 to 1947-1948 and reverted back the second level in both spheres. In most West European countries, in the aftermath of the Second World War, trade unions had largely abandoned second order for first order questions, but southern European trade unionism was different -- the Offe and Wiesenenthal analysis has to be modified in this light, as their work applies primarily to northern European countries.

The case of France is that of a less well-organised, inchoate industrial relations system, where the lack of a centralised labour movement, compared, for example, with Sweden, impaired the effectiveness of any trade union sanctions (as seen in 1947-1948). In fact, the capacity of trade unions to effect change is overstated by Offe and Wiesenenthal, since this capacity partly depends on the form of the state itself. In France, change in industrial relations could only come about with the connivance, if not the active help, of the state. The tensions in the representation of workplace demands need to be distinguished from the consideration of political forms, before these levels can then be brought back together. Hence the attraction of the union to some workers and its links with a political party have to be considered separately from the development of the state, before these approaches can be reunited.

My analysis of workers' participation and the French state from 1944 to 1948 contributes to the debate on workers' organisations and political exchange. The possible double nature of European trade unions -- arguing for immediate benefits and the need to transform society -- is shown in France to be contingent not just on the nature of the labour movement but also on the form of the state. Offe and Wiesenenthal suggest that as working-class organisations use more instrumental logic, so workers' demands get channelled by parties, unions, and the state into safe ways of interest

articulation. I extend this thinking to suggest that the labour-state relationship ought to be considered alongside the labour-capital relationship. The crucial point is to what extent state-led development can afford to ignore labour on its own terms. Offe and Wiesensthal's optic is to question just what the role of workers is in any analysis. This is the reason why the current study examines in detail the *comités de gestion*, such as at Berliet, where workers attempted to redefine their identity and position in their own sphere, abetted by the state for a short time from 1944 to 1947. The attempts by workers and their organisations to define their identity and establish their true interests ideally ought to take account of both the workplace and the state.

## 8. Conclusion

This chapter has traced the importance and roles of the major actors in 1944-1948: the state, the CGT, and the employers. State officials oversaw increased government intervention in the economy; the CGT tried to balance serving the interests of the PCF, during the party's time in government from 1944-1947, with representing workplace demands; employers pushed for more rationalisation at the workplace. The combined productivity efforts of the employers and state officials made attempts by workers for increased participation very difficult, except if these attempts contributed to higher production. Furthermore, workers and their organisations were excluded from decision-making in the firm and at the level of the state, as suspicious employers and poorly implanted unions at the workplace meant that capital and labour did not fashion a working compromise. It is the role of state officials in this outcome which deserves attention; elsewhere in Europe, state officials achieved a corporatist system, whereby labour acquired political rights in exchange for industrial peace. In France, however, state administrators both promoted and hindered such an outcome. The next chapter, therefore, scrutinises micro-level dealings, based on archival evidence, between state officials and workers from 1944 to 1948. The result is to uncover the future pattern of labour exclusion in France. The evidence illustrates that the representation of workplace demands can best be located in the interplay between the industrial and political arenas and reveals the role of the state in fashioning and constraining the collective action capacity of workers.

## Chapter III Promotion of Participation by the State

### 1. Introduction

This chapter considers how various branches of the state, such as the Ministry of Labour, the regional *commissaires*, and the departmental prefects, promoted worker participation in both the firm and the state. The chapter illustrates how the initial efforts favouring conciliation and an expanded consultation with workers by state officials gave way by 1946-1947 to a harder line, where traditional administrative roles and preoccupations with law and order were stressed, at the expense of any increased participation in the state structure by workers. The chapter elaborates on a theme of the previous chapter, namely, the importance of the role of the state in the determination of workers' interests.

The policy of French state officials in the early post-Liberation period was to encourage more active trade union participation in the structures of the state. The 1944 CNR Charter had called for "indispensable reforms," including "the establishment of a true economic and social democracy" and "the intensification of production in accordance with a Plan to be decided by the state, after consultation with all those concerned with this production."<sup>1</sup> In December 1945, the Direction des Relations Professionnelles et des Questions Sociales of the Ministry of Labour argued that more active trade union participation was a longstanding government aim and that it was now time for trade unions to play a much more prominent role in state affairs: "Cet impératif, qui figurait explicitement dans le programme du CNR, et vers lequel tend toute l'évolution de la vie économique et sociale de la France depuis plus de vingt ans, doit entrer dorénavant dans sa phase de réalisation."<sup>2</sup>

This "twenty-year evolution" towards greater worker involvement, encompassing the efforts of Albert Thomas and Léon Blum, as recounted in chapter II, culminated in the postwar years in the Resistance insistence on democratisation. There was a move away from the idea of labour playing a limited, fixed role at both the workplace and in the state, as propounded early in the Vichy regime by the Comité d'Études Économiques et Syndicales, formed by the CGT and the CFTC just after their dissolution in 1940 with a manifesto containing the principle that French syndicalism "doit prendre dans l'État sa place et seulement sa place." The manifesto continues:

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<sup>1</sup> as cited by Alexander Werth, *France: 1940-1955*, London, 1956, pp.222-223.

<sup>2</sup> CAC TR 13633, "Bilan et programme de l'activité du ministère du travail en matière de relations professionnelles et d'organisation sociale," 17 December 1945, p.5.

"Le syndicalisme ne peut pas prétendre absorber l'État. Il ne doit pas non plus être absorbé par lui. Le syndicalisme, mouvement professionnel et apolitique, doit jouer exclusivement un rôle économique et social de défense des intérêts de la production. L'État doit jouer son rôle d'arbitre souverain entre tous les intérêts en présence. Ces deux rôles ne doivent pas se confondre."<sup>3</sup>

Instead, workers were enjoined to add their voices in the formulation of state policies.<sup>4</sup> Opposition to the new Vichy regime was incarnated by the Comité in its refusal of any restriction of trade union rights.<sup>5</sup>

In addition to the legacy and strength of ideas of worker participation from the Resistance, the other reason for integrating the unions into state and firm decision-making was pragmatic. Though it was weaker than in other European countries, the French labour movement was stronger than before the war and still considered very militant. Some employers and many state officials wanted in 1944, above all else, consistency and control over trade unions: the very unpredictability of labour was a threat which they wanted to eliminate. The next section considers the extent to which labour was represented in some of the main government institutions of the period, the Comité Économique Interministériel, the Conseil Économique et Social, and other central government organisations.

## **2. Central government institutions**

After the Liberation, trade unions increased their representation in many government organisations and developed a more active voice in government for their members. At the same time, this enhanced participation was consultative only, particularly in the Conseil Économique et Social, and did not lead to a fundamental realignment in decision-making powers for the unions.

### **a. The Comité Économique Interministériel**

The Comité Économique Interministériel "functioned as a kind of economic cabinet," presided over by de Gaulle, within the provisional government of 1944-1946.<sup>6</sup> The other members of the Comité at its inception in Algiers in 1944 were: René Capitant (social policy), Paul Giacobbi (supply and production), René Massigli (foreign affairs), René Mayer (public works), Pierre Mendès France (finance), René

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<sup>3</sup> Comité d'Études Économiques et Syndicales, founding manifesto, 15 November 1940, found in *dossiers de presse*, Institut d'Études Politiques, Paris.

<sup>4</sup> Andrew Shennan, *Rethinking France: Plans for Renewal, 1940-1946*, Oxford, 1989, pp.276-277, recounts how members of the Comité were attracted by syndicalist notions of worker and management organisations meeting on a separate but equal basis.

<sup>5</sup> Jean-Louis Robert, "La modification du syndicalisme français au creuset de la guerre," *Le Mouvement social*, 158, January-March 1992, p.10.

<sup>6</sup> Richard Kuisel, *Capitalism and the State in Modern France*, Cambridge, 1981, p.314, note 83.

Pleven (colonies), Henri Queuille (state commissioner), and Raymond Offroy, who was the general secretary of the committee and an adviser on economic affairs to de Gaulle. The Comité was established, Richard Kuisel notes, "to resolve growing differences within the government over economic policy."<sup>7</sup> The provisional government did not give any priority to bringing workers and their representatives into their deliberations. According to a "projet de note" outlining the powers of the Comité and drawn up in Algiers by Offroy, there was to be no direct worker or union representation.<sup>8</sup> At the same time, it was decided not to have a debate on economic policy in the consultative assembly, with Offroy "express[ing] doubts, which de Gaulle shared, that the assembly could provide constructive answers."<sup>9</sup> The Comité, therefore, did not promote democratic participation by workers or, for that matter, any other social group; such input would await the foundation of the Conseil Économique et Social.

#### **b. The Conseil Économique et Social**

The creation in 1946 of the Conseil Économique et Social was an attempt at an economic "parliament" with constitutional status, representing professional bodies such as the CGT. It replaced the Conseil National Économique (CNE), formed in 1925 by Premier Édouard Herriot with only limited consultative powers and no legislative authority.<sup>10</sup> The CNE was condemned to obscurity, according to Jack Hayward, by its "excessive timidity ..., the suspicion of Parliament and the indifference of most Governments."<sup>11</sup>

Although Paul Ramadier, after he became Prime Minister, wanted the new Conseil Économique, established by the law of 27 October 1946, to be the "very centre of the nation's economic organisation,"<sup>12</sup> and Léon Jouhaux, the CGT leader, was the first president, the Conseil proved to be ineffectual, like its predecessor: it was bypassed by successive governments because it was seen as a competitor for legislative power and was disliked by employers.<sup>13</sup> The meetings of the Conseil did provide an opportunity for the CGT to express grievances directly to national employer federations

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<sup>7</sup> Kuisel, p.181.

<sup>8</sup> AN F60 896, *projet de note*, 25 July 1944.

<sup>9</sup> Kuisel, p.182.

<sup>10</sup> Kuisel, p.83.

<sup>11</sup> Jack Hayward, Private Interests and Public Policy: The Experience of the French Economic and Social Council, London, 1966, p.11.

<sup>12</sup> Quoted in Le Monde, 27 March 1947, as cited in Hayward, p.15.

<sup>13</sup> See Kuisel, pp.214,258 and Hayward, p.16. See also: Henry Ehrmann, Organized Business in France, Princeton, 1957.

and to learn how to make use of a public space -- le Conseil "est essentiellement une tribune beaucoup plus qu'un carrefour," according to Hubert Lesire-Ogrel.<sup>14</sup> For Adrian Rossiter, closed-door sessions were more important than the bland public face of the plenary gatherings.<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, the CGT was under no illusions: at the Comité Confédéral National (CCN) of the CGT in November 1947, René Arrachard of the Fédération du Bâtiment, citing a report by Pierre Le Brun, one of the few non-Communist members of the Bureau Confédéral, ridiculed the delays imposed by any recourse to the Conseil and argued that demands had to be addressed directly to the government:

"Le gouvernement ... cherche un appui en s'adressant au Conseil Économique. Notre camarade Le Brun avait raison de dire que c'est là un moyen sur lequel nous avons des réserves à faire, certes, et si le Conseil Économique devait être saisi de cette question [blocage des salaires], il est probable que dans six mois, il y serait encore. C'est au gouvernement directement qu'il faut nous adresser..."<sup>16</sup>

By this time, during the widespread strike wave of November 1947, the CGT had other reasons in wishing to confront the government directly over wage restraint. Later, during the violent miners' strikes of October 1948, the CFTC alone attempted to get the Conseil to intervene:

"La Commission Exécutive de la CFTC suggère que le Conseil Économique, conformément à l'article 4 de la loi du 27 octobre 1946, soit saisi d'urgence de la question en vue de réaliser une médiation permettant de mettre fin au conflit."<sup>17</sup>

By 1951, the right of the Conseil to intervene in industrial disputes had been taken away.

### **c. Other central organisations**

Trade unions had a long history of representation in government organisations, normally under the auspices of the Ministry of Labour, but they developed a more active voice in the immediate post-Liberation period.

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<sup>14</sup> Hubert Lesire-Ogrel, "Les Organisations syndicales ouvrières au Conseil Économique," in André Tiano, Michel Rocard and Hubert Lesire-Ogrel, Expériences françaises d'action syndicale ouvrière, Paris, 1956, p.427.

<sup>15</sup> See Adrian Rossiter, "The Blum Government, the Conseil National Economique and Economic Policy," in Martin Alexander and Helen Graham, eds, The French and Spanish Popular Fronts: Comparative Perspectives, Cambridge, 1989, pp.156-170 and Adrian Rossiter, "Corporatist Experiments in Republican France, 1916-1939," unpublished PhD thesis, University of Oxford, 1986.

<sup>16</sup> Documents de l'Institut CGT d'Histoire Sociale, Les Comités Confédéraux Nationaux de novembre 1947 et de janvier 1948, Paris, no date, p.12.

<sup>17</sup> CAC TR 10239, CFTC Executive Commission resolution of 22 October 1948 presented to the Conseil Économique at its meeting of 26 October 1948.

In 1891, the Conseil Supérieur du Travail was created, with 50 members, one-third of whom were workers and members of unions. The Conseil was a state-sponsored consultative body, without any decision-making power in its own right:

"[Le Conseil] pouvait 'avec l'autorisation du ministre procéder à toutes enquêtes et entendre toutes les personnes qu'il jugera en état de l'éclairer sur les questions qui lui sont soumises. ... Il est destiné à fournir d'une manière également rapide et sûre les renseignements concernant les questions ouvrières.'" <sup>18</sup>

The Conseil was enlarged in 1899 to include 22 worker representatives, out of an increased total membership of 66, and was again reorganised in 1921 and enlarged to 78 members, of whom 32 were workers, with a permanent commission of 7 workers out of the total of 19. Between the wars, the Conseil advised on "general working conditions and industrial relations"; nearly all important labour legislation was "threshed out" by it during this period.<sup>19</sup> The Conseil would be cited by the Commission Supérieure des Conventions Collectives, following the Second World War, for its involvement in the origination of all social protection between the wars.<sup>20</sup> The work of the Conseil was suspended at the outset of the war, in September 1939, and its functions were taken over by another committee, the Commission Nationale de Coordination de la Main-d'Oeuvre, which was composed solely of government officials, without any representation of management or labour.<sup>21</sup>

After the Liberation, worker representation in government organisations not only increased significantly, ranging from the Commission Nationale des Salaires to the Conseil National du Travail, but workers' representatives also played leading roles in them.<sup>22</sup> In June 1946, for instance, the CGT demand for a wage increase of 25 per cent led to its asking for a meeting of the Commission Nationale des Salaires, fully attended by employer and union representatives and 26 civil servants. At the meeting, presided over by Ambroise Croizat, the Minister of Labour, Henri Raynaud, CGT Secretary, presented the wage demands, against the background of "la plus grande émotion ... dans les milieux ouvriers", while at the same time acknowledging the role of the Commission.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> CAC 860561/1, citing the decree of 22 January 1891.

<sup>19</sup> Henry Ehrmann, French Labor from Popular Front to Liberation, New York, 1947, p.190.

<sup>20</sup> See CAC 860561/1, Commission Supérieure des Conventions Collectives, "réorganisation syndicale et la première loi sur les conventions collectives," 1946-1948: previous organisations with trade union representation.

<sup>21</sup> Ehrmann, French Labor, pp.175-176,306.

<sup>22</sup> See Appendix: "Organismes dans lesquels sont représentées les organisations syndicales d'employeurs et de travailleurs."

<sup>23</sup> CAC TR 13931, minutes of Commission Nationale des Salaires meeting, 13 June 1946, p.4.

The attitude of the minister was also crucial in making workers' organisations and demands more prominent. Miners enjoyed "des rapports privilégiés" with Marcel Paul, Communist Minister of Industrial Production from November 1945 until December 1946, who was instrumental in the nationalisation of Électricité de France and Gaz de France in April 1946 and the passage of the electricity and gas personnel statute two months later and who was also General Secretary of the Fédération de l'Éclairage (the electricity workers' union). Metalworkers held "d'excellents rapports" with their own former General Secretary, Ambroise Croizat, who was Minister of Labour from November 1945 until December 1946 and then again from January until May 1947, when the Communist ministers were excluded from the government.<sup>24</sup> Croizat's Ministry of Labour was "envahi [du matin au soir] par les délégations syndicales, assurées ici d'un accueil chaleureux et complice."<sup>25</sup> Croizat acted as a "recours hiérarchique" after any labour inspector decisions opposed to worker interests and his ministerial replies to the inspectors often defined or interpreted laws. Likewise, Charles Tillon, as Minister of Air, insisted at a meeting of the CEI on the need for higher salaries in the aircraft industry, to be funded by a reduction in costs, with the cooperation of workers.<sup>26</sup>

At all events, like the CGT, the government depended at least as much on its agents in the provinces -- the *commissaires*, prefects, and the labour inspectorate. It was these state officials who would be the main go-between with workers in promoting participation in both the firm and the state.

### **3. The Ministry of Labour: labour inspectors**

This section examines the role played by labour inspectors in the immediate post-Liberation period in establishing better industrial relations in the workplace and in representing the central government to the workforce. It argues that the inspectors were encouraged by the Ministry of Labour in 1944-1946 to take the initiative to promote worker participation in the firm and in the state. By 1947-1948, however, they had reverted to a more circumspect, traditional role in the workplace and they were seen to be favouring the employers.

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<sup>24</sup> Annie Lacroix-Riz, La CGT de la Libération à la scission, de 1944 à 1947, Paris, 1983, p.99.

<sup>25</sup> Annie Lacroix-Riz, "Un ministre communiste face à la question des salaires: l'action d'Ambroise Croizat de novembre 1945 à mai 1947," Le Mouvement social, 123, April-June 1983, p.18. Croizat, however, found himself more and more isolated within the government, particularly after his return to the labour ministry in the 1947 Paul Ramadier cabinet.

<sup>26</sup> AN F60 899, minutes of CEI meeting, 17 March 1945.

The labour inspectors were one of the principal mediators between trade unions and employers. They interpreted and enforced government directives and negotiated workers' and trade unions' demands with employers. In the day-to-day world of industry, the inspectors provided a channel for the workforce both to gain access to the workings of the state and to mobilise state power in support of worker demands. This section concentrates on the inspectors' administrative role following Vichy, their mission to establish "social peace" in the workplace, and their changing relationship with the CGT and employers.

The labour inspectorate dated back to 1841, with the introduction of volunteer inspectors; the current system of inspectors chosen in a national competition was set up in 1892. Donald Reid describes how inspectors in the period of 1892 to 1940 developed a social identity as figures of authority whose responsibilities went well beyond their statutory duties, in an environment marked by hostility to state intervention in industrial relations.<sup>27</sup> Herrick Chapman cites an example from 1929 of this earlier hostility to the state and suspicion of officials' efforts: when a worker wanted to consult a labour inspector about working conditions in his plant, the local CGTU militant told him that the inspector "'would scarcely heed such a request' and that 'it is only the workers themselves who ought to ... [express] their grievances to the boss, via the union.'"<sup>28</sup> During the Vichy period, inspectors continued to carry out their tasks and were even given the power by the regime to authorise special dispensations to the general salary freeze.<sup>29</sup> As German exactions intensified, the job of the inspectorate remained that of trying to maintain production in order to limit, if not alleviate, penury. This task became more urgent in the aftermath of the Liberation, given the disorganisation stemming from the scorched earth policy of German retreat, the flight of collaborationist employers, Liberation account settling, and Resistance expectations and demands regarding employment conditions.

Henry Hauck, *directeur des relations professionnelles* in the Ministry of Labour and an old ally of the moderates in the CGT, reported in March 1945 to Alexandre Parodi, the Minister of Labour, after an interview with several CGT Union Départementale leaders, their feeling that the labour inspectors had neither the time nor perhaps even the will to intervene sufficiently at the workplace. The union leaders felt

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<sup>27</sup> Donald Reid, "L'identité sociale de l'inspecteur du travail, 1892-1940," *Le Mouvement social*, 170, January-March 1995, pp.40,58.

<sup>28</sup> Herrick Chapman, *State Capitalism and Working-Class Radicalism in the French Aircraft Industry*, Berkeley, 1991, p.59, citing report to the Gironde Prefect, 30 May 1929.

<sup>29</sup> Patrick Fridenson and Jean-Louis Robert, "Les ouvriers dans la France de la Seconde Guerre mondiale: un bilan," *Le Mouvement social*, 158, January-March 1992, p.138.

that while some inspectors were too close to the employers, others had been discredited owing to their attitudes during Vichy.<sup>30</sup> In his letter, Hauck called for a climate of social peace to encourage further participation by the unions:

"... il est extrêmement regrettable qu'une atmosphère de méfiance règne entre les syndicats ouvriers appelés à jouer un rôle de plus en plus important dans la vie sociale du pays et les inspecteurs du travail qui ont pour tâche de veiller à l'application des lois destinées à protéger les salariés."<sup>31</sup>

In the aftermath of Vichy, one of the inspectors' tasks was to abrogate the measures of the Charte du Travail, according to the ordinance of 27 July 1944. The Charte du Travail, enacted in October 1941, had established twenty-nine professional families (*familles professionnelles*), though only three were really organised by 1944, and *comités sociaux d'entreprises*, which were responsible for social welfare matters in the firm and which numbered over 8000 by the end of Vichy, though some of these were organisations on paper only.<sup>32</sup> A circular put out by the Ministry of Labour, with the agreement of the Ministry of Finance, established that the precise role of the inspectors was to confiscate assets belonging to Charte organisations: they were to draw up complete on-the-ground accounts, which would then be checked by a special office. This was slow work: by 3 December 1945, of 2500 Charte groups being dissolved, only 140 had been investigated.<sup>33</sup>

The role of the labour inspectors during the aftermath of Vichy was an ambivalent one. While their task of overseeing the end of Vichy legislation work enabled their authority to be reestablished, particularly in the eyes of workers, their continued reliance on Vichy procedures -- recourse to administrative fiat -- belied any break in French administrative practices.<sup>34</sup> Nevertheless, the inspectors were immediately associated with the provision of state guarantees. They were responsible for applying the law of 20 May 1944 on the indemnity of workers' lost salary, although here again the process was slow, "étant donné que ce service n'a pas été organisé pour répondre à un tel genre de travail."<sup>35</sup> This delay was compounded by employers who

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<sup>30</sup> CAC TR 13634, letter to Ministre du Travail from Henry Hauck, 31 March 1945.

<sup>31</sup> CAC TR 13634, letter to Ministre du Travail from Henry Hauck, 31 March 1945, p.2.

<sup>32</sup> Richard Vinen, *The Politics of French Business, 1936-1945*, Cambridge, 1991, p.115 and Kuisel, p.146.

<sup>33</sup> CAC TR 13633, "Bilan et programme de l'activité du ministère du travail en matière de relations professionnelles et d'organisation sociale," 17 December 1945, p.2.

<sup>34</sup> See, for example, CAC TR 14002, the meeting of the Inspecteurs Divisionnaires du Travail, 9 March 1946, on the coexistence of *comités de sécurité* and *comités d'entreprises*: "M. Piton [a divisional labour inspector] indique que pendant la guerre on s'est trouvé en présence d'une situation du même ordre. ... On a réglé la question par voie de simple circulaire."

<sup>35</sup> AN F1a 4028, report of Commissaire de la République à Rennes (Victor Le Gorgeu), 31 December 1944.

awaited reimbursement from the state before paying their workers, instead of advancing the money, as they were supposed to do. The inspectors also stepped in to settle financial problems encountered by workers whose employers had disappeared -- this intervention was essential, noted a *commissaire de la République*, "pour l'apaisement des esprits."<sup>36</sup>

One of the main tasks of the labour inspectorate was to establish "social peace" in the workplace. In a revealing speech given in 1945 to the labour inspectors, R. Vayssières, one of fourteen divisional labour inspectors, recounted the recent past of the service and stressed its new, progressive role. The labour inspectorate was to be not only an arbitrator, but also responsible for implementing new social policies:

"Jusqu'en 1936, la mission de l'Inspecteur du Travail était toute de contrôle. ... En 1936, le rôle de l'Inspecteur du Travail a pris un sens nouveau. Brusquement, les circonstances imposent au service un rôle de conciliation et d'arbitre. ... Ce rôle, il l'a conservé depuis. Mais à présent, il faut qu'il devienne en outre un facteur de progrès social, et de sécurité sociale.

"Progrès social, sécurité sociale, paix sociale: tels sont maintenant les trois buts assignés à votre effort."<sup>37</sup>

Henry Hauck, the Ministry of Labour high official, also noted the importance of establishing a climate of trust at the departmental level in relations between the inspectors and unions so that government social policy could be upheld:

"Si le climat de confiance entre les pouvoirs publics et les organisations ouvrières, que nous nous efforçons de créer à Paris, n'existe pas dans les départements, le succès de la politique sociale du Gouvernement peut [s]e trouver compromis."<sup>38</sup>

Furthermore, the inspectors were exhorted to take on a leadership role to promote the goals of conciliation and "social peace": "N'attendez pas d'être actionnés par les syndicats ouvriers ou saisis par vos chefs," continued Vayssières, the Divisional Labour Inspector. The inspectors were to visit trouble-spots and head off conflict. Vayssières assured the inspectors that were workers and employers to approach them spontaneously for advice, particularly concerning those disputes which did not call into question texts/edicts under the jurisdiction of the inspectors, then, he added, they would know that their initiative had been a success:

"Si les ouvriers et les patrons viennent spontanément chez vous pour vous demander de les aider à régler leurs difficultés, même et surtout celles qui ne mettent pas en cause des textes dont vous avez la charge, ... si [les

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> CAC TR 13910, "Rôle social de l'Inspecteur du Travail," *exposé* by R. Vayssières, Inspecteur Divisionnaire du Travail, 1945, p.1.

<sup>38</sup> CAC TR 13634, letter to Ministre du Travail from Henry Hauck, 31 March 1945, p.2.

organisations patronales et ouvrières] suivent volontiers vos initiatives, alors vous pouvez être assurés que vous avez réussi."<sup>39</sup>

The inspectors had great impact on workers and the CGT because of the frequency with which they were called in to advise on procedure or settle industrial disputes. Examples abound from the archival evidence. One concerns Marseille: "... à noter la grande influence sur les milieux ouvriers de M. Gatet, Inspecteur Départemental du Travail," wrote the *commissaire de la République* in October 1944 in his bimonthly report.<sup>40</sup> Another refers to Nancy, where the Prefect of Meurthe-et-Moselle in June 1945 also confirmed the influence of the labour inspector:

"L'Inspection du Travail a de fréquents contacts avec les représentants des organisations syndicales d'employeurs et de salariés au sujet, soit de la constitution de Comités d'entreprises, soit du chômage, soit encore de l'application de nouveaux arrêtés de salaires."<sup>41</sup>

Although the CGT made regular use of the services of the labour inspectorate, the union never lost sight of its shortcomings. Some of the criticisms by the CGT of the inspectors included their lack of understanding of workplace conflicts, their lack of initiative, and their slow pace.

At their most successful, the inspectors protected workers' rights and argued on their behalf while taking the initiative urged on them by Vayssières and Hauck to force action by the central services, as exemplified by the inspector who urged the government to take into account workers' salary demands, as cited by the Prefect of Puy-de-Dôme:

"L'Inspecteur du Travail pense que de tels incidents [short strikes] vont continuer à se produire si la révision générale des salaires n'est pas effectuée promptement et si l'administration centrale n'indique pas, d'une façon formelle, la position des pouvoirs publics en matière de salaires."<sup>42</sup>

More often, the inspectors' coordinating role clearly reflected government policies: they were charged by the Comité Économique Interministériel to examine irregularities in wage rates<sup>43</sup>; they presided over regional commissions to investigate all work stoppages<sup>44</sup>; they arranged meetings between employers and unions to discuss

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<sup>39</sup> CAC TR 13910, "Rôle social de l'Inspecteur du Travail," *exposé* by R. Vayssières, Inspecteur Divisionnaire du Travail, 1945, pp.1,5.

<sup>40</sup> AN F1a 4023, report of Commissaire de la République de la Région de Marseille (Raymond Aubrac), 13 October 1944.

<sup>41</sup> AN F1a 4029, report of Préfet de Meurthe-et-Moselle, 26 June 1945.

<sup>42</sup> AN F1a 4028, report of Préfet du Puy-de-Dôme, 16 February 1945.

<sup>43</sup> AN F60 899, minutes of CEI meeting, 17 March 1945.

<sup>44</sup> AN F1a 4028, report of Préfet de l'Ardèche, 16 February 1945.

ministerial salary *arrêtés* and closely monitored the outcome.<sup>45</sup> The Minister of Labour, Ambroise Croizat, explicitly ordered inspectors to ask employers to impose maximal salaries and not just minimal ones.<sup>46</sup> As a result, the inspectors charged with representing government policy often lacked flexibility. In one case, the inspector intervened at the behest of the local prefect to put across the "instructions ministérielles impératives" in two strike attempts in Landes.<sup>47</sup>

The inspectors' main task in industrial relations was to solve workplace disputes so as to ensure continued production. Even when openly advocating the position of the workers, they couched their support in terms of social peace. They wanted to avoid any disruptions to production. In a case at Saint-Étienne, the labour inspector reported a dispute to his superior in Lyon between the CGT metalworkers' union and the employers' Association des Syndicats Métallurgiques Patronaux de la Loire. The dispute concerned an increase in wages for those metalworkers on piecework (*au rendement*). The inspector wrote that "la thèse ouvrière est justifiée par les textes et par la logique" and then ended his report with a warning, "il est à craindre des mouvements ouvriers et des grèves," a warning echoed by the divisional inspector in his summary to the Ministry of Labour.<sup>48</sup> More frequently, the labour inspectorate intervened in a seemingly neutral capacity, often to settle employer/staff salary differences: "En Meurthe-et-Moselle plusieurs interventions des Services de l'Inspection du Travail ont été nécessaires pour régler les différends entre les employeurs et le personnel, tant au sujet des salaires qu'au sujet des classifications."<sup>49</sup> In the autumn of 1945, inspectors also took charge of specific disputes. One local inspector was called in when the workers at a company in the Vosges refused to do four extra tasks as demanded by the management.<sup>50</sup>

The inspectors enjoyed a privileged relationship with the local authorities. The departmental labour inspector often presided over the departmental branch of the

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<sup>45</sup> AN F1a 4025, report of Commissaire de la République de la Région de Nancy (Paul Chailley-Bert) concerning two meetings held under the aegis of the Inspection Divisionnaire du Travail between the steel employers and unions, 2 November 1945. See also AN F1cIII 1210, report of Préfet des Bouches-du-Rhône, 15 July 1945: "Les organisations patronales et ouvrières s'occupent activement de ces questions [on salaries], et l'Inspection du Travail suit avec attention et seconde leurs efforts."

<sup>46</sup> Circulaire TR 109, 19 December 1945, as cited in Lacroix-Riz, "Un ministre communiste," p.8.

<sup>47</sup> AN F1a 4028, report of Préfet des Landes, 14 April 1945.

<sup>48</sup> CAC TR 10228, report of Inspecteur du Travail à Saint-Étienne (M. Chazeaubenit), 26 September 1946 and letter of Inspecteur Divisionnaire du Travail à Lyon (M. Roux) to Ministre du Travail, 16 October 1946.

<sup>49</sup> AN F1a 4025, report of Commissaire de la République de la Région de Nancy (Paul Chailley-Bert), 1 December 1945.

<sup>50</sup> AN F1a 4025, report of Commissaire de la République de la Région de Nancy (Paul Chailley-Bert), 17 November 1945.

Commission Régionale de Reconstruction Économique whose task was to resolve disputes and so increase production. In the Ardèche, the Prefect wrote:

"Cette Commission, qui a pour but de rechercher, pour y remédier, toutes les causes d'arrêt ou de ralentissement des diverses industries, est actuellement en pleine activité. Elle est en étroit contact avec la Commission régionale."<sup>51</sup>

The inspector intervened often with the prefect or the *commissaire* to ensure the maximisation of production with the minimum of obstacles and worker grievances. In Agen and Funel, for example, in response to two strike threats, "le Préfet est immédiatement intervenu, en accord avec l'Inspecteur du Travail, pour éviter tout incident."<sup>52</sup> In Bordeaux, after a strike of 500 transport materials workers had started at 10 a.m., the *commissaire de la République*, "immédiatement alerté par les syndicats et l'Inspection Divisionnaire du Travail," obtained a settlement which led to work starting again at 2 p.m.<sup>53</sup> This streamlined and rational response led the *commissaire de la République* in Lille, Francis-Louis Closon, to suggest that the divisional labour inspector should coordinate all disputes, including those occurring in the jurisdictions of other specialised inspectors, such as in the mines and civil engineering.<sup>54</sup> However, this increased responsibility often led to disappointing results in practice owing, among other factors, to inadequate staffing levels.

The inspectors also played an important role in educating and informing workers and their organisations about new labour legislation. They also encouraged increased worker representation on all new *comités d'entreprises*. The *commissaire de la République* in Nancy noted in March 1945:

"Les syndicats poursuivent leur oeuvre de réorganisation, et les secrétariats sont en rapports constants avec l'Inspection du Travail pour fournir à leurs adhérents tous renseignements concernant la législation en vigueur."<sup>55</sup>

He emphasised these close relations again in another report at the end of the year:

"Les rapports de l'Inspection du Travail sont toujours nombreux avec les différents syndicats. La CGT en particulier demande fréquemment soit des interventions de l'Inspection du Travail pour régler des différends et relever des irrégularités, soit des précisions sur l'interprétation d'un texte."<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> AN F1a 4028, report of Préfet de l'Ardèche, 16 February 1945.

<sup>52</sup> AN F1a 4028, report of Préfet du Lot-et-Garonne, 15 March 1945.

<sup>53</sup> AN F1a 4028, report of Commissaire de la République à Bordeaux (Gaston Cusin), 1 February 1945.

<sup>54</sup> CAC TR 13636, in letter from Ministre de l'Économie Nationale (Pierre Mendès France) to Ministre du Travail, 27 January 1945.

<sup>55</sup> AN F1a 4024, report of Commissaire de la République de la Région de Nancy (Paul Chailley-Bert), 1 March 1945.

<sup>56</sup> AN F1a 4025, report of Commissaire de la République de la Région de Nancy, 17 December 1945. See also Paul Chailley-Bert's report of 16 January 1946: "Des contacts fréquents continuent à avoir

The inspectors played a crucial role in assuring the success of the *ordonnance* on the *comités d'entreprises* -- as stressed by R. Vayssières, in his speech mentioned above.<sup>57</sup> His words followed up explicit orders from the Minister of Labour to the divisional inspectors concerning the *comités*:

"Vous voudrez bien inviter les Inspecteurs du Travail placés sous vos ordres à se mettre en relation au plus tôt avec les chefs d'entreprises intéressés et les organisations syndicales les plus représentatives du personnel, afin, non seulement de leur donner tous les renseignements dont ils pourraient avoir besoin, mais encore de faciliter, dans toute la mesure du possible, la désignation des candidats proposés pour les postes de membres de ces comités."<sup>58</sup>

In order to facilitate such government instructions in this and other follow-up circulars,<sup>59</sup> the inspectors arranged frequent meetings between employers and workers.<sup>60</sup>

The Ministry of Labour strove to make this educational role of the labour inspectors all-embracing -- its own material highlighted the way trade unions had been guided by the inspectors to set up the *comités d'entreprises*, as workers' delegates did not always know the details of the legislation.<sup>61</sup> The inspectors were keen to brief fully these delegates because, in their opinion, the *délégué au comité d'entreprise* had a "droit de participation"<sup>62</sup>:

"[les] comités d'entreprises ... ont été créés précisément pour permettre aux ouvriers de prendre connaissance [des] questions complexes, de faire leur éducation économique, ... se préparant ainsi à prendre une participation effective à la gestion, à assumer une responsabilité plus grande."<sup>63</sup>

As a result, the inspectors furnished sufficient documentation to the *comités*, so that they would be able to give an informed opinion to the managers (*chefs d'entreprises*) -- a policy that greatly angered the employers, the CNPF considering it "fâcheuse."<sup>64</sup>

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lieu entre les Services de l'Inspection du Travail et les Syndicats cela pour satisfaire aux demandes de renseignements."

<sup>57</sup> CAC TR 13910, "Rôle social de l'Inspecteur du Travail," *exposé* by R. Vayssières, Inspecteur Divisionnaire du Travail, 1945, p.3.

<sup>58</sup> CAC TR 14485, *circulaire* (#5) from Ministre du Travail (Alexandre Parodi) to Inspecteurs Divisionnaires du Travail, 13 March 1945.

<sup>59</sup> See CAC TR 14485, *circulaire* (#11) from Ministre du Travail (Alexandre Parodi) to Inspecteurs Divisionnaires du Travail, 14 June 1945.

<sup>60</sup> See AN F1a 4029, report of Préfet de Meurthe-et-Moselle, 26 June 1945.

<sup>61</sup> CAC TR 13633, "Les Comités d'Entreprises," Centre d'Études et de Recherches Sociales, Ministère du Travail, 14 September 1945, pp.2,3.

<sup>62</sup> CAC TR 13633, "Distinction entre délégués du personnel et délégués au comité d'entreprise," report by G. Boutier, Inspecteur du Travail, 1 February 1947, ch.II.

<sup>63</sup> CAC TR 13633, "Les Comités d'Entreprises," Centre d'Études et de Recherches Sociales, Ministère du Travail, 14 September 1945, p.3.

<sup>64</sup> CAC 860561/3, "Collaboration entre les pouvoirs publics et les organisations professionnelles en France," Bureau International du Travail (ILO), May 1947, p.96.

Not surprisingly, the relations between the inspectors and the employers were at times fraught. The employers tried to evade government control and reassert their primacy at the workplace, as noted by the Prefect of Ardennes, for example:

"Le patronat est souvent maladroit. C'est ainsi qu'il a été constaté que, dans la plupart des industries du travail des métaux et de la métallurgie, les bulletins de paye sont établis sans indications précises, ceci semble bien intentionnel, et cette pratique enlève aux services de l'Inspection du Travail et aux ouvriers toute possibilité de contrôle sur leur classement dans les catégories professionnelles. La loi est formelle, et elle doit être appliquée. ... Mais [le Préfet] croit qu'il serait nécessaire de prévoir, et très prochainement, une commission d'arbitrage car les conflits ne vont pas manquer de surgir si l'attitude patronale se maintient."<sup>65</sup>

At the end of this report, the prefect remarks that the inspector is "submergé par des travaux de toutes sortes et ne peut intervenir autant qu'il est nécessaire." He concludes: "Il est indispensable que l'Inspection du Travail dans les Ardennes soit renforcée à très bref délai."<sup>66</sup> The number employed in the labour inspectorate was small, though it had doubled from 172 inspectors in 1937-1938 to 343 members (including departmental and regional chiefs) in 1950.<sup>67</sup> This understaffing in the 1940s prevented any detailed follow-up of employer practices. Moreover, while the inspectors often joined forces with the CGT to denounce employer practices,<sup>68</sup> CGT departmental leaders complained of too close personal relations between certain inspectors and employers.<sup>69</sup>

The overall importance of the inspectors was diminished over the course of the first postwar years, mainly owing to repeated employer resistance to them and changing government policies. In his 1945 *exposé*, Divisional Inspector Vayssières said that the inspectors' role was to be objective and impartial, to resolve difficult questions and thereby to gain the confidence of workers and employers.<sup>70</sup> By 1947, however, after the expulsion of the PCF ministers from the government, employers had no qualms about refusing to take part in meetings with workers under the auspices of the Ministry

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<sup>65</sup> AN F1a 4028, report of Préfet des Ardennes, 15 December 1944.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Michel Margairaz, *L'État, les finances et l'économie: Histoire d'une conversion, 1932-1952*, Volume I, Paris, 1991, p.420 and Val Lorwin, *The French Labor Movement*, Cambridge, Mass., 1966, p.257.

<sup>68</sup> See AN F1a 4023, extract from regional economic conference in report of Commissaire de la République de la Région de Marseille (Paul Haag), 15 February 1945: "La surenchère pratiquée sur les salaires par les Américains et même par certains employeurs français travaillant pour le compte de la nation alliée, suscite de nombreuses critiques. L'Inspection du Travail et la CGT s'emploient, malgré tout, à maintenir les ouvriers dans les industries françaises, mais y parviennent difficilement."

<sup>69</sup> CAC TR 13634, letter to Ministre du Travail from Henry Hauck, 31 March 1945.

<sup>70</sup> CAC TR 13910, "Rôle social de l'Inspecteur du Travail," *exposé* by R. Vayssières, Inspecteur Divisionnaire du Travail, 1945, p.2.

of Labour.<sup>71</sup> Employers also sought to bypass the inspectorate entirely by referring disciplinary matters, including arbitrary firings of workers' representatives, to the courts, as legal decisions often went their way. L'Union des Industries Métallurgiques et Minières, the most important employer association at the time, held that "It is finally the courts that should judge the validity of disciplinary punishments, not the plant committees or the persons concerned."<sup>72</sup> More fundamentally, employers won important victories against the May 1945 ordinance which allowed employers to be fined for damages for all salaried workers fired without the approval of the labour inspectorate. The penalty was struck down by the Cour de Cassation on 24 January 1947 and the Conseil d'État on 18 June 1947. These rulings revealed, according to the writer of a report on the administrative control of industrial work, that "les dispositions de l'ordonnance n'ont aucun effet sur les rapports de droit commun entre employeurs et salariés."<sup>73</sup>

Ministerial instructions also changed, after the fall of Croizat in May 1947, from the earlier emphasis on social peace to a new requirement for strict adherence to salary frameworks: "... le service de l'Inspection du Travail doit observer la plus grande réserve lorsqu'il est amené à intervenir dans les conflits relatifs à des demandes de hausse de salaires, sous quelque forme que ce soit."<sup>74</sup> As can be seen, inspectors were now being advised to remain reserved in their dealings at the workplace, instead of the previous injunction to take the initiative in industrial relations.

By late 1948, inspectors were increasingly agreeing with employer decisions regarding the firing of union militants.<sup>75</sup> This new bias towards employers represented a turn-around from the inspectors' original preoccupation with fair results, outlined by Vayssières in 1945:

"Ce qui compte, ce sont surtout les résultats, et pas seulement les résultats obtenus dans l'application des textes, mais aussi ceux obtenus dans les

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<sup>71</sup> See CAC TR 10228, no date [after May 1947]: a meeting called by the Loire-Inférieure Directeur Départemental du Travail between the employers and workers (*métallurgistes*) of Saint-Nazaire was attended only by the secretary of the union.

<sup>72</sup> Union des Industries Métallurgiques et Minières, La Discussion du projet de convention collective nationale dans les industries métallurgiques: État de la question en avril 1949, Paris, 1949, p.22, as cited in Lorwin, p.261.

<sup>73</sup> CAC TR 13637, "Contrôle administratif de l'emploi," report by Georges Coutellier, *docteur en droit*, March 1949. See also Lorwin, pp.260-261, for more on labour law jurisprudence.

<sup>74</sup> CAC TR 13521, letter from Ministre du Travail to Directeur Départemental du Travail de Saône-et-Loire, 26 August 1948.

<sup>75</sup> See chapter V, section 2a for an example in Montrouge.

questions où il faut aller au-delà en faisant appel à l'équité et au sens social des employeurs."<sup>76</sup>

Over the course of the 1944-1948 period, then, the labour inspectors altered their approach at the workplace, from a pronounced engagement with workers, employers, and even central government itself, to a withdrawal from contentious issues and a turn towards the employer perspective.

By 1949, the inspectors were submitting reports in answer to a ministerial circular about the possibilities of employee profit-sharing.<sup>77</sup> Such a scheme illustrated a radically different view of participation, compared with the inspectors' briefings in 1945 to workers' delegates to the *comités d'entreprises* about "taking an effective part in the management of firms" (see above, p.77).

Notwithstanding this later shift, the achievements of the labour inspectors in the immediate post-Liberation period were two-fold: the inspectors provided a new access to the state for workers and their representatives and they helped create better conditions in the firm for worker participation. However, the labour inspectors failed to win the full trust of workers and their organisations, owing to the inspectors' needs to ensure uninterrupted productivity, sustain the language of social peace, and maintain compliance to government policy.

#### **4. Regional and departmental administration: the *commissaires de la République* and prefects**

The experience of *commissaires* and prefects paralleled that of the labour inspectorate, with whom, of course, they liaised, especially where a labour dispute might threaten public order. The state officials all wanted to increase production and to ensure that no stoppages or slowdowns occurred. Where the labour inspectors were primarily concerned with promoting cooperation at the workplace by workers and employers, the regional and departmental administrators hoped to improve worker participation in state institutions, as well as to maintain public order. Yet just as labour inspectors had facilitated access to state structures for workers and their organisations in 1944-1946, so, too, did the *commissaires* and prefects engage at the level of the workplace at the same time. Some interventionist *commissaires* enacted radical new workplace arrangements in order to speed up production.

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<sup>76</sup> CAC TR 13910, "Rôle social de l'Inspecteur du Travail," *exposé* by R. Vayssières, Inspecteur Divisionnaire du Travail, 1945, p.4.

<sup>77</sup> See CAC TR 13649, reports by *inspecteurs du travail*, March 1949. Employee profit-sharing was an old social catholic nostrum popular with the Gaullists and with the Centre des Jeunes Patrons, a catholic employers' group founded before the war. See Shennan, pp.198-199 and Richard Vinen, *Bourgeois Politics in France, 1945-1951*, Cambridge, 1995, pp.63-66.

In 1944-1946, the *commissaires de la République*, eighteen in total, incarnated national authority in their regions, as mentioned in chapter II, section 3a. Each *commissaire* administered a region of several departments, which continued to be run by prefects. The *commissaires* and prefects were responsible to the Minister of the Interior, for whom they wrote bi-monthly reports. They held wideranging administrative, police, and economic powers in their respective geographic areas, where they represented the central government to the inhabitants.<sup>78</sup>

Following the abolition of the *commissaires* in March 1946, however, the prefects resumed their traditional tasks of administration, policing, economic oversight, and information provision; they no longer provided access for the workforce to the workings of the state nor did they support worker demands, either at the local or central levels.

The *commissaires* and prefects sought initially, in 1944-1945, the active participation of trade unions, especially the CGT, in economic affairs in order to promote growth and speed up reconstruction. One of the more interventionist *commissaires* was Raymond Aubrac in Marseille, where labour relations in the docks and on the trams were traditionally tense.<sup>79</sup> In November 1944, he set up the Conférence Économique Régionale, largely because of trade union pressure:

"Cette décision est consécutive aux demandes qui me sont parvenues, en particulier des organisations syndicales, tendant à réaliser sur un cadre plus large que celui des services du Secrétariat Général aux Affaires Économiques, la coordination de toutes les activités intéressées."<sup>80</sup>

The Conférence brought together representatives of the regional administration, the CGT, and local business and had a strictly limited consultative role. At the meeting of 14 December 1944, in the presence of the Minister of Industrial Production (Robert Lacoste) and the *commissaire de la République*, the delegates discussed such questions as employee transfers to the war industries, salaries, coal supply, and communication routes. On the matter of employee transfers, for instance, the CGT agreed entirely with the proposed measures, on the condition that there was an information campaign directed at the workers to make them aware that all transfers would be implemented

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<sup>78</sup> For more on the *commissaires* (officially called the *commissaires régionaux de la République*), see Charles-Louis Foulon, Le Pouvoir en province à la Libération: Les Commissaires de la République 1943 -1946, Paris, 1975. On the prefects, see Brian Chapman, The Prefects and Provincial France, London, 1955.

<sup>79</sup> On pre-war labour relations in the city, see David Levy, "The Marseilles Working-Class Movement, 1936-1938," unpublished PhD thesis, University of Oxford, 1982.

<sup>80</sup> AN F1a 4023, report of Commissaire de la République de la Région de Marseille (Raymond Aubrac), 15 November 1944.

according to a coordinated plan, without entailing any diminution in salaries.<sup>81</sup> The CGT felt that it was important for the union to show its members that it was arguing on their behalf. One of the principal CGT delegates also argued for priority to be accorded in the reconstruction effort to mining industries, ahead of the development of communications, heavy industries, the provision of foodstuffs, and the building of private dwellings.<sup>82</sup> This emphasis on the mining industry reflected the strength of the CGT in the mining sector and also the coal shortage in the winter of 1944-1945.

Thought to be too radical and too close to the PCF, Raymond Aubrac was dismissed at the end of January 1945 (see below, pages 83-84). The new *commissaire* in Marseille, Paul Haag, maintained the practice of holding these conferences at regular intervals, in order to restore production; the next one took place on 3 February 1945, with Pierre Mendès France, Minister of National Economy, in the chair. Additional meetings were held, among others, on 5 June and 19 December 1945 (renamed as the Conseil Économique Régional).<sup>83</sup> Similar bodies existed elsewhere: the *commissaire de la République* in Limoges, Pierre Boursicot, on his own initiative, created a Conseil Économique Régional, which would permit "une étroite collaboration entre l'Administration et les organisations ouvrières, paysannes et patronales."<sup>84</sup> The first meeting took place on 30 June 1945, with Robert Lacoste, Minister of Industrial Production, in the chair. In Toulouse, Pierre Bertaux, the *commissaire*, created in October 1945 a Conseil Régional Économique "destiné à étudier le plan régional de reconstruction économique."<sup>85</sup> Another initiative was a Conseil Régional Intersyndical, created by Jean Mairey, the *commissaire* in Dijon, in February 1945 and which allowed him to benefit from a trade union perspective; a similar advisory body was established concurrently for the employers.<sup>86</sup>

In addition to these consultations about economic reconstruction, the *commissaires* encouraged another form of trade union participation by using their executive powers to requisition companies and develop new management structures. Under the ordinance of 10 January 1944, the *commissaires régionaux de la République*

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<sup>81</sup> AN F1a 4023, report of Commissaire de la République de la Région de Marseille (Raymond Aubrac), 15 December 1944.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., citing M. Lunet, CGT delegate.

<sup>83</sup> AN F1a 4023, reports of Commissaire de la République de la Région de Marseille (Paul Haag), 15 February 1945, 15 June 1945, and 15 January 1946.

<sup>84</sup> AN F1a 4029, report of Commissaire de la République à Limoges (Pierre Boursicot), 20 June 1945.

<sup>85</sup> AN F1a 4029, report of Commissaire de la République à Toulouse (Pierre Bertaux), 15 November 1945.

<sup>86</sup> AN F1a 4028, reports of Commissaire de la République at Dijon (Jean Mairey), 1 and 16 April 1945. The *commissaire* enthused: "Je n'ai qu'à me louer du concours que m'apporte le Conseil Régional Intersyndical..."

obtained the right to requisition companies in order to assure their continued functioning. In effect, this new decree consisted of an expansion on the original power, accorded in the law of 11 July 1938 and then in the *règlement* of 22 November 1938, allowing prefects to requisition companies in the event of war needs.<sup>87</sup>

Raymond Aubrac made the most wideranging requisitions in Marseille, considering them to be essential for relaunching production.<sup>88</sup> Aubrac ordered the requisition of fifteen companies, mainly in the construction, naval, and docks industries, between 10 September and 5 October 1944 and signed an *arrêté commissarial* instituting a *comité de gestion* or *comité consultatif* in each. Again, trade union and worker pressure assured the application of the measures. In the case of the train repair plant at La Capelette belonging to the steel manufacturer, the Aciéries du Nord, pressure was already building on the *commissaire* to do something about the absent management team when a delegation from the firm's CGT branch went to consult Aubrac on 8 September 1944. On 9 September, staff representatives travelled to Lyon to offer the post of director to Georges Comin, a former engineer at the plant; on 10 September, Pierre Tissier, a lawyer and *conseiller d'État*, signed the *arrêté*, on behalf of the *commissaire*, establishing the official requisition of the Aciéries du Nord plant and naming Comin the director.<sup>89</sup> Three members of the *comité de gestion* were chosen by the *commissaire* from a list given to him by the personnel of the plant. In a report the following year, the *comité* noted: "[le commissaire] espérait ... faciliter l'union au travail des ouvriers conduits par une direction de leur choix."<sup>90</sup> The combined action of the *commissaire* and the CGT had resulted in a new workplace arrangement, designed to restore production and alter the management structure in the plant.

This new plant management structure did not go unchallenged. During the autumn, Aubrac encountered determined opposition from the former management teams at La Capelette and from central government. Although three representatives of the former *conseil d'administration* were also appointed to the new *comité de gestion* at the Aciéries du Nord plant, they refused to take part, as they contested the legitimacy and legality of the requisition. These representatives attacked the requisition decrees in the

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<sup>87</sup> Antoine Prost, "Le retour aux temps ordinaires," in Claire Andrieu, Lucette Le Van, Antoine Prost, eds, *Les nationalisations de la Libération: De l'utopie au compromis*, Paris, 1987, p.103.

<sup>88</sup> Raymond Aubrac cited by Robert Mencherini, extract from his untitled conference paper on the Aciéries du Nord in Marseille, in Andrieu, Le Van and Prost, p.82.

<sup>89</sup> Mencherini, in Andrieu, Le Van and Prost, p.81. See CAC TR 14043 for a copy of the *arrêté* (#122) from the Bulletin Officiel du Commissariat Régional de la République à Marseille, 12 September 1944.

<sup>90</sup> CAC TR 14043, Comité de gestion des Aciéries du Nord, "Un an de gestion ouvrière aux Aciéries du Nord de Marseille-Capelette, septembre 1944-septembre 1945," p.9.

Conseil d'État and succeeded at the end of October in convincing the railways (SNCF) not to settle outstanding debts to the Aciéries on old orders. It was only pressure by the local press that led the SNCF to agree to pay up.<sup>91</sup> Moreover, Aubrac faced opposition in Paris, as René Mayer, the Radical Minister of Public Works, flew to Marseille at the beginning of October 1944 to tell Aubrac in person to stop all requisitions immediately. Such bans were also pronounced by the Minister of Industrial Production, the Socialist Robert Lacoste, and the Minister of the Interior, Adrien Tixier, on 22 September and 14 October, respectively.<sup>92</sup> Despite the CGT's attempt to support Aubrac -- "La CGT a tenu ... à manifester sa confiance à mon sujet," reported the *commissaire* on 16 January<sup>93</sup> -- he was finally forced to resign owing to the combined efforts of the economic ministries and the Socialists on 22 January 1945.<sup>94</sup>

Despite the concerted campaign in the autumn of 1944 against the Marseille requisitions by business and central government, as well as by sections of the local press, these requisitions enjoyed wide support among Marseille workers. Paul Haag, Aubrac's successor as *commissaire de la République*, noted this support and workers' disdain for the old management in a long letter to Alexandre Parodi, the Minister of Labour, in May 1945:

"Dans l'ordre politique, il ne fait aucun doute que la formule réalisée [on requisitions] a recueilli l'assentiment des salariés -- non seulement de ceux qui travaillent dans les 15 maisons dont il s'agit et qui ont donné au cours des mois écoulés depuis la [L]ibération des preuves de compréhension et d'attachement qu'il aurait certainement été vain de réclamer d'eux sous l'ancienne gestion -- on peut affirmer que la notion du service de la collectivité s'est largement sub[s]tituée à la notion de profit -- mais, encore, d'une manière générale, des salariés marseillais."<sup>95</sup>

The experience of "substitution of collective service for profit" in the Marseille plant affirmed the desire by workers for new management powers yet also confirmed the need for a sympathetic voice in the state administration, in order to allow such worker participation to proceed.

Elsewhere in France, during the autumn of 1944, the *commissaires de la République* made far less use of their requisition powers and, in some cases, actively

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<sup>91</sup> Antoine Prost, "Le retour aux temps ordinaires," in Andrieu, Le Van and Prost, p.95.

<sup>92</sup> Raymond Aubrac, personal testimony given 24 May 1984, and Antoine Prost, "Le retour aux temps ordinaires," in Andrieu, Le Van and Prost, pp.110,96.

<sup>93</sup> AN F1a 4023, report of Commissaire de la République à Marseille (Raymond Aubrac), 16 January 1945.

<sup>94</sup> Charles-Louis Foulon, *La France libérée: 1944-1945*, Paris, 1984, p.119.

<sup>95</sup> CAC TR 14043, letter to Ministre du Travail (Alexandre Parodi) from Commissaire Régional de la République à Marseille (Paul Haag), 16 May 1945, pp.4,5.

opposed the policy. Francis-Louis Closon, the *commissaire* in Lille, for example, refused to requisition the local plant of the Aciéries du Nord, deeming it simply a punitive anti-employer measure:

"J'ai refusé [the demand for requisition] ... faisant valoir que la mauvaise conduite des dirigeants n'est pas une raison suffisante pour entraîner la réquisition. Il s'agit, en l'espèce, d'appliquer un plan de politique générale économique et non pas d'exercer des représailles contre un patronat qui a peut-être failli à ses devoirs."<sup>96</sup>

Perhaps Closon was only being prudent, for the administrative requirement of impartiality at certain times clashed with the goals of encouraging production and worker participation. In Loire, the Prefect in 1945 confiscated the holdings of a small company, to the wholehearted approval of the workers. This decision was annulled by the Conseil d'État in early 1947, however, to the delight of employers in the area:

"... les milieux patronaux se réjouissent ouvertement de l'échec du Préfet et se plaisent à épiloguer sur 'la position que peut être la sienne à la suite de la décision du Conseil d'État.'"<sup>97</sup>

As well as the power to requisition local companies, the *commissaires* also had the power to sequester the property of collaborators. This right, though, was often a protective or holding measure, while the *commissaires* awaited a more permanent legal or governmental decree. The best-known case occurred in Lyon, where Yves Farge, the *commissaire de la République*, sequestered in September 1944 the Berliet car and truck plant on account of the collaborationist conduct of the Berliet family. Farge chose a new administrator and created for his assistance a new administrative board, the *conseil consultatif* (or *comité de gestion*), composed of two worker representatives, one representative of the technicians, and one local state official. This form of worker participation was expressly designed to increase worker confidence, as Farge later wrote: "La participation à la gestion du Conseil administratif devait, dès le départ, permettre d'assurer l'intégration du personnel dans la vie d'entreprise et de l'intéresser à l'activité et au développement de celle-ci."<sup>98</sup> Farge also spoke publicly of the government nationalisation projects laying the foundations for true workplace democracy -- "jetant les bases d'une véritable démocratie du monde du travail."<sup>99</sup>

These enterprising efforts of public authorities for greater worker participation were thought to be appreciated by the workers, according to the reports of the

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<sup>96</sup> Francis-Louis Closon, *Commissaire de la République du général de Gaulle: Lille, septembre 1944-mars 1946*, Paris, 1980, p.135.

<sup>97</sup> AN F1a 4739, Renseignements Généraux, 18 March 1947.

<sup>98</sup> Yves Farge, "L'expérience Berliet," in *Revue française du travail* I, 2, May 1946, p.98.

<sup>99</sup> AN F1a 4022, text of speech broadcast by Yves Farge, 9 December 1944.

*commissaires* and the prefects, especially during the immediate post-Liberation period, when these initiatives were at their strongest. Henri Longchambon, Prefect of Rhône after the Liberation, noted in his first prefectural report:

"Dans la classe ouvrière, les augmentations substantielles de salaires qui viennent d'être réalisées, la tendance nettement affirmée par les pouvoirs publics vers une nouvelle organisation sociale conduisant à une participation de ses meilleurs éléments à la gestion des intérêts nationaux, est [sic] très favorablement accueillie [sic]."<sup>100</sup>

Regional and departmental public authorities spent a considerable amount of time in 1944 and early 1945 trying to avoid strikes in conjunction with the local CGT, either by favouring wage increases, referring the question of wage rates for arbitration to Paris, or by trying to satisfy other demands. Paul Chailley-Bert, the *commissaire de la République* in Nancy, for example, boasted of a salary agreement reached under his auspices on 5 October 1944 between the employers' unions, represented by l'Union des Chambres Syndicales and the Comité des Forges, and the trade unions, represented by the CGT and the CFTC: "Cet arrêté a été accueilli très favorablement dans tous les milieux tant patronaux qu'ouvriers de la Région."<sup>101</sup>

The *commissaires* worked closely with the CGT and were grateful for its cooperation. In Marseille, Raymond Aubrac noted, early in November 1944, that "La CGT s'affirme comme un élément d'organisation et de progrès. Elle collabore avec la plus grande loyauté avec les Pouvoirs Publics" and, later that month, that "L'action [du PCF] est doublée dans les villes par celle de la CGT dont il convient de noter la loyauté dans ses rapports avec les pouvoirs publics."<sup>102</sup> The same spirit was evident in Rouen, where the *commissaire*, Henri Bourdeau de Fontenay, established with the regional CGT "des relations périodiques qui lui permettent de suivre de très près l'évolution des esprits et qui ont, jusqu'à ce jour, évité les incidents."<sup>103</sup> In February 1945, Chailley-Bert, the *commissaire* in Nancy, remarked:

"Les syndicats poursuivent leur reconstitution et leur réorganisation. Il y a lieu de noter que ces associations font preuve, à part quelques exceptions, d'un grand esprit de compréhension et modération, et s'attachent à ne présenter des revendications que lorsque celles-ci sont basées sur des textes établis."<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> AN F1cIII 1225, report of Préfet du Rhône (Henri Longchambon), 1 October 1944.

<sup>101</sup> AN F1a 4024, report of Commissaire de la République à Nancy (Paul Chailley-Bert), 15 October 1944.

<sup>102</sup> AN F1a 4023, reports of Commissaire de la République à Marseille (Raymond Aubrac), 2 and 15 November 1944.

<sup>103</sup> AN F1a 4028, report of Commissaire de la République à Rouen (Henri Bourdeau de Fontenay), 31 December 1944.

<sup>104</sup> AN F1a 4024, report of Commissaire de la République à Nancy (Paul Chailley-Bert), 16 February 1945.

*Commissaires* in other parts of the country were also grateful for the fact that the CGT, and especially the PCF, channelled hostility away from the public authorities -- at least, in the immediate post-Liberation period. Gaston Cusin, the *commissaire* in Bordeaux, commented:

"Des manifestations s'organisent sous l'effet du mécontentement. ... Il faut cependant souligner qu'elles ne dégénèrent pas en hostilité contre les Pouvoirs Publics et que les Organes communistes, notamment, ont toujours pris soin de confirmer publiquement cette interprétation et de canaliser le mécontentement sur les méfaits de 'la 5ème Colonne' ou les carences des services."<sup>105</sup>

That line, however, would also turn against the authorities (see below, pp.90-91).

The CGT regularly presented demands to each of the *commissaires* -- often at the end of demonstrations and marches, perhaps designed to let off steam. In Toulouse, for instance, on 24 December 1944, demonstrators remained in front of the prefecture for an hour and then handed in a list of demands to the *commissaire*, in what the Prefect termed a "démonstration mesurée."<sup>106</sup> At times, workers presented demands directly to the *commissaire* when he came to the workplace: Raymond Aubrac went to Gardanne to the mines of the Bassin de Fuveau, where a delegation of miners asked to see him in order to present him with their demands.<sup>107</sup> In Toulouse, after aircraft workers abandoned the idea of a large demonstration scheduled for 19 January 1945 and agreed to adhere to the new work schedule introduced owing to cutbacks in the electricity supply, Pierre Bertaux, the *commissaire*, went to the factory gates:

"Le soir prévu pour la manifestation, le Commissaire Régional s'est rendu à la sortie du travail des usines Latécoère pour remercier les ouvriers de leur geste patriotique, et écouter leurs doléances. Il a eu avec eux un entretien de plus d'une heure, au milieu des machines et des carcasses de prototypes."<sup>108</sup>

The *commissaires* and prefects often put their own prestige on the line, in order to help the CGT and PCF contain discontent. By the winter of 1945, the run-away rise in food prices was making the CGT's battle for production (see chapter II, sections 4a)ii and 4b) increasingly difficult to sustain, while the government was divided over what economic policy to follow. Meetings between CGT leaders and the public authorities were often held during the winter and spring of 1945 to avoid strikes. The *commissaire* in Nancy, Paul Chailley-Bert, recounts conversations to this effect in May

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<sup>105</sup> AN F1a 4028, report of Commissaire de la République à Bordeaux (Gaston Cusin), 15 January 1945.

<sup>106</sup> AN F1a 4028, report of Préfet de la Haute-Garonne, 16 January 1945.

<sup>107</sup> AN F1a 4023, report of Commissaire de la République à Marseille (Raymond Aubrac), 2 January 1945.

<sup>108</sup> AN F1a 4028, report of Commissaire de la République à Toulouse (Pierre Bertaux), 2 February 1945.

1945 in a successful attempt to avert a strike at Bar-le-Duc.<sup>109</sup> Francis-Louis Closon, the *commissaire* in Lille, describes in his memoirs a similar incident in the spring of 1945, when he met directly with miners from the groupe de Bruay early in the morning and persuaded them to call off a strike.<sup>110</sup> In Clermont-Ferrand, after metalworkers decided to strike in January 1945 to obtain an increase of five francs in their hourly wage, a meeting took place in the office of the *commissaire de la République*, which resulted in the postponement of the strike order. Henry Ingrand, the *commissaire*, promised to obtain a revision of salaries on a national scale.<sup>111</sup>

Although salary agreements with the CGT, or groups of workers, could still sometimes be engineered by *commissaires*, often workers had to resort to the threat of a strike in order to achieve their goals rather than acceding to the state administration's line of social peace. Only a few months after the above incident in Clermont-Ferrand, at the end of May 1945, the workers again threatened to strike and thereby successfully reduced the impact of a new government-approved salary structure. The disabused *commissaire*, Ingrand, commented: "Les ouvriers sont ainsi portés à admettre ... que les discussions avec les représentants des pouvoirs publics sont en fait inutiles."<sup>112</sup>

Even in the absence of wideranging worker participation, workers and their organisations still expected the prefectoral authorities to intervene on their behalf in matters of salaries, food, and supplies. After a sudden cut in electricity at plants in the Rhône department in January 1945, the Prefect "a dû intervenir personnellement" at a meeting described as "houleuse" at the Bourse du Travail.<sup>113</sup> Similarly, in December 1945 in Rhône, trade unions wanted the public authorities to reach a decision about pay for reduced working time.<sup>114</sup>

Prefects intervened often in workplace and salary matters, during 1945, in order to avert possible unrest. When no agreement was reached in a dispute, there was often arbitration, initiated either by the *commissaire de la République* or by the Prefect. In Rhône, the Prefect specified in his report that the arbitration process "n'était pas strictement légale bien qu'elle ait donné des résultats appréciables" and that new legislation was needed in this domain.<sup>115</sup> When there were possibilities of industrial

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<sup>109</sup> AN F1a 4024, report of Commissaire de la République à Nancy (Paul Chailley-Bert), 2 June 1945.

<sup>110</sup> Closon, p.143.

<sup>111</sup> AN F1a 4028, report of Commissaire de la République à Clermont-Ferrand (Henry Ingrand), 1 February 1945.

<sup>112</sup> AN F1a 4029, reports of Commissaire de la République à Clermont-Ferrand (Henry Ingrand), 31 May and 15 June 1945.

<sup>113</sup> AN F1a 4028, report of Préfet du Rhône (Henri Longchambon), 16 February 1945.

<sup>114</sup> AN F1cIII 1225, report of Préfet du Rhône, 15 December 1945.

<sup>115</sup> AN F1cIII 1225, report of Préfet du Rhône (Henri Longchambon), 16 April 1945.

action, the authorities acted immediately: in March 1945, in Agen and Funel, for instance, following strike threats in two metalwork plants, the Prefect "est immédiatement intervenu ... pour éviter tout incident."<sup>116</sup> As a result, in this case, of personal contact with the CGT representatives, the Prefect prevented any strikes and the workers and the employers signed agreements.<sup>117</sup> There was also, however, open criticism of workers -- in Landes, the Prefect stated that in some cases workers were trying to "force the hand" of their employers by demanding increases over the official limits and he called for more respect for the government line:

"Deux tentatives de grève se sont même fait jour à ce sujet, mais le Préfet a pu les faire aplanir par une intervention immédiate de l'Inspecteur du Travail, la position de l'Administration étant très forte sur ce point en raison des instructions ministérielles impératives."<sup>118</sup>

This approach of appealing to the labour inspector to enforce ministerial instructions simply concentrated discontent on the Ministry of Labour. In June, the Union Locale des Syndicats Confédérés sent the Prefect of Landes a motion condemning the attitude of the Ministry of Labour representatives at the Commission Régionale des Salaires de Bordeaux.<sup>119</sup>

Sometimes, reference back to Paris proved unsatisfactory for workers and governmental intransigence led them to question the moderation of their union representatives. The *commissaire de la République* at Angers, for instance, went to Paris in May 1945, at a time of considerable worker unrest, in order to see the Minister of Labour and he obtained certain "satisfactory decisions" for the workers. For Alain Savary, the *commissaire*, it was a matter of overcoming bureaucratic inefficiency: "Beaucoup d'agitation eût été évitée si l'on n'avait pas donné, par des délais trop longs, l'impression à la classe ouvrière qu'elle n'obtiendrait rien sans menaces de grèves."<sup>120</sup> The same *commissaire* signalled the difficulties of these union representatives:

"Ils ont participé avec les administrations locales, à l'élaboration de nombreux rapports présentés au Ministre du Travail. Ils ont participé aux travaux de la Commission régionale des salaires. L'incertitude qui paraît régner à Paris, la lenteur des décisions officielles leur sont presque reprochées maintenant par leurs commettants. Quand ils conseillent la modération et tendent d'enrayer les mouvements de grève, la politique des prix actuelle les met dans une position particulièrement délicate et si cette situation continue, je prévois un changement

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<sup>116</sup> AN F1a 4028, report of Préfet du Lot-et-Garonne, 15 March 1945 (already cited above, note 52).

<sup>117</sup> AN F1a 4028, report of Préfet du Lot-et-Garonne, 15 April 1945.

<sup>118</sup> AN F1a 4028, report of Préfet des Landes, 14 April 1945.

<sup>119</sup> AN F1a 4029, report of Préfet des Landes, 13 June 1945.

<sup>120</sup> AN F1a 4029, report of Commissaire de la République à Angers (Alain Savary), 20 June 1945.

radical des représentants actuels. Je ne crois pas, pour ma part, que ce soit l'intérêt du Gouvernement."<sup>121</sup>

Other *commissaires* also noted this dilemma of union representatives participating in state structures but emerging with few rewards; as worker protest increased, they urged action by the central government. Paul Chailley-Bert, the Nancy *commissaire*, reported in June that

"... les orateurs [at worker demonstrations] n'hésit[e]nt pas à déclarer que si le Gouvernement ne prend pas les mesures qui s'imposent, le peuple saura se faire justice lui-même."<sup>122</sup>

By October, he was only slightly less alarmed:

"Le peuple est actuellement extrêmement raisonnable et les délégations ... tiennent un langage très modéré... Mais il est clair que cette sagesse ne durera pas longtemps si la situation actuelle ne s'améliore pas."<sup>123</sup>

Despite the moderate line of the CGT on salaries in 1945, the insistent demand of many workers and their shopfloor leaders was for far-reaching structural reform, a demand exacerbated by inflation and the difficult conditions of daily life. The *commissaire* in Dijon, Jean Mairey, wrote, "En fait, on [the working class] espère encore fermement la mise au point des réformes de structure et une révision totale de la politique économique."<sup>124</sup> Lack of such political reform was also seen as an underlying cause of union unrest:

"Plus importantes que ces cause économiques sont les causes sociales et politiques. La classe ouvrière est actuellement traversée de courants très divers. La plupart des dirigeants syndicalistes manifestent leur mécontentement contre l'absence de 'réformes de structure.'"<sup>125</sup>

As time went on, however, workers became more and more discouraged, as they were not consulted on policy decisions and did not have access to information concerning production. They openly accused the authorities of sabotage, as Henri Longchambon, the Prefect of Rhône, noted in March 1945:

"[Les ouvriers] ont l'impression que l'effort qu'ils ont fourni de bon coeur ne leur a apporté aucune amélioration. Faute d'être suffisamment informés des

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<sup>121</sup> AN F1a 4029, report of Commissaire de la République à Angers (Alain Savary), 7 June 1945.

<sup>122</sup> AN F1a 4024, report of Commissaire de la République à Nancy (Paul Chailley-Bert), 2 June 1945.

<sup>123</sup> AN F1a 4025, report of Commissaire de la République à Nancy (Paul Chailley-Bert), 16 October 1945.

<sup>124</sup> AN F1a 4028, reports of Commissaire de la République à Dijon (Jean Mairey), 1 and 16 April 1945.

<sup>125</sup> AN F1a 4028, report of Commissaire de la République à Angers (Michel Debré), 23 February 1945. Debré was replaced by Alain Savary on 1 April 1945 (see notes 120, 121).

difficultés réelles de l'heure et de leurs causes, ils accusent les pouvoirs publics, les services de répartition et les patrons d'incapacité, de sabotage."<sup>126</sup>

Prefects put themselves directly in the industrial firing line with their interventions; frustration with the disappointed hopes of the Liberation turned workers increasingly against the state and its most evident and accessible representative.<sup>127</sup>

The prefects thus became the focus of petitions and protest action by workers. Four to five thousand demonstrators took over the prefecture on 16 May 1945 in Rhône, as part of the Lyon strike wave<sup>128</sup>; at Clermont-Ferrand in the same month, the local CGT organised a meeting attended by six thousand workers, who then sent a delegation to the Prefect with a list of demands, including the participation of workers on the price control commissions<sup>129</sup>; at Commercy in Meuse in early 1946, at the instigation of the Union Locale de la CGT, more than eight hundred workers marched and then gathered in front of the sub-prefecture and the city hall to protest against lack of fresh supplies.<sup>130</sup>

By the summer of 1947, following the expulsion of the PCF ministers from the government, the gloves were coming off. After a meeting of ten thousand persons organised by CGT metalworkers in Loire-Inférieure in July 1947, a procession marched to the prefecture in Nantes and a delegation met the Prefect, who then transmitted a list of demands to the Minister of the Interior, Édouard Depreux.<sup>131</sup>

Incidents at Le Mans in September 1947 revealed evidence of further antagonistic worker perspectives regarding the prefects. According to a report for the head of the Sûreté Nationale by an official from the Renseignements Généraux (RG: police spies), eight thousand demonstrators escorted a delegation to see M. Briand, the Prefect of Sarthe, on 11 September.<sup>132</sup> Most of the protesters were strikers from Renault and Gnome et Rhône, who wanted the public authorities to pay more attention to the rising cost of living and to resolve the issue immediately.<sup>133</sup> The secretary-

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<sup>126</sup> AN F1a 4028, report of Préfet du Rhône (Henri Longchambon), 16 March 1945. (For a different viewpoint just two months earlier, see above, p.87, note 105.)

<sup>127</sup> The prefects were more numerous than the *commissaires*, of course, with 91 departments in metropolitan France, compared with 18 *commissariats*. Also, the prefecture in each department was traditionally the focal point of activity and protest, as would be even more the case after the abolition of the *commissaires* in March 1946.

<sup>128</sup> AN F1cIII 1225, report of Préfet du Rhône (Henri Longchambon), 16 May 1945.

<sup>129</sup> AN F1a 4028, report of Préfet du Puy-de-Dôme, 16 May 1945.

<sup>130</sup> AN F1a 4025, report of Commissaire de la République à Nancy (Paul Chailley-Bert), 16 February 1946.

<sup>131</sup> AN F1cIII 1288, report of Préfet de la Loire-Inférieure, 10 August 1947.

<sup>132</sup> AN F1a 4741, Renseignements Généraux, 16 September 1947: "Note pour M. le Directeur Général de la Sûreté Nationale."

<sup>133</sup> AN F1a 4741, report of Préfet de la Sarthe (M. Briand), 11 September 1947: demands of Renault *comité de grève*.

general of the Union Départementale de la CGT, M. Gervais, an *ex-unitaire* (CGTU), spoke briefly and reminded the protesters that the demonstration was against the government, not the Prefect himself:

"Nous allons nous rendre auprès de M. le Préfet; ce n'est pas contre lui que cette manifestation est dirigée, mais contre le gouvernement. Camarades, je vous demande d'attendre dans le calme!"

Then some demonstrators climbed the railings of the prefecture, to general applause. Despite the secretary-general's exhortations, there were hostile cries against the Prefect and the government. Demonstrators entered the courtyard of the prefecture, Gervais could not calm the crowd and, finally, the CRS arrived from Tours. Further incidents occurred the next day and evening in the city and again in front of the prefecture.

In its conclusion, the RG report noted that the Le Mans incidents showed a complete absence of authority over the workers by their leaders and by the Prefect. The executive committee of the CGT could not maintain discipline because of its moderate attitude; also, its secretary-general, Gervais, was considered incompetent by many trade unionists. The Prefect, Briand, was not well-regarded because he had made promises about bringing in fresh supplies (*ravitaillement*) which he had not kept.<sup>134</sup>

The lack of authority of the Prefect, in this instance, reflected a widespread inclination of workers to reconsider the authority and role of the state: their discontent with poor working and living conditions was directed at it. The disinclination of the workers in Le Mans in 1947 to distinguish between the Prefect and the government had been a more widespread danger for the authorities at least from 1945. In May of that year, Henri Longchambon, the Prefect of Rhône warned:

"Le mécontentement dû à ces conditions économiques désastreuses, salaires, ravitaillement insuffisant, menace de chômage généralisé, s'accompagne de la destruction de l'autorité de l'État. En effet ce mécontentement ... se dirige contre l'État et le Gouvernement qui le représente."<sup>135</sup>

The Prefect of Rhône took seriously the loss of authority by the state. Longchambon devoted the principal part of his June 1945 report to this question and he concluded that the representatives of the state had to be more accessible, less distant:

"Pour reconquérir et garder cette autorité l'État doit être présent, accessible, son action doit être apparente et connaissable en même temps que précise, nuancée et rapide. Ceci impose que les attributions de ses représentants n'excèdent à aucun moment ce qu'ils sont en mesure de connaître et de contrôler."<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> AN F1a 4741, Renseignements Généraux, 16 September 1947: "Note pour M. le Directeur Général de la Sureté Nationale."

<sup>135</sup> AN F1cIII 1225, report of Préfet du Rhône (Henri Longchambon), 16 May 1945.

<sup>136</sup> AN F1cIII 1225, report of Préfet du Rhône (Henri Longchambon), 16 June 1945. Longchambon would replace Yves Farge as *commissaire* in Lyon on 15 September 1945.

Writing in June 1945 in the absence of deputies and senators, who would be elected in the first constituent assembly elections in October 1945, Prefect Longchambon proposed a *chargé d'affaires cantonal* in each canton to bring the state closer to the general population. Another form of consultation, in the economic sphere, was called for by the Prefect of Gers, in April 1945, who cited favourably a report from the President of the Chamber of Commerce of his department:

"Pour résoudre les problèmes de la production, il n'y a qu'un seul moyen: nous nous permettons une fois de plus d'insister sur la nécessité pour l'État d'aider à la réalisation d'une économie intelligemment et pratiquement dirigée. ... [L]a consultation des divers éléments qui constituent les activités productrices, ouvriers, paysans, commerçants, agriculteurs ne ferait-elle que provoquer une association de bonnes volontés dans l'oeuvre de relèvement. ... Qu'on aille donc vers les rassemblements, vers les confrontations et qu'on sorte de ces conceptions établies dans le silence et la méditation des cabinets du travail..."<sup>137</sup>

Local pressures on *commissaires* and prefects thus often made them seek to influence government policy as much as to implement it, especially as that policy came increasingly under attack in 1945. In Marseille, *commissaire de la République* Haag thought it necessary to remind all Prefects in his region "qu'ils étaient les représentants du Gouvernement et non les mandataires de la population."<sup>138</sup>

Following the abolition of the regional *commissaires de la République* in March 1946, the Socialist Minister of the Interior, André Le Trocquer, issued a decree on 15 April 1946 to remind all prefects of their tasks: first, administrative supervision; second, police powers; third, economic powers, in the application of the national Plan; fourth, provision of government information: as the sole representative of the central government in the department, the prefect was to act as the delegate for all ministers.<sup>139</sup>

The recapitulation of prefects' tasks in this statement showed that the initial emphasis by state authorities in the immediate post-Liberation period of seeking the active participation of trade unions, especially in economic affairs, was ceding to more traditional concerns of the maintenance of order and general administration. Henceforth, from 1946 on, representatives of the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of the Interior would not be as engaged at the micro-level in assuring a new type of economic and social democracy, as envisaged in the CNR Charter.

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<sup>137</sup> AN F1a 4028, report by Président de la Chambre de Commerce du Gers, in report of Préfet du Gers, 14 April 1945.

<sup>138</sup> AN F1a 4023, report by Commissaire de la République à Marseille (Paul Haag), 16 June 1945.

<sup>139</sup> Pierre Doueil, *L'administration locale à l'épreuve de la guerre (1939-1949)*, Paris, 1950, pp.286-287.

Unable to break the black market and control inflation, unwilling to brave employer opposition to go further with structural reforms, the government came increasingly to depend on the cooperation of the PCF and the CGT to contain wages, avoid strikes and encourage production. Yet the credit of these two organisations -- like that of the government -- was not immune to policy failures, the harshness of working-class life and political disappointment. As the patience of the working class wore thin in 1947, mounting cold war tensions made the continuation of the tripartite government coalition more and more difficult. Expelled from the government, the PCF no longer had any reason to compel the CGT into further endangering its support in the pursuit of unpopular government measures, and soon had every reason to exploit that support and working-class frustration against the government.

## 5. Conclusion

The proliferation of official bodies in the immediate post-Liberation, many intended as replacements of older ones discredited by Vichy, did bring in many worker representatives to central government institutions. The 1946 Conseil Économique et Social, for example, was even an attempt at an economic parliament, where the CGT delegates could direct their grievances directly to national employer federations. Yet the Conseil was bypassed by governments, as its predecessor, the Conseil National Économique, had been: participation in the new organism did not bring with it any influential decision-making power for the CGT.

State officials on the ground, particularly labour inspectors, also promoted worker participation. From 1944 to 1946, they desired to integrate workers and unions more systematically at the workplace in order to achieve increased production, social progress, and public order. Certain *commissaires de la République*, likewise, effectuated far-reaching reforms by instituting new management structures in requisitioned companies at the time of the Liberation. The archival evidence in this chapter reveals many initiatives by labour inspectors, *commissaires*, and prefects to bring in workers at the workplace. In the absence of more far-reaching central government efforts, however, these local attempts did not permanently alter industrial relations. Pressure by workers on local state officials often made them seek to influence government policy as much as to implement it. By 1946-1947, these state officials had reverted to previous roles and were no longer encouraging worker participation. They resumed being the representatives of the state, as opposed to those of the people.

The next chapter picks up on the efforts to change relations in the workplace by focusing on the *comités d'entreprises* and the Berliet *comité de gestion* experience. Studying participation in the workplace will enable a better assessment of the central theoretical claim of this thesis, that the representation of workplace demands can best be located in the interplay between the industrial and political arenas. Also, closer scrutiny of the workplace reforms will bring out the historical legacy of exclusion of workers and their organisations from decision-making in the firm, as suspicious employers and poorly implanted unions at the workplace did not fashion a lasting working compromise.

## Chapter IV Participation in the Workplace

### 1. Introduction

This chapter analyses the efforts to foster worker participation in the firm and to change labour-management relations in the workplace. In the 1944-1948 period, workers became more involved at the workplace, especially as their elected representatives obtained positions in the *comités d'entreprises* and defended their rights as *délégués du personnel*. More substantial control of production eluded workers in the firm, however, as the terms of participation were laid out by managers and state officials. The role of state officials, particularly labour inspectors, prefects, and *commissaires*, in first promoting and then constraining worker participation was considered in the last chapter. This chapter focuses primarily on the *comités d'entreprises* and the Berliet *comité de gestion* experience, as new forms of worker involvement in the workplace. At a firm such as Berliet, there was an attempt at innovative relations of production and there was greater input by workers in the running of the operation. This involvement, in both the *comités d'entreprises* and the *comités de gestion*, did not extend to all workers: the voices of women and immigrants were rarely heard.

In the immediate aftermath of the Liberation in 1944, new workplace committees were formed, such as the *comités patriotiques d'entreprise* (usually encouraged by the *comité départemental de Libération* (CDL), which united local Resistance movements), the *comités mixtes à la production* (mixed production committees), as well as the *comités de gestion*.<sup>1</sup> These committees tried to instil new relations at the workplace, at a time when employers had been discredited and many had fled; they were usually the result of local initiatives, such as at Lyon, Marseille, Montluçon, and Toulouse, rather than nationwide.

The new spirit of participation was reflected in the *projet d'ordonnance* of 22 February 1945 instituting the *comités d'entreprises*. In the *exposé des motifs* of the ordinance, drawn up by the Minister of Labour, Alexandre Parodi, in October 1944 for the Comité Économique Interministériel, there was a widely-acknowledged need to bring workers into management:

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<sup>1</sup> See Antoine Prost, "Un mouvement venu d'en bas" and "Le retour aux temps ordinaires," in Claire Andrieu, Lucette Le Van and Antoine Prost, eds, Les Nationalisations de la Libération: De l'utopie au compromis, Paris, 1987, pp.65-106.

"Une des idées que l'on retrouve dans presque tous [les projets de reconstruction économique] est la nécessité d'associer les travailleurs à la direction de l'économie et à la gestion des entreprises."<sup>2</sup>

The *exposé* emphasised that the *comités* would not be "des organismes de décision" -- the authority of the management would be maintained; at the same time, staff and employees would have access to the running of the firm and the *comités d'entreprises* would have to be kept informed "de la manière dont l'entreprise est gérée."<sup>3</sup>

In the workplace, the newly-created *comités d'entreprises*, the enhanced powers of the *délégués du personnel*, and electoral representation of employees on the social security boards gave workers, for the first time, the opportunity formally to voice some of their demands. They now had certain limited, legally enforceable decision-making rights. However, they had no access to production decisions. Moreover, any form of participation was restricted by the existing social and economic structure and by the attitudes of the *patronat*.

Most commentators on French industrial relations have noted the antagonistic attitudes displayed by employers and workers in bargaining and in the workplace.<sup>4</sup> The *comités d'entreprises*, especially the law of 16 May 1946 which extended the coverage of the institution to all firms with 50 workers, did not alter labour-management hostility. Henry Ehrmann remarks:

"Instead of permitting the slow growth of labor-management collaboration for which the promoters of the original text had hoped, the bolder version of the law froze the partners in their traditional attitudes of antagonism and suspicion."<sup>5</sup>

The evidence presented in this chapter suggests that the promoters of the original text were too optimistic in their hope for workplace collaboration. Maurice Combe, in his personal account of twenty years' experience in a *comité d'entreprise*, blames the employers for having maintained their old hostility -- "une attitude contraire, de fermeture et d'opposition" -- whereas the workers were more open to the new committee, "avec une attitude ouverte et constructive."<sup>6</sup>

The notion and ends of participation at the workplace itself thus differed according to various points of view: the Ministry of Labour saw worker participation

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<sup>2</sup> AN F60 897, "projet d'ordonnance instituant des comités d'entreprises: exposé des motifs," drawn up for the Comité Économique Interministériel, 26 October 1944.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> See Val Lorwin, *The French Labor Movement*, Cambridge, Mass., 1954; Henry Ehrmann, *Organized Business in France*, Princeton, 1957; Duncan Gallie, *Social Inequality and Class Radicalism in France and Britain*, Cambridge, 1983.

<sup>5</sup> Ehrmann, pp.449-450.

<sup>6</sup> Maurice Combe, *L'Alibi: Vingt ans d'un comité central d'entreprise*, Paris, 1969, p.298.

as overcoming traditional impediments to a well-functioning economic system; the management was only prepared to accept participation in a limited advisory capacity; and the CGT held mixed views -- desiring a greater voice for workers at the plant but afraid of cooptation by management. The next section considers the precursors of the *comités d'entreprises*, the Vichy *comités sociaux d'établissement*, where the above attitudes could already be detected in embryonic form.

## 2. The *comités sociaux d'établissement*

The *comités sociaux d'établissement* were established officially by the Vichy Labour Charter (Charte du Travail) of 4 October 1941. They were paternalistic organisations which grew out of the government policy of channelling worker sentiment away from unions in a corporatist direction. Employers approved of these new committees, as, at the same time, strikes were made illegal and trade unions were banned. Moreover, the scope of the committees was precisely demarcated: they had power over social issues such as the running of employee canteens but did not have a say in company management.

The *comités sociaux* were widespread: there were 6,728 in operation by the autumn of 1943.<sup>7</sup> There were differing views as to their utility. After the abolition of Vichy legislation on 10 September 1944, there was a six-month interregnum before the establishment of the *comités d'entreprises*. The Divisional Labour Inspector in Nancy reported in January 1945 to Alexandre Parodi, the Minister of Labour, that there had been 350 committees in the Nancy area and that their role had been not only social but also professional. The Divisional Labour Inspector thought the role of the *comités sociaux* was positive because their advice had to be taken by management in matters of work regulations and organisation; as a consequence, the Nancy inspectorate had hopes of using this model to further participation. The Nancy inspector wrote:

"le Service y voyait-il la possibilité de faire respecter les desiderata du personnel, de l'instruire des problèmes que pose la conduite d'une entreprise et de le préparer à une participation plus effective à la gestion."<sup>8</sup>

Workers, however, harboured suspicions of the committees as management often appointed the worker representatives. Andrew Shennan cites a survey of 1500 committees in the Northern Zone in 1943 which found that "15 per cent of them had been nominated by management and a further 5 per cent directly appointed by the

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<sup>7</sup> Andrew Shennan, *Rethinking France: Plans for Renewal, 1940-1946*, Oxford, 1989, p.191. The figure is from the December 1943 issue of *Collection Droit Social*.

<sup>8</sup> CAC TR 13633, report of Nancy Divisional Labour Inspector to Minister of Labour, 4 January 1945.

patron."<sup>9</sup> Christian Bougeard, in his examination of Breton trade union activity during the war, mentions worker indifference towards the committees and indicates that there were fewer functioning committees than suggested by the official registrations.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, he concludes that there was considerable hostility to Vichy reforms:

"rares sont [les dirigeants de la CGT ou de la CFTC] qui acceptent de se compromettre dans les projets gouvernementaux imposés d'en haut, car ils sentent bien le refus voire l'hostilité des travailleurs dans les entreprises."<sup>11</sup>

The main legacy of these *comités sociaux d'établissement* appeared in the attitudes and thinking of labour inspectors and state officials. Their conception cited above, of workers learning to take responsibility within the committees, would reappear just a few months later in virtually identical language concerning the role and function of the *comités d'entreprises* for worker participation.<sup>12</sup>

### 3. The *comités d'entreprises*

The *comités d'entreprises* gave workers, for the first time, the opportunity to voice their demands, through institutionalised, formal procedures. The government passed an ordinance on 22 February 1945 which created committees in all plants with a minimum of 100 employees; the law of 16 May 1946 lowered this limit to 50 workers. The 1945 ordinance on the *comités d'entreprises* came after the first flush of Liberation enthusiasm had given way to some frustration and disappointment with limits imposed on worker participation, rising prices and a penury of material goods. The ordinance enabled workers to participate in the affairs of a company on a consultative basis. Workers, though, expressed several criticisms of the ordinance, generally deeming it inadequate.

First, some workers were put off taking part in the new committees because they saw the *comités d'entreprises* as a continuation of Vichy policies. Reporting in June 1945 on the low number of *comités* set up in Meurthe-et-Moselle -- only 26 of an expected 80 -- the Prefect noted:

"... beaucoup d'ouvriers continuent à considérer les comités d'entreprises comme une émanation de l'ex-gouvernement de Vichy, qui auraient changé

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<sup>9</sup> Shennan, pp.190-191, citing "Un an de vie des comités sociaux provisoires d'entreprises: une enquête de l'office des comités sociaux d'entreprises," *Bulletin de la Charte du Travail*, June 1943.

<sup>10</sup> Christian Bougeard, "Le syndicalisme ouvrier en Bretagne du Front populaire à la Seconde Guerre mondiale," *Le Mouvement Social* 158, January-March 1992, p.78.

<sup>11</sup> Bougeard, p.84.

<sup>12</sup> See CAC TR 13633, "Les Comités d'Entreprises," Centre d'Études et de Recherches Sociales, Ministère du Travail, 14 September 1945 (cited in chapter III, section 3).

d'appellation et cette considération est suffisante pour qu'ils s'en désintéressent."<sup>13</sup>

Secondly, the overly long wait for the *comités d'entreprises*, wrote another *commissaire*, made workers lose all their enthusiasm for involvement once they were set up:

"[Les ouvriers] sont mécontents de la lenteur apportée à la mise en place des réformes qu'ils espéraient. Il est à souligner que la très lente gestation qui a précédé la naissance des comités d'entreprises a complètement fait disparaître l'enthousiasme avec lequel les ouvriers attendaient cette mesure. Actuellement, on peut enregistrer une grande désaffection en ce qui concerne la mise en application du texte récemment publié."<sup>14</sup>

This response, however, seems not to have been characteristic of all regions and the geographical variation seems to have been related to the differing attitudes to the committees taken by the unions, not only in different areas, but in different industries or even plants.

Thirdly, the initial limit of 100 workers in a plant for the new *comités d'entreprises* was seen to be too high. The *commissaire* in Bordeaux, for instance, spoke in March 1945 of a "certaine émotion" in worker circles about the application of the ordinance because industry was so little concentrated in the area that 80 per cent of the workers there would not be represented. Instead, according to the *commissaire*, workers were more interested in a lesser limit of 50 workers in a plant or in a system which would bring together all the plants of the same firm -- indeed, this would satisfy "les milieux ouvriers dans leur désir légitime de participer au contrôle et à la gestion des entreprises de quelque importance."<sup>15</sup>

Finally, there was, not unreasonably, much confusion over the precise role of the *comités d'entreprises*. In pursuit of their "legitimate desire to participate in the control and management of firms," workers and unions sought to change or enlarge the consultative and educational role of the *comités*. The Prefect of Meurthe-et-Moselle remarked:

"la majeure partie d'entre eux [les ouvriers] ne comprend pas le rôle ... Ils ont tendance à assimiler le comité d'entreprise à une réunion de délégués dont le rôle est de soumettre leurs revendications à leurs employeurs."<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> AN F1a 4029, report of Préfet de Meurthe-et-Moselle, 26 June 1945.

<sup>14</sup> AN F1a 4028, report of Commissaire de la République à Clermont-Ferrand (Henry Ingrand), 16 April 1945.

<sup>15</sup> AN F1a 4028, report of Commissaire de la République à Bordeaux (Gaston Cusin), 1 March 1945.

<sup>16</sup> AN F1a 4029, report of Préfet de Meurthe-et-Moselle, 26 June 1945.

In fact, the *comités* had not been conceived as a forum for the transmission of worker demands but, rather, as a partnership between labour and management to increase production.

Unions sometimes delayed elections to the *comités* in a bid to increase or transform their powers, or in order to preserve the Liberation *comités de gestion*. In May 1945, the Prefect of Allier commented on the difficulties of instituting the *comités d'entreprises* in the region of Montluçon-Commentry, the site of several *comités de gestion*<sup>17</sup>:

"Mes dispositions sont jugées insuffisantes par les groupements ouvriers qui voudraient, avant de passer à leur mise en application, obtenir des employeurs des accords fixant au comité des pouvoirs plus étendus que ceux prévus par l'ordonnance."<sup>18</sup>

By July 1945, the trade unions still had not proceeded with elections to the new committees because they hoped to blur the separation between the *comités d'entreprises* and the old *comités de gestion*. In Montluçon, according to the *commissaire*, the unions "prétendent simplement adjoindre à des comités de gestion créés à la Libération de nouveaux éléments désignés par les organisations ou mouvements politiques et syndicaux anciens ou nouveaux."<sup>19</sup>

Elsewhere, unions decided that the best way to exploit to their advantage the new *comités d'entreprises* was to become involved and sit on them as members and enlarge their powers from within. In April 1945, in Chalons-sur-Marne, the *commissaire* noted:

"certaines critiques sont adressées par les milieux ouvriers qui estiment la réforme insuffisante et qui regrettent que le Gouvernement n'ait pas cru devoir suivre les propositions de l'assemblée consultative. Les organisations syndicales invitent, en conséquence, leurs adhérents à utiliser la plénitude des prérogatives reconnues aux représentants des salariés au sein des comités d'entreprises."<sup>20</sup>

The union advice regarding participation was not always followed, however, partly because the numerous small plants were excluded from the ordinance, partly because in some firms workers tried to raise the stakes or even to disengage from the process. In Nancy, for example, the small number of *comités* created at the outset, in the spring and summer of 1945, was put down in part to worker indifference by the

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<sup>17</sup> See Georges Rougeron, Secretary of the Allier CDL, personal testimony given 24 May 1984, and Antoine Prost, "Le retour aux temps ordinaires," in Andrieu, Le Van and Prost, pp.107-109,89-106.

<sup>18</sup> AN F1a 4028, report of Préfet de l'Allier, 15 May 1945.

<sup>19</sup> AN F1a 4029, report of Commissaire de la République à Clermont-Ferrand (Henry Ingrand), 15 July 1945.

<sup>20</sup> AN F1a 4028, report of Commissaire de la République à Chalons-sur-Marne (Marcel Grégoire), 15 April 1945.

*commissaire*.<sup>21</sup> By the autumn of 1945, the *commissaire* in Nancy reported that there was still indifference towards the *comités* in worker circles.<sup>22</sup> Previously, he had commented on how *comités* had been created wherever there was interest shown -- "où les salariés et les organisations syndicales se sont intéressées de cette question."<sup>23</sup> However, figures for the three departments of Meurthe-et-Moselle, Meuse and Vosges in the *commissaire*'s next report revealed that only 76 of 216 potential *comités* had been set up.<sup>24</sup> The *commissaire* blamed this gap on the deficiency of the trade unions in not drawing up lists of candidates for the elections to the committees, despite the efforts of the Ministry of Labour and the labour inspectorate.<sup>25</sup>

Preparing workers to assume "responsibly" their new positions as delegates in the *comités d'entreprises* was a preoccupation of the labour inspectorate that the CGT sought to exploit for its own purposes (see also below, pp.111-112). The CGT wanted to equip workers -- particularly its own militants -- with the knowledge of how to utilise effectively the new *comités* by appealing to the government for an education subsidy. The CGT submitted in the spring of 1945 for approval by the Ministry of Labour a course programme of 26 lessons for future members of the *comités d'entreprises*. Alexandre Parodi, the Minister of Labour, not only complied with the request but also wrote to the CFTC suggesting that he would do the same for them.<sup>26</sup> The Minister suggested that the CFTC contact the CGT regarding the running of the programme and added: "J'ai l'impression que les dirigeants de la CGT accepteraient volontiers un échange de vues avec ceux de la CFTC à ce sujet."<sup>27</sup> The training course, covering employment law and company management, was run by the Comité National Permanent d'Éducation Ouvrière, based at the CGT headquarters in Paris. It was accorded a subsidy of ten million francs by the Direction des Relations Professionnelles et des Questions Sociales of the Ministry of Labour, which also furnished teachers and funds for books for the libraries at the training centres.<sup>28</sup> There

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<sup>21</sup> AN F1a 4024, report of Commissaire de la République à Nancy (Paul Chailley-Bert), 16 May 1945.

<sup>22</sup> AN F1a 4025, report of Commissaire de la République à Nancy (Paul Chailley-Bert), 17 November 1945.

<sup>23</sup> AN F1a 4025, report of Commissaire de la République à Nancy (Paul Chailley-Bert), 1-2 September 1945.

<sup>24</sup> AN F1a 4025, report of Commissaire de la République à Nancy (Paul Chailley-Bert), 18 September 1945.

<sup>25</sup> AN F1a 4025, report of Commissaire de la République à Nancy (Paul Chailley-Bert), 1-2 September 1945.

<sup>26</sup> CAC TR 14485, letter from Alexandre Parodi, Minister of Labour, to CFTC, 18 May 1945.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> CAC TR 13633, "Bilan et programme de l'activité du ministère du travail en matière de relations professionnelles et d'organisation sociale," Ministry of Labour, 17 December 1945, p.6.

was evidently widespread interest: the Prefect of Puy-de-Dôme commented in his monthly report about how the CGT would initiate courses,

"afin de donner aux ouvriers l'instruction indispensable qui leur permettra de remplir au mieux leurs fonctions. Ces cours porteront sur la législation du travail, l'administration de l'entreprise et les oeuvres sociales."<sup>29</sup>

The course eventually consisted of 24 lessons; in the first lesson, an introductory talk given by the author and university professor Jean Guéhenno, he recounted how in planning the programme, the union representatives wanted a theoretical approach while he desired a more practical approach. He then told the story of how in his youth, he had heard a *chef d'entreprise* lament all of his responsibilities. Guéhenno continued:

"Je souhaitais que tous mes camarades de travail partagent avec lui ces responsabilités. Je sentais que nous en serions tous grands.

Ce que je souhaitais dans ma jeunesse, vous avez la chance, à cette heure, de pouvoir le vivre. Vous allez être responsables et toute votre vie en peut être changée."<sup>30</sup>

After this exhortation, redolent of all the hopes of the new legislation, the would-be candidates for elections to the *comités* were given instruction by two civil engineers, a labour inspector, and two prominent CGT trade union leaders, Roger Lapeyre (Public Works Employees) and Alain Le Léap (Civil Servants), in such topics as collective bargaining, economics of the firm, social questions, accounting, and statistics. Whatever the technical virtue of the course, it helped to reinforce the presence of the CGT in the *comités d'entreprises* and probably provided the permanently impecunious federation with a welcome source of funding for its staff, the *permanents*.

The Direction des Relations Professionnelles et des Questions Sociales (which would later become the Direction du Travail) at the Ministry of Labour stepped in frequently to assure the smooth start up and operation of the *comités d'entreprises*: "Leur mise en place, leur rodage nécessite de fréquentes interventions du service, tant en ce qui concerne la composition des comités ... que leur fonctionnement ..."<sup>31</sup> We saw above the difficulties of implementation faced from the union side. The Direction also had to sidestep employers' obstructions. For example, Henry Hauck, its director (and who was linked to Léon Jouhaux, the moderate CGT leader) was asked by a *chef de bureau* at the Direction, Renée Petit, for clarification on several points raised by

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<sup>29</sup> AN F1a 4028, report of Préfet de Puy-de-Dôme, 16 April 1945.

<sup>30</sup> CAC DRT 1146, "Programme d'enseignement pour la formation technique des délégués ouvriers dans les comités d'entreprises: cours du 1er degré," no date [1945].

<sup>31</sup> CAC TR 13633, "Bilan et programme de l'activité du ministère du travail en matière de relations professionnelles et d'organisation sociale," Ministry of Labour, 17 December 1945, p.7.

Leblanc, the representative of the powerful employers' federation, the Union des Industries Métallurgiques et Minières (UIMM). Leblanc had visited her office on 23 November 1945, within weeks of a new decree of 2 November on the management of social affairs by the *comités d'entreprises*. He had come to ask detailed questions about the appropriate role of the *comités* in the control of worker housing, apprenticeship schools, and financing. Leblanc hoped that the Direction would help lessen the amount of worker involvement. Hauck's handwritten response over the letter from Renée Petit is preserved in the archives and is to the point: "Il faut éviter que le sens très net de l'ordonnance et du décret soit faussé par des interprétations tendancieuses des employeurs."<sup>32</sup> An important director at the Ministry of Labour, therefore, was siding emphatically against employers in order to maintain the letter and the spirit of the ordinance on the *comités d'entreprises*.

Employers were not well disposed towards the *comités*, as we have just seen. The most favourable response garnered by the *commissaires* was evinced in the April 1945 report by Marcel Grégoire, the *commissaire* at Chalons-sur-Marne: "Les chefs d'entreprises, dans l'ensemble, sont assez favorables à l'institution des [comités d'entreprises]."<sup>33</sup> That general approval was, however, qualified. In January 1945, the Divisional Labour Inspector in Nancy had written that employers were opposed to full employee participation in the firm's management:

"Les employeurs, dans leur ensemble, ont bien accepté de consulter obligatoirement leur personnel sur l'application de la réglementation du travail et l'organisation du travail dans leurs établissements. Mais ils répugnent visiblement à les voir participer à la gestion car ils tiennent à assurer seuls la direction de leur entreprise dont ils sont seuls responsables vis à vis de ceux qui y ont investi des capitaux et ils tiennent également au secret des affaires commerciales et de la situation financière de leurs entreprises."<sup>34</sup>

Employers were more favourably inclined to the *comités*, according to the Nancy Divisional Inspector, when workers expressed a more limited wish -- for example, to uphold a firm's general economic interests and to run workers' social affairs: "... pour que les travailleurs participent effectivement à la gestion des intérêts économiques de la profession et des intérêts sociaux de ses membres."<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> CAC DRT 919, letter from Renée Petit, *chef de bureau*, to Henry Hauck, Director, 24 November 1945.

<sup>33</sup> AN F1a 4028, report of Commissaire de la République à Chalons-sur-Marne (Marcel Grégoire), 15 April 1945.

<sup>34</sup> CAC TR 13633, report of Nancy Divisional Labour Inspector to Minister of Labour, 4 January 1945. The importance of employer control, discussed in chapter II, section 5a, emerges clearly here.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

Employers reluctantly accepted the initial ordinance of February 1945 about the creation of the *comités d'entreprises* because they had, in effect, no other option. Employers were far more resistant to the implementation of the law of May 1946, which extended the coverage of the initial legislation to all plants having at least 50 workers. The Divisional Inspector at Lyon wrote soon after: "on remarque en général une lenteur, voire même une certaine défiance vis-à-vis de cette formation."<sup>36</sup>

On two significant sets of issues, access to company financial records and the setting of wage rates, employers and workers held opposite views of the utility of the *comités d'entreprises*, justifying Henry Ehrmann's observation, cited above (note 5), that the 1946 law froze the industrial partners in their traditional attitudes of antagonism and suspicion.

A key innovation in all of the legislation on the *comités d'entreprises* and the one most resisted by employers was the access offered the committees to the financial records of a company so that management and labour might discuss economic affairs as partners and not adversaries. There was a decided shift in emphasis in this regard between the initial ordinance of 1945, which called for the committee to be "obligatoirement informé," and the terminology of the law of 1946, which used "obligatoirement consulté." Ambroise Croizat, the Minister of Labour, wrote in a *circulaire* dated 31 July 1946:

"Le législateur a voulu marquer par là [the change in terminology] la nécessité de consulter obligatoirement le comité d'entreprise sur les problèmes d'organisation et de gestion concernant la marche de l'entreprise."<sup>37</sup>

Although the Divisional Inspector at Lyon observed in 1946 that "on commence à aborder sérieusement les questions d'ordre économique qui, jusqu'ici étaient laissées de côté au profit des oeuvres sociales,"<sup>38</sup> by and large it proved very difficult for workers' representatives to obtain adequate company financial information. Indeed, in 1948, the same inspector commented:

"On peut dire que peu de comités remplissent entièrement leurs attributions d'ordre économique. En général, les employeurs ... considèrent que l'organisation et la gestion sont de la compétence de la Direction seule."<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> CAC TR 14006, report of Lyon Divisional Labour Inspector (P. Aymard) to Minister of Labour, 8 July 1946.

<sup>37</sup> Circ.TR 80/46, about application of law of 16 May 1946, from Ambroise Croizat, Minister of Labour, to all divisional labour inspectors and labour inspectors, 31 July 1946, p.4.

<sup>38</sup> CAC TR 14006, report of Lyon Divisional Labour Inspector (P. Aymard) to Minister of Labour, 8 July 1946, p.7.

<sup>39</sup> CAC TR 14006, report of Lyon Divisional Labour Inspector (P. Aymard) to Minister of Labour, April 1948, p.8.

He noted also that with few active members and insufficient financial resources, even legally constituted *comités* in the *petites et moyennes entreprises* had no real substance ("n'ont pas de vie réelle.")<sup>40</sup>

These conflicting worker appreciations of the new *comités d'entreprises* posed problems for the labour inspectorate, charged with overseeing their operations. On the one hand, inspectors wanted the *comités* established but, on the other, they had to try to define the committees' role, which was found inadequate by the unions but considered excessive by management. Divisional inspectors were also given instructions from the Direction du Travail that did not seem to accord entirely with Croizat's broader legal interpretation of the law.

The *comités d'entreprises* had been set up specifically to discuss the organisation of work in the workplace and not for the delivery of worker demands, the task for the *délégués du personnel*. Several reports and communications by the Ministry of Labour went to great lengths to establish this difference. Renée Petit, *chef du bureau* at the Direction du Travail, gave a talk after the introduction of the revised law on the *comités* in May 1946, in which she discussed the differences between the two representative institutions:

"C'est en évitant de se présenter comme un organe supérieur de revendication, c'est en faisant leurs les préoccupations de l'entreprise que les comités d'entreprises justifieront leur existence et affirmeront, parallèlement aux délégués du personnel, leur caractère d'institution utile au relèvement du pays."<sup>41</sup>

The Minister of Labour emphasised these same points in the *circulaire* of 31 July 1946, when he noted the different attributions of the institutions regarding salaries:

"[les délégués du personnel] sont chargés de présenter toutes revendications individuelles ou collectives émanant du personnel. ... C'est sur un tout autre terrain qu'intervient le comité d'entreprise. Il doit se placer, en effet, sur le plan de l'entreprise elle-même et aborder l'examen du salaire sous son aspect économique."<sup>42</sup>

A labour inspector wrote in 1947 that the duties of the *délégué* were defensive and supervisory: "[il] dispose d'un pouvoir de contrôle de la gestion ... Il fera respecter les droits reconnus"; whereas the representative to the *comité* "possède un droit de

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<sup>40</sup> CAC TR 14006, report of Lyon Divisional Labour Inspector (P. Aymard) to Minister of Labour, April 1948, p.10.

<sup>41</sup> CAC TR 13931, "Comités d'entreprises et délégués du personnel," talk by Renée Petit, *chef de bureau*, Direction du Travail, 28 May 1946, p.11.

<sup>42</sup> Circ.TR 80/46, about application of law of 16 May 1946, from Ambroise Croizat, Minister of Labour, to all divisional labour inspectors and labour inspectors, 31 July 1946, p.3.

participation."<sup>43</sup> The inspector wrote: "La participation à la gestion est donc différente du contrôle de la gestion. Elle a un caractère actif, constructif."<sup>44</sup>

A major issue of interest to worker representatives on the *comités d'entreprises* was the setting of remuneration. In a revealing note in November 1946 to M. Jaussaud, Henry Hauck's successor as director at the Direction du Travail, Renée Petit explored the question of whether a *comité* had the power to scrutinise individual salaries in a plant.<sup>45</sup> She wrote that Croizat's *circulaire* of 31 July 1946 had emphasised the general [her underlining] nature of consultation implied by the law. She concluded that a *comité* could not press for information on individual salaries, only on salaries considered as a whole. Furthermore, she queried the possible extent of a *comité* being "obligatoirement consulté":

"l'interprétation extensive de la formule relative à la consultation obligatoire des salariés, tendrait à faire du comité d'entreprise l'associé permanent et constant de la direction, ce que ne paraît pas avoir voulu le législateur qui prévoit seulement en principe la réunion du comité une fois par mois."<sup>46</sup>

Renée Petit's hierarchical superior, Olga Raffalovich, *sous-directeur des questions sociales et des conditions de travail*, in handwritten comments at the end of Petit's memo, agreed with her reasoning and added:

"Il s'agit d'un problème très délicat, car nous touchons là à la ligne de démarcation à établir entre les responsabilités de la Direction et les attributions des Comités."<sup>47</sup>

Any decision in favour of allowing the *comités d'entreprises* to examine individual salaries would set a precedent, she noted, and would lead probably to conflicts between a *comité* and the management, just when the *comités d'entreprises* were being set up. Raffalovich wrote:

"Il semblerait plus opportun, en conséquence, d'éviter de sources nouvelles de difficultés, dans cette période de démarrage, et de ne laisser aborder que progressivement l'étude d'ensemble de la situation financière des entreprises."<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> CAC TR 13633, "Distinction entre délégués du personnel et délégués au comité d'entreprise," report by G. Boutier, labour inspector, 1 February 1947, ch.II: Association des salariés à la gestion de l'entreprise: contrôle et participation.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> CAC TR 14006, memo from Renée Petit, *chef de bureau*, to M. Jaussaud, *directeur du Travail*, with further notes by Olga Raffalovich, 20 November 1946.

<sup>46</sup> CAC TR 14006, memo from Renée Petit, *chef de bureau*, to M. Jaussaud, *directeur du Travail*, 20 November 1946, p.2.

<sup>47</sup> CAC TR 14006, further notes by Olga Raffalovich to memo from Renée Petit, *chef de bureau*, to M. Jaussaud, *directeur du Travail*, 20 November 1946.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

The discussion of such problematic issues, then, would await the next stage of employer-worker cooperation, if at all.

Arguing the necessity of defusing possible conflict, key civil servants in the Ministry of Labour effectively moderated the provisions of the legislation of 16 May 1946 and strengthened the hand of employers. Nevertheless, it was the changing political climate, the growing tension within the tripartite coalition, that effectively tipped the balance. The expulsion of the PCF from the government in May 1947 and the burgeoning split in the CGT fixed the nature of the *comités d'entreprises*. With both the union movement and the PCF and SFIO divided, there was neither the possibility of a left-wing majority in parliament nor of concerted industrial action on the shopfloor.

The CGT protested to the Ministry of Labour, even before May 1947, about the behaviour of employers. In February 1947, the secretary of the *comité d'entreprise* at a metalworking plant in Lille took advantage of the return in January of Ambroise Croizat, the Communist Minister of Labour, after a month-long spell in office by the Socialist Daniel Mayer, and wrote to the Minister, complaining of a "raidissement patronal en matière d'application des dispositions heureuses de la loi du 16 mai."<sup>49</sup> The secretary of the *comité*, who was also a trade union representative in the workplace, detailed the tough employer line in the entire region: opposition to the development of the *comités d'entreprises*; strict interpretation of the measures of the legislation; and curtailment of the activity of the *comités* solely to social questions. There is no record in the archives of an answer to this letter; presumably, Croizat's exit as Minister in May ended any likelihood of a favourable inquiry into the allegations. In July 1947, Georges Delamarre, the secretary of the CGT, wrote to Renée Petit, at the Direction du Travail:

"De nombreux comités nous signalent que leur chef d'entreprise s'oppose à la communication des prix de revient, et d'une façon générale à tous renseignements intéressant la vie économique de l'entreprise, soit par refus catégorique pur et simple, soit par arguments dilatoires."<sup>50</sup>

These examples show the stiffening of the employer resolve -- Delamarre concluded that the effect of the employer attitude was to render the law of May 1946 inoperative. He wanted the matter referred to the Commission Supérieure des Comités

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<sup>49</sup> CAC TR 14058, letter from R. Bollens, secretary of the *comité d'entreprise* of Éts. Paindavoine, Lille, to Ambroise Croizat, Minister of Labour, 18 February 1947. This plant had been the site of a *comité de gestion*: see Antoine Prost, "Le retour aux temps ordinaires," in Andrieu, Le Van and Prost, p. 100.

<sup>50</sup> CAC DRT 907, letter from Georges Delamarre, Secretary of the CGT, to Renée Petit, Direction du Travail, 4 July 1947.

d'Entreprises, instituted on 23 February 1945 by the Minister of Labour to follow up the implementation of the *comités d'entreprises*.<sup>51</sup>

The Commission Supérieure des Comités d'Entreprises, however, normally investigated general infractions within carefully defined parameters and not always to great effect. One case with which it dealt was a long-running dispute at Citroën. Instead of a single *comité d'entreprise* serving all the various Citroën plants in different parts of the country, the CGT desired *comités d'établissements* for each plant, as well as one *comité central d'entreprise*. Initial arbitration in June 1945 by Henry Hauck, at the Ministry of Labour, had increased the number of employees serving on the *comité d'entreprise* but further discussion of the proposed *comités d'établissements* was put off until the renewal of the *comité d'entreprise*. The following year, on the occasion of new elections to the *comité d'entreprise*, the CGT reaffirmed its original demand for decentralisation, against the wishes of the management. After fruitless intervention by the Paris Divisional Labour Inspector and the services of the Sous-Direction des Questions Sociales et des Conditions de Travail at the Direction du Travail, a meeting of the Commission Supérieure des Comités d'Entreprises was arranged, on 10 December 1946. Delegations from management and the trade unions presented their cases and members of the Commission attempted to formulate a compromise, but to no avail. The issue was then taken up in March 1947 by the *cabinet* of Ambroise Croizat, the Minister of Labour, but no solution was obtained.<sup>52</sup>

The failure of mediation again showed the incapacity of the state to enforce the creation of new *comités* in each plant against determined employer opposition. The CGT had argued that a single *comité d'entreprise* for such a large concern as Citroën entailed too much work for the *comité* and that the establishment of *comités d'établissements* as well would respond better to local questions at each plant. This position was supported by the CGT delegates to the Commission Supérieure des Comités d'Entreprises.<sup>53</sup> However, the management stated that a single *comité* was

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<sup>51</sup> See CAC TR 14485, *circulaire* #5 from Minister of Labour to divisional labour inspectors, 13 March 1945, p.5: "[la] Commission Supérieure des Comités d'Entreprises ... a pour mission de suivre l'application de l'ordonnance et d'étudier toutes mesures nécessaires au bon fonctionnement de l'institution."

<sup>52</sup> See CAC DRT 920 for extensive documentation on the dispute: memo from R. Blanc, Paris Divisional Labour Inspector and memo from P. Le Guay, *chef de bureau*, to M. Jaussaud, *directeur du Travail*, 31 October 1946; letter from Jaussaud to PDG of Citroën, 27 November 1946; memo from M. Lamour, *chef-adjoint du cabinet*, Minister of Labour, 7 March 1947; letter from Suzanne Charpy, Socialist Party, to Daniel Mayer, Minister of Labour, 30 April 1948. See CAC TR 13632 for the proceedings of the Commission Supérieure des Comités d'Entreprises on 10 December 1946, dated 30 December 1946.

<sup>53</sup> CAC TR 13632, M. Larue, CGT delegate, proceedings of the Commission Supérieure des Comités d'Entreprises, 10 December 1946, dated 30 December 1946, p.5.

better suited to the company structure, marked by strong centralisation, with no autonomy for plant managers. The workers responded that each plant manager did have a limited scope over discipline, schedules, and bonuses.<sup>54</sup> The situation was well summed-up by Lamour, the *chef-adjoint* of the Minister of Labour's *cabinet*:

"Il est connu que la Direction Citroën-Michelin entend rester maîtresse absolue chez elle et ne peut se résoudre à se soumettre de bon gré ni à la loi, ni surtout à l'esprit de la loi sur les comités d'entreprises. Elle se sert de toutes les arguties possibles pour faire échec aux dispositions légales. Mais cela ne fait pas l'affaire des ouvriers qui se voient privés de tous moyens effectifs de contrôle de l'entreprise, et pratiquement de toutes possibilités d'intervention efficace dans le domaine de la production."<sup>55</sup>

In April 1948, Suzanne Charpy, the head of the *service des comités d'entreprises, enquêtes et documentation* at the SFIO, wrote a friendly letter to the Socialist Minister of Labour, in which on behalf of workers at Citroën she raised the dispute again, pointing out that the management had refused to implement the terms of a ministerial accord. An official at the Direction du Travail, however, scrawled on the margins of the letter: "C'est une vieille question qui est posée depuis 2 ans. La Commission Supérieure l'a examinée en son temps et conclu à l'impossibilité de [consentir à] tels comités en raison de la structure de la Société."<sup>56</sup>

Despite such concerted employer opposition to the implementation of a *comité* in each plant and the apparent compliance of the state with this stand, workers and their representatives accepted the *comités d'entreprises* as a site of participation, even if not always on their terms. They recognised the validity of the *comités*, as in an unspecified case during the strike wave of May 1948, when strikers agreed to abide by the decision of the "commission d'arbitrage" of their *comité d'entreprise*.<sup>57</sup> More generally, however, workers had to determine to what extent their own voices could be heard and within whose terms, particularly as the former collaborative spirit between workers and employers within at least some of the *comités* in 1945 ceded to increased antagonism.

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<sup>54</sup> CAC TR 13632, summary by R. Blanc, Divisional Labour Inspector, proceedings of the Commission Supérieure des Comités d'Entreprises, 10 December 1946, dated 30 December 1946, p.2.

<sup>55</sup> CAC DRT 920, memo from M. Lamour, *chef-adjoint du cabinet*, Minister of Labour, 7 March 1947, p.1.

<sup>56</sup> CAC DRT 920, letter from Suzanne Charpy, *service des comités d'entreprises*, SFIO, to Daniel Mayer, Minister of Labour, 30 April 1948. The official's comments within square brackets are hard to read and are a probable reading. Suzanne Charpy was the author of Prendrons-nous les Usines? Des comités d'entreprises à la gestion collective, Paris, 1946, an optimistic account of the possibilities of the *comités*. (Catalogue B 743 at the IFHS.)

<sup>57</sup> CAC TR 13521, monthly report, *service central de statistique*, Direction Générale du Travail et de la Main-d'Oeuvre, May 1948.

The workers' influence was prominent in the matter of raising production, an end which linked the battle for production strategy of the CGT and PCF to the concerns of the government. Even in June 1947, an official in the Loire had noted:

"[Les comités d'entreprises dans les entreprises majeures] se préoccupent de plus en plus de la marche des entreprises et abordent les questions d'organisation de la production, de gestion économique."<sup>58</sup>

As late as the summer of 1948, one inspector observed how production in one (unnamed) company had doubled within a year as the result of the initiative of the *comité d'entreprise*, though this view was not shared by all of the inspectors.<sup>59</sup> And in a summary report, the Paris Divisional Labour Inspector concluded positively:

"Il est certain que les comités d'entreprises ont contribué à augmenter la production grâce aux suggestions émises en ce qui concerne l'organisation de l'entreprise et à l'amélioration du climat social dans les entreprises."<sup>60</sup>

Notwithstanding the raised production, however, improvement of labour relations in firms could not survive the worker militancy of 1947-1948. One labour inspector wrote in the above report that whereas collaboration in the *comités d'entreprises* "dans le sens souhaité par le Législateur" had been apparent at their inception, the *comités* in 1948 were "moins des collaborateurs de la Direction que des surveillants impitoyables de cette dernière."<sup>61</sup> Although this view was not shared by all the contributors, the Paris Divisional Labour Inspector affirmed in his conclusion that the institution of the *comités* "ne progresse plus à l'heure actuelle" -- mainly owing to employer intransigence and the "position de combat" taken by the CGT, in the wake of the strikes of November-December 1947.<sup>62</sup>

Earlier, the labour inspectors, as previously noted (see above, pp.102-103), called for more systematic education of the worker representatives, especially in economics, if the *comités* were to attain their full development.<sup>63</sup> The Paris Divisional Labour Inspector commented:

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<sup>58</sup> CAC TR 14006, report on *comités d'entreprises* by M. Bordaner, *directeur départemental du travail et de la main-d'oeuvre*, Saint-Étienne, 23 June 1947.

<sup>59</sup> CAC TR 14002, unnamed labour inspector and general comments by R. Blanc, Divisional Labour Inspector, in his "Rapport sur les comités d'entreprises," in 1st area (Paris), for Minister of Labour, 29 June 1948, p.30.

<sup>60</sup> CAC TR 14002, "Rapport sur les comités d'entreprises," in 1st area (Paris), by R. Blanc, Divisional Labour Inspector, for Minister of Labour, 29 June 1948, p.36.

<sup>61</sup> CAC TR 14002, unnamed labour inspector in "Rapport sur les comités d'entreprises," in 1st area (Paris), by R. Blanc, Divisional Labour Inspector, for Minister of Labour, 29 June 1948, pp.30-31.

<sup>62</sup> CAC TR 14002, "Rapport sur les comités d'entreprises," in 1st area (Paris), by R. Blanc, Divisional Labour Inspector, for Minister of Labour, 29 June 1948, p.36.

<sup>63</sup> See among others CAC TR 14006, reports of Lyon Divisional Labour Inspector (P. Aymard) to Minister of Labour, 8 July 1946, p.7 and April 1948, p.8.

"[L'ouvrier] devra recevoir une instruction intellectuelle et technique qui le rendra progressivement plus compétent pour aborder des problèmes plus vastes et surtout pour acquérir la notion de l'équilibre nécessaire du social et de l'économique."<sup>64</sup>

For the labour inspectors, the *comités* opened up tantalising possibilities of a new collaborative spirit in the workplace. In a report for the Toulouse Divisional Labour Inspector in the spring of 1948, a departmental official wrote that the institution of the *comités d'entreprises* was "une des plus audacieuses réformes sociales de l'époque," precisely because of a possible new spirit of solidarity.<sup>65</sup> The Paris Divisional Labour Inspector concluded his report with his vision of where worker education would lead:

"Plus tard, lorsque notamment l'éducation ouvrière aurait porté ses fruits, il pourrait être envisagé une réforme plus profonde permettant de combler le voeu du législateur en associant plus étroitement les ouvriers à la gestion même de l'entreprise."<sup>66</sup>

For its part, the CGT wanted to enlarge the scope of the *comités* so that the worker delegates would not cede to a "particularisme étroit d'entreprise" (the sin of "economism"), but instead keep in mind the interests of all trade unionists, as was emphasised at the meetings of the Conférences Nationales des Comités d'Entreprises held in Paris in April 1948, with over 20,000 participants.<sup>67</sup> A pre-conference supplement to *La Vie ouvrière*, the majoritarian (PCF) CGT faction newspaper, set the tone: the first task of a *comité* was to: "intervenir dans la direction et la gestion financière des entreprises afin de limiter ... la malfaisance du système capitaliste."<sup>68</sup> Benoît Frachon, the CGT Secretary General, extolled the *comités* as "une grande conquête démocratique de la classe ouvrière."<sup>69</sup> The CGT seemed to find the legislation adequate; it urged its members to take advantage of it. A CGT proposal to reform the law of 16 May 1946, for instance, did not attempt to recast the text but

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<sup>64</sup> CAC TR 14002, "Rapport sur les comités d'entreprises," in 1st area (Paris), by R. Blanc, Divisional Labour Inspector, for Minister of Labour, 29 June 1948, p.31 (my emphasis).

<sup>65</sup> CAC TR 14006, report by J. Pinaud, *directeur départemental du travail et de la main-d'oeuvre*, Montauban, in report by Toulouse Divisional Labour Inspector to Minister of Labour, 24 April 1948, p.6.

<sup>66</sup> CAC TR 14002, "Rapport sur les comités d'entreprises," in 1st area (Paris), by R. Blanc, Divisional Labour Inspector, for Minister of Labour, 29 June 1948, p.36.

<sup>67</sup> Speech by J. Duchat, CGT Secretary, in CGT, Untitled brochure: discours, séance de clôture, Conférences Nationales des Comités d'Entreprises, Paris, 4 April 1948, p.6.

<sup>68</sup> "Pour la Conférence nationale des délégués ouvriers aux comités d'entreprises," supplement to *La Vie ouvrière*, 1948, p.5.

<sup>69</sup> Speech by Benoît Frachon, CGT General Secretary, in CGT, Untitled brochure: discours, séance de clôture, Conférences Nationales des Comités d'Entreprises, Paris, 4 April 1948, p.20.

aimed to modify certain articles "en vue de mettre fin aux contestations qui se sont produites et d'assurer aux comités le plein exercice des droits que leur confère la loi."<sup>70</sup>

Finally, involvement in the *comités d'entreprises* did not extend equally to all workers in any one plant. In a report for the Minister of Labour at the end of 1945, the Divisional Labour Inspector Vayssières noted that there was little interest shown by union secretaries in putting into place a *comité d'entreprise* in those industries with predominantly female labour and cited the high number of abstentions in one unnamed establishment<sup>71</sup>:

|               |                            |
|---------------|----------------------------|
| First round:  | 244 registered, 119 voted; |
| Second round: | 244 registered, 100 voted; |
| Third round:  | 239 registered, 76 voted.  |

Vayssières attributed this lack of participation to:

"d'une part à l'indifférence de beaucoup d'ouvrières en matière de syndicalisme, d'autre part aux ennuis provoqués dans le passé par l'exercice des fonctions de délégué du personnel, enfin aux difficultés de la vie actuelle qui multiplient les tâches auxquelles les femmes doivent faire face dans leur ménage et absorbent leur temps et leur activité en dehors de leur profession."<sup>72</sup>

This absence of attention to structural conditions, that is, to tasks outside the workplace, such as domestic labour, precluded any real consideration of women's participation in the *comités*. A study conducted for the *comité d'entreprise* at Citroën, where the female workforce numbered 2,354 (1,836 workers and 518 clerks), out of a total Paris-based workforce of 14,650 employees, suggested that 74 of 106 women interviewed had a journey to work lasting at least one hour; and that 27 of them, almost 40 per cent, were interested in a crèche.<sup>73</sup> The *comité* then visited other crèches, at Renault, in operation for one year, and at Galeries Lafayette, in existence for about thirty years, where it sought to determine the effects of the crèches on the physical condition of the babies. One anonymous questioner asked if the babies were breastfed and was told:

"Très peu; les mamans sont généralement déficientes et ne peuvent allaiter; beaucoup d'entre elles sont à fortifier. Les enfants, à leur arrivée à la crèche, sont presque toujours malingres, rachitiques même; très vite, pour la plupart, ils deviennent bien portants et beaux."<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> CAC DRT 902, "Proposition de loi établie par la CGT tendant à compléter le sens de l'ordonnance du 22 février 1945 modifiée par la loi du 16 mai 1946," no date [post September 1948].

<sup>71</sup> CAC TR 14002, "Rapport sur l'application de l'ordonnance du 22 février 1945 dans la 1ère circonscription à la date du 31 décembre 1945," submitted by R. Vayssières, Divisional Labour Inspector, to Minister of Labour, 17/31 January 1946, p.7.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> IFHS, 8 SD 36, *procès-verbaux* of the Citroën *comité d'entreprise*, 24 May and 10 June 1946.

<sup>74</sup> IFHS, 8 SD 36, *procès-verbal* of the Citroën *comité d'entreprise*, 18 October 1946.

Apart from providing an interesting view on the difficult conditions of working-class life two years after the Liberation, the account of the visits by the Citroën *comité* emphasised solicitude for the babies, rather than concern for the mothers or their possible involvement in the *comités*.

Examination of gendered social conditions by outside committees or advisers proved even more difficult in those plants and industries where the *comités d'entreprises* were not in smooth operation. In a report on her activities in the clothing industry, a *conseillère du travail* (labour adviser) noted that a great many *comités d'entreprises* existed in name only, owing to lack of contact between management and personnel and the lack of an appropriate workplace atmosphere in which to flourish. She suggested that the *service social* be extended:

"C'est là un moyen d'apporter une aide réelle à des gens défavorisés dès la naissance, et qui traversent parfois de bien lourdes épreuves."<sup>75</sup>

Another category of worker omitted by the attentions of the *comités* was the immigrant. Only French citizens could vote for members of the *comités*.<sup>76</sup>

Over the period 1944 to 1948, workers and their representatives accepted the *comité d'entreprise* as a site of potential participation, even if not always on their terms. In his 1945 report, the Divisional Labour Inspector Vayssières commented that the initial ordinance on the *comités* had greatly disappointed the trade unions and that some workers regretted that the powers of the *comités* "soient par trop limités," although most wanted to try to apply and implement the reform at the workplace.<sup>77</sup> The law of May 1946 strengthened terminology and reduced the threshold to fifty workers for the mandatory establishment of a *comité d'entreprise* in a plant. The law did not alter appreciably the scope of activity for a *comité* at the level of production, aside from offering the committees access to the financial records of a company. By 1948, workers were only partially closer to decision-making power in the firm, but only by legal statutes that were not always enforced or respected by employers or state officials.

The evidence cited suggests that the reaction to the works councils legislation in the Ministry of Labour itself was a critical factor in the extension and support of worker participation at the workplace. Henry Hauck's determination in 1944-1945, as a high official at the Ministry, to withstand the pressure of the UIMM contrasts markedly with

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<sup>75</sup> Bibliothèque Marguerite Durand, DOS 331 OUV, "compte-rendu des activités de la Conseillère du travail," by O. Dalard-Lejeune, for the Chambre Syndicale des Confectionneurs, 14 May 1948, pp.3,4.

<sup>76</sup> AN F1a 4029, report of Préfet de Meurthe-et-Moselle, 26 June 1945. See chapter VI, section 3b.

<sup>77</sup> CAC TR 14002, "Rapport sur l'application de l'ordonnance du 22 février 1945 dans la 1ère circonscription à la date du 31 décembre 1945," submitted by R. Vayssières, Divisional Labour Inspector, to Minister of Labour, 17/31 January 1946, p.8.

the later change in attitude in 1946 ("Il s'agit d'un problème très délicat"; "Il semblerait plus opportun d'éviter de sources nouvelles de difficultés ...") by such high officials as Hauck's successor, Jaussaud, and the second in command, Olga Raffalovich. There was an attempt by Hauck to enforce legislation in the earlier period. Later, from 1946 on, the Ministry of Labour was less sympathetic to worker concerns; it toned down the provisions of the new law, a move welcomed by employers. In order to understand this changed outlook by state officials, it is necessary to analyse the factors constraining full participation, which are explored in the next three chapters. First, an extended look at the most significant *comité de gestion* of the period will reveal the full range of possibilities of worker participation on offer; the role of a sympathetic local and regional state administration; and how this experiment in one large firm was also affected by changes in attitude over the course of 1944 to 1948.

#### 4. The Berliet *comité de gestion*

The argument so far developed in this chapter is that state officials, such as representatives of the Ministry of Labour, helped to promote worker participation at the workplace in the immediate period after the Liberation. Workers and their representatives accepted the *comité d'entreprise* as a site of participation, even if not always on their preferred terms. The full extent of the acknowledgement of workers' demands by the state can be seen in the requisitioned factories, where *comités de gestion* were set up. Yet even in these instances of "worker control," there were limits to workers' decision-making capacities. As in other workplace situations, workers faced resistance from state officials, employers and company shareholders -- and even unions.

The most notable example of worker participation at the workplace in the immediate post-Liberation period occurred in Lyon at the Berliet truck firm. Marius Berliet and then his sons were arrested for collaboration in September 1944. Yves Farge, the *commissaire de la République* and former Socialist journalist, then signed a decree requisitioning the company and appointed Marcel Mosnier, a Communist engineer, to run the operation. The employees participated actively in the running of the firm in a *comité patriotique d'entreprise*, which would later become a *comité d'entreprise*. They were also represented in the *comité de gestion*, or *comité consultatif*, which assisted the management, and in the interventions of the *délégués d'atelier*. The experiment did not result in nationalisation; instead, the firm reverted to the previous ownership of the Berliet family. The failure of the Berliet experiment and

other worker control initiatives<sup>78</sup> cemented the failure of the immediate post-Liberation labour market changes: a profound degree of powerlessness was to mark the labour movement for the next generation.

The Berliet experiment presented a different model of worker participation, because workers were centrally involved in decision-making and the state representatives allowed greater flexibility here than elsewhere. Instead of simply backing a technocratic vision, a business logic favouring economic growth, technical efficiency, and social stability, the *commissaire de la République* approved a much more radical plan, which would enhance production, certainly, but also permit the formation of a new collective identity for workers at the plants, although unskilled workers, including women and immigrants, were only marginally involved.

The following sections examine the rise and subsequent collapse of the Berliet experiment. The first section argues that Yves Farge's role as *commissaire de la République* was crucial for the initial launch of the worker control experiment but that his main aim was to increase production at the firm. The second section focuses on productivism at Berliet and makes the case that the *comité de gestion*, led by the CGT, implemented the same rationalisation measures at the workplace that were being imposed elsewhere, except that they were instituted at Berliet under a different system of managerial authority and accountability. The final section considers the end of the Berliet experiment and summarises the reasons why the firm was not nationalised.

#### **a. Support by the state: the role of the *commissaire***

The *commissaire de la République*'s role was instrumental in establishing the Berliet experiment. Yves Farge had already shown his willingness to listen to ordinary citizens soon after his appointment as *commissaire*, when he kept up with *comités de Libération* (CDL) in all eight of the departments -- Ain, Ardèche, Drôme, Isère, Loire, Rhône, Savoie, Haute Savoie -- of the Rhône-Alpes region in order to involve them in the planning for the ensuing victory -- "à recueillir leur assentiment sur les dispositions à arrêter pour l'heure de la victoire," he wrote later. He added: "Nous étions dans l'obligation de confronter nos pensées avec celles de tous les camarades qui composaient les Comités de Libération."<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> For information on worker control at the Port-de-Bouc dockyards near Marseille, see Jean Domenichino, "Un chantier, des ouvriers, une ville: Port-de-Bouc et la construction navale (1900-1966)," unpublished thèse de doctorat, Université d'Aix-en-Provence, 1988, especially ch.5 on 1944-1948 and ch.6 on the *comité d'entreprise*. See also Jean Domenichino, "Marseille: les usines réquisitionnées," *Cahiers d'histoire de l'institut Maurice Thorez*, 7, 4, July 1973, pp.161-177.

<sup>79</sup> Yves Farge, *Rebelles, soldats et citoyens: Souvenirs d'un Commissaire de la République*, Paris, 1946, pp.50,53.

On industrial policy, Farge favoured worker participation, in the spirit of the Liberation:

"C'est en donnant à tous les travailleurs de France ... le droit de dire leur mot dans la gestion des affaires publiques comme dans la gestion des entreprises privées que l'on apportera la Grande Libération que le peuple de France exige."<sup>80</sup>

On 4 September 1944, the day after the liberation of Lyon, Farge gave instructions to all eight prefects of the region:

"Il vous appartiendra de saisir les archives des syndicats patronaux et si vous le jugez nécessaire, des Comités d'Organisation, de déterminer rapidement la responsabilité, aussi bien de ces organisations que les Chambres de commerce. ... Vous aurez le devoir de bloquer leurs comptes et de réquisitionner leurs propriétés."<sup>81</sup>

He was also quoted as saying:

"La caractéristique essentielle de notre action, notre facteur le plus décisif c'est l'appui total des syndicats ouvriers ... Nous avons déjà réalisé dans certaines usines, mises sous séquestre, la participation effective des ouvriers à la direction. Les délégués ouvriers siègent à côté de l'administrateur du séquestre et de l'administrateur technique dans le comité directeur de l'usine. Ils participent au pouvoir exécutif. Dès ce moment on peut tout demander à la classe ouvrière. Les résultats obtenus chez Berliet sont une preuve irréfutable."<sup>82</sup>

Many of these quotes pointing to Farge's preoccupation with worker participation are attributed to him after the events described. He certainly wished to tip the balance away from the employers but the last two sentences point to another strand of his thinking: his concern was how to bring in the working class to accept government policy in order to increase production. Farge's real opinion of comprehensive worker control at the time may be surmised from his reply to Alfred Bardin, to whom Farge first offered the post of director of Berliet and who would only accept if the workforce were allowed to participate directly in the running of the firm: "Mais c'est un Soviet que vous voulez!", Farge said, revealing the limits to his openness to innovation.<sup>83</sup>

Farge vetoed Bardin as director because he had precise notions of the reach of the administrator. Farge wrote that "Un Commissaire de la République ne pouvait aller plus loin dans la décision. Il ne lui était pas permis d'anticiper sur les intentions

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<sup>80</sup> cited in Claude Morgan, Yves Farge, Paris, 1954, p.115.

<sup>81</sup> Farge, Rebelles, soldats et citoyens, pp.208-209.

<sup>82</sup> cited in Morgan, Yves Farge, p.116.

<sup>83</sup> as cited in Marcel Peyrenet, Nous prendrons les usines. Berliet: La gestion ouvrière (1944-1949), Geneva, 1980, p.24.

gouvernementales."<sup>84</sup> However, Marcel Mosnier, the eventual choice as director, insisted on having Bardin as his deputy, as "technical director." It was Mosnier who then launched the worker control experiment and set up the *comité consultatif*, or *comité de gestion*.

The *commissaire de la République*, Yves Farge, therefore, both encouraged and held back expectations regarding worker participation at the Berliet truck firm in Lyon. Farge approved Mosnier's plan for the *comité de gestion*, in effect, an administrative board, composed of four members: Bouthillier, Secretary General of the Rhône Prefecture, representing the public authorities; Bardin, representing the firm's technicians; and Besson (the CGT secretary at Vénissieux) and Bidaut, from Monplaisir, representing the workers and designated by each of the two main plants. This administrative group would meet daily (although Bouthillier dropped out for unexplained reasons after a few months, probably because the CGT effectively had three representatives) and would take all decisions in concert -- the basis of the "worker control" appellation.<sup>85</sup> In fact, Mosnier placed himself in the position of executor of the employees' will, rather than representative of the state.<sup>86</sup>

Farge had little sympathy for the collaborationist *patronat* and he assented to the plan of worker control because he was particularly concerned to restart production as soon as possible: the main Berliet plant, at Vénissieux, had been partially destroyed by the bombings and production had fallen to nearly nothing. Farge visited the plant in December 1944 with Robert Lacoste, the Socialist Minister of Industrial Production, and was particularly gratified that the workers were now fully part of the war effort and also that none of them brought up the topic of working hours:

"[the Berliet workers] savent maintenant qu'ils travaillent pour la Nation, rien que pour la Nation ... Pas une seule fois on ne nous a parlé -- bien au contraire -- de limitation des heures de travail."<sup>87</sup>

Mosnier's plan for the *comité de gestion* also paralleled one of Farge's innovations, a regional commission for economic reconstruction, with three worker representatives out of eleven (initially eight) members:

"Cette commission est chargée de rechercher toutes les causes d'arrêt ... de l'activité économique générale de la région ...; à cet effet, elle peut enquêter sur le fonctionnement de toutes ces entreprises, sur leur activité passée, et sur leurs possibilités d'avenir. Elle étudie toutes les réformes qui paraissent souhaitables

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<sup>84</sup> as cited in Peyrenet, p.24.

<sup>85</sup> See Peyrenet, pp.35ff.

<sup>86</sup> Gérard Declas, "'Berliet sans Berliet' (1944-1949): une expérience autogestionnaire?", *Recherches et travaux*, 7, December 1978, p.105.

<sup>87</sup> AN F1a 4022, text of speech broadcast by Yves Farge, 9 December 1944.

en vue de stimuler la production et de développer l'essor économique au bénéfice de l'intérêt général."<sup>88</sup>

Farge's emphasis on promoting economic recovery was in keeping with the policy of state actors who actively sought social peace and greater productivity. Farge's contribution was to focus more on the desirable reforms necessary to integrate the workforce in the recovery effort.<sup>89</sup> In this aim, he was well appreciated by the workers. The local newspaper La Marseillaise reported that the general strike in Lyon on 16 May 1945 over the delay in promised salary increases, involving 120,000 workers, was not at all directed against any of the local authorities, including Farge:

"Des représentants qualifiés des grévistes nous ont déclaré que cette grève n'était nullement dirigée contre les autorités locales dont ils ont pu à maintes occasions apprécier le dévouement à leur cause. Ils gardent donc toute leur confiance envers MM. Yves Farge, Longchambon [the Prefect of Rhône] ..." <sup>90</sup>

Increasingly, however, Farge's battle lay with his superiors, such as Adrien Tixier, the Minister of the Interior, and Robert Lacoste, the Minister of Industrial Production, who had stopped approving new requisitions on 22 September 1944, in a bid to reestablish, according to Antoine Prost, "l'ordre légal, c'est-à-dire le pouvoir des propriétaires."<sup>91</sup> On the same day as the general strike in May 1945, Farge drafted a report to Tixier in advance of a local delegation of unions visiting Paris the next day to see the Minister of Finance René Pleven, Lacoste, and Alexandre Parodi, the Minister of Labour. Farge wrote:

"On ne peut pas demeurer plus longtemps enfermé dans un dilemme stupide, 'poursuivre des méthodes de Vichy ou revenir au libéralisme anarchique du temps de l'abondance'. Dans tous les domaines, il faut chercher et mettre en pratique la solution qui débarrassera le pays de ses parasites."<sup>92</sup>

Such growing outspokenness about the need to reject liberal solutions, associated with Pleven's policy in Finance, led to differences of opinion and emphasis with the government and Farge resigned on 15 September 1945, along with M. Biquard, his *chef de cabinet*.

As a measure both of the change after Farge's departure and the Berliet workers' increasing displeasure with government policy, the general assembly of Berliet workers on 20 October 1945 addressed a manifesto to the Minister of the

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<sup>88</sup> Arrêté #699, 16 Dec. 1944, as cited in Fernand Rudé, Libération de Lyon et de sa région, Paris, 1974, pp.225-226.

<sup>89</sup> See chapter III, section 4, p.85.

<sup>90</sup> AN F1a 4022, La Marseillaise de Lyon et du Sud-Est (Mouvement de Libération Nationale), 16 May 1945.

<sup>91</sup> Antoine Prost, "Le retour aux temps ordinaires," in Andrieu, Le Van and Prost, p.97.

<sup>92</sup> AN F1a 4022, report of Commissaire de la République à Lyon (Yves Farge), 16 May 1945. See also chapter VII, section 3a.

Interior, which reaffirmed their desire to participate even more closely in the company, while also demanding greater efforts by elected representatives and trade unions for the nationalisation of key industries.<sup>93</sup>

### **b. Productivism**

Changing workplace practices, which stressed the need to raise productivity, increased pressure on workers; as long as they had a voice in decision-making, they gave their consent to the changes. As political and industrial tensions heightened in the firm, however, worker unrest also increased.

Industry in Lyon had changed during the nineteenth century -- from very traditional trades (such as silk) to a greater industrialisation towards the end of the century.<sup>94</sup> Vénissieux, the site of the main Berliet plant, likewise changed enormously, especially in the first few decades of this century, when it grew to become a prime industrial location.<sup>95</sup> With assembly line production came discontent with Taylorism and time-and-motion studies, as recounted, for instance, in the autobiography of a Berliet worker, Georges Navel.<sup>96</sup>

At Berliet, there were strikes in 1935 and early 1936, followed by the firing of 1200 workers in 1938. Marcel Peyrenet writes that Marius Berliet's fears of 1936 would largely dominate his itinerary from 1936 to the postwar period: he wanted vengeance for the workers' outbursts in 1936 and trusted in the coming of a new authoritarian social order.<sup>97</sup> During the war, Marius Berliet not only supplied Germany with new trucks and favoured the Service du Travail Obligatoire (even sending one of his children to Germany), but he also instituted a reign of terror in the plants, with a member of the Milice as leader of the security guards.<sup>98</sup> It was no wonder, then, that Félix Besson, of the *comité de gestion*, cited in his first anniversary report on the Berliet experiment in 1945 the special significance of the return of trade union rights and an end to harassment:

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<sup>93</sup> AN F1cIII 1225, report of Préfet du Rhône, 14 November 1945, citing report from Berliet workers' assembly addressed to Minister of the Interior (Adrien Tixier), 20 October 1945.

<sup>94</sup> See Pierre Cayez, *Crises et croissance de l'industrie lyonnaise: 1850-1900*, Paris, 1980.

<sup>95</sup> See Philippe Videlier, "Banlieues de province: l'exemple lyonnais," in Annie Fourcaut, ed, *Un Siècle de banlieue parisienne (1859-1964)*, Paris, 1988, pp.227-243.

<sup>96</sup> See Georges Navel, *Travaux*, Paris, 1945, as cited in Roger Magraw, *A History of the French Working Class, Volume II: Workers and the Bourgeois Republic*, Oxford, 1992, pp.201,227.

<sup>97</sup> Peyrenet, p.15. See also chapter V, section 2c on Berliet's work methods, particularly his reliance on timed workrates.

<sup>98</sup> Antoine Prost, "Un mouvement venu d'en bas," in Andrieu, Le Van and Prost, p.68.

"Nous avons retrouvé toute notre liberté syndicale. Plus de brimades pour les militants, plus de sanctions pour les partisans du syndicalisme."<sup>99</sup>

However, there was some disappointment among workers in 1945, notably over the question of salaries. Fernand Rudé recounts the general feeling in Lyon at the time:

"Les salaires n'étaient évidemment plus en rapport avec le coût de la vie. La déception des travailleurs se traduisit d'abord par une diminution du rendement et cela au moment même où les dirigeants syndicalistes demandaient à la classe ouvrière de tendre toujours davantage son énergie en vue de la reconstruction, de la restauration de notre économie nationale."<sup>100</sup>

There was an invasion of the Lyon city hall on 15 May 1945, as part of the general strike referred to above, in section 4a, and local strikes in 1945 over the delay in promised salary increases.<sup>101</sup> At Berliet, Alfred Bardin, the technical director, acknowledged the problem:

"Même dans la période transitoire, le travail reste le même, avec des temps chronométrés, un horaire à respecter et des salaires insuffisants."<sup>102</sup>

Given the prewar background and continuing unease over salary levels, how is the initial success of the Berliet experience to be understood? Farge cites new management techniques as a prime reason:

"Pour la première fois en France, des méthodes nouvelles de gestion ont été mises en application à l'échelle d'une très grande entreprise industrielle."<sup>103</sup>

The aim of the managerial experiment of the *comité de gestion* was to inaugurate "une économie démocratique," without bosses, and with many workplace committees established.<sup>104</sup> Although the combination of Mosnier and Bardin launched the innovation in management at the company, there was also some continuity in administrative personnel, such as the firm's accountant, Pierre Thibaudon, employed at Berliet since 1909.

The *comité de gestion* (or *comité consultatif*) worked well because of Mosnier's non-hierarchical leadership. In his first annual report, Mosnier commented that despite its name, the *comité consultatif* had "un rôle de gestion." He added:

"... contrairement à ce que craignait notre ministre de l'Intérieur, M. Tixier, cependant socialiste, lequel ne croit pas à la maturité économique des ouvriers,

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<sup>99</sup> Félix Besson, "Rapport de la section syndicale ouvrière CGT," *Contact*, No. 12, 8 October 1945, as reprinted in Peyrenet, p.86.

<sup>100</sup> Rudé, p.216.

<sup>101</sup> Rudé, p.216.

<sup>102</sup> As cited in Peyrenet, p.93.

<sup>103</sup> Yves Farge, "L'expérience Berliet," in *Revue française du travail* 1, 2, May 1946, p.98.

<sup>104</sup> Rudé, pp.221ff.

nous n'avons jamais été en opposition, dans le sein du Conseil ... parce que sur tout, nous pensons et jugeons pareillement."<sup>105</sup>

Robert Burlat, CGT militant at Berliet, said, " Le Comité se réunit chaque matin. On fait le tour des problèmes. Chacun intervient à sa guise. La règle est l'unanimité, après discussion."<sup>106</sup> Yet many workers found such new consensual and non-hierarchical management difficult to fathom and wrote, for example, in a formal style to *Monsieur Besson*, one of their own representatives on the *comité de gestion*. A union newspaper upbraided these workers at the end of 1945:

"Trop de camarades ne se rendent pas compte du changement intervenu chez Berliet ... c'est un ouvrier qui participe à la gestion de l'entreprise en votre nom..."<sup>107</sup>

There was also a *comité d'entreprise* (works council) at Berliet, which created a production committee to develop productivity, reduce production costs, reorganise workshops, buy new machines, and improve workers' professional qualifications.<sup>108</sup> These measures were seen to be needed because of the shortage of raw materials: resources had to be better deployed by the workforce and so lessen the risk of redundancies. However, old methods were also brought back: the number of timekeepers (*chronométrateurs*) was increased from 23 in 1945, to 31 in 1946, and 38 in 1947 -- there was one timekeeper per 188 workers in 1946, but one per 134 in 1947.<sup>109</sup> There were constant injunctions against wasting time, going slow and absenteeism.<sup>110</sup> The monthly bulletin of the PCF cell at Berliet even featured a laudatory article about Stakhanov, commending his example: "Les Stakanovistes travaillent vite et bien."<sup>111</sup> Labour inspectors, accompanying visiting delegates from the International Labour Organisation (ILO), noted the presence of boards which displayed the results obtained by different teams of workers.<sup>112</sup>

Mosnier's stated aim as director was to end paternalism -- "J'ai voulu que dans une usine au moins en France le sort, la vie des travailleurs ne dépendent pas de l'arbitraire patronal ..." <sup>113</sup> -- yet he replaced the employer's arbitrary power with a managerial practice firmly rooted in productivism. Many workers in the firm, for

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<sup>105</sup> in "Une année de gestion démocratique," *Contact*, No.12, 8 October 1945, as reprinted in Peyrenet, p.88.

<sup>106</sup> As cited in Peyrenet, p.35.

<sup>107</sup> As cited in Peyrenet, p.94.

<sup>108</sup> Peyrenet, p.163.

<sup>109</sup> Peyrenet, p.163.

<sup>110</sup> Declas, pp.80-81.

<sup>111</sup> "Stakanovistes," *Le Mécano*, February 1945, as reprinted in Peyrenet, p.53.

<sup>112</sup> CAC TR 13838, report of Renée Petit, *chef de bureau*, to Director, no date [received 3 July 1946].

<sup>113</sup> Peyrenet, p.61.

example, were discomfited by the means of calculating a special bonus, inaugurated at the end of 1945, around 6000 francs on average per employee. The bonus was calculated according to regularity of attendance, as a penalty against absenteeism, and also according to seniority, as a loyalty bonus but inevitably favouring the managers, with longer years of service, over the workers. Unskilled workers, in particular, with little seniority, would lose out collectively to managers. Marcel Peyrenet remarks that worker opposition to this criterion illustrated the latent antagonism between the participatory structure and the technical hierarchy operating in the firm.<sup>114</sup>

The first work stoppage at Berliet, in 1945, resulted from a dispute over the apportionment of a salary bonus, in this case to tool-makers, skilled workers (who were considered the labour aristocracy) representing about five per cent of the total personnel. They were to be accorded an individual bonus, based on each man's output, but they demanded a collective bonus, in order to affirm their "esprit de corps" and to counter the favouritism involved in individual bonuses.<sup>115</sup> In the event, the solution proposed was to raise the bonus for all, dependent on a commensurate increase in production.

These examples regarding bonuses show that workers were not necessarily receptive to new management techniques, which stressed ever increasing productivity -- productivism -- often at the expense of collective pursuit and reward. If anything, however, the protest illustrated the risks for the *comité de gestion*, controlled by the CGT, of its battle for production strategy, which was tied to keeping the PCF in power. Indeed, the tool-makers' demands were the occasion for an outburst in May 1946 by Mosnier (a Communist) in the Berliet internal newsletter, Contact, about the need to maintain vigilance against "irresponsible elements" who were opposed to democratic management, because they did not appreciate how their protest would be used by political opponents.<sup>116</sup>

It should also be mentioned that in 1944-1946 there had been a large influx of unskilled and unpoliticised workers into Berliet. In 1945, almost 71 per cent of the 5700 workers were unskilled, of these 12 per cent were women; a thousand new workers arrived in the next year and the proportion of unskilled workers in the plants rose above 71 percent. The newcomers were not aware of the previous conditions at Berliet and were poorly integrated into factory life, particularly as a third of them also worked the land as agricultural workers.<sup>117</sup> The unskilled also included an

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<sup>114</sup> Peyrenet, p.99.

<sup>115</sup> Peyrenet, pp.99-100.

<sup>116</sup> Marcel Mosnier, "Soyons vigilants", Contact No.19, May 1946, as reprinted in Peyrenet, p.101.

<sup>117</sup> Peyrenet, p.128.

unspecified number of immigrants, particularly from North Africa, Indochina, and Spain.<sup>118</sup> The CGT militant Félix Giovannetti complained of all of these unskilled workers, "Sans tradition ouvrière réelle leur conscience politique est faible."<sup>119</sup>

Politicisation of workplace issues, however, became increasingly common as the relations between the two factions of the CGT and between Communists and Socialists deteriorated over the course of 1947. A series of accusatory articles in the Communist plant newsletter directed at Alfred Bardin, the Socialist technical director, further exacerbated tensions in the firm, not only between Communists and Socialists, but also between the managerial staff and workers. The polarisation culminated in the strike against Communist "colonisation" at Berliet by managers and technicians in November 1947, at a time of national industrial conflict.<sup>120</sup> The Berliet experiment, therefore, was not exempt from the national breakdown between Communists and Socialists, as Gérard Declas argues.<sup>121</sup> The principal breakdown, though, occurred at the level of the firm. The *comité de gestion* kept in place the existing workplace structure, including differences between categories of workers, and relied on the same rationalisation measures at the workplace that were being tried elsewhere. In its desire to increase production, the *comité* perhaps lost an opportunity to review the form of employee participation, which might have led to more solidarity in the firm in 1947.

Workers did respond more positively to changing workplace practices in the requisitioned industries, such as Berliet, but there were still significant problems, such as absenteeism and go-slow tactics. Interestingly, during the managers' strike of 1947, which began on 4 November, workers assumed all managerial positions and all piecework was abandoned -- the workers' delegates judging their peers to be sufficiently committed to the cause to work to their utmost ability. Production was maintained at a level just below normal, until Communist workers went out on strike on 25 November to join the national strike.<sup>122</sup>

### c. The end of the Berliet experiment

The national divisions between Communists and Socialists not only partly sealed the fate of the Berliet *comité de gestion* experiment but also were largely responsible for the failure of the attempt to nationalise Berliet in January 1947 and February 1948. These divisions on the left are readily seen in the debates on the

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<sup>118</sup> Peyrenet, p.41.

<sup>119</sup> As cited in Peyrenet, p.128.

<sup>120</sup> Rudé, pp.221ff. See also Peyrenet, pp.145-190.

<sup>121</sup> Declas, p.92.

<sup>122</sup> Declas, pp.95,97; Peyrenet, pp.177-184.

parliamentary texts about the nationalisation project.<sup>123</sup> Former Berliet shareholders, led by Winckler (a relative of Marius Berliet and president of the *conseil de surveillance des actionnaires*), also were keen to assert control.<sup>124</sup> In the plants, however, there was strong support for a new status for Berliet. In January 1947, a meeting of 3000 Berliet workers backed nationalisation. An official from the Renseignements Généraux, the investigative division of the Sûreté Nationale, noted:

"L'organisation en régie des établissements Berliet est favorablement accueillie par le personnel ouvrier de ces usines."<sup>125</sup>

The new worker input at Berliet from 1944-1948 did not last for several reasons: the national and local divisions noted between Communists and Socialists; problems of organisation and traditional union weakness on the shopfloor; the lack of mobilisation of the state to compensate for that organisational weakness. In this regard, the resignation of Yves Farge in September 1945 spelled the removal of a sympathetic voice in the local administration. In addition, the abolition of the *commissaires de la République* in March 1946 confirmed the hold of Paris with its different priorities for the maintenance of public order.

There were also financial constraints on any possible nationalisation project. Marius Berliet hardly had any of his company holdings left in his name, when he was stripped of them, as he had given them to his children. Only two of the seven children were sentenced to heavy fines, resulting in the state holding only ten to twelve per cent of the capital. To nationalise the company, therefore, would have required compensating the bulk of the shareholders.<sup>126</sup> Moreover, the Conseil d'État pronounced against most of the requisitions in 1947 and those affecting Berliet in 1949.<sup>127</sup>

However, as Antoine Prost asserts, the real reasons for the non-nationalisation of Berliet lay elsewhere, in the evolution of the parliamentary majority and of public opinion.<sup>128</sup> By the middle of 1946, the climate had changed because the Socialists and the Communists no longer formed a majority in the National Assembly and the other parties refused to authorise new nationalisations. Important ministers were opposed to

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<sup>123</sup> See Ministry of Labour archives CAC TR 13649: Commission Consultatif au Travail et à l'Emploi, 1946-1949; *dossier* on Usines Berliet, 1947-1948. Also: Services du Premier Ministre, AN F60 692, Cabinet Ramadier: Berliet proposition de loi, 1947. The final attempt to nationalise Berliet came in December 1949.

<sup>124</sup> Peyrenet, pp.154-158, recounts in detail the shareholders' strategy.

<sup>125</sup> AN F1a 4735, Renseignements Généraux, 18 January 1947.

<sup>126</sup> Antoine Prost, "Le retour aux temps ordinaires," in Andrieu, Le Van and Prost, p.103.

<sup>127</sup> Antoine Prost, "Une pièce en trois actes," in Andrieu, Le Van and Prost, p.244.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

the idea: Robert Lacoste, the Socialist Minister of Industrial Production, for instance, was hailed by the Lyon businessman Georges Villiers, the head of the CNPF and a Berliet shareholder, as having been instrumental in the campaign against nationalisation: "c'est grâce à lui que nous avons pu éviter la nationalisation de l'affaire Berliet."<sup>129</sup>

After the return of the shareholders as owners and operators of the company in 1949, the CGT refused all contact with the new president of the Board of Management but was not even notified, in any case, of a meeting at the Rhône prefecture between the new management and the other trade unions.<sup>130</sup> By this time, workers no longer had a say in production decisions although they were still accorded added responsibilities in the *comité d'entreprise*.

The Berliet *comité de gestion* experiment, dependent on state intervention for its launch, illustrates the important role of local state officials in worker participation attempts, as well as the overriding productivist concerns of the period. As we have seen, the *commissaire de la République*'s main goal was to increase production, at first to assist the war effort and then to aid national reconstruction. The new *comité de gestion*, an administrative board composed of employee representatives, fashioned a fresh approach to industrial relations in the firm, particularly after the autocratic managerial style of its founder, Marius Berliet. The novel system of collective managerial authority invoked a new spirit of participation in the firm, as workers were encouraged to be involved in decision-making. One of the first acts of a group of workers at the Vénissieux plant in October 1944 was to reorder the letters of the giant panel atop the factory: B.E.R.L.I.E.T. became L.I.B.E.R.T.E.<sup>131</sup> However, the *comité de gestion* continued to apply prewar rationalisation measures and also introduced Stakhanovite policies at the workplace, in order to expand production. Productivity and output did increase, but many workers in the plants, particularly the unskilled, complained of low salaries and misdirected bonuses. At the same time, middle management contested the political orientation of the *comité de gestion*, which was controlled by the CGT and which followed the confederation's battle for production strategy, designed to enhance the credibility of the PCF on the national level. These differences at Berliet between workers and management and among categories of workers would become heightened in the crucial year of 1947, as the PCF fought to retain its place in government and in the absence of full government support for the proposed nationalisation of the firm. The Berliet experiment again reveals the

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<sup>129</sup> as cited in Peyrenet, p.121.

<sup>130</sup> Declas, p.104.

<sup>131</sup> Peyrenet, p.38.

necessity to consider the interplay between the industrial and political arenas; even the most advanced worker control venture of the time was constrained by the productivist outlook of union and state officials, as well as by the weak backing of central government.

## 5. Conclusion

This chapter has concentrated on renewed efforts by the government and Ministry of Labour officials after the Liberation to alter the traditional attitude of confrontation between the *patronat* and unions in the workplace. The *comités d'entreprises*, instituted in the ordinance of February 1945, gave workers the formal opportunity to express their perspectives at the workplace. The *comités* were seen by state officials as being helpful to raising industrial output, owing to an increased collaborative spirit in the firm and the recognition by management of the importance of worker demands. Employers, however, were reluctant to cede any managerial control to the *comités d'entreprises*, particularly concerning access to production decisions and company financial information. Workers and their representatives were suspicious of the *comités*, at first, because of their perceived links with Vichy industrial relations policies, such as the *comités sociaux d'établissement*, and their initial limit to firms employing at least one hundred workers, a figure considered too high. Labour inspectors from the Ministry of Labour educated the workers about the specific role of the *comités d'entreprises* and high officials at the Ministry, such as Henry Hauck, endeavoured, in 1945, to maintain the letter and the spirit of the ordinance on the *comités*.

The political and industrial context of the legislation on *comités d'entreprises* changed in 1946, even as the law of May 1946 widened the coverage of the *comités* to include firms having a minimum of fifty workers. Employers regrouped in a new organisation, the CNPF, which began to operate in June 1946, and were much more aggressive in countering the new legislation at the level of the firm. The left lost its majority in the second constituent assembly elections of June 1946 and both the union movement and the PCF and SFIO became increasingly divided -- there was neither the possibility of a left-wing majority in parliament nor of concerted industrial action on the shopfloor. Finally, officials at the Ministry of Labour showed themselves to be less sympathetic to worker concerns, as they moderated their earlier reforming zeal or, like Hauck, were replaced.

Workers gained in the legislation on the *comités d'entreprises* certain limited, legally enforceable rights in the workplace, especially concerning social affairs, but

were excluded from any more far-reaching decision-making power in the firm. A more extended form of worker participation occurred during this period at the Berliet truck firm in Lyon, which was administered by a director in association with a worker-led *comité de gestion*. Even this experiment, however, was constrained by the attitudes of state officials and the CGT itself. The next three chapters consider the wider factors constraining full participation in the workplace and in the state, beginning with the absence of participation in the workplace itself.

## Chapter V                      Constraints on Participation in the Workplace

### 1. Introduction

There are several reasons why full participation in the workplace did not proceed as planned for workers and their representatives. One was employer opposition, the topic of this chapter. Another was that worker participation was not the primary aim of the CGT; this paradox is examined in chapter VI. A third reason was the state administration's fear of experimentation, the subject of chapter VII. The strategy of the *patronat* was to foreclose openings for workers and unions both at the workplace and in the administration. Employers had become well-organised at the national level in opposition to the Popular Front and then thanks to the Vichy French State. They knew the value both for themselves and for the public authorities of representative interlocutors, since legitimate business representatives were needed in the state.<sup>1</sup> Above all, they wanted to preserve their authority in the firm, a characteristic obsession of French family firms which preferred a secure, if limited, market share to innovation and the risks of competition. The weak position of the *patronat* nationally after the Liberation was only partially reflected by diminished employer authority in the firm. In fact, employers reasserted their control at the workplace, although there was considerable variation in these attempts and over time, as new legislation took effect.

The increased importance of unions, especially the CGT, provoked alarm among employers, who wanted to keep them out of decision-making regarding plant conditions. According to Val Lorwin, unions were seen as a threat to employers' authority and conveyed the risk of "industrial democracy."<sup>2</sup> In the adversarial relationship in the workplace, only one side, that of the workers, was anxious to change that balance of power away from the *patronat de droit divin*.

This chapter examines developments in the firm, including managerial innovation, rationalisation, and issues of job control, as well as the reaction of labour inspectors to these changing workplace practices. It concludes by assessing the impact of collective bargaining agreements sponsored by state officials. Even the strongly interventionist role of the state in the Liberation period could not alter long-established prejudices in industrial relations.

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<sup>1</sup> See Jean-Noël Jeanneney on the history of the CRP: "Hommes d'affaires au piquet: le difficile intérim d'une représentation patronale (septembre 1944-janvier 1946)," *Revue historique*, January-March 1980, pp.81-100. Refer to chapter II, section 3b)iv.

<sup>2</sup> Val Lorwin, *The French Labor Movement*, Cambridge, Mass., 1954, p.276.

## 2. Changing workplace practices

Section 2 investigates how changing workplace practices increased pressure on workers. Employers imposed new rationalisation measures, asserted their managerial authority, and resisted the introduction of the *comités d'entreprises*. Labour inspectors did not challenge the right of the *patronat* to intensify rationalisation at the workplace; they restricted their role to the resolution of disputes.

### a. *Patronat* power and the *comités d'entreprises*

In the immediate post-Liberation period, employers tried to safeguard their still considerable power by campaigning against the encroachments of the *comités d'entreprises*. The CNPF protested against the law of 16 May 1946, especially the obligation to consult the *comité d'entreprise* on financial matters, the secret of secrets in most firms. The CNPF protest confirmed, for CGT General Secretary Benoît Frachon -- though it should hardly have surprised him -- that the employers

"did not look upon the [*comités*] as organs of class collaboration, but as an unavoidable accident in a particular political situation, the consequences of which they were trying to reduce, while maintaining the hope of getting rid of them for good."<sup>3</sup>

There were, indeed, repeated efforts by the employers first to forestall and then to overturn the effects of the *comités d'entreprises* and their predecessors, the *comités de gestion*. In December 1944, the Divisional Labour Inspector in Lyon observed that, at best, "Les employeurs freinent et essaient d'aiguiller [les comités de gestion] vers les attributions sociales sans pouvoir de gestion," while some employers simply wanted the *comités de gestion* to fail, as it would be "le meilleur moyen de prouver l'incapacité foncière des ouvriers à participer à la gestion des entreprises."<sup>4</sup> In another incident, the Prefect of the Ardennes criticised engineering employers who intentionally prepared vague pay-slips in order to remove any possibility of verification by the labour inspectorate and workers.<sup>5</sup>

Employers also, however, appealed, selectively, to the legal framework surrounding labour relations, in order to frustrate workers' claims. When printers at Auch, for example, went on strike, claiming equal pay with colleagues in Toulouse, their employers refused to concede to them, as their salary resulted from a national

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<sup>3</sup> Benoît Frachon quoted by Derek Kartun, "Joint Production Committees in France," *Communist Review*, July 1947, p.206.

<sup>4</sup> CAC TR 14043, report of Lyon Divisional Labour Inspector (M. Kervran) to Minister of Labour, 18 December 1944, p.4.

<sup>5</sup> AN F1a 4028, report of Préfet des Ardennes, 15 December 1944. See also chapter III, section 3.

agreement sanctioned, the employers argued, by the Minister of Labour.<sup>6</sup> However, on another occasion, when construction workers demanded renewal of their collective agreements (*conventions collectives*), the CNPF argued against their immediate renewal, while asserting that it was not opposed to the principle of the agreements ("quoique n'étant pas hostile à leur principe").<sup>7</sup> Most striking of all, the General Inspector of Industrial Production in the Rhône-Alpes region wrote in February 1945 that salary demands were being made "dans une atmosphère moins bonne qu'à l'automne 1944."<sup>8</sup> Increases were accorded either individually or collectively "à la suite d'une certaine agitation, appuyée parfois de menaces de grèves." The inspector gave examples of labour agitation in the construction industry and dockyards, among others, where the workers, he felt, were exploiting the labour shortage and raising their demands. The employers were not opposing the demands; indeed, they feigned acceptance, according to the inspector, and counted on the local representative of the ministries to implement government directives and refuse approval.<sup>9</sup>

Employers fought tenaciously against the provisions of the legislation on the *comités d'entreprises*. The CNPF considered "fâcheuse" the advice of the Minister of Labour to the labour inspectors in his circular of 21 May 1946 to ensure that employers give full documentation to the *comités*.<sup>10</sup> Many employers with a workforce just over the new minimum of 50 dismissed workers in order to fall below the limit and thus escape the requirements of the law of 1946.<sup>11</sup> Cases of management manipulation of the *comité d'entreprise* were exposed, such as at the Longwy steelworks, where traditional paternalist measures were apparently agreed to by the *comité* under the threat of job losses: article 36 of the plant rules, for example, stipulated that any work stoppage would automatically terminate the employee's right to company housing and he/she would have to vacate their residence within 48 hours.<sup>12</sup> In Montrouge, following the November-December 1947 strike, an employer fired the secretary of the *comité central d'entreprise* and faced no sanctions.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> AN F1a 4028, report of Préfet du Gers, 15 February 1945.

<sup>7</sup> AN F1a 4733, Direction des Renseignements Généraux, 13 December 1946.

<sup>8</sup> AN F1a 4022, in report of Commissaire de la République à Lyon (Yves Farge), 18 February 1945.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> See CAC 860561/3, "Collaboration entre les pouvoirs publics et les organisations professionnelles en France," International Labour Organisation report, May 1947, p.96.

<sup>11</sup> CAC TR 14006, report of Lyon Divisional Labour Inspector (P. Aymard) to Minister of Labour, April 1948, p.9.

<sup>12</sup> CAC TR 13633, Suzanne Charpy, "Offensive du patronat contre les comités d'entreprises," Le Populaire, 2 October 1946.

<sup>13</sup> CAC TR 14030, letter from Lucien Debat to Minister of Labour, 11 July 1948 and memo from Labour Inspector (M. Carré) to Paris Divisional Labour Inspector (R. Blanc), 9 September 1948. Other instances of strict employer actions have already been referred to in chapter IV -- such as

Workers were hoping naturally, at the very least, to discuss workplace issues in the *comités*, as the Divisional Labour Inspector in Nancy reported: "[les ouvriers] ne demandaient que de pouvoir discuter dans l'entreprise des questions intéressant leur vie de travail."<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, employers remained jealous of their rights: "Ils tiennent à conserver leur autorité et leurs prérogatives de patrons," wrote the Lyon Divisional Labour Inspector. He remarked further that previously poor industrial relations were maintained in the *comités d'entreprises*, although the regular contact between employers and workers was helpful nonetheless: "les comités d'entreprises, en établissant le principe de prises de contact périodiques entre patrons et salariés ont donné la possibilité à chaque partie d'exposer et de discuter son point de vue."<sup>15</sup> The Paris Divisional Labour Inspector agreed with this minimalist assessment of the role of the *comités d'entreprises* -- to encourage greater worker-employer contact. He blamed the employers for being too concerned with their own particular interests and not wishing to see the institution of the *comités* develop, for "Les chefs d'entreprise estiment que le Comité n'a ni le temps, ni les moyens de discuter de l'orientation de l'activité générale de l'entreprise ..."<sup>16</sup> The evidence suggests, then, that employers took every opportunity to refuse to cooperate with the *comités d'entreprises*.

#### **b. Managerial authority and the CGC**

As well as standing firm against the *comités d'entreprises*, employers gradually introduced new forms of management into French industries in the post-Liberation period. However, these new forms of management, where they existed, did not give new powers to workers. At best, they did away with *patronat* despotism and relied instead on persuasion in the workplace and industrial relations. Prewar instances of management-worker collaboration were too rare<sup>17</sup> to provide a secure base for a more consensual or corporatist model of industrial relations (such as the German model<sup>18</sup>). In the post-Liberation period, as before the war, it was still common for employers to

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employer opposition to the *comité d'entreprise* at Éts Paindavoine, Lille and the appeal by employers to the DRT.

<sup>14</sup> CAC TR 13633, report of Nancy Divisional Labour Inspector to Minister of Labour, 4 January 1945.

<sup>15</sup> CAC TR 14006, report of Lyon Divisional Labour Inspector (P. Aymard) to Minister of Labour, April 1948, pp.8-9.

<sup>16</sup> CAC TR 14002, R. Blanc, Divisional Labour Inspector, "Rapport sur les comités d'entreprises," in 1st area (Paris), for Minister of Labour, 29 June 1948, pp.36,29.

<sup>17</sup> See Henri Prouteau, *Les Occupations d'usines en Italie et en France (1920-1936)*, Paris, 1938, p.118: "Dans les entreprises trop rares où employeurs et employés travaillaient dans un esprit de collaboration ou tout au moins d'estime suffisante, l'agitation de 1936 fut réduite au minimum." (citing Gérard Bardet, *Une Expérience de collaboration ouvrière à la direction d'une usine*, Paris, 1936.)

<sup>18</sup> See chapter VIII, section 4 about the German "Montan" model, for instance.

be paternalist: many firms instituted their own methods of detection of industrial hazards and protection against occupational diseases before the passage of laws (that were enforced by an understaffed labour inspectorate). The employers' sense of duty was "heightened by the feeling that what [was] given unilaterally [did] not encroach upon managerial authority," reflecting profound attitudes deeply rooted in French social structure.<sup>19</sup>

One tactic favoured by the *patronat* in its bid to preserve managerial authority was to encourage independent trade unions and to give indirect support to the Confédération Générale des Cadres (CGC), which represented managers, engineers, and technicians -- but not, of course, the employers themselves. The CGC followed an independent line, particularly on links with the state, and was opposed to the politicisation of the CGT and its ties to the PCF. As Guy Groux notes, the CGC advocated a market economy in which engineers and managers, representing the "economic elite," would play a principal role alongside employers and workers, with the state limited to a supervisory capacity.<sup>20</sup> The managers, for Henry Ehrmann, the "adoptive children of capitalism," were strongly influenced by a bourgeois outlook.<sup>21</sup> In fact, the CGC was singled out by Alexandre Parodi, the Minister of Labour, over concerns about its representativeness: in circulars of March and April 1945, Parodi questioned the overall record of the union under Vichy and advised divisional inspectors to review its suitability for election to a *comité d'entreprise* on a case-by-case basis.<sup>22</sup>

The state thus faced considerable difficulty in trying to establish new relations at the workplace. A departmental labour director suggested in 1948 that it would be desirable for employers to give workers a share in profits under the control of the *comité d'entreprise* -- "pour mieux les associer à la vie de l'entreprise."<sup>23</sup> However, the antipathetic nature of workplace relations was too entrenched for state-sponsored ideas. Even in 1983 Adolf Sturmthal could write: "French employers, whose firms are still, in spite of a trend toward concentration, to a large extent small or middle-sized, have traditionally been extremely hostile to trade unionism."<sup>24</sup> In the 1940s,

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<sup>19</sup> Ehrmann, pp.429-430.

<sup>20</sup> Guy Groux, "La CGC," in Claire Andrieu, Lucette Le Van and Antoine Prost, eds, Les Nationalisations de la Libération: De l'utopie au compromis, Paris, 1987, p.156.

<sup>21</sup> Henry Ehrmann, Organized Business in France, Princeton, 1957, pp.116,484.

<sup>22</sup> CAC TR 14485, circulars 5 and 6 from Alexandre Parodi, Minister of Labour, to Divisional Inspectors of Labour, 13 March and 6 April 1945.

<sup>23</sup> CAC TR 14006, report by J. Pinaud, *directeur départemental du travail et de la main-d'oeuvre*, Montauban, in report of Toulouse Divisional Labour Inspector to Minister of Labour, 24 April 1948, p.6.

<sup>24</sup> Adolf Sturmthal, Left of Center: European Labor since World War II, Urbana, 1983, p.128.

employers were sometimes ready, for reasons of caution, to adopt new management styles but without relinquishing either their fundamental hostility to workers' organisations or their desire for absolute authority in the workplace. Michael Burawoy's argument about the end of managerial arbitrary despotism and the necessity of persuading workers to cooperate with management, in factory regimes under advanced capitalism, is only partially applicable to the immediate post-Liberation period in France.<sup>25</sup>

### c. Rationalisation: Taylorism and automation

New management initiatives were focused on increased rationalisation at the workplace. Automation, Taylorism and a timed workrate (*chronométrage*) were introduced or accelerated, despite reduced food rations and rising prices.

Industrial relations became increasingly fraught in the late 1940s as workers, especially the semiskilled, started to protest against the speed-up of work. At the nationalised Renault works in Boulogne-Billancourt, one of the principal contributing factors to the wildcat strikes of spring 1947 was the insistence of management on a timed workrate. Already, in February, the 150 workers of *atelier 59*, the metalwork shop, had stopped work, "se refusant à un nouveau chronométrage qui les obligeait à produire plus pour gagner davantage."<sup>26</sup> However, timed work linked to increased productivity was precisely the line supported by the CGT, as part of its battle for production strategy. Until the November 1947 strike wave, the CGT continued to affirm the necessity to produce more and to encourage productivism.

For members of the *comités d'entreprises*, the overriding goal continued to be the need to raise production. Even as late as April 1948, at a time of union hostility, the departmental labour director in Montauban reported that proceedings of the local *comités d'entreprises* were marked by the recitation of such dictates as

"Il faut produire davantage.

Il faut rationaliser."<sup>27</sup>

He wrote also that in order to achieve these ends,

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<sup>25</sup> Michael Burawoy, *The Politics of Production: Factory Regimes under Capitalism and Socialism*, London, 1985, p.126. See chapter II, section 7a.

<sup>26</sup> AN F1a 4737, RG, *cabinet* du Ministre de l'Intérieur, 28 February 1947.

<sup>27</sup> CAC TR 14006, report by Jean Pinaud, *directeur départemental du travail et de la main-d'oeuvre*, Montauban, in report of Toulouse Divisional Labour Inspector to Minister of Labour, 24 April 1948, p.5 (underlining in original).

"l'action soutenue du comité est nécessaire en matière de rationalisation, notamment en faisant en sorte que chacun des salariés s'intéresse à son travail et pense à chaque instant aux moyens susceptibles de l'améliorer."<sup>28</sup>

The belief in rationalisation and, specifically, timed workrates was also consistently supported by the Ministry of Labour. There was much interest, for instance, in the Bedaux system, a wage incentive scheme tied to workrates. A detailed memo for the Direction du Travail explained the process, based on the Bedaux unit which was equal to the work done in one minute by a man working "normally," this figure then corrected by another calculation for a typical workrate. The memo concluded:

"... le système Bedaux est un système de mesure du travail humain ayant à la base un système de chronométrage perfectionné mais dans lequel on fait entrer un certain nombre d'éléments autres que le temps."

These other elements allowed for work done in teams, where the individual worker had to wait for another member of the team to finish his task. The memo also acknowledged that the system required "une organisation scientifique très poussée" -- and lost its utility when work was done mainly by machine.<sup>29</sup>

There had been initial efforts by employers to introduce such plans in the 1930s but many were dropped owing to worker and sometimes even state opposition. Herrick Chapman describes management efforts to introduce the Bedaux system into an aircraft plant near Lyon in 1935. After the workers walked out, and management refused to have a local justice of the peace arbitrate, the workers appealed to the Minister of Air, whose intervention caused the management to withdraw their plans -- the government could not afford strikes in a key sector.<sup>30</sup> The Bedaux system was also introduced in the 1930s in the coal mines in the Nord and Pas-de-Calais but was specifically abolished by the Popular Front collective bargaining agreements of June 1936.<sup>31</sup> When war was declared in 1939, however, the 1936 agreement was no longer respected by the mining companies and timed workrates, the Bedaux system, and other measures were reintroduced.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> CAC DRT 902, "Note sur la détermination du salaire par la mesure du travail humain: le système 'Bedaux,'" memo for Direction du Travail, no date [1945-1948], pp.3,4. All references to workers in the memo employ the masculine form.

<sup>30</sup> Herrick Chapman, State Capitalism and Working-Class Radicalism in the French Aircraft Industry, Berkeley, 1991, p.66.

<sup>31</sup> Étienne Dejonghe, "Les problèmes sociaux dans les entreprises houillères du Nord et du Pas-de-Calais durant la seconde guerre mondiale," Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine, 18, January 1971, pp.125-126.

<sup>32</sup> Patrick Fridenson and Jean-Louis Robert, "Les ouvriers dans la France de la Seconde Guerre mondiale: un bilan," Le Mouvement social, 158, January-March 1992, p.128.

At Berliet, one of the main complaints of workers at the 1945 trial of the Berliet family for collaboration concerned Marius Berliet's work methods. Berliet himself proudly admitted at the trial that he had been the first in France to introduce Taylorism, in "1905 or 1906":<sup>33</sup> "Nous avons toujours marché sur ces méthodes-là: cela dure depuis 30 ans et mes succès industriels viennent en grande partie de l'application de cette méthode." The president of the court then accused Berliet of perfecting the method during the war by using *chronométrage* and cited the testimony of an unnamed witness who explained:

"Agissant en vertu d'instruction de la direction, le service chronométrage a provoqué la réduction des temps de fabrication particulièrement en ce qui concerne le montage camions ...  
'La conséquence fut que pour gagner la même somme les ouvriers devaient travailler le double, alors que la production était déjà destinée en grande partie aux Allemands.'"

Berliet shrugged away what he called "ces petits détails" and recorded that there were 20 *chronométreurs* at the company, "vingt hommes qui passaient leur temps à augmenter ou à diminuer les prix sur le travail qu'on faisait." The president of the court remarked acerbically: "Il fallait faire le plus de travail possible, en dépensant le moins possible; ce sont comme vous l'avez dit, des subtilités." Berliet, again taking the defensive, replied: "Il y a 45 ans que je mène cette vie là, c'est comme cela que j'ai créé l'usine." Félix Besson, an *ouvrier spécialisé* and trade union official, described the effect of such policies on working conditions:

"Nous étions poussés [à la production], nous étions surveillés ... Le chronométrage était effectué tous les jours. Tous les jours, il fallait produire davantage."

The president of the court referred to *chronométrage* records and how workers were paid according to the rate fixed by the most recent timing, in effect a retrospective speed-up: "Vous étiez payés selon le temps fixé par le dernier chronométrage. Si vous mettiez plus de temps, tant pis; tel montage de telle pièce, c'était tant de minutes." Besson replied:

"Nous, délégués, notre rôle était toujours d'intervenir dans ce sens, contre ces diminutions, mais on ne tenait pas compte de nos réclamations.  
La Direction des Établissements Berliet donnait des ordres bien précis sur cette question."

Besson added that this practice continued in 1944, even after the Allied landings. Paul Berliet, a son and the operating manager of the company, said: "Je reconnais que le

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<sup>33</sup> The following is from AN 334 AP 19, Berliet trial record, Cour de justice de Lyon, 3-8 June 1945, pp.37ff. See also chapter IV, section 4b about the reign of terror instituted in the Berliet plants during the war.

chronométrage s'est poursuivi jusqu'à la fin. Le chronométrage est une chose obligatoire."

The trial transcript shows the determination of an employer to maximise production and obtain the most out of his workforce using punitive methods and surveillance. During the war, Berliet had sent his sons to Germany to learn production methods; everything, he felt, could be achieved according to scientific, timed norms. All work methods had to be controlled by the employer -- indeed, Paul Berliet said at the trial that his father had sacked André Guédras, a chemical engineer, for putting too much acid into the battery charges. The subsequent "Berliet experiment" of employee participation in company management relied for its initial success mainly on the impression held by the workers that they were reversing such total employer authority and were now themselves responsible for the running of the company.

Another factor highlighting the issue of job control in almost all industries was the introduction of automation, in particular for the semiskilled workers (*ouvriers spécialisés*). At Renault, in the words of Patrick Fridenson, the semiskilled workers were the most affected by "the move to mechanized mass production of a new model (the 4CV)."<sup>34</sup> This new post-Liberation mechanisation followed a sustained period in the 1930s of modernisation of work methods, owing to the Depression as well as the increased labour costs entailed by the Popular Front.<sup>35</sup> A typical venture was the Simca automobile plant in Nanterre, which had gone bankrupt under the previous owners Donnet. In 1935, an Italian formerly with Fiat bought Simca-Nanterre -- which became Citroën in 1961 -- and modernised it by installing more than seven kilometres of assembly lines and bringing in "Mussolini methods."<sup>36</sup> Worker response was rapid: the introduction of modern technology was deemed by Henri Prouteau to be one of the principal causes of the factory occupations of 1936.<sup>37</sup>

The new mechanised technology continued to be implemented during the war throughout industrial France. A worker completing her training period in 1943 at a gas-meter factory in Montrouge described life on the assembly line: "Journée fatigante, énervante au possible, rythme implacable de la chaîne; failli pleurer de fatigue cet après-

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<sup>34</sup> Patrick Fridenson, "Automobile Workers in France and Their Work, 1914-1983," in Steven Kaplan and Cynthia Koepp, eds, Work in France: Representations, Meaning, Organization, and Practice, Ithaca, 1986, p.533. Opposition to deskilling is characteristic of a workforce with artisanal traditions (see chapter II, section 5a) and not only in France: the famed industrial militancy in Glasgow during the First World War can be traced to engineering craftsmen, according to Iain McLean, The Legend of Red Clydeside, Edinburgh, 1983, p.6.

<sup>35</sup> See also chapter II, section 5a.

<sup>36</sup> Serge Ducrocq, 1945-1985: Histoire de la CGT à Nanterre, Paris, 1988, p.44.

<sup>37</sup> Henri Prouteau, Les Occupations d'usines en Italie et en France (1920-1936), Paris, 1938, pp.192-193.

midi." At intervals, the workers were shifted around within the factory to learn how to operate the specialised machinery so that they could replace one another, in her case moving eight times in one month -- leading to even greater fatigue.<sup>38</sup>

This assembly line production increased after the Liberation in the drive for heightened output and the effect was especially noticeable for women, among other semiskilled workers. A magazine advertisement for the textile industry extolled the benefits of automation and machine modernisation for improved production, while showing photographs of women busily engaged in work.<sup>39</sup> As noted earlier, it was only in the 1950s, according to one contemporary observer cited by Richard Kuisel, that French managers would realise the great importance of human factors in American productivity.<sup>40</sup>

In the immediate post-Liberation years, employers implemented rationalisation initiatives not only to increase productivity but also to retain control at the workplace: their main aim was not to relinquish any of their managerial authority.

#### **d. Worktime, salaries, job control**

The post-Liberation emphasis on production brought issues of worktime and salary sharply into focus for workers. The favourable atmosphere of the Liberation was short-lived: inflation, shortages and wage restraint soon caused demands for increases in salary, accompanied by threats of walkouts and strikes.

Workers wanted guarantees over salaries and were dissatisfied with the government minimum wage. In Sarthe, the Prefect reported in June 1945 that workers wanted a guarantee of a salary midway between the minimum and maximum salaries fixed by the decrees.<sup>41</sup> There was discontent over arbitrary wage policy and the fixing of salary zone boundaries: in one case, Lorraine steelworkers on one side of a river, presumably a departmental boundary, received 15 per cent less in wages than workers on the other side, although the cost of living was the same.<sup>42</sup>

Labour disputes often concerned job control issues. In the Lozère, 450 workers at the Forges et Aciéries de St-Chély d'Apcher had been on strike since 4 June 1945, reported the *commissaire* on 16 June, because of employer discipline of a young

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<sup>38</sup> Annie Fourcaut, *Femmes à l'usine en France dans l'entre-deux-guerres*, Paris, 1982, p.126. See also chapter II, section 5a.

<sup>39</sup> Bibliothèque Marguerite Durand, DOS 331 OUV, magazine advertisement for male clothing industry, no date [1949].

<sup>40</sup> See citation of Pierre Bardin's report in chapter II, section 5a, note 165.

<sup>41</sup> AN F1a 4029, report of Préfet de la Sarthe, 1 July 1945.

<sup>42</sup> CAC TR 10172, salary zones, 1945-1948.

worker for bad workmanship ("une malfaçon dans son travail").<sup>43</sup> Miners went on strike in January 1945 at Giraumont, in Meurthe-et-Moselle, to demand the firing of an engineer and the arrest of the local mayor, the *commissaire* attributing the stoppage to "raisons extra-professionnelles," presumably linked to the post-Liberation purge.<sup>44</sup>

The length of the working week also provoked disputes. In February 1945, 600 railworkers at Bar-le-Duc protested against the 54-hour week and obtained a promise of increased food and material supplies.<sup>45</sup> A few months later, in August, in Haute-Garonne, speakers at a meeting of the railworkers' union extolled the "battle for production" line and their belief that the renewal and salvation of France lay only in work. Although the 54-hour working week was adopted in principle, there were "a few unhappy listeners," according to the report by the Prefect.<sup>46</sup>

The CGT adhered to its productivist stance, despite such worker uncertainty, if not discontent, about salaries and the length of the working week. At a meeting of the Commission Nationale des Salaires in April 1946, the CGT Secretary, Henri Raynaud, implicitly acknowledged the cool worker response to the working week campaign when he insisted that "an exceptional effort of production" was required of workers, but to ensure that they made the extra effort, workers' remuneration had to be linked to production.<sup>47</sup> Another CGT delegate to the meeting, Roger Pascré, from the Cartel des Ingénieurs des Cadres Supérieurs, spoke out against complex pay formulae:

"Plus ces systèmes sont complexes, plus on s'éloigne du but recherché qui est d'intéresser les travailleurs à la production en leur faisant prendre conscience de l'importance de leur effort. Les systèmes devraient être élaborés dans l'entreprise même avec la collaboration des ouvriers, en tenant compte du facteur humain."<sup>48</sup>

This desire for equality in the decision-making process was not taken up by the employer representatives at the meeting and was also castigated later by an anonymous prefect, who wrote: "La notion traditionnelle de salaire ... se dissout dans des concepts à prétentions égalitaires."<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> AN F1a 4029, report of Commissaire de la République à Montpellier (Jacques Bounin), 16 June 1945.

<sup>44</sup> AN F1a 4024, report of Commissaire de la République à Nancy (Paul Chailley-Bert), 31 January 1945.

<sup>45</sup> AN F1a 4024, report of Commissaire de la République à Nancy (Paul Chailley-Bert), 1 March 1945.

<sup>46</sup> AN F1a 4029, report of Préfet de la Haute-Garonne, 16 August 1945.

<sup>47</sup> CAC TR 13931, minutes of Commission Nationale des Salaires, 17 April 1946, p.2.

<sup>48</sup> CAC TR 13931, minutes of Commission Nationale des Salaires, 17 April 1946, p.3.

<sup>49</sup> AN F1a 4731, "'Situation de la France à la veille des consultations électorales,' synthèse générale des rapports des Préfets pour la période du 10 août au 10 septembre 1946," Minister of the Interior, 23 September 1946, p.3.

The possibility of worker participation in the fixing of salaries or of a fairer distribution of benefits did not emerge from these consultations and reports. The interest of the state administration centred solely on greater productivity arising from profit-sharing. In May 1947, a Ministry of Labour report stated:

"Dans les revendications ouvrières actuelles, s'il n'est pas possible de satisfaire les demandes d'augmentation de salaire proprement dites, il y a cependant un élément qui doit être retenu: la demande d'une participation des producteurs aux avantages qui résultent de l'augmentation de la production."<sup>50</sup>

At the time, however, even the CGT position was changing, not simply extolling production for its own sake but emphasising with renewed vigour the question of who benefited from increased production. The embarrassment of the CGT local branch and the change in tone were both evident in *l'Accélérateur*, the CGT newspaper at the nationalised firm of Renault: in March 1947, it had urged, "Il n'est pas de problème plus urgent, ni plus nécessaire que celui de la productivité." In May 1947, during the strike, it wrote: "... produire! d'accord, mais que ce soit au bénéfice de la Nation et des travailleurs et non pas pour le profit des inutiles ou des privilégiés."<sup>51</sup>

The idea of a system of profit-sharing was not well regarded by unions, owing partly to the distributional implications: the employees would have no say in fixing the benefits payable to the workforce. The Paris Divisional Labour Inspector reported unions' criticisms:

"Les ouvriers ne recevant qu'une part bien souvent minime des bénéfices, toute augmentation de leur activité aura surtout pour effet d'accroître les bénéfices du patron. ... En bref, ce système de rémunération ne permet pas une véritable collaboration du personnel à la gestion de l'entreprise."<sup>52</sup>

The Ministry of Labour ignored these reservations and, in subsequent years, along with other government departments, tried to promote greater productivity hand in hand with profit-sharing arrangements, the primary aim remaining increased productivity.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> CAC TR 13819, "Primes à la production et au rendement," report for Ministry of Labour, 14 May 1947.

<sup>51</sup> CAC TR 13641, cited in Ministry of Labour report on RNUR, no date [1947].

<sup>52</sup> CAC TR 13649, report of Paris Divisional Labour Inspector to Minister of Labour, 17 March 1949.

<sup>53</sup> See the voluminous material on productivity: CAC TR 13819: articles 39, 39bis, 40 of proposed budget of 1952; proceedings of the Comité National de la Productivité; reports of productivity missions to the U.S.A.; CAC TR 14121: "La productivité: source de bien-être," brochure by l'Association Française pour l'Accroissement de la Productivité, [1951]; CAC DRT 937: yearbooks listing members of productivity missions to the U.S.A., 1949-1953; CAC TR 10111: "engagement du stagiaire" for productivity missions, including a clause whereby the participant would agree to set up productivity indices in her/his branch of industry.

### e. The reaction of labour inspectors

Labour inspectors did not challenge the right of the *patronat* to bring in increased rationalisation at the workplace. Their role was to end disputes and to encourage production, not to prevent new workplace practices introduced in the name of expanded productivity and production. As already discussed in the last two chapters, labour inspectors actively promoted the *comités d'entreprises*, however, because they opened up possibilities of a new workplace collaborative spirit, which, the inspectors hoped, would lead to higher production.

The official representatives of the Ministry of Labour were more circumspect regarding rationalisation measures and managerial authority, however. The inspectorate was meant to abet collaboration between the interested parties at the workplace while not interfering in the management of the firm. Despite the increased willingness of workers and their organisations to work with the state, they could not expect state intervention to match their concerns, except in moments of acute tension. Public authorities debated the scope and organisation of the inspectorate simply as a technical matter: for instance, the Lille *commissaire* Francis-Louis Closon's suggestion, already mentioned, that divisional labour inspectors coordinate work conflicts and assume the powers of other inspectors from the Inspection des Mines, Ponts et Chaussées, was advanced "dans l'attente d'une organisation plus rationnelle des services intéressés."<sup>54</sup>

The inspectors attempted to continue to fulfil their mandate of resolving disputes even in 1948, after the strike wave of 1947, and the ensuing worsening of labour relations and the national political climate. The statistical service, reporting the strike figures in May 1948, noted: "Les litiges ont toujours pu être tranchés par l'Inspecteur du Travail et le travail a repris très rapidement."<sup>55</sup> However, they could not always collect the relevant data<sup>56</sup> and increasingly sided with employers in industrial disputes - as when the Divisional Labour Inspector approved a company's decision to dismiss a militant in Montrouge for union activities, despite having initially backed the worker.<sup>57</sup>

This change in outlook in favour of employers reflected the shift in political balance and atmosphere after the expulsion of the Communists from the government in

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<sup>54</sup> CAC TR 13636, letter from Pierre Mendès France, MEN, urging acceptance of Francis-Louis Closon's idea, to Minister of Labour, 27 January 1945. Closon's letter is also in this archive. See chapter III, section 3.

<sup>55</sup> CAC TR 13521, Service Central de Statistique, Ministry of Labour, report of May 1948.

<sup>56</sup> See chapter VII, section 2.

<sup>57</sup> CAC TR 14030, letter from Lucien Debat to Minister of Labour, 11 July 1948 and memo from Labour Inspector (M. Carré) to Paris Divisional Labour Inspector, 9 September 1948; also see above, note 13.

May 1947 and the political cast given by successive national strikes. It was mirrored in the entire apparatus of the Ministry of Labour, from Daniel Mayer, the Minister, down. In a letter to the Secretary of the CGT Fédération des Travailleurs de la Métallurgie (FTM) in April 1948 concerning the difficulties encountered by the FTM in putting up union posters in certain plants, the Minister affirmed that the display of union information had to be allowed in all firms, as long as

"les communications affichées ne sauraient être, par leur caractère polémique, de nature à troubler le bon ordre de l'entreprise et à porter ainsi préjudice à son bon fonctionnement."<sup>58</sup>

Such ministerial instructions clearly favoured industrial harmony, even if imposed from outside. In these circumstances, it was unlikely that workers would have state allies in their struggle against intensified workplace practices and for greater participation on their terms. A synthesis of confidential prefectural reports from 41 departments in June 1948, for example, revealed the prefects' lack of sympathy for worker grievances, deemed to be exploited for, if not inspired by, political ends:

"Grèves en chaîne, grèves partielles, grèves perlées un peu partout. Le travail reprend sans que satisfaction soit forcément obtenue. D'où la lassitude signalée par de nombreux préfets qui estiment qu'elles sont déclenchées à titre de sondage et pour tenir en haleine les ouvriers et saboter la production (conflit déclenché par une équipe d'ouvriers effectuant un travail pénible, dans un atelier indispensable à la marche de l'usine)."<sup>59</sup>

At a time of increased government intervention, these state officials paradoxically retreated to an old-fashioned laissez-faire approach in industrial relations. Labour inspectors and other state representatives did not interfere with the managerial prerogative of employers, nor did they evince much understanding of the changing workplace practices, let alone any sympathy for the affected workers.

### 3. Collective bargaining

Despite the promulgation in December 1946 of a new law on collective bargaining, the Ministry of Labour desired to steer well clear of detailed salary negotiations between employers and unions. The effect of this distancing was to keep in place traditional antagonistic industrial relations in the firm and to reduce further the likelihood of effective worker participation in the workplace or the state.

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<sup>58</sup> CAC TR 14036, letter from Minister of Labour (Daniel Mayer) to Secretary of FTM, 8 April 1948.

<sup>59</sup> AN F1cIII 1234, synthesis of confidential prefect reports from 41 departments, June 1948 (underlining in original).

The need for collective bargaining agreements was a longstanding demand of trade unions, the heritage of the gains of the Popular Front. Prior to the 1930s, there had only been a few isolated agreements, usually reached as the result of strikes.<sup>60</sup> François Sellier blames the individualism and lack of organisation of French employers for the slow development of collective bargaining.<sup>61</sup> A memorandum of the CGPF in 1934 stated: "Les conventions collectives constituent, pour les entreprises, une limitation de leur liberté, contraire à leur fonctionnement normal" and ended with the warning that a collective bargaining system would lead inevitably to "l'ingérence de l'État," state interference.<sup>62</sup> For Salomon Schwarz, this intransigent employer attitude was to play a vital part in inciting workers in May-June 1936 to question their inferior status vis-à-vis their *patrons*. When the employers were forced to acquiesce and sign the Matignon Accord in June 1936, recognising union rights and collective bargaining, it was a unique achievement for the French working class, which gave workers practical experience of bargaining.<sup>63</sup> Julian Jackson writes that "the previous structures of authority had been irremediably undermined by the experience of June 1936; it was not clear what new ones were to be created in their place."<sup>64</sup>

The Matignon Accord led to a rapid upsurge in the number of collective contracts signed,<sup>65</sup> but there were soon disputes over interpretation. Eventually, in December 1936, a new short-term bill on compulsory arbitration was introduced by the Léon Blum government. Although many conflicts in 1936-1937 were settled by departmental arbitration commissions and by more lengthy conciliation procedures, business leaders tried to prevent the application of labour legislation or, where they could not, to dilute its content.<sup>66</sup> Richard Vinen notes that the arbitration system was regarded with horror by employers when it was introduced, but that they came to exploit it quite effectively, to their own satisfaction.<sup>67</sup> By the summer of 1937, the arbitration law had, thus, already been discredited for many workers, as a report by the Services du Premier Ministre in 1937 made clear:

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<sup>60</sup> Salomon Schwarz, "Les occupations d'usines en France de mai et juin 1936," in International Review for Social History, 2, Leiden, 1937, p.52.

<sup>61</sup> François Sellier, La Confrontation sociale en France, 1936-1981, Paris, 1984, ch.2.

<sup>62</sup> cited by Schwarz, p.55.

<sup>63</sup> Schwarz, pp.51,52,56,86.

<sup>64</sup> Julian Jackson, The Popular Front in France: Defending Democracy, 1934-1938, Cambridge, 1988, p.107.

<sup>65</sup> The average number of contracts signed annually between 1930 and 1935 was 22; between June and December 1936, it was 2,336. Jackson, p.110.

<sup>66</sup> Richard Vinen, The Politics of French Business, 1936-1945, Cambridge, 1991, p.76.

<sup>67</sup> Vinen, pp.77-78.

"Lenteur excessive des procédures, désaccord de plus en plus fréquents sur la compétence, développement de conflits à base économique ou technique, nombre croissant de sentences non exécutées: tout cela diminue l'autorité de la loi et la déconsidère aux yeux de la classe ouvrière."<sup>68</sup>

The "lenteur excessive" came about because the *patrons* were dragging their feet over the nomination of their representatives (without which the arbitration commissions could not function), the report added. Indeed, the government did blame the employers: Prime Minister Camille Chautemps noted on 1 January 1938 that of 53 violations of arbitration rulings, 43 were due to employer intransigence.<sup>69</sup> When the law came up for renewal in 1938, a revised version was passed but the employers this time refused to accept it.<sup>70</sup> The resulting strikes and occupations in November 1938 -- mixed with the Communist campaign against the Munich Agreement, passed by the French Assembly the previous month -- were violently suppressed. Julian Jackson notes:

"By failing to provide any convincing new structures of authority in the factory or to set up an effective arbitration machinery, the leaders of the Popular Front had left the victories of 1936 dangerously exposed to the counter-attack of the employers."<sup>71</sup>

Although it was not altogether clear that the state could by itself be an effective substitute for capable, united worker organisation on the shopfloor, workers became even more committed, in 1938, to fighting for legislation that would last and for guarantees upon which they could rely. In February 1938, the CGT metalworkers passed a resolution calling for employers to sign their collective agreement, requesting inscribed guarantees of their salaries in order to maintain their purchasing power -- "garanties qu'ils sont prêts par tous les moyens qu'ils conservent en leur pouvoir à exiger ..."<sup>72</sup>

This commitment to the search for guarantees in collective bargaining was reinforced after the Liberation, when workers naturally once more looked to the state to provide the guarantees absent in 1938 and missing since. During the Vichy regime, the institutions of collective bargaining had been commandeered by the state to the greater

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<sup>68</sup> AN F60 622, "Note sur l'application de la loi sur la conciliation et l'arbitrage obligatoires," Services du Premier Ministre, 6 July 1937.

<sup>69</sup> Michel Margairaz, L'État, les finances et l'économie: Histoire d'une conversion, 1932-1952, Paris, 1991, vol.1, p.376.

<sup>70</sup> Jackson, p.110.

<sup>71</sup> Jackson, p.112.

<sup>72</sup> AN F60 642, resolution by *métallos* of XVe, 28 February 1938, as cited by Services du Premier Ministre.

benefit of the *patronat*.<sup>73</sup> The Ministry of Labour recognised after the Liberation that, in order to resolve work disputes, legislation on collective bargaining would have to be recast as the wartime laws

"ont retiré aux organisations syndicales le pouvoir de régler par voie de conventions collectives la majeure partie des conditions de travail, et ont suspendu l'application des procédures de conciliation et d'arbitrage des conflits du travail."<sup>74</sup>

In order to educate workers about this renewed focus of the state on collective bargaining, CGT courses for the *comités d'entreprises* delegates, for instance, featured extensive teaching about collective bargaining, arbitration, and conciliation procedures and focused on the role of the state at each stage. The lesson on conciliation reminded the delegates that, as from 1936, "l'État imposait aux parties une tentative de conciliation." The discussion of arbitration assessed the roles of the various public authorities and concluded that labour inspectors, prefects, and *commissaires* did not have sufficient powers and that conflicts would be resolved finally by the "superarbitre," the Minister of Labour, in agreement with other ministers.<sup>75</sup> The CGT's analysis showed the delegates, therefore, that power in the French centralist state lay with the Minister of Labour himself -- at the time, the Communist, Ambroise Croizat -- and so reminded them that action at the workplace was insufficient unless doubled by political action. This importance of political action hinted at the need for the union to maintain a transmission-belt tie to the Communist Party in order to ensure long-lasting guarantees.

In December 1946, a new law on collective agreements was passed, which abrogated previous legislation and enshrined workers' and unions' rights. It did not concern itself with the question of wage rates, as they were now determined by government decrees, resulting in the suspension of salary conciliation and arbitration. The law established a hierarchy whereby national agreements would be necessary before agreements were concluded at other levels. It was a slower, less effective system than in 1936, although its scope was wider and national agreements might serve as a palliative for the weakness of unions at plant level. In addition, it stipulated that workers' and employers' representatives would meet under the aegis of the Ministry of

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<sup>73</sup> See Vinen, ch.9, especially pp.116-124, 134-137. Richard Vinen absolves the *patronat* of direct responsibility for the brutal wartime treatment of labour, a view which disregards intensified workplace pressure by employers, including more rationalisation. See Fridenson and Robert, pp.127-129.

<sup>74</sup> CAC TR 13633, "Bilan et programme de l'activité du ministère du travail en matière de relations professionnelles et d'organisation sociale," Ministry of Labour, 17 December 1945, pp.14-15.

<sup>75</sup> CAC DRT 1146, "Programme d'enseignement pour la formation technique des délégués ouvriers dans les comités d'entreprises : cours du 1er degré," no date [1945]: Lesson 7 by Roger Lapeyre, General Secretary of the Fédération des Fonctionnaires, des Travaux Publics et des Transports.

Labour in the Commission Supérieure des Conventions Collectives, composed of representatives from the CGT, CFTC, CNPF, the Minister's staff, the Ministry of National Economy, and the Commissariat Général du Plan. The remit of the Commission was to oversee national collective agreements and to offer recommendations on government salary decrees.

At the first session of the Commission Supérieure des Conventions Collectives, in January 1947, Benoît Frachon, the CGT General Secretary, spoke of the CGT's impatience for the start of proceedings not only of the new Commission, which was national in scope, but especially of the industry-wide *commissions mixtes*. These *commissions mixtes* were to be meetings of union and employer delegations, designed to come up with collective agreements for the principal industries.<sup>76</sup> Already, Renault workers had cited CNPF delaying tactics about discussion of the new law on the *conventions collectives* ("... mais le CNPF manœuvre pour en retarder la discussion."<sup>77</sup>) Later, there were petitions<sup>78</sup> and worker protests, such as at Lyon on 1 March 1947, intended to show "la ferme volonté des travailleurs d'obtenir un salaire minimum vital et la signature des conventions collectives nationales."<sup>79</sup>

The CGT and CNPF reached an accord in the summer of 1947 on salaries but failed to achieve an agreement on the *conventions collectives*. Their joint declaration announced a commitment -- in the end, to no avail -- to reach "un accord précis sur les méthodes de travail permettant d'augmenter la production et le rendement sans mettre en péril la santé des travailleurs ..." <sup>80</sup>

A report for the Direction du Travail in September 1948 measured the progress achieved by the legislation and discussions in the Commission and cited employer reluctance to recognise unions' rights:

"On peut conclure que d'une manière générale, les délégations patronales ... se montrent toutefois assez réticentes en ce qui concerne la reconnaissance des

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<sup>76</sup> CAC TR 13677, minutes of the first session of the Commission Supérieure des Conventions Collectives, 18 January 1947, p.2.

<sup>77</sup> AN F1a 4735, Direction des Renseignements Généraux, 7 January 1947, citing Syndicat des Métaux de Boulogne-Billancourt (RNUR) leaflet headed: "En avant! Vers de nouvelles conquêtes!"

<sup>78</sup> See CAC TR 13754 for petition to the Commission Supérieure des Conventions Collectives, signed by 60 CGT Michelin employees (received 20 February 1947):

"Nous, soussignés, ingénieurs, cadres, techniciens, employés et ouvriers, demandent instamment que les discussions en vue de l'établissement et la signature d'une convention collective unique, et la fixation du salaire minimum vital, aient lieu le plus rapidement possible.

"Le rapport entre les prix actuels et nos salaires ne nous permet plus d'assurer l'existence décente de nos familles."

<sup>79</sup> AN F1a 4739, Direction des Renseignements Généraux, 18 March 1947.

<sup>80</sup> CAC TR 13819, "Déclaration commune de la CGT et du CNPF," 1 August 1947.

privilèges réclamés au nom du principe de la liberté syndicale par les délégations ouvrières."<sup>81</sup>

The report also made clear that workers were seeking firm guarantees about union freedom:

"Les travailleurs ... reconnaissent ... que l'action syndicale ne doit pas constituer une gêne pour le bon fonctionnement de l'entreprise, mais ils tiennent à s'assurer une sécurité aussi large que possible dans l'exercice de l'action syndicale et ils revendiquent, parallèlement aux déclarations de principe, toute une série d'avantages concrets."<sup>82</sup>

Workers' delegates in the Commission Supérieure des Conventions Collectives demanded certain union controls over hiring and firing and the availability of time for union duties by union delegates. Employers wanted to make known their workforce requirements only to the Service Départemental de la Main-d'Oeuvre and they refused to surrender their right to hire directly, without interference.

One example of the differences between trade unions and management regarding unions' rights can be found in the CGT and UIMM positions in the negotiation of the *convention collective nationale de la métallurgie* in September 1947. The employer delegation specifically rejected article 12 of the proposed agreement about the availability of time for union duties:

"Dans le cas où le syndiqué est appelé à remplir une fonction syndicale imposant sa mise en disponibilité temporaire, la réintégration dans le même emploi et aux mêmes conditions à l'expiration de ce mandat sera obligatoire de plein droit."<sup>83</sup>

For employers, the legislation imposed "des complications inutiles, préjudiciables à la bonne marche des entreprises." The Ministry of Labour tried to establish a procedure for the firing of *délégués du personnel* and members of *comités d'entreprises*, but even this advice, as we have seen, was contravened by employers.<sup>84</sup>

The Ministry of Labour recognised that neither employers nor workers were satisfied by the relevant legislation of December 1946. For its part, the view of the Ministry of Labour administration was that collective agreements were not intended to freeze social arrangements at their current level but were meant to encourage future progress in industrial relations. The Ministry had to acknowledge that this goal had been "trop souvent [perdu] de vue par les négociateurs." It attributed the lack of

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<sup>81</sup> CAC 860561/1, report on law of 23 December 1946 on collective agreements and work of Commission Supérieure des Conventions Collectives, Direction du Travail, 20 September 1948.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid. (my underlining)

<sup>83</sup> CAC TR 13709, "Positions respectives de la CGT et de l'UIMM pour l'élaboration de la convention collective nationale de la métallurgie," 25 September 1947.

<sup>84</sup> CAC DRT 1148, letter from Minister of Labour to Departmental Directors of Labour and appended memo, no date [after March 1947]; and see above, note 13.

success in formulating collective agreements to the "climat social ..., qui ne connaît plus l'élan généreux qui a suivi la Libération" and also to the incapacity of the state to intervene:

"... la contradiction indéniable que connaissent tous les États qui veulent concilier l'initiative nécessaire et souvent plus efficace du législateur, avec le maintien d'un système contractuel. Cette contradiction est singulièrement accrue lorsque c'est aux Pouvoirs Publics qu'il appartient d'orienter l'économie par une intervention directe en matière de prix, de salaires et d'emploi de la main-d'oeuvre, et même d'établir des statuts particuliers pour des branches importantes d'activité."<sup>85</sup>

Nevertheless, the Ministry of Labour was also keen to escape from the detail, particularly in connection with collective bargaining. Its goal was for the social partners to take responsibility; otherwise, they would not bargain and would leave matters to the state, as demonstrated by the bad faith of employers in appealing selectively to state-sanctioned agreements (see above, pp. 130-131). Daniel Mayer, the Minister of Labour, implicitly referred to this objective at the first session of the Commission Supérieure des Conventions Collectives, in January 1947:

"Le rôle de la commission ... ne sera pas de discuter les détails. Sa tâche essentielle sera, lorsque surgiront des difficultés, d'essayer de les aplanir, de donner des conseils ... Il y a grand intérêt à laisser les représentants patronaux et ouvriers des différentes industries entrer en rapport et commencer eux-mêmes les discussions."<sup>86</sup>

Mayer also asked members of the Commission, which included Robert Marjolin, from the Commissariat Général du Plan, to bear in mind the Plan: "Il a ensuite demandé à la Commission de se placer dans le cadre du plan de modernisation et d'équipement et a rappelé que les quatre éléments, prix, salaires, production et monnaie, ne sauraient être dissociés."<sup>87</sup> The focus was on the need to embrace the larger picture, the planning of the economy, and this could be done without significant input from labour, as would soon be shown, when the CGT withdrew from the Plan, after the ejection of the PCF ministers from the government.

The government and the state steered clear of much -- and, increasingly, more -- of the terrain of collective bargaining because long-established conflictual relations between labour and management risked dragging the administration and the government into the quicksands of industrial conflict. When it did try to intervene, the state often

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<sup>85</sup> CAC 860561/1, report on law of 23 December 1946 on collective agreements and work of Commission Supérieure des Conventions Collectives, Direction du Travail, 20 September 1948.

<sup>86</sup> CAC TR 13677, minutes of the first session of the Commission Supérieure des Conventions Collectives, 18 January 1947, p.3.

<sup>87</sup> CAC TR 13677, minutes of the first session of the Commission Supérieure des Conventions Collectives, 18 January 1947, p.2.

lacked power and merely encouraged employers' bad faith in bargaining. By relinquishing much of that terrain to the unions and the *patronat*, however, the state administration was effectively keeping in place long-established conflictual relations.

#### 4. Conclusion

After the Liberation, employers only reluctantly agreed to concessions in their dealings with state administrators. Instead, they sought increased control at the workplace, by carrying out rationalisation initiatives and by fighting tenaciously against the provisions of the legislation on the *comités d'entreprises*. They had also become well-organised at the national level, by re-launching a national employers' association, the CNPF. Employers encountered few problems in representing themselves both in the workplace and in the state and in opposing every extension of worker participation.

State intervention, even enlarged as it was in the immediate Liberation period, could not overturn long-established prejudices in industrial relations. By 1947-1948, employers had reasserted their control at the workplace, at the same time as the strike defeats and union splits had cost the trade unions their large gains in membership. The workers and their representatives had not had time to integrate into the machinery of the state and so the trade unions, in particular, could not easily palliate their shopfloor weakness by more easily invoking the state. Also, worker participation in the workplace and in the state was not a principal aim of the CGT, a topic examined in the next chapter. The paradox of an interventionist state at the mercy of old-fashioned industrial relations would not be resolved for another two decades.

## **Chapter VI      Constraints on Participation:    The CGT**

### **1. Introduction**

This chapter examines the role played by the CGT in constraining worker participation in the workplace. We saw in the last chapter how employers intensified rationalisation measures and impeded every extension of worker participation in the firm. In support of the PCF battle for production, the CGT also adopted a productivist outlook, which distanced it from some members of its own constituency.

The CGT faced a dilemma as to what type of worker participation to back. The long struggle between Guesdist and syndicalist ideas in the labour movement had led to a lack of experience in participating in state-supported structures and in the workplace. Exerting more influence at the level of the state was the more likely option. At the same time, there was a longstanding syndicalist element within the CGT opting for more radical versions of worker control at the workplace. The traditional lack of union strength on the shopfloor; internal union divisions, particularly between Communists and non-Communists; divisions between workers on the basis of skills, nationality, and gender all resulted in the failure to overcome supposed post-Liberation employer weakness in the private sector by solidly increasing union membership and organisation. The CGT thus showed little flexibility in dealing with the possibility of new decision-making capacities at the level of the workplace. Instead, it highlighted the productivist concerns of the PCF to ensure that the Communists remained a party of government and the union confederation focused worker demands on the admittedly acute question of inflation and penury of supplies. There was only episodic attention to demands for relaxing speed-up at work, much less for worker participation.

The chapter begins with a general consideration of the CGT's attitude to the state, before assessing the implications for the CGT of its support for the PCF line on productivity. The confederation faced mounting pressure from some parts of the workforce, as the rate of absenteeism and the number of workplace disputes increased. The CGT's emphasis on political rather than industrial solidarity obscured divisions between workers in the workplace, based on nationality, gender, and skill level. The CGT's focus concerned work and production, not the encouragement of participation.

### **2. The politics of the CGT**

#### **a. The CGT and the state**

The CGT accepted in principle the decision-making capacities of each level of government as given and did not set the terms for any worker involvement in the

institutions of the French state, outside the participation of the PCF in government. It did not press for any fundamental reworking of the state, much like the PCF, which did not even want limited decentralisation at the regional level, once it was assured of representation at the centre.

At times, the moderate attitude of the CGT to the state was a drawback for their relationship with workers. The incident at Le Mans, in September 1947, referred to in chapter III, showed how CGT executive members in Sarthe, all Communists, were experiencing difficulties in maintaining discipline because of their moderate attitude towards the prefect.<sup>1</sup> When the union leader told the crowd that the demonstration was against the government, not the prefect himself, he failed not only to detect the anger of the protesters, themselves almost all Communists or sympathisers, but also that he was out of step with his members. What was needed was a different type of decision-making, offering more access to the workers.

The CGT had settled after the First World War into a "centralised militant structure based on big industrial unions working largely through delegation of power," in the words of Gérard Noiriel.<sup>2</sup> The confederal nature of the CGT required a national bureaucracy, yet the operating structure was a notional centralist system only, since each member union federation and departmental branch ran itself. The absence of strong union roots at the workplace, according to Noiriel, ensured that Léon Jouhaux's "policy of participation," elaborated by the general secretary after the war, resulted in consultation taking place only between the national directors of the union and not "at the most fundamental level," the workplace.<sup>3</sup> The partisans of direct action, CGTU syndicalists and Communist militants, persecuted in the workplace<sup>4</sup> and linked to an isolated, minority party, secured no place in this new way of operating, until union reunification and the Popular Front. During the Popular Front and after, leftist syndicalists continued to be critical of the centralised CGT structure and it was they, according to Roger Magraw, who "took the initiative in fomenting the strikes of spring 1938 against wage cuts, speed-ups and a rising accident rate."<sup>5</sup> However, after the Liberation, increased state intervention, the presence of the PCF in government, and the

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<sup>1</sup> See above, chapter III, section 4.

<sup>2</sup> Gérard Noiriel, Workers in French Society in the 19th and 20th Centuries, Oxford, 1990, p.153.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Henri Jourdain, for example, "survived as a [CGTU] *unitaire* leader at the Wybot airplane factory just long enough to organize a single protest" and remained "a militant on the move ... one step ahead of the blacklist." Herrick Chapman, State Capitalism and Working-Class Radicalism in the French Aircraft Industry, Berkeley, 1991, p.61.

<sup>5</sup> Roger Magraw, A History of the French Working Class, Volume II: Workers and the Bourgeois Republic, Oxford, 1992, p.287.

CGT's links to the party and its predominance among skilled workers in heavy industry and white-collar workers in the public sector all ensured that the CGT was eager to participate in the institutions of the state on behalf of its constituents. Typical of the attitude during this era was the radicalism of the aircraft workers, described by Herrick Chapman as "CGT-oriented, productivist, and optimistic about the gains workers can make in state-supervised industries in periods of left-wing political resurgence."<sup>6</sup>

Some CGT members, such as Pierre Le Brun and Albert Gazier, both Socialist *confédérés*, and Henri Jourdain, of the *unitaires*, placed more emphasis on worker democracy than on taking part in the structures of government but did not succeed in altering established CGT thinking.<sup>7</sup> Gazier, for example, was a strong proponent of worker participation who, reluctant to give the state too much authority, advocated "un dirigisme qui soit libéral."<sup>8</sup> There was also a lingering syndicalist undercurrent, appealed to by the Trotskyists at Renault and later in the Loire-Atlantique FO. The old instinct was perhaps also given freer reign in the CGT after the events of 1947. A CGT congress in Indre-et-Loire in May 1948, for instance, resolved that it was inadvisable simply to remain within the limited setting of laws and decrees:

"Il est une autre conception avec laquelle il faut également briser, c'est le légalisme. Se contenter de rester dans le cadre étroit des lois et décrets promulgués à l'égard des travailleurs, c'est piétiner sur place et ne pas avancer, en particulier dans la période présente, sur le problème des salaires."<sup>9</sup>

This turning away from state institutions and possible renewed emphasis on the workplace advocated by syndicalists was difficult for the CGT, except for the most basic bread and butter demand: remuneration. That was partly because the confederation's focus had been on participation at the level of the state -- especially since it was strongest precisely in the state sector and in those industries with newly-acquired *statuts*, such as the dockworkers -- but also owing to the increased importance of government intervention, particularly with the Plan of 1946. Herrick Chapman

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<sup>6</sup> Chapman, p.313.

<sup>7</sup> See chapter II, section 4c for more on Jourdain; Gazier gave up the CGT for a parliamentary career; Le Brun, representing technicians on the CGT Bureau, had been expelled by the Radical Socialists and voted with the Communists: Val Lorwin, "The Struggle for Control of the French Trade-Union Movement, 1945-1949," in Edward Earle, ed, Modern France: Problems of the Third and Fourth Republics, Princeton, 1951, p.204.

<sup>8</sup> Andrew Shennan, Rethinking France: Plans for Renewal, 1940-1946, Oxford, 1989, pp.196,235.

<sup>9</sup> IFHS, Fonds Marty, Congrès de l'Union Départementale des Syndicats Ouvriers d'Indre-et-Loire, 22-23 May 1948. This departmental union was dominated by the CGT *cheminots* of Saint Pierre des Corps, who may well have been regretting the absence at the SNCF of a *statut du personnel*, as existed at EDF, for example. See Georges Ribeill, "Y a-t-il eu des nationalisations avant la guerre?" in Claire Andrieu, Lucette Le Van and Antoine Prost, eds, Les Nationalisations de la Libération: De l'utopie au compromis, Paris, 1987, p.52.

notes that the labour gains in the aircraft industry of 1936 and 1944-1945 had made "conservative stabilizers like [prime ministers] Daladier and Ramadier all the more intent to find ways to break the back of the CGT without diminishing the power of the ministries to manage the industry as a whole." This strategy of seeking to repress the CGT without reversing state control ran head on into the determination of the CGT to keep its membership and organisational advantages in the public sector as its last bastions. As a consequence, according to Chapman, the entire nationalised sector remained "a highly politicized, and hence deeply contested, arena of labor relations for years to come."<sup>10</sup>

The focus and the structure of the CGT were adapted to an interventionist strategy in the state along well-established lines. There was little inclination or flexibility within the CGT structure to deal with the possibility of new decision-making capacities at the level of the workplace, which would be more difficult to control or politicise in the interests of a party that thought in terms of state power and the systematic subordination of cells (soviets) to party control. Henri Jourdain gives the example of Raymond Sémat, general secretary of the Fédération des Métaux, the metalworkers' union, who was schooled in union ways and demands of the 1930s and had difficulty in understanding the changed nature of demands after the Liberation.<sup>11</sup> Chapman summarises the position of the union vis-à-vis its members very well:

"Those features of the CGT that made its militants so effective in representing workers in the 1930s and 1940s -- its hierarchical organization, its discipline, its affiliation with the Communist Party, and its focus on the struggle for state power -- also undercut its capacity to respond flexibly to the rank and file."<sup>12</sup>

After the Liberation, the focus of the CGT remained worker, or more precisely, union participation at state, national, regional, and, to an extent, local levels. CGT representatives at the workplace encountered difficulties with this strategy as workers expected quicker results than could be provided by intervention through official channels; they were not always happy to entrust their future to a politicised minority at the workplace. This minority provided the union representatives of the workers, expounded moderation and attempted to check strike action. However, their adherence to the government's policies on salaries and prices in the difficult living conditions of the immediate post-Liberation period made their position increasingly open to challenge.<sup>13</sup> In one example at Sète in September 1945, dockworkers' new

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<sup>10</sup> Chapman, p.312.

<sup>11</sup> Henri Jourdain, *Comprendre pour accomplir*, Paris, 1982, p.65.

<sup>12</sup> Chapman, p.305.

<sup>13</sup> See chapter III, section 4 for report of Commissaire de la République à Angers (Alain Savary), 7 June 1945, warning the government of the consequences of this imbalance.

"exorbitant demands" (such as pay for two extra hours as waiting hours) were not backed by their union leaders, who offered their resignations. The *commissaire* refused to see the leaders until the union situation was settled. Finally, the dockworkers' demands were dropped and the union representatives kept their jobs.<sup>14</sup>

The CGT supported official government policies from 1944 to 1947, partly because of its ties to the PCF, which had ministers in the provisional government and then was a member of the ruling tripartite coalition with the MRP and the SFIO. Having learned useful lessons during the Popular Front period (see chapter II, section 3b)i), the CGT tried to target the state after the Liberation. The confederation helped to obtain some notable successes, such as worker statutes and social legislation. Communist ministers constructed favourable terms for trade unions in the newly-nationalised sectors, such as at the EDF, thanks to Marcel Paul, and at Renault, and for civil servants with Maurice Thorez's *statut de la fonction publique*. The focus, if not the structure, of the CGT, however, were adapted to an interventionist strategy in Paris along well-established lines, particularly in conjunction with the PCF. After the exclusion of the Communist ministers in May 1947 and the strikes of 1947-1948, high state officials in the central services, however, preferred to work with business leaders, as we saw in the last chapter. The next section explores further the CGT ties to the PCF.

### **b. CGT-PCF ties**

The closeness of the CGT to the PCF imposed choices on the union confederation which hindered its ability to obtain an independent voice for workers in the institutions of the state or in firms. The CGT's close association with the PCF presented problems in practice and in theory, many of which foreshadowed the growing estrangement of some sections of the working class from the CGT and also the confederation's division in 1947.

The CGT and the PCF both supported increased rationalisation at the workplace during the "battle for production." The general secretary of the PCF, Maurice Thorez, urged workers to increase production on many occasions. On a visit to the Valenciennes coal fields on Christmas Eve 1945, Thorez, Marcel Paul, the Minister of Industrial Production, and Benoît Frachon, the CGT general secretary, all made "un appel rigoureux pour l'accroissement de la production."<sup>15</sup> This visit and others

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<sup>14</sup> AN F1a 4029, report of Commissaire de la République à Montpellier (Jacques Bounin), 15 September 1945.

<sup>15</sup> AN F1a 4029, report of Préfet du Nord, no date [December 1945].

followed the famous speech by Thorez at Waziers (Nord) on 21 July 1945 entitled "Produire, faire du charbon," in which he exhorted all miners to make a patriotic sacrifice for their country by stepping up production.<sup>16</sup> According to Monique Luirard, the miners were seen as the elite of the working class and they were courted by the Communist ministers.<sup>17</sup> Before the war, the PCF had not been against rationalisation and new technology as such in principle but had emphasised the issue of whether or not the working class would profit from their introduction.<sup>18</sup> The decision by the PCF to abandon this concern, as well as its extreme productivist language in the early period of the Liberation, effectively limited the opportunities for the party to speak to those workers desiring participation along other lines.

The PCF pursued the battle for production in the coal mining industry as part of its effort to show that the ruling coalition could not govern without the inclusion of the party.<sup>19</sup> To this end, the CGT and PCF sought to maintain good relations with the American embassy, at least until the departure of the Communist ministers from the government. In June 1945, an attaché from the U.S. embassy participated in a special *congrès du charbon* in Saint-Étienne, which brought together state, mining and union leaders to discuss plans to increase production in the coal mines.<sup>20</sup> As late as February 1947, Irwin Wall writes, Maurice Thorez "was still trying to legitimate the PCF in American eyes" by informing Jefferson Caffery, the Ambassador, of "the CGT's restraint on the wage issue and commitment to the control of inflation."<sup>21</sup> That information was, however, as likely to confirm the Ambassador in his view that the CGT was but a transmission belt for the PCF and that the party via the union had placed its "sleepers" (moles) in the apparatus of the state at the Liberation (see below, pages 165-166).

The CGT also desired to curry favour with the public authorities, such as prefects and *commissaires*, in order to make itself indispensable to them and so fashioned demands to suit the needs of the government. The *commissaire* at Clermont-Ferrand went so far as to praise the union militants who were doing their best to head

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<sup>16</sup> The speech is reprinted in Maurice Thorez, Oeuvres choisies en trois volumes, tome 2: 1938-1950, Paris, 1966.

<sup>17</sup> Monique Luirard, La Région stéphanoise dans la guerre et dans la paix, 1936-1951, Saint-Étienne, 1980, p.796.

<sup>18</sup> IFHS, Fonds Marty 14 AS AM 231 (110): "La lutte de la classe ouvrière contre la rationalisation capitaliste," Paris, no date [1928?].

<sup>19</sup> Darryl Holter, "Politique charbonnière et guerre froide, 1945-1950," Le Mouvement social, 130, January-March 1985, p.42.

<sup>20</sup> Luirard, p.795 and Holter, p.42.

<sup>21</sup> Irwin Wall, The United States and the Making of Postwar France, 1945-1954, Cambridge, 1991, p.101, citing reports in the National Archives and Records Administration, Washington.

off ill-considered protest. He also noted, however, that while workers seemed to be following the militants because of their authority, worker discontent might provoke conflicts difficult to resolve.<sup>22</sup> In Marseille, the CGT delegates informed the prefect, after a large protest meeting about lack of provisions, that they had this time contained the crowd's indignation, but they were not certain of being able to do so again.<sup>23</sup> Another *commissaire*, at Bordeaux, also in the summer of 1945, wrote that the majority of union leaders, whatever their affiliation, were attempting to channel discontent but were not always followed.<sup>24</sup> In Dijon, the *commissaire* reported that workers favoured more "audacious" reforms than the small ones being offered.<sup>25</sup> By the end of 1946 and the first few months of 1947, provincial shop assistants were in favour of industrial action against government austerity measures, despite orders to the contrary from the union leaders.<sup>26</sup>

In practice, the CGT's agreement to the "battle for production" and its autarkic strategy distanced the confederation from its constituency -- being a "syndicat de classe" cost the "syndicat de masse" its mass support.<sup>27</sup> The official CGT policy was "produce first, then make demands." ("Produire d'abord, revendiquer ensuite."<sup>28</sup>) This policy came increasingly to be identified with the strategy of the PCF and did not fully reflect the reality of worker discontent. Opportunities for dissent, however, were limited as the trade union replaced former syndicalists with representatives of the Communist majoritarian faction. In one early instance, the CGT replaced their serving delegate to the CDL in the Alpes-Maritimes with a member of the 1939 majoritarian tendency and a PCF militant.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> AN F1a 4029, report of Commissaire de la République à Clermont-Ferrand (Henry Ingrand), 4 August 1945.

<sup>23</sup> F1cIII 1210, report of Préfet des Bouches-du-Rhône, 15 September 1945.

<sup>24</sup> AN F1a 4029, report of Commissaire de la République à Bordeaux (Maurice Bourguès-Maunoury), 15 July 1945.

<sup>25</sup> AN F1a 4029, report of Commissaire de la République à Dijon (Jean Mairey), 3 August 1945.

<sup>26</sup> AN F1a 4733, RG, 21 December 1946: At Lyon and Bordeaux, "un noyau important d'employés [de commerce] était partisan de déclencher la grève immédiatement malgré les ordres des dirigeants syndicaux, qui comme on le sait sont en majorité de tendance réformiste." At the time of the 1947 split, most of the Fédération des Employés would indeed leave to join the FO. See René Mouriaux, Le Syndicalisme en France depuis 1945, Paris, 1994, p.32.

<sup>27</sup> Michel Dreyfus, Histoire de la C.G.T., Brussels, 1995, p.345, states: "Ce syndicalisme de classe, dont les origines remontent au syndicalisme révolutionnaire, puis qui s'est nourri de l'influence croissante du communisme, est une caractéristique de la CGT."

<sup>28</sup> AN F1a 4023, report of Commissaire de la République à Marseille (Raymond Aubrac), 13 October 1944.

<sup>29</sup> AN F1a 4023, letter from Directeur Départemental Provisoire de la Police in Nice to Prefect of Alpes-Maritimes, 5 October 1944.

There were also deep-seated theoretical and strategic problems in the outlook of the CGT. Did the CGT see itself just as a pressure group or as a wider part of the political opposition itself, in alliance with the PCF? The long-held alternative reformist, Guesdist and syndicalist positions over whether or not to engage in political action gave way in the post-Liberation period to a consensus within the confederation about the CGT's political involvement. At the very least, it was felt by one labour analyst, unions could exert influence on government policy and also politicise the masses, but what was unresolved was their relation to particular political parties.<sup>30</sup> The extent of CGT support for the PCF was a fundamental concern of the minority FO faction, as Grégoire Madjarian notes: "Ce que la tendance 'Force Ouvrière' conteste, c'est le soutien de la [CGT] aux positions communistes et non l'intervention politique proprement dite."<sup>31</sup> SFIO union militants in the Bouches-du-Rhône also were urged to preach union independence and to "liberate" trade unionism from all Communist interference:

"Le rapport d'action syndicale présenté par Mme. Rapuzzi [to the SFIO Federal Congress] conclut à la nécessité de libérer le syndicalisme de toute ingérence communiste. Les militants socialistes ont été invités à intensifier leur propagande ... pour prôner l'indépendance syndicale et combattre la main-mise des éléments communistes sur les organismes syndicaux."<sup>32</sup>

The CFTC was critical of CGT strategy, in particular, the Guesdist (and Leninist) linking of the defense of workers' economic interests with their political interests, with the former subordinated to the latter. The CFTC refused any politicisation and (in harmony with social catholic doctrine) wanted to extend workers' rights within the workplace on the basis of "co-gestion" and "co-propriété."<sup>33</sup>

The role of the CGT was at times all-embracing, as befitted a "syndicat de classe" out to raise the political consciousness of its members and steer its most active ones also into the PCF. It paid attention to shopfloor frustration, as in Nancy, in November 1946, when the union published lists of merchants who had maintained or,

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<sup>30</sup> See Alain Bockel, La Participation des syndicats ouvriers aux fonctions économiques et sociales de l'état, Paris, 1965, pp.587-588.

<sup>31</sup> Grégoire Madjarian, Conflits, pouvoirs et société à la Libération, Paris, 1980, p.334. For syndicalism in French trade unionism, see Jeremy Jennings, Syndicalism in France: A Study of Ideas, London, 1990.

<sup>32</sup> AN F1cIII 1253, report of Préfet des Bouches-du-Rhône on SFIO Federal Congress at Salon-de-Provence, 10 August 1947 (held prior to the Lyon National Congress, 14 and 15 August). Mme. Rapuzzi was a close ally of Gaston Defferre, the Socialist leader in Marseille and member of the SFIO national Comité Directeur. I am grateful to David Goldey for this information.

<sup>33</sup> François Rivet, "Les comités mixtes à la production, 1944-1949," unpublished mémoire de maîtrise, Université de Paris I, 1982.

on the contrary, increased prices.<sup>34</sup> However, the CGT's attempt to win the allegiance of the many unaffiliated workers, especially the unskilled, was only partially successful. It was finally undermined by the determination of its PCF leaders and militants to turn a "syndicat de masse" into a "syndicat de classe," the traditional problem faced also by the CGT's former syndicalist leadership.<sup>35</sup>

### **c. The CGT and the workplace: absenteeism and workplace disputes**

As illustrated in the previous section, workers' grievances at the workplace were not adequately represented by the CGT. CGT militants were unable to respond adequately, according to Herrick Chapman, to "demands for employee autonomy and trade union democracy, which cut against the grain of a Communist movement whose leaders remained committed to party-dominated unionism and 'democratic centralism.'"<sup>36</sup>

The strongly centralist intent of the CGT was illuminated in the attitude of the leadership to the *comités de gestion*. Benoît Frachon did not use the term in his speeches, instead citing the Montluçon *comité*, for instance, as an "initiative populaire," which would help relaunch production.<sup>37</sup> According to Grégoire Madjarian, the CGT did not want to take any self-management initiative which might not be approved by the *commissaires de la République* -- a policy, he adds, designed to limit social conflicts and to give priority to the battle for production<sup>38</sup> -- but also to avoid responsibility.

There was a long history of CGT disregard for worker control initiatives.<sup>39</sup> In the 1920s and early 1930s, worker control, in the sense of the right of workers to participate in management, continued to be associated with syndicalism and social catholic theories of the CFTC, rather than with the CGT or the CGTU, both "more concerned about winning union rights or defending the immediate interests of workers."<sup>40</sup> When the reunited CGT took up the demand for workers' control in the mid-1930s, Andrew Shennan writes, it was part of the plan for nationalisation and state

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<sup>34</sup> An F1cIII 1222, report of Préfet de la Meurthe-et-Moselle, 9 December 1946.

<sup>35</sup> Low unionisation levels have imposed obvious numerical limits to a supposed "syndicalisme de masse" on all French unions. See Dreyfus, pp.322-323.

<sup>36</sup> Chapman, pp.305-306.

<sup>37</sup> Cited in Claire Andrieu, Lucette Le Van and Antoine Prost, eds, Les Nationalisations de la Libération: De l'utopie au compromis, Paris, 1987, p.96.

<sup>38</sup> Madjarian, pp.179-180.

<sup>39</sup> See Alain Cottureau, "The Distinctiveness of Working-Class Cultures in France, 1848-1900," in Ira Katznelson and Aristide Zolberg, eds, Working-Class Formation: Nineteenth-Century Patterns in Western Europe and the United States, Princeton, 1986, pp.111-154.

<sup>40</sup> Shennan, p.189.

economic management and applied only at the national level, rather than at the level of the factory.<sup>41</sup>

The greater workplace pressure on workers for increased productivity, poor rations, inflation, and the general difficulties of life in 1945 resulted in higher rates of absenteeism and an increased number of workplace disputes, sometimes over control of the work process. Absenteeism rates were high, especially from 1945 on, reflecting exhaustion, ill-health, and the search for food but also, in part, worker disenchantment with productivism, inciting much concern from prefects and *commissaires*. In Charente, in 1945, employers complained of excessive absenteeism, reaching 20 per cent in certain factories;<sup>42</sup> and there were high rates of between 20 and 30 per cent in the same period in Toulouse, Loire, and Gard, among other departments.<sup>43</sup>

Worker absenteeism continued to be regarded as a major problem throughout the whole 1944-1948 period, but after the breakup of tripartism the government took a tougher line on it. In Nord and Pas-de-Calais alone, in the first six months of 1948, 4300 miners had had "absences injustifiées" longer than twelve days; sanctions from July on resulted in the dismissal of 43 miners.<sup>44</sup> Total absenteeism in the Houillères du Nord et Pas-de-Calais between 1946 and September 1948 never dropped below 14.95 per cent, with the figure reaching as high, in a non-strike month, as 35.24 per cent in August 1948. There was a progressive increase over the period, from an average of 19.5 per cent absenteeism in 1946, to 22.8 per cent in 1947, excluding three strike months, to 24 per cent in 1948, up to September. The overall average absenteeism was 21.8 per cent for the period.<sup>45</sup> In September 1948, the Lacoste decrees were promulgated to reduce absenteeism in the mines, as well as to "make certain cutbacks among the personnel."<sup>46</sup> Any worker missing six straight days of work or absent twelve days in six months without good cause would be fired. The CGT linked the absenteeism provisions in the Lacoste decrees to the government policy of restoring full control to mine managers over work accidents and health risks,

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<sup>41</sup> Shennan, p.190.

<sup>42</sup> AN F1a 4029, report of Préfet de la Charente, 6 June 1945.

<sup>43</sup> AN F1a 4029, reports of: Commissaire de la République à Toulouse (Pierre Bertaux), 15 July 1945 (20-25% absenteeism); Préfet de la Loire, 16 July and 15 August 1945 (27.34% in May, 26.81% in June, 22.05% in July); Préfet du Gard, 15 August 1945 (30% in June, 26% in July). Also AN F1a 4028, report of Préfet de la Loire, 19 May 1945: absenteeism had increased to almost 28% for the period 15 April-15 May.

<sup>44</sup> CAC TR 13646, "Les mineurs entendent obtenir l'abrogation de trois 'décrets Lacoste,'" *Le Monde*, 1 October 1948, p.3.

<sup>45</sup> CAC TR 13646, "Absentéisme des travailleurs libres du fond, 1946-1948," Houillères du Nord et Pas-de-Calais, no date [1949].

<sup>46</sup> CAC TR 13521, service central de statistique, Ministry of Labour, report of November 1948.

previously subject to the authority of the independent *caisses de secours* (mutual aid societies).<sup>47</sup> These decrees were to spark the outbreak of the miners' strike of October 1948, noted for its violence, just like the previous year's strike, in November 1947, against the removal of Léon Delfosse, the Communist miners' leader, from the Conseil d'Administration des Houillères.<sup>48</sup> Both strikes reflected the profound discontent of this particular section of the working class.

As well as the increase in absenteeism, workplace disputes also multiplied after 1945. In Nancy, the *commissaire* detailed a long list of small incidents in May 1945, such as demonstrations, protest meetings, and short strikes, for the most part concentrated around the celebration of May Day, with demands for higher salaries, extra provisions, and, in a few instances, more purges of Vichy collaborators.<sup>49</sup> The Rhône Prefect reported for April 1945 that in industrial and commercial firms, "les conflits se multiplient entre patrons et employés."<sup>50</sup> He attributed these conflicts to the low standard of living. These disputes were resolved by arbitration, involving either the *commissaire de la République* or the prefect, which worked well, even if it was not strictly legal, given the then current industrial legislation.<sup>51</sup> The Vosges Prefect warned that worker agitation was beginning again in June 1945: "On a nettement l'impression que les travailleurs se réveillent de la période de silence qui leur a été imposée pendant l'occupation sous la menace de la déportation."<sup>52</sup>

Many of these and other reported disputes concerned salary issues, although specific differences arose over control at the workplace.<sup>53</sup> In the strike statistics collected by the Service Central de Statistique at the Ministry of Labour, the majority of reported conflicts concerned wage demands. For instance, 85 per cent of strikes in May 1948 were deemed to be about remuneration; the others concerned disputes over hiring and firing. In September 1948, 40 strikes were reported as having occurred for reasons other than salary differences, including protests over firing of union representatives and demands for improvement of working conditions.<sup>54</sup> It should be

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<sup>47</sup> Institut CGT d'Histoire Sociale, Paris, CGT brochure, "La vérité sur la grève des mineurs," no date [1948-1949].

<sup>48</sup> See Odette Hardy-Hémery, *De la croissance à la désindustrialisation: Un siècle dans le Valenciennois*, Paris, 1984, pp.340-341.

<sup>49</sup> AN F1a 4024, report of Commissaire de la République à Nancy (Paul Chailley-Bert), 2 June 1945.

<sup>50</sup> AN F1cIII 1225, report of Préfet du Rhône (Henri Longchambon), 16 April 1945.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> AN F1a 4029, report of Préfet des Vosges, 20 June 1945.

<sup>53</sup> See reference in chapter V, section 2d, note 43, to the strike provoked by employer sanction of a young worker for bad workmanship.

<sup>54</sup> CAC TR 13521, Service Central de Statistique, Ministry of Labour, reports of May and September 1948.

noted moreover that disputes over salaries often merged with issues of control: in May 1947, for instance, the Fédération des Métaux in Meurthe-et-Moselle put forth salary demands, including one requesting the reclassification of foremen, an area of contested jurisdiction.<sup>55</sup>

Not all of the conflicts affected all workers, an aspect noted by the statistical service in its tabulation of strike participation, in other words, the proportion of the total workforce on strike. This national figure in 1947, for instance, ranged from a high of 98.7 per cent during the strike wave of June to a low of 69.9 per cent in August, when, according to the statistical office, "la grève a été déclenchée sur une réclamation n'intéressant qu'une catégorie de salariés et n'a pas entraîné l'ensemble du personnel."<sup>56</sup> However, some of the categories established by the statistical service were open-ended: in September 1947, 42 of 165 strikes were classified as "divers," mainly strikes of protest against the general policies of the government, as well as conflicts specifically related to a "question d'ordre professionnel," most of which had ended either in deals or in worker successes, according to the statisticians.<sup>57</sup> Skilled workers were in an advantageous position compared with the unskilled: although all workers evidently shared a common interest in higher salaries, it was skilled workers, in particular, who could win industrial disputes more readily, as they were less easily replaceable.

#### **d. The 1947 split in the CGT**

The CGT faced a challenge, by 1947, in its attempt to recapture the disaffected constituencies of unskilled and skilled workers. In January 1947, the Renseignements Généraux (RG) reported that where unions had previously tried to contain strikes, they were now supporting worker demands.<sup>58</sup> The apparent change in union tactics may be accounted for by the differing attitudes of opposing factions within the unions, as at Renault. Even at Renault, however, further police sources confirm the generally accepted view that the strikes of May 1947 were a spontaneous eruption, for which the CGT had not taken the initiative. Characteristically, the union leaders had jumped aboard the strike bandwagon in order not to lose contact with their potential constituency the better to control the strike.<sup>59</sup> Gradually, the CGT took charge of

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<sup>55</sup> AN F1a 4739, Direction des Renseignements Généraux, 13 May 1947.

<sup>56</sup> CAC TR 13521, Service Central de Statistique, Ministry of Labour, report of August 1947.

<sup>57</sup> CAC TR 13521, Service Central de Statistique, Ministry of Labour, report of September 1947.

<sup>58</sup> AN F1a 4735, RG, 25 January 1947.

<sup>59</sup> AN F1a 4739, RG, 21 May 1947.

protest action, orders from the national headquarters often finding an enthusiastic reception at local levels:

"Il est apparu que si cette agitation a été provoquée par des mots d'ordre venus des organismes nationaux, elle a trouvé sur le plan local un écho favorable. Ces revendications traduisent dans leur ensemble les sentiments des milieux ouvriers."<sup>60</sup>

One of the reasons why the CGT was caught out so disastrously by the Renault strike in 1947 was that it was deemed by the rank and file to have sacrificed its traditional role of defense of worker bread and butter demands. According to one of the strike leaders, the Trotskyist and dissident Communist, Pierre Bois, "la CGT avec ses mots d'ordre: 'Retournons nos manches, mettons en un bon coup' sacrifie la fonction traditionnelle du syndicalisme qui est de défendre les revendications ouvrières."<sup>61</sup> The PCF concentration on raising production obscured real worker demands for wages to keep pace with inflation and for more control over the process of production and thus the utilisation of labour at the workplace. A CGT metalworkers' union leaflet from the end of December 1946 at Renault signalled a shift in emphasis with its call for the right of the union to have control over hiring and firing and for workers to see their complete pay slips: "Une telle tâche implique la prise de responsabilité de tous les travailleurs, par la connaissance de leur travail et la façon de faire un temps."<sup>62</sup> Shortly thereafter, in January and February 1947, there were short work stoppages and "une certaine effervescence" in the workshops; union delegates only succeeded with difficulty in assuring the continuation of work. Management and the union delegates were "studying the situation," although the workers of *atelier 59*, metal casting, stopped work on 27 February because they absolutely refused to consider any new *chronométrage* which would require them to produce more in order to earn higher wages. By the end of April 1947, the entire workforce of 5350 was on strike.<sup>63</sup> George Ross notes:

"The unwillingness of the Renault management (prompted from behind the scenes by the Ministry of Labour) to grant large enough concessions to bring

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<sup>60</sup> AN F1a 4739, RG, citing report of Préfet de la Meurthe-et-Moselle, 31 May 1947, on a two-hour strike the previous day by 90 per cent of metalworkers in the department.

<sup>61</sup> CAC TR 13641, cited in Ministry of Labour report on RNUR, no date [1947]. Pierre Bois was a member of l'Union Communiste, which propounded a belief in direct action: Philippe Fallachon, "Les grèves de la Régie Renault en 1947," Le Mouvement social, 81, October-December 1972, p.116.

<sup>62</sup> AN F1a 4735, Direction des Renseignements Généraux, 7 January 1947, citing Syndicat des Métaux de Boulogne-Billancourt (RNUR) leaflet entitled: "En avant! Vers de nouvelles conquêtes!" (underlining of quote in original).

<sup>63</sup> AN F1a 4737, Renseignements Généraux, 24, 28 February and 29 April 1947.

the workers back finally forced the CGT to face the painful choice to which the battle of production strategy had ultimately led."<sup>64</sup>

The CGT and then the PCF rallied to the cause. The local PCF deputy and former Renault fitter Alfred Costes, Eugène Hénaff, head of the Paris CGT and member of the PCF central committee, and Albert Carn, head of the Paris CGT metalworkers, all addressed a protest meeting on 30 April. Sympathetic PCF resolutions ensued, one issued, for instance, by the Comité de la Fédération de la Moselle on 3 May. The strike ended 16 May, with the return to work of *ateliers* 6 and 18.<sup>65</sup> Robert Lacoste, Socialist Minister of Industry, talked of the need to create a favourable social climate, by agreeing to the demands for increases in salary and trusting in the workers.<sup>66</sup>

On the shopfloor, relations between the CGT and some sections of the workforce had been damaged and the CGT could no longer afford to toe the party's productivist line. Similarly, the PCF was afraid of losing the support of its natural working-class constituency and of being outflanked on the left by other groups. That tension, in addition to the worsening international context in 1947 of the Cold War, resulted in the PCF refusing to accept the government policy on keeping down wages; Communist deputies and ministers voted against the Ramadier government in a confidence vote on 4 May. The following day, a special government decree ended the tenure of the PCF ministers.<sup>67</sup> The PCF appeared surprised and wrong-footed by its rapid and well-prepared expulsion from government. Its initial response to being driven from power was to make conciliatory declarations in an effort to regain its "rightful place" in government.<sup>68</sup> After the criticisms of the party voiced at the launch meeting in September 1947 of the Cominform by European Communist parties, the PCF declared on 30 October that it would no longer collaborate with other parties and that it "would no longer participate in government."<sup>69</sup> Its encouragement of the strikes of late 1947, broken by the SFIO Minister of the Interior, Jules Moch, sealed the Communist-Socialist divorce which ended any hope of a sustained left-wing political axis in the Fourth Republic and thus of a pro-labour government. The unsuccessful

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<sup>64</sup> George Ross, Workers and Communists in France: From Popular Front to Eurocommunism, Berkeley, 1982, p.46. Ambroise Croizat had returned as Minister of Labour in January 1947.

<sup>65</sup> AN F1a 4739, Renseignements Généraux, 30 April and 16 May 1947; AN F1cIII 1302, report of Préfet de la Moselle, 3 June 1947.

<sup>66</sup> CAC TR 10228, Robert Lacoste, "Note sur le conflit des Usines Renault," Direction du Travail, 7 May 1947.

<sup>67</sup> Bruce D. Graham, Choice and Democratic Order: The French Socialist Party, 1937-1950, Cambridge, 1994, pp.370-371.

<sup>68</sup> Jean-Pierre Rioux, The Fourth Republic, 1944-1958, Cambridge and Paris, 1987, p.125.

<sup>69</sup> Graham, pp.373-374.

strikes confirmed the split in the CGT and delivered a fatal blow to the industrial muscle of the unions, for their new members, who had earlier flocked to the unions in 1944, now deserted them in droves.

The split in the CGT between the minority and majority factions in December 1947 was precipitated by these political and industrial developments, although it had long been a possibility. The fracture was connected fundamentally to the very different agendas of the PCF and the non-Communist factions within the union confederation, dating back at least to the reunification of the CGT in 1936, after its earlier division in 1921 (see chapter II, section 4a)i). Even in December 1945, the Rhône Prefect was suggesting that a split was conceivable, as the factions were virtually equally strong in and around Lyon, with perhaps a slight advantage for the more politically-inclined *unitaires*, who, he said, "veulent faire de la politique syndicale et par conséquent déborder le cadre de la charte d'Amiens, les [confédérés] s'y opposent."<sup>70</sup>

Sizable Ministry of Labour and American financial assistance was given to the newly-created Force Ouvrière (FO), in order to assure France and the United States of a non-Communist union.<sup>71</sup> "The real key to the French political situation ... has been the control of the French labor movement ... by the Communist party," wrote Ambassador Jefferson Caffery in January 1948. He regarded the split as "potentially the most important political event since the Liberation of France" and outlined ways of getting aid to the FO, noting the attendant risks of the operation, but concluded: "there is nothing ... which would ... help more in achieving the fundamental aims of our foreign policy here."<sup>72</sup>

Irwin Wall suggests that American support for alternatives on the French left and anti-Communist initiatives in the trade unions was sustained and extensive but ultimately unimportant. He cites the efforts of the American Federation of Labor representative in Europe, Irving Brown, who worked closely with the Paris embassy and Socialist leaders like Gaston Defferre to channel funds to the emergent Force Ouvrière, but who was unable to ensure policies or leadership -- deemed insufficiently anti-Communist -- to his liking.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> AN F1cIII 1225, report of Préfet du Rhône, 15 December 1945.

<sup>71</sup> Wall, p.113, asserts that the total amounts spent by American sources may "remain forever hidden," but also that this funding is of limited importance. He contends, p.109, that American funding of FO has been overemphasised.

<sup>72</sup> Letter from Ambassador Jefferson Caffery to Under Secretary of State Robert Lovett, 7 January 1948, marked top secret, in National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, cited by Wall, p.104.

<sup>73</sup> Wall, pp.96-113.

This American financial and political anti-Communist strategy has been overplayed, for many commentators, in general accounts of the period. Alexander Werth notes that the French governments played a double game with the U.S.A., "steering an uneasy course between America's expectations and the fears and suspicions of French public opinion."<sup>74</sup> William Hitchcock extols the "degree of independence and initiative that France maintained" in this period despite "such reliance on American support."<sup>75</sup> Denis MacShane also minimises U.S. influence and instead stresses French trade union traditions and internal differences.<sup>76</sup>

On the other hand, Annie Lacroix-Riz contends in Le choix de Marianne that the French ruling classes saw much to gain in the Franco-American alliance: "Les classes dirigeantes ... ont vu dans l'alliance avec Washington le bouclier protecteur contre l'essor communiste tant redouté."<sup>77</sup> This view needs qualification, however, in order to take into account the differences in outlook between sections of the right. For example, the disinclination of the Gaullist RPF towards fully supporting U.S. policy contrasts with the CNPF setting up of l'Association pour l'OTAN as a further expression of its ties to the U.S.<sup>78</sup> Edward Rice-Maximin shows that the U.S. would not take risks with the French *classes dirigeantes* alone and worked to bring in other groups: "In American opinion, the French bourgeoisie was not strong enough to contain communism without important working-class allies." There was "extensive collusion" between the United States embassy in Paris and the French Socialists, according to State Department documents of the time analysed by Rice-Maximin, as a way for the Americans "to split the working class," although the United States "very quickly lost interest" in its Socialist allies, as it found right-wing parties with which to work.<sup>79</sup>

The United States desired cutbacks in opportunities for Communist participation in the state. A top-secret memorandum from the First Political Secretary at the Paris embassy in March 1947 suggested that "more important than driving the Communists out of the ministry was the need to eliminate them from all government agencies,

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<sup>74</sup> Alexander Werth, France: 1940-1955, London, 1956, p.395.

<sup>75</sup> William Hitchcock, France Restored: Cold War Diplomacy and the Quest for Leadership in Europe, 1944-1954, Chapel Hill, 1998, p.206.

<sup>76</sup> See Denis MacShane, International Labour and the Origins of the Cold War, Oxford, 1992.

<sup>77</sup> Annie Lacroix-Riz, Le Choix de Marianne: Les relations franco-américaines de la Libération au début du plan Marshall (1944-1948), Paris, 1985, p.214.

<sup>78</sup> Werth, p.136, cites a later RPF article, from January 1950, denouncing "the government as the puppet of the American trusts."

<sup>79</sup> Edward Rice-Maximin, "The United States and the French Left, 1945-1949: The View from the State Department," Journal of Contemporary History, 19, 1984, pp.744-745.

particularly the army, police and Interior Ministry."<sup>80</sup> In 1948, Ambassador Caffery told Léon Blum that by opposing cuts in the civil service, the Socialists were "'playing directly into the hands of the Communists'" as the "reforms were necessary if the Communists were to be 'contained and beaten back.'"<sup>81</sup> The Socialists and, more generally, the French government did not succumb to this American pressure completely or consistently. They wanted the PCF out of government and out of the police: the Marseille CRS (Compagnies Républicaines de Sécurité) were dissolved and the Minister of the Interior, Jules Moch, reconstituted a more reliable anti-riot squad in the CRS and in the prefectural corps. On the other hand, a wholesale purge of Communists in the public service would have alienated the country and particularly the powerful civil service unions often organised by FO or, in education, the Fédération de l'Éducation Nationale (FEN), where the SFIO had many members and voters.

As in 1921, when the CGT made up for its losses among private sector blue-collar workers by recruiting civil servants, or *fonctionnaires* (with the complaisance of a sympathetic left-wing government, the 1924-1926 Cartel des Gauches), so, in 1948, FO was more successful than the CGT among the same groups. The American embassy in Paris reported in June 1948 that FO was attracting primarily white-collar workers and so was weakest where the Communists were the strongest, among the blue-collar workers in heavy industry.<sup>82</sup> The FO was found wanting by the American embassy, for whom its leadership was "insufficiently anti-Communist while its pro-government timidity in wage disputes angered the rank and file."<sup>83</sup>

Yet, from the point of view of worker participation, the postwar die had been cast. Without an effective political relay in government in 1947, the CGT was more intent upon traditional representation of demands and, where possible, on breaking its recent isolation by joint actions with other unions. The superior organising skills of the CGT, the personal authority of its militants and the support to them offered locally and nationally by the PCF, ensured a continuing majority for the *unitaires* within the CGT (since many non-Communist workers remained in it<sup>84</sup>) and for the CGT within a diminished labour movement, during the period of the *scission syndicale* and the

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<sup>80</sup> Rice-Maximin, p.735, citing memo of Douglas MacArthur II, 26 March 1947, in National Archives, Diplomatic Series, Washington.

<sup>81</sup> Rice-Maximin, p.738, citing Foreign Relations of the United States, 1948, vol.III (Western Europe), Washington, 1974, Caffery, 29 January, pp.613-614.

<sup>82</sup> Rice-Maximin, p.738, citing Norris Chipman, Embassy First Secretary, "Report to the Third European Intelligence Conference," Frankfurt, 2-7 June 1948, relayed by Caffery, 10 June 1948, in National Archives, Diplomatic Series, Washington.

<sup>83</sup> Wall, p.109, citing a report by Norris Chipman, Embassy First Secretary, on the first year of FO, 4 April 1949, in National Archives and Records Administration, Washington.

<sup>84</sup> Val Lorwin, The French Labor Movement, Cambridge, Mass., 1954, p.127.

industrial setbacks of 1947 and 1948. The Divisional Labour Inspector at Lille, for instance, reported on the militants' prestige and the organisational skills of the CGT in February 1948, after the union split:

"Il semble que le prestige personnel des militants ouvriers soit appelé à jouer un grand rôle en la circonstance ... ils seront plus ou moins suivis par les travailleurs selon qu'ils auront su plus ou moins gagner leur confiance. ...

Par ailleurs, il semble non moins certain que les syndicats adhérents à la CGT continueront à bénéficier dans les milieux spécifiquement ouvriers, de l'autorité que s'est acquise l'organisation."<sup>85</sup>

The inspector's report is particularly revealing, given that there was real competition for working-class support in the Nord department from a well-entrenched SFIO and then FO.

The CGT directed much protest action in 1948, at certain times seemingly to ensure popularity for itself, according to many prefects who considered the strikes to have been launched as a sounding of opinion and in order to maintain the workers' attention ("pour tenir en haleine les ouvriers").<sup>86</sup> There was a similarity here with the situation of the spring of 1920, when the CGT did not want to be caught out by radical factions arguing for a general strike (which was then undertaken in May 1920 and lost, at great cost to the confederation).<sup>87</sup> In 1948, some union leaders warned again that they would be overrun by their followers if satisfaction was not accorded to the working class demands for higher wages, as the Le Mans Prefect reported.<sup>88</sup>

The evidence suggests, then, that from 1944 to 1947 the CGT reoriented the notion of participation away from workplace concerns to broad notions of involvement with the state machinery. It sought to retain total control of the presentation of workers' demands to the state and saw itself as the main arbiter of social peace. The union confederation did gain support owing to strong organisation and popular local militants, who put across the demands on salaries and lack of provisions. Yet the CGT did not take up other concerns about the organisation of work and the pace of production -- these issues either were left to the *comités d'entreprises* or went unexpressed, at least until 1947-1948.

Industrial demands could unite unions temporarily but not on a sustainable basis, owing to political differences. Prefects noted united action by the CGT, FO and the CFTC in the August 1948 strikes at Lille and in the drawing up of demands at

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<sup>85</sup> CAC DRT 913, report of Lille Divisional Labour Inspector, 5 February 1948.

<sup>86</sup> AN F1cIII 1234, synthesis of prefect reports from 41 departments, June 1948. See chapter V, section 2e for full citation.

<sup>87</sup> See Dreyfus, pp.105-112.

<sup>88</sup> AN F1cIII 1318, report of Préfet de la Sarthe, 4 September 1948.

Toulouse -- and this common tendency extended across 44 departments, according to the reports.<sup>89</sup> However, the lack of effective organisation across different economic sectors and the concentration on developing political, rather than industrial, solidarity meant that well-organised and apparently protected workers on strike were sometimes abandoned by other trades within the labour movement. Indeed, the Lille Prefect believed that the failure of the November 1948 miners' strike demonstrated that the great mass of workers in the Nord department had not been willing to support the miners, despite the efforts of the CGT to spread the strike to other sectors.<sup>90</sup> The difficulties in achieving workforce unity, not for political reasons, but on account of nationality, gender, and skill level, are examined in the next section.

### **3. A heterogeneous workforce**

The political and productivist focus of the CGT in the immediate post-Liberation years and the confederation's link with the PCF obscured divisions between categories of workers in the workplace. The two parts of this section review the evidence of these distinctions: section 3a considers, briefly, the effects of different skill levels on achieving unity at the workplace and section 3b takes cognizance of the divisions of nationality and gender and the inequalities of entitlement at the workplace accruing to immigrants and women workers. The effect of these divisions within a heterogeneous workforce represents another factor constraining full participation in the workplace and in the state by workers.

#### **a. Challenges to workforce unity**

The targeting of the state by the CGT in 1944-1947 helped further to rescue political action from its traditional syndicalist rejection. The way workers experienced the state and the manner in which the agents of the state could effect change had not been a systematic object of attention in the recent history of the CGT, except among the often minority reformists and then the Communists, in their very different ways.

In the post-Liberation period, workers would need the necessary knowledge and strategies of resistance against government-sponsored policies, in order to challenge effectively enhanced productivity measures at the workplace, as recounted earlier (see section 2c). These traditions of resistance from their collective past had

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<sup>89</sup> AN F1cIII 1303 and 1269, reports of Préfets du Nord and Haute-Garonne, 7 and 5 September 1948; AN F1cIII 1234, synthesis of reports, July and August 1948.

<sup>90</sup> AN F1cIII 1303, report of Préfet du Nord, 6 December 1948. The Prefect notes: "En dépit des efforts déployés par la CGT pour généraliser les conflits sociaux, les travailleurs des différentes branches de la production n'ont pas accepté, dans l'ensemble, de se solidariser avec les mineurs." See also below, note 118.

been established at the height of the importance of skilled artisanal labour, before the advent of scientific methods of production. The traditions characteristically involved specific worker strategies to maintain control at the workplace: individual or small group go-slow methods; absenteeism; and voluntary departure.<sup>91</sup>

These traditional strategies adopted by workers changed in both postwar periods owing to the differing composition of the workforce, as war work had absorbed new unskilled hands: seasonal, unskilled, women and immigrant workers often lacked adequate "generational" knowledge and so did not inherit earlier worker methods of resistance. Nevertheless, some oral traditions survived and collective forms of know-how were transferred between generations of workers.<sup>92</sup>

New production methods also resulted in changed worker responses and made the achievement of unity around control issues more difficult: the different work experiences of unskilled, semiskilled, and skilled workers entailed a distinct vision of participation at the workplace for each group. The postwar skilled labour shortage ensured that skilled workers were in relatively high demand during the period<sup>93</sup> and tended to find employment easily. At Renault, skilled workers respected the productivist ethos of the CGT, while the semiskilled went on strike in the spring of 1947 owing to "the move to mechanized mass production of a new model (the 4CV)," according to Patrick Fridenson. He adds that "the semiskilled were affected by transfers from one workshop to another, specialization, compulsory overtime, and, for some, deskilling."<sup>94</sup> There were often different entitlements to benefits between skilled workers and others. At Renault, Philippe Fallachon has shown that skilled (*ouvriers professionnels*), semiskilled (*ouvriers spécialisés*) and unskilled workers were treated differently, even by the CGT, which announced in late February 1947 a productivity bonus which varied depending on workers' skills, a move which immediately elicited a strong protest by workers against the "scandalous distribution of the bonus."<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Patrick Fridenson, "France-États-Unis: genèse de l'usine nouvelle," in Lion Murard and Patrick Zylberman, eds, *Le Soldat du travail -- Guerre, fascisme et taylorisme*, special issue of *Recherches*, 32/33, September 1978, p.381. Also see David Montgomery, *Workers' Control in America: Studies in the History of Work, Technology, and Labor Struggles*, Cambridge, 1979.

<sup>92</sup> See Noiriél, *Workers in French Society*.

<sup>93</sup> Patrick Fridenson, "Automobile Workers in France and Their Work, 1914-1983," in Steven Kaplan and Cynthia Koepp, eds, *Work in France: Representations, Meaning, Organization, and Practice*, Ithaca, 1986, p.533. It should be remembered, however, that real wages had fallen for all workers: a Parisian skilled worker earned in August 1948 half of his pre-war wages in real terms, allowing for the effects of inflation: Werth, p.403.

<sup>94</sup> Fridenson, "Automobile Workers," pp.532-533.

<sup>95</sup> Fallachon, p.120.

The relations between workers and white-collar workers and managers also provoked divisions, as at Citroën and Berliet, where the November 1947 strikes "were distinguished by the antagonism between workers and executives or foremen."<sup>96</sup> In another firm, the state-owned SNCF, unity between workers and managers was celebrated, however, at least before the autumn strikes: "Rendons toujours plus vivante notre unité avec les cadres," wrote the union newspaper in May 1947.<sup>97</sup> This wish for harmony followed the nationwide tours of 1946 led by management and the railworkers' union, where they presented a joint position on a plan of action to local managers and workers and, in turn, listened to employees' complaints.<sup>98</sup> In fact, the tours were intended to encourage production and not worker participation: Georges Ribeill recounts how the Managing Director accorded productivity bonuses immediately, but deferred wage increases until such time as production improved.<sup>99</sup>

Divisions between categories of workers and between them and management are important to consider when understanding the feasibility of participation in the workplace. Yet, as Patrick Fridenson concludes about the automobile industry, "Periodically, workers were able to restore some sort of unity. Then collective action became possible and broke out; it secured changes in work for a while, soon followed by an erosion of workers' cohesion."<sup>100</sup>

#### **b. Nationality and gender divisions and inequalities of entitlement**

Divisions between workers were particularly acute on the basis of nationality and gender. Immigrants and women were accorded different entitlements at the workplace and fought on their own behalf, as well as, at times, for all workers. Such divisions, however, contributed to the failure of the CGT to overcome supposed postwar employer weakness.

Considerable immigration, especially of Algerians (who were part of the *métropole*) and Moroccans, occurred under Vichy owing to the shortage of labour and this pattern continued after the Liberation. Extensive immigration in the 1920s and 1930s already had established new communities, whose members would be important in the social conflicts of the post-Liberation period. The Italian and Polish immigrant communities in Longwy, at the Lorraine steelworks, played a significant role, for

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<sup>96</sup> Fridenson, "Automobile Workers," p.533.

<sup>97</sup> A. Seguy in *La Tribune des Cheminots*, 15 May 1947, as cited in Georges Ribeill, "Le personnel de la SNCF (1937-1981). Contraintes économiques, issues techniques, mutations professionnelles et évolutions sociales. Les cours successifs d'une entreprise publique," Paris, 1982, p.241.

<sup>98</sup> Ribeill, p.236.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Fridenson, "Automobile Workers," p.546.

example, in the 1947 and 1948 strikes; prominent among the new participants were the worker sons, the second generation, of 1920s immigrant workers.<sup>101</sup> At Vénissieux, site of the main Berliet plant, 44 per cent of workers in 1931 were foreign-born, up from 29.8 per cent in 1921, and many of these workers would be PCF stalwarts from the mid-1930s on, particularly following the law of 1932 which set a quota on the hiring of immigrants.<sup>102</sup> The PCF also made a deliberate attempt at the Liberation to end differences in affiliation between immigrant and French workers by dissolving the pre-Second World War groups of foreign workers in France working for Communist parties ("partis-frères") in other countries, notably Spain and Italy; henceforth, all immigrant workers would have to be militants in the French Communist Party.<sup>103</sup>

As Roger Magraw remarks, however, "a labour movement built, historically, on the male, French, skilled worker found severe difficulty in gaining footholds in those sectors of heavy industry into which immigrants were recruited."<sup>104</sup> French workers were suspicious not only of the new arrivals but also of the *patronat*, whom they suspected of wanting to undercut wages and to reassert its authority at the workplace. Gérard Noiriel, for instance, points to the key role played in the interwar period by the recruitment of immigrant workers in the strengthening of employer control via *paternalisme*.<sup>105</sup> The creation in 1924 of the Société Générale d'Immigration, run by large industrialists, allowed employers to direct the recruitment of immigrants to needy areas or industries, resulting in a labour force that was much more flexible than the native French one.<sup>106</sup>

After the Second World War, in light of the prewar labour movement grievances, the government tried to fashion a compromise between labour and the *patronat*. There was an attempt at planned immigration: a law passed on 2 November 1945 created the Office National d'Immigration (ONI), to be administered by a tripartite *conseil d'administration*, including the CGT and representatives of management and the

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<sup>101</sup> Eric Venturini, "L'aurore des patriarches: les grèves de 1947 et 1948 dans le pays-haut," unpublished *mémoire de maîtrise*, Université de Paris I, 1987, ch.1.

<sup>102</sup> Philippe Videlier, "Banlieues de province: l'exemple lyonnais," in Annie Fourcaut, ed, *Un Siècle de banlieue parisienne (1859-1964)*, Paris, 1988, p.232. Roger Magraw, *A History of the French Working Class, Volume II: Workers and the Bourgeois Republic*, Oxford, 1992, p.254, notes that while 33 per cent of skilled French workers lost their jobs at Vénissieux in the early 1930s, 75 per cent of immigrant workers did so as well.

<sup>103</sup> Venturini, p.27.

<sup>104</sup> Magraw, p.317.

<sup>105</sup> Gérard Noiriel, "Du 'patronage' au 'paternalisme': la restructuration des formes de domination de la main d'œuvre ouvrière dans l'industrie métallurgique française," *Le Mouvement social*, 144, July-September 1988, p.29.

<sup>106</sup> Noiriel, "Du 'patronage' au 'paternalisme,'" pp.29-30; and Gérard Noiriel, *The French Melting Pot: Immigration, Citizenship, and National Identity*, Minneapolis, 1996, p.86.

state administration. Ambroise Croizat, the CGT representative and Minister of Labour as of 21 November 1945, advocated a programme of regulated immigration. However, the ONI "quickly became a fraud," according to Gary Freeman, and lasted only until 1948, when its functions were taken over by the Ministry of Labour.<sup>107</sup> The *conseil* never met again after 1948, when the ONI "functioned without and largely against the will of the largest union group, the CGT."<sup>108</sup>

By 1948, the CGT was more firmly opposed to immigration, fearing any consequent reduction of wages. In 1946-1947, the Renault management even appealed to the CGT to convince its Italian counterpart, the CGIL, to bring in workers, as the French plants were suffering a severe labour shortage.<sup>109</sup> In February 1948, however, Claude Bourdet, the journalist, was attacking the CGT position on immigration:

"En raison du chômage croissant, la CGT s'élève contre l'entrée en France de nouveaux travailleurs étrangers. Cette prise de position ... risque d'avoir toute une série de répercussions idéologiques et pratiques."<sup>110</sup>

In fact, unemployment was hardly a problem but even a small increase could have a downward effect on wage demands, owing to the low labour mobility in France -- supply and demand were very important in wage determination.<sup>111</sup> The targeted arrival of immigrants, therefore, had a considerable impact on the natural constituency of the CGT, the male, French, skilled worker, even if the new arrivals were taking up unskilled and semiskilled positions. Indeed, Bourdet also criticised the French need to control ("réglementer") immigration, in other words, the linking of immigration specifically to job offers, instead of allowing a more open system of immigration.<sup>112</sup>

The ONI treated the issue of immigration strictly from the perspective of labour needs and did not address itself to the rights of immigrants as non-citizens. At the level of the state, immigrants faced added difficulties: their employment files and dossiers

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<sup>107</sup> Gary Freeman, Immigrant Labor and Racial Conflict in Industrial Societies: The French and British Experience, 1945-1975, Princeton, 1979, p.228.

<sup>108</sup> Gary Cross, Immigrant Workers in Industrial France: The Making of a New Laboring Class, Philadelphia, 1983, p.222.

<sup>109</sup> See Fernand Picard, L'Épopée de Renault, Paris, 1976.

<sup>110</sup> Claude Bourdet, "Chômage et immigration," Combat, 5 February 1948. Bourdet is described by Alexander Werth as "one of the leading non-Communist left-wing journalists under the Fourth Republic." Werth, p.139.

<sup>111</sup> Chris Howell, "French Socialism and the Transformation of Industrial Relations since 1981," in Anthony Daley, ed, The Mitterrand Era: Policy Alternatives and Political Mobilization in France, London, 1996, p.144. Howell is referring here to postwar labour regulation in France, from 1945 to 1968.

<sup>112</sup> Bourdet, "Chômage et immigration."

were sent to Paris for review with a minimum delay of 6-12 months<sup>113</sup> and they always faced the threat of expulsion. The Pas-de-Calais Prefect even suggested stripping the French nationality of second-generation immigrant workers caught up in the violent miners' strikes of 1948:

"Ce sont les naturalisés, ou les plus assimilés parmi les étrangers de par leurs longs séjours chez nous ou leurs alliances, qui se sont montrés les plus violents. A ce propos, il est regrettable que la législation sur les naturalisations ne prévoie pas de déchéance de nationalité pour des cas semblables: il y aurait urgence à combler cette lacune par un texte législatif ou réglementaire."<sup>114</sup>

At the level of the workplace, immigrants likewise confronted added impediments. The *commissaire* in Lille reported in 1945 that Polish miners had to pay a special tax ("timbre") on their identity cards; it was a sum which could be high, especially if there were many children in the family. Nor did they receive the "prime de la mère au foyer," or mother's allowance, reserved only for French workers. Unlike the hardened opinions of the prefect expressed three years later, at a time of social conflict, the *commissaire* advised in 1945 a more humane attitude by the government:

"Si le Gouvernement désire conserver la main d'oeuvre polonaise il importe que non seulement il ne fasse pas de discriminations à son préjudice mais encore qu'il s'efforce de l'attacher à la mine par tous les moyens."<sup>115</sup>

Polish miners did go out on strike: the *commissaire* in Nancy reported, for example, that "une grève légère" was started on 19 July 1945 by 104 Polish miners for unexplained reasons, but that they returned to work the following day.<sup>116</sup> Equally, miners of other nationalities went out on strike -- 130 North African miners at Lens, for instance, ceased work in March 1947 to protest against their low salaries.<sup>117</sup> The next year, the same prefect in Pas-de-Calais claimed that the threat of expulsion faced by immigrant miners, of whom he said that there were 110,000 in the department, including 90,000 Polish miners, led to their not being very active in the 1948 strike.<sup>118</sup> However, there is no factual evidence to support this claim, nor, indeed, do the

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<sup>113</sup> AN F1a 4023, report of Commissaire de la République à Marseille (Raymond Aubrac), 13 October 1944.

<sup>114</sup> AN F1cIII 1307, report of Préfet du Pas-de-Calais, 5 December 1948.

<sup>115</sup> AN F1a 4029, report of Commissaire de la République à Lille (Francis-Louis Closon), 20 June 1945.

<sup>116</sup> AN F1a 4025, report of Commissaire de la République à Nancy (Paul Chailley-Bert), 2 August 1945.

<sup>117</sup> AN F1a 4739, Renseignements Généraux, 14 March 1947.

<sup>118</sup> AN F1cIII 1307, report of Préfet du Pas-de-Calais, 5 December 1948. This view of the strike being undermined by the immigrant origins of miners possibly underlies the analysis expressed above, note 90, of the failure of generalisation of the 1948 strikes in the Nord department.

employment figures at the Houillères du bassin du Nord et du Pas-de-Calais correspond to the prefect's.<sup>119</sup>

The different entitlements at the workplace for immigrants extended to the *comités d'entreprises*, where only French workers were eligible to vote for the members in the initial ordinance.<sup>120</sup> The law of May 1946 revised these articles so that all foreign workers ("salariés de nationalité étrangère") could be electors, provided that they had worked in France for at least five years; candidates for election to the *comités*, however, were required to be French citizens.<sup>121</sup>

Immigrant groups were more active at the time than is generally recognised. The Algerian Muslim Association in Marseille argued for full entitlement of Algerian workers (who were classified *indigènes* within the Union Française) to French social protection and for the participation of Algerians in trade union committees (*conseils syndicaux*).<sup>122</sup> In response to the recruitment of North African dockworkers by the Ministry of Labour, the leaders of the Muslim Association wanted to place the dockworkers under the control of the CGT so that they would benefit from the same advantages as French workers: "... une fois embauchés les Nords Africains puissent être considérés comme travailleurs libres et bénéficient des mêmes avantages que la main d'oeuvre française."<sup>123</sup>

Clearly, the CGT did not lay great priority on the different entitlements of immigrant workers, probably because of strategic concerns but also owing, no doubt, to the continuing xenophobia and racism of French society.<sup>124</sup> Similarly, women not only received different entitlements at the workplace and state benefits but faced difficulty in participating fully owing to the dual demands of domestic labour and paid work. Women fought for equal salaries and crèche facilities and also linked workplace

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<sup>119</sup> CAC TR 13646 provides employee lists for the Houillères in both departments of Nord and Pas-de-Calais, as at 31 December 1948, according to age, provenance, and function. The number of immigrant miners at the coal face was 45,514, about 40 per cent of the total; there were also 5,393, 10 per cent of the total, working above ground. Another or the same prefect of Pas-de-Calais reported in September 1945 that 40 per cent of the deep miners were foreigners. (AN F1a 4029, report of Préfet du Pas-de-Calais, 13 June 1945.)

<sup>120</sup> This stipulation was emphasised in the prefect's report from Meurthe-et-Moselle, a region with a high proportion of immigrant workers. (AN F1a 4029, report of Préfet de Meurthe-et-Moselle, 26 June 1945.)

<sup>121</sup> Circ.TR 80/46, about application of the law of 16 May 1946, from Ambroise Croizat, Minister of Labour, to all divisional labour inspectors and labour inspectors, 31 July 1946, p.8.

<sup>122</sup> AN F1cIII 1210, report of Préfet des Bouches-du-Rhône, 15 February 1945. For a fuller discussion of the Union Française, see Shennan, ch.6.

<sup>123</sup> AN F1cIII 1210, report of Préfet des Bouches-du-Rhône, 15 October 1945.

<sup>124</sup> See Noiriel, *The French Melting Pot*, especially pp.200-212. Noiriel also writes, p.286, in reference to the late 19th century: "Trade unions ... have always been less hostile to forms of exclusion that run no risk of encroaching on the rights of French nationals."

and home issues much more readily than did men. Women workers assumed responsibility for all household tasks and could not take the same interest in union and workplace activity as easily as their male counterparts.

Employers' insistence on control of the firm had long had a gender aspect: in company housing at Longwy, from the beginning of the century, the plant warden would make weekly visits to ensure that regular cleaning was taking place, a task for the workers' wives. Gérard Noiriel asserts that this employer strategy was a means of inculcating the norms of domestic discipline in working-class families.<sup>125</sup>

The unintended effect of such practices of division of labour was to reinforce the notion of an "essentially domestic identity for working-class women" in the eyes of male workers, as Siân Reynolds makes clear regarding the Popular Front.<sup>126</sup> In 1943, a worker completing her training period at a gas-meter factory in Montrouge described life for the 200 women in her workshop:

"Nous faisons neuf heures par jour, et pour elles, dont la majorité est mariée, ces heures se doubleraient de celles passées à faire le ménage, les queues, la lessive, le raccommodage, les soins aux enfants. Il est difficile de mesurer exactement la part de fatigue revenant au travail de la maison et celle due à l'usine. Les deux s'aggravent mutuellement."<sup>127</sup>

After the Liberation, it was increasingly difficult for women workers to separate the home and the domestic economy from the concerns of the workplace, owing to the penury of supplies. Women often replaced men in demonstrations for more food, as the men engaged in the "battle for production."<sup>128</sup> The reports of the public authorities make repeated mention of demonstrations by housewives (*ménagères*), often organised by the PCF Union des Femmes Françaises (UFF).<sup>129</sup>

The UFF unveiled a National Women's Charter in December 1944, which stressed the need for women to contribute to the reconstruction effort as workers as well as mothers. The Charter featured specific demands regarding women's working

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<sup>125</sup> Noiriel, "Du 'patronage' au 'paternalisme,'" p.33.

<sup>126</sup> Siân Reynolds, "Women, Men and the 1936 Strikes in France," in Martin Alexander and Helen Graham, eds, The French and Spanish Popular Fronts: Comparative Perspectives, Cambridge, 1989, p.199. See also Anne Marrast, "Étude sur les femmes à l'époque du Front populaire," unpublished mémoire de maîtrise, Université de Paris I, 1986.

<sup>127</sup> Annie Fourcaut, Femmes à l'usine en France dans l'entre-deux-guerres, Paris, 1982, p.126.

<sup>128</sup> Annie Lacroix-Riz, "CGT et action ouvrière de la Libération à mai 1945: les difficultés d'une stratégie," Revue d'histoire de la deuxième guerre mondiale, 116, October 1979, p.53.

<sup>129</sup> AN F1a4028, report of Préfet de la Haute-Garonne, 16 January 1945: demonstration in Toulouse by "soi-disant ménagères" with 1500 women shouting "Nous avons faim, nous avons froid"; AN F1a4028, report of Préfet de l'Ariège, 16 February 1945: "interventions de ménagères"; AN F1a 4023, report of Commissaire de la République à Marseille (Paul Haag), 31 March 1945: "rassemblements des ménagères à Toulon au début du mois"; "[31 mars] délégués de l'Union des Femmes Françaises à la tête d'une foule de plusieurs milliers de personnes."

conditions, including the provision of crèches, the opportunity to breastfeed at work and the end of the 20 per cent wage differential between men and women.<sup>130</sup> This latter demand was taken up by the CGT, in particular: the Rhône women's section, for example, insisted on "travail égal, salaire égal" in 1945.<sup>131</sup> The following year, in July 1946, the Minister of Labour, Ambroise Croizat, promulgated a directive which stipulated equal pay for equal work; however, the underpayment to women continued in practice, according to Claire Duchen, because a woman's salary was often considered to be a *salaire d'appoint*, pin money, in other words, a secondary or extra income.<sup>132</sup>

Women's issues were hardly at the top of the agenda for trade unions, writes Duchen, although the CGT was more active than others.<sup>133</sup> In 1948, it set up a national women's council, which prepared a list of aims concerning women at work and the CGT women's sections tabled various proposals at each national congress to help working mothers, ranging from demands for two paid hours each day for mothers to nurse their babies to the option of unpaid maternity leave.<sup>134</sup> However, the *rapporteur* at national congresses revealed the lack of enthusiasm for the creation of women's sections.<sup>135</sup> While some issues regarded as domestic or of concern to women did feature on the national agenda of the CGT, the constraints on women workers' participation, particularly the invisible demands of domestic life, were not appreciated.<sup>136</sup> The focus of the confederation was on work and production, not participation.

#### 4. Conclusion

The CGT approached the institutions of the state after the Liberation with a renewed spirit of participation in order to support the PCF, raise production, and deliver benefits to its constituencies. The CGT was successful at emerging with guarantees for many workers, including legal statutes for miners and dockworkers and legislation on social security for protection against unemployment, illness, and old age. Semiskilled, unskilled, immigrant, and women workers did not share equally in the

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<sup>130</sup> Claire Duchen, *Women's Rights and Women's Lives in France, 1944-1968*, London, 1994, p.43.

<sup>131</sup> AN F1cIII 1225, report of Préfet du Rhône, 15 November 1945, citing a demand from the Commission Féminine de l'Union Départementale des Syndicats Ouvriers du Rhône.

<sup>132</sup> Duchen, p.159.

<sup>133</sup> Duchen, p.160.

<sup>134</sup> Duchen, pp.161,110.

<sup>135</sup> Duchen, pp.160-161.

<sup>136</sup> See also chapter IV, section 3 about the lack of women's participation in the *comités d'entreprises*.

entitlements and faced constraints on participation at the workplace. While skilled workers, in particular, fared relatively well in the period, the protest at Renault in 1947 revealed the militancy of semiskilled and unskilled workers. Patrick Fridenson remarks, "Trade unions, though quite important at some stages, were not a necessary vehicle in some struggles, which, in fact, often went on without a union's presence or in the face of union discouragement."<sup>137</sup>

The CGT was committed to promoting work and production, not necessarily to altering relations at the workplace. In part, this focus derived from an unchanged industrial relations climate, whereby employers were still unwilling to cede any control to employees. Also, the CGT would have needed a stronger organisational base and greater financial resources in order to develop its agenda in the state more effectively. Instead, government intervention focused on key industries and big projects, especially with the Plan, and increasingly ignored the input of the CGT regarding worker demands, particularly after the polarisation of 1947-1948. The role of the state in constraining worker participation is the subject of the next chapter.

The CGT faced a fundamental difficulty in being unable to guarantee the united compliance of the workforce in exchange for a political guarantee by the government. The CGT was not in a position, to cite Claus Offe and Helmut Wiesenthal, "to substitute external guarantees of survival for those internal ones for which the union organization depends upon its members."<sup>138</sup> To move on to such a mode of interest representation, the CGT would have had to accept quantitative criteria at the firm and been able to deliver the consent of its members. Alternatively, the CGT would have needed to focus more pointedly on the new decision-making capacities at the level of the workplace. Nevertheless, its overall weakness, its tie to the PCF, and its productivist orientation prevented a fuller exploration of this domain.

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<sup>137</sup> Fridenson, "Automobile Workers," p.546.

<sup>138</sup> Claus Offe and Helmut Wiesenthal, "Two Logics of Collective Action," in Claus Offe, Disorganized Capitalism, Cambridge, 1985, p.217.

## Chapter VII      Constraints on Participation: The State

### 1. Introduction

Workers confronted a paradox with regard to the role of the state in promoting or hindering worker participation. The last chapter considered the paradox of the principal trade union confederation not pursuing worker participation as a primary aim and instead backing, from 1944 to 1947, enhanced productivity; this chapter explores further the paradox of an interventionist state at the mercy of old-fashioned industrial relations. The entrenched power of the centralised state, with an administrative structure organised and directed from the centre, militated against special efforts by certain officials to promote enhanced worker participation at the level of the firm. At the same time, the state was arguably not powerful enough to refashion industrial relations in order either to allow -- and enforce -- further participation at the firm or to bring trade unions into centrally negotiated collective bargaining agreements. The CGT and the PCF both accepted the decision-making capacities of the levels of government and the administrative influence of state officials; yet employers fought against this interference, all the while strengthening their links with the state but not with unions. This chapter argues that the overall effect of these obstacles was both to limit the likelihood of further reform at the level of the firm and also to circumscribe the role of workers' representatives in state institutions.

The chapter assesses, first, the possibilities presented for worker participation in 1944-1946 by the new system of the *commissaires de la République*. This regional level of government had limited powers, particularly in the economic sphere, which were soon reclaimed by central government. The abolition of the *commissaires* in 1946 marked the full return of the centralised, unitary state. State officials then became even more committed to strict interpretations of the law and the preservation of governmental authority. The rest of the chapter considers, therefore, the obstacles to further participation present at the central level and how workers and their representatives gained only restricted access to government decision-making.

### 2. The transitory system of the *commissaires de la République*

Regional government was inaugurated during Vichy, when regional prefects were merely accorded powers belonging to ordinary prefects and did not gain any new powers from the centre. As a result, affirms Brian Chapman, the idea of regional

government was largely discredited, because it did not help to solve the problem of overcentralisation in France.<sup>1</sup>

The new regional administration of the *commissaires de la République*, put in place in 1944, enjoyed only limited added flexibility of decision-making, compared with both the Vichy experiment and the prefect-based state structure of the Third Republic. The *commissaires* had more powers than the Vichy regional prefects since they had full ministerial authority to act in their regions at the Liberation in order to restore public order and the respect of law.<sup>2</sup> However, they were still dependent on the central government because the old administrative apparatus was quickly re-formed and revived, in terms both of hierarchy and work habits. When Henri Longchambon, the *commissaire* in Lyon and Yves Farge's successor, complained about the increased centralisation of decision-making in his December 1945 report to the Minister of the Interior, he blamed this development explicitly on the resumption of an unsuitable administrative routine:

"Mais j'ai lieu de penser que cette évolution procède beaucoup plus de la résurrection spontanée d'une routine administrative inadéquate à notre temps, que d'une orientation gouvernementale délibérée."<sup>3</sup>

Earlier in the same report, he gave a more precise indication of his meaning when he referred to how specialised *fonctionnaires* were applying governmental directives while the social repercussions of the measures were falling on prefects and *commissaires*: they were significantly hampered by the lack of adequate decision-making power at the regional and local levels.

The regional level of government remained dependent on the central level mainly owing to the short-term, transitory nature of the system of *commissaires de la République* and of their devolved powers. At the Liberation, the *commissaires* "were granted extraordinary powers to act in their regions" but, as Brian Chapman recognises, by May 1946, their powers "were no longer necessary."<sup>4</sup> He adds that it had appeared as if the *commissaires* might remain a permanent part of the administration to control and coordinate prefectoral activity in their areas, "but they had aroused the political envy and spite of the National Assembly, and it refused to allow credits for their salaries in the budget of the Minister of the Interior."<sup>5</sup> Robert Gildea

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<sup>1</sup> Brian Chapman, *The Prefects and Provincial France*, London, 1955, pp.57-58.

<sup>2</sup> Chapman, p.60.

<sup>3</sup> AN F1a 4022, report of Commissaire de la République à Lyon (Henri Longchambon), 24 December 1945.

<sup>4</sup> Chapman, pp.60-61.

<sup>5</sup> Chapman, p.61.

agrees with this assessment by affirming that the *commissaires* were abolished "in order to restore the cosy duopoly of local deputy and departmental prefect."<sup>6</sup> In the year following May 1946, the regional administration was gradually dismantled, the departmental prefects went back to their former responsibilities and the coordinating function of the *commissaires* was left to lapse.

In any case, both prefects and *commissaires* often lacked sufficient economic and political powers to promote worker participation. With regard to arbitration of work conflicts, for instance, they had to cede to the authority of the Minister of Labour; he took all decisions, in concert with any other minister concerned, and had become the sole "*superarbitre*," according to Roger Lapeyre, CGT Secretary General of the civil servants' federation.<sup>7</sup> The *commissaires* also were condemned for formulating economic policies with too wide a compass. The Minister of the Interior, for example, wrote to Yves Farge, the *commissaire* in Lyon, in April 1945 about the proposed Commission Régionale de Reconstruction Économique and declared that the powers envisaged for the Commission were too large, as it would have the right to interrogate anyone capable of giving useful information, even if bound by a "secret professionnel." The Commission could only be consultative in character, wrote the Minister, as the *commissaire* did not have any legislative authority. Farge had to rewrite the relevant clauses accordingly and the Minister granted his approval, although still of the opinion that the *commissaire's* *arrêté* gave "des pouvoirs extrêmement larges" to the members of the Commission.<sup>8</sup>

Farge was also the object of a protest concerning one of his requisitions, of the Lafarge cement and lime company. In October 1944, the *directeur-adjoint* of the company wrote a four-page letter to the Minister of the Interior arguing that the commissarial *arrêté* was illegal and exceeded his territorial limits.<sup>9</sup> Such attempts at overruling the *commissaire* revealed explicitly the real locus of power, especially for employers intent on reversing acts favourable to employees: the hierarchy within the state structure had not changed fundamentally in the immediate post-Liberation period.

The role of *commissaires* was thus mainly consultative and educational: in his report of 20 April 1945, Yves Farge cited M. Séguin, an industrial physics professor

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<sup>6</sup> Robert Gildea, *France since 1945*, Oxford, 1996, p.129.

<sup>7</sup> CAC DRT 1146, "Programme d'enseignement pour la formation technique des délégués ouvriers dans les comités d'entreprises : cours du 1er degré," lesson 7, no date [1945].

<sup>8</sup> AN F1a 4022, letters from Minister of the Interior (Adrien Tixier) to Commissaire de la République à Lyon (Yves Farge), 28 April 1945 and 28 June 1945. See also chapter III, section 3.

<sup>9</sup> AN F1a 4022, *arrêté* 367, Commissaire de la République à Lyon (Yves Farge), 6 October 1944 and letter to Minister of the Interior from *directeur-adjoint*, S.A. des Chaux et Ciments de Lafarge et du Theil, Paris, 30 October 1944.

and head of the Economic Sub-Committee of the Commission de Reconstruction, who suggested that there was poor use of coal in the Lyon industrial region and lack of appropriate knowledge of boilers by the workers servicing them. Consequently, the Commission Régionale de Reconstruction Économique undertook to organise des "cours systématiques de chauffe rationnelle."<sup>10</sup> Also, the *commissaire* was a go-between with the Minister of Labour, speaking directly with him on behalf of workers.<sup>11</sup>

The *commissaires* did possess, however, a certain latitude in the exercise of their powers, especially at the start of their mandates in the immediate post-Liberation and with regard to salaries. The government announced in September 1944 its intention to increase salaries by 40 to 50 per cent, with the proviso that the rise would have to take account of the cost of living in each region. As a result, one particular *commissaire* restricted the increase in his region, with immediate effect ("pour calmer les impatiences"), to 30 to 35 per cent.<sup>12</sup> Such differentiated action was repeated elsewhere, depending on the perspective of the *commissaire* and also his relations with the workers' movement; Yves Farge, for example, wanted to satisfy the wishes of the workers and authorised three salary increases.<sup>13</sup>

Some *commissaires* attempted to make wide use of their powers -- a notable example occurred in September 1944 in Marseille, where Raymond Aubrac decreed the requisition of fifteen firms and allowed the creation of *comités de gestion* under *pouvoirs exceptionnels* granted to him in the immediate wake of the Liberation. Although the ordinance of 10 January 1944 permitted him to make the requisitions, he was subject as well to article 4, whereby these powers were only valid when communication channels had been interrupted between the government and the *commissaire*. With the resumption of such communication, the government reminded the *commissaires* as early as 22 September of the full provisions of the ordinance.<sup>14</sup> A Ministry of the Interior note of 26 November 1944 criticised Aubrac for continuing to exercise the powers even when he was in contact with the central authority and in another report he was considered to be a docile tool of the PCF.<sup>15</sup> Aubrac was

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<sup>10</sup> AN F1a 4022, report of Commissaire de la République à Lyon (Yves Farge), 20 April 1945.

<sup>11</sup> AN F1a 4029, report of Commissaire de la République à Angers (Alain Savary), 7 June 1945.

<sup>12</sup> AN F1a 4028, letter from Commissaire de la République à Rennes (Victor Le Gorgeu) to the Minister of the Colonies (René Pleven), 10 September 1944.

<sup>13</sup> Annie Lacroix-Riz, *La CGT de la Libération à la scission, de 1944 à 1947*, Paris, 1983, p.23.

<sup>14</sup> Antoine Prost, "Le retour aux temps ordinaires," in Claire Andrieu, Lucette Le Van and Antoine Prost, eds, *Les Nationalisations de la Libération: De l'utopie au compromis*, Paris, 1987, pp.103-104.

<sup>15</sup> AN F1a 4023, "Situation de la région de Marseille depuis la Libération," 15 December 1944 and anonymous note, (Ministry of the Interior), 26 November 1944.

replaced as *commissaire* in January 1945. In recollections presented to a colloquium in May 1984, Aubrac noted that the *comités* were not liked by the central administration, even if he considered them merely as *comités consultatifs*, passing on advice to the director of the firm. In addition, he said that he had encountered many political difficulties from such ministers as René Mayer, the Minister of Public Works and formerly of the Rothschild bank, who flew unannounced from Paris early in October 1944 in order to command Aubrac to stop the requisition programme, saying: "le ton monte autour de la politique que vous faites à Marseille et cela ne va pas pouvoir durer très longtemps ..." <sup>16</sup>

Although a later mission of inquiry in May-June 1946 headed by an official, Domb, from the Ministry of National Economy concluded that the requisitioned companies were doing well ("elles ont soit bourgeonné, soit donné de beaux fruits"), it was thought that the best solution to the problem of what to do with the requisitioned plants was to increase worker participation in management at a national level, otherwise the Marseille workers would have too many advantages relative to other workers in the country. <sup>17</sup> The official's suggestion, however, was not adopted and the requisitions were soon abandoned, the last ones being terminated along with the *comités de gestion* on 1 March 1947. <sup>18</sup>

The above report encapsulates the difficulty of particular procedures enacted by sympathetic public authorities. In the absence of generalised efforts, the decentralisation of policy would eventually fail, from the point of view of workers and their representatives.

Attempts to change administrative methods in favour of greater coordination also failed. When a *commissaire de la République* suggested that divisional labour inspectors assume the powers of other inspectors from the Inspection des Mines and Ponts et Chaussées, for example, and arbitrate work conflicts in their sectors, he was confronted with substantial opposition, despite support from Pierre Mendès France. <sup>19</sup> At the same time, there was a chronic lack of funds and resources for the central government inspectorate. One prefect reported that there were about 100 inspectors at the Direction Départementale du Contrôle des Prix for the entire Bouches-du-Rhône but

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<sup>16</sup> Raymond Aubrac, testimony, in Andrieu, Le Van and Prost, p.110. See also CAC TR 14043, report by Aubrac's successor, Paul Haag, 16 May 1945.

<sup>17</sup> AN F60 1001, "Rapport de la mission chargée de procéder à une enquête sur les entreprises réquisitionnées de Marseille," May-June 1946.

<sup>18</sup> Antoine Prost, "Le retour aux temps ordinaires," in Andrieu, Le Van and Prost, p.104. See also Annie Lacroix-Riz, "Les résistances dans l'administration," in Andrieu, Le Van and Prost, pp.192-210.

<sup>19</sup> CAC TR 13636, letter from Pierre Mendès France, MEN, urging acceptance of Francis-Louis Closon's idea, to Minister of Labour (Alexandre Parodi), 27 January 1945. See chapter V, section 2e.

they were without cars: "On ne peut espérer que cette centaine d'inspecteurs ... puissent exercer sur les transactions et les prix un contrôle véritablement efficace."<sup>20</sup> Later, there were widespread complaints about budget cuts which reduced the possible scope for action by the administration.<sup>21</sup> In addition, the very methods of the civil service were often suspect, as with a failed study by the Inspection du Travail on the conflicts of 19 June 1948. The inspectors were supposed to have questioned representative establishments in their region in order to determine the pattern of the outbreaks but they had a natural tendency to ask questions in those places where the strike actually took place, thus falsifying the results. The inspectorate also lacked experience of opinion polling.<sup>22</sup>

While the Communists were part of the government, they favoured further centralisation and a reduction in the powers of regional government. As early as October 1944, the Communists were criticising the inefficient local bureaucracy. The *inspecteur général des services administratifs* in Marseille reported on conversations with Thibault Andrieu, a Communist representing the CGT in the CDL, who said that work was slowing down mainly because of certain ingrained administrative routines: "... surtout par les habitudes de routine si chères à certaines Administrations."<sup>23</sup> In response to a questionnaire from the Minister of the Economy in November 1945, the Communist Prefect in Limoges (Haute-Vienne), Jean Chaintron, estimated that the abolition of the regional level of government in his area alone would lead to savings of fifty million francs per year.<sup>24</sup> Later, he described his hostility to the regional level as being motivated by the rise of a regional bureaucracy: "Nous apercevions bientôt avec effarement l'invraisemblable montée de bureaucratie régionale tendant à paralyser une administration qui se voulait démocratique et opérative."<sup>25</sup>

The many restrictions operated by the central government on the actions of the *commissaires*<sup>26</sup> reflected the enforced dependence of the regional level of government on central government but also a revival of the unitary state. Already, in December

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<sup>20</sup> AN F1cIII 1210, report of Préfet des Bouches-du-Rhône, 15 February 1945.

<sup>21</sup> See AN F1a 4731, general survey of prefect reports, 23 September 1946.

<sup>22</sup> CAC TR 13521, Service Central de Statistique, Ministry of Labour, report of June 1948.

<sup>23</sup> AN F1a 4023, report of Commissaire de la République à Marseille (Raymond Aubrac), 13 October 1944.

<sup>24</sup> Solange and Christian Gras, "Mouvements régionaux et reconstruction des États de l'Europe occidentale," *Europa, revue d'études interdisciplinaires*, 5, 2, 1982, p.280.

<sup>25</sup> Jean Chaintron, testimony, in *La Libération de la France. Actes du colloque internationale, Paris, 28-31 octobre 1974*, [Comité d'histoire de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale,] Paris, 1976, p.512, as cited by Solange and Christian Gras, p.280.

<sup>26</sup> Sainclivier writes that except at the outset, all *commissaires* complained of the diminution of their powers. Jacqueline Sainclivier, "Le pouvoir résistant (été 1944)," in Philippe Buton and Jean-Marie Guillon, eds, *Les Pouvoirs en France à la Libération*, Paris, 1994, p.34.

1945, the National Assembly had voted unanimously for the suppression of the regional level.<sup>27</sup> When the Prefect of Moselle reported to a meeting of his administrative staff on the new (second) constitution of 27 October 1946 and its (theoretical) principles of decentralisation and deconcentration,<sup>28</sup> he noted that the *tutelle administrative* had been abolished and liberty returned to the *collectivités locales*. However, prefects were to continue to hold the right of control: they were to ensure that local decisions did not contravene the law and that these decisions did not have national significance.<sup>29</sup> The prewar structure had come back unchanged, the conclusion reached by Charles-Louis Foulon:

"Au moment du départ du Général de Gaulle, le jacobinisme du Ministre de l'Intérieur et la volonté des administrations centrales avaient retourné sa physionomie d'avant-guerre à l'organisation des pouvoirs publics ... La Résistance [avait été] sacrifiée à l'État unitaire."<sup>30</sup>

### **3. The entrenched power of the centralised state**

With the abolition of the *commissaires* in 1946 and the old administrative apparatus re-formed and revived, all power lay once again with the unitary state. The centralised state had already become entrenched over the course of the post-Liberation period, starting in 1944, owing to the responsibilities of central administrators for economic coordination. This section examines the renewed authority of the state in the 1944-1948 period and how it was expressed in economic planning, anti-communism, and the structure of decision-making. The centralised state structure increasingly militated against local efforts by state officials and workers' representatives to promote worker participation.

#### **a. The renewed authority of the state**

Although state interventionism became increasingly important after 1944, the debate on the role of government in post-Liberation France was restrictive: there was little focus on workers' access to the structures of the state or on their participation in the firm; instead, the competence of state officials, the preservation of governmental authority, and its independence from pressure groups were all highlighted.

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<sup>27</sup> Solange and Christian Gras, p.281.

<sup>28</sup> According to Williams, "the decentralizing provisions of the constitution proved a dead letter." Philip Williams, *Crisis and Compromise: Politics in the Fourth Republic*, London, 1964, p.345.

<sup>29</sup> AN F60 674, report from Préfet de Moselle, 5 February 1947.

<sup>30</sup> Charles-Louis Foulon, "Prise et exercice du pouvoir à la Libération," in *La Libération de la France. Actes du colloque internationale, Paris, 28-31 octobre 1974*, [Comité d'histoire de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale,] Paris, 1976, p.522, as cited by Solange and Christian Gras, p.281.

Two views of the state were emerging, as Richard Kuisel shows in his study of French economic management. One outlook, especially prominent among the older generation and the prefectural corps, was of the state as "an impartial arbiter that maintained harmony and order among competing interests." The other view, held by younger administrators, technicians, engineers, was of the state as "the carrier of progress ... [encouraging] the forces of economic expansion."<sup>31</sup> Kuisel here is describing attitudes in the 1950s, but they had started to take root in the 1940s. The outlooks, Kuisel writes, were in some ways complementary. They both emphasised the pivotal role of the state in the economy. As L. H. Schlenker observes, ever since the Second World War, "state actors have sought to guide, to stimulate, and to ultimately [sic] control the economic destiny of the nation."<sup>32</sup>

Such a preponderant role for the state ensured that it remained, during the years 1944-1948, a central target for trade unions, since they were too weak to achieve basic demands at the workplace and needed state backing to push through progressive decisions favouring workers' rights. George Ross notes that "large numbers of questions which might, elsewhere, have become matters for collective bargaining, have been the object of politics, legislation, and state regulation in France."<sup>33</sup> This tendency was exacerbated in the immediate post-Liberation period, as the government set most salary and price levels, rationed food and raw materials and was the essential source of funds for investment. Paradoxically, such powers in turn undermined attempts at collective bargaining, for "un certain nombre de mesures réclamées dans les conventions collectives se heurtent aux pouvoirs impartis actuellement à l'État dans le domaine de la politique économique."<sup>34</sup>

State officials aimed to assert their authority through claims of a monopoly of technical efficiency. This stance was already clear in Raymond Aubrac's first report as *commissaire* in Marseille, where the *inspecteur général des services administratifs* noted: "D'une façon générale, le Gouvernement doit s'affirmer, tant dans le domaine administratif -- on manque souvent des instructions techniques -- que sur le plan

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<sup>31</sup> Richard Kuisel, Capitalism and the State in Modern France: Renovation and Economic Management in the Twentieth Century, Cambridge, 1981, p.256.

<sup>32</sup> L. H. Schlenker, "France: The Business State," in Marinus van Schendelen and Robert Jackson, eds, The Politicisation of Business in Western Europe, London, 1987, p.114.

<sup>33</sup> George Ross, "The Perils of Politics: French Unions and the Crisis of the 1970s," in Peter Lange, George Ross and Maurizio Vannicelli, Unions, Change and Crisis: French and Italian Union Strategy and the Political Economy, 1945-1980, London, 1982, p.71.

<sup>34</sup> CAC 860561/1, report on law of 23 December 1946 on collective agreements and work of Commission supérieure des conventions collectives, Direction du Travail, 20 September 1948.

politique ..."<sup>35</sup> In the early post-Liberation period, however, reforming *commissaires* were committed to more than simply the technical aspects of government. Yves Farge, the *commissaire* in Lyon, asserted the case for an active state interventionist posture in favour of productivism:

"On ne peut pas demeurer plus longtemps enfermé dans un dilemme stupide, 'poursuivre des méthodes de Vichy ou revenir au libéralisme anarchique du temps de l'abondance'. Dans tous les domaines, il faut chercher et mettre en pratique la solution qui débarrassera le pays de ses parasites."<sup>36</sup>

As the initial *commissaires* departed, there was a more concerted focus on administrative efficiency as the way to ensure social peace. The second *commissaire* in Marseille, Paul Haag, called in his first report in early 1945 for respect for governmental authority.<sup>37</sup> This attitude emphasised the need for independence from pressure groups and control over the population. Hence in June 1945, *commissaire* Haag reminded the prefects in his region: "qu'ils étaient les représentants du Gouvernement et non les mandataires de la population."<sup>38</sup> When Henri Longchambon, the second *commissaire*, arrived in Lyon at the end of 1945, he, too, considered that the state was losing its authority -- because of the lack of enforcement of government directives, the anarchic condition of the country, and the ability of private interests to circumvent government rules.<sup>39</sup> These views were also consonant with de Gaulle's. This supposed lack of authority led, for many prefects, to a "crise de moralité," in which government decisions on salaries "ne trouvent aucun écho, aucun signe d'intérêt parmi la masse,"<sup>40</sup> a rather artificial way to analyse opposition to wage restraint in a period of galloping inflation.

In the wake of the protests of 1947, state officials became even more committed to strict interpretations of the law. The preservation of governmental authority and independence from pressure groups came together in a series of decisions regarding trade union rights. Crapier, the Secretary of the CGT Fédération Nationale des Travailleurs, Cadres et Techniciens des Chemins de Fer in Paris, wrote to the Minister of the Interior, Jules Moch, protesting against the arrest and detention in prison of a

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<sup>35</sup> AN F1a 4023, report of Commissaire de la République à Marseille (Raymond Aubrac), 13 October 1944 (underlining in original).

<sup>36</sup> AN F1a 4022, report of Commissaire de la République à Lyon (Yves Farge), 16 May 1945 (already cited in chapter IV, section 4a).

<sup>37</sup> AN F1a 4023, report of Commissaire de la République à Marseille (Paul Haag), 15 February 1945.

<sup>38</sup> AN F1a 4023, report of Commissaire de la République à Marseille (Paul Haag), 15 June 1945.

<sup>39</sup> AN F1a 4022, report of Commissaire de la République à Lyon (Henri Longchambon), 24 December 1945.

<sup>40</sup> AN F1a 4731, "'Situation de la France à la veille des consultations électorales,' synthèse générale des rapports des Préfets pour la période du 10 août au 10 septembre 1946," Minister of the Interior, 23 September 1946, p.3.

union militant. Moch, the Socialist minister who had called out the troops against the strikers, replied: "Je tiens à vous rappeler qu'en vertu du principe traditionnel de la séparation des pouvoirs, le pouvoir judiciaire est indépendant." The Minister enunciated the same principle, that judicial authority was independent, in a letter regarding the arrest and detention of PTT workers in Marseille and in a letter to the Prefect of the Loire, approving the Prefect's similar response to the CGT Departmental Union, which was backing strikers being pursued for "entraves à la liberté du travail..."<sup>41</sup> Moch used these narrow readings of the law to attack his political enemies, the Communists. A *polytechnicien*, he was later derided in *Esprit* as a "coldhearted technocrat tak[ing] over the heritage of Jean Jaurès."<sup>42</sup>

### **b. The dependence of the regional administration on central economic planning**

The entrenched power of the centralised state in 1944-1948 is particularly well illustrated by the dependence of the regional administration on central government. Government intervention and the prominence of economic issues made the knowledge and skills of technocrats at the centre vital, most obviously in the operation of the Plan.

After the Liberation, a *service de liaison* between the Ministry of the Interior, the *commissariats de la République* and the prefectures was set up by Adrien Tixier, the Socialist Minister of the Interior (and former *commissaire aux affaires sociales* in Algiers). Tixier, identified by Richard Kuisel as one of the partisans of wholesale renovation of the French economy, supported the report, entitled Structural Economic Reforms, drawn up in Algiers by André Philip, which called for "the immediate creation of a completely planned economy composed of nationalised, directed, and controlled sectors."<sup>43</sup> At the Comité Économique Interministériel, Tixier relayed the wishes of *commissaires* and prefects for weekly bulletins on the national economic situation.<sup>44</sup> The *service de liaison* was meant to facilitate the task of the *commissaires* and the prefects, as a Ministry of the Interior memo made clear: "notamment par des

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<sup>41</sup> An F1a 4745, letters from Jules Moch, Minister of the Interior, 19-22 December 1947. Moch's cabinet colleague and fellow Socialist Christian Pineau, Minister of Public Works and Transport, would later, in October 1948, suspend Crapier and Raymond Tournemaine as the union delegates from the board of the SNCF. The seats would not be filled until 1971. See Georges Ribeill, "Le personnel de la SNCF (1937-1981). Contraintes économiques, issues techniques, mutations professionnelles et évolutions sociales. Les cours successifs d'une entreprise publique," Paris, 1982, p.441.

<sup>42</sup> Alexander Werth, *France: 1940-1955*, London, 1956, p.405, citing Jean Marie Domenach in *Esprit*, January 1949.

<sup>43</sup> Kuisel, pp.177,189. André Philip was the *commissaire* in Algiers responsible for relations with the assembly and the study of postwar problems: Kuisel, p.177.

<sup>44</sup> AN F60 901, minutes of CEI, 11 September 1945.

interventions directes auprès des différents Ministères en vue de hâter le règlement de questions ..."<sup>45</sup> Such attributions had previously been given to the Bureau des Rapports Préfectoraux, part of the Direction du Personnel -- but this office existed before the war only because of the departmental "tutelle administrative." However, the memo emphasised that, in 1946, economic tutelage could not be decentralised and had to be retained by ministries responsible for economic planning:

"cette même administration doit, en outre, appliquer les règles et les dispositions de la tutelle économique qui, elle, ne peut se décentraliser étant, tout entière, retenue et exercée par ceux qui organisent les plans généraux c'est à dire à l'échelon ministériel."<sup>46</sup>

The extension of *planisme* thus resulted in more prefectoral dependence on the technical and economic ministries: "Le préfet aurait ainsi un second chef hiérarchique." The memo argued, however, that the Minister of the Interior was the only "chef hiérarchique" of the prefects and as such should play a crucial role in the government. The explicit concern of the memo was not only to elevate the role of the ministry but to restore the economic liaison service, which had been established only on a short-term basis, its fate linked to that of the *commissaires*. When the *commissaires* were abolished in 1946, the constituent assembly voted to do away with the *service de liaison* as of 1 April -- but in spite of this decision, the *cabinet* of André Le Troquer, the new Minister of the Interior, opted to keep it under the name of "Service de Documentation," as the need to coordinate economic planning had become too important.

This trend toward greater economic coordination had become pronounced over the course of the post-Liberation period; it also further served to weaken regional autonomy. In Lyon, in 1945, the prefect noted that before there had been a *répartiteur adjoint* in the city to distribute coal; now the allocation was done in Paris.<sup>47</sup> The central government, of course, had assumed control over prices and salaries,<sup>48</sup> and regional economic conferences were limited to consultative roles only.<sup>49</sup> Regional shares of national benefits could be limited: a regional economic conference held in Marseille in June 1945 under the auspices of the *commissaire* determined that there

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<sup>45</sup> AN F1a 4743, memo from Favre, *chef du bureau central du personnel*, to the *directeur du cabinet et du personnel* at the Ministry of the Interior, 13 July 1946.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid. (underlining in original).

<sup>47</sup> AN F1cIII 1225, report of Préfet du Rhône (Henri Longchambon), 16 April 1945.

<sup>48</sup> See AN F60 897, minutes of CEI, 2 October 1944: Pierre Mendès France on need to control salary increases.

<sup>49</sup> AN F1a 4023, report of Commissaire de la République à Marseille (Paul Haag), 15 November 1945.

were no immediate advantages in the national plan for the region.<sup>50</sup> The economic powers of the *commissaires* were soon withdrawn, in any case, by a Ministry of the Interior ordinance of 24 October 1945. Henri Longchambon, the second *commissaire* in Lyon, recognised that this increased concentration of power in the centre without intermediary institutions posed a fundamental problem:

"Ainsi chaque jour, et de plus en plus, se pose le problème fondamental de savoir si toute autorité de décision et d'action doit être concentrée à Paris, ou s'il convient de maintenir des échelons intermédiaires, représentants valables d'une autorité centrale ... Pour l'heure, dans les faits, la question est résolue chaque jour un peu plus dans le sens de la concentration de l'autorité de direction à Paris et de la suppression de toute représentation de cette autorité à des échelons intermédiaires."<sup>51</sup>

The concentration of authority in the centre was further emphasised by the wideranging powers of the Plan (administered by the Commissariat Général du Plan, or CGP) and the Ministry of Finance. As John Zysman argues, Jean Monnet, the Commissioner for the Plan, and his colleagues only had to win the agreement of the Ministry of Finance in order to wield considerable interventionist power because of the influence of the ministry in the allocation of credit in the economy. State bureaucrats controlled access to investment funds or allocated the funds themselves.<sup>52</sup> Prominent among the powerful state officials were the finance inspectors, who staffed the top levels of the Treasury. These central administrators bore the brunt of workers' attacks: at meetings of the *cartel des fonctionnaires*, the general grouping of civil servants, in Marseille, Toulon and Nice in October 1945, CGT speakers attacked the "situation misérable" of the *fonction publique* and blamed the Minister and the inspectors. One speaker in Marseille said:

"Le responsable est le Ministère des Finances. L'Inspection des Finances est une caste de magnats sortie de l'École libre des sciences politiques ... L'administration ainsi dirigée est faussée ..."<sup>53</sup>

Prefects increasingly had to defend the policies of the central government, not always an agreeable task, for it was not easy to make penury popular, particularly against well-organised political opposition and popular incomprehension. Prefects, therefore, did not hesitate to explain the difficult circumstances in their departments to a

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<sup>50</sup> AN F1a 4023, report of Commissaire de la République à Marseille (Paul Haag), 30 June 1945.

<sup>51</sup> AN F1a 4022, report of Commissaire de la République à Lyon (Henri Longchambon), 24 December 1945.

<sup>52</sup> John Zysman, *Governments, Markets, and Growth: Financial Systems and the Politics of Industrial Change*, Ithaca, 1983, pp.106-107. Kuisel, pp.241-242, notes that there was a contest over the control of the new equipment fund (*fonds de modernisation et d'équipement*) between the Ministry of Finance and the CGP, that was settled in favour of the ministry in late 1949.

<sup>53</sup> AN F1a 4023, report of Commissaire de la République à Marseille (Paul Haag), 15 October 1945.

demanding Paris government. In April 1945, the Bouches-du-Rhône Prefect reported that ministers' statements were being "deformed" by the partisan press, linked to certain political parties and that the government did not have the same access to the public as the parties did:

"... placé au dessus des partis, ... le Gouvernement ne peut disposer ... des organes de presse. Les déclarations ministérielles sont généralement commentées avec la déformation qu'entraîne la position particulière d'un parti. Peut-être y-a-t-il là une des causes de l'incompréhension manifestée par une fraction de l'opinion à l'égard de certains Ministres."<sup>54</sup>

Perhaps it was not coincidental that Adrien Tixier, the Minister of the Interior, when speaking a few months later of the wishes of *commissaires* and prefects for weekly accounts of the economic situation, recommended radio speeches as a viable option.<sup>55</sup>

In June 1948, the prefects' problems of defending government policies were, in some ways, more acute than in 1945. Prefects had been ordered to explain the advantages of the Marshall Plan in order to counter the hostility to it of the PCF. They stated in their reports that the PCF remained solidly implanted in factories and that it could quickly regain lost terrain because of the failure of governmental policy. "Pour le Préfet des Bouches-du-Rhône les dispositions récentes du Gouvernement sont tardives. Il craint qu'elles soient sans valeur."<sup>56</sup>

The centralised state also became the messenger for American aid as officials at the centre managed funds from the Marshall Plan. Richard Vinen points out that U.S. subsidies increased the influence of French central administrators, "because Marshall aid was channelled through the French state and its distribution was controlled by French civil servants."<sup>57</sup> John Zysman indicates that the Marshall Plan helped strengthen the link between the CGP and the Treasury, in that the joint management of the American funds further committed the Treasury to modernisation "and gave a lasting financial cast to French industrial intervention."<sup>58</sup> As intervention became associated with planning, there was more government discretion in financing which led to selective policies meant to encourage key sectors, particularly iron, steel, and cement.<sup>59</sup> Since these decisions emanated from the centre, the particular interests of

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<sup>54</sup> AN F1cIII 1210, report of Préfet des Bouches-du-Rhône, 16 April 1945.

<sup>55</sup> AN F60 901, minutes of CEI, 11 September 1945.

<sup>56</sup> AN F1cIII 1234, synthesis of confidential prefectural reports from 41 departments, June 1948.

<sup>57</sup> Richard Vinen, *Bourgeois Politics in France, 1945-1951*, Cambridge, 1995, p.90.

<sup>58</sup> Zysman, p.109. See also Michel Margairaz, *L'État, les finances et l'économie: Histoire d'une conversion, 1932-1952*, Paris, 1991, volume 2, pp.720-990 passim; and above, chapter II, section 3b)vi.

<sup>59</sup> Zysman, pp.146-147.

regions and departments were effectively marginalised: the discretion of *commissaires* and prefects was limited.

The combined clout of the CGP and the Ministry of Finance resulted also in the isolation of separate regional authorities. Solange and Christian Gras write: "À la centralisation politico-administrative passant par le Ministère de l'Intérieur et ses agents s'ajoute peu à peu une centralisation économico-financière passant par les ministères 'économiques.'"<sup>60</sup> The CGP attacked "old-fashioned regionalist sentiments" emanating from the "relative backwardness of the peripheral parts of France."<sup>61</sup> Regionalist thinking had been discredited, in any case, by actions during the war, as in Brittany, where Breton *autonomistes* had collaborated in an attempt to install an autonomous Breton state allied to the Third Reich.<sup>62</sup>

Prefects and *commissaires de la République* were hierarchically subordinate to the Ministry of the Interior, but nominally responsible for coordinating the field agents of all the central administrations in their areas. Effectively, they lost more and more of their economic decision-making powers in the immediate post-Liberation to the central administrations of the Treasury and the Plan (CGP), with less important local and regional autonomy as a result. There was thus little likelihood of special efforts by these officials to promote enhanced worker participation at the level of the firm.

### c. Anti-communism

The renewed authority of the centralised state was expressed not only in economic planning but also in political surveillance. The regional and departmental administrations were subject to intense political scrutiny and anyone suspected of Communist leanings was strictly monitored and scrutinised. This vetting reinforced the power of the central government. The *cabinet* of Édouard Depreux, the Socialist Minister of the Interior in the Bidault, Blum and Ramadier governments 1946-1947, prepared in June 1946 a revealing table in which critical remarks were made on prefects' reports. The categories used were: presentation, clarity, exactitude, *conscience professionnelle*, intelligence, interest of report, political tendency. Virtually everyone was labelled as a "socialiste" or "socialisant," aside from Lucien Monjaudis, the Prefect of Loire, who was described as a Communist and "très à gauche."<sup>63</sup> He

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<sup>60</sup> Solange and Christian Gras, p.280.

<sup>61</sup> Gildea, p.129.

<sup>62</sup> Charles-Louis Foulon, Le Pouvoir en province à la Libération: Les Commissaires de la République 1943-1946, Paris, 1975, p.63. See also Jacqueline Sainclivier, La Bretagne de 1939 à nos jours, Rennes, 1989.

<sup>63</sup> AN F1a 4743, remarks on prefects' reports of June 1946, *cabinet* Depreux, 6 August 1946.

and Jean Chaintron, Prefect of Haute-Vienne, were the only Communist prefects named (and tolerated) by de Gaulle at the Liberation and they were both removed by Paul Ramadier and Édouard Depreux in November 1947, at the time of the first strike wave.<sup>64</sup>

Independent *commissaires* also incited unease among central state administrators. Yves Farge, the *commissaire de la République* at Lyon, was a former Socialist journalist who had evinced considerable organisational skill during the Resistance. An official named Fouche (at the Ministry of the Interior) added the following comments to Farge's first commissarial report after his appointment at Lyon: "Grosse autorité dans la Résistance. Tendances pro-communiste. A besoin d'être doublé d'un administrateur." Another official on the ground (unnamed, aside from the initials R/JP) noted in the same report, however, that Farge was "un homme de premier ordre ayant profondément le sens de l'État, organisateur remarquable et qui a la confiance complète de la classe ouvrière ..." <sup>65</sup> Although Farge suffered from accusations of left-leaning actions, he was isolated by the ministry primarily because of his nontraditional background -- not having risen through the ranks -- and his lack of sympathy with current administrative goals. Farge resigned on 15 September 1945, not wanting to be a mere *exécutant* in the wake of substantial legislative changes limiting the powers of the *commissaires*.<sup>66</sup>

Anti-communism also served to strengthen the power of the central level of the state by reinforcing police powers. There were Prefects of Police in Paris, Lyon, Marseille, Bordeaux, who managed "responsibility for public order, public morality, and public hygiene," with the post in Paris ranking as one of the two highest in the prefectural corps.<sup>67</sup> Over the course of the postwar period, however, the police were called on to do more outright anti-communist work, including considerable spying on unions. Jules Moch, Édouard Depreux's successor as Minister of the Interior, wrote a letter to Christian Pineau, Minister of Public Works and Transport, in which he gave details of a meeting of Communist railway workers held in Chateauroux on 23 November 1948 and added why he had marked the letter "très confidentiel": "Étant donné les moyens utilisés pour l'obtention de ces renseignements, il y a lieu de

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<sup>64</sup> Irwin Wall, French Communism in the Era of Stalin: The Quest for Unity and Integration, 1945-1962, Westport, Conn., 1983, pp.36,67.

<sup>65</sup> AN F1a 4022, in report of Commissaire de la République à Lyon (Yves Farge), 13 September 1944; FOUCHE in the text.

<sup>66</sup> Solange and Christian Gras, p.279. See also Yves Farge, Rebelles, soldats et citoyens: Souvenirs d'un Commissaire de la République, Paris, 1946 and Yves Farge, "Au temps où la France se refusait au coin des rues," Europe, 24, 5, 1 May 1946, pp.36-55.

<sup>67</sup> Chapman, p.26.

considérer ce document comme très confidentiel."<sup>68</sup> The use of police informers complemented the more obvious face of police intervention during the strike waves.<sup>69</sup> The Fourth Republic, like the Third, might govern badly, but could still resort to the expedients of the Second Empire in order to maintain its surveillance strategies and internal defence.

#### **d. The structure of decision-making**

Another factor in the lack of access to the state for workers and their representatives was the governmental structure of decision-making. Prior to and immediately after the Liberation, until October 1945, the provisional consultative assembly exerted limited legislative control over the executive. The consultative assembly only had one occasion, in July 1944, when it was based in Algiers, to hear of the government's economic policies and, after the Liberation, the assembly did not have the first full debate on economic policy until a year later, in July 1945.<sup>70</sup> The government decreed major reforms, such as the *comités d'entreprises* and major nationalisations, during this period, without any real legislative check, according to Andrew Shennan, who adds: "In so far as the Consultative Assembly criticized the government's reforms, it generally criticized them for not going far enough."<sup>71</sup> Maurice Larkin notes that "Conservative opposition to ... extensions of state control had been largely pre-empted by the use of ordinances months before the Constituent Assembly was elected"; while the first constituent assembly itself was "committed to laying the foundations of the future rather than concerned with the day-to-day critique of government and with inter-party jockeying for advantage."<sup>72</sup>

The election of the first constituent assembly in October 1945 marked the return to parliamentary control (in a unicameral regime) and the advent of a solid, tripartite majority. With the expulsion of the Communists in May 1947, tripartism came to an end,<sup>73</sup> and subsequent governments had to rely in parliament on thin and uncertain

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<sup>68</sup> AN F1a 4745, letter from Jules Moch, Minister of the Interior, 6 December 1948.

<sup>69</sup> See AN F60 693, letter from *Directeur des services de police* to the Prefect of Meurthe-et-Moselle, 8 October 1948, about police intervention in a steel strike in Villerupt, where 300-400 strikers were pushed back with teargas.

<sup>70</sup> Andrew Shennan, Rethinking France: Plans for Renewal, 1940-1946, Oxford, 1989, p.249.

<sup>71</sup> Shennan, p.291.

<sup>72</sup> Larkin, pp.131,130.

<sup>73</sup> Rioux states that the election of the second constituent assembly, in June 1946, had already shifted the political balance within tripartism; the legislative elections of November 1946 then revealed increasingly open divisions among the three parties. Jean-Pierre Rioux, The Fourth Republic, 1944-1958, Cambridge and Paris, 1987, pp.102,110.

majorities, which could be nullified by the defection of even a minor group.<sup>74</sup> There was no potential majority party; each party had to depend on its own interest groups, on the "loyalty of a particular group, whose support it dare not alienate."<sup>75</sup>

These differing forms of government each led to different opportunities for interest groups to voice their concerns. The Social Security ordinances of 4 and 19 October 1945, for instance, were promulgated directly by the executive, despite protests by employers and preexisting health insurance carriers. As Ellen Immergut shows in her examination of health policy-making, however, the return of parliamentary democracy and especially increased party competition resulted in an "onslaught of particularistic claims," as certain interest groups, such as the medical profession, highly overrepresented in parliament and acting almost as swing voters, were more important than groups representing larger memberships to unstable governing coalitions.<sup>76</sup>

Workers and their representatives were more prominent in the initial phase of direct executive rule (1944-1945), when the CNR Charter was being implemented, as they were needed as supporters of the main Resistance parties (the PCF, SFIO and MRP) -- although even at this juncture working-class interests were often secondary.<sup>77</sup> As parliament reasserted its importance in decision-making (after October 1945), workers' voices, tied to the increasingly marginalised Communist party,<sup>78</sup> themselves became marginalised.

#### **4. The limits of the centralised state: employers and labour**

In theory, a powerful, centralised state could be an advantage for workers, if it could be used to promote their demands and weigh in against employers. There was something intrinsically hostile, however, to the interests of workers in the French

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<sup>74</sup> Philip Williams, Politics in Post-War France: Parties and the Constitution in the Fourth Republic, London, 1954, p.190. Also, legislation had to pass in the new Council of the Republic, created in the constitution of October 1946 and elected on 24 November and 8 December. See Maurice Larkin, France since the Popular Front: Government and People, 1936-1986, Oxford, 1988, p.129: "While it is true that the two houses elected in 1946 both had majorities that were pledged to reform, it is hard to know whether the social measures of the Liberation would have become law so painlessly had they had to run the traditional gauntlet of both houses."

<sup>75</sup> Williams, Politics in Post-War France, p.329.

<sup>76</sup> Ellen Immergut, "The Rules of the Game: The Logic of Health Policy-Making in France, Switzerland, and Sweden," in Sven Steinmo, Kathleen Thelen and Frank Longstreth, eds, Structuring Politics: Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Analysis, Cambridge, 1992, pp.68-71.

<sup>77</sup> Unemployment insurance, for instance, did not feature in the Social Security ordinances. See Shennan, pp.221-223.

<sup>78</sup> Owing to the Cold War, the marginalisation of the PCF would have occurred independently of the return to a parliamentary structure but this form of government accentuated the lack of a secure coalition partner for the PCF.

centralised state of 1944-1948. The relative success of economic planning, for example, many observers have shown, came about at the expense of workers, who had to pay higher prices for subsidised food and who were left out of the decision-making process.<sup>79</sup>

In fact, the question was whether the centralised state was itself sufficiently coherent to put in place a system of corporatist intermediation in general and a modern industrial relations system, in particular. Although Pierre Birnbaum argues that corporatism did not take root in France "because of the exceptional strength and administrative centralization of the French state,"<sup>80</sup> Jack Hayward writes more convincingly of the "enduringly fragmented nature of the very state machine that aspires to impart unity to a pluralistic whole" and points, in particular, to the "feeble French Ministry of Labour," incapable of playing an influential interventionist role.<sup>81</sup>

The new postwar corporatist order elsewhere in Europe featured centralised bargaining by powerful trade unions and employer associations, coordinated by social democratic and/or christian democratic governments. However, this did not occur in France, where there was neither the social base nor the industrial and political muscle necessary for such a system. Salary agreements in France were localised agreements only.<sup>82</sup>

Attempts at corporatist agreement more often than not left a weak government at the mercy of the interests who compromised, over their differences, at the expense of the public interest. Such was the fate of the Palais Royal conference of July 1946 on prices and wages, for example, which simply served to licence inflation rather than to control it.<sup>83</sup> A typical report on salary negotiations, in this case for Marseille from 1945, suggested: "des liaisons constantes sont maintenues avec les représentants de la

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<sup>79</sup> See Jack Hayward, The State and the Market Economy: Industrial Patriotism and Economic Intervention in France, Brighton, 1986, ch.4 and Chris Howell, Regulating Labor: The State and Industrial Relations Reform in Postwar France, Princeton, 1992, pp.54-55.

<sup>80</sup> Pierre Birnbaum, States and Collective Action: The European Experience, Cambridge, 1988, p.123, as cited by Bo Rothstein, "The State, Associations, and the Transition to Democracy: Early Corporatism in Sweden," in Dietrich Rueschemeyer, Marilyn Rueschemeyer and Björn Wittrock, eds, Participation and Democracy, East and West: Comparisons and Interpretations, Armonk, N.Y., 1998, p.134.

<sup>81</sup> Hayward, pp.13,60.

<sup>82</sup> The 1946 law on collective bargaining specifically excluded wages; even so, the only two national contracts negotiated were those for bank employees and streetcar workers. Val Lorwin, The French Labor Movement, Cambridge, Mass., 1954, p.132.

<sup>83</sup> Williams, Crisis and Compromise, p.394.

CGT et des employeurs de la Région pour l'examen et la solution des revendications diverses."<sup>84</sup>

In the immediate post-Liberation period, state officials did intervene in industrial relations, but there was still no consistent commitment then at the centre to altering industrial relations in order to force employers to the bargaining table, let alone provide a political guarantee to the CGT. Jack Hayward notes that in 1945, the government was too poorly informed and equipped to carry out a *dirigiste* labour market policy; government was brought in to settle disputes when business was unwilling to negotiate with unions.<sup>85</sup> Certainly after 1948, as Hayward observes, "the state has -- apart notably from minimum wage regulation -- usually delegated management of industrial relations to business."<sup>86</sup>

Employers' disinclination to deal with unions -- let alone the state -- underlined their desire for independence and control, as shown so strongly in the prewar period (see above, chapters II and V). Paul Chailley-Bert, the *commissaire* in the recently-liberated city of Nancy remarked in October 1944:

"... les industriels et les commerçants font preuve d'une indépendance marquée et tendent à vouloir reprendre les habitudes commerciales d'avant-guerre, ce qui ne saurait être compatible pour l'instant avec une économie dirigée..."<sup>87</sup>

Later, however, the employers' national organisation, the CNPF, became wary of individual members going their own way, particularly on the question of pay settlements, since the CNPF was aiming to keep wages low and was fearful of the generalisation of too generous individual deals (by those employers wishing to end disputes with a quick and favourable settlement for the workers).<sup>88</sup> The wish to control wage costs, Richard Vinen writes, "often led the leaders of the *patronat* into a working alliance with the state."<sup>89</sup> Business leaders realised that "state action, or the

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<sup>84</sup> AN F1a 4023, report of Commissaire de la République à Marseille (Raymond Aubrac), 16 January 1945. Another, earlier example: "Un nouveau barème [salary scale] a été obtenu dans le Var avec l'accord du Patronat." AN F1a 4023, report of Commissaire de la République à Marseille (Raymond Aubrac), 2 November 1944.

<sup>85</sup> Jack Hayward, "Planning and the French Labour Market: Incomes and Industrial Training," in Jack Hayward and Michael Watson, eds, *Planning, Politics and Public Policy*, Cambridge, 1975, pp.160,161.

<sup>86</sup> Hayward, p.59.

<sup>87</sup> AN F1a 4024, report of Commissaire de la République à Nancy (Paul Chailley-Bert), 15 October 1944.

<sup>88</sup> Vinen, p.66, citing examples of such employer behaviour and CNPF concern from October 1946, January 1947, and November 1947.

<sup>89</sup> Vinen, p.67.

threat of it, was the only means to impose discipline on employers over the question of professional organization."<sup>90</sup>

Big business enjoyed sometimes close relations with certain politicians and parties and funded them through the disingenuously named Centre d'Études Économiques, founded in 1946. André Boutemy, its most influential leader, served as a go-between with the CNPF, which did not want to be compromised, according to Vinen, by direct intervention in politics.<sup>91</sup> Boutemy had a good personal relationship with René Mayer, the Radical Minister of Finance in the first Schuman government (November 1947-July 1948), who was known as the "gravedigger of economic democracy."<sup>92</sup> There were also obvious connections between large-scale industrialists and civil servants, because of their shared backgrounds in the *grandes écoles* -- the vice-president of the CNPF, Pierre Ricard, had not only graduated from the *école polytechnique* but had also worked for fifteen years in the *corps des mines* and the Ministry of Industrial Production.<sup>93</sup> Furthermore, the government needed a close collaboration between the civil service and business leaders for the effective distribution of Marshall aid.<sup>94</sup>

While big business could quietly adjust the terms of its relationship with the state, small business leaders complained at length about their treatment, despite -- or because of -- the size of their electoral constituency, estimated at 2.5 million voters in 1950.<sup>95</sup> It was the number of small firms also which had resulted in an environment "deeply hostile to trade unions, and indeed to any form of workers' organization."<sup>96</sup> It was their very predominance, and that of medium-sized businesses, which exposed the lack of influence of the French state. For example, many of the firms of fifty to one hundred employees affected by the law of May 1946 on the *comités d'entreprises* were laggard and even defiant about implementing the legislation; several firms employing just over the minimum level fired workers in order to escape the provision of the law altogether; and in those small and medium-sized firms where the *comités* did exist, they had no substantive existence in any case.<sup>97</sup> Moreover, local bankers in Marseille

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<sup>90</sup> Vinen, p.69.

<sup>91</sup> Vinen, pp.76-77. Boutemy had to resign his ministerial post in 1951 when it was revealed that he had distributed CNPF electoral subsidies. Williams, *Politics in Post-War France*, p.356.

<sup>92</sup> Werth, p.391, citing anonymous source.

<sup>93</sup> Vinen, pp.69-70,93-94.

<sup>94</sup> Vinen, pp.59-60, citing civil servant letter of June 1948 to presidents of chemical industry associations.

<sup>95</sup> Williams, *Politics in Post-War France*, pp.331-332.

<sup>96</sup> Howell, p.45.

<sup>97</sup> CAC TR 14006, reports of Lyon Divisional Labour Inspector (P. Aymard) to Minister of Labour, 8 July 1946, p.7 and April 1948, pp.9,10.

refused to carry out certain banking transactions on behalf of the requisitioned industries, involving small and medium-sized companies.<sup>98</sup>

Attention to the importance of the relations of the centre with officials in the regions and departments should not obscure the significance of the close economic ties between administrators and big business, in particular. State economic policy-making increasingly left workers out of the picture, including their aspirations for greater participation. After 1947, the CGT would need to undertake mobilisation before any reform, before even any negotiation, it seemed. In 1944-1947, the centralised state, however, had apparently not had the power or inclination, and after 1947 certainly not the latter, to refashion industrial relations.

Although it is true that the centralised state did hinder special efforts to promote greater worker participation in Lyon and Marseille, in particular, where reforming *commissaires* might have accomplished more had they been allowed to by central authority, elsewhere centralisation was necessary to counter the authority and position of employers and establish national collective bargaining. This contradictory role of the centralised state was the paradox confronting workers and their representatives at the time. The CGT, committed to the battle for production and tied to the PCF in government, effectively favoured centralisation but complained indifferently of bureaucratic sabotage, unconcern, or incompetence at national and local level, depending on the issues and the temper of its constituency. Perhaps the question, ultimately, does not concern the centralisation of the state but its accessibility and openness to participation. The Jacobin tradition of the French state -- and much of the French left -- was favourable to neither.

## 5. Conclusion

The French administration -- unlike in most other European countries at the time -- was incapable of setting up a centralised system of industrial relations although it did initially promote a process of limited participation at the workplace and in state institutions in the immediate post-Liberation period of 1944-1945. This initiative soon faded, as concerns of social order, expansion of investment and productive capacity and partnership with big business became the paramount priorities. State officials advocated modernisation based on technical efficiency and increased government intervention; the planning commission (CGP) was also designed, according to Peter

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<sup>98</sup> Raymond Aubrac, testimony, in Andrieu, Le Van and Prost, p.111.

Hall, to "enhance the ability of the state to formulate and implement a coordinated economic policy."<sup>99</sup>

In theory, then, the power of the centralised state became more entrenched but in the area of industrial relations, state administrators were dispersed, insufficient and incapable of enacting their policies; whereas employers' associations, unlike unions, were relatively centralised and fought to contain worker demands.

In the aftermath of the Liberation, the instances of increased worker participation were not generalised by the administration, even when advised of their success (see the Domb report cited above, p.182). The introduction of the *commissaires de la République* did not result in significantly greater decision-making power at the regional level or in more responsiveness to workers' demands. Their essential function was to restore law and order and republican legality in the chaotic circumstances of the Liberation. In addition, several other factors, including the entrenched habits of the state bureaucracy, ministers' fears and alarms, and the threat posed by the regional level to the departmental power bases of local and national politicians, all helped to curtail the tenure of the *commissaires de la République*. When the regional level was dismantled in 1946, the state structure reverted to its traditional form, although the Ministry of the Interior was now subject to the dictates of economic planning. The need for a regional police authority quickly resurfaced, with the appointment of IGAMEs (*inspecteurs généraux de l'administration en mission extraordinaire*), in May 1948. Eight inspectors were appointed to serve in each military region and were accorded full authority over all civil and military organisations.<sup>100</sup> They were seen to be required to maintain order and preserve social peace in times of industrial unrest.

During the 1944-1948 period, the CGT accepted the decision-making capacities of each level of government and the administrative influence of state officials. Yet the confederation also maintained an ambivalence towards the centralised state. In the terms of Claus Offe and Helmut Wiesensthal, the CGT operated on a first level in its state involvement: it postponed the second type of conflict, namely which political form would be "most conducive to the articulation of the undistorted interest" of the working classes.<sup>101</sup> Offe and Wiesensthal argue that the interests of workers are less likely to be voiced within the framework of liberal political forms. The CGT was by no

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<sup>99</sup> Peter A. Hall, Governing the Economy: The Politics of State Intervention in Britain and France, Cambridge, 1986, p.171.

<sup>100</sup> Chapman, pp.61-62.

<sup>101</sup> Claus Offe and Helmut Wiesensthal, "Two Logics of Collective Action," in Claus Offe, Disorganized Capitalism, Cambridge, 1985, p.202.

means wholly committed to these liberal forms, but it was hardly sympathetic to worker spontaneity and independent soviets either. In France, the weakness of the trade unions meant that their capacity to bring about change, to argue effectively for worker participation, depended on the form of the state itself. The CGT strived for participation organised under its aegis, if at all. The CGT's support for established political forms from 1944 to 1947 did not, as Offe and Wiesenenthal might suppose, give rise to any external support for the confederation.<sup>102</sup> Instead, the French model was distinctive because of "the exclusion of labor from a voice in economic decision-making."<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> See Offe and Wiesenenthal, p.217.

<sup>103</sup> Howell, p.54.

## **Chapter VIII Conclusion**

### **1. Introduction**

This study had three aims. The first was to describe the role of French state officials in both promoting and hampering workers' participation at the workplace and in the state in the immediate post-Liberation period. The second aim was to assess the state efforts of promotion against the constraints operating on participation. The third aim was to use the French case to contribute to the theoretical literature on the state and on worker collective action. This concluding chapter examines each of these aims in turn and then situates the study in relation to others about worker and union participation in the postwar states of Sweden, Germany, and the United States. Lastly, the chapter suggests possible future research directions on the topic of worker participation and the French state.

### **2. The promotion and hampering by state officials of workers' participation**

During the period of 1944 to 1948, worker participation included many different forms: outright worker control and/or co-decision-making in the firm or plant; consultation with management in a works council; and input at the level of the state in government policy committees, ministerial commissions, planning groups, departmental and regional bodies.<sup>1</sup>

Worker participation schemes needed help from the state in France owing to the deeply-set opposition of employers, the historic weakness of labour in the workplace, and firmly-held views within the labour movement against any type of participation in state structures or with management. State officials traditionally had not interfered to any appreciable extent in industrial relations in the firm. It was the onset of the interventionist state in France after the Liberation, in 1944-1945, which paved the way for an innovative reconsideration of the role of government at the workplace.

Administrators in the immediate post-Liberation period were prepared to use the power of the state to promote a collaborative vision at the workplace. Officials at the Ministry of Labour, for example, desired workers and their representatives to play a much more prominent role in state affairs and to have a plant-level voice in the management of their firms. Moreover, the Resistance call for democratisation animated the thinking of certain officials, particularly in the wake of the CNR Charter, which

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<sup>1</sup> See appendix, pp.214-216, for a full list of such bodies: "Organismes dans lesquels sont représentées les organisations syndicales d'employeurs et de travailleurs," CAC TR 13634, no date [end 1948?].

underlined the need for consultation with all economic actors and for the establishment of a true economic and social democracy.

The state's main reason for integrating the unions was pragmatic: the labour movement was still a potential hindrance to post-Liberation reconstruction. At a time of labour shortage, the state was dependent upon workers in order to expand production, the primary focus of postwar planning initiatives. For this reason, state officials also wanted to limit the unpredictability and occasional militancy of labour.

The principal means envisaged by state administrators for the creation of such a workplace democracy was the legislation on the *comités d'entreprises*. Many other measures also worked to the same goal, including enhanced powers of the *délégués du personnel* and electoral representation for workers' delegates on national social security boards. Workers, for the first time, now had formal opportunities to voice their demands at the workplace. Henry Hauck, *directeur des relations professionnelles* in the Ministry of Labour and an old ally of the CGT leader Léon Jouhaux, mentioned in a letter to the Minister of Labour in 1945 how the unions had been entrusted with an increasingly important role: "les syndicats ouvriers appelés à jouer un rôle de plus en plus important dans la vie sociale du pays ..."2

Hauck instructed the labour inspectors to create a climate of trust with the unions in order to uphold the new government social policy, such as the legislation on the *comités d'entreprises*, and to promote the goals of conciliation and "social peace." Labour inspectors were exhorted to be active in their relations with unions and to encourage more trade union participation in the structures of the state.

At the workplace, labour inspectors were instrumental in implementing first the ordinance of February 1945 and then the law of May 1946 on the *comités d'entreprises* -- they facilitated the designation of candidates, smoothed relations between employers and workers and incited the workers to take their *droit de participation*, their rightful place, in the committees ("... à prendre une participation effective à la gestion, à assumer une responsabilité plus grande."3)

Other state officials, including the *commissaires de la République* and prefects, responsible to the Ministry of the Interior,4 also played a prominent role on the ground in promoting this vision of participation. The *commissaires de la République* and

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2 CAC TR 13634, letter to Ministre du Travail from Henry Hauck, 31 March 1945, p.2 (already cited in chapter III, section 3).

3 CAC TR 13633, "Les Comités d'Entreprises," Centre d'Études et de Recherches Sociales, Ministère du Travail, 14 September 1945, p.3 (already cited in chapter III, section 3).

4 The *commissaire de la République* and the prefect not only represented the Minister of the Interior but also every other minister, as well as the government itself. See Brian Chapman, *The Prefects and Provincial France*, London, 1955, p.71.

prefects, at least initially, in 1944-1945, pursued the active participation of unions in economic conferences in order to speed up reconstruction and increase productivity. In addition, some *commissaires*, notably Raymond Aubrac in Marseille and Yves Farge in Lyon, requisitioned companies and developed new management structures involving representatives of the workforce. Farge, in particular, was instrumental in the creation of the Berliet experiment in worker control; it was only a representative of the state who had the power to confiscate the plant of an adjudged economic collaborator like Marius Berliet.

However, the emphasis of state efforts gradually changed over the course of 1946 and into 1947. There was a new insistence in ministerial instructions on a strict adherence to salary frameworks, instead of the earlier weight given to social collaboration. The policy of requisitioning was abandoned, as were the experiments in new forms of worker participation in Lyon, Marseille, Montluçon, and Toulouse. The *commissaires de la République* were abolished in the spring of 1946 and prefects reverted to their traditional domains of general administration and the maintenance of public order, instead of intervention in the workplace.

Labour inspectors became less sympathetic to workers' concerns. They did little to promote integration and sided more and more often with employers in disputes, following ministerial instructions on wage restraint. Workers, in turn, were reconsidering the authority and role of the state: discontent with their poor standard of living was increasingly directed at prefects, government ministers and civil servants.

There are three main reasons why this turnaround in worker participation efforts occurred. The employers refused to accept new powers of intervention at the workplace; the CGT was insufficiently committed to workplace participation; and the power of the centralised state was entrenched in the domain of economic planning but did not penetrate the workplace sufficiently to establish and support participation. The state structure also suffered from administrative secrecy and lack of openness to participation initiatives.

After the Liberation, employers only reluctantly agreed to concessions in their dealings with state administrators. Chapter V detailed the rationalisation measures introduced by the *patronat*, as they sought to retain and extend control at the workplace. They also carried on a determined fight-back against the development of the *comités d'entreprises*: they interpreted the legislation of May 1946 as strictly as possible and refused to allow the *comités* to examine any of the firm's business affairs. One CGT trade unionist concluded in July 1947 that the consequence of the employer attitude was

to render the law of May 1946 inoperative.<sup>5</sup> There was also the matter of the poor rate of introduction of the *comités d'entreprises*: by 1967, half of the firms subject to the 1946 law had still not created a *comité* at the workplace.<sup>6</sup> Employers also re-established in 1946 their national association, the CNPF, which extended their political influence, especially in the Plan. Employers encountered few problems in representing themselves both in the workplace and in the state and in opposing every extension of worker participation.

The weakness and form of the CGT and the labour movement, more generally, constrained state officials' initiatives on participation. The CGT lacked a strong organisational base and sufficient financial resources in order to press for workers' demands in the state more effectively. Also, the closeness of the CGT to the PCF imposed choices on the union confederation which hindered its ability to obtain an independent voice for workers in the institutions of the state or in firms. The CGT was, however, successful at emerging with state guarantees such as the 1946 legal statutes in the mines and at the docks, sectors deemed indispensable by postwar planners for the economic recovery of the country.

The long struggle between Guesdist and syndicalist ideas in the labour movement led to a lack of experience for workers' representatives in participating in state-supported structures and at the workplace. The oppositional culture of the CGT did not fit in well with the new *comités d'entreprises*, according to Michel Dreyfus: "Compte tenu de ses réflexes anti-étatiques, anti-patronaux et de sa culture d'affrontement, la CGT a initialement tâtonné pour mener à bien ce type de pratiques gestionnaires, pour la plupart inconnues de son champ d'intervention."<sup>7</sup> There was thus a gap between the demands and rhetoric of the CGT and its lack of management skills. A CGT activist at the time said that the *comités d'entreprises* did not really work: "C'était nouveau; on n'a pas su les gérer -- on s'intéressait au ravitaillement. À ce temps, on pensait que c'était un pas irréversible vers le socialisme."<sup>8</sup> It was not the ghost of Rosa Luxemburg, but those of Kautsky and Lenin, which haunted the CGT.

The relationship between the leadership and the grassroots of the CGT changed after the Liberation, partly as the result of most workers' preoccupation with food shortages and the effects of inflation but also owing to the productivist outlook of the

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<sup>5</sup> See chapter IV, p.108, note 50.

<sup>6</sup> Chris Howell, *Regulating Labor: The State and Industrial Relations Reform in Postwar France*, Princeton, 1992, p.45, citing Gérard Adam, *Le Pouvoir syndical*, Paris, 1985, p.66.

<sup>7</sup> Michel Dreyfus, *Histoire de la C.G.T.*, Brussels, 1995, p.328.

<sup>8</sup> Interview with Achille Blondeau, former general secretary, CGT Fédération du Sous-Sol, 22 September 1989.

confederation, exemplified by that of skilled workers. There was a divide between the interests of skilled workers and that of the unskilled, immigrants, and women, all of whom fared less well at the workplace and who were not as well represented by the CGT. The removal of the leadership from the concerns of the shopfloor was also exemplified in the adherence to the Communist Party's line on the "battle for production," to ensure that the PCF remain a party of government.

It was the weakness of the CGT not only at the workplace but as a mass union confederation, however, which resulted ultimately in the failure of participation initiatives. The split in the CGT at the end of 1947, the ensuing creation of the Force Ouvrière, and the failure of the 1947 and 1948 strike waves meant that the labour movement had even less capacity to influence the state agenda, unlike the corporatist situation in other countries, where labour could challenge successfully the prevailing government consensus and impose its views.

The third major reason why worker participation initiatives by the state were hampered in the 1944-1948 period concerns the state structure itself. State intervention, even enlarged as it was in the immediate Liberation period, could not overturn long-established prejudices in industrial relations because it was devoted to other goals. The initial post-Liberation initiatives to promote participation at the workplace and in state institutions in 1944-1945 soon faded, as concerns of social order, expansion of investment and productive capacity and partnership with big business became the paramount priorities.

The advent of the "concerted economy" was structured around big business and the planning capabilities of the state, at the expense of any substantial involvement by labour. The shift in thinking within the space of a few years is well illustrated by a comparison of the following two citations. René Pleven, then Minister of Finance, endorsed enthusiastically the prospect of consultation, in July 1945:

"For the first time since liberation, the heads of labour organizations, business leaders, and a few men chosen for their technical expertise are going to be able to sit around a table and get to grips with the great problems that affect the future of the French economy."<sup>9</sup>

Peter Hall, by contrast, cites one union member's account of a later meeting of the planning commission (CGP):

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<sup>9</sup> René Pleven, 4 July 1945, as cited by Andrew Shennan, Rethinking France: Plans for Renewal, 1940-1946, Oxford, 1989, pp.246-247.

"It seems that everything happens as if the procedure was arranged beforehand in such a way that a certain number of decisions are taken by direct agreement between the employers' representatives and the civil servants."<sup>10</sup>

Thus, worker participation could not go further because of the inaccessibility of the state administrative structure and its closure to far-reaching participation. Jonas Pontusson writes: "[T]he state's autonomy from popular pressures constitutes the principal obstacle [to the extension of democratic control] in France."<sup>11</sup> The best evocation of the gap between workers' expectations and the actual role of the state administrators may be found in the following petition addressed to the sub-prefect in Villefranche-sur-Saône, in the Rhône department, in May 1945:

"Messieurs de l'Administration, vous devrez montrer plus d'énergie pour imposer les mesures que réclame la situation. Si vos chefs ou leurs mandants font obstacle à vos initiatives, passez outre, devriez-vous le payer de vos situations? Vous êtes en place pour diriger les masses, c'est le moment ou jamais de montrer vos qualités d'administrateurs honnêtes qui ne songent pas qu'à leurs situations ou à leurs réélections."<sup>12</sup>

In theory, then, the power of the centralised state became more entrenched but in the area of industrial relations, state administrators were dispersed, insufficient and incapable of enacting their policies. The Ministry of Labour was notoriously understaffed, particularly in the provision of labour inspectors, as was seen in chapter III. The government and the state steered clear of much -- and, increasingly, more -- of the terrain of collective bargaining because long-established conflictual relations between labour and management risked dragging the administration and the government into the quicksands of industrial conflict. When it did try to intervene -- as with the Commission Supérieure des Conventions Collectives (see chapter V), the state often lacked power and merely encouraged employers' bad faith in bargaining. By relinquishing much of that terrain to the unions and the *patronat*, however, the state administration was effectively keeping in place long-established antagonistic relations in the workplace.

In summary, therefore, postwar industrial relations developed differently in France than elsewhere in Europe; not only was labour insignificant in economic policy-making but its clout in the workplace was also usually marginalised, except for periodic eruptions. The procedures or "rules of the game" for these industrial relations were set

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<sup>10</sup> Peter A. Hall, Governing the Economy: The Politics of State Intervention in Britain and France, Cambridge, 1986, p.158. The account, not dated, is most likely from the 1950s.

<sup>11</sup> Jonas Pontusson, "Comparative Political Economy of Advanced Capitalist States: Sweden and France," Kapitalistate, 10, 1982, p.68.

<sup>12</sup> AN F1a 4022, petition addressed to Sous-Préfet on behalf of 1500 workers on general strike, Villefranche-sur-Saône, 16 May 1945, in report of Commissaire de la République de la Région de Lyon (Yves Farge), 17 May 1945.

in the immediate post-Liberation period, when the expectations of economic democracy were at their highest. Worker participation did not go further at the time for several reasons: the structure and form of the state; the power of the employers; the weakness of the labour movement, in general, and the effective indifference of the largest union, the CGT, to the issue of worker participation. State officials' attempts at promotion of participation were insufficient, viewed in this wider context of constraints.

### 3. Theoretical contribution

A theoretical consideration of workers' participation in France brings together both the labour-employer and the labour-state relationships. This theoretical dimension aims to unite two disparate literatures on the state and worker collective action, in order to show the need to consider the role of the state in the analysis of workers' interests. Claus Offe's work in conjunction with Helmut Wiesen­thal is a rare attempt to put together these themes analytically.<sup>13</sup>

Offe and Wiesen­thal argue that European trade unions were historically constituted to deliver immediate benefits for workers, on the one hand, and also to transform society in a way that would accommodate workers' interests.<sup>14</sup> This second, transformative characteristic has been lost elsewhere but has been sustained in a particular way in France, owing to the CGT's longstanding link with the PCF. A different analysis of transformation is therefore needed for France. The industrial aims and loyalties of the CGT, however, are more often considered only in light of transmission belt theories linking the union solely to the requirements of the Communist Party. This type of approach privileges the political over the industrial; it ignores the workplace.<sup>15</sup> It is more illuminating to frame the debate differently, other than merely between theories of the transmission belt and industrial base. Offe and Wiesen­thal offer a partial resolution, but not a complete answer, to the tension between the political and the industrial because their optic is perhaps too conditioned by northern social democracy and corporatism, involving a centralised labour movement and state. In France after the Liberation, the labour movement was too weak to impose sanctions on the state, as seen in 1947-1948, and the state did not promote a centralised labour movement; as the result of this labour weakness, the reluctance of the state, as well as employer opposition, a corporatist system was not feasible.

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<sup>13</sup> Claus Offe and Helmut Wiesen­thal, "Two Logics of Collective Action," in Claus Offe, *Disorganized Capitalism*, Cambridge, 1985, pp.170-220.

<sup>14</sup> See chapter II, section 7b, for this and subsequent references to Offe and Wiesen­thal.

<sup>15</sup> See chapter II, section 4c.

The theoretical question is how to bring the state into this schema and analysis of the aims and modes of worker collective action. In France, in 1944-1947, the CGT operated at a first level (where conflict focuses on distributional issues) in terms of its involvement in the state yet at a second level (a class analysis about which arrangements would most represent workers' undistorted interest) with regard to identity formation at the workplace. In France, in this period, I would argue that there were two separate first- and second-level conflicts, one in the state and the other at the workplace. In addition to the conflicts at the workplace, there was a first-level conflict in the state over fixed questions of production and efficiency, where the parameters were fixed and the political participants, including the CGT, knew the rules which they would have to follow in order to derive benefits for its members. There was also a second-level conflict, with more fluid, changing boundaries, where workers would desire more (economic) democracy and worker participation, in order to gain greater bargaining powers and a stronger position from which they could make their voices heard.

In post-Liberation France, what could have been a pivotal debate on the very nature of the state was cut short, as the state again presented itself as the impartial arbiter of the nation's appropriate direction. State officials and union representatives accepted the fact of state intervention and the need to play according to certain rules, namely those of cost/benefit analysis. There were costs to both the state and union actors, however, in confining their relations in state structures to a first-level, distributional conflict: at times of crisis, both the first- and second-level conflicts, at the workplace, intervened. The second-level set of conflicts arose only in France and Italy, where the leading union confederation's ties to a Communist Party entailed a questioning of workplace arrangements and commitment to a revolutionary analysis.

It was in the interest of the French state, therefore, to make any conceivable second-order level of conflict into a first-order level conflict. From 1944 to 1947, state-sponsored liberal political forms were supposed to diminish the collective identity of workers and so smooth the transition from Liberation to Restoration. The CGT wanted to be part of the new state structures for distributional reasons: it wanted greater representation which it had already defined as desirable to obtain. The state institutions, however, encouraged not worker cohesiveness, but worker division, since rival unions were competing against one another for democratic representation. Weak implantation at the workplace then led the CGT to assert again its oppositional analysis, in order not to lose any members.

The French case-study shows how workers and their organisations could not use either the state or the workplace as a springboard, one for the other, for their

demands if they were to avoid state intervention removing the real decisions beyond the reach of citizens. A further problem for the working-class movement, however, was its disaggregation: the interests of immigrants, semiskilled and unskilled workers, and women were not always well represented. The workers' movement had been traditionally defined by the experiences of work alone; it also needed to take into account and address broader political issues in the family and the community.

Claus Offe and Helmut Wiesensthal's analysis is useful for the way it brings together, and illustrates the tensions between, industrial and political factors in the determination of workers' collective identities. The archival evidence presented in this study about France illustrates that an understanding of the representation of workplace demands can best be located in the interplay between the industrial and political arenas and reveals the role of the state in fashioning and constraining the collective action capacity of workers.

#### **4. Participation in an international context: Sweden; Germany; U.S.A.**

The analysis used here regarding worker participation initiatives in France can also be viewed in a comparative international context. As in France, the postwar interaction between unions, the state, and employers in such countries as Sweden, Germany, and the United States, revealed the capacity of state power to resolve discrepancies in tandem with or opposed to the collective action capacity of workers and their organisations. In Sweden, the state had already shown a willingness before the Second World War to intervene in industrial relations and help employers and unions fashion agreements at the workplace. In postwar Germany, the interventionist state, in association with a radicalised labour movement, instituted far-reaching reform and achieved a stable industrial relations system, with opportunities for worker participation in both the firm and the state. In contrast, leading unions in the postwar United States did not seek any state involvement in industrial relations, but nor did the U.S. government have the same capacity as the French, let alone the Swedish or German states, to intervene in the industrial arena, except in a restrictive capacity, as with the passage of the Taft-Hartley Act in 1947.

In Sweden, labour had already achieved a confirmed position as an industrial partner in both the state and the workplace by the 1940s. Corporatism developed early, before the First World War, and the Saltsjöbaden agreement of 1938 established joint regulation of industrial relations between the labour confederation and the employers' union. The "early corporatism" practised in Sweden, writes Bo Rothstein, "gave the

organized working class a channel to the Swedish state,"<sup>16</sup> unlike in France, where the labour movement was excluded from the state.<sup>17</sup> According to Rothstein, the Swedish state was marked by "political openness and administrative autonomy." The centralised and open nature of state action in Sweden actually strengthened voluntary organisations, such as trade unions, instead of being detrimental to increased participation, as in France.<sup>18</sup>

When the Swedish Social Democratic Party acceded to power in 1932, it espoused joint management by capital and labour and limited state intervention, whereby decision-making in the sphere of production would remain with employers.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, the system of centralised wage negotiations begun in 1938 would last over thirty years, until the late 1960s/early 1970s when workers aspired to "self-manage their working activity and working conditions."<sup>20</sup> In response to these new demands, leaders of the labour movement in Sweden backed in 1976 the labour economist Rudolf Meidner's proposal of employee investment funds, intended to inaugurate a new form of collective employee ownership of the firm.<sup>21</sup> Interestingly, Meidner's ideas were prefigured in France by members of the Radical party in the second constituent assembly in 1946, when they proposed a company ownership system of "labour shares" which would eventually equal the number of "capital shares."<sup>22</sup> This scheme, like others of the era in France, failed owing to lack of agreement among the political parties; the Swedish experience shows the advantages of a political consensus for achieving industrial relations reforms for labour, however limited. The necessary prerequisites for industrial relations reform in Sweden were a voice for labour in the state and a regulated, uncontested terrain of industrial relations, both of which proved unfeasible in France.

In Germany, the postwar "Montan" model of full parity co-determination in the German coal and steel industries of the Ruhr became the focus of attempts to increase

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<sup>16</sup> Bo Rothstein, "The State, Associations, and the Transition to Democracy: Early Corporatism in Sweden," in Dietrich Rueschemeyer, Marilyn Rueschemeyer and Björn Wittrock, eds, Participation and Democracy, East and West: Comparisons and Interpretations, Armonk, N.Y., 1998, p.134.

<sup>17</sup> Rothstein, p.134, citing Pierre Birnbaum, States and Collective Action: The European Experience, Cambridge, 1988, p.123.

<sup>18</sup> Rothstein, p.152.

<sup>19</sup> See Louis Gill, "Myrdal and the Third Way," in Gilles Dostaler, Diane Ethier, Laurent Lepage, eds, Gunnar Myrdal and his Works, Montreal, 1992, p.53.

<sup>20</sup> Gill, p.60.

<sup>21</sup> Interview with Rudolf Meidner, 15 April 1987. The law creating the funds was finally passed in a very diluted form by the Social Democratic government in 1983.

<sup>22</sup> Andrew Shennan, Rethinking France: Plans for Renewal, 1940-1946, Oxford, 1989, p.198.

workers' control throughout the German economy.<sup>23</sup> The model, instituted in 1951 as "the result of a long union battle for economic democracy," allowed for equal employee and shareholder representation on the supervisory boards of companies in the steel and coal industries.<sup>24</sup> Gérard Noiriel makes the point that "'co-management' [co-determination] put down no roots [in France] at the most fundamental level, in the workshops, as was happening in Germany at that time."<sup>25</sup>

Indeed, the German case well illustrates the specificities of France. The previously mentioned government mission of inquiry in 1946 into the requisitioned companies in Marseille<sup>26</sup> -- which concluded that worker participation in management ought to be increased at a national level in order to offset the Marseille workers' advantages relative to other workers in the country -- was disregarded by the government and, furthermore, the requisitions were all officially terminated the following year, on 1 March 1947. In Germany, on the other hand, the 1951 law was soon supplemented by the 1952 Works Constitution Act, which provided for one-third employee representation in companies outside the coal and steel industry with more than 500 employees and also laid the legal foundations for works councils.<sup>27</sup> Although many in the German union movement opposed the co-determination model, because it did not go far enough towards worker co-ownership,<sup>28</sup> a stable industrial relations system did ensue, with opportunities for worker participation in both the firm and the state.

The interventionist capacity in the postwar state in the U.S.A. was essentially negative. There was a reversal of some of the labour movement's New Deal gains of the 1930s and a rejection of tripartite labour-business-government institutions that had been prevalent during the Second World War. The wartime experience, according to Alan Brinkley,

"led most to conclude ... that neither a new economic order nor active state management of the present one were necessary, possible, or desirable; that the

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<sup>23</sup> I thank Robin Archer for bringing this point to my attention.

<sup>24</sup> Jelle Visser and Joris Van Ruyseveldt, "Robust Corporatism, Still? Industrial Relations in Germany," in Joris Van Ruyseveldt and Jelle Visser, eds, Industrial Relations in Europe: Traditions and Transitions, London, 1996, p.150.

<sup>25</sup> Gérard Noiriel, Workers in French Society in the 19th and 20th Centuries, Oxford, 1990, p.153.

<sup>26</sup> AN F60 1001, "Rapport de la mission chargée de procéder à une enquête sur les entreprises réquisitionnées de Marseille," May-June 1946 (already cited in chapter VII, section 2).

<sup>27</sup> Visser and Van Ruyseveldt, pp.150,151.

<sup>28</sup> Visser and Van Ruyseveldt, p.149.

existing structure of capitalism (including its relative independence from state control) represented the best hope for social progress."<sup>29</sup>

American employers did not require to be legitimised by state-sponsored labour-management collaboration, since they had not been "tarred with the brush of collaboration or appeasement," as in Europe, and they also wanted the restoration of their prewar prerogatives.<sup>30</sup> There was also resistance from within the union movement to corporatism and state intervention: the "AFL unions had never been as committed as the CIO to the tripartite bargaining arrangements of the war era, and these unions demanded a return to free and unrestricted collective bargaining."<sup>31</sup> The passage of the Taft-Hartley Act in 1947, which instituted various anti-labour restrictions, such as the end of secondary pickets, cemented the end of possible new industrial relations arrangements in the United States. Nelson Lichtenstein asserts: "Union leaders correctly recognized that the act represented the definitive end of the brief era in which the state served as an arena in which the trade unions could bargain for the kind of tripartite accommodation with industry that had been so characteristic of the New Deal years."<sup>32</sup>

A student from the École Nationale d'Administration, who commented on and translated the Taft-Hartley Act for the French Ministry of Labour, concluded that the law did not provide an interesting experiment for France, given the strength of French unions, even after the split within the CGT.<sup>33</sup> Presumably, the writer was referring to the oppositional political strength of the CGT, unlike the situation in the United States, where there was a shift in the 1940s, according to Ira Katznelson, from labour as political opposition to labour as an interest group.<sup>34</sup> There was a disaggregation of labour's political strength from its industrial force in the U.S.A. The Taft-Hartley Act was unnecessary in France, however, where the defeats of the strike waves of 1947-1948 and the unions' lack of access to the state confirmed the weakness of the labour movement, without requiring further punitive measures.

These examples show that an interventionist capacity for the state is important although not sufficient for promoting worker participation. What is often paramount is the openness of the state structure and the institutional access for workers and their

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<sup>29</sup> Alan Brinkley, "The New Deal and the Idea of the State," in Steve Fraser and Gary Gerstle, eds, *The Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order, 1930-1980*, Princeton, 1989, p.101.

<sup>30</sup> Nelson Lichtenstein, "From Corporatism to Collective Bargaining: Organized Labor and the Eclipse of Social Democracy in the Postwar Era," in Fraser and Gerstle, p.130.

<sup>31</sup> Lichtenstein, in Fraser and Gerstle, p.131.

<sup>32</sup> Lichtenstein, in Fraser and Gerstle, p.134.

<sup>33</sup> CAC TR 14121, "Étude et traduction de Taft-Hartley," Fernand Jeanclaude, Ministry of Labour trainee, 1948.

<sup>34</sup> Ira Katznelson, "Was the Great Society a Lost Opportunity?" in Fraser and Gerstle, p.191.

organisations in both the firm and the state. In Sweden and Germany, an interventionist state reached or imposed an industrial relations accommodation with employers; in the United States, the state turned away from any such initiative. As in France, state officials left in place long-established conflictual relations at the workplace.

The originality of this study on worker participation and the French state lies in its focus on micro-level dealings between state officials and workers from 1944-1948. In uncovering them, the future pattern of labour exclusion in France can be distinguished. The emphasis on participation is also important. Participation brought a national culture of workers and their representatives and organisations into the structures of the nascent welfare state. Earlier, the left was not only divided but locally-implanted and anti-state.

This study examined the role of state officials in fashioning a new form of workplace participation in 1944-1948, yet questions remain regarding the precise type of participation workers themselves desired. In part, workers did not have the space to define matters on their own terms; these were set elsewhere. In addition, archival evidence is missing, apart from specific instances of worker control, such as at Berliet. Future research could fill more of these gaps, including more thorough comparative scrutiny of the *comités de gestion* in Lyon, Marseille, including Port-de-Bouc, Montluçon, and Toulouse. Such a comparison was beyond the scope of the current study. Likewise, international comparisons with Japan would be fruitful, since Japanese state intervention also coincided at this time with an insurgent labour movement. Also, further study of the micro-level relations between state and labour in the countries referred to above, Sweden, Germany, and the United States, would amplify some of the comparisons with France. Finally, the introduction of works councils in the contemporary European Union will evoke many of the questions brought up here about the nature of participation.

LES ORGANISATIONS SYNDICALES D'EMPLOI ET DE TRAVAIL

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I - SUB LR PLAY INTERNATIONAL.-

- Conseil d'administration du Bureau International du Travail.
- Conférence Internationale du Travail.
- Commissions d'Industrie.

## II-80R IS PLAY NATIONAL.-

Organisational

- Le Conseil domoestique,**

Organismes dépendant du Ministère du Travail.

- Conseil national du Travail, (ne fonctionne pas)
- Commission supérieure des conventions collectives,
- Commission supérieure des comités d'entreprise,
- Commission nationale des salaires, (a disparu)
- Commission technique interprofessionnelle des salaires  
au rendement, A. 9/8/46 (tombée en désuétude)
- Conseil d'administration de l'Office national d'emploi-  
gestion, Ordonnance du 2/11/45,
- Conseil supérieur de la Sécurité sociale,  
(ordonnance du 4/10/45)
- Commission supérieure des allocations familiales,
- Conseil d'administration de la Caisse nationale de  
Sécurité sociale.
- Le Conseil supérieur de la Mutualité (Ord. du 19/10/45)

- La Comité permanent de la médecine du Travail, (Loi du 30/10/41)
- La Commission de la Sécurité du Travail, (arrêté du 23/10/45) (travaille de la Prévention) - M. LAFARDE
- La Commission d'Hygiène Industrielle (M. JOBELET-Secrétaire) (arrêté du 25/3/46)
- La Commission supérieure des maladies professionnelles, (tombe en désuétude)

- Le Comité national de formation professionnelle agréé, (Décret du 9/11/46)
- La Commission nationale de la Main-d'œuvre, (Décret 20/4/48) - (transformation de l'ancienne commission nationale provisoire de la main-d'œuvre qui n'avait pas été réunie depuis un an)
- Les Commissions mixtes des conventions collectives,
- Les Commissions professionnelles des salaires, (décret du 10/11/1939)
- Les Commissions techniques des salaires au rendement, (arrêté du 9/5/46)

-- Organismes dépendant du Ministère des Finances et des Affaires Économiques.--

- Le Conseil de l'Economie Nationale (arrêté du 9/6/45)
- Comité consultatif du Centre national d'Informations économiques. (ordonnance du 14/8/45)
- La Commission de normalisation des comptabilités. (décret du 4/4/46)
- Le Comité central des prix. (ordonnance du 30/6/46)
- La Conférence nationale économique des prix et des salaires. (décret du 2/7/46) (ne fonctionne plus).
- Comité de contrôle des banques d'affaires (L. 2/12/45)
- Conseil national du Crédit (Loi du 2/12/45)
- Conseil d'administration des Charbonnages de France, (Loi du 17/5/46)

- Conseil National des Assurances, (loi du 25/4/46)
- Commission consultative de la distribution (A.16/8/48)

- Ministère de l'Industrie et du Commerce.

- Le Conseil permanent de la Production Industrielle, (arrêté du 17/12/45)
- Le Comité supérieur des Economies de combustibles minéraux solides, (arrêté du 10/4/46)
- La Commission des prix des combustibles minéraux, (arrêté du 1/10/46)
- La Commission spéciale pour l'étude des questions concernant l'hygiène dans les mines, (1912-Arrêtés des 4/9/46 et 31/3/48)
- Conseil supérieur de la Coopération, (décret 10/1/1947)
- L'Assemblée permanente des présidents des Chambres de commerce.
- Les Comités consultatifs de la production industrielle auprès de chaque direction technique, (arrêté du 30/11/45 et 27/3/46)

- Ministère de la Reconstruction.

- Les représentants ouvriers à la reconstruction, (arrêté du 7/6/46)

- Ministère de l'Agriculture.

- Le Conseil supérieur de l'Agriculture, (décret du 9/4/45)
- L'Assemblée permanente des présidents des Chambres d'Agriculture, (loi du 3/1/34)
- Le Conseil supérieur de la Coopération agricole, (ordonnance du 12/10/45 - loi du 14/5/46)
- Le Comité central d'agrément des coopératives agricoles, (Décret du 10/10/46)

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- La Commission consultative supérieure du ravitaillement, (arrêté du 3/7/45)
- Le Comité national permanent du ravitaillement, (Arrêté du 11/12/45)
- Les Comités consultatifs de l'Agriculture (élevage, horticulture, horticole, etc...)

- Le Conseil national de la viande, (décret du 10/1/47, arrêté du 21/1/47)

- Le Comité consultatif national du poisson, (arrêté du 10/3/45)

- Commissariat au Plan.

- Le Conseil du Plan, (décret du 3/1/46 et décret 10/6/47)
- Les Commissions de modernisation par branches d'industrie, (décret du 3/1/46 et décret 10/6/47)

- Ministère des Forces Armées.

- Les Conseils supérieurs consultatifs de l'Armement, (Armement, Poudres, Constructions navales aéronautiques etc...)

- Ministère de l'Education Nationale.

- Le Conseil supérieur de l'Enseignement technique, (décret du 9/7/1930)
- Les Commissions consultatives nationales d'apprentissage (arrêté du 28/11/46 pour le métallurgie - arrêté du 6/3/47 pour le bâtiment)

- Ministère de la Justice.

- Comités mixtes
  - { du Notariat,
  - { des Avoués,
  - { des Agrésés,
  - { des Commissaires priseurs,
 (ordonnances du 2 novembre 1943)

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### III - Sur le plan local.-

- Commissions mixtes des conventions collectives régionales et locales,
- Conseils départementaux du Travail et de la main-d'œuvre (ordonnance du 3/7/44 - Décret du 26/8/44, non consultés)
- Commissions départementales provinciales des salaires,
- Commissions départementales provinciales de la main-d'œuvre (décret du 27/4/46, non mises en place)
- Commissions départementales de la main-d'œuvre, (décret 20/4/48, remplacées précédents)
- Commissions consultatives d'appel du Contrôle de l'Emploi, (Décret 23/8/45, art. 7)
- Commissions spécialisées placées auprès des sections de placement et des sections de main-d'œuvre, *(certaines de l'Office National)*
- Commissions consultatives auprès des centres d'immigration (circulaire du 12/4/47)
- Comités départementaux de service social de la main-d'œuvre étrangère, (arrêté du 1/6/46)
- Comités départementaux à la reconstruction, (arrêté du 7/6/46)
- Commissions départementales de la reconstruction, (décret du 30/3/46)
- Chambres d'agriculture,
- +Comités départementaux d'égrenage des coopératives agricoles,
- Commissions provinciales de travail en agriculture, (ordonnance du 7/7/45)
- Commissions consultatives départementales du ravitaillement, (arrêté du 3/7/46)
- Comités départementaux des prix, (ordonnance du 30/6/46)
- Commissions d'assainissement du marché, (décret du 8/1/47)

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### IV - Sur le plan de l'entreprise.-

- Comités départementaux de l'enseignement technique, *new*
- Conseils d'administration des classes provinciales et régionales de sécurité sociale et d'allocations familiales,
- Chambres de métiers, (loi du 26/7/1925)
- Chambres de commerce, (loi du 9/4/1898)
- Commissions départementales d'investigation (stocks) (arrêté du 24/4/46)
- Comités mixtes à la production,
- Comités d'entreprise,
- Délégués du personnel,
- Commissions mixtes des événements d'établissement aux conventions collectives,
- Conseils d'administration des banques nationalisées (loi du 2/12/45)
- Conseils d'administration des Compagnies d'assurances nationalisées, (loi du 20/4/46)
- Conseils d'administration des Centres de formation professionnelle accédés (arrêté du 13/11/46)
- Conseils d'administration des houillères de bassin, (loi du 17/5/46)
- Conseils d'administration des services de distribution de gaz et d'électricité, (loi du 8/4/46)
- Conseils d'administration des sociétés nationales des constructions aéronautiques,
- Conseils d'administration d'électricité et Gas de France
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