Strikes and Discontent in the French Empire and Beyond

1947-48

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by

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Abstract

This thesis examines French post-war strikes in a new light. The first half exhumes the subterranean sources of discontent which powered these movements. The memory of wartime hardships or torture endured long after hostilities ended. The preservation of concentration-camp like detention centers, and the erection of confining ONCOR barracks, ensured *l'univers concentrationnaire* remained a permanent fixture in the psychological and architectural landscape of the immediate post-war years. These factors, combined with exhaustion from overwork, the selective heroism of the battle for production, the judicial persecution of respected *maquisards*, and rose-tinted portrayal of Eastern Europe in the communist and even centrist press, describe the 'impossibility of demobilization' which lurked behind demands for more food or higher wages. Post-war strikes signaled the continuation of grudges left over from World War II and the Occupation. Moreover, news of anti-labour legislation and repression abroad, kept CGT unionists on a constant war-footing and bred fears that similar measures could intrude on French soil.

The second part of the thesis contextualizes the 47-48 strikes in a global setting and argues an 'impossibility of demobilization' infected police, intelligence services, and administrations throughout France and its empire as well. Colonial authorities interpreted benign strikes as attempts to topple French rule, while anti-communism and xenophobia resulted in the mistreatment and deportation of Polish, Spanish, Italian, and Romanian workers or associations in the metropole; actions which had significant repercussions. Democracies in the West and emerging communist regimes in the East exploited the fallout of the 47-48 strikes. They prompted Quebecois authorities to overreact to unrest

in Asbestos, while Dutch economic courts punished trade unionists for sending financial aid to French strikers. Meanwhile, Hungarian, Czech, and Polish communist propaganda machines instrumentalized French strikes, both to discredit capitalist nations in the West at home and to market the ‘superiority’ of communism abroad.

Long Abstract

The immediate post-war years in France and Europe saw countless cities, factories, and industries engulfed in paralysing, divisive, and deadly strike waves. From Paris to Algiers, industrial action saw thousands of miners, metal-workers, postmen, textile weavers, and teachers, belonging to multiple ethnicities and political orientations, take to the streets for reasons often not articulated fully or accurately by either Socialist, Communist or trade union representatives at the time. Demands for higher wages, lower prices, and more bread obscured and subsumed more subtle sources of discontent.

Thus far, the works of Robert Mencherini, Annie Lacroix-Riz, Danielle Tartakowsky, and many others, have analysed the political significance and ramifications of the 1947-48 strikes. Questions as to whether Joseph Stalin was responsible for orchestrating a dastardly coup in France, via industrial action the PCF led and abetted, have been put to rest, while current historiographies fix the 47-48 strikes firmly in the context of the Cold War.

My contribution to this historiography will be twofold: to better understand, identify, and analyse these latent anxieties and silent frustrations, it is necessary to look and think differently about the immediate post-war period itself. Thus, the first four chapters will examine the types of subterranean discontent which powered such movements, focusing specifically on France. Rather than concentrating on the emerging binaries of the Cold War, I will examine the 'impossibility of demobilization' afflicting French society. Secondly, the three remaining chapters will contextualize French post-

war strikes, not only in labour disputes within the larger French Empire, but also in a global setting. The impact of the 47-48 strike waves resonated across borders in significant and unexpected ways.

Through private correspondence, labour press releases, medical records, and ministerial reports, the first chapter exhumes the emotions and frustrations underpinning the discontent which fueled French post-war strikes. The first section focuses on the physical and physiological factors which contributed to unrest. Rising absenteeism suggested how miners yearned to escape a claustrophobic and highly dangerous workplace, if only temporarily. Wounds or illnesses sustained during the war persisted long after hostilities ended, while chronic fatigue from strenuous workloads, and often extreme hunger from low rations, suggest the depth of their hardship.

The second section uncovers the psychological stresses workers and their representatives faced. The continuing existence of numerous camps for Vietnamese labor, German POWS, and French laborers ensured that workers and survivors continued to be haunted by *l'univers concentrationnaire.* Lingering memories of the repression, torture, and violence meted during the Occupation precipitated post-war militancy among some trade unionists. Furthermore, the court trials of renowned *maquisards* and respected *résistants* in northeastern coalfields compelled miners to fight back against the authorities and go out on strike.

Moreover, the selective heroism promoted during the battle of production had its own price. An idolization of miners, dockers, or railway conductors came at the expense of other professions, such as bargemen and construction workers, whose efforts to

rebuild France went unrecognized. This awareness of being forgotten or belittled is crucial for understanding the discontent which preceded post-war strike waves.

The last section will examine how *l'univers concentrationnaire* never disappeared for laborers housed in confining ONCOR (Office National des Cantonnements Ouvriers de la Reconstruction) barracks scattered throughout post-war France. Despite the ambitions of progressive architects, haphazard planning and frequent material shortages ensured that ONCOR housing retained a sense of war-time prisoner camps. The ONCOR dwellings accentuated feelings of isolation among workers, forced again to live far away from family and friends.

In the second chapter, I argue post-war strikes did not necessarily announce the beginning of the Cold War in France, but rather signalled the continuation of grudges and struggles left over from the Occupation. An 'impossibility of demobilisation' prevailed not only amongst prisoners of war or combat veterans, but throughout French society. The persistence of old 'rancunes' played a significant part in fuelling post-war strike waves, as seen in the case of CGT unionists in the naval plants of Saint-Chamond, who sought to discredit an uncooperative *patronat* by unearthing documents holding managers responsible for the unjustified firing of communist workers during the Phoney War.

I argue that the specter of Vichy is crucial for understanding why the Seine primary school teachers' strike of November/December 1947 took place. For communist sympathizers or supporters, this strike was framed as another episode in the long struggle between secular and confessional schools in France. The perception of a growing

inequality between decimated urban or state schools, as opposed to supposedly thriving confessional schools in the countryside, was maintained for months before the strike via regular press releases loyal to anti-clerical factions in teacher unions.

A study of strikes in Berliet factories reveal various engineers, technicians, and other *cadres* also had great difficulty demobilizing. Much like the *patronat* in Saint-Chamond, *cadres* in Lyon faced accusations of war time treachery. By going on strike, said *cadres* set out to accomplish more than just clearing their names, but to re-assert the authority they once possessed before nationalisation and moderate democratization of industrial relations after the Liberation. The trials of insubordinate strikers in 1949 allowed aggrieved engineers to achieve victory over their tormentors and avenge or re-claim their lost status as masters of the workplace.

In contrast, the French *patronat* was largely exempt from the impossibility of demobilization which affected the metal-workers of Saint-Chamond, teachers in the Seine *département,* and engineers in the mines. Although post-war strikes reveal some bosses minimized their authoritarianism in the workplace, others, like the Schneider patronat, presiding over the metalwork and mining industries of Le Creusot in Saône-et-Loire, did not mend their ways. The paternalist model in the Schneider plants persisted long after the end of World War II, despite the CGT and PCF's attempts to carry on the struggles of yesteryear.

In the third chapter, I argue that journalists, editors, columnists, and intellectuals writing for *L'Humanité, La Vie Ouvrière*, *Ce Soir*, *La Défense,* and *Le Peuple* heightened discontent in France by portraying the emerging Soviet sphere in Eastern

Europe as countries filled with limitless resources. They painted Czechoslovakia as an ascendant social democracy, beaming with youthful energy and vigour. The formerly backward peasant nation of Hungary appeared transformed for the better by communism. Poland was a promised land brimming with ingenuity and meritocracy. French workers facing crippling rations, fatigue, demoralization, or disillusionment with the slow pace of recovery looked to the East with envy, hope, and aspiration. It is unlikely such coverage instilled revolutionary intentions, although it did inflame the discontent which exploded during strikes in 1947 and 1948.

Conversely, publications loyal to anti-communist trade unions, such as Force Ouvrière, frequently exposed the authoritarian practices of communist regimes, therefore convincing miners not aligned to the CGT, not to take part in the miners' strike.

In the fourth chapter, I demonstrate that events abroad also accentuated this 'impossibility of demobilization' afflicting French workers. For PCF-oriented CGT unionists in particular, the press, and correspondences with unions in and outside the French Empire, sketched a world filled with democracies, dictatorships, colonial administrations, and other regimes united in waging war against workers. Local, national, and trade union newspapers, whether biased in favor of communist, socialist, right-wing, anarchist, and independent causes or parties, all imparted this message to varying degrees in the late forties. While caring little for the fate of indigenous or foreign laborers, French unionists were nonetheless well informed about the various 'reculs ouvriers' sweeping through the imperium and the world at large. Some feared similar measures had begun to intrude on French soil, thereby fueling desires to preserve legislation favorable to workers via strikes and other forms of protest throughout 1948.

While the first part of the thesis argues the specter of World War II or Occupation is crucial for understanding the outbreak of French post-war strikes, the second part proves Cold War paranoia and growing fears of anti-imperialist movements bred a similar 'impossibility of demobilization' among security branches and colonial administrations, facing their own waves of unrest throughout the French Empire.

In the fifth chapter, I show how strikes frightened intelligence agencies, police informants, and security personnel in overseas territories. Strikes in mainland France envenomed colonial anxieties sweeping across a French Empire rattled by war in Indochina, uprisings in Madagascar, and labour unrest in French-owned railway companies in Ethiopia and neighbouring French Somaliland. Colonial administrations experiencing their own 'impossibility of demobilisation', interpreted generally benign and peaceful strikes in overseas *départements* in the Caribbean, or Algeria and Morocco, as nationalist or communist revolts aiming to topple French rule; and often reacted rashly in response.

In addition, this chapter also explores how strikes overseas revealed the aspirations of workers and their representatives far away from the metropole. Strikes abroad took place in very different geographical, political, social, and economic contexts. Industrial action represented an opportunity for indigenous workers, in territories such as La Réunion or Algeria, either to move closer or drift further away from French rule.

The sixth chapter examines how French security forces, also suffering from the impossibility of demobilization, unleashed a wave of terror and violence on immigrant communities following the November/December strikes. It explains why Polish, Italian, and Spanish workers chose to participate in French strikes or not, and assesses the international ramifications of French authorities' mistreatment of foreign labourers. The expulsion of Italian trade unionists from France prompted no reaction from De Gasperi's government, considering the anti-communist and anti-partisan crusade taking place in Italy, while the exile and imprisonment of Spanish republicans signaled the abandonment of France's anti-Franco foreign policy, which so isolated Spain on the world stage after World War II.

Conversely, the deportation or mistreatment of Polish miners and pro-Romanian organizations or individuals had the opposite effect, and severely harmed France's diplomatic and cultural standing in Eastern Europe.

In the final chapter, I argue the misleading, and often sensational coverage of post-war French strikes abroad, such as in Canada and the Netherlands, was partly responsible for prompting governments in the West to overreact to their own labour unrest. The French miners' strike in particular envenomed pre-existing fears of chaotic or communist-led strikes, and pushed politicians and company directors in Quebec to overreact to unrest in Asbestos. Meanwhile, Dutch politicians and magistrates, while unencumbered by the blinding anti-communism which prompted Quebecois authorities to react so harshly to unrest in Asbestos, also used the French miners' strike to weaken already diminished and isolated communists in Dutch trade unions.

In contrast, communist parties in Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia successfully instrumentalized French strikes to discredit their adversaries in the West, and to legitimise the hold of their regime at home. The Eastern bloc weaponized French strikes, not to destabilize or sabotage enemies behind the Iron Curtain, as some French politicians so feared, but to mobilize support for the Communist cause.

Abbreviations

Organisations

AFL	American Federation of Labour
AML	Amis du Manifeste et de la Liberté
ARAC	Association Républicaine des Anciens Combattants
ATV	Association des Travailleurs Vietnamiens
BKP	Bëlgarska Komunističeska Partija (Bulgarian Communist Party)
BVD	Binnenlandse Veiligheidsdienst (Dutch Domestic Security Services)
HTUC	Hungarian Trade Union Congress
CCL	Canadian Congress of Labor
CFA	Francs of the French colonies in Africa
CFE	Chemin de Fer Franco- Éthiopien
CFTC	Confédération Française des Travailleurs Chrétiens
CGC	Confédération Générale des Cadres
CGIL	Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro (Italian General Confederation of Labor)
CGT	Confédération Générale du Travail
CGTM	Confédération Générale des Travailleurs Marocains
CGTU	Confédération Générale du Travail Unitaire
CIO	Congress of Industrial Organizations
CPGB	Communist Party of Great Britain
CPN	Communistische Partij Nederland (Dutch Communist Party)
CPUSA	Communist Party of the United States of America
CNPF	Centrale Nationale du Patronat Français
CNPF	Comité National des Polonais de France
CNT	Confédération nationale du travail (Anarchist)
CNV	Christelijk Nationaal Vakverbond (Dutch National Federation of Christian Trade Unions)
CRS	Compagnies Républicaines de Sécurité
CSU	Canadian Seamen's Union
CTCC	Confédération des Travailleurs Catholiques du Canada
DST	Direction de la Surveillance du Territoire
EVC	Eenheids Vakcentrale (Dutch Communist Trade Union)
FEN	Fédération de l'Éducation Nationale
FFI	Forces Françaises de l'Intérieur
FNSIM	Fédération Nationale des Syndicats d'Ingénieurs et assimilés des Mines
FNSS	Fédération Nationale du Sous-Sol
FNTBB	Fédération Nationale des Travailleurs du Bâtiment et du Bois
FO	Force Ouvrière
FSM	Fédération Syndicale Mondiale
FTP-MOI	Franc-tireurs-main-d'oeuvre immigrés
GC	Gauche Communiste
GM	General Motors
HPB	Hôpital Psychiatrique de Blida (Algérie)
HUAC	House on Un-American Activities Committee
KAB	Katholieke Arbeidersbeweging (Dutch Catholic Trade Union Federation)
KPD	Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands (German Communist Party)

KVP	Katholieke Volkspartij (Dutch Catholic People's Party)
LPP	Labor Progressive Party (Canadian Communist Party)
MDP	Magyar Dolgozók Pártja (Hungarian Working People's Party)
MKP	Kommunisták Magyarországi Pártja (Hungarian Communist Party)
MOI	Main d'oeuvre Indigène Nord-Africaine et Coloniale
MRP	Mouvement Républicain Populaire
NMU	National Maritime Union
NVV	Nederlands Verbond van Vakverenigingen (Dutch Association of Trade Unions)
ONCOR	Office National des Cantonnements Ouvriers de la Reconstruction
OVRA	Organizzazione per la Vigilanza e la Repressione dell'Antifascismo (Organisation for the Vigilance and Repression of Anti-Fascism) (Italy)
OPO	Organizacja Pomocy Ojczyźnie (Organization de l'aide à la patrie) (Poland)
PCI	Partito Comunista Italiano (Italian Communist Party)
PCM	Parti Communiste Marocain
PCP	Partido Comunista Português (Portuguese Communist Party)
PCR	Partidul Comunist Român (Romanian Communist Party)
PIDE	Polícia Internacional e de Defesa do Estado (Portuguese International and State Defense Police)
POWN	Polska Organizacja Walki o Niepodległość (Polish Organization for the Struggle for Independence)
PPA	Parti du Peuple Algérien
PPR	Polska Partia Robotnicza (Polish Workers' Party)
PRL	Parti Républicain de la Liberté
PvdA	Partij van de Arbeid (Dutch Labor Party)
RPF	Rassemblement du Peuple Français
SBO	Syndicat de la Batellerie Artisanale
SEBCA	Société d'Exploitation des Bois Coloniaux en Algérie
SFIO	Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière
SIHN	Syndicat des Ingénieurs des Houillères du Nord et Pas-de-Calais
SMCS	Società Mineraria Carbonifera Sarda (Sardinian Mining Society)
SNCF	Société Nationale des Chemins de Fer Français
SNET	Syndicat National de l'Enseignement Technique
SNI	Syndicat National des Instituteurs
STO	Service du Travail Obligatoire
UD	Union Départementale
UFA	Union des Femmes Algériennes
UGT	Unión General de Trabajadores (General Union of Spanish Workers)
UGTT	Union Générale des Travailleurs Tunisiens
UMW	United Mining Workers of America
UPC	Union des Populations du Cameroun
USBB	Union des Syndicats du Bâtiment et du Bois
USCI	Union Syndicale des Ingénieurs Catholiques
USM	Union des Syndicats de Madagascar
VNI	Verenging Nederland- Indonesië (Dutch-Indonesian Association)
WFTU	World Federation of Trade Unions

Archives

ADSSD	Archives Départementales de la Seine-Saint-Denis
AMDT	Archives du Monde du Travail
AN	Archives Nationales
ANOM	Archives Nationales d'Outre-Mer
CHS	Centre d'Histoire Sociale du Vingtième Siècle
IHS-CGT	Institut d'Histoire Sociale de la Métallurgie
OURS	Office Universitaire de recherche Socialiste

Introduction

The years 1945-50 witnessed an era of permanent agitation. Civil wars in Greece and China, partitions in Israel/Palestine and India/Pakistan, anti-colonial struggles in Indochina, Malaysia and Indonesia, or insurgencies in the Soviet Union, were the most visible symptoms of this worldwide discontent. Disaffection in continental Europe, whether in Italy, Belgium, Germany, or even behind the Iron Curtain in Poland and Czechoslovakia, translated into massive and occasionally violent strike waves. Even in the United States, relatively unscathed by war, workers walked-out of factories, mines and railroads, or in the British Commonwealth, where thousands of Canadian and Australian miners took to the streets. Spontaneous strikes shook textile plants in Salazar's Portugal, Franco's Spain, and De Valera's Ireland as well.[1]

France was particularly prone to this kind of upheaval. An uneasy truce, embodied in *le tripartisme*, which saw Socialists, Communists and Christian democrats set aside differences in the name of national recovery, buckled under the weight of Cold War pressures. Steadily mounting anger gave rise to populist movements such as General de Gaulle's RPF (Rassemblement du peuple français).[2] Inflation rose sharply while sugar and bread were in short supply. Disease was rampant and unemployment high.

[1] For insurgencies in Ukraine and the Baltic, see J. Burds, 'Gender and policing in Soviet West Ukraine, 1944-1948', *Cahiers du monde russe,* 42/2-4 (2001), pp.270-320. Y. Zhukov,'Examining the Authoritarian Model of Counter-insurgency: The Soviet campaign against the Ukrainian Insurgent Army', *Small Wars and Insurgencies,* 18/3(2007), pp.441-449. For post-war strikes in Belgium and Ireland, see A. Thomas, ' "Une telle indifférence": la présence communiste dans les entreprises belges de l'après-guerre (1945-1948)' (Masters Thesis, Université de Liège, 2015), pp205-225. '`À son tour, l'Irlande connaît les restrictions', *La Croix* [Paris], no.19, 481 (3rd April 1947), p. 3 col a-c.

[2] R. Vinen, *Bourgeois Politics in France 1945-1951* (Cambridge, 1995), pp.215-218. B., Lachaise, 'La création du Rassemblement du peuple français', in S. Bernstein and P. Milza (eds.), *L'Année 1947* (Paris, 2000), pp.332-333.

Uneventful twenty-four hour shut downs of mines or taxi-routes in late 1946 preceded massive strikes throughout 1947. Railwaymen, postmen, teachers, metallurgists, factory-workers, and miners took to the streets in their thousands.[3] Small Trotskyist groups in the Renault car-manufacturing plant sparked a strike-wave which later spread from Paris and into the countryside in the summer of 1947.[4] However, concessionary wage hikes proved to be fleeting solutions. Regional courts which tried workers refusing to pay for overpriced train tickets in Marseille, combined with the dismissal of veteran coalmining unionist Léon Delfosse in the North, provoked further unrest.[5] The ensuing strikes raged uncontrollably from mid-November till early December 1947. The murder of a young PCF (Parti communiste français) member Vincent Voulant and derailment of a passenger train killing many on board, unleashed a flurry of rumours and conspiracy theories.[6] Socialist and Christian Democratic deputies stoked fears of a Soviet-backed revolution, further crystallizing divisions between a communist majority and SFIO (French Socialist Party) leaning minority in the CGT (Confédération générale du travail).[7] Textile workers erected barricades in Saint-Etienne, while fully armed colonial troops from Senegal poured into Nice to suppress unrest.[8] Fist-fights and heated arguments plunged the National Assembly into chaos, as communist deputies hurled insults like *Boches* or *fascistes* at Jules Moch and Robert Schuman for proposing legislation to punish strikers guilty of sabotage or endangering 'freedom to work.'[9] Freezing weather and fierce

[3] 'Certains ont voulu la grève pour faire monter la fièvre dans le pays', *Le Populaire* [Paris] no.7215 (4th June 1947), p.1. col a', OURS, *Le Populaire 1946-1948.*
[4] P. Bois, *La grève Renault d'avril-mai 1947* (Paris, 1947), pp.14-33.
[5] R. Mencherini, *Guerre froide, grèves rouges. Parti communiste, stalinisme et luttes sociales en France. Les grèves "insurrectionnelles" de 1947-1948* (Paris, 1998), pp.27-55.
[6] Ibid, pp.216-217 and p.44.
[7] M. Dreyfus, *Histoire de la CGT. Cent ans de syndicalisme en France* (Paris, 1995), pp.213-233.
[8] Y. Benot, *Massacres coloniaux 1944-1950: la IVe République et la mise au pas des colonies françaises* (Paris, 1994), p.97.
[9] T. Bouchet, *Noms d'oiseaux. L'insulte en politique, de la Restauration à nos jours* (Paris, 2010), pp. 190-197.

counter-attacks from CRS (Compagnies républicaines de sécurité) forces ensured strikes did not endure.

Yet order was restored only temporarily. 1948 proved even more unstable domestically and internationally. Strikes rattled overseas *départements* and colonial possessions in North and West Africa, even though these disturbances exploded for reasons unrelated to events in the metropole. The Dakar-Niger strike which affected supply lines stretching from Senegal to Mali in October 1947, outlived 'insurrections' in France and ended in triumph for indigenous railwaymen three months later.[10] French troops were mobilized again to battle insurgencies in Indochina, as l'Union française slowly disintegrated.[11]

The November/December strikes, combined with the hardening of Cold War tensions in Europe after the Prague coup, prompted Socialist Minister Jules Moch to purge the CRS of communist elements and to champion aggressive measures in order to confront industrial action a weakened CGT initiated in Clermont-Ferrand.[12] The CRS were deployed in even greater numbers to confront strikes engulfing Michelin factories, resulting in violent clashes and rioting on the streets. Cinemas throughout France screened footage of these chaotic scenes. Fear pushed militants and unionists to react

[10] F. Cooper,' 'Our Strike': Equality, Anti-colonial Politics and the 1947-48 Railway Strike in French West Africa', *The Journal of African History,* 37/1 (1996), pp.81-118 and *Decolonization and African Society: The Labor Question in French and British Africa* (Cambridge, 1996), pp.225-260.

[11] For the beginnings of the First Indochina War, see J.P. Rioux, *The Fourth Republic 1944-1958,* tr. G. Rogers (New York, 1987), pp.81-97. M. Michel,' L'empire colonial dans les débats parlementaires', in S. Bernstein and P. Milza (eds), *L'Année 1947* (Paris, 2000), pp. 189-193.

[12] H. Chapman, *France's Long Reconstruction: In Search of the Modern Republic (*Cambridge, 2018), p.33.

against this perceived retreat of workers' rights, and convinced others not to get involved in strikes.[13]

These fears re-surfaced months later during the seven-week long miners' strike in the Nord- Pas-de-Calais region and Saint-Étienne. The Lacoste Amendments which intended to punish rising absenteeism and threatened to restrain union representation, caused uproar.[14] Miners voted overwhelmingly in favour of strike action. The shutting down of security details in the mines gave Moch the greenlight to send in 35,000 troops, including army regiments fully equipped with miniaturized tanks and gun turrets to encircle the mines. A repeat of the November/December strikes had to be avoided at any cost.[15] Many press outlets and politicians were unanimous in condemning another 'Stalinist' intrigue seeking to halt or sabotage France's fragile economic recovery. Splits in the CGT a year earlier engendered bitter cleavages which played out on the ground, as miners often aligned with FO (Force ouvrière) or CFTC (Confédération française des travailleurs chrétiens) unions were subject to harassment for refusing to participate.[16] Conversely, security forces shot dead unarmed strikers, marking the beginning of a years-long judicial campaign to punish miners and their families for taking part in strikes.[17]

[13] M. Zancarini- Fournel, *Les luttes et les rêves. Une histoire populaire de la France de 1685 à nos jours* (Paris, 2016), p.711.
[14] Ibid, p.712.
[15] Ibid, p.712. F. Charpier, 'L'histoire secrète des grèves de 1947-1948', in B. Collombat, D. Servenay, F. Charpier, M. Orange and E. Seznec (eds), *Histoire secrète du patronat de 1945 à nos jours. Le vrai visage du capitalisme français* (Paris, 2014), pp.75-76.
[16] M. Fontaine and X. Vigna, 'La grève des mineurs de l'automne 1948 en France', *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d'histoire,* 121/1 (2014), p.25.
[17] J.L.Vivens, 'Conflit social ou affrontement politique? La grève des mineurs en France en 1948 sous les angles de la solidarité et la répression' (Research Masters, Université Paris 1-Panthéon-Sorbonne, 2015), pp.127-193.

The historiography of the 1947-48 strikes is fragmentary, although there exists a notable interest in the political dimension of these movements. Annie Lacroix-Riz and her doctoral thesis, later condensed into the text *La CGT de la Libération à la Scission 1944-1947,* explored the CGT's dealings with the uncompromising *État.* She detailed the rise and fall of wages in multiple professions, the price of bread and schisms between 'majority' trade unionists prone to compromise, and the 'confederate' minority willing to resort to more traditional forms of protest to make the plight of exhausted workers heard.[18]

Robert Mencherini's work sought to uncover whether the Nov-Dec strikes were a coup the PCF orchestrated at the behest of the Soviet Union. Mencherini dispels this hypothesis, stating there were a plurality of reasons why post-war industrial action took on such a revolutionary character and why it was riven by discord and poorly co-ordinated.[19] He sheds light on disagreements wracking the PCF in the aftermath of the strikes in December 1947. Although Stalin himself did not approve of insurrectionary movements in France, it is obvious Maurice Thorez, Jacques Duclos and other members of the Comité général du Parti communiste disagreed: a pro-Stalinist faction supported strikes or social movements in France to further the USSR's foreign policy, while others wished to tighten the PCF's grip on workers' federations.[20] He asserts strikes were not a conspiracy the PCF concocted to bring down the government and deftly distinguishes

[18] A. 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)' (PhD thesis, Université de Paris 1, 1981), pp.665-676.
[19] Mencherini, *Guerre froide, grèves rouges*, pp.76-89.
[20] Ibid, pp.233-244.

between legitimate grievances people expressed from below, with the doubts and hesitations of the party above.[21]

However, both Riz and Mencherini's understanding of discontent is confined to the lack of food and other resources which afflicted French workers. I believe more subtle, but no less important sources of unrest have been underestimated and understudied. For example, Richard Hirsch's article hones in on the discontent Parisian teachers expressed, as opposed to the more publicized strikes of the miners and workers at Renault.[22] His work does not contain the dichotomies of previous studies, but also reveals how teachers' strikes were a precursor to the independence of the SNI (Syndicat national des instituteurs) in 1948, a trade union free from the influence of communists in the CGT, yet still ideologically aligned to Force ouvrière.[23] Nonetheless, his work underestimates the power of the Occupation in the framing of the teachers' strike. For left-leaning participants, it was a chance to resist supposedly thriving religious schools still controlled by remnants of the Vichy regime.

Hanna Diamond, Bruno Mattéi, Évelyne Desbois and Yves Jeanneau all illustrated how French miners were mythologized during the battle of production.[24] The blackened, hardened physiques of these workers in the Pas-de-Calais were plastered on walls and billboards extolling their tireless commitment.[25] As stated in Marc Lazar's article, communists idolized miners' bravery in the face of disease and treacherous

[21] Ibid, pp.109-127.
[22] R. Hirsch, 'La grève des instituteurs et institutrices de la Seine de 1947', *Le Mouvement Social,* 212/3 (2005), pp.35-57.
[23] Ibid, p.57.
[24] Y. Jeanneau, 'Les murs de l'histoire. L'imagerie de la bataille du charbon' and B. Mattéi, 'Portrait du mineur en héros' in É. Desbois, Y. Jeanneau and B. Mattéi (eds), *La foi des charbonniers: les mineurs dans la Bataille du charbon, 1945-1947* (Paris, 1986), pp.57-101.
[25] H. Diamond, 'Miners, Masculinity and the 'Bataille du Charbon' in France 1944-1948', *Modern and Contemporary France*, 19/1 (2011), pp.70-82.

conditions long after *la bataille du charbon* ended. Miners came to embody noble workers whose rugged endurance and earthy masculinity garnered a respect other professions never received.[26] I will show how this idolization came at the expense of other workers, such as bargemen and construction crews. Feelings of being forgotten or left behind have been neglected or ignored in the study of French post-war strikes.

Éric Kocher-Marboeuf's essay studied how multiple CRS divisions were deployed and armed in response to unrest in Marseille and le Pas-De-Calais region. Relying primarily on reports security forces compiled, Marboeuf alleged, apart from isolated incidents where excessive force resulted in the unfortunate death of strikers, CRS were right to deploy force and concluded personnel acted responsibly, while unruly masses provoked an underfunded and numerically inferior police force.[27] Patrick Bruneteaux's nuanced reading of *la violence d'État* during the 1947-48 strikes is more convincing, stating the French government should have been held responsible for manufacturing a misleading portrayal of strikers as violent or insurrectional, and not the police. When CRS units did employ violence to beat back strikers, it was a means of proving themselves able to withstand prolonged urban warfare.[28]

Conversely, Xavier Vigna, Marion Fontaine, Philippe Roger, and to a lesser extent Danielle Tartakowsky, analysed the various forms of violence striking miners utilized, either to defend themselves from the CRS or harass 'yellow-bellied' colleagues

[26] M. Lazar, 'Le mineur de fond: un exemple de l'identité du PCF', *Revue française de science politique,* 35/2 (1985), p.195.
[27] É. Kocher-Marboeuf, 'Le maintien de l'ordre public lors des grèves de 1947' in S. Bernstein and P. Milza (eds.), *L'année 1947* (Paris, 2000), pp.373-383.
[28] P. Bruneteaux, *Maintenir l'ordre. Les transformations de la violence d'État en régime démocratique* (Paris, 1996), pp.150-155.

who refused to take part.[29] In short, the miners' strike became a re-enactment of the war. Newspapers invoked the Soviet menace or Nazi monster to castigate or praise communist-leaning strikers engaged in a losing battle against Socialist *Boches* and *les collabos* of Force ouvrière.[30] Jean-Louis Vivens uncovered the vast local, regional, and international solidarity campaigns organised to help miners and their families weather the professional and social fallout of strikes, while Dominique Simonnot's analysis provides an evocative account of the trials miners endured in Mazingarbe during the post-war era.[31] Simonnot interviewed surviving miners, who vividly recalled their fraught relationships with intransigent managers, hierarchies favouring engineers, quasi-clandestine gatherings with communist sympathizers at night, chronic attacks of bronchitis, and the looming threat of sclerosis.[32]

Nearly all these texts omit one crucial question, however: how was the French miners' strike perceived and interpreted abroad? Did state violence unleashed upon French or immigrant miners, persuade or influence other governments to clamp down on their own strikes? Dariusz Jarosz's and Maria Pasztor's book mentioned briefly how French strikes, and the reprisals and deportations Polish miners endured, strained diplomatic relations between France and Poland.[33] Yet how these communist regimes weaponised these strikes remains understudied.

[29] D. Tartakowsky, *Les manifestations de rue en France, 1918-1968* (Courtry, 1997) p. 553.
[30] Fontaine and Vigna, 'La grève des mineurs de l'automne 1948 en France', pp.21-34. P. Roger, 'Les grèves de 1947 et 1948 dans le Pas-de-Calais, déroulement, violence et maintien de l'ordre', *Revue du Nord,* 389/1 (2011), pp.133-180.
[31] Vivens, 'Conflit social…', pp.78-105.
[32] D. Simonnot, *Plus noir dans la nuit: la grande grève des mineurs de 1948* (Paris, 2014), pp. 9-38.
[33] D. Jarosz and M.Pasztor, *Conflits brûlants de la guerre froide: les relations franco-polonaises de 1945 à 1954* (Warsaw, 2004), pp.120-130.

My contribution to this historiography will be twofold: Firstly, I will examine the types of subterranean discontent which powered such movements, focusing specifically on France. I use the word 'subterranean' because it is arguable Socialist and Communist parties or trade unions did not fully articulate or accurately express why workers took to the streets. Demands for higher wages, lower prices, and more bread hid more subtle sources of unrest. Yet in order to better understand, identify, and analyse these latent anxieties and quiet frustrations, it is necessary to look and think differently about the immediate post-war period itself. Rather than focusing on the emerging binaries of the Cold War, I will try to examine the malaise afflicting French society as a whole. Secondly, I will contextualize French post-war strikes, not only in labour disputes within the larger French Empire, but also in a transnational setting. The political ripples French strikes triggered were truly global in scale.

In making these arguments, Fabien Théofilakis' idea of the 'impossibility of demobilisation' has been vital.[34] He suggested an inability to demobilize affected German prisoners-of-war forced to work in French coalfields. POWS still lived in uncomfortable barracks, obeyed orders and traded grey infantry uniforms for blue mining jackets. The professional hierarchies in the mines of the north and east, coupled with an unforgiving workplace and strict discipline, mirrored war-time environments and experiences.[35] Bruno Cabanes' and Guillaume Piketty's edited volume also explores the pathologies, psychoses, and fears born out of World War I or World War II and how they

[34] F. Théofilakis, 'Les prisonniers de guerre allemands en mains françaises (1944-1949): captivité en France, rapatriement en Allemagne' (PhD thesis, Université de Paris Ouest Nanterre, 2010), p.645.
[35] Ibid, pp.645-646.

lingered after hostilities ended.[36] The war raged on both in body and mind for workers in post-war France as well.[37]

As a concept, the 'impossibility of demobilization' has proven sturdier than John Horne's idea of the 'demobilization of minds', which he applied to France following the Great War. As Horne argued, cultural and political demobilization, unlike military and economic demobilization, can be a very slow process. It took the French press and public opinion until the Treaty of Locarno in 1925 to gradually cease its dehumanization of the German enemy.[38] Although France did not suffer anywhere near the casualties of World War I, the aftermath of World War II was perhaps more devastating morally, physically, and psychologically. France had endured a humiliating defeat in 1940, four years of occupation, deportations to labour or concentration camps (at home and abroad), the suspension of civil liberties, and Vichy's authoritarian governance.

Here, the excavation of subterranean discontent by deploying the concept of the impossibility of demobilization, particularly in the first half of the thesis, has much more in common with the work of Richard Bessel, Dirk Schumann, and many others in the volume *Life after Death: Approaches to a Cultural and Social History of Europe during the 1940's and 1950's.* Therein, scholars peered beneath the deafening public silence and 'normality' that characterized the post-war years and examined the hidden traumas and

[36] B. Cabanes and G. Piketty (eds.), *Retour à l'intime au sortir de la guerre* (Paris, 2009), pp.10-300.
[37] The work of Emmanuel Saint-Fuscien also deals with how French World War I veterans brought the war back with them. See 'Sortir de la guerre pour revenir dans la classe? L'impact de la guerre sur les pratiques enseignantes au prisme du cas Delvert (1906-1939)', *Histoire de l'éducation,* no.139 (2013), pp.51-72.
[38] J. Horne, 'Demobilizing the Mind: France and the Legacy of the Great War, 1919-1939', *French History and Civilization,* no.2(2009), pp.101-119.

discontent.[39] In the first four chapters, I attempt to unearth the unutterable discontent which powered strike-waves in post-war France.

The first chapter will examine the physiological, psychological and environmental factors which heightened the unrest afflicting French workers before the 1947-48 strike waves. Emotional and physical trauma, and the memory of torture or internment, remained important for workers who had survived detention centres or returned from STO forced labour camps. Letters expressed chronic fatigue, lack of rest or food, and a sense of depletion. Medical records reveal the precipitous rise of absenteeism in coalfields where hundreds of miners fled suffocating conditions and gruelling workloads, often with the aid of sympathetic doctors. Excavating the ravages of the battle of production on French workers is crucial for understanding why strikes became so widespread.

In addition, poor working conditions suggest how *l'univers concentrationnaire* persevered and accentuated lingering feelings of imprisonment in France. These psychological pressures, I argue, were as important as the physiological handicaps in shaping workers' attitudes. Reminders of the war lay everywhere, especially because of the proximity of Indochinese and former German prisoner camps to mining basins and villages in north-eastern *départements* and southern regions.[40] Workers were angered by the judicial repression aiming to purge former veterans in the coalfields, charges which were subsequently perceived as assaults on communities still cherishing the memory of

[39] R. Bessel and D. Schumann, 'Introduction: Violence, Normality, and the Construction of Postwar Europe', in R. Bessel and D. Schumann (eds), *Life after Death: Approaches to a Cultural and Social History of Europe during the 1940's and 1950's* (Cambridge, 2003), pp.1-12.

[40] David Rousset coined the term *l'univers concentrationnaire* to describe the Nazi camp system. See O.L.C. Grandmaison, 'Sur *L'Univers concentrationnaire*: remarques sur "tout est possible", *Lignes,* 2/2(2000), pp.26-46.

resistance. Particular groups of labourers, such as construction workers and bargemen, often expressed feelings of worthlessness because their own sacrifices were underrated during the so-called 'battle of production'. Finally, environmental factors such as the ONCOR barracks, initially conceived as progressive and hospitable housing projects, unintentionally produced a sense of detachment. This militarised housing also ensured that memories of confining prisons and camps re-surfaced.

The second chapter argues that post-war strikes did not necessarily announce the beginning of the Cold War in France, but rather signalled the continuation of grudges left over from the Occupation. For many participants and opponents, industrial action was an opportunity to address and finally resolve conflicts and grievances left over from the war, not only during the 1948 miners' strike, as Xavier Vigna and Marion Fontaine argued, but during many other strikes between 1947 and 1948. Metal-workers in the Loire region saw industrial action as an opportunity to accuse managers and bosses of collaboration. The Berliet car-manufacturing plant in Lyon saw embattled engineers go on strike to fight false accusations of collaboration. Teachers' unions in the months preceding the November/December strikes manufactured fears of ascendant Catholic and denominational schools, supposedly thriving in a countryside swarming with Vichyist priests. The only profession spared was the powerful *patronat*, like the Schneider family in Le Creusot, who continued to resist CGT unionists eager to replicate the success of *Le Front Populaire*.

The third chapter charts the response of the French press that prodded workers either to go on strike or not in post-war France. Although it is so far impossible to know how individuals or communities responded to this avalanche of commentary, its ubiquity

may well have helped to mobilise and articulate discontent. Journalists, editors, columnists, and intellectuals writing for *L'Humanité, La Vie Ouvrière, Ce Soir*, *La Défense*, and *Le Peuple* portrayed the emerging Soviet sphere in Eastern Europe as countries filled with limitless resources. They painted Czechoslovakia as an ascendant social democracy beaming with youthful energy and vigour. The formerly backward peasant nation of Hungary appeared transformed for the better by communism. Poland was a promised land brimming with ingenuity and meritocracy, while the USSR built thousands of affordable leisure centres or cinemas. Considering the immense popularity of the post-war communist press, such content may have appealed to a demoralized and famished French workforce. According to Anna Maria Jackowska, the centrist press occasionally even praised the communist take-over of Eastern Europe until 1948.[41] Conversely, publications loyal to anti-communist trade unions, such as Force Ouvrière, frequently exposed the authoritarian practices of communist regimes, which may have played a role in convincing miners not aligned to the CGT not to take part in the miners' strike.

To paraphrase Patrick Boucheron's book on the global history of France*,* the fourth chapter will write *une histoire des grèves de 1947-48 qui s'explique avec le monde.*[42] Namely, it argues that an inability to demobilize among CGT trade unionists and regular French labourers was sustained via newspaper reports, telegrams, and letters describing the erosion or retreat of trade union rights abroad, not just in the United States, Greece, Spain, Portugal or Eastern Europe, but also in territories within the French Empire such as French India, Oceania, Tunisia, and Madagascar. Though failed

[41] A.M. Jackowska, 'La Pologne et les Polonais dans la presse et les sondages d'opinion publique en France (1945-1947)', *Académie Polonaise des Sciences. Centre Scientifique à Paris,* vol.17(2015), pp.207-220

[42] P. Boucheron, 'Introduction', in P. Boucheron (ed), *L'Histoire Mondiale de la France* (Paris, 2017), p.8.

colonial strikes involved the same government, it is likely metropolitan observers made few distinctions between foreign and colonial *recul ouvriers*. French workers constantly read and heard about foreign workers such as themselves being harassed, tortured, imprisoned, slaughtered, and stripped of hard-won rights. It appeared the entire world was still trapped in what Robert Gerwarth, Michael Gehler, David Schriffl, and to a lesser extent Tony Judt described as a 'long World War', with workers engaged in a losing battle against various regimes and administrations.[43] While French ministers feared the loss of liberties in the emerging Soviet bloc in the wake of the Prague coup, French workers worried about the 'Schuman Laws' in December 1947 or the Lacoste Amendments and Decrees of 1948, which exemplified this world-wide *recul ouvrier*. Strikes, especially in northern mining fields during the winter of 1948, were partly motivated by desires to preserve gains acquired with the Miners' Statute.[44]

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Moving on from the metropolitan setting, the three remaining chapters will then reposition the 1947-48 strikes in a global context and assess their impact in various colonial, European, and even Canadian sectors. While the fourth chapter discussed

[43] R. Gerwarth, *The Vanquished: Why the First World War Failed to End, 1917-1923* (London, 2016), pp.1-15. M. Gehler and D. Schriffl (eds), *Violent Resistance: From the Baltics to Central, Eastern and South Eastern Europe* (Paderborn, 2020) T. Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945* (London, 2010), pp.32-37.

[44] On the 4th December 1947, the National Assembly voted in favour of laws which not only deprived policemen of the right to strike, but also punished acts of violence or sabotage during strikes. See A. Bancaud, 'Une justice d'État trop sensible aux bruits de la rue (1947-1953)', in P. Buton, O. Büttner, M. Hastings (eds), *La Guerre froide vue d'en bas* (Paris, 2014), pp.55-71. The Lacoste Decrees, named after Socialist Minister for Industry Robert Lacoste, and issued between February and September 1948, sought to curb mounting absenteeism and stagnant productivity by modifying the Miners' Statute, making it easier to fire or sanction miners. The decrees also aimed to lay-off 10% of the administrative personnel in the mines, and sought to restrain the CGT's influence both in the workplace and food cooperatives. See Vivens,'Conflit Social', pp.48-49.

French strikes ***avec*** *le monde*, the following chapters will explore how French strikes fit ***dans*** *le monde*.

A vast historiography covers the 'cultures of panic' which swept across the French and British Empires in the early twentieth century.[45] Examples include Martin Thomas' study of French colonial intelligence in North Africa and the Levant before World War II and Alexander Keese's article on Red scares in French West Africa and Polynesia, yet relatively little scholarship focuses on the many outbreaks of industrial action that rattled a French Empire crumbling under the weight of insurrections in Indochina and uprisings in Madagascar.[46] More importantly, few studies have put the metropolitan 1947-48 strikes in relation to colonial labour movements which occurred simultaneously or shortly thereafter. Firstly, the fifth chapter argues that strikes in France envenomed colonial panics in overseas *départements*, Algeria, and Morocco. Admittedly, metropolitan strikes did not trigger fears of nationalist or communist rebellions among colonial intelligence agencies, police informants, and security personnel. Yet the 1947-48 strikes *did* inflame these pre-existing anxieties. Colonial administrations, afflicted with their own inability to demobilize since the failed Algerian uprisings of 1945 and the ongoing conflicts in Indochina, interpreted generally benign and peaceful strikes as potential revolts aiming to topple French rule, and often reacted rashly in response.

Secondly, the fifth chapter will also look closely at the demands and frustrations which fuelled strike movements across the French Empire. Though it is difficult to

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[45] See H. Fischer-Tiné (ed), *Anxieties, Fear and Panic in Colonial Settings: Empires on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown* (Cham, Switzerland)

[46] A. Keese, 'A Culture of Panic: Communist Scapegoats and Decolonization in French West Africa and French Polynesia (1945-1957), *French Colonial History*, 9/1 (2008), pp.131-145. M. Thomas, *Empires of Intelligence: Security Services and Colonial Disorder after 1914* (Berkeley, 2007), pp.1-14.

answer the question of whether Martinicans, Guadeloupians, Reunionese, Guyanese, Algerians, and Moroccans felt any more 'French' by going on strike, what is true is that many hoped, at the very least, to benefit from the same wages and rights that metropolitan workers already possessed. In overseas *départements*, solidarity campaigns for French miners were a means of validating newfound citizenship, while indigenous trade unionists in Algeria compared French mining directors to dogs. In short, depending largely on the context and territory, strikes overseas provided an opportunity for indigenous workers to either move closer or further away from French rule.

The thesis will continue by moving away from the imperial domain to examining the plight of non-French workers in France in the early post-war period. Apart from rare articles by Phryné Pigenet and Aurélie Denoyer, which revealed the French State's clampdown on exiled Spanish republicans in the early fifties, very little has been written on the expulsion or mistreatment of Polish, Spanish, and Italian workers during and after the 1947-48 strikes.[47] Previous studies tend to view these years as a time when French authorities were eager to welcome immigrant labourers so they could bolster reconstruction efforts. The work of Stéphane Mourlane and Alexis Spire in particular analysed the repercussions of the Franco-Italian Accords of 1946 and 1947, which saw thousands of Italian workers employed in French factories or construction sites.[48] Recent scholarship by Laurence Prempain also chronicled the ordeals of displaced Polish women struggling to integrate into French society, while Janine Ponty focused her research on

[47] P. Pigenet, 'La protection des étrangers à l'épreuve de la "guerre froide": l'opération "Boléro-Paprika"', *Revue d'Histoire Moderne & Contemporaine,* 46/2 (1999), pp.296-310. A. Denoyer, 'L'opération Boléro-Paprika: origines et conséquences. Les réfugiés politiques espagnols: de l'expulsion à leur installation en RDA', in G. Dreyfus-Armand (ed), *Résonnances françaises de la guerre d'Espagne* (Paris, 2011), pp.295-312.

[48] S. Mourlane, 'La question migratoire dans les relations franco-italiennes dans les années 1950-1960', *Cahiers d'études Italiennes,* no.22 (2016), pp.159-173.

Polish miners who volunteered to leave France in order to help rebuild a devastated Poland.[49]

In contrast to this work, the sixth chapter will argue that for many immigrant labourers, whether they participated in French strikes or not, the post-war period was a time of violent persecution and expulsion. French police, CRS or DST members, like their colonial counterparts mentioned in chapter five, searched for treacherous communist plots among immigrant 'colonies' where there was none to be found, resulting in unjustified repatriations.

The torture or eviction of immigrant labourers had severe repercussions in Eastern Europe, as will be seen in the final section of chapter six and again in chapter seven. The labelling of Romanian organizations or individuals as 'Cominform' agents by French authorities, combined with news travelling back to Poland about the harassment of Polish miners, did much to damage relations between France and the emerging Eastern Bloc.Though many scholars cite Cold War tensions and Soviet imperialism as the main explanations for France's loss of prestige east of the Danube, this thesis argues that French security forces' misconduct during the 1947-48 strikes deserves some of the blame for hastening the breakdown of French cultural and political clout in Eastern Europe. Chapter seven will then suggest French post-war strikes also allowed Polish, Hungarian, and Czech communist parties to resurrect a Stalinist 'proletarian

[49] L. Prempain, 'Exploration des stratégies d'après-guerre. Destins croisés de deux Polonaises en migration. France (1945-1950)', *ILCEA,* no.34 (2019), http://journals.openedition.org/ilcea/5928 ; DOI : https://doi.org/10.4000/ilcea.5928, J. Ponty, 'Une intégration difficile: les polonais en France dans le premier 20e siècle, *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d'Histoire,* no.7(1985), pp.57-58.

internationalism'.This concept has rarely been studied in the context of the immediate post-war era.[50]

In addition, this thesis emphasizes the global significance the French miners' strike had in the Francophone world. Canadian and Quebecois historiographies generally interpret the Asbestos mining strike of 1949 as marking the beginning of Quebec's social and political liberalization, or 'Quiet Revolution', and the decline of the 'Grande Noirceur' of Maurice Duplessis' nearly thirty year reign as provincial premier.[51] However, these works tend to neglect the wider context of the Cold War when examining the violence Duplessis' administration unleashed to quell the Asbestos strike. This chapter argues it is likely that the brutal suppression of the miners' strike in France, an event the Quebecois press covered extensively, had some bearing on how Quebecois police and John-Mansville company directors reacted to unrest in Asbestos. Although an exact causal link is difficult to establish, the repression of strikes in Quebec needs to be examined as part of a worldwide reaction against labour unrest in the late forties and not as a purely domestic or isolated phenomenon divorced from developments abroad.

In keeping with the global significance of post-war French strikes, the final chapter will also make a contribution to the historiography on post-war Franco-Dutch relations. Thus far, studies focus briefly on Dutch foreign policy in relation to France's opposition to German rearmament in the late forties and early fifties, and explores

[50] For Sino-Soviet 'proletarian internationalism' in the 1950s, see A. Jerslid, *The Sino-Soviet Alliance: An International History* (Chapel Hill, 2014), pp.2-15.
[51] E. Martin Meunier, 'The French-Canadian Great Darkness (Grande Noirceur) in Quebecois History and Memory: Revisiting the Dominant Interpretation', *Vingtième Siècle. Revue D'Histoire,* vol 129/1(2016), pp.43-59.

whether Dutch diplomatic decision-making conflicted or accorded with French interests.[52] Yet very little has been written on Franco-Dutch labour relations in the immediate post-war period. The seventh chapter will therefore examine how some Dutch labourers sought to help French miners on strike in 1948 by sending relief money and adopting starving children temporarily, and how the Dutch government used these 'illegal' exchanges to punish communist trade unionists campaigning for Indonesian independence.

[52] W. D. E. Mallinson, 'Dutch Foreign Policy, 1948-1954: From Neutrality to Commitment' (PhD, London School of Economics,1990), pp.131-132.

1. Anatomy of Discontent

Using private correspondence, labour press releases, medical records, and ministerial reports, this chapter exhumes the emotions and frustrations underpinning the discontent which fueled French post-war strikes. The first section focuses on the physical and physiological factors which contributed to unrest. Rising absenteeism suggested how miners yearned to escape a claustrophobic and highly dangerous workplace, if only temporarily. Wounds or illnesses sustained during the war persisted long after hostilities ended, while chronic fatigue due to strenuous workloads and often extreme hunger from low rations, contributed to these hardships.

The second part uncovers the psychological stresses workers and their representatives faced. The continuing existence of numerous camps for Indochinese labour, German POWS, and French labourers ensured that workers and survivors continued to be haunted by *l'univers concentrationnaire.* Lingering memories of the repression, torture, and violence meted during the Occupation precipitated post-war militancy among some trade unionists. Furthermore, the court trials of renowned *maquisards* and respected *résistants* in northeastern coalfields, compelled miners to fight back against the authorities and go out on strike.

The French state, whether under General de Gaulle or his successors, ignored the uncomfortable realities of the war in favour of a triumphalist narrative of national renewal.[1] Yet this re-imagining of the war years came at a price. The mythologization of

[1] P. Lagrou, *The Legacy of Nazi Occupation: Patriotic Memory and National Recovery in Western Europe, 1945-1965* (New York, 2004), pp.2-5.

the Resistance in countless films, commemorations, and autobiographies released shortly after the Liberation marginalized narratives which did not fit into this state-sanctioned interpretation of the past.[2] Neglected voices or testimonies from Jewish concentration camp survivors and communist partisans took decades to resurface.[3] Moreover, a hierarchy of martyrs was erected. French public opinion, generally unsympathetic to returning STO (Service du travail obligatoire) labourers or prisoners-of-war, perceived these victims as loyal followers of Maréchal Pétain.[4] An idolization of miners, dockers, or railway conductors came at the expense of other professions and workers whose efforts to rebuild France went unrecognized. This awareness of being forgotten or belittled is crucial for understanding the discontent which preceded post-war strike waves. These sentiments of being unappreciated or cast aside, although apparently unconnected to the psychological and environmental imprisonment examined throughout the chapter, are in fact crucial for understanding how *l'univers concentrationnaire* remained fixed in the minds of many workers returning from forced labour camps.

The last section will examine how *l'univers concentrationnaire* never disappeared for labourers housed in confining ONCOR (Office National des Cantonnements Ouvriers de la Reconstruction) barracks scattered throughout post-war France. Despite the ambitions of progressive architects, haphazard planning and material shortages ensured ONCOR housing retained a sense of war-time prison camps. Instead of

[2] R. Pithon, 'Le cinéma français en 1948: entre le rêve à bon marché et la grandeur passée', in R. Girault and R. Frank (eds.), *La puissance française en question! (1945-1949)* (Paris, 1988), p.453.
[3] H. Stenius, M. Österberg and J. Östling, 'Nordic Narratives of the Second World War: An Introduction', in H. Stenius, M. Österberg and J. Östling (eds.), *Nordic Narratives of the Second World War: National Historiographies Revisited* (Lund, 2011), p.12.
[4] H.E. Bories- Sawala, *Dans la gueule du loup: les Français requis du travail en Allemagne* (Villeneuve, 2010), pp.305-307

fostering a communitarian spirit, as the Ministry for Reconstruction intended, the ONCOR dwellings accentuated feelings of isolation among workers forced again to live far away from family and friends.

Historians have yet to explore the role of fatigue and exhaustion.[5] Charles de Gaulle ordained that France should 'not (be) waiting for help from others' but act as 'a nation of labourers, who made the most of their soil, their mines, their factories and ports.'[6] A few days later, Maurice Thorez echoed the General's orders in the region of Pas-de-Calais in northern France and in a warlike chant declared that miners had to 'Produce, produce, produce more and always produce!'[7] Both de Gaulle and Thorez set the tone for a post-war political discourse few dared challenge. The battle for production had to be won at the expense of an already depleted and underfed workforce.

In his correspondence, trade unionist Gaston Davoust, complained to fellow activists in Belgium about fatigue and long working hours compounded by a lack of *vitalité* since his time as a prisoner.[8] To prominent Belgian Trotskyist Adémar Hennaut, Davoust conveyed feelings of relief and frustration at having found a secure, albeit very tiring job as an assistant to a workshop manager.[9] For activists like him, and workers in general, sleep offered a few precious hours to rest, especially since dwindling breaks and

[5] One notable exception is D. Veillon, *Vivre et survivre en France, 1939-1947* (Paris, 1995), pp.301-313.
[6] M. Boumediene, *La place de la loi et du contrat dans la garantie du droit à la protection sociale de 1945 à nos jours. Tome 1* (Paris, 2003), pp.92-93.
[7] Maurice Thorez, ' "Produire, Faire du Charbon"; Discours prononcé à Wazier (21st July 1945)', http://fgimello.free.fr/CV-Bio-Liens/thorez.htm (23rd November 2019). See also R. Trampé, *Les Trois Batailles du charbon (1936-1947)* (Paris, 1989), pp.211-218 and B. Mattéi, 'Après la guerre…la bataille (1945-1947), in É. Desbois, Y. Jeanneau and B. Mattéi (eds), *La foi des charbonniers,* pp.17-55.
[8] 'Correspondance Henry Chazé-Hennaut' 14th July 1947. http://archivesautonomies.org/IMG/pdf/gauchecommuniste/internationaliste3ecamp/ffgci/correspondance-chaze-hennaut-texte.pdf (23rd November 2019).
[9] Ibid, 2th August 1946 (23rd November 2019).

increasing workloads made it impossible to organize reading groups or write letters.[10] Davoust hardly had the physical strength to do anything else but work.[11] In one particularly telling rant, he revealed he rarely read the books and newspapers he received from his friends, never went to the cinema, rarely saw colleagues from the factory, and rarely visited his parents.[12] Work was so exhausting there was little room left for anything else in life.[13]

Researchers P. Boulenger and P. Karton submitted an article for *Le Bulletin de L'Institut d'Hygiène* in early 1946, that sought to determine the average number of hours people worked before contracting tuberculosis. Approximately 45% claimed to work 40-49 hours per week, while over 50% replied they toiled over fifty hours. In addition, nearly half stated they had little to no capacity for work long after recovery in a sanatorium.[14] They proved over-work and fatigue increased risks of exposure to disease. MRP (Mouvement républicain populaire) public health minister Mme Poinso-Chapuis announced tuberculosis was in regression throughout the country in June 1948, yet workers deprived of nutritious food since the war were still vulnerable.[15] A chronic lack of vitamins coupled with exerting labour, weakened bones and the immune system. Doctors reported a dramatic increase in people complaining of joint pains in the immediate post-war period. Rheumatisms afflicting both young and old skyrocketed and

[10] Ibid, 27th January 1948 (23rd November 2019).
[11] Ibid, 11th May 1947 (23rd November 2019).
[12] Ibid, 16th March 1947 (23rd November 2019).
[13] Ibid, 5th March 1946 (23rd November 2019).
[14] 'Tuberculose et "production" ', *Le Libertaire* [Paris], no.140 (30th July 1948), p.4 col a.
[15] '100,000 victimes', *Le Libertaire* [Paris], no.132 (4th June 1948), pp.1-4 col a-b.

to cope with the pain alcohol provided temporary relief.[16] By 1950, Professor André Lemaire recorded that France was ranked first in Europe in terms of alcohol abuse.[17]

As a result, French workers often sought to escape the workplace. Absenteeism, especially in mining basins, was the first line of protest before striking.[18] Interminable hours spent hunched underground with short breaks and little respite pushed workers to flee by any means necessary. Article Six of the Miners' Statute stipulated that unjustified absences would be severely punished and that employees absent for six consecutive days without good cause would be automatically fired. Twelve days unjustified leave over six months also ended employment.[19] However, in June 1948, the director-general of *les charbonnages* still complained the Statute did not actually facilitate the dismissal of absentee miners.[20] Despite costly risks, countless miners continued to defy both trade unions and directors. In Decazeville, employees became highly skilled at avoiding work.

Mr Fraisse fractured his middle-finger in February 1946 and was ordered to take a month-long sick leave, yet he was still absent over two months later.[21] Mr Garcia, who sustained very mild contusions to his left hand and elbow, did not return to the mine for two months as well.[22] Doctors in towns surrounding the Decazeville pits received probing telegrams from the mining office demanding why some miners took so long to

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[16] 'Les restrictions alimentaires et la santé publique', *Le Libertaire* [Paris], no.53 (1st November 1946), pp.1-4 col a-e.
[17] 'Recrudescence de l'alcoolisme', *Le Monde* [Paris] (7th March 1950) in S. Effosse, *L'invention du logement aidé en France* (Vincennes, 2003), pp.132-133.
[18] H. Simon, 'Les motivations de l'absentéisme', *Sociologie du travail,* 20/3 (1978), pp.326-328
[19] 'Décret no.46-1433 du 14 juin 1946 relatif au statut du personnel des exploitations minières et assimilées' https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000000685579#LEGIARTI000022918490 (23rd November 2019).
[20] E. Dejonghe, 'Les houillères à l'épreuve: 1944-1947', *Revue du Nord,* no.227 (1975), p.666.
[21] 'Lettre à Monsieur le Docteur Darde à St Cyprien (Aveyron)', 22nd May 1946, AMDT, Fonds Mines et Usines de Decazeville, 110 AQ 561.
[22] 'Lettre à Monsieur le Docteur Vergnes; le Gua-Cransac (Aveyron)', 27th May 1946, AMDT, Fonds Decazeville, 110 AQ 561.

return to work. Although doctors were held responsible for such blatant absenteeism, miners missed appointments and final check-ups on purpose to extend their sick leave. Sometimes miners declared fit to go back to work waited for a week or more before they returned: '…nous paraît véritablement exagéré que cet ouvrier n'ait repris son travail que huit jours après sa guérison dûment constatée par vous'.[23] Avoiding work showed many miners dreaded the pits so much, they would go to great lengths to prolong their absence.

The Decazeville management grew impatient with unauthorized sick-leave extensions in late 1946. Doctors who treated wounded miners received telegrams from the mining office warning them not to compromise their professional integrity by prescribing over-long leaves of absence. It urged doctors to be watchful and not encourage these practices.[24] Some doctors wanted to make more profits, which the Decazeville social security fund facilitated by covering every miner's medical appointment. The mining company accused doctors of arranging too many consultations with miners who suffered relatively minor injuries: '… environ tous les 2 ou 3 jours. Vous reconnaîtrez que c'est vraiment excessif.'[25]

Dr Vergnes sympathized with the miners' plight and garnered a reputation for extending sick leaves. Between autumn 1946 and the winter of 1947, the Decazeville collieries sent him numerous complaints for prescribing long sick leaves which often lasted for up to two months, in particular to Polish and Spanish miners despite very mild symptoms such as sprained toes, thumbs, or ankles.[26] The company considered

[23] 'Lettre à Monsieur le Docteur Ricaud; Decazeville', 28th June 1946, AMDT, Fonds Decazeville, 110 AQ 561.
[24] Ibid.
[25] 'Lettre à Monsieur le Docteur Darde à Saint-Cyprien (Aveyron), 11th July 1946, AMDT, Fonds . Decazeville, 110 AQ 561.
[26] 'Lettre à Monsieur le Docteur Vergnes; le Gua-Cransac (Aveyron)', 28th February 1946, AMDT, Fonds Decazeville, 110 AQ 561.

absenteeism a scourge and sent him several telegrams to make him stop. [27] The company's frustration is revealed in a telegram Vergnes received : 'Nous attachons le plus grand prix à ce que les blessés soient traités avec le maximum de guaranties et de soin, mais nous ne pouvons admettre des prolongations injustifiées des incapacités.' The company's indignation is understandable in light of statistics compiled two months before the November/December strikes which showed a sharp increase in the number of sick leaves. Every day, an average of 13.5 miners were deemed unfit, and a great number of miners expected to recover between 25th November and 9th December did not return to work.[28] The combination of industrial action and soaring absenteeism in the Decazeville mines illustrates the growing lassitude and discontent rampant among miners and other workers throughout France at the time.

An anonymous trade unionist from the Syndicat des Mineurs de la Loire, wrote a letter to *Le Libertaire* condemning the irresponsible policies the PCF and mining directors promoted which sacrificed lives for the sake of quotas and deadlines.[29] The letter spoke of the fears all miners shared, whether in Decazeville or throughout France. He deplored the drills that released toxic fumes which remained trapped and warmed the air, 'créant une mauvaise aération, provoque l'échauffement des chantiers si nuisible à la santé des mineurs.'[30] He described the poisonous smells of heavy motor oil spreading through the pits and lungs of miners, and the infernal racket of motors or drills, cracking support beams and crumbling walls. He recalled a disaster which occurred during the

[27] 'Lettre à Monsieur le Docteur Vergnes; le Gua par Aubin (Aveyron)', 2nd October 1946, AMDT, Fonds Decazeville, 110 AQ 561. 'Lettre à Monsieur le Docteur Vergnes; le Gua par Aubin (Aveyron)', 16th October 1946, AMDT, Fonds Decazeville, 110 AQ 561.
[28] 'Lettre à Monsieur le Docteur Vergnes; le Gua', 29th December 1947, AMDT, Fonds Decazeville, 110 AQ 561.
[29] 'Lettre d'un mineur de la Loire à tous les mineurs de France', *Le Libertaire* [Paris], no.101 (30th October 1947), p.4 col a.
[30] Ibid.

war, where an enormous dust explosion engulfed the pits of la Chana in the Loire, killing sixty-five miners.[31] Unlike the PCF which published articles and speeches urging miners to toil beyond reason, the unionist refused to criticize young men who fled the mines, as he had worked in the pits for eight years himself and sympathized with men who walked away from a dangerous job which brought poor health and premature death: ' Je trouve qu'ils ont raison de ne pas vouloir mourir à cinquante ans de la silicose, ou même avant, d'un accident quelconque….'[32] This unsparing letter was remarkable for its unflinching honesty, and encapsulates the exceptional physical dangers miners had to face everyday.[33]

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Such hardships were indissociable from feelings of confinement and a lingering *univers concentrationnaire* which formed the backbone of the psychological discontent some French workers experienced. In 1949, an anonymous worker at the Renault car-manufacturing plant declared factory life was not only meaningless, but inhumane.[34] It was an audacious choice of words to describe one's job so soon after the war. Even he admitted the nationalisation schemes implemented four years earlier had achieved some progress. Healthcare was swift and efficient in factory infirmaries, yet clean showers were still a rarity. The worker recalled former STO prisoners who were disappointed with the Renault plant's poor sanitation. Even though they suffered much in Germany, they often found German factories cleaner than the Renault plants.[35]

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[31] 'La catastrophe de la Chana' https://www.forez-info.com/encyclopedie/memoire-et-patrimoine/93-la-catastrophe-de-la-chana.html (23rd November 2019).
[32] Ibid.
[33] 'Lettre d'un mineur de la Loire à tous les mineurs de France'.
[34] 'Faits et Documents. Découverte de l'usine Renault', *La Révolution Prolétarienne* [Paris], no.316 (June 1948), pp.30-31.
[35] Ibid, p.31.

He and his colleagues felt like disposable commodities in the factory. Membership of a trade union provided little comfort. Workers were generally indifferent as to who ran the factory or how it functioned, while CGT representatives only appeared en masse during internal elections.[36] The rest of the year, they gave no direction to a faceless mass. The worker painted a grim portrait of a life lived according to the dictates of autocratic bureaucracies and regulations.[37] When out of the factory, whether on vacation or sick leave, the name Renault followed him and his colleagues everywhere. If he wished to play sports, the Renault factory provided a pitch where to play. The food he ate came from the Renault canteen. The company provided living quarters for workers.[38] Rather than seeing these services as 'perks', he regarded them as part of the stifling and dictatorial conditions of the factory, while other employees felt the Liberation did not change anything.[39] Questioning over 300 men and women during the summer strikes of 1947, the worker heard the recurring complaint: 'Il y a eu du changement en 36, mais depuis c'est pareil'.[40]

Feelings of imprisonment endured, not only in the factory, but also because some labour camps in France were not decommissioned after the war.[41] In the Tarn for example, only the nationality and race of prisoners shifted, but the camps remained. In 1948, Trostkyist journalist Jean-René Chauvin paid a visit to a labour camp in Bergerac which held hundreds of Indochinese workers.[42] Chauvin himself had escaped from

[36] Ibid, p.31.
[37] Ibid, p.31.
[38] Ibid, p.31.
[39] Ibid, p.31
[40] Ibid, p.31.
[41] For how the French state provided militarized and segregated housing to immigrant labourers throughout the twentieth century, see M. Bernardot, 'Camps d'étrangers, foyers de travailleurs, centres d'expulsion: les lieux communs de l'immigré décolonisé', *Cultures et Conflits,* no.69 (2008), pp.55-79.
[42] 'Texte- "Les travailleurs vietnamiens en France" p.1-10', 1948, CHS, Fonds Jean-René Chauvin, 1-JRC-3F.

Buchenwald shortly after his transfer from Auschwitz.[43] This visit proved to be a haunting return to *l'univers concentrationnaire* where Indochinese inmates recalled their own experiences of repression, forced immigration, and slavery.[44] Many explained how local *notables* in Indochina singled them out at random and sent them by force to France in 1940. Wealthy peasant farmers always had the option of giving a gift to the *notable* as a bribe to avoid being picked.[45] Most of those chosen were poor and desperate. One worker admitted he had no choice but to leave since his father still owed a half years' worth of harvest to the notable: 'Poussé, j'ai du accepter de partir pour qu'il (his father) puisse obtenir un nouveau délai.'[46] Many forced labourers refused to leave their families or communities and enlisted in clandestine rebel groups, resulting in others taking their place. This triggered vicious violence in villages back in Indochina. Authorities who organized their departure assured the Indochinese they would receive the same pay and benefits French workers enjoyed, which was a lie. The voyage to Toulon was especially uncomfortable. There were no bunks to sleep in and many passengers fell ill before arrival on a freezing January morning.[47] The barracks themselves were crude and cold. In 1942, police reported Indochinese labourers refused to return to barracks because of leaking roofs.[48] The armistice marked the beginning of an especially painful period since all correspondence with Indochina was cut-off for years: '…en plus d'être mal nourris nous n'avions même pas de nouvelles de nos familles...Cette période a été pour nous la plus triste.'[49]

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[43] 'Biography or History of Jean-René Chauvin (1918-2011)' http://www.calames.abes.fr/Pub/#details?id=FileId-3043 (2nd January 2020).
[44] Ibid, pp.1-2.
[45] Ibid, p.2.
[46] Ibid, p.2.
[47] Ibid, p.3.
[48] L.K. Luguern, 'Les travailleurs indochinois en France de 1939 à 1948' (Mémoire de Maîtrise, Université Paris-Nanterre, 1988) p.64.
[49] 'Texte- "Les travailleurs vietnamiens en France"' p.3.

From late 1944, the Ministry for Colonial Affairs fretted about the maintenance of order and discipline amongst Indochinese workers in the metropole.[50] They feared Communist or Trotskyist propaganda would seduce workers, who could become the foot soldiers of revolution if they returned home. Hoping to avoid any future revolt, the Ministry for Labour granted Indochinese labourers the right to form unions.[51] Many decided to adhere to the CGT which finally granted them equal pay, yet illiteracy and lack of qualifications prevented them from finding employment in construction or metal-work plants.[52] Although the Indochinese generally spoke and understood French, barely one tenth could read or write Vietnamese. Worker committees implemented translation and language classes. Each camp featured a blackboard and newspaper articles stuck to walls.[53] Yet granting greater autonomy in the camps was counter-productive. It gave desperate, lonely, and famished workers a taste for freedom.[54]

The thirst for a fully sovereign Indochina grew more pronounced the longer they stayed on French soil. Representative bodies such as the Congrès de Marseille and the Rassemblement des Ressortisants Annamites made clear their intentions in a manifesto, stipulating that all people possessed the right to self-governance.[55] By 1946, diplomatic relations faltered between Ho Chi Minh and the Fourth Republic, prompting French police to raid Indochinese labour camps in the south and south-west of France for the next two years, resulting in the arrest of multiple Indochinese CGT delegates.[56] On the 17th July 1948, the Indochinese workers delegation published a declaration which accused both the police and military of unlawful arrests and persistent harassment in

[50] Luguern, 'Les travailleurs indochinois', pp. 125-126.
[51] Ibid, pp.125-126. "Texte- "Les travailleurs vietnamiens en France', p.5.
[52]'Texte- "Les travailleurs vietnamiens en France" p.5.
[53] Ibid, p 5.
[54] Luguern, 'Les travailleurs indochinois', pp.126-129.
[55] Ibid, pp.128.
[56] Ibid, pp.128-130.

many camps in Mazargues, Colgate and Montauban. The year 1948 'fut ainsi marquée par l'apogée de la politique répressive en direction des travailleurs indochinois.'[57]

It was in this context that Chauvin visited a disciplinary camp detaining Indochinese workers eight miles from Caylus. They were the *meneurs*, workers who refused to cooperate with French authorities.[58] Having already spent the final months of the war in captivity and starvation, Chauvin knew what to expect when nearing the camp, as he and many veterans 'ont connu ce dernier…'[59] It was a vast enclosure filled with barracks and the occasional concrete building situated on a deserted and rocky plateau with little grass. Two watchtowers greeted Chauvin at the entrance of the camp. Heavily armed guards surveilled the Indochinese closely. Further afield small groups of prisoners pulled wagons filled with boulders and rocks.[60] Chauvin watched as the Indochinese toiled with the indolence of convicts, their deliberate slowness and careful movements reminding Chauvin of what he had experienced in concentration camps: 'Ils me rappelaient le rythme du pas Buchenwaldien…'[61]

Chauvin asked them why they were there. The crowd replied unanimously : 'Nous avons refusé de servir sous les ordres d'officiers français, contre nos compatriotes, nous sommes des détenus politiques, nous sommes mal nourris…'[62] One prisoner claimed food packages arrived emptied. The Indochinese were forced to write home in French, a language most could barely speak. The local préfet also inspected the camp,

[57] Ibid, pp.131.
[58] Ibid, p.128.
[59] Texte- "Les travailleurs vietnamiens en France", p.9.
[60] Ibid, p.9.
[61] Ibid, p.9.
[62] Ibid, p.10.

which the inmates explained had been improved especially for the occasion.[63] When Chauvin left, he saw two lorries rushing towards the camp, filled with Indochinese workers sitting silently behind cage-like windows.[64]

At first glance, the meeting between Chauvin and Indochinese workers is not unexpected, as he was a Trotskyist and anti-colonialist. The French faction of the Fourth International welcomed some of the most ardent critics of French imperialism. Trotskyist delegates in Indochinese labour camps tended to be extremely popular.[65] However, Chauvin's visit was unique since it was a meeting between prisoners. The burden of shared experience weighed heavily on his observations. He understood why Indochinese workers risked imprisonment or death, for he had undergone the same risks as a member of a clandestine cell in Marseille. Chauvin remembered the arduous shifts imposed on prisoners in the punitive mines of Jawischowitz.[66] By interacting with the Indochinese, Chauvin revisited the humiliations and torture he suffered in the recent past. The memory of the camps persisted. It was an experience permanently etched in the minds of survivors. Men and women such as Chauvin were intimately acquainted with the consequences of undergoing oppression. It was an unforgettable trauma which coloured his world-view and propelled his activism. He fervently supported strikes because he agreed with worker demands for higher wages and lower prices, but also because he supported what they symbolized, a physical and psychological breaking free from party and governmental constraints.[67]

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[63] Ibid, p.10.
[64] Ibid, p.10.
[65] Luguern, 'Les travailleurs indochinois', pp. 96-97.
[66] Jeanne Menjoulet,'Biography or History of Jean-René Chauvin (1918-2011)', http://www.calames.abes.fr/Pub/#details?id=FileId-3043 (2nd January 2020).
[67] 'Conférence pour l'Unité Syndicale… Appel à tous les Syndiqués', February 1948, CHS, Fonds Jean-René Chauvin, 1-JRC-3A2.

Chauvin was not the only one who noticed the lingering resonance of *l'univers concentrationnaire* in the minds of the French working-class. The labour camps holding Indochinese workers were a fraction of a much larger network scattered throughout the country. The mining town of Lens in Pas-de-Calais witnessed the brutal treatment of captured German POWS and the quasi-internment of North African and Italian workers for years after the war, many of whom barely survived in barracks bearing an eerie resemblance to what one onlooker called 'les bagnes nazis'.[68] Editors of the anarchist newspaper *le Libertaire* received a short account of the horrifying living conditions POWS experienced, housed only a short distance away from the mining pits. In an article entitled 'À Lens on se croirait à Buchenwald', an eye-witness commented on the forbidding structure of the barracks which looked like Nazi labour camps:'Toute l'entreprise fonctionne à la schlague…'[69] Discipline was harsh and foremen shouted at and beat prisoners when daily output quotas fell behind: ' Il est courant de voir un chef d'équipe réveiller leur zèle à coup de ceinturon.'[70] Prisoners rarely walked freely outside camps and could only buy cigarettes under armed guard. Foreign labourers were watched closely and their movements tightly controlled, as will be seen in greater detail in chapter six. In the evening a bowl of rancid carrot soup was the only dish on the menu. French men recruited to lead POWs into the mines could at least bring a pack of sandwiches to consume after every eight-hour shift, which the rest of the team could not do.[71]

This does not mean the population of Lens felt much sympathy for German POWs. The PCF and far-left leaning journalists of *L'Humanité* or *Ce Soir* paid hardly any attention to the miseries POWs interned in mining basins of the north-east endured.[72]

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[68] 'À Lens on se croirait à Buchenwald', *Le Libertaire* [Paris], no.78 (22nd May 1947), p. 2 col a.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Ibid.
[71] Ibid.
[72] Théofilakis, 'Les prisonniers de guerre allemands', pp.891-893.

Le Libertaire, much like Chauvin a year later, unearthed troubling realities, and evocative words like Buchenwald and *bagne* demonstrate *l'univers concentrationnaire* was still present in post-war France.[73] Whether French workers sympathized with German POWS or rejoiced in seeing former captors trapped in cages is irrelevant. What these observations illustrate is the inability to demobilise. Moreover, the fate of German POWs was similar to what some French miners suffered in months and years after the war. Barracks once home to Ukrainian and Russian prisoners provided shelter for mining families whose homes had been destroyed.[74] These environments of confinement and restriction prolonged residual trauma. The indignities of living in cramped and damp barracks (and literally replacing prisoners) coalesced with fears that labour camps would once again become permanent fixtures of everyday life in post-war France.

Yet not all wartime prison survivors were expatriated abroad. Pierre Bernard, metal-worker and member of the Syndicat National des Ingénieurs et Cadres de la Métallurgie, spent the late thirties and early forties interned in three French prisons.[75] Charged with possessing newspapers belonging to the PCF in 1938, Bernard recalled his harrowing sentence in a *Maison Centrale* in an article for *La Révolution Prolétarienne* in 1949. He quipped that Nazi interrogators added finishing touches to techniques and cruelties the French penitentiary system perfected.[76] Daily humiliations, disease, hunger, and a crushing discipline left long-lasting scars. Although he wrote at length about the chronic lack of food, weight loss, and tragic death of a cell-mate, Bernard remembered

[73] Ibid.
[74] Pascal Brenneur, 'Les prisonniers russes dans les mines de fer lorraines (1941-1944)', http://documents.irevues.inist.fr/bitstream/handle/2042/43835/CL_1989_1_11.pdf?sequence=1 (3rd January 2020). 'Camps et Cités de baraquements du bassin minier Nord-Pas-de-Calais (1942 à nos jours)', (18th October 2013), https://dechvideo.wordpress.com/2013/10/18/camps-et-cites-de-baraquements-du-bassin-minier-npdc-1942-a-nos-jours/ (4th January 2020).
[75] 'Le Pain, la Paix, la Liberté …Trois Prisons', *La Révolution Prolétarienne* [Paris], no.328 (June 1949), pp.11-16.
[76] Ibid, p.13.

the perverse power relations at play in the jail courtyard.[77] The influence and status foremen wielded in the factory became enhanced in prisons.

Workshop accountants, former administrators, and *contremaîtres* who patrolled the workplace in peacetime all enjoyed special privileges, while ordinary labourers bore the brunt of punishment. A super-aristocracy made of accountants, nurses, and various bureaucrats ran free to plot and barter amongst themselves, while working-class labourers adhered to a very different set of rules.[78] The ever-present threat of violence and torture reinforced these imported hierarchies.

Les prévôts were guards who maintained order in the prison and kept watch in the courtyard. Suspicious activity such as talking loudly or whispering warranted punishment. Armed guards dragged prisoners guilty of any of these activities to *le quartier*, a series of torture chambers nestled deep in the jail.[79] Bernard compared them to Dante's descent into Hell. Minor indiscretions earned inmates a stay in separate *salles de disciplines* where guardians forced the condemned to march in circles, a routine interrupted by severe beatings and brief pauses.[80] Others had to contend with gradual reductions of food and water. Although Bernard emerged without too many injuries, many of his fellow inmates were not so fortunate. He remembered the bloodied torsos of men staggering out of *la salle,* with some prisoners suffering excruciating deaths from beatings they underwent over a period of twelve weeks.[81] The guards' favourite torture technique was to wrap inmates in a kind of straitjacket called *une camisole* for long

[77] Ibid, p.13.
[78] Ibid, p.13.
[79] Ibid, p.13
[80] Ibid, p.13.
[81] Ibid, p.13.

periods of time.[82] Bernard confirmed multiple witnesses and survivors remembered guards also used many instruments, from truncheons to whips, to hurt inmates.[83]

The third and final circle of hell was the secretive internal jurisdiction *le prétoire*. The prison director arranged tribunals where the chief guardian arbitrarily condemned prisoners to death without defence or jury.[84] Bernard got off lightly as he received only fines restricting the amount of food he could purchase in the canteen. Sessions in *le prétoire* ended with the accused forced to thank the prison director.[85] Bernard was released after two years, joined a clandestine CGT cell called Libération, and thereafter remained a devoted trade unionist. It is unknown whether Bernard was an active participant or supporter of the strike waves of the late-forties. Considering his adherence to Force ouvrière and his dislike of the PCF, it is perhaps unlikely. However, his experience of imprisonment was one of countless others.

Apart from journalists or intellectuals such as psychoanalyst Charles Baudouin, who published articles in labour newspapers decrying the potential Buchenwald *barreaux* concealed inside every bureau, victims hardly spoke about their memories of imprisonment.[86] Yet it was a real malaise which a sluggish recovery and fears or rumours of another war perpetuated. These horrific disciplinary regimes or injustices instilled long-lasting suspicions of authority, whether it was the state, police, or even trade unions. Burdened and armed with such memories, striking workers wanted to allay ghosts of the past as much as satisfy demands of the present.

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[82] Ibid, p.13.
[83] Ibid, p.13.
[84] Ibid, p.15.
[85] Ibid, p.13.
[86] 'Sadisme des bureaux', *Le Libertaire* [Paris], no.70 (27th March 1947), pp.1-3 col a-d.

Yet memories of imprisonment also resurfaced, as former *résistants* risked returning to jail for crimes they committed in the tumultuous aftermath of the Liberation. Henri Martel, communist mayor of Sin-le-Noble, highlighted an article in *La Voix du Nord*, dated April 1946, describing how eleven men went to trial for committing vandalism, armed robbery, and destruction of property in the months and weeks following the Liberation in the region of Valenciennes.[87] Young miner Marcel Saint-Jean featured prominently in court hearings as he was involved in breaking and entering in the surrounding countryside.[88] Marcel and his accomplices claimed to be former résistants.[89]

Two years later in Bourgogne, the second trial of an infamous *maquisard* commander and miner Antoine Bar (Le Barbu) also featured in the communist press in the autumn of 1948. Headlines shouted that wartime patriots were being wrongfully condemned. Bar stood accused of murdering Jean-Marie Tissier in 1944, a fellow miner and trade unionist who supported the Vichy regime.[90] As Robert Chantin argued, his arrest sparked a furious outcry among the mining community, and the anger his trial had aroused among fellow miners festered, only to explode during the strikes in the winter of 1948.[91]

Between 1946 and 1948 numerous veterans of communist-leaning factions of the Resistance, like the examples mentioned above, went on trial.[92] For many people who cherished the memory of the Resistance, particularly in mining communities, it seemed

[87] 'La bande des agresseurs de la région de Valenciennes et de Douai devant les Assises du Nord', *La Voix du Nord* [Lille], (11th April 1946), p.2', AMDT, Fonds Henri Martel, 2008-028-001.
[88] Ibid.
[89] Ibid.
[90] R. Chantin, 'Des temps difficiles pour des résistants de Bourgogne, échec politique et répression (septembre 1944-1953)' (PhD thesis, Université Lumière Lyon 2, 2000), pp.381-384.
[91] Ibid, p.385.
[92] R. Chantin, *Parcours singuliers de communistes résistants de Saône-et-Loire. Antoine Tissier, Camille Vaillot, Elsof Leroy, Pierre Grille, Antoine Bar* (Paris, 2007), pp.155-166.

judges and courts were shifting their attention away from Vichyist collaborators to target ordinary workers who helped liberate the country.[93]

The belief that former *résistants* were under siege is encapsulated in Henri Martel's writings where he cautioned company directors, engineers, and cadres not bully miners and threatened to unearth dossiers proving their collusion with Vichy.[94] The firing of Léon Delfosse, a highly respected former partisan, during the November/December strikes, seemed to trigger a nation-wide judicial campaign aiming to sully and imprison former *résistants*.[95] Martel, who had been a prisoner in an Algerian concentration camp for nearly two years, despaired fellow miners and veterans still had to face imprisonment.[96] Although trials of former *maquisards* and miners in Bourgogne damaged the mythos of Resistance among the populace, its hold in Le Nord and Pas-de-Calais did not waver significantly by 1947-48.[97] In the months preceding the November/December strike waves in the north-east, commemorations and monuments dedicated to *les fusillés* saluted the memory of executed martyrs.[98] The brutal mistreatment of poor and hungry miners at the hands of CRS troops was an unforgivable insult and a further desecration of a treasured identity. Participation in the *maquis* was a source of quiet pride and even comfort for workers facing hardships in troubled times. Witnessing or reading of the gradual tarnishing of the resistance hardened the resolve of many miners on strike.

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[93]Ibid, p.385.
[94]'Ne joues pas avec le feu sur un tonneau de poudre par Henri Martel-Secrétaire de la Fédération Nationale du Sous-Sol pp.1-3', Nov-Dec 1947, AMDT, Fonds Henri Martel, 2008-028-001.
[95]Ibid.
[96]Ibid.
[97] Chantin, 'Des temps difficiles pour des résistants de Bourgogne', pp.455-465.
[98] 'Ville de Sin-le-Noble: Grande journée de commémoration des victimes de guerre 1939-1945', 24th August 1947, AMDT, Fonds Henri Martel, 2008-028-054.

Feelings of abandonment and neglect also contributed to discontent. Although these emotions may seem unrelated to *l'univers concentrationnaire,* it is worth emphasising that feeling undervalued or forgotten worsened the physical, psychological, and environmental imprisonment that so many French workers experienced after the war. The May Day celebrations of 1946 gave miners, textile workers, and metallurgists of the North some time for much needed rest. Martel and numerous other communists, socialists and trade union representatives gave rousing speeches heaping praise and thanks to construction workers and miners, the foot-soldiers of France's renewal. It was an opportunity for the onlooking worker to be proud of what he or she had accomplished after countless hours and lowering wages, a brief pause to celebrate what they had achieved and to contemplate the challenges which still lay ahead. Yet ferrymen and bargemen, much to their disappointment, were barely mentioned.[99] Only one orator referred to the *4000 péniches* while the mayor mentioned ferrymen only once.[100] Bargeman Georges Janssoune felt his co-workers deserved far more than a passing mention. He was furious their efforts were trivialized, while miners and train-conductors received all the praise and respect of the orators and attending crowds. He wrote a letter to Henri Martel to complain that the ferrymen of Douai should receive their fair share of attention both politically and symbolically.

Barge crews as well as the artisans responsible for remodelling and reconstructing ships argued that they were the equals of their comrades toiling in mines or factories. They were not exempt from the hardships the working class endured after the Liberation, and neither did they escape the war unscathed: '… ces trois catégories de travailleurs ont

[99] 'Lettre de Georges Janssoune à Monsieur Henri Martel, pp.1-2', 6th May 1946, ADMT, Fonds Henri Martel, 2008-028-001.
[100] Ibid, p.1.

leur sort lié et tiennent une large place dans la renaissance de la France.'[101] Janssoune reminded Martel bargemen were active participants in the battle for production, hauling mounds of coal over long distances. Ships ferried over a quarter of all the coal extracted in France after all. Crews worked for thirteen hours a day even on Sundays. Despite such arduous schedules Janssoune boasted bargemen managed to surpass the monthly threshold of 400,000 tonnes of coal delivered, reaching 425,000 tonnes in March 1946.[102] The memory of mass deportations, executions, and the humiliation of defeat and submission were not the preserve of miners or forced labourers. Janssoune declared bargemen suffered as much and occasionally more than workers on land.[103] Devastating Allied bombing raids targeting supply routes, coupled with the threat of suspicious Nazi *mitrailleuses*, had sunk over 5,000 barges during the Occupation, often with entire crews on board.[104]

Bargemen played an essential role in transporting supplies to starving cities. Judging by reports written in early 1945, perilous working conditions along some routes were not uncommon. Harsh weather impeded the safe passage of barges to the capital. In winter, persistent rain, violent winds, freezing cold temperatures, and thick sheets of ice rendered the transport of heavy cargo a dangerous challenge.[105] Bargemen also repaired a drastically diminished fleet after the war. Fleeing Nazi forces sank innumerable barges as Allied armies swept down the country.[106] A significant number of stranded boats were left adrift in canals for months. This clogged waterways and blocked access to eastern

[101] Ibid, p.1.
[102] Ibid, p.1.
[103] Ibid, p.1.
[104] Ibid, p.1.
[105] 'Rapport sur la Batellerie', 1945, AMDT, Fonds Henri Martel, 2008-028-001.
[106] Ibid, p.2.

regions. It was virtually impossible to transport heavy machinery along the Seine, Oise, and Marne rivers while debris cluttered the way.

Outdated and rusty boats also proved problematic and the few barges still afloat were neglected during the Occupation: '…sans subir les réparations d'entretien nécessaires. De ce fait, le nombre de ceux qui sont inaptes au chargement de ces marchandises est de plus en plus important.'[107] Bargemen also experienced insufficient rations considering the daily amount of heavy-lifting the job required. Near constant exposure to rainfall and strong winds only added further health complications to the exhaustion: 'Il s'en suit un peu de fatigue et de lassitude bien compréhensibles qui freinent quelque peu le rendement'.[108]

Furthermore, bargemen could not obtain brand new barges. Mr Lorio, representative of the SBA (Syndicat de la Batellerie Artisanale) attended a meeting in Béthune in August 1946, hoping to discuss the replacement of damaged barges.[109] He was shocked to discover that hardly any boats were under construction.[110] Although Mr Porter, Director of ship-building sites promised over 300 boats per year would be built under his supervision, he forgot ship-building sites were not yet under construction. In fact Porter did not receive planning permission from the harbour masters' office in Strasbourg. Wood shortages also impeded the construction of boats.[111] Such were *les petites misères* of the French post-war fluvial system.[112]

[107] Ibid, p.2.
[108] Ibid, p.2.
[109] 'L'avenir du batelier. Syndicat de la Batellerie Artisanale p.2', August 1946, AMDT, Fonds Henri Martel, 2008-028-001.
[110] Ibid, p.2.
[111] Ibid, p.2.
[112] 'Rapport sur la batellerie p.4', 1945, AMDT, Fonds Henri Martel, 2008-028-001.

Understandably Janssoune found it troubling that a communist mayor, representing a party committed to equality and still clinging to the myth of 75,000 *fusillés*, could so easily forget such sacrifice. Although bargemen were relatively few in number, 'leur place dans les transports est très importante'.[113] Janssoune suggested Martel should make amends and correct his negligence by writing an article in the popular newspaper *Liberté,* knowing Martel faced an election in early June of that year. If the current mayor hoped to keep his job, an article commemorating or simply acknowledging the bargemen's struggles 'serait bien accueilli et aurait une petite incidence sur les prochains scrutins.'[114]

This revealing letter could be interpreted as a subtle and cynical attempt at blackmailing Martel. One can argue Janssoune was exploiting the frustration of his forgotten co-workers, holding a generally well-liked mayor to account for a careless omission in return for a flattering article. Yet Janssoune was also implying that, if upper-echelons of the communist party continued to ignore his colleagues, then bargemen in Douai would withhold support for the party indefinitely. However, considering Martel availed of numerous reports detailing the bargemen's plight, it is likely he had not forgotten on purpose.[115] Although high prices, low wages, and solidarity undoubtedly played a part in bargemen's decision to go on strike a year later, Janssoune's letters also reveal that a lack of recognition underpinned this discontent. Even though he was a communist himself, Janssoune exposed the PCF's hypocrisy and pretensions of equality among workers. Communist posters and leaflets extolling the virtues and heroics of manly miners, or the virility of dock workers, minimised the efforts of other labourers

[113] 'Lettre de Georges Janssoune…', p.2.
[114] Ibid, p.2.
[115] 'Rapport sur la batellerie', 1945, AMDT, Fonds Henri Martel, 2008-028-001

also doing their uttermost to bolster production.[116] A hierarchy of worth seemed to prevail which inspired envy and feelings of insecurity from unrecognised workers.

Martel probably did not seek deliberately to offend bargemen at the May-Day rally but he was unconsciously echoing communist and state propaganda, that miners were the vanguard of the working-class. The first among equals, spearheading the reconstruction of the nation, with bodies hardened by unforgiving conditions.[117] In comparison, bargemen lacked both myth and mystery. Unlike miners they could not boast of taking part in one defining moment of valiant resistance against the Occupier.[118] Apart from individual bargemen who shared their common experiences and memories, the profession as a whole was largely unknown and underappreciated.

Considering this state of affairs, French *bateliers* eventually went on strike in 1947. As ordered by the chief secretary of the S.B.A Paul Berges, bargemen throughout France stayed aground and the artisans dropped their tools.[119] Berges reiterated the same grievances Janssoune had relayed to Henri Martel. He declared bargemen had not been able to cover their expenses for some time despite an overwhelming workload: 'Pourtant le marinier a donné ses preuves de bonne volonté pour le redressement du pays.'[120] For the first time since before the Occupation bargemen's trade unions sent delegates to Paris to meet with the Minister for Public Works. His deputy Mr Carour began negotiations

[116] J.C. Lahaxe, 'Mineurs et dockers communistes, image, réalité, mémoire', in X. Daumalin, S. Daviet and P. Mioche (eds), *Territoires européens du charbon: des origines aux reconversions* (Aix-en-Provence, 2006), pp.103-118. M. Pigenet, 'À propos des représentations et des rapports sociaux sexués: identité professionnelle et masculinité chez les dockers français (XIXe - XXe siècles)', *Le Mouvement Social,* 198/1 (2002), pp.56-63.
[117] Diamond, 'Miners, Masculinity, and the 'Bataille du Charbon', pp.69-71.
[118] É. Dejonghe, 'Chronique de la grève des mineurs du Nord/Pas-de-Calais (27 mai- 6 juin 1941)', *Revue du Nord,* 69/273 (1987), pp.323-345.
[119] 'Les Bateliers en grève-unknown newspaper', 1947, AMDT, Fonds Henri Martel, 2008-028-001.
[120] Ibid.

with the bargemen, but they did not reach an agreement.[121] The strike went ahead as planned although it is unknown if demands for higher wages were met.

Stone masons, carpenters, and tilers, like bargemen, also felt French public opinion underestimated their efforts. Mr Chouffret was head of the Saint-Lambert masonry training school in Paris which trained young teenagers who wanted to become stone cutters, tilers, and painters. By the end of the Occupation Chouffret was dismayed at the dwindling number of students enrolling in the school. In an article in *L'Université Libre*, he wrote about the appalling working conditions which probably explained this fall in numbers.[122] Children who trained to become bricklayers worked on sites constantly exposed to foul weather, and as they often came from poor households, went to school with threadbare clothing. Departmental inspectors supervised the school grounds, yet their presence made no difference.[123] Teachers also had to adapt to technological innovations in masonry and wondered if they should continue to impart outdated artisanal methods. They spent precious time learning new skills instead of teaching.[124]

Chouffet's observations encapsulated the many problems facing France's post-war construction industry. By late 1945, entrepreneurs had difficulty finding a qualified and motivated manual labour force.[125] The young had no desire to become roofers, carpenters, or stonemasons. Among the rare children who did wish to work in construction too many wanted to become plumbers, while too few found masonry

[121] Ibid.
[122] 'Notes documentaires et études en vue de la reconstruction. Le problème de la main-d'oeuvre dans l'industrie du bâtiment, pp.1-4', 3rd October 1945, AMDT, Fonds Henri Martel, 2008-028-001.
[123] Ibid, p.2.
[124] Ibid, p.2.
[125] Ibid, p.2.

appealing.[126] This endemic lack of interest predated the Liberation. In the late thirties, when demand was high for mechanics and stonemasons, none of the apprentices trained to meet demand were employed. According to a lengthy report by the Ministry for Information, over two thousand underprivileged children residing in the suburbs of Paris in 1942 should have been directed towards earthwork or masonry, yet barely a hundred wanted to pursue this career.[127] Considering the devastation air raids had wrought, the French state could ill afford to muster a depleted and rapidly aging manual labour force. This inability to recruit or inspire plunged the construction industry into severe crisis.

To make matters worse, the average metropolitan manual labourer was usually unwilling to move around the country to find employment. As the Ministry for Information ruefully discovered, French construction workers were reluctant to undertake a nomadic way of life.[128] Offers of increased wages as an incentive to migrate to Provence in the summer repeatedly failed. Instead, workers preferred to receive unemployment benefit in Paris, considering salaries in southern or eastern *départements* were only worth three-quarters of these benefits. In addition, the public did not have a good opinion of *les gars du bâtiment*. Entrepreneurs had a reputation of being cavalier and thoughtless towards labourers whom they hired or fired with indifference.[129] They were treated as disposable, easily replaced with Polish, Italian, and Spanish immigrants or refugees.[130] Construction workers were frequently typecast as social outcasts, either potential or former criminals, and uneducated dropouts.

[126] Ibid, p.2.
[127] Ibid, p.2.
[128] Ibid, p.2.
[129] Ibid, p.2.
[130] Ibid, p.2.

The report wondered how a profession once so esteemed was now denigrated and considered degrading by its own members: 'Où est le temps où le maître d'oeuvre était vénéré dans une région toute entière?'[131] With only one man out of a thousand likely to become a construction worker, and a discouraged or hungry post-war workforce, expectations for grand rebuilding efforts vanished. The days of impressive architectural feats French manual labourers had achieved were long gone.[132]

Sadly the common builder knew all too well his place near the bottom of the working-class hierarchy. If fears of being forgotten plagued bargemen, builders hoped to remain invisible: 'L'ouvrier a honte de sa condition'.[133] Judging by the Ministry for Information's findings, painters and plasterers did not enjoy their jobs and longed to find work outside construction. The builder envied the immaculate *chapeau mou* of the electrician or metal-worker: 'Il veut avoir l'air d'un Monsieur.'[134]

Parents encouraged their children to aim higher and not become construction workers. News and rumours of deaths or accidents on construction sites dissuaded both children and teens from considering such a precarious profession. Moreover, builders earned a reputation for drinking heavily.[135]Another popular perception was that only the ignorant or undynamic worked in construction. Laying bricks did not have the appeal of handling a machine or calculating math problems: 'Les jeunes gens et les enfants ont le goût du mystère… Ils préfèrent la mécanique… le travail paraît plus noble.'[136]

[131] Ibid, p.3.
[132] Ibid, p.3.
[133] Ibid, p.3.
[134] Ibid, p.3.
[135] Ibid, p.3.
[136] Ibid, p.3.

The Ministry's report concluded that propaganda at both local and national levels could help improve the public image of builders. People needed reminders of the crucial role the construction industry would play in the nation's recovery. Documentation centres distributed films and newsreels to schools and cinemas.[137] Teachers expounded on the importance and nobility of builders reconstructing train stations, bridges, and monuments : '… à l'aide de beaux films sur l'importance nationale de la profession.'[138] The Ministry hoped screenings of popular movies, such as Eisenstein's *La Ligne Générale*, could enliven information campaigns. The novels of André Chamon could reveal the hidden delights of terracing and beauties of construction. It was necessary for the whole of France to appreciate the role of construction workers.[139]

However, efforts to boost morale among builders took place only during elections and parliamentary debates. Ambitious re-housing plans proposed after the Liberation never came to fruition. As Sabine Effosse argued, 'particular' interests trumped popular demand for more housing.[140] By 1948, barely 8,300 lodgings were re-built out of approximately 600,000 left in ruins after the war. Once again the housing problem and builders had been overlooked.[141]

In 1948, even the annual bulletin of the Congress of the F.N.T.B.B (Fédération Nationale des Travailleurs du Bâtiment, du Bois et Parties Similaires) expressed disappointment that movements aiming to recruit young apprentices and builders did not have the desired impact.[142] Neither did the anticipated *Journée de la Jeunesse* the

[137] Ibid, p.3.
[138] Ibid, p.3.
[139] Ibid, p.3.
[140] S. Effosse, *L'invention du logement aidé en France* (Vincennes, 2003), pp.150-151.
[141] Ibid, pp.155-156.
[142] 'Fédération Nationale des Travailleurs du Bâtiment, du Bois et Parties Similaires: 18ième Congrès National Ordinaire 7-8-9 Octobre 1948-Rapports de la commission exécutive fédérale pp.1-46', Oct. 1948, AMDT, Fonds Henri Martel, 2008-028-054.

U.S.B.B (Union des syndicats du Bâtiment et du Bois) arranged, have much success in attracting apprentices. Youth groups failed to mobilize builders because committee presidents struggled to communicate with their target audience. Their approach was bureaucratic and impersonal, driving youths away from meetings.[143] Moreover, men responsible for directing the committees, often much older than their comrades, lacked patience in dealing with or speaking to youths.

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Poor housing also caused psychological and physical distress. The Construction workers Federation was powerless to change the often abysmal barracks housing builders. On the 5th September 1945, Minister Raoul Dautry created l'Office National des Cantonnements ouvriers de la Reconstruction (ONCOR), a semi-public owned initiative designed to provide cheap and convenient barracks for migrant builders, technicians, and engineers.[144] Dautry hoped workers would be satisfied with the cooperative aspects of the barracks, giving inhabitants a small measure of control and autonomy. Even the communist-led Fédération de la Construction et du Bois approved of ONCOR, urging destitute or homeless builders to settle for barracks until improved or affordable accommodation became available. The F.S.B.B argued ONCOR housing were temporary, necessary, and allowed builders to survive when food was scarce.[145] Although conceived as a pragmatic solution to unrealisable demands for better housing, the ONCOR barracks were not well received by French workers.[146] Their complaints focused on the lack of privacy, limited space, and resources which they compared to life in a military environment.[147]

[143] Ibid, pp.26-27.
[144] D. Voldman, *La reconstruction des villes françaises de 1940 à 1954* (Paris, 1997), p.141.
[145] Ibid, p.20, AMDT, Fonds Henri Martel, 2008-028-054.
[146]Voldman, *La reconstruction des villes françaises*, p.141.
[147] Ibid, p.141.

Mr Joël le Bras remembered living in ONCOR barracks for four years with his parents in Bouguen, Normandy, during the late forties and early fifties.[148] He recalled the numerous unpleasantries of living in 'ces longues baraques "suisses".'[149] Inhabitants were often cut-off and isolated from local towns. The dark and low walls of the barracks were never painted and there were no gardens. Moreover, arguments and fights were common in the evening time when everyone returned from building sites. Radios stayed on for most of the night preventing people from sleeping.[150] The stench from cheap braseros heaters was nauseating, while heaps of faeces and waste piled up in gaps between barracks. Women and children from neighbouring towns rarely passed through the barracks unaccompanied. Le Bras claimed people frequently mistook the barracks for prison-camps.[151]

For workers who could not afford a car, barracks emphasized the limitations of their lives and made them feel as if they were living in internment camps. Often the only forms of entertainment available were live readings of *L'Humanité* at the weekend, listening to the radio, walks in the surrounding countryside, and gatherings.[152] Some barracks did have enough space to cater for families with children, although this was very rare. None of the ONCOR barracks had bathrooms. The kitchen sink had to be used both for washing dishes and bathing. Furthermore, dangerous layers of asbestos cement coated the walls which could cause severe indigestion or poisoning. In summer, melting

[148] Georges Perhirin,'Souvenir du Bouguen Joël le Bras. Témoignage et paroles d'un ancien du Bouguen nord-ouest' (19th November 2004) http://lebouguen-lesbaraques.eu/?p=221 (21st November 2019).
[149] Ibid.
[150] Ibid.
[151] Ibid.
[152] Ibid.

rooftop tar was a persistent problem. Le Bras slept alongside a paper-thin wall, allowing him to hear his neighbours' arguments.[153]

Architect Mr Nazelle knew French construction workers were averse to being herded into barracks resembling war-time camps. A report entitled 'Les aspects psychologiques et sociaux de l'organisation des chantiers de Reconstruction des régions sinistrées' was presented to a committee in late 1945.[154] Nazelle identified the many consequences and possible drawbacks of allocating barracks to workers, either domestic or foreign, still recovering from the trauma they had experienced. Remembering his time living among labourers as part of a Red Cross brigade after World War I, Nazelle warned entrepreneurs could not afford to underestimate or ignore workers' needs.[155] As if predicting the conflicts and strikes of the late-forties, Nazelle understood the *règlementation sévère* imposed upon a demoralized and disgruntled workforce would lead to resistance or agitation.[156] He knew the hefty price some workers paid during the Occupation : '…un terrible tribut, déportation, travail obligatoire en Allemagne et à l'organisation Todt, captivité, maquis, camps de concentration, conditions effrayantes qui ont usé les corps et les âmes.'[157] It was normal for workers to want to escape from such a depressing and confining existence.

Nazelle insisted employers should take workers' pain and misery very seriously, considering they had to leave their home and family to toil in ravaged landscapes littered with ruins and unburied corpses. Otherwise they would not apply themselves to their

[153] Ibid.
[154] 'Rapport de Mr Nazelle à la commission du travail en chantier du comité national d'organisation française p.1-10', 1945, Archives Nationales, Fonds Organisation Nationale des Cantonnements Ouvriers de la Reconstruction 1945-1964, 19780320/1-C.4271.
[155] Ibid, pp.1-2.
[156] Ibid, pp.1-2.
[157] Ibid, p.3.

work or just abandon everything, as many of their predecessors, haunted by memories of confining trenches, had done in 1919.[158] It was not sensible to send labourers to decimated villages only for them to suffer the same deprivation local populations faced, such as no electricity or running water. Barracks made to secure welfare and security would prevent workers from worrying about fending for themselves, and hopefully foster a renewed community spirit based on mutual aid and cooperation, while maximizing productivity.[159] New barracks should instead reverse or erase memories of the past and re-invigorate the workforce.

French workers were not eager to revisit conditions they had endured during imprisonment or service in the STO. According to a lengthy report by social inspector Romain, numerous labourers did not want to leave families for extended periods of time.[160] He received complaints from trade unionists in the Var region, who were forced to travel long distances to relatively unscathed boroughs or satellite towns on the outskirts of Toulon to live in depressing and poor housing. By September 1945, refugees fleeing the destruction of Toulon overwhelmed its neighbouring towns and villages. As there was a shortage of highly-qualified labour in the Var region, over a thousand builders were 'displaced' to help reconstruction, which meant none could afford to return home.[161] Workers had to toil in a devastated *agglomération toulonnaise* at the cost of endless commutes every morning and evening to reach building sites, therefore sacrificing time normally spent among family and friends.[162] Prolonged absences away

[158] Ibid, p.3-4.
[159] Ibid, p.4-5.
[160] 'M. Romain, Contrôleur Social à Monsieur le Chef du Service de la main-d'oeuvre collective. Objet- Conditions matérielles de vie des travailleurs déplacés à Toulon p.1-3', 25th September 1945, AN, Fonds ONCOR, 19780320/1-C.4271.
[161] Ibid, p.2.
[162] Ibid, p.1.

caused ‘une pénible perturbation dans leur vie familiale.’[163] Disputes and disagreements abounded, leading to separations and divorces. The Ministry did not address these problems early enough, which resulted in a gradual withering and degradation of family life.[164]

The CGT implored departmental representatives and industries to recognise that workers’ discontent was tied to the problem of reconstruction. They asked that repaired or restored buildings in Toulon should accommodate homeless workers immediately, and former residents of the city as well: ‘M. le Secrétaire Départemental constate que malgré des suggestions répétées à cet égard, cet ordre d’urgence n’a pas été pris en considération.’[165] Despite the Ministry for Labour’s repeated assurances to the CGT, the building of family-friendly housing rarely materialized, even though factories and local workshops in the Var region were willing to provide material needed for reconstruction, like wood, clay, or tiles.[166] Apart from roofs, almost all material was on hand to commence construction programmes, which would satisfy exhausted labourers yearning for housing near the workplace. CGT delegates sternly warned Romain that workers insisted on living with close relatives no matter how long the construction process. Many specified family homes were immeasurably preferable to days spent walking between crowded refectories to confining barracks, an opinion the *ouvriers spécialisés* shared as well.[167] The battle for production was a call-to-arms answered reluctantly.

Attuned to this discontent, Nazelle prioritized six key concerns: beds, food, canteens, hygiene, medical supplies, and workshops for repairing trucks or machines.[168]

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[163] Ibid, p.1.
[164] Ibid, p.2.
[165] Ibid, p.1.
[166] Ibid, p.2.
[167] Ibid, p.2.
[168] ‘Rapport de Mr Nazelle p.4’, AN, Fonds ONCOR, 19780320/1-C.4271.

Only well-structured barracks capable of fulfilling workers' needs were the solution. He even specified sleeping quarters should contain no more than five bedrooms to avoid any resemblance with claustrophobic wartime bunkbeds : 'Il faut éviter le dortoir et les couchettes superposées qui économisent la place, mais rappellent fâcheusement les camps de prisonniers ou de travailleurs.'[169] Every man should enjoy space to store baggage and keep personal belongings close at hand on small bedside tables. Nazelle encouraged a hospitable architectural aesthetic, urged listeners to appreciate the importance of painting exteriors in uplifting colours, and advocated the regular cultivation of gardening plots.[170] Small details and adjustments could play a significant role in keeping workers comfortable and compliant, considering the harsh lives they led.[171]

Furthermore, Nazelle hoped female house directors would act as liaison officers between the worker, his family, and social services. For labourers not in contact with wives or children for extended periods of time, the worry and anxiety could prove detrimental to reconstruction efforts and slacken morale.[172] What was to prevent men from deserting barracks following weeks and months of isolation with few opportunities for companionship or distraction? To curb temptations to leave, house directors would provide invaluable counselling services, helping unruly workers to adapt or overcome loneliness and depression.[173] Although Nazelle's recommendations were very ambitious, his idealism reflected the ephemeral optimism and radicalism born out of the Liberation.

[169] Ibid, p.5.
[170] Ibid, p.5.
[171] Ibid, p.5.
[172] Ibid, p.8-9.
[173] Ibid, pp.8-9.

This fleeting euphoria evaporated when faced with merciless realities. It is plausible that meagre resources sometimes forced planners to postpone or amend Nazelle's prescriptions, often reverting to more uninviting models of accommodation. The Ministry for Reconstruction and Urbanism sought to purchase British military barracks built in 1945, yet only the Ministry for Industrial Relations could afford to buy them.[174] France signed a deal with England to ferry British-made barracks with the civil engineering company Pauling and Co. A further agreement was finalized with a French worker cooperative named *La Laborieuse*, which was responsible for hiring construction crews to travel to England and dismantle these ready-made barracks.[175] Setbacks and disappointing discoveries plagued the entire operation. The French liaison officer in contact with the British Ministry for Reconstruction, Mr Girard, found the barracks' quality severely lacking. Instead of retrieving spacious or well-preserved lodgings as promised, the expedition found the only barracks available were dilapidated Nissen huts.[176] They had been built by British and American armies since World War I, and looked like cylinders made of corrugated steel. Teams of six men assembled these huts, renowned for their convenience, in just a few hours.[177] However, military-style huts were certainly not known for their comfort or capaciousness. Accommodating troops in wartime, the Nissen felt cramped, forbidding, and allowed little room for manoeuvre or privacy.

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[174] 'Étude Générale sur les Cantonnements Ouvriers pp.1-23', 1949-1950, AN, Fonds ONCOR, 19780320/1-C.4171.
[175] Ibid, p.7.
[176] Ibid, p.7.
[177] J. David Rogers, 'Nissen and Quonset Huts', https://web.mst.edu/~rogersda/umrcourses/ge342/quonset_huts-revised.pdf (5th January 2020). K. Lee Draper, 'Wartime Huts: The Development, Typology and Identification of Temporary Military Buildings in Britain, 1914-1945' (Phd thesis, University of Cambridge, 2017), pp.97-245.

They did not meet the standards of the model barracks Nazelle had envisaged to house French workers. Their design varied slightly, but all included cold and uncomfortable concrete floors: 'Les baraques étaient de types très variés, notamment des Nissens en forme "métro", elles étaient très dispersées sur le territoire, souvent en assez mauvais état".[178] Moreover, delayed shipping pushed back the transfer of huts. When they finally reached France in late 1945 and early 1946, reports complained of the uncoordinated unloading and unpackaging of Nissen huts. The men who assembled them often exercised little care when handling fragile material. Consequently, barracks were sometimes incomplete, with various constituent parts arriving in separate ports hundreds of miles apart.[179] The failing *Services des Constructions Provisoires* delivered them, and the promotion of Mr Billoux to the Ministry for Reconstruction, who disapproved and denounced the Fougeralles-Pauling deal, brought shipments to a grinding halt in the summer of 1946.[180] New orders were subsequently cancelled, while any remaining huts left stranded and disassembled in France were temporarily abandoned, only to be finally re-distributed in October. Ultimately the whole operation was deemed a waste of time and money, both for the Ministry and workers: 'la plupart des baraques ainsi récupérées étant considérées comme impropres pour les cantonnements ouvriers.'[181]

Following this disastrous operation, the Billoux cabinet, seeing no alternative, conceived a new strategy and settled for significantly cheaper, efficient, and homegrown methods for assembling barracks at a regional level. The cabinet consulted a handpicked group of architects and charged them with co-ordinating or directing barrack-making initiatives with departmental delegates. Billoux and his cabinet eventually chose

[178] Ibid, p.7.
[179] Ibid, p.7.
[180] Ibid, p.7.
[181] Ibid, p.7.

schematics and blueprints Mr Thomas designed for mass reproduction 'qui permettait une économie de bois très appréciable, tout en permettant un prix au mètre carré apparamment bas.'[182] By March 1946, the ambitious and more humane architectural mission Nazelle had outlined in his conference paper was generally side-lined in favour of discount barracks. The report noted the conception of ONCOR barracks was radically altered as gigantic lodgings replete with sizeable dormitories, kitchens, refectories, entrance halls, infirmaries, and administrative offices were often not feasible. Such costly projects necessitated the renting of vast swathes of land and required new roads. The price for complex sanitation networks or funnelling of clean water, was no longer a priority. The well-being of workers seemed less important than budgetary concerns. [183]

Thomas' designs included the segregation of smaller barrack units dispersed throughout a demolished town or village, composed of one barrack divided into four rooms, which a concierge would guard and supervise. Workers would either be separated across various neighbourhoods nearby a town or building sites, allowing them to 'bénéficier des réseaux existant dans la ville'.[184] These deceitfully named 'hotels' did not contain their own canteen or infirmary. Special administrative centres were usually located a short distance away, though this varied greatly depending on the region. Some canteens could only be accessed via daily truck journeys or walks. The low-cost and isolating *système Thomas* consisted of erecting extremely thin slabs of overlapping wood, which were then nailed in place.[185]

After visiting barracks built in accordance with these designs, a supervisor compared them to vulgar *caisses à savon*, notably in the regions of Oberhoffen and

[182] Ibid, pp.7-8.
[183] Ibid, p.8.
[184] Ibid, p.8.
[185] Ibid, p.8.

Herrelsheim in Alsace.[186] Reports deduced that at least the Thomas' system 'évite la construction de véritables camps qui ont toujours un peu l'allure de camps de prisonniers.'[187] This was correct in theory. However, the building process demanded precision, dedication, and careful planning, qualities enterprises tasked with completing barracks often lacked. Originally conceived as sturdy structures built to last till the very end of reconstruction, the ONCOR barracks did not withstand poor weather, as seen during the winter of 1946-1947 when many required constant maintenance and repair.[188] Furthermore, disagreements between Ministry representatives and local delegates entrusted with supervising barracks hampered completion. Thomas acquired an unpleasant reputation. He was renowned for his brash and hectoring demeanour when addressing delegates, while his ministry colleagues became equally unpopular in their encounters with architects.[189] Although it was agreed *les chargés de mission* would not act as substitutes for experienced architects, serving only as guides to steer ONCOR construction in the desired direction, this did not happen.[190]

In Dunkirk social controller Mr Cacqueray highlighted even more problems.[191]Chronic shortages of paint, locks, and electrical appliances delayed the completion of the ONCOR, which frustrated workers desperately in need of housing. Comments lambasted the scarcity of aid and goodwill. Seemingly indifferent entrepreneurs and selfish architects did not express concern for the lack of maintenance or care required to uphold the social mission of reconstruction. Their main preoccupation appeared to be the allure of financial gain or professional advancement instead of

[186] Ibid, p.7.
[187] Ibid, p.9.
[188] Ibid, p.10.
[189] Ibid, p.9.
[190] Ibid, p.9.
[191] 'M. Cacqueray, Contrôleur Social à Monsieur le Ministre du Travail et de la Sécurité Sociale pp.1-4', AN, Fonds ONCOR, 19780320/21-C.4191.

collaboration.[192] In Cappelle-la-Grande, water installations were not completed and workers used makeshift showers and sinks built outdoors, while architects ultimately decided to scrap the meeting hall.[193] In Uxem, central heating was missing, window panes did not fit properly, and a putrid lake of liquid mud surrounded the site, rendering access difficult.[194] Partially-occupied barracks in Petite-synthe fared no better, despite numerous interventions to try and fix the problems.[195] There were no showers or heating. Roofs were leaking and in poor condition, especially after a particularly freezing winter. By January 1947, many canteens faced bankruptcy as construction crews often found cheaper and better food elsewhere. Cooking staff in Armbouts-Cappel served under twenty meals per day and in Les Moëres only three workers dined in the canteen.[196] Cacqueray littered his report with dispiriting conclusions, recommending the evacuation of barrack sites due to incompletion and the haphazard furnishing of basic utilities.[197] Depending on the region overcrowding also became a problem. The director-general of the Gérardmer camp in the Vosges region received a letter from Nazelle, complaining about homeless workers moving inside encampments.[198] Barracks hosted only two hundred and forty workers. By July 1948, the number rose to two hundred and sixty-four and steadily increased. There was virtually no space left to accommodate displaced or drifting workers. Infirmaries and offices were at full capacity. Thirty men slept on the ground in the entrance hall every night. Company observers wondered why wandering workers clogged so many areas.[199]

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[192] Ibid, p.1.
[193] Ibid, p.2.
[194] Ibid, p.2.
[195] Ibid, p.2.
[196] Ibid, p.2.
[197] Ibid, p.2.
[198] 'Le Directeur Général de l'Organisation Nationale pour les Cantonnements Ouvriers de la Reconstruction à Monsieur Charlet, Commissaire du Gouvernement auprès de L'O.N.C.O.R pp.1-2', 6th August 1948, AN, Fonds ONCOR, 19780320/4-C.4174.
[199] Ibid, p.1.

Moreover, *chargés de mission* who had considerable power in the decision-making process of the ONCOR's construction, struggled to find suitable contractors. The Ministry for Reconstruction released bulletins declaring that if departmental delegates did not find suitable enterprises to fund barrack construction, in keeping with the cheap Thomas' system, *chargés de mission* were therefore responsible for finding enterprises prepared to finish the job. Unfortunately, some of the companies they selected did not complete the ONCOR barracks to required standards: ' les chargés de mission firent appel à quelques entreprises sérieuses, il faut constater que certaines d'entre elles par contre n'apportèrent pas aux travaux le soin désirable.'[200] Workers lodged in poorly fabricated housing, unfit to shelter them from the elements. The yearly report claimed the planks of wood used to build barracks in Herrlsheim had been heavily damaged by sleet and snow during the harsh winter of 1946-1947.[201] In Oberhoffen, slabs of wood were so damaged that nails splintered or shattered them. The weakened and dilapidated state of the ONCOR which barely adhered to Thomas' frugal outlines, shocked visitors and observers. Thin-walled barracks in Eastern *départements* incurred additional expenses with the purchase of mobile radiators distributed in winter.[202] Thomas-style barracks, conceived as cheaper alternatives to Nazelles' unaffordable sketches, and although definite improvements over militarized Nissen huts, still failed to inspire confidence in the Ministry for Reconstruction or among dwellers.[203] Shortages of essential material and hastily erected barracks did not take into consideration the impact such shabby surroundings could have on the state of mind or even physical health of hard-working labourers.

[200] 'Étude Générale sur les Cantonnements Ouvriers p.9', 1950, AN, Fonds ONCOR, 19780320/1-C.4271.
[201] Ibid, p.9.
[202] Ibid, p.10.
[203] Ibid, pp.22-23.

In Thomas' conception of the ONCOR constructions, there was no mention of the considerate house officer or guidance counsellor Nazelle recommended in 1945. Instead, a guardian or concierge now filled this role, one assigned for each barrack to monitor workers.[204] The logic and topography of wartime camps was unconsciously or perhaps deliberately reproduced. Moreover, the incompetence and complacency callous enterprises exhibited would ensure, albeit to a much lesser degree, that workers continued to experience poor housing.

In addition, the ONCOR barracks in Dunkirk became the site of a confrontation during the November/December strikes. Mr Marcobruni, the local zone director, decided to close the *Cantine de La Victoire* for a number of days, citing the lack of coal and diminishing number of meals served during the first week of industrial action.[205] Marcobruni vigorously defended his actions when the local prefect questioned him, by claiming that since hardly any coal was set to arrive during the strike, there was no point in keeping the canteen open.[206] Although neighbouring refectories in Ile Genty and Milieu served lunch and dinner as normal, the local CGT and trade unions seized or borrowed material belonging to the ONCOR to prepare soup dispensing centres for hungry strikers.[207] Yet by the 5th December, emboldened strikers occupied the canteen in *La Victoire*, using it as a base for further deliberations. Marcobruni's arguments did not convince the general controller, who failed to see why a barrack director chose to shut down a canteen, despite there being no recorded drop in the number of workers purchasing meals before the 26th.[208] Although Marcobruni's exact motivations for

[204] Ibid, p.8.
[205] 'Rapport: Cantine de La Victoire. Cession à L'O.N.C.O.R, pp.1-4', 2nd March 1948, AN, Fonds ONCOR, 19780320/21-C.4191.
[206] Ibid, p.3.
[207] Ibid, p.3.
[208] Ibid, p.3-4.

closing the canteen remain a mystery, this seemingly innocuous incident reveals how ONCOR managers panicked in the wake of the strike.[209] Macrobuni's decision disclosed the ONCOR's embarrassing lack of security. For nearly two weeks, a canteen the Ministry supervised became exposed to potentially violent, armed, or riotous strikers.[210] Ultimately the canteen did not suffer any damage and no one was harmed. However, this incident revealed the managers of the ONCOR did not foresee the eventuality of industrial action. In the eyes of national media, it appeared as if the canteen surrendered its contents and supplies to packs of marauding strikers without resistance.[211] Rumours circulated the ONCOR management had briefly lost control. It is not surprising that to avoid exposing such blatant weaknesses and lack of foresight, the controller intended to pin the blame on Marcobruni.

The perception that rampaging communist agitators temporarily stormed or invaded canteens and barracks proved embarrassing for the Ministry for Reconstruction. In March 1948, Nazelle felt obliged to write a stern letter to Mr Froment, chief editor of the newspaper *L'Entreprise et l'Usine Modernes,* contesting assertions journalists made, which claimed ONCOR barrack and kitchen staff distributed free soups to dangerous strikers.[212] The newspaper accused barrack authorities of wasting millions of francs, all the while handing out material and supplies free of charge without holding anyone accountable: 'On oublie son déficit que le Trésor a dû couvrir par des subventions, on oublie qu'au cours des récentes grèves, il a servi des repas gratuits aux ouvriers

[209] 'Note pour Monsieur Keriskl a/couvert de Monsieur Gosselin', 13th April 1948, AN, Fonds ONCOR, 19780320/21-C.4191.
[210] 'Rapport: Cantine de la Victoire-Cession à L'O.N.C.O.R p.4'.
[211] 'Extrait du Journal "L'Entreprise et l'Usine Modernes'' no.144 du 20 Mars 1948', AN, Fonds ONCOR, 19780320/1-C.4171.
[212] 'Lettre à Monsieur Froment, Directeur du Journal "L'Entreprise et l'Usine Modernes' pp.1-2', 27th March 1948, AN, Fonds ONCOR, 19780320/1-C.4171.

grévistes.'[213] The supposedly abhorrent business practices and irresponsibility of ONCOR managers was, according to the article, worthy of a parliamentary investigation to unveil all the gross imperfections afflicting the organisation. Nazelle vociferously denounced the articles' content, stating the ONCOR would not tolerate baseless allegations and declared barracks were a politically neutral entity devoid of partisan affiliations, and insisted army regiments and policemen on duty during strikes also received shelter and food.[214] There was no wilful collusion between communists or spies disguised as chefs, stealing cooking appliances and secretly helping strikers : 'Dans deux cas, les municipalités ont demandé que l'ONCOR mette à leur disposition à côté de la cantine pour les ouvriers travaillant normalement, des soupes populaires dont les frais ont été couverts en dehors de la gestion de l'ONCOR.'[215] The media fallout, although generally undeserved touched on the sensitive topic of food distribution in ONCOR canteens, one of the most decisive factors in compounding and arousing unrest.

Less than a month following the end of the November/December strike waves, a similar scandal erupted in the La Bresse encampment. Departmental delegate Mr Jaouen received alarming messages from Mr Navelle, commissioner of reconstruction projects in la Bresse, claiming local companies involved in managing ONCOR barracks worried about a troublesome barrack canteen.[216] The complaint came after Mr Luteau, a former ONCOR manager, released pamphlets and propaganda on behalf of a company intending to open a competing canteen in the region. Luteau succeeded in opening his own refectory, resulting in over half the workers stationed in La Bresse using the new and improved canteen, while a dwindling number stayed in the malfunctioning and unpopular

[213] 'Extrait du Journal "L'Entreprise et l'Usine Moderne'' no.144 du 20 Mars 1948'.
[214] 'Lettre à Monsieur Froment, Directeur du Journal "L'Entreprise et l'Usine Modernes' p.2.
[215] Ibid, p.2.
[216] 'Le Délégué Départemental à M. le Ministre de la Reconstruction pp.1-2', 2nd April 1948, AN, Fonds ONCOR, 19780320/4- C.4174.

ONCOR barrack's restaurant.[217] Jaouen admitted 'la nourriture y était meilleure et plus abondante pour un même prix …'[218] Luteau, to great effect, mounted a daily campaign hurling criticism at the ONCOR, which swiftly convinced workers to abandon barrack canteens. Managers still refused to accept rationing cards in the canteen, depriving workers of approximately ten grams of much-needed fat for the physically challenging labour they undertook daily. Dishes lacked variety and nutrients to maintain stamina. Moreover the frequent firing and hiring of barrack managers guaranteed perpetual disorganization in the canteens. Taking advantage of this, Luteau's fliers undoubtedly struck a chord among workers labouring twelve hour days without a nourishing lunch : 'le régime ONCOR avec son système de ravitaillement ne nous assure qu'une nourriture défectueuse malgré l'indemnité de pension qui fut relevée de 38 francs depuis le 15 janvier.'[219] Luteau demanded the ONCOR grant workers more freedom of movement and independence, liberties limited to a bare minimum.

He also urged colleagues to sign petitions in protest of mismanagement, boldly announcing workers should be able to govern and regulate canteens without interference.[220] One petition proposed the formation of a committee, which employers backed fully, that would have the sole responsibility of running the canteen and presumably improve catering standards.[221] Jaouen had no choice but to convene a meeting with trade unionists, company representatives, and barrack director Mr Housman, which ended with the permanent closure of Luteau's separatist canteen, in

[217] Ibid, p.2.
[218] Ibid, p.2.
[219] 'Lettre de propagande distribuée par M. Luteau', 27th January 1948, AN, Fonds ONCOR, 19780320/4-C.4174.
[220] Ibid, 4.
[221] 'Copie d'une pétition distribuée par M. Luteau', 31st January 1948, AN, Fonds ONCOR, 19780320/4-C.4174.

return for multiple concessions.[222] The deal stipulated the relaxation of strict security measures and intrusive regulations. It suggested managers should allow workers to use fatty food ration cards freely.[223] This example was not unique; in fact, it echoed the rapid proliferation of unregulated refectories spreading throughout the country. Luteau was not exceptional in trying to capitalize on widespread worker dissatisfaction with lacklustre ONCOR facilities. The November/December strikes unleashed a noticeable pattern of resistance, clearly demonstrating that defective canteens lay at the heart of discontent.

In February 1948, the Minister for Reconstruction and Urbanism sent telegrams warning departmental delegates in Pas-de-Calais of the unlawful erection of refectories unsupervised by ONCOR staff.[224] Inspector Charlet caught an unnamed canteen proprietor boasting of setting meal prices at fifty-five francs, a price far lower compared to dishes one could buy in a nearby ONCOR barrack. The sale of licence-free alcohol and liquor, which the ONCOR management usually prohibited, did much to boost revenue, while the owner paid no patents or taxes of any kind.[225] However, no negotiations or arrangements could prevent floods of workers fleeing unhygienic refectories in favour of higher-quality food and illegal beverages. In this instance, the Ministry responded by threatening to launch police investigations, prompting the immediate closure of the rogue canteen.[226] It is no coincidence that less than three years after the establishment of ONCOR projects, dozens of canteens amassed mountains of debt. By late 1948, eighteen canteens and nine barrack sites from Calvados to Poitiers

[222] 'Le Délégué Départemental à Monsieur le Ministre de la Reconstruction et de l'Urbanisme p.2'.
[223] Ibid, p.2.
[224] 'Le Ministre de la Reconstruction à Monsieur le délégué du Pas-de-Calais à Arras', 5th February 1948, AN, Fonds ONCOR, 19780320/24-C.4194.
[225] Ibid.
[226] Ibid.

closed down ‘en raison de leurs faiblesses ou de leur situation déficitaire.’[227] The St. Nazaire canteen accrued over three million francs alone. In 1949, cabinet meetings justified the slashing of canteens, arguing that countless workers simply refused to eat in over-priced and unsatisfactory cantonments, putting into question the sustainability and relevance of the barracks themselves.[228]

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[227] ‘Rapport au Ministre- Objet: Cessation par L’ONCOR de l’exploitation d’un certain nombres de Cantonnements ouvriers pp.1-6’, 1950, AN, Fonds ONCOR, 19780320/1-C. 4171.
[228] ‘Inspection Générale: Note de Transmission de M. Salaun, Chef de Service de l’Inspection Générale pp.1- 12’, 3rd May 1950 , AN, Fonds ONCOR, 19780320/24- C.4194.

When analysing the emotions underpinning outbursts of collective action or other expressions of contentious politics, studies focus on 'moral shocks' such as police brutality or unpopular decision-making by elected officials to uncover feelings of anger, revulsion, or disappointment.[229] This chapter has sought to highlight instead the various physical, psychological, and environmental factors which fuelled discontent over the long-term: namely over the weeks and months before strike waves took hold of France throughout 1947 and 1948. However, this does not mean anger or resentment played no part. As mentioned above, the firing of a respected partisan like Léon Delfosse certainly constituted a 'moral shock' for French miners, but many more emotions need to be considered. Feelings of bitterness or being left behind, combined with the mental and physical perseverance of *l'univers concentrationnaire*, undergirded demands for more food or lower prices. The wounds of World War II loomed large, as the second chapter shall further attest.

[229] I. Gomza and N. Koval, 'The Winter of Our Discontent: Emotions and Contentious Politics in the Ukraine during the Euromaidan', *Kyiv-Mohyla Law and Politics Journal,* no.1 (2015), pp.43-50.

2. Eternal War

Strikes did not mark the beginning of the Cold War, but the continuation and occasional culmination of grudges left over from World War II and the Occupation. As will be seen, metal workers employed in armament factories in the Loire department did not forget anti-communist purges Premier Édouard Daladier and his successor Paul Reynaud began before the Phoney War.[1] Unfounded rumors blaming communist sabotage for a slowing war economy in 1939 justified the firing or imprisonment of hundreds of militants affiliated with the PCF or CGT.[2] National, departmental, and local authorities supported repressive surveillance regimes employers implemented.[3] The French government's campaign to overturn the social democratic consensus the Popular Front established during the late thirties, which restored the power of *le patron* at the expense of trade unions, left bitter memories.[4] An emboldened CGT mobilized surviving testimonies of fired workers to discredit employers during industrial disputes.

Even though women could vote since 1944, the post-Liberation era did not translate into greater emancipation for them.[5] Some industrial and social tenets the Vichy regime established endured during the Fourth Republic. Vichy paternalism remained, and corporatist 'organization committees', founded shortly after the fall of France to foster

[1] T. Imlaly, 'Mind the Gap: The Perception and Reality of Communist Sabotage of French War Production during the Phoney War, 1939-1940', *Past and Present* no.189 (2005), pp. 179- 211.
[2] Ibid, pp.180-192.
[3] Ibid, p.199. F. Gouven, 'Les acteurs ordinaires d'un anticommunisme inédit: surveillance, répression et "abjuration" en province (automne 1938-printemps 1940), in J. Vigreux and R. Ducoulombier (eds), *Territoires contemporains,* no.7 (2017) http://tristan.u-bourgogne.fr/CGC/publications/Histoire_documentaire_communisme/Florent_Gouven.html#Références (5th January 2020).
[4] T. Beaumont, 'Extending Democracy: Railway Workers and the Popular Front in France, 1936-1938', *European History Quarterly,* 44/3 (2014), pp.469-474.
[5] K. Colvin, ' " A Well-Made-Up Woman": Aesthetics and Conformity in Postwar France', *French Historical Studies,* 38/4 (2015), pp.705-711.

the Third Reich's new European order, were not dismantled. De Gaulle's Provisional Government perfected rather than ended Vichy industrial legislation.[6] Hatred legitimized by anti-Jewish laws festered long after the political, religious, and intellectual disavowal of anti-Semitism.[7] Caricatures and commentaries of various publications, including communist dailies, continued to echo Vichyist or even Nazi propaganda.[8]

I argue that the spectre of Vichy is crucial to understanding why the Seine primary school teachers' strike of November/December 1947 took place. For communist sympathizers or supporters this strike was framed as another episode in the long struggle between secular and religious schooling in France. The perceived inequality between decimated urban or state schools and supposedly thriving denominational schools in the countryside was maintained for months before the strike, via regular press releases loyal to anti-clerical factions in teacher unions.

This chapter will also argue the legacy of *l'épuration* weighed heavily on the minds of *cadres* employed by the Berliet car-manufacturing plant in Lyon. Engineers, technicians, and managers accused of wartime collaboration went on strike to stop these inquisitions. Industrial action throughout 1947 and 1948 made engineers question the nationalization of the mining industry and forced them to reflect on their own diminished authority. Moreover, the trials of militant CGT or PCF members after the miners' strike was an opportunity for cadres to punish or lay-off disobedient colleagues.

[6] L.A. Brunet, 'The new industrial order: Vichy, steel and the origins of the Monnet Plan, 1940-1946'(PhD, London School of Economics and Political Science, 2014), pp.198-202.
[7] F. Azouvi, 'La délégitimation de l'antisémitisme au lendemain de la seconde guerre mondiale', *Archives Juives,* 49/2 (2016), pp.15-25.
[8] A. Grynberg, 'Des signes de résurgence de l'antisémitisme dans la France de l'après-guerre (1945-1953)?', *Les Cahiers de la Shoah,* 5/1 (2001), pp.197-198.

Finally, the last section of this chapter will examine how bosses reacted to post-war strikes, in keeping with the larger theme of lost authority. A devastated economy, humbling allegations of wartime treachery, and the renewed influence of the CGT obliged *patrons* to moderate their authoritarianism.[9] However, some remained intransigent in the face of unrest. Strikes in Bourgogne reveal that the Schneider plants were able to retain their paternalist model largely unscathed after the war, despite the best efforts of determined unionists to challenge this orthodoxy.

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Yves Cohen described the late 19th and early 20th centuries as an era obsessed with the idea of the 'chief'. Soldiers, political thinkers, clergymen, and historians lamenting the passing of 'ancient hierarchies' searched to revive, define, and refine the concept of leadership.[10] Throughout the globe, sociologists, psychologists, anthropologists, economists, and scientists pondered leadership, while middle and upper classes in industrialized societies, fearing the growth of socialism or labour movements, placed their faith in new leaders who promised to maintain order.[11] The need for a leader was especially high in the years preceding and during the World Wars, as men such as Adolf Hitler or Joseph Stalin took command of entire nations.[12] Yet Cohen's compelling narrative stops at the Second World War. Was this half-century of command not affected by a conflict which ended in the tarnishing of chiefs both in politics and in the workplace?

[9] H. Rousso, 'Les élites économiques dans les années quarante', *Mélanges de l'école française de Rome,* 95/2 (1983),pp.29-33.
[10] Y. Cohen, *Le Siècle des Chefs. Une histoire transnationale du commandement et de l'autorité (1890-1940)* (Paris, 2013), pp.57-58.
[11] Ibid, pp.59.
[12] Ibid, pp.792-795.

On the factory floor this faith in the chief never went unchallenged. In France for example, strikes and social movements after World War I erupted after a long subservience to a war economy which entailed rigorous discipline and control in the factory or mines.[13] Strikes were cathartic, a burst of evanescent independence for workers and communities desperate to be heard after lengthy periods of anonymity and hard labour.[14] Yet the socio-political context following World War II was fundamentally different. Many French workers suffered not only the disgrace of defeat, but the inhumanity of being treated as slaves.[15] Moreover, some bosses such as Louis Renault allowed his plants in Billancourt and Pont de Sèvres to construct plane and tank parts for the Nazi war machine.[16] Therefore, the 1947-48 strikes were still taking place in a climate of suspicion, accusation, and vengeance.[17] The violence of *l'épuration* may have faded, yet in spirit it was very much alive. Confrontations between workers and chiefs came with unresolved trauma.[18] Going on strike was not only a chance to demand better wages, but an opportunity for revenge and to settle old scores.

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[13] P. Schill, 'Entre France et Allemagne: grèves et mouvement ouvrier mosellans (1918-1923), *Cahiers d'histoire, Revue d'histoire critique,* no. 92(2003), pp.115-129. G. Noiriel, 'Les Grèves de 1919 en France: Révolution manquée ou mouvement d'humeur?', *French Politics and Society,* 8/1(1990), pp.48-55. For more on the pre-World War II history of French metal-worker strikes, see the final chapter in J.L. Robert, *Les ouvriers, la patrie et la révolution, Paris, 1914-1919* (Paris, 1995).

[14] For an analysis of France's celebratory "style" of strike action, see S. Sirot, *La grève en France: une histoire sociale (XIXe-XXe siècle)* (Paris, 2003), p.149.

[15] C. Pagenstecher, ' " We were treated like slaves". Remembering forced labour for Nazi Germany', in R. Hörmann and G. Mackenthun (eds), *Human Bondage in the Cultural Contact Zone. Transdisciplinary Perspectives on Slavery and Its Discourses* (Münster, 2010), pp.283-290. For French workers' experiences in the STO, see F. Berger, 'L'exploitation de la main d'oeuvre française dans l'industrie sidérurgique allemande pendant la Seconde Guerre mondiale', *Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine,* 50-3/3 (2003), pp.148-181. J.P. Vittori, *Eux, les S.T.O* (Paris, 1982), pp.137-148.

[16] P. Fridenson, J.F. Grevet and P. Veryret, 'L'épuration dans l'industrie automobile' in M. Bergère (ed), *L'épuration économique en France à la Libération* (Rennes, 2008), pp.229-256. A. Lacroix-Riz, *Industriels et Banquiers sous l'Occupation* (Paris, 2013), pp.147-149

[17] A. Bancaud,'L'épuration judiciare à la Libération: entre légalité et exception', *Histoire de la Justice*, 18/1 (2008), pp.216-217. H. Rousso, 'L'épuration en France: une histoire inachevée', *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d'histoire,* no.33(1992), pp.79-93.

[18] For the various physical and psychological "deportation pathologies" that forced labourers and concentration camp survivors endured after World War II, see M.T. Brancaccio, 'From 'Deportation Pathology' to 'Traumatismes Psychiques de Guerre': Trauma and reparation in post-war France (1940's-1990's)', in J.Withuis and A. Mooij (eds.), *The Politics of War Trauma: The Aftermath of World War II in Eleven European Countries* (Amsterdam, 2010), pp.79 -105.

In July 1947, the management of the Saint-Chamond Naval Steel works complained to President Villiers of the CNPF (Centrale Nationale du Patronat Français).[19] The preceding month, frustrated metal-workers orchestrated a thirty-three day long walkout in the naval plant. The co-director of the plant, Mr Cabane, alleged a crowd of employees verbally abused and harassed him and a head engineer.[20] He complained that on the afternoon of the 25th July, plant-workers ceased to work and gathered outside his office, demanding a wage increase he refused to grant. His assistant repeated Cabane's message to men assembled downstairs, who were 'principalement des jeunes et Nord-Africains'.[21] Several workers then rushed into the president's board room and cornered him in his office. A heated argument ensued with workers threatening to hold the president hostage until he met their demands.[22]

Before going any further with the CGT's response, it is necessary to briefly establish the context to explain the longevity of the strike and why it culminated in this way. In May 1947, management and trade union delegates had negotiated a 3% wage increase for Saint-Chamond plant workers.[23] They wanted the same salaries employees earned at the Homécourt plant, a factory owned by the same company. The Meurthe-et-Moselle accords between the the CNPF (representing the Homécourt management) and trade unions in Lorraine informed employees of this discrepancy between the plants.[24] Cabane and management argued the wage increase in Lorraine could never apply in Saint

[19] 'Lettre du 25 juillet adressée par la Direction des Aciéries de la Marine à Mr Villiers, Président de la CNPF' in 'Lettre de M.Chirat et M.Trompafant aux Camarades Semat et Viallon, secrétaires de la Fédération des Métaux à Paris pp.1-8', 10th September 1947, IHS-CGT, Fonds Fédération des travailleurs de la métallurgie- CGT, Boîte Luttes 1947 (not classified).

[20] "Lettre du 25 juillet adressée par la Direction des Aciéries de la Marine à Mr Villiers, Président de la CNPF", p.1.

[21] Ibid, p.6.

[22] Ibid, p.6.

[23] Ibid, p.1-2.

[24] Ibid, p.2.

Chamond since it was an agreement signed at a regional and not national level.[25] Besides, in Homécourt wages supposedly did not increase by 3%, but by 'un chiffre notamment plus moindre.'[26]

However, according to delegate Chirat the CGT had sent demands for higher wages as early as 17th April and not the 8th May.[27] Officially CGT delegates feared that if wages stagnated, workers would drift towards other factories offering better pay or benefits. Unofficially, it is more likely the CGT worried about cuts in membership due to lower pay.[28]

In addition delegates mentioned an agreement management and the CGT signed on the 18th July 1946, which included provisions guaranteeing an increase in the hourly rate of pay for professionals, regular metal-workers, and extended breaks for young employees.[29] Although director Berthier, chief of all naval factories in la Loire signed the agreement on 18th July 1946, the provisions were scrapped. Therefore the walk-out strikes which broke out a year later were an attempt at getting back these advantages.[30] Metal-workers felt betrayed and 'ne pouvait comprendre que le directeur Olivier ait accordé satisfaction à Homécourt et à Boncaut, tandis que Berthier et Cabane se refusaient à accorder à St. Chamond ces avantages…"[31]

[25] Ibid, p.2.
[26] Ibid, p.2.
[27] 'Lettre de M.Chirat et M.Trompafant aux Camarades Semat et Viallon, secrétaires de la Fédération des Métaux à Paris' p.2.
[28] Ibid, p.2.
[29] "L'accord du 18 juillet 1946: Réponse faite en présence de M. l'Inspecteur du Travail. La demande présentée le 12 juillet par les délégués ouvriers assistés par le secrétaire du syndicat CGT" in 'Lettre de M.Chirat et M.Trompafant aux Camarades Semat et Viallon, p.3', 10th September 1947, IHSM, Fonds FTM-CGT, Boîte Luttes 1947.
[30] 'Lettre de M.Chirat et M.Trompafant aux Camarades Semat et Viallon, secrétaires de la Fédération des Métaux à Paris' p.5.
[31] Ibid, p.5.

CGT delegate Chirat, representing the workers at Saint-Chamond, submitted a report on the May strike of 1947 where he gave a different interpretation of the incident. He claimed Cabane's recollection of the events was highly exaggerated, if not erroneous.[32] Firstly, Chirat stated there were only two North-Africans in the crowds which surrounded Cabane's office, implying his account referred to racist stereotypes. Secondly, Cabane was never in any danger.[33] Workers were just frustrated at his stubborn refusal to concede the wage increase which led a CGT delegate, sent to Germany as a slave labourer, to shout that Cabane 'avait réuni les gars à la cantine d'Assailly et avait déclaré que d'aller travailler pour l'Allemagne était travailler pour la France.'[34] This demonstrates the betrayal some workers felt went far deeper than a wage dispute. They could not forget what they had endured in the force labour camps and their experiences resurfaced during the strike.

In his reports Chirat added that before the war, naval company managers had fired four well-known CGT delegates, generally respected and renowned for their professionalism.[35] He insinuated their dismissal was politically motivated, but also due to their identification of multiple defects in the factory which management did nothing to resolve.[36] Chirat added those men either died from malnutrition, disease, or were imprisoned in concentration camps.[37] Therefore, Cabane's accusations represented another example of a chief wielding power to clamp down on dissent in the factory, a trend which intensified during the Occupation and continued subtly after the war. Company management continued to antagonize the workforce, refusing to heed reports

[32] Ibid, pp.1-8.
[33] Ibid, p.6.
[34] Ibid, p6.
[35] Ibid, p.7.
[36] Ibid, p.7.
[37] Ibid, p.7.

worker committees submitted, bullying men on assembly lines, and picking on overly politicized workers. CGT unionists did not forget these unfair dismissals and their consequences.[38]

Nine years before the strike, delegates had recorded the factory's numerous shortcomings. Most of the machinery and tools had not been replaced since 1900 and repairs were always temporary or inadequate.[39] Employees worked overtime for hardly any reward : 'ce sont des choses que nous n'avons cessé de réclamer à toutes les entrevues mensuelles, et jusqu'à présent, aucune amélioration n'a été apportée.'[40] The delegates repeatedly accused superiors and managers of failing to modernise equipment since World War I.[41] However they did little to solve these problems. One report even claimed the company considered the equipment was in good condition.[42] Managers also refused to hire unemployed and qualified workers the CGT recommended because of their membership to the union.[43]

These grievances dating back to the late thirties still applied at the time of the strike in 1947. Yet above all, what Chirat's reports revealed was the sense of injustice many former Saint-Chamond employees still felt against the managers and directors of the naval plants. Chirat compiled transcripts of interviews with former employees, particularly CGT members who were fired in anti-communist purges during and after the Phoney War.

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[38] Ibid, p.7.
[39] 'Ateliers de Construction- Service Atelier Central: Rapport des Délégués p.1', 10th Sep. 1947, IHS-CGT, Fonds FTM-CGT, Boîte 'Luttes 1947'.
[40] 'Atelier Mécanique Précision (F.A.M)- Ateliers de Construction p.2', 10th Sep 1947, IHS-CGT, Fonds FTM-CGT, Boîtes 'Luttes 1947'.
[41] Ibid, p.1.
[42] Ibid, p.2.
[43] Ibid, p.2.

Examples include the testimony of CGT delegate Petit who was fired by director Berthier in September 1940.[44] He accused Petit of treason, espionage, and organizing secretive gatherings for an illegal communist cell. As a final insult he warned Petit he would stop at nothing to prevent him from getting another job.[45] Former delegate Soulier, on the day he was fired in January 1940 remembered Berthier telling him he was a treacherous Frenchman who deserved to be shot twelve times in the head.[46] Fréderic Conductier, also fired in September 1940, recalled his final meeting with Berthier who spent the entire meeting shouting threats and taunts: 'vous êtes un mauvais Français, un indésirable, je vous ferai crever de faim…'[47]

Other trade union delegates fired for their association with communism or their participation in strikes faced discrimination at work. One labourer, a newly appointed delegate in 1939, suffered constant 'traitements de l'ingénieur Revel et du contremaître … qui profitaient de n'importe quel sujet même en dehors du service, pour me menacer de renvoi et m'insulter.'[48] It was a struggle to find employment and even the army refused to draft known Communists.[49] Despite references from a general and a local police station, one former delegate could not get drafted.[50]

As purges and anti-communist discrimination took place only seven years before the 1947 strikes, these events were still fresh for the CGT and many French labourers. They still remembered how they experienced injustices and discrimination in the workplace before the war, as well as oppression and helplessness during the Occupation.

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[44] 'Recueil des entretiens avec les délégués licenciés par la direction de Saint-Chamond p.1-6.', 10th September 1947, IHS-CGT, Fonds FTM-CGT, Boîte 'Luttes 1947'.
[45] Ibid, p.4.
[46] Ibid, pp.5-6.
[47] Ibid, p.5.
[48] Ibid, p.3.
[49] Ibid, p.3.
[50] Ibid, p.3.

Consequently, it is understandable these ordeals had a significant impact on workers' behaviour during the strikes, and it is not surprising that the CGT weaponized these past experiences to challenge the patronat and its considerable power after the war.

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For the metal-workers in Saint-Chamond it was the memory of the STO and wartime anti-communist purges which framed their difficulty to demobilize and resurfaced during the summer strikes of 1947. Yet, as will be seen in the next section, it was the spectre of Vichy that loomed large in the minds of participants and observers during the Seine teachers' strike in November/December 1947.

For over fifteen days in December 1947 Parisian primary, secondary teachers, and even some university professors led an unprecedented strike. Leaflets celebrated French educators who endured 'la même vie misérable'and the same privations as workers.[51] This movement was touted as a turning point in the survival and preservation of secular teaching. *Les écoles normales* faced considerable difficulties in recruiting new trainees.[52] Pamphlets claimed that before the war approximately ten people applied for one teaching post whereas by late 1947, four or five candidates applied per ten vacancies. They deplored that public schools lay in ruins, while confessional schools, supposedly untouched by the war's devastation were expanding and received unmerited funding from the state.[53] This crisis encompassed universities, technical schools, and vocational institutes as well. Teachers on strike in the Seine département were frustrated at the lack

[51] 'Anonymous pledge of support for the Seine teachers' strike pp.1-4', December 1947, CHS, Fonds Paul Delanoue, 8-PD-I.
[52] Ibid, p.1.
[53] Ibid, p.1.

of support for the movement in the rest of the country. Infighting and splits between the FEN (Fédération de l'Éducation Nationale) and the SNI (Syndicat National des Instituteurs) fractured the strike's potential to spread outwardly from Paris.[54] Communist-leaning teachers and educators along the Seine, who once meant to spearhead a nationwide protest with metal-workers, train conductors, and miners, did not get much support.[55] Sporadic outbursts of dissent undoubtedly erupted in southern regions, though they consisted mainly of token one-hour walk-outs in solidarity with local workers on strike.[56]

Nevertheless, pamphlets insisted numerous university academics empathized in heart and mind with the plight and demands of primary and secondary school teachers. They expressed the hope that no matter what kind of resistance from *les organismes directeurs*, French university staff would surely vote in favour of joining the movement.[57] They understood that demanding eighteen to twenty thousand francs per month was reasonable, and not a declaration of war from a small minority.[58] Teachers called for greater investment in secular education to ensure the future of the Fourth Republic. Religious schools in the countryside should not be allowed to thrive at the expense of the rest.

The failed teachers' strike was framed as another episode in an ongoing conflict between the forces of secularism and religion in France, as in the minds of its supporters in the SNI, the strike needed to be more than a conflict over better pay. Confessional

[54] Ibid, p.2.
[55] R. Hirsch, 'Les grèves d'instituteurs dans le département de la Seine de 1944 à 1967', *Carrefours de l'éducation,* 19/1(2005), p.33.
[56] 'Compte rendu du mouvement de grève des 5,6,8, et 9 décembre 1947 dans le département des Bouches du Rhône pp.1-2', 10th December 1947, CHS, Fonds Paul Delanoue, 8-PD-1.
[57] 'Anonymous pledge of support for the Seine teachers' strike', p.4.
[58] Ibid, p.3.

schools were described as villains thriving on state benefits, while impoverished state schools floundered.[59] This narrative, however, had no bearing on reality and CGT and SNI member Paul Delanoue soon acknowledged their groundlessness. He disapproved of his colleagues' virulent anti-clericalism and resigned from his post as head of a commission erected to 'defend secularism' in January 1946.[60] Delanoue was open to greater cooperation and understanding with educators in clerical establishments and believed that preserving acrimonious divisions left over from the war were counterproductive.[61] Secularism was enshrined in the 1946 Constitution and there was no real threat from vestiges of Vichyist pedagogy.[62]

Yet the myth of unfair treatment of secular schools still played a role in mobilizing support for the teachers' strike. An anonymous woman and socialist trade unionist from the Aude *département* addressed a short letter to Prime Minister Léon Blum in December 1947, imploring him to support the strike.[63] She claimed to have followed Blum's political career since she was a child in Narbonne, when her father's friend contested Blum's parliamentary seat. She reminded Blum that teachers had

[59] 'Vers une large conquête du corps enseignant', *Bulletin d'information, édité par la section centrale des intellectuels destiné aux instituteurs communistes,* [Paris] no.1(July 1946), pp.1-2', July 1946, CHS, Fonds Paul Delanoue, 1-PD-9. Undated extracts of *Action Laïque* in 1948 often included articles critical of the clerical threat supposedly brewing in France: 'L'église n'a jamais renoncé aux avantages que Vichy lui avait consentis. Et depuis la Libération, son activité s'est developpée dans toutes les directions…'

[60] Isabelle Guichon, 'Biography of Paul Delanoue', http://www.calames.abes.fr/pub/#details?id=FileId-3055 (26th November 2019).

[61] 'La liberté d'enseignement ne peut signifier dans notre pays qu'une lutte partisane entre des idéologies toujours prêtes à s'opposer et à se haïr, alors qu'elles ne sont que les faces diverses d'un même idéal humain' in 'Lettre de P. Delanoue à un camarade p.1-2', undated, CHS, Fonds Paul Delanoue, 1-PD-9.

[62] C. Singer, '1940-1944: La laïcité en question sous le régime de Vichy', *Raison présente,* no.149-150 (2004), pp.46-47. Nicolas Atkin outlined the limitations and ultimate failure of the Vichy regime to dismantle secularism in 'The challenge to *laïcité*: church, state and schools in Vichy France, 1940-1944', *Historical Journal,* 35/1(1992), pp.168-169. For more on the concept of "Christian civilisation" and its usage in education or during the Occupation, see P. Rocher, 'Cité Nouvelle 1941-1944. Les jésuites entre incarnation et eschatologie', *Chrétiens et sociétés,* no.2 (1995), Y. Déloye, *École et citoyenneté : L'individualisme républicain de Jules Ferry à Vichy: controverses* (Paris, 1994), pp 343-379. A.R. Michel, *La J.E.C. Jeunesse Étudiante Chrétienne face au nazisme et à Vichy* (Paris, 1988), p.213.

[63] 'Lettre anonyme à Léon Blum pp.1-2', December 1947, AMDT, Fonds Fédération de l'Éducation Nationale; sous-fonds Adrien Lavergne, secrétaire général (1927-1962), 1998-011-1BB-022.

brought him to power in 1936: 'ce sont ces mêmes instituteurs qui ne gagnent plus assez pour vivre aujourd'hui qui avaient fait votre élection.'[64] She called for the Socialist party to renew a spirit of justice and class consciousness. Inspired by the example of renowned Audian trade unionist Maurice Sanaut, she defended secular schools and their teachers, declaring scholars could not be condemned to penury.[65]

These themes recurred in columns and articles published before the November/December strikes in monthlies closely aligned with anti-clerical factions of the SNI. In September 1947, *L'École Libératrice* reported summaries of measures the yearly SNI congress adopted regarding the protection and promotion of *laïcité* in schools.[66] Regional trade union bureaus and activists encouraged local organisations to prevent catholic groups or propagandists from dissuading parents to enrol their children in state schools.[67] The Congress declared any remaining faith symbols or iconography should disappear from classrooms. Congress members hoped priests, who could teach under Vichy laws, would have their licences revoked.[68] Moreover, the building of new private schools should cease until the end of reconstruction projects.[69] The SNI even proposed police should disband overtly religious protests and forbid clergymen from replacing absentee teachers.[70] It was almost as if the war had never ended, with priests and bishops scheming to re-assert Catholic domination and perhaps Vichyist ideologies.

The real difficulties public schools faced in urban areas compounded exaggerated fears of resurgent denominational schools. The SNET (Syndicat National de

[64] Ibid, p.1.
[65] Ibid, p.2.
[66] 'Défense de l'école laïque', *L'École Libératrice* [Paris], no.20 (10th September 1947), p.293', CHS, Fonds Paul Delanoue, 8-PD-1.
[67] Ibid, p.293.
[68] Ibid.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Ibid.

l'Enseignement Technique) issued a report in February 1946 revealing severely depleted resources.[71] Working-class or civil servant parents often struggled to afford yearly fees for their children. With prices surging, scholarships and bursaries worth 3,000 francs only covered two months' worth of school fees.[72] Students had to fend for food at midday."[73] Machines ranged between twenty-five and fifty years old, while tools in the United States were replaced every five years.[74] Moreover, there were hardly any machines available in the first place. Classes of nearly fifty-five students shared only two fileting and milling apparatus, drills, and shapers. Annual funding allocated to workshops was not enough to purchase essential machinery.[75] Trainees hoping to study turning, drilling, planning, forging, and industrial design complained incessantly to the SNET about the chronic lack of tools, premises, and staff available. The *matériel classique* required to instruct technical graphics did not exist: 'pas de modèle, pas d'organes types de démonstration, aucune documentation.'[76] Classrooms suffered chair and blackboard shortages, and this is why many parents chose to move their children from technical colleges to lower-ranking apprenticeship studios.

Due to bombings during the war many workshops sheltered refugees, allied soldiers, and enemy troops.[77] As a result, typing machines disappeared forcing students to huddle around a single machine to complete courses in dactylography.[78] The SNI admitted some classes took place in abandoned barracks filled with broken tables,

[71] 'Rapport sur la situation actuelle des écoles de l'enseignement technique, présenté le 8 février 1946 à la Commission de l'Enseignement de l'Assemblée Constituante pp.1-16', February 1946, CHS, Fonds Paul Delanoue, 1-PD-10.
[72] 'Rapport sur la situation actuelle des écoles de l'enseignement technique', p.4.
[73] Ibid, p.4.
[74] Ibid, p.5.
[75] Ibid, p.5.
[76] Ibid, p.6.
[77] Ibid, p.6
[78] Ibid, p.6.

crumbling staircases, and shattered windows.[79] The students did not have a calm environment to concentrate. Teachers struggled to hear their voices over sounds of people queuing and bustling at rationing depots below the barracks. Recreation consisted of students trying coffins on for size in a courtyard overlooking a local morgue.[80] The stench of death wafted into the improvised classroom.

Paul Fraisse, journalist at the short-lived *La Gauche RDR (Rassemblement Démocratique Révolutionnaire)*, wrote articles revealing poor teaching conditions were not uncommon in late 1948.[81] Primary and secondary school teachers sent him letters admonishing the French State for being sluggish in its efforts to repair schools. In Paris, schools demolished or heavily damaged during bombing raids were repaired with cheap plaster, bricks, and chipboard. Pupils and teachers alike froze in winter and suffocated in summer. Rain easily seeped inside the classrooms which had no windows and necessitated the use of harsh electric lamps all day in winter.[82] Dedicated teachers paid for pencils, books, and printing paper themselves, and rarely received aid from town councils.

Chronically low salaries engendered feelings of bitterness and disappointment. A teacher living in the Oise region ruefully admitted to Fraisse she could not afford books, scientific journals, or literary periodicals such as *Lettres Françaises*.[83] In the Loire region, a teacher lamented she cancelled subscriptions to *Action* and *L'École Laïque* to balance household budgets. [84]Female teachers dealt with added pressures such as daily

[79] Ibid, p.8.
[80] Ibid, p.8-9.
[81] 'C'est toujours elle l'école qu'on laisse à l'abandon! Ouvrons le dossier de la grande pitié de l'enseignement public en France pp.1-3', *La Gauche RDR* [Paris], no.6 (September 1948) pp.1-3', September 1948, CHS, Fonds Jean-René Chauvin, 1-JRC-3H.
[82] Ibid, p.3
[83] 'La vie des maîtres p.1', *La Gauche RDR* [Paris], no. 8 (15-30 November 1948)', November 1948, CHS, Fonds Jean-René Chauvin, 1-JRC-3H.
[84] Ibid, p.1.

household chores, while correcting assignments and preparing for class.[85] Finding time to rest was challenging : 'Nous arrivons au bout d'une année scolaire abrutis de travail, les nerfs dans un état lamentable…sans même les moyens de se payer une détente à la mer.'[86] For teachers near la Seine and beyond, it appeared as if secular schooling was on the verge of collapse.

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As a motor of discontent, an inability to demobilize was not only apparent among metal-workers or teachers. It also affected highly-qualified technicians, engineers, and other *cadres* throughout post-war France. As seen in the following section, many *cadres* were tired of being tarred as war-time collaborators by resentful workers in northern mines or southern car factories. Many chose to fight back by going on strike to reclaim the status they enjoyed under the Vichy regime.

Mr Savin was a young engineer working in the Liévin mines in the Pas-de-Calais. In early April 1945, he read a copy of Mr Henri Martel's speech at the Mining assembly in *La Tribune.*[87] Impressed with Martel's critique of the deficiencies wracking the post-war mining industry, Savin sent a lengthy reply to the mayor of Sin-le-Noble. An engineer's experience would, he hoped, lend a different perspective to hardships ordinary miners and their trade union delegates expressed.[88] The letter's preface, as well as

[85] Ibid, p.1.
[86] Ibid, p.1.
[87] 'Monsieur Savin, Ingénieur fosse 7 de Liévin, à Monsieur Martel membre de l'Assemblée Consultative pp.1-6', 14th April 1945, AMDT, Fonds Henri Martel, 2004-028-033.
[88] Ibid p.1.

snippets of information sprinkled throughout the text betray Savin's fear that miners were unjustly vilifying engineers.

He assured Martel that he and fellow engineers registered to the S.I.H.N (Syndicat des Ingénieurs des Houillères du Nord et du Pas-de-Calais) approved of his speech at the assembly. Although not a member of the CGT, Savin promised he was an 'ingénieur aimé de ses ouvriers.'[89] As if to assuage any lingering doubt, Savin recited his war record, claiming he risked everything by taking part in the Resistance in 1944. His exploits included leading an assault on explosives caches and stealing wood and material under the watchful eye of the occupier.[90] Savin praised Martel's defence of the CGT and agreed it was unfair to accuse CGT members of sowing anarchy and slowing production.[91] In fact, he lauded the CGT's efforts in organizing reconstruction initiatives, despite shortages of food and bone-chilling weather. He praised the fortitude of regular miners who beat pre-war production records repeatedly, despite the disastrous state of sanitary and culinary facilities.[92]

Yet Savin's flattery was short-lived. When complaining about the calamitous rationing regime afflicting Paris, forcing people to scavenge for overpriced meat on the black-market, Savin worried people in Avion and co-workers in Liévin blamed engineers and other cadres.[93] Savin wondered how miners could abuse young engineers toiling in unenviable conditions, and earning approximately the same salary as them, while

[89] Ibid, p.1,
[90] Ibid, p.1.
[91] Ibid, p.1.
[92] Ibid, p.1.
[93] Ibid, p.2.

merchants and barterers could sell pounds of tobacco, slabs of meat, or silk stockings on the black market and live comfortably for six days.[94]

Savin believed hunger and desperation pushed employees and families to vilify or attack anyone in positions of authority. The contempt for engineers was fed in part by desires to overthrow not only collaborators, but cadres guilty of nullifying or deliberately abandoning reforms acquired in 1936. Savin claimed he understood this yearning for revenge, having participated in marches and protests during the Popular Front:'j'ai défilé, jeune élève ingénieur plein d'enthousiasme au Mur des Fédérés avec un million de camarades parisiens".[95] He admitted private hatreds lurked beneath the surface and waited patiently, preparing for the right moment to strike. A pervasive malaise threatened to destabilize chains of command in the mines. Savin forcefully reminded Martel that *l'épuration* was disproportionately affecting engineers, while those who had awarded bonuses to managers during the Occupation were still free.[96] Why did ordinary miners not aim their anger at technicians, who when confronted, never admitted to following the occupier's orders and turned a blind eye to their crimes? Savin noted collaborators were now ardent Gaullists who would never dare cause damage to newly nationalized pits, since they never bothered to sabotage Nazi-managed mines in the first place.[97]

Despite such fears, Savin expressed hope for the future of French industry. He supported Martel's propositions to grant miners the right to send representatives directly to the *Conseil des Houllières Nationales*.[98] He believed employees and managers should share responsibilities in a democratized workplace and wanted the reign and influence of

[94] Ibid, p.2.
[95] Ibid, p.2.
[96] Ibid, p.2.
[97] Ibid, p.2.
[98] Ibid, p.3.

bureaucrats, safely nestled in 'cushy' jobs to end.[99] Young, bright, and qualified graduates had to supplant *l'ancienneté*.[100] A new radicalism full of spirited initiative would be the guiding light towards happiness and prosperity.

Savins' willingness to cooperate with this 'new radicalism' was by no means widespread amongst engineers. In fact some sorely missed the corporatist *Charte du Travail* the Vichy regime had imposed, for it restored the prestige and respect engineers and trained technicians once enjoyed before the Popular Front's equalising reforms.[101] Widespread unemployment and the perceived *dégradation* of their profession disillusioned young engineers. Insubordination and loss of esteem in the field rewarded graduates who spent years studying for extremely rigorous examinations in selective *grandes écoles*.[102] As Luc Boltanski argued, engineers and technicians keen to reclaim their titles as 'commanders' of the workplace, warmly received Vichy's *Charte du Travail* which enshrined the word *cadre* into law. Countless hagiographies and pamphlets released during the Occupation lionized the leadership qualities, expertise, and military-like virtues of the engineer, a 'chief' destined to inspire his troops in factories and mines by his example.[103] Cadres were an elite to be reckoned with once again. Engineers were the designated guardians and standard-bearers of unquestionable order and obedience.

The Liberation and the mild democratisation of industrial relations thus proved uncomfortable for many cadres still imbued with Vichy's spirit of hierarchy and authority. Mounting anxieties swiftly turned into fear and resentment as the CGT and

[99] Ibid, p.3.
[100] Ibid, p.3.
[101] L. Boltanski, *Les cadres: la formation d'un groupe social* (Paris, 1982), pp.128-129.
[102] Ibid, pp.120-125.
[103] Ibid, pp.127-131.

other left-wing organisations accused the CGC (Confédération Générale des Cadres) of collaboration.[104] *Le Creuset* and *L'Écho de l'USIC* (Union Syndicale des Ingénieurs Catholiques) published articles and opinion pieces which spoke at length about this pervasive unease, as embattled cadres hardened their anti-union, anti-nationalisation, and especially anti-communist views.[105] Some *cadres* were also hostile to the universalist social insurance the CGT championed and compared it to an unfair tax.[106] Corporatist-oriented cadres, and subordinates eager to fulfil the revolutionary social and economic changes the Resistance had envisioned were at loggerheads.[107]

Miner turned engineer Augustin Viseux experienced this renewed *esprit revendicatif* first-hand. He joined the SNIM (Syndicat national des ingénieurs des mines) and represented underground engineers.[108] In his memoirs he recalled how miners, who were now below him in the hierarchy became jealous of him. These sentiments intensified when communists disseminated propaganda blaming engineers for unduly pressuring lower-ranking workers.[109] For young miner Achille Blondeau, standing up to an obdurate engineer was a rite of passage which earned him respect and admiration from peers.[110] During the mining strikes of 1948 *La Gauche Radicale* designated engineers as their chosen target. Strikers in the southern mining fields of La Grande Combe showed a journalist the spacious villas the mining administration and neighbouring engineers supposedly inhabited, highlighting the divide between wealthy professionals and starving

[104] Ibid, p.137.
[105] Ibid, pp.138-140.
[106] P. Baldwin, 'The Failure of the Solidaristic Welfare State: France and Germany', in N. Deakin, C. Jones-Finer, B. Mathews (eds.), *Welfare and the State: Critical Concepts in Political Science Volume II. The Zenith of Western Welfare State Systems* (New-York, 2004), pp.153-154.
[107] C. Lévy, 'Grégoire Madjarian, *Conflits, pouvoirs et société à la Libération', Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine,* 30/2(1983), pp.335-336.
[108] A. Viseux, *Mineur de Fond* (Paris, 1991), p.365.
[109] Ibid, p.365.
[110] P. Outteryck, *Achille Blondeau: mineur, résistant, déporté, syndicaliste* (Lille, 2008), p.48.

underlings.[111] Socialist Mayor Camille Delabre retrieved a flier which revealed how miners percieved engineers: 'il est vrai que ces pommes de terre étaient destinées aux familles des grévistes et que ces messieurs ingénieurs n'ont pas ce souci d'être privés de pommes de terre, car leurs caves sont bien garnies ainsi que leurs portefeuilles…leurs appointements varient entre 60 et 90,000 francs par mois… Les ouvriers sauront se souvenir de ces choses.'[112]

Engineering cadets came from middle-class families or aristocratic dynasties and believed in values that often clashed with workers' *esprit revendicatif.*[113] Articles and statutes of the FNSIM (Fédération Nationale des Syndicats d'ingénieurs et assimilés des Mines) neatly summarized the mission and creed engineers upheld in the Nord and Pas-de-Calais: 'Les ingénieurs sont des salariés remplissant une fonction patronale.'[114] Socialist minister Jules Moch, trained in the elite École Polytechnique, perfectly embodied this stereotype of the alien, aloof, and technocratic engineer. He featured prominently in letters miners and trade union delegates wrote during and after the strikes.[115] With fellow socialist ministers Robert Lacoste and Paul Ramadier, Moch

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[111] 'Interview d'un mineur du Gard. La guerre dans le Pays Noir pp.1-4', *La Gauche RDR (Rassemblement Démocratique Révolutionnaire),* [Paris] no.8 (15-30th November 1948) in CHS, Fonds Jean-René Chauvin, 1- JRC-3H.

[112] 'Assez de politique de famine', *La Tribune des Mineurs* (18th December 1948)', November-December 1948, OURS, Dossier de Camille Delabre sur les Grèves de 1948 dans le Nord et Pas-de-Calais.

[113] M. Letté, 'Culture de la rationalisation chez les ingénieurs durant la seconde industrialisation pp.2-10', (2010), https://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/halshs-00541840/document (25th November 2019). See also J.P.Thuillier, 'Les Ingénieurs et la Société française aux XIXe et XXe siècles, compte rendu du colloque du Creusot des 23,24, 25 octobre 1980', *Revue du Nord*, 63/248 (1981), pp.269-270. A. Ternier, *Être ingénieur d'hier à aujourd'hui* (Neuilly-sur-Seine, 1984), pp.338-339. A. Dicon, 'French Engineers and Social Thought, 18-20th Centuries: An Anthology of Technocratic Ideals', *History and Technology,* 23/3(2007), pp. 198-199. C. Stoffaës, 'Le rôle du Corps des Mines dans la politique industrielle française: deux siècles d'action et d'influence', *Annales des Mines - Réalités industrielles,* 2011/4 (2011) pp.48-52.

[114] D.C. Richet , 'Les ingénieurs des houillères et des mines et leurs syndicats du Front Populaire à nos jours' in M. Descastes and J.C. Robert (eds), *Clefs pour une histoire du syndicalisme cadre* (Paris, 1984), p.193.

[115] É. Mechoulan, 'Jules Moch, ministre des Travaux publics et des Transports, 1945-1947. La technique au service de la politique', (unpublished paper, delivered 23rd May 2001, Comité d'histoire, Ministère des Transports, de l'Aménagement du territoire, du Tourisme et de la Mer), pp.1-12.

became a hated and heartless *affameur* (starver), in league with nefarious banks and murderers.[116]

Viseux suffered the same kind of attack: 'Que n'avons-nous pas entendu comme moqueries, voire comme insultes!'[117] Colleagues accused him of betraying his socialist father or abandoning his Christian faith.[118] The weighty 'anvil' of the Communist party distressed him, especially since he claimed he never collaborated with Nazis (although his name initially appeared on a personnel list set to be purged).[119] War record notwithstanding, Viseux was harassed for being an engineer above all else. At an annual production committee, communist sub-Secretary of State Auguste Lecoeur held engineers responsible for any delays in production: 'malgré le peu d'enthousiasme et le laisser-aller des ingénieurs.'[120] Viseux demanded evidence of these accusations to the speaker who ignored him until the end of the talk, when 'le service d'ordre musclé du parti' surrounded Viseux and his friend, who quickly fled to their parked car.[121] Viseux was not a supporter of Communist-leaning CGT members, decrying their dictatorial tendencies to reach consensus.

Some *cadres* chose irregular and limited outbursts of industrial action to re-assert control and counter fraudulent rumours of war-time treachery. The Berliet strike of November 1947 amply demonstrates how *cadres* reacted to the erosion of their

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[116] 'Lettre d'Arthur Losson, démission de Force Ouvrière', 28th November 1948, ADSSD, Fonds Fédération Nationale des Travailleurs du Sous-Sol et Parties Similaires- CGT 1892-1996, 239J-12. For a study of the demonization of Jules Moch in the communist press, see G. Morin, 'Les communistes et Jules Moch, représentation et pratiques en temps de Guerre froide', in P. Buton, O. Büttner, M. Hastings (eds), *La Guerre froide vue d'en bas* (Paris, 2014), pp.247-271.
[117] Viseux, *Mineur de Fond*, p.365.
[118] Ibid, p.365.
[119] Ibid, p.350.
[120] Ibid, p.365.
[121] Ibid, p.366.

authority.[122] It was a backlash not only against the emergence of the PCF, but against the kind of slanders and groundless accusations which rattled Savin in the northern coalfields. *Cadres* were tired of being typecast as wartime villains once again.

The movement began shortly after the release of two lengthy articles in the communist-leaning newspaper *Le Mécano*. It implied some *cadres* in the Berliet car-manufacturing plant in Lyon collaborated under the Occupation, along with company director Marius Berliet and his two sons who were themselves imprisoned for collaboration.[123] This article singled out three technicians and engineers in particular: Mr Planté, chief timekeeper and representative of the executive branch in central committees, Mr Benoit, head accountant, and finally Mr Bardin, technical director and regional secretary of the national managers' trade union.[124] Bardin complained to the factory's management committee about these accusations, but worker representatives refused to apologize or even comment on the articles' content. Technicians and managers called a strike and promptly convened a general assembly in solidarity with Bardin.[125] Communists initiated smear campaigns which worsened when word of the strike spread beyond the factory. The conflict only ended in late December 1947 when Minister Robert Lacoste intervened to re-instate Bardin as head engineer, while Planté and Benoit could return to work at a later date.[126]

Yet the abuse engineers claimed to have witnessed and experienced in the months preceding the strike is of greater significance. The strike committee's booklet recounted in detail the PCF's creeping influence in the factory. Communists had a powerful

[122] 'L'expérience Berliet et son sabotage par les politiciens', *La Révolution Prolétarienne* [Paris], no.312 (February 1948), pp.17-25.
[123] L. Muron, *Marius Berliet* (Lyon, 1995), pp.183-186.
[124] 'L'expérience Berliet et son sabotage par les politiciens', p.22.
[125] Ibid, pp.22-23.
[126] Ibid, p.24.

monopoly in the distribution of periodicals so that non-aligned newspapers could not be sold on the premises. While *La Vie Ouvrière* or *France-U.S.S.R* were readily available, publications affiliated with the CFTC were much harder to acquire.[127] In addition some employees were labelled 'persona nongrata' by communists. A chief manager asked a worker to transfer to another team, but since PCF trade unionists did not like the worker, they vetoed the manager's decision.[128] The PCF's popularity and sway over the workforce increased over time. The 3rd August marked the beginning of holidays for all personnel in Berliet plants and festivities usually took place at the *colonie de vacances* in Letrat. However, communist ringleaders decided to host their own parties on the 15th August and convinced most employees not to attend festivities on the 3rd August. Cadres were also upset to find newsreels praising the recovery of Berliet plants not only omitted any reference to managers or technicians, but credited Communists as the men solely responsible for this resurgence.[129]

Communists also imposed surveillance in the factory. Under their supervision the function of the security detail changed, and men such as Mr Minet controlled armed guards and conducted clandestine activities in the plant.[130] Minet bullied and berated employees who did not obey orders. He even threatened to harm workers refusing to participate in strikes launched for larger bread rations.[131]According to the strike committee the security detail became a front for political manoeuvrings, dubious dealings, and proselytizing.[132] One room was reserved for stockpiling copies of communist-leaning newspapers, while an old office became a meeting place for

[127] Ibid, p.23.
[128] Ibid, p.22.
[129] Ibid, p.19.
[130] Ibid, p.20.
[131] Ibid, p.20.
[132] Ibid, p.20.

communist cells. PCF members requisitioned cars and vans to distribute dailies and security guards handed out fliers, pamphlets, and posters during working hours without fear of punishment.[133] Guards wore a *béret basque* instead of mandatory workplace caps.[134] One guard rallied large numbers of workers and led them through spontaneous protest marches against the local préfet. None of the above received any authorization or approval from management.[135] *Cadres* worried armed guards could spearhead an insurrection in the plant.

In addition, engineers and managers found the prevalence and frequency of trade union meetings threatening: 'La fréquence des réunions de délégués des commissions spécifiquement syndicales augmente exagérément".[136] From the managers' perspective such gatherings were an unwelcome distraction which disrupted production and agitated the workforce. Mostly communist-leaning personnel spoke freely at such events, while they ignored dissenting voices.[137] *Cadres* who cherished the freedom of speech restored after the war were deeply concerned that these seminars catered only for communist sympathizers, and maintained it was 'une contrainte intolérable, contraire à la liberté des gens.'[138]

For *cadres* the communist menace lurked everywhere. Canteens accommodated communist rallies during municipal elections.[139] Innumerable posters promoting Soviet sympathizers decked Berliet leisure centres, while canteen loudspeakers spouted not only social or trade union news but 'une propagande politique non voilée', especially during

[133] Ibid, p.20.
[134] Ibid, p.20.
[135] Ibid, p.20.
[136] Ibid, p.21.
[137] Ibid, p.21.
[138] Ibid, p.21.
[139] Ibid, p.21.

elections.[140] Judging by the anti-communist tone of the strike committees' complaints, perhaps engineers and technicians deliberately exaggerated the PCF's grip on Berliet. However, the attempt to dismiss the three technicians was unjustified, and the communists' desire to takeover worker committees surely played a part in this attack. Yet it is doubtful the PCF gained favour through intimidation, harassment, or other heavy-handed tactics alone.[141] Rather than painting an objective analysis of Berliet's internal squabbles, the pamphlet conveyed the feeling engineers and managers had been fighting a losing battle in the plant. The strike was the culmination of an almost two-year long cold war. It captured the sense of malaise Mr Bardin and his fellow strikers experienced, and likely that of countless other *cadres* in post-war France.

Berliet's managers, much like Savin in le Nord, looked back fondly on the immediate aftermath of the Liberation. Despite many difficulties in getting the factory running again, it was a time when the whole workforce set aside ideological differences.[142] Strikers reminded readers of the accomplishments of 'les comités du bâtiment', which allowed workers to be actively involved in reconstruction efforts.[143] In total, fourteen committees dealt with the supervision of foundry installations, smelting plants, pressing machinery, sheet metal sectors, and electrical services. For the first time in years personnel made use of a truly democratic system of representation.[144] Managers presided over building committees, while worker delegates and technicians were elected by secret ballot. Management advised and informed every committee dealing with the

[140] Ibid, p.21.
[141] 'Rapport au Ministre de la production industrielle', 1947, in L. Muron, *Marius Berliet* (Lyon, 1995), p, 197. See also M. Peyrenet, *Nous prendrons les usines Berliet. La gestion ouvrière (1944-1949),* (Garance, 1980).
[142] 'L'expérience Berliet et son sabotage par les politiciens', p.18-19.
[143] Ibid, p.19.
[144] Ibid, p.19. See A. Steinhouse, *Workers' Participation in Post-Liberation France* (Maryland, 2001), pp.87-99 for an analysis of post-war 'comités d'entreprises'.

allotment of work schedules, cost prices, and various other issues. Committee members, whether worker delegates or technicians, tried their best to respond to personnel's many worries.[145] Managers freely acknowledged it was by no means a perfect system. Committees could do little to improve the distribution of food, and after the Liberation damage to workers' housing was extensive: 'Les maisons de la cité, entièrement détruites, ne sont pas toutes reconstruites, un projet d'urbanisation ne l'ayant pas encore permis.'[146]

Such realities partly explain why workers found the achievements of *les commissions de travail* negligible. These commissions planned the distribution of rations, organized press releases, and dealt with social services for workers.[147] In 1946, a chateau and its surrounding grounds located eight miles away from Lyon opened its doors to convalescing workers and children. A sports stadium was erected in October 1947 called the Stade-Auto Lyonnais, while charity funds allowed workers to donate money to carpenters making children's toys.[148] But for workers, sports clubs and two-week vacations did not allay grievances regarding food, shelter, and gruelling work. Managers admitted dozens of unrecorded walk-outs or two-hour protest strikes plagued production between the winter of 1946 and summer of 1947.[149] These events explain why managers feared communists would overrun the workplace. They believed hierarchy was essential to maintain order and cohesion in the factory while permitting the expression of multiple viewpoints. As the authors of the pamphlet argued, abolishing hierarchy was a foolhardy goal in an industry reliant on the skill and leadership of experts.[150]

[145] Ibid, p.19.
[146] Ibid, p.18.
[147] Ibid, p.19.
[148] Ibid, p.19.
[149] Ibid, p.20.
[150] Ibid, p.25.

By the 16th December 1948, Savin shared the same frustrations *cadres* expressed in Berliet. At a conference less than two weeks after the conclusion of the bloody and disruptive miners' strike, Savin criticized the 'new radicalism' he had once endorsed in 1945 and now believed it had caused untold damage to productivity.[151] The hopeful tone of the letter he sent to Martel three years previously had disappeared completely.

He despaired estimated rates of absenteeism, depending on the mine or pit, could reach as high as 40%, almost double that of 1938.[152] Paid leave steadily increased: 'Les causes de cette chute ont été souvent décrites, certaines d'entre elles valables en 1945, ne peuvent plus être invoquées.'[153] The quality and assiduity of the workforce had decreased and miners appeared disillusioned, no longer taking pride in performing hard manual labour.[154] Technological innovation was both a blessing and curse. Employees complained constantly of clumsy and weighty jackhammers.[155] Reliable miners were aging and struggled to maintain the strength and resilience of yesteryear. Polish and North African replacements were welcome yet still insufficient.[156] The engineer feared miners had become too complacent, distracted by the allure of more comfortable jobs elsewhere, and therefore separated from *les métiers primaires*.[157] Savin blamed nationalisation for precipitating such tendencies.[158]

Savin also reiterated anxieties previously mentioned in his letter to Mr Martel. He believed reforms introduced in 1945 hastened the erosion of pre-war discipline and

[151] 'Conférence faite par M. Savin, ingénieur civil des mines le 16 décembre 1948 à l'association des cadres dirigeants de l'industrie française pour le progrès social et économique. Pour une réforme de la gestion des houillères nationalisées pp.1-24.', December 1948, AMDT, Fonds Henri Martel, 2008-028-018.
[152] Ibid p.3.
[153] Ibid, p.3.
[154] Ibid, p.4.
[155] Ibid, p.4.
[156] Ibid, p.4.
[157] Ibid, p.4.
[158] Ibid, p.5.

caused unforeseen consequences. The Liberation had triggered a reaction tantamount to revolution.[159] Old methods of organization and constraint, excessive line-speeds, and individual payment loosened, diminishing the efficiency of pre-war rationalization schemes. Savin now realized the Liberation was partly responsible for the cascading assaults on the 'principes de discipline et d'obéissance qui étaient ceux des mineurs d'autrefois.'[160] There were also growing numbers of workers transferred to the surface because they were sick, wounded, or incapacitated, which hampered an already inept workforce.[161]

Savin repeatedly emphasized post-war French miners were physically and psychologically incapable of matching exploits their forefathers had achieved: 'un simple chiffre désastreux le confirme: le rendement moyen du mineur français de 1948 est inférieur à celui du mineur de 1913.'[162] Once again, Savin accused the *Établissement Central* for not imposing a psychological climate conducive to re-instating the authority of engineers and *cadres*.[163] For their part, miners were disappointed nationalisation had not fostered greater transparency or inclusivity for union delegates in pit councils.[164] Workers in other industries could at least force bosses to increase wages via strike action or otherwise. Any major decisions affecting salaries, distribution of equipment, or resources became distant ministerial debates.[165] Savin claimed experts out in the field did not have a say : '…jamais les responsables des Bassins, ou ceux qui commandent le personnel et vivent avec lui, ne sont appelés à formuler ces avis ou suggestions.'[166]

[159] Ibid, p.5.
[160] Ibid, p.5.
[161] Ibid, p.6.
[162] Ibid, p.6.
[163] Ibid, pp.9-10.
[164] Ibid, pp.10-11.
[165] Ibid, p.11.
[166] Ibid, p.11.

Engineers wanted stricter discipline, even if it meant provoking trade unions or giving ammunition to communist propagandists.[167]

Moreover, foremen still feared the repercussions of misguided and slanderous accusations of collaboration from workers or the CGT. An infrequent police presence or *gardes mobiles* in mines did little to re-assure engineers or *cadres* dreading the spectre of future purges 'car les rancunes sont tenaces à la mine.'[168]

Savin and his colleagues found it difficult to inspect and control miners at work, and felt they had to exercise caution when reprimanding wayward labourers: 'les mineurs dans leurs batailles pour la dignité humaine attachent une grande importance à ces conquêtes récentes, mais ces conquêtes ont sapé les fondements de l'autorité classique.'[169] They interpreted the Oct/Nov strikes of 1948 as a further example of the degradation and loss of the power engineers and cadres once enjoyed in the mine. Savin, who had been receptive to the CGT's progressive legislation and rights since 1945, started to question this legacy. Although unwilling to amend decrees of the Miners' Statute, he believed order was necessary if France wished to compete with coal industries in the Ruhr, Belgium, or England.[170]

Yet not all engineers shared Savin's despondency. On the contrary, the judicial fallout of the miners' strike offered an unprecedented opportunity for cadres to overturn, at least symbolically, the inefficient *dirigisme* lambasted in Savin's report. It was also a chance to exact revenge on individuals. Personal and professional vendettas played out in

[167] Ibid, p.11.
[168] Ibid, p12.
[169] Ibid, p.13.
[170] Ibid, pp.13-15.

courtrooms throughout France in 1949. The far-left wing press compared engineers to Nazi collaborators once again, but they emerged victorious this time.[171]

La Défense warned that engineers who fired strikers with impunity were becoming the henchmen of Minister Robert Lacoste.[172]Journalists reported many examples where engineers played a significant part in making miners' lives even more difficult by aggravating their sentences in court. For example, when a group of miners confronted a chief-engineer, demanding to know why they had been fired, he replied they were too involved in trade union activities. One miner, gravely ill with a kidney disease and who suffered torture for four years as a deportee in Germany, was jailed for three months. His sentence was based entirely on an engineer's testimony.[173] The Alès courtroom in the southern Gard region also saw a head engineer distinguish himself for his spiteful testimony during the trial of a local mayor and trade unionist.[174] Even after strikers completed prison terms, some *cadres* did all in their power to impede their return to the workplace. Paul Paillet experienced this first-hand after his release as he tried to reclaim his job in the Antonin-Barbier pits, until an engineer told him not to come back because he was a communist.[175] Yet it is likely *cadres* sometimes used underhanded methods to continue punishing former strikers, such as sending them to the most dangerous pits in the mine. A young woman in Pas-de-Calais wrote letters to relief agencies describing how her father's colleagues were re-employed in what engineers

[171] '714 Condamnés- 1046 Mois de prison: Arrachons l'amnestie', *La Défense* [Paris], no. 203 (24th-30th December 1948), p.1.
[172] 'Les ingénieurs lacostisés', *La Défense* [Paris], no. 212 (25th February- 3rd March 1949), p.4 col a.
[173] 'Justice et humanité: Amnestie des mineurs!', *La Défense* [Paris], no.214 (11th- 17th March 1949), p.1 col a.
[174] 'À Alès, le 2 février: Dossiers vides- 30 mois de prison dont 24 ferme', *La Défense* [Paris], no.210 (11-17th February 1949), p.4 col a.
[175] 'Justice aux mineurs et à leurs défenseurs!', *La Défense* [Paris], no. 235 (12th-25th August 1949), p.1 col a-b.

called the 'Cominform' pits, the most hazardous areas where miners 'luttent sans cesse avec la mort.'[176]

Whether in court or in mines, many engineers mourning their lost authority made the most of the judicial repression against disobedient strikers and trade unionists to re-claim their former status as the unrivalled 'chiefs' of the workplace.

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In contrast to the metal-workers of Saint-Chamond, teachers in the Seine département, and engineers in the mines, it is striking that for the French *patronat* the spectre of the war did not overly affect their actions or psyche. Although post-war strikes reveal some bosses minimized their authoritarianism in the workplace, others like the Schneiders in Le Creusot, did not mend their ways.[177]

In November 1947, metal-workers of the Camus Entreprise in Belleville voted in favour of strike action.[178] CGT delegate Duncat waited two days for a reply from management, only to learn the *Direction* refused to discuss any of the workers' proposals.[179] In response, Duncat announced every sector of the plant would shut-down. As the strike wore on the mayor attempted to mediate between the CGT and factory management but to no avail. Under no circumstances would Mr Berthoud, the boss of the factory, agree to negotiate with delegates if Duncat continued to attend meetings. Insulted, Duncat left the room even though no deal was struck.[180] Despite ominous

[176] 'Noël et le Nouvel An au "Pays Noir", *La Défense* [Paris] no. 205 (7th-13th January 1949), p.4.
[177] H.W. Ehrmann, *Organized Business in France* (Princeton, 1957), pp.426- 435.
[178] 'Syndicat de Belleville- Rapport sur la grève des métallurgistes du 24 novembre au 11 décembre 1947 pp.1-2', November-December 1947, IHS-CGT, Fonds FTM-CGT, Boîtes'Luttes 1947'.
[179] Ibid, p.1.
[180] Ibid, p.1.

threats of arrest, violence, and desertion, strikers held out en masse until early December when the the CGT had no choice but to admit defeat.[181]

Berthoud allowed all employees to return to work without fear of penalty, provided delegate Duncat never set foot inside the factory again. Furious workers stood behind Duncat.[182] Probably fearing the continuation of an already lengthy strike, the boss reluctantly conceded to allow his return: 'Comment décrire la fureur de ce patron et de sa femme en voyant rentrer notre camarade Duncat, mais ils pensent certainement pouvoir le faire repartir à la première occasion.'[183] Although the strike was ultimately unsuccessful, the return of Duncat was a significant breakthrough.[184] During the war and the decades before it, rarely anyone dared question or protest the discharge of colleagues. However, in Duncat's case this paternalistic attitude was challenged. To the fiercely determined workforce at the Camus enterprise, the balance of power in the factory had tipped slightly in their favour. The CGT's report ended in an overly triumphalist tone : 'car tous les ouvriers Bellevois sont décidés à montrer à tous ces Messieurs que le temps est passé où ils étaient les grands maîtres'. It nonetheless contained a grain of truth.[185] This is just one example of how some *patrons* moderated their authoritarian tendencies after the war. It certainly was not willingly, but in the face of a battle-worn and emboldened workforce, bosses had to adapt and become less intransigent.

Industrialist and essayist Auguste Detoeuf was the perfect example of a progressive post-war *patron social*.[186] Former president and founder of the public

[181] Ibid, p.1.
[182] Ibid, p.1.
[183] Ibid, p.1.
[184] Ibid, p.2.
[185] Ibid, p.2.
[186] R.F. Kuisel, 'Auguste Detoeuf, Conscience of French Industry: 1926-1947', *International review of Social History,* 20/2(1975), pp.166.

transport company Alstom, Detoeuf was different to other industrialists in that he did not fully subscribe to the 'spirit of hierarchy' and tried to think of cooperative alternatives to paternalism.[187] While Renault hired men to eavesdrop on CGT unions after the Popular Front and then fired its members, Detoeuf envisaged a future in which company directors or presidents surrendered their authoritarianism and treated workers with respect.[188] The next generation of bosses should not be distant fathers obsessed with wealth or profits, but leaders who inspired the workforce with their example.[189]

By 1945, Detoeuf continued to expand on such themes in newspaper articles and columns in *La Revue de Paris* or *Le Figaro,* calling for greater cooperation between working classes and elites.[190] While surveying a multitude of economic problems assailing the nation such as sharp falls in steel and coal output or the daunting task of re-housing the destitute, Detoeuf returned to ideas delineated before the war.[191] The Liberation was the opportune moment for bosses and engineers to prove their worth while collaborating with lower *cadres*.[192] Detoeuf insisted 'les procédés tyranniques n'obtiennent point de rendement: on sait que le rendement des esclaves et des prisonniers a toujours été faible.'[193] The chief had to bear the burden of relief efforts and allow worker committees an opinion on the delegation of tasks in the factory.[194] Detoeuf was conciliatory and emphasized the importance of allowing industry heads and employees to

[187] Ibid, p.162.
[188] Ibid, p.165. '…nous avions des centaines de syndiqués…il fallait les réunir par petits groupes de 5 ou de 10, et encore, de temps à autre, un certain monsieur Duvernoy arrivait à glisser dans les 5 ou 10, un de ses agents, et le lendemain, nos camarades étaient licenciés' in 'Discours de Benoît Frachon', *La Voix des Usines* (July, 1937), pp.1-2, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, GR FOL- JO-2507. See also P. Fridenson, 'Automobile workers in France and their work 1914-1983', in S.L. Kaplan and C.J. Koepp (eds) *Work in France: Representations, Meaning, Organization, and Practice* (New York, 1986), p.529.
[189] 'Auguste Detoeuf, Conscience of French Industry 1926-1947',p.166-167.
[190] Ibid, p.172.
[191] 'Le problème du travail français', *La Revue de Paris* [Paris], no.6 (September 1945), pp.26-28.
[192] Ibid, p.33.
[193] Ibid, p.34.
[194] Ibid, pp.34-35. Kuisel, 'Auguste Detoeuf…', p.172.

express and pursue their interests for the good of the whole. Suspicious of planned economies in general, Detoeuf believed real modernization could only be achieved if free-market liberalism flourished unimpeded by government, although he accepted limited state intervention.[195] Ultimately, the central tenet of Detoeuf's philosophy was the democratization of responsibility in the workplace.

The first post-war congress of the *Centre des Jeunes Patrons* took place in June 1948 in Le Touquet just six months after the November/December strikes.[196] The CJP's president Jacques Warnier stressed the importance of Christian values in the conception of *comités sociaux* under Vichy, which implies social communitarianism was a key influence at the congress.[197] Established to train recently graduated *polytechniciens* in economic liberalism, this congress sought to reimagine entrepreneurship and leadership. These *collèges de travail* promoted dialogue between trade unionists and management at a time of escalating industrial conflicts.[198] Work committee representatives, trade union delegates, and presidents attended these conferences together. Employees were encouraged to attend and learn more about the technical aspects of the workplace in a spirit of *compréhension confiante*.[199] The ideas expressed at the congress were proof that the image of an understanding and socially conscious patron was becoming more popular.[200] It is arguable the CJP congress was a measured response to the agitation and unrest which enveloped the country only a few months before (and again in the mining pits four months later). Rather than resorting to overt or extreme forms of repression or

[195] Ibid, p.35. Kuisel, 'Auguste Detoeuf…, p.172.
[196] 'Le Centre des Jeunes Patrons a ouvert son congrès', *Le Monde* [Paris], (28th June 1948)
[197] F. Le Bot, 'La naissance du Centre des jeunes patrons (1938-1944): Entre réaction et relève', *Vingtième Siècle, Revue d'histoire,* 2 /114 (2012), pp.111-113.
[198] 'Le Centre des Jeunes Patrons- 28th June 1948'
[199] Ibid.
[200] For a study of the survival of Vichy-era industrial reforms and practices, see R.F. Kuisel, 'Technocrats and Public Economic Policy: From the Third to the Fourth Republic', *Journal of European Economic History,* 2/1(1973), pp.53-99.

coercion, especially the kind Directeur Paul Berthier practised back in 1938, some industrialists adapted to the social democratic and reformist *zeitgeist* of the post-war era, which suggested reactionary methods to re-assert control in the workplace were counterproductive.[201]

On the other hand, the November/December strike waves failed to have much of an impact on the Schneider patronat, presiding over the metal-work and mining industries of Le Creusot in Saône-et-Loire, which already had a long history of resisting the CGT's influence.[202]

In his reports, CGT unionist Mille admitted that he hoped to lead a movement on par with the general strikes of 1936 and 1938.[203] Like many others he looked back fondly on Le Front Populaire, as it marked the signing of the Matignon Accords which enshrined the right to trade union representation into law. However, although the region of Le Creusot was not spared from strike waves in May 1936, metal-workers and miners employed in the Schneider et Cie factories never took part in industrial action.[204] As Morgan Pogglioli argued, trade unions struggled to challenge or break the *tyrannie* of the Schneider family. Their intransigence impeded dialogue with trade unions during the inter-war years.[205] In the late thirties, Schneider management countered any CGT attempts to form a commission with trade union delegates and Schneider plant representatives, which delayed the implementation of the Matignon reforms.[206] The

[201] *Patrons* in the CNPF abandoned the corporatism of the Occupation and chose to protect 'free enterprise' instead. See F. Denord, 'Les idéologies économiques du patronat français au 20e siècle', *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d'histoire*, 114/2 (2012), pp. 177-182.
[202] 'Le Creusot- Réunion du Comité Exécutif: Rapport de Mille pp.1-7.', 3rd Dec. 1947, IHS-CGT, Fonds FTM-CGT, Luttes 1947.
[203] Ibid, p.6.
[204] M. Poggioli, 'Le Creusot en 1936: le calme au milieu de la tempête', in J.F. Poujeade and S. Paquelin (eds.) *Le Mouvement ouvrier au Creusot au XXe Siècle* (Chenove, 2007), p.59.
[205] Ibid, pp.60-62.
[206] Ibid, p.62.

Schneider obstruction endured until 1939 when the Ministry for Labour set up a commission.[207] The CGT played a part in forcing the Schneider patronat to compromise, although it did not succeed in driving workers away from an extremely influential *patron* whose name was synonymous with the prosperity of Le Creusot.[208]

Mille discovered the Schneider plant's welfare programmes still kept the workforce compliant and heavily indebted to the family.[209] This may help explain why strikes in 1947 failed to make a breakthrough. More than half the workforce voted against the strike at Le Creusot, while eight hundred abstained.[210] Communists had failed to convert enough 'enlightened' *cadres*. Mille also blamed a well-prepared and unrelenting management, confident the workforce would not dare confront them. For his active part in the movement Mille was even forbidden from entering metal-work factories.[211] Although he found it hard to admit, the strikes had been a failure and the power of the *patronat* in Le Creusot remained intact.

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[207] Ibid, p.63.
[208] Ibid, p. 64-65 For how the Schneider family used social welfare institutions to control its workforce since the 1870s, see D. Reid, 'Industrial Paternalism: Discourse and Practice in Nineteenth-Century French Mining and Metallurgy', *Comparative Studies in Society and History,* 27/4 (1985), pp.601-602.
[209] For information on the benefits and compensation packages Schneider et Cie granted to employees returning from STO labour camps in 1945, see F. Berger, 'La société Schneider face au travail obligatoire en Allemagne', in C. Chevandier, J.C. Daumas (eds), *Le Travail dans les entreprises sous l'Occupation* (Besançcon, 2007), pp.67-86. The Schneiders also set-up numerous canteens, refectories and family gardens for their workforce during the war. See S. Gacon and F. Jarrige, 'Les trois âges du paternalisme. Cantines et alimentation ouvrière au Creusot (1860-1960)', *Le Mouvement Social,* 247/2 (2014), pp. 40-42.
[210] 'Le Creusot- Réunion du Comité Exécutif: Rapport de Mille' p.5.
[211] Ibid, p.7.

In conclusion, the persistence of old *rancunes* left over from the Occupation played a significant part in post-war strike waves. An impossibility of demobilisation was certainly evident among CGT trade unionists in Saint-Chamond, who sought to discredit an uncooperative patronat by unearthing documents holding managers responsible for the unjustified firing of communist workers during the Phoney War. The Seine teachers' strike was framed as another battle between the forces of secularism and clericalism. Yet it is doubtful the impassioned memories of the betrayals of Vichy and industrialists during the war did much to help further strikers' demands.

Strikes in Berliet factories revealed various *cadres* also had great difficulty demobilizing. Much like the *patronat* in Saint-Chamond, *cadres* in Lyon faced accusations of war time treachery. By going on strike they set out to accomplish more than just clearing their names and sought to denounce the growing influence of the PCF in the factory, which in their view caused rebellious and complacent behaviour to proliferate among rank and file workers. Engineers in north-eastern *départements* echoed similar fears in the aftermath of the miners' strike in 1948, although they singled out the nationalisation of French coalmines rather than the influence of a confrontational CGT as the main reason why *cadres* no longer wielded the authority they once possessed. However, the trials of insubordinate strikers in 1949 allowed aggrieved engineers to achieve victory over their tormentors and avenge or reclaim their lost status as masters of the workplace.

Finally, while some *patrons* hid or moderated their authoritarian habits in accordance with the *dirigiste* and social democratic tendencies of the post-war era, this was by no means the case in every industry. The paternalist model in the Schneider plants persisted long after the end of World War II despite the CGT and PCF's attempts

to carry on the struggles of yesteryear. A workforce insulated from the worst effects of the Occupation by the Schneiders ensured wartime *rancunes* which drove metal-workers, teachers, or engineers to go on strike elsewhere in post-war France were largely absent in Le Creusot.

3. Look to the East

This chapter examines how journalists and intellectuals from the communist press heightened discontent in France by depicting the emerging Soviet sphere as lands beaming with resources and promise.

The communist press enjoyed enormous popularity in the immediate post-war years. Roughly 27% of all newspapers sold belonged to publishing houses loyal to the generally pro-Soviet by-line of the PCF, a total exceeding sales recorded for Christian democratic or socialist presses at the time.[1]

It knew how to cater to the preferences and sensibilities of various audiences. While editors adhered to the ideological parameters the PCF's central committee decreed, which specified print media should express the Party's political agenda above all else, this did not mean journalists relayed exclusively Marxist interpretations of current affairs to readers. The editors of *Miroir-Sprint* for example jettisoned overtly political messaging in their sports' coverage to reach as broad an audience as possible.[2]

This chapter argues publications aligned to the CGT, such as *Le Peuple* and *La Vie Ouvrière*, regional weeklies like *Le Cri des Travailleurs,* or national dailies such as *L'Humanité* and *Ce Soir* may have helped to galvanize workers' discontent. Journalists

[1] É. Combeau-Mari, '*Miroir-Sprint*, levier de promotion de la presse communiste française à la Libération', in M. Attali and É. Combeau- Mari (eds.), *Le sport dans la presse communiste* (Rennes, 2013), pp.103.
[2] Ibid, pp.115-117. See Y. Guillauma, 'Presse et pouvoir de 1944 à 1958: contribution à l'histoire de la presse sous la IVe République' (PhD thesis, Université Pars II, 1993).

packaged the reconstruction of Eastern Europe or USSR in a style and language which spoke directly to anxieties regarding shortages of food, re-introduction of grueling workloads, factionalism within the CGT, and a disappointing lack of radical change.

Moreover, centrist and even right-wing newspapers did not sufficiently challenge these blinkered narratives of Eastern Europe's renewal. In the words of Agnès Márton-Domeyko, *Le Monde* and *Le Figaro* surrendered to the 'dictates of the Spirit of Yalta', resulting in often dispassionate coverage of events taking place in the emerging Soviet sphere.[3] Countries gradually falling under the control of one-party regimes, particularly in Poland, Romania, or Bulgaria received limited attention. The Yalta and Potsdam conferences acknowledged communist parties would play a major if not leading role in rebuilding Eastern Europe. The consolidation of Soviet influence appeared inevitable. There was therefore little incentive for *Le Monde* or *Le Figaro* to condemn harshly the undemocratic behavior of, for example, the PPR (Polish Communist Party).[4]

This chapter is divided geographically. Each section will analyze the representation of an Eastern European nation in the French far left and centrist press, and discuss how these depictions might have helped convince, and occasionally dissuade workers from participating in strikes between 1947 and 1948.

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[3] A. Márton-Domeyko, 'Les Français et la Pologne, 1945-1948', *Revue des Études Slaves*, 71/2 (1999), p.293.
[4] Ibid, p.293.

Secondary school children from Prague sent a letter to the FNSS (Fédération Nationale du Sous-Sol), via the central committee of Prague trade unions to French miners' children in late 1948. They explained how their parents suffered indignities at the hands of businessmen and oppressive administrations in the recent past, and told them their parents' struggle was not in vain, implying the French miners' plight was the result of a failed capitalist system.[5] They compared the miners' struggle to that of a tragic Czech hero:

> 'Dans un de nos opéras nationaux le héros qui a lutté pour la vérité et le droit, fait ses adieux à ses enfants avant son exécution, par ces paroles: "Enfants, mes chers enfants adorés, que Dieu vous fasse voir le temps où sera réalisé tout ce pourquoi votre père a donné sa vie''.'[6]

The letter ended with a promise that capitalism would soon collapse leaving behind a world where the labourer is free and the world at peace.[7] They implied, ever since the Prague coup, Czechs lived in a better society that taxed or purged corrupt elites and re-distributed wealth to impoverished workers or peasants. Even secondary school children had money to spare. It appeared journalists in *La Vie Ouvrière* who had praised Czechoslovakia as a land gleaming with promise over the last two years were right.[8]

In 1947, journalist Édouard Storace's weekly exposés in *La Vie Ouvrière* presented a selective view of social and economic progress in the East, and a convincing alternative to the measures the American-backed Ramadier government offered.[9] Hard work was rewarded and life in general appeared fairer in the East. While strolling

[5] 'Lettre d'enfants d'une école secondaire de Prague envoyée par le conseil central des syndicats de Prague à la FNTSS', November-December 1948, ADSSD, Fonds FNTSS-CGT, 239J 12.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid.
[8] 'J'ai fait mon marché à Prague', *La Vie Ouvrière* [Paris], no.160 (25th September- 1st October 1947), pp. 4-5 col a-l.
[9] Ibid, pp.4-5.

through the streets of Prague guided (and watched) by the factory-worker Lida Dnovlova, Storace described a busy market place filled with bakeries and shops bursting with affordable confections: 'Les gosses français resteraient frappés d'admiration et plein de convoitise devant l'amoncellement de gâteaux de toutes sortes et les magnifiques brioches dorées.'[10] Storace knew how to grab an audience who earned barely enough money to afford a baguette. He asked readers to question why improvements in wages and living standards stalled or were in free-fall, while the rate of production was now almost higher than pre-war levels.[11] His utopic vision of Eastern Europe free from the yoke of capitalism was very appealing.

The Czech example was a beacon of light, but it also exposed what French workers had lost by no longer having communist ministers in government. It was almost five months since communist ministers were ousted from the tripartite coalition. The first Renault strikes in April 1947 shook not only the government, but also put into question the PCF's loyalty to its base in the factories.[12] It was not the CGT, but anarchists and side-lined Trotskyists who started the strikes which spread beyond the car-manufacturing plant in Paris to industries in the north and south.[13] Desperate to regain support among workers, the CGT and Maurice Thorez drifted away from the iron-clad economic dictates all parties in the tripartite coalition agreed upon, and refused to block pay increases.[14] These fissures became apparent during the May Day celebrations. Facing a huge crowd, Thorez backtracked and declared communist support for the Renault strikers. When the representative of the socialist party, Daniel Mayer, approached the podium, the crowd

[10] Ibid, p.4.
[11] Ibid, p.4.
[12] K. Eide, 'L'aspect politique des grèves de novembre-décembre 1947' (MA thesis, University of Oslo, 2006), p.26-27.
[13] Ibid, p.26.
[14] Ibid, p.27.

heckled and nearly booed him off the stage.[15] On the 4th May, communist ministers officially broke rank with the MRP and SFIO in a vote of no confidence. Less than a day later, Président des Conseils Paul Ramadier convened an emergency meeting with all cabinet ministers, demanding that communists resign for putting party politics ahead of cooperation in government. When they refused the following morning, Ramadier removed the communists from office.[16]

The PCF would never again influence government policy. Yet what the communists had achieved while in power left lingering thoughts of 'what if' among party members, especially when Storace and others extolled the supposed achievements and ambitions of communist ministers abroad. Though debates regarding the introduction of social security between 1945 and 1946 were, as Colette Bec argues, confined to administrative, judicial, or trade union elites, and received limited exposure in the national press, communist Minister for Labour Ambroise Croizat was instrumental in founding the modern French social security system during his tenure.[17] He helped introduce improved health insurance, pensions for the elderly, and the reform of right-to-work laws.[18] Czech communist Minister for Agriculture Julius Duris, whom Storace interviewed and praised for his decision-making when facing the rationing crisis, seemed to be making even better progress in his country.[19] Duris elaborated a plan to reduce

[15] Ibid, p.27.
[16] Ibid, p.28.
[17] C. Bec, 'La "sécu" en mode mineur. Le regard de la presse dans l'immédiat après-guerre', *Les Tribunes de la Santé,* /47(2015), p.52.
[18] For more on the formation of the French welfare state and Croizat's tenure as Minister for Labour and Social Security , see J.C. Barbier, *The Road to a Social Europe: A Contemporary Approach to Political Cultures* (New-York, 2013), p. 163. F. Billoux, *Quand nous étions ministres* (Paris, 1972), p.127. A.M. Guillemard, *Aging and the Welfare State Crisis* (London, 2000), pp.58-60. S. Buzzi, J.C. Devinck and P.A. Rosental, 'Médecine sociale, médecine d'usine (1946-1965)', in S. Buzzi, J.C. Devinck, P.A. Rosental (eds.), *La santé au travail 1880-2006* (Paris, 2006), pp.59-76. A. 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,* no. 123(1983), pp.43-44.
[19] Ibid, pp.4-5.

taxation for poor peasants and increased them for rich families: 'Pour éviter tout cela, nous avons proposé que la charge de ces dépenses tombe avant tout…sur les 35,000 millionnaires.'[20] This spoke directly to the hopes and disappointments of the card-holding communist worker in France. If Communists were still in government, perhaps the French would enjoy the bounty Czechoslovakians seemed to benefit from. Storace hailed Czech communist ministers for thoroughly planning the recovery of the Czech nation while preserving the well-being and employment of its workforce.[21] The Czech Trade Union Federation was leading its own battle for production and according to Storace's picturesque sorties in Prague, the Czechs, unlike French workers, saw the fruits of their labour.

Painting Czechoslovakia as an ascendant social democracy, free from the scourges of capitalism or rationing was not the preserve of blinkered journalists but rather an illusion academics also fostered. Their trusted opinion of Czech miners' working conditions confirmed what the PCF wanted their base to hear and read: that Eastern European countries with an increasingly dominant communist presence were truly 'des pays où l'on vit bien.'[22] Historian Jean Bruhat wrote an article in *Démocratie Nouvelle,* which *Le Cri des Travailleurs* re-published in late December 1947. Professor Bruhat acknowledged life remained hard in Czechoslovakia, but mainly expounded on the hearty meals and contented workers he had met at the mines of Host: 'À midi, soupe, boeuf pommes de terre et pâtisserie. Le soir, soupe et une succulente assiette de charcuteries, d'oeufs et de légumes".[23] These mouth-watering dishes came with the added benefit of higher wages. The most disadvantaged and lowly worker did not need to

[20] Ibid, p.5.
[21] Ibid, p.5.
[22] 'Un pays où l'on vit bien', *Le Cri des Travailleurs* [Paris], no.3(21st December), p.4 col a-b.
[23] Ibid.

worry as his salary quadrupled. He interviewed an elderly miner who recalled decades of hardship, and who was now finally savouring the freedoms nationalisation schemes and the Miners' Statute of January 1947 had provided.[24] He waxed lyrical about forming a trade union under the watchful eye of Austrian police, recalled the traumatic German occupation, forced labour in Goering enterprises, and now 'la liberté', the prophetic and poetic denouement after years of oppression.[25]

Yet Czechoslovakia was not only a land of grateful workers but a nation filled with youthful vibrancy, as Simone Téry argued in *L'Humanité*. When visiting Prague in late September 1947, Téry attended a youth festival where she admired the energy young men and women delegates exuded: 'Tu ne peux pas savoir, Simone, me dit-il, comme c'est merveilleux ici. On se sent tellement plus jeune!'[26] Teens in Eastern Europe seemed to bask in the light of a new tomorrow. Mothers were proud of their children who devoted time after school to extract coal, and in doing so, contributed to the reconstruction of Lidice. A metal-worker's wife in Kladno boasted about her fourteen year-old son who supposedly devoted four-hundred hours of work to the Republic. Elegant and ambitious young women not lacking food or strength pushed wheel-barrows filled with bricks and heaved mounds of coal with ease.[27] Meanwhile, in haggard and shrivelled France, Téry saw only frowns, downcast eyes and 'des gens inquiets de l'avenir.'[28] The message was clear: French labourers seemed drained of all zeal, weakened and feeble without Communists in government.

[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid.
[26] 'Derrière le rideau de fer', *L'Humanité* [Paris], no.928 (3rd September), pp1-3 col a-d.
[27] Ibid, p.3
[28] Ibid, p.3.

Even newspapers not aligned with communist or far-left leaning parties also praised the merits of shopping in the Eastern bloc. Michel Gordey, writing on behalf of the tabloid *France-Soir*, spoke about the abundance of newspapers in Warsaw and Prague.[29] In every kiosk, English, Italian, French, Scandinavian, and Polish magazines or periodicals were available. Gordey claimed French newspapers were generally two pages shorter than average Czech dailies. The Czechoslovak press could afford to print newspapers every single day of the week, tallying six to eight pages.[30] Furthermore, a photo in *La Défense* featured dozens of cheery French workers, supposedly victims of unwarranted judicial repression in the months following the November/December strike waves, boarding a plane headed for Czechoslovakia. Czech trade unions invited French strikers for a restful sojourn in the new communist state, a topic which will be explored further in chapter seven. Grass, and indeed everything else, was greener over the Iron Curtain.[31]

Yet for French workers not affiliated with the PCF or CGT, Czechoslovakia was not a beacon of equality, tolerance, or abundance. While headlines in *L'Humanité*, *Ce Soir* or *Rouge-Midi* heralded the Prague coup as a triumph for democracy, the predominantly socialist and Force-ouvrière-leaning audience of *La Révolution Prolétarienne* discovered a different view of Czechoslovakia under communist rule. An article submitted in August 1948 relayed the story of a Czech worker who had fled to France for fear of being imprisoned for his participation in the attempted *Právo Lidu* printing house strike.[32] The courageous and efficient KSČ(Czech Communist Party)

[29] 'Derrière le rideau de fer je n'ai entendu parler que de paix', *France-Soir* [Paris], no.1058 (26th December 1947), p.1 col a.
[30] Ibid.
[31] '100 travailleurs, victimes de la répression à la suite des grèves, invités par les syndicats tchécoslovaques, prennent le départ au Bourget', *La Défense* [Paris], no.175 (7th May 1948), p.4 col a.
[32] 'En Tchécoslovaquie: la grève du "Právo Lidu"', *La Révolution Prolétarienne* [Paris], no.319 (September 1948), pp.18-19.

trade unionists Storace lionized were conspicuously missing from the refugee's account. Instead of securing greater autonomy and self-sufficiency for Czech workers, the KSČ instituted an authoritarian regime unsympathetic to the complaints of factory labourers and peasants**.** Following a forced 'merger' with the Social Democratic Party, the KSČ cancelled the publication of the socialist press organ *Právo Lidu*.[33] They shut down a printing plant and publishing houses which cost countless jobs. Hundreds of angry employees failed to understand why communist Prime Minister Antonín Zápotocký and former Socialist party leader Zdeněk Fierlinger did nothing to prevent the closure. Committee representatives showed they cared little for the fate of employees. When Fierlinger finally did show himself to jeering crowds, he cited obtuse Marxist theory and exchanged fiery words with an elderly employee who confronted him.[34] Disgusted and enraged, workers planned an enormous strike and a protest march to the Chamber of Deputies. Fierlinger ordered a twenty-four hour delay before negotiations, allowing communist agents to 'liquider la résistance du personnel.'[35] Death threats and harassment ensured the impending strike did not take place.

Readers consulting *La Révolution Prolétarienne* and other newspapers not beholden to the bias or lies the PCF communicated were aware of disturbing reports regarding Czechoslovakia throughout 1948. Translations and extracts detailing the horrific working conditions Czech authorities imposed on German citizens in Semperk featured prominently.[36] FO and socialist activists or workers exposed to information outside the PCF/CGT bubble knew about the Stalinisation of the Czech workplace, which entailed unwilling 'volunteers' had to march to mining pits every Sunday at

[33] Ibid, p.18.
[34] Ibid, p.19.
[35] Ibid, p.19.
[36] 'Le travail forcé en Tchécoslovaquie', *La Révolution Prolétarienne* [Paris], no.313 (March 1948), p.31.

gunpoint, the abolition of bank holidays, and the favouritism rife in industries traditionally loyal to the KSČ.[37] This may partly explain why a small minority of miners refused to support or partake in the 1948 winter strike. Many noticed incipient authoritarianism in the behaviour and decision-making of communist trade unionists in Lorraine. The bullish tactics some PCF members used to prolong the movement had been enough to trigger fears that a Stalinisation of French mines was forthcoming. Government ministers received anguished letters from workers complaining socialist miners were strong-armed into following commands. Sightings of intimidating Hungarian immigrant communists barking orders and attacking miners who returned to work, were not uncommon.[38] Socialist prefect Camille Delabre received accounts of communists armed with rusty crowbars, harassing and pursuing FO militants.[39]The increasingly dictatorial conduct of communist trade unionists in France, as well as articles disclosing what was happening in Eastern Europe, disturbed some miners, making them weary of the CGT and suspicious of the PCF during the miners' strike.

It is ironic that metal-workers from Škoda factories in Pilsen urged French workers, and PCF members in particular, to be wary of the PCF. In October 1949, in a letter to *Le Figaro*, Škoda employees confessed they were wrong to trust the KSČ during the 1946 elections as the freedom and progress communists promised had not materialized.[40] The 'confédérations communistes', possibly referring to the Revolutionary Trade Union Movement, did not tend to workers' demands but instead

[37] 'Tchécoslovaquie: la lutte des classes sous la démocratie populaire', *La Révolution Prolétarienne* [Paris], no. 327(May 1949), pp.26-27.
[38] M. Fontaine, X. Vigna, 'La grève des mineurs de l'automne 1948', p.29.
[39] 'La peur régnait et chacun se terrait et n'osait plus s'affirmer publiquement tant on redoutait les représailles des équipes de choc communistes. Ces équipes de choc étaient d'ailleurs munies de matraques faites de tuyaux de caoutchouc, armés de frondes pour lancer rivets et plombs, d'armes à feu et de grenades' in 'Rapport sur les grèves de 1948 pp.15-16', December 1948, OURS, Dossier Camille Delabre sur les grèves de 1948 dans le Nord et Pas-de-Calais.
[40] 'Lettre des ouvriers de Škoda aux travailleurs français', *La Révolution Prolétarienne* [Paris], no.334 (December 1949), pp.30-31.

instituted re-education programmes and disseminated mind-numbing propaganda which perverted the mission of Czech trade unions.[41] The letter captured the profound disillusionment of Czech workers stripped of the right to protest and coerced into gruelling 'shock-work' schedules or Stakhanovite contracts *La Vie Ouvrière* so highly praised. Party cadres detained dozens of workers in response to attempted strikes in August 1949.[42] Such detailed and sustained criticism of the KSČ and its failure to convert Škoda plant workers to the cause, corroborates historian Johann Smula's findings, which argued endemic disenchantment among the Škoda workforce eventually led to strikes in 1953.[43] After the Prague coup in 1948, non-communist leaning French workers believed strikes the PCF supported were preludes to tyranny: 'nous-même sommes devenus des victimes dupées.'[44]

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Journalists writing on behalf of *Le Peuple,* the main organ of the CGT, also portrayed Poland as a harbinger of ingenuity and responsible efficiency. They heaped praise on the rapid industrial and economic transformation of Warsaw in June 1948.[45] French reporters visiting workshops throughout the country applauded the achievements of 'le miracle polonais.'[46] They wondered how a decimated nation caught in the epicentre of a cataclysmic conflict, with its engineers, technicians, and intelligentsia almost entirely exterminated could have managed such a successful recovery. The answer, for *Le Peuple,* was simple and appealing: the Polish government (read Communists)

[41] Ibid. See also J. Smula, 'The Party and the Proletariat: Škoda 1948-53', *Cold War History,* 6 /2 (2006), pp.153-156.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Smula, 'The Party and the Proletariat: Škoda 1948-53', pp.153-156.
[44] Lettre des ouvriers de Škoda aux travailleurs français', p. 30.
[45] 'Le "Miracle" Polonais', *Le Peuple* [Paris], no.200 (17-24th June 1948), p.2 col a-c.
[46] Ibid.

promoted experts coming directly from the working-class, as opposed to relying on discredited or collaborationist 'élites.'[47]

Interviewing Mr Podomski from the Polish Ministry for Production, journalists learnt how thousands of newly trained engineers and directors, benefiting greatly from educational programmes authorities had just created became 'les nouveaux cadres.'[48] This system granted the most able-minded an opportunity to rethink the structure and output of factories. Talented labourers became leaders due to their experience or problem-solving aptitudes.[49] Men who proposed new methods or improved techniques got a promotion. Affordable correspondence courses in forestry and mining gave diligent workers a good education and an opportunity to rise through the ranks. French workers read about the promise and possibility of a true meritocracy, giving street-wise and hardened workers a chance to become experts.[50]

Moreover, Polish factories hummed with the sound of ambition and new ideas : 'Ce qui m'a frappé surtout au cours de ces visites, c'est… le souci d'améliorer le travail, le goût des idées nouvelles, la soif d'instruction que manifestent tous les ouvriers…'[51] In the shoe-making plant of Chełmek, the phrase 'scientific organisation' did not inspire dread or mockery.[52] Rather than preserving tired and tested Taylorist or Fordian systems of timed organisation, workers decided *le minutage* for themselves with no interference from managers.[53] Teams regulated production rates autonomously and adjusted or tailored line-speed pacing according to the strengths, weaknesses, and needs of

[47] Ibid.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid.
[50] Ibid.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Ibid.

employees. Every sector had an 'idea box' which replaced plodding pre-war administrative councils.[54] Polish workers, inspired by collaborative efforts, were no longer confined to the daily drudgery and anonymity of an assembly line, at least according to *Le Peuple*.

In contrast, such examples of social mobility accomplished in such a short period of time only magnified the inertia in the French workplace. Amongst French miners or autoworkers, still saddled with outdated and potentially hazardous systems, few expected to match or surpass feats purportedly achieved in the Soviet sphere. The battle for production forced mining companies to re-adopt the controversial *système Bedaux* which was abolished during the Popular Front.[55] Franco-American billionaire Charles Bedaux conceived this system which stipulated every worker had set amounts of time to work or rest, and would earn a standard rate equalling sixty Bedaux. If employees managed to surpass the set hourly rate, they received a 75% bonus.[56] Consequently, journalist René Le Bras discovered miners focused mainly on saving time to earn higher wages. Therefore team spirit and solidarity 'disparaissent pour faire place à la compétition et l'égoïsme.'[57] Every movement was measured and calibrated to ensure maximum productivity which entailed severe physiological and psychological damage and increased the risk of diseases such as silicosis. Le Bras cited the example of Michelin factories where employees checking valves only had six five-minute breaks per day, while machine-operators had four ten-minute breaks: 'Toutes les

[54] Ibid.
[55] É. Desbois, 'Des ingénieurs perdus. Le procès de l'exercice du métier d'ingénieur dans les mines sous l'occupation' in Y. Jeanneau, B. Mattéi (eds.), *La foi des charbonniers: Les mineurs dans la Bataille du charbon 1945-1947* (Paris, 1986) https://books.openedition.org/editionsmsh/2287 (5th December 2019).
[56] 'Un ouvrier parle du système Bedaux', *Masses/Socialisme et Liberté* [Paris], no.14 (April-May 1948), pp. 25-26.
[57] Ibid.

formules d'organisation du travail considèrent les travailleurs comme des machines…'[58] As Évelyne Desbois explained, engineers continued to apply this system in various forms, as hundreds of French enterprises signed contracts with Bedaux societies years after the Matignon Accords.[59]

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Some journalists like Auguste Gallois in 1947 also presented developments in Hungary in an overly-flattering light, and announced the dawn of a new age in a country once renowned for its regressive politics.[60] Thanks in large part to the arrival of the Soviet armies, the Hungarian people (and the previously banned Communist Party) had succeeded in overthrowing the dictatorial rule of Miklós Horthy. The Soviets removed any trace of the borderline feudal system, requisitioned the properties of the gentry, and distributed it to penniless peasants and former servants.[61] Pinning their hopes on a quick Nazi victory during the war, the aristocracy fled the country and left behind vast swathes of empty land the newly liberated peasants took for themselves.[62] The urban working class also enjoyed new opportunities. Mr Kossa, the Secretary-General of the Hungarian trade unions, told Gallois Hungarian workers were united, despite shortages of grain and equipment. Unlike France, riven with trade union infighting, the Hungarians appeared to have prioritized the nation's well-being over squabbling. Now Hungarian workers

[58] Ibid.
[59] Desbois, 'Des ingénieurs perdus. Le procès de l'exercice du métier d'ingénieur dans les mines sous l'occupation'.
[60] 'Confrontations Européennes- Hongrie 1947', *Le Peuple* [Paris], no.162 (27th September 1947), p.5 col a-f
[61] Ibid.
[62] Ibid.

possessed one strong, uniform trade union per profession, each professing the same ideals and objectives.[63]

The Hungarian government did not appear as a distant entity, since trade unionists had become government ministers, secretaries of state, and deputies in parliament where a real 'workers democracy' took shape.[64] Trade unions had the power to influence policy-making, economic planning, and regulate the price of goods and services. Gallois wrote how the cost of living had decreased since his arrival, with the price of gas, water, and transportation lowering with each passing month, although the workers' wages were considerably lower than their French counterparts.[65] In a glass-making plant workers received barely a fraction of what their French counterparts earned. Gallois met metal-workers who survived over two months without pay, yet they still toiled away to get decimated factories up and running again. What mattered was that Hungarian workers were now in control of their lives.[66]

Travelling deeper in the country along Lake Balaton, Gallois saw from afar mansions once belonging to upper-class families now in the hands of supposedly emancipated workers: 'ils vivent là dans le confort et une opulence de nourriture vraiment impressionants".[67] The countryside was buzzing with sounds of packed trains and truckloads of workers speeding in every direction to reach isolated villages in need of repair, stocked with 25 litres of wine and accompanied by joyous orchestras. Factories near the Danube built tennis courts, gymnasiums, swimming pools and multiple kinder-garten crèches.[68] As expected, Gallois assured his audience everything was built by the

[63] Ibid.
[64] Ibid.
[65] Ibid.
[66] Ibid.
[67] Ibid.
[68] Ibid.

worker and for the worker. Fellow journalist Georges Vertes invited Gallois to the inauguration of an enormous hostel offering over 400 spacious rooms to young apprentices.

A key theme in Gallois' article, apart from unity, was meaningful construction, the literal building of a new world. It was an inspiring narrative of renewal, one which was surprisingly lacking in France. Minister for Reconstruction and Urbanism Eugène Claudius-Petit had to settle for modernisation of housing but not radical improvement.[69] The Vichy regime's 'rural' understanding of urban planning persisted.[70] As Bertrand Vayssière argued, former collaborators still retained their post in the ministry and urbanists turned away aesthetically pleasing designs, looking to the USA and the Athens Commission for inspiration instead.[71] Reconstruction focused more on technocratic rationalisation and utility.[72] Both the government and ministry sought to address the housing crisis as swiftly and efficiently as possible. There was no time or money to re-structure towns or cities radically, with a view to erase symbolically the memory of fascism. After the massive destruction Allied bombing and fleeing Nazi regiments had caused; inspiring, revolutionary, or creative designs were difficult to afford and hard to conceive. [73] The Fourth Republic did not use reconstruction as an antidote to erase the past.[74] Survival was of much greater importance. In contrast, Gallois' myopic interpretation of Hungary's 'revolution', either authentic or exaggerated, provided a far more appealing narrative of renewal for disillusioned and impatient French workers.

[69] B. Vayssière, 'Relever la France dans les après-guerres: reconstruction ou réaménagement?', *Presses Universitaires de France/Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains,* 236/4 (2009), pp.57-58.
[70] Ibid, pp.52-54.
[71] Ibid, pp.53-56.
[72] Ibid, p.57.
[73] Ibid, pp.54-56.
[74] Ibid, pp.56-58.

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Moreover, flattering portrayals of the Soviet Union in *La Vie Ouvrière* highlighted how distractions were in short supply in the anxiety-ridden lives of average French workers. By 1947, the USSR projected the image of a benevolent regime intent on reconstructing entertainment venues and facilities to provide rest and leisure to hard-working labourers.[75] A grainy snapshot of towering and glistening trade union headquarters in Odessa symbolized this transformation.[76] The workers' paradise was booming, while France staggered and floundered.

Less than a month before the November/December strike waves, the chief secretary of leather workers' unions published reports the CGT received from a visiting delegation of Soviet trade unionists.[77] It claimed increasing productivity went hand in hand with improved cultural activities. The USSR built five thousand clubs, fifty-thousand cultural centres, four thousand libraries containing millions of books, and over three thousand cinematheques in two years.[78] Agricultural labourers also had thousands of local and regional clubs at their disposal. The Soviet working-class seemed to possess precious time and money to enrol in various recreational outlets without impeding reconstruction efforts. In 1946, the Central Committee claimed it organized amateur art competitions, particularly in music and dance.[79] Russian unionists also promoted sporting events, with over a million workers registered to join in football, gymnastics, and boxing clubs: 'Dans de nombreuses compétitions internationales, les membres des clubs

[75] 'Les syndicats soviétiques et le bien-être des travailleurs', *La Vie Ouvrière* [Paris], no.162 (15-21st October 1947), p.7 col a-c.
[76] 'USSR! Pays de l'incomparable' *La Vie Ouvrière* [Paris], no.216 (9-15th September 1948), p.3 col a-c
[77] 'Les syndicats soviétiques et le bien-être des travailleurs'
[78] Ibid.
[79] Ibid.

syndicaux se sont distingués par leurs hautes qualités sportives.'[80] Moreover, parents toiling all day did not worry about leaving their children at home after school. Trade unions built kindergartens or nurseries near the workplace to nourish youthful talent. In winter, concerts and theatre performances were open to all, attracting millions of children each year.[81] Such articles assured their overwhelmingly communist-leaning French audience that feats of renovation did not preclude personal fulfilment in the Soviet Union. The USSR was proof tiresome and exacting labour was not incompatible with the freedom to enjoy hobbies.

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In conclusion, coverage of the reconstruction of Eastern Europe or USSR in the communist press resembled the laudatory articles French syndicalists and anarchists wrote as they visited Russia after the Bolshevik Revolution or during the Russian Civil War. For example, PCF ally Marguerite Thévenet sent reports regarding the ongoing famine to *L'Humanité* in 1922. Although she acknowledged the emerging Soviet Union's faults, she still emphasized the regime's accomplishments and revolutionary zeal.[82]

This chapter has demonstrated journalists reporting for *L'Humanité, Le Peuple, Le Cri des Travailleurs,* and other regional dailies or weeklies also framed their coverage of the post-war Soviet sphere in a similar fashion. While brief observations vaguely recognised the ongoing hardships Eastern Europeans endured, most articles exaggerated positive developments, whether the abundance of goods or food in Czech markets, greater labour participation and control in Polish workplaces, transformational social

[80] Ibid.
[81] Ibid.
[82] I. Birchall, 'Camarades! La naissance du parti communiste en France, Romain Ducoulombier, Paris, Perrin 20101', *Historical Materialism,* 21/3 (2013), pp.181-182.

change in Hungary, or the booming leisure industry in the USSR. Conversely, publications loyal to anti-communist trade unions, such as Force ouvrière, frequently exposed the authoritarian practices of communist regimes, therefore convincing miners not aligned to the CGT not to take part in the miners' strike. However, given the immense popularity of the French communist press in the immediate post-war years, one must also assume examples of 'popular' democracy impressed the PCF's membership, and perhaps even audiences beyond the PCF's base. French workers facing crippling rations, fatigue, demoralization, or disillusionment with the slow pace of recovery may have looked to the East with envy, hope, and aspiration. It is currently impossible to know whether such coverage instilled revolutionary intentions, although it would seem likely the communist, and occasionally centrist press had some part to play in fanning discontent which exploded during strikes in 1947 and 1948. Yet as argued in the following chapter, the rest of the world did not often appear so inspiring.

4. Le recul ouvrier

This chapter will argue that exposure to regular newspaper reports, telegrams, and letters describing the erosion of trade union rights in and outside the French Empire were constant reminders of the continuing turmoil of the post-war period. They underscored fears that 'victory' over fascism might not be as complete as they hoped and that workers would continue to 'lose out' despite the official end of the war.

The Prague coup of February 1948 caused great anxiety and paranoia amongst post-war French diplomats or policymakers. The communist takeover of Czechoslovakia convinced Minister Georges Bidault and many others that the Soviet Union sought European, if not global dominion.[1] The 'Prague effect' spread worldwide via thousands of articles from America to Scandinavia warning of the likelihood of another war brewing between the East and West.[2] This moment in international relations forced the Quai d'Orsay to abandon bilateral treaties with Eastern Europe and align more closely with Britain or the Benelux nations, and persuaded Jules Moch to strengthen domestic security further.[3] Henceforth, French authorities readied to counter any internal disturbances akin to the November/December strikes.

However, the Prague Coup and Second Red Scare marginalized more understated 'scares'.[4] French trade unionists, particularly in communist-leaning factions of the CGT,

[1] P. Svik, 'The Czechoslovak Factor in Western Alliance Building, 1945-1948', *Journal of Cold War Studies,* 18/1 (2016), p. 153-158.
[2] P. Roslyng-Jensen, 'From World War to Cold War: Scandinavian media attitudes to the Soviet Union 1945-1948', *Scandinavian Journal of History,* 37/4 (2012), pp.528-540.
[3] Svik, 'The Czechoslovak Factor…', p.58. Vivens, 'Conflit social…', pp.49-50.
[4] M.J. Heale, 'Review: Bowing to the Right: Red Scare Politics in the McCarthy Era', *Reviews in American History,* 41/3(2013), pp.533-539.

feared France would experience a *recul ouvrier* if anti-labour trends continued to spread. French workers were generally well informed about the brutal suppression of strikes, the killing or harassment of leftist leaders, and the break-up of unions across the globe. The passing of anti-union legislation both during and after the November/December strikes further exacerbated these fears.[5] Such ominous developments abroad, combined with the amendment of the Miners' Statute and increasingly ruthless conduct of the CRS at home throughout 1948, partly explain the militancy of the miners' strike.

However, this does not mean French workers and their representatives in various unions were always aware of unrest abroad, or inclined to support or empathize with labourers wrestling with oppressive legislation overseas. For example, the Dakar-Niger strikes between October 1947 and March 1948 in West Africa saw thousands of African railway staff campaign for the same wages and benefits accorded to European workers.[6] These struggles went almost unnoticed by *Le Peuple*, *L'Humanité*, or *Le Populaire*. The CGT, SFIO and PCF showed hardly any interest in providing financial or material support to African colleagues facing judicial repression.[7] The Trotskyist *La Vérité* was one of the rare newspapers in France to publish letters from participants or observers in Abidjan. Solidarity depended on whether unionists in the imperium deviated or not from the CGT's directives in the metropole.[8]

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[5] The Trotskyist *La Vérité* subtly implied that the authoritarian measures Bolivian president Enrique Hertzog sanctioned to crush mining strikes and evict trade unionists could soon be implemented in France as well. 'La répression du gouvernement Hertzog contre les ouvriers fait rage', *La Verité* [Paris], no.200 (12th December 1947), p.2 col a.

[6] P. Dewitte, 'La CGT et les syndicats d'Afrique occidentale française (1945-1957)', *Le Mouvement Social,* no.117 (1981), p.13.

[7] Ibid, pp.14-16.

[8] ' "Nous resterons jusqu'au bout…" nous écrit la Fédération des Syndicats des Cheminots Africains', *La Vérité* [Paris], no.204 (16th January 1948), p.1 col c. 'Lettre de Dakar', *La Vérité* [Paris], no. 205 (23rd January 1948), p.2 col e. 'Au bout de quatre mois de grève les cheminots africains dans une situation critique', *La Vérité* [Paris], no.207 (6th February 1948), pp.1-2 col c. 'Malgré les mesures et les calomnies, les cheminots africains restent unis dans la lutte', *La Vérité* [Paris], no.209 (20th February 1948), p.2 col c. 'La grève des cheminots africains', *La Vérité* [Paris], no.214 (26th March 1948), p.1 col b.

Indeed, although imperial *recul ouvriers* in French India, Oceania, Tunisia, and Madagascar were not the same as those in foreign countries because, politically, they involved the same government, it is unlikely French workers made this distinction. Léon Kaptue, in his history of industrial relations in colonial Cameroon, amply demonstrated that French CGT unionists claimed, in theory, to represent all labourers without prejudice, yet in practice they often exhibited extremely racist and paternalist attitudes when interacting with indigenous workers.[9] Despite lofty rhetoric, French workers still perceived French Indian or Tunisian labour disputes as foreign affairs. At best, perhaps the main difference metropolitan unionists noticed between foreign and colonial *recul ouvriers* was that, in the latter case, the CGT could intervene directly in contentious labour disputes in French possessions overseas by, for example, convincing colonial administrators or the Ministry of Colonial Affairs to release imprisoned workers.

Yet there *was* an awareness of these worldwide anti-labour measures in France. This chapter will uncover and analyse this awareness and the various manifestations of *le recul ouvrier* in dailies, weeklies, monthlies, letters, and trade union bulletins spanning the entire political spectrum from 1946 till mid 1948 in many parts of the world. It will cover territories and nations such as the United States, Southern and Eastern Europe, and France's empire overseas.

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On the 12th July 1947, the socialist *Le Cri des Travailleurs* reported on the passing of the Taft-Hartley Act in the United States. Entitled 'Recul ouvrier aux États-Unis', the article alerted French readers to the dire future awaiting trade unions in

[9] L. Kaptue, *Travail et main-d'oeuvre au Cameroun sous régime français, 1916-1952* (Paris, 1986), p. 219.

America and throughout the globe.[10] Organisations representing the interests of poverty-stricken and powerless workers were under siege and trade unions, the engines of social and economic progress, were in full retreat. The US government appeared to rescind hard-won rights and could decide which strike was a threat to national interests. Either employers or police could penalize workers supporting striking colleagues.[11] The newspaper warned French workers should remain vigilant. If they did not prize the general interest over squabbling between socialists and communists in the CGT, 'le mouvement ouvrier connaîtra…des lendemains décevants.'[12]

Opinion pieces in *Internationalisme*, a newspaper aligned with the minuscule *Gauche Communiste* developed a similar theme. Anti-Soviet, anti-socialist, and often anti-strike, the GC was deeply critical of both the democratic West and the Soviet Union. An article released in January 1947 analysed the bleak post-war political landscape.[13] With ineffective parties leading wounded nations, in league with authoritarian states, the commentator concluded World War II was not yet over. Interpreting 1947 through the prism of the Bolshevik revolution and its repercussions, the author nicknamed 'Marco' believed imperialist powers brought World War I to an abrupt close for fear of contagious rebellions spreading outwardly from Russia to Germany. The post-World War I years saw trade unions assert themselves and force a compromise with governments dreading insurrection. However, 'Marco' and his colleagues despaired there were no openings for revolutionary change in the post-1945 world. Socialist and Stalinist

[10] 'Recul ouvrier aux États-Unis', *Le Cri des Travailleurs* [Albi], no.89 (12th July 1947), p.4 col a.
[11] For an analysis of the Taft-Hartley Act and its repercussions on American labour-management relations, see G. Lipsitz, *Rainbow at Midnight: Labor and Culture in the 1940's* (Chicago, 1994), pp.157-182.
[12] Ibid.
[13] 'Problèmes actuels du mouvement révolutionnaire international', *Internationalisme* no.17 (January1947), https://archivesautonomies.org/spip.php?article1939 (15th January 2020).

parties proved helpless in leading workers to a better tomorrow: 'Il serait peut-être plus exact encore de dire qu'il n'existe pas de mouvement ouvrier…' [14]

Despite their ideological differences, both *Le Cri des Travaillers* and *Internationalisme* agreed laws aiming to minimize the influence of left-wing trade unions were multiplying. Governments or militias sanctioned punitive measures, often intending to make examples of distinguished union militants to dissuade further agitation. The upper-echelons of French trade union federations, particularly in the PCF or SFIO, were generally well-informed about the persecution workers faced abroad. At a regional level, speakers attending yearly trade union congresses paid homage to foreign labour activists targeted, silenced, or killed. In August 1947, at the SFIO Congress delegate Paulette Dupey condemned 'les oppressions et les assassinats dont sont l'objet tous les Républicains et les Socialistes en Espagne, au Portugal, en Europe Centrale et d'une façon générale, dans tous les pays à régime dictatorial.'[15]

Local and national newspapers were partly responsible for transmitting such fears to the working population. The CGT's central bureau issued statements in February 1947 which featured warnings of impending coups planned by proto-fascists.[16] Vague statements described former Vichy supporters infiltrating republican parties and plotting a coup d'état to undermine the fragile Fourth Republic.[17] Union delegates ordered members to remain vigilant and urged loyal militants to save 'leur sang-froid' for strikes and movements to come.[18] 'Plus que jamais la République est en danger, la démocratie

[14] Ibid.
[15] 'Affirmation d'unanimité enthousiaste sur un programme d'action précis au Congrès de la SFIO-Rapport International', *Le Cri des Travailleurs* [Albi], no.93 (23rd August 1947), p.1 col a.
[16] 'Vigilance contre les tentatives réactionnaires déclare le Bureau Confédéral', *La Vie Ouvrière* [Paris], no.128 (19th-25th February 1947), p.8 col a-b.
[17] 'Attention au désastre et à la dictature', *Le Cri des Travailleurs* [Albi], no.73 (15th March 1947), p.1 col a.
[18] 'Dans le respect des libertés: discipline et sang-froid', *Le Peuple* [Paris], no.165 (18th-25th October 1947), p.1 col a-b.

en péril', said *Le Cri des Travailleurs* on the 19th April 1947.[19] This steady stream of information readied workers for future conflict, while foreign developments exacerbated domestic tensions.

When observing the government's response to the 1947-48 strike waves, French commentators saw the continuation, if not importation of anti-union laws the United States had first enacted. During the miners' strike, Justice Minister André Marie proposed significant alterations to articles 75 and 83 of the penal code, specifying that decrees which punished intelligence gathering for enemy states or individuals committing terrorist acts would also apply to striking miners.[20] Marie's proposals did not pass, but the fact he reprimanded a prosecutor in Béthune for his leniency towards miners on trial demonstrated that anti-labour trends had reached France.[21] For journalist André Marty-Capgras, the Taft-Hartley Act spread across the Atlantic, with socialist ministers taking inspiration from the Americans. The brutal suppression of miners in France was seen as part of a larger pattern.[22]

With these fears in mind, it is clearer why so many trade union delegates during the 1947-48 strikes demanded the CGT's right to assembly be respected; the Lacoste amendments of 1948 caused uproar because they sought to forbid communist-leaning trade unionists from congregating in cafeterias or property the mine owned.[23] Newspaper

[19] 'Aux manifestants commerçants, artisans: la cagoule se démasque', *Le Cri des Travailleurs* [Albi], no. 78 (19th April 1947), p.1 col c.
[20] 'Le code pénal contre la Constitution', *La Défense* [Paris], no.197 (12th-18th November 1948), p.4 col a.
[21] Vivens, 'Conflit Social…', p.107.
[22] 'Le code pénal contre la Constitution-12th-18th November 1948'.
[23] 'La deuxième circulaire ministérielle en date du 12 février 1948, a pour object l'application de l'article 28 du statut du mineur. Cet article définit l'exercice du droit syndical et de la liberté d'opinion, il constituait un acquis considerable pour l'époque…on relève en particulier le refus du ministre à la tenue de réunions syndicales sur les lieux du travail "car ces réunions risqueraient d'entraver la liberté du travail et l'activité de l'exploitation' in 'La Grande Grève des Mineurs de 1948- un colloque organisé les 22 et 23 novembre 1978 par la FNSS pp.26-27 ', November 1978, ADSSD, Fonds de la FNSS-CGT, 239J 12.

reports, telegrams, and letters describing the retreat of trade union rights abroad, in or outside the French Empire, were omnipresent after the war and may explain why, especially in northern coalfields during the autumn and winter of 1948, strikes appeared so insurrectionary. Was industrial action in the late forties partly a reaction to this *recul ouvrier*?

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Trade unionist Gaston Davoust maintained a short correspondence with Marxist commentator and critic Paul Mattick. In return for articles detailing the political and social landscape of post-war Europe, Mattick informed Davoust about developments in the US.[24] The Democratic Party held the presidency under Harry S. Truman while the Republicans controlled the Senate after a forceful campaign. Strike waves involving oil workers, miners, machinists, auto-workers, longshoremen, and textile workers finally receded.[25] A Pomeranian immigrant formerly living in Chicago, Mattick had moved to New York in late 1946.[26] He worked as a toolmaker by day, and also wrote economic reviews for Spanish newspapers in Chile and articles for Spartacist-leaning journals in the United States. In letters enclosed with food parcels for his French contact, Mattick expressed his desire to return to Berlin.[27] As a committed member of the Spartacus league when he was barely fourteen, Mattick had been an active participant in the failed

[24] 'Letter from Paul Mattick to Gaston Davoust', 16th November 1946, https://archivesautonomies.org/IMG/pdf/gauchecommuniste/internationaliste3ecamp/ffgci/correspondance-chaze-mattick.pdf (15th January 2020).
[25] J. Brecher, *Strike!* (San Francisco, 1972), pp.227-228.
[26] 'Letter from Paul Mattick to Gaston Davoust-30th March 1946'.
[27] Ibid.

German revolution of 1918. Ostracized for his involvement in the KPD (German Communist Party), Mattick fled to the United States in 1926.[28]

While surprisingly indifferent to the strikes, which he barely mentioned in his letters, Mattick expressed concern about the right-ward turn of American party and labour politics.[29] He saw no difference between Republicans or Democrats regarding their economic or foreign policies. Both parties appeared to be imperialist, masking their ambitions as aid to a ravaged Europe.[30] The strike waves caused disruption which gradually turned the public against organised labour. The mining strikes of November 1946, begun only days before congressional elections, intensified what R. Alton Lee called this 'post-war reaction', ensuring Republicans replaced the seemingly powerless Democrats in Congress.[31] Mattick despaired that this right-ward lurch had infected labour movements, triggering splits, expulsions, witch-hunts, and chronic infighting.[32]

Mattick's pessimistic assessment of post-war American trade unionism was not limited to intellectuals as disenchantment also spread to workers along the assembly line. In 1947, Paul Romano (pen-name Phil Singer), an employee in a General Motors plant wrote a pamphlet entitled 'The American Worker'.[33] Recounting his early days at GM, he was shocked to discover trade union delegates were not eager to recruit newcomers. Despite the hundreds of workers registered to unions only a handful attended weekly meetings and most did not want to sacrifice a Sunday evening discussing wages.[34]

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[28] 'Biography of Paul Mattick, (20th September 2005), http://libcom.org/history/articles/1904-1981-paul-mattick (accessed 15th January 2020).
[29] 'Letter from Paul Mattick to Gaston Davoust- 9th July 1946'.
[30] 'Letter from Paul Mattick to Gaston Davoust-16th November 1946'.
[31] R. A. Lee, *Truman and Taft-Hartley: A Question of Mandate* (Lexington, 1966), p.8. See J.H. Shurbet, 'John L. Lewis: The Truman Years' (Phd thesis, Texas Tech University, 1975), pp.244-254.
[32] 'Letter from Paul Mattick to Gaston Davoust-16th November 1946'.
[33] 'L'ouvrier américain-L'organisation des ouvriers', *Socialisme ou Barbarie* [Paris], no.3 (July-August 1949), p.74.
[34] Ibid, pp.74-75.

Fearful of the possible repercussions of Taft-Hartley, Romano tried to galvanize the factory floor himself.[35] He pushed for a general strike in response to Taft-Hartley's passing in Congress, but union delegates prevented him from taking further action. He even tried to convene an emergency meeting to discuss the Taft-Hartley Act, but union delegates refused and told him to wait until after the CIO (Congress of Industrial Organizations) assembly to start debates. Several weeks later, they finally called a meeting only to find a half-filled hall.[36]

In France, journalists also covered this decline in *La Révolution Prolétarienne,* and wrote extensive analyses of American post-war labour politics, discussing how employers or the American press labelled communist delegate William Foster a radical subversive for leading strikes aiming to unionize metal-workers. Labour activist Alfred Rosmer explained trade union representation in the US often collapsed in the face of intransigent factory owners who tried to expel independent or far-left leaning unionists.[37] In *Le Monde* readers discovered how the Truman administration brought the seemingly invincible John L. Lewis, leader of the UMW (United Mining workers of America), to heel after the 1946 miners' strike.[38] *L'Humanité* covered the telephone operators' strike of April 1947, highlighting the role of Republican Senator Alfred Driscoll who passed laws allowing the imprisonment of strikers for thirty days in the New Jersey State legislature.[39] Even the right-wing *L'Aurore* described Taft-Hartley as a 'declaration of war' against unions, and instituting a 'shocking' imbalance of power favouring

[35] Ibid, pp.76-77.
[36] Ibid, p.77.
[37] 'La classe ouvrière américaine après la guerre: le problème de la reconversion', *La Révolution Prolétarienne* [Paris], no.302 (April 1947), pp.14-16.
[38] 'John Lewis et son syndicat sont frappés de lourdes amendes', *Le Monde* [Paris], 6th December 1946, https://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1946/12/06/john-lewis-et-son-syndicat-sont-frappes-de-lourdes-amendes_1869784_1819218.html (14th January 2020).
[39] 'La crise s'aggrave aux États-Unis: 350,000 téléphonistes ont cessé le travail', *L'Humanité* [Paris], no.803 (8th April 1947), pp.1-3 col b. 'Aux téléphonistes américains: 30 jours de prison par jour de grève', *L'Humanité* [Paris], no. 805 (10th April 1947), pp.1-3 col b.

employers.[40] The Marshall Plan, which many on the French left and even right considered an act of benevolent imperialism, was not the only reason why the press warned French workers of American economic and cultural hegemony in post-war Europe.[41] The US could export anti-labour laws like Taft-Hartley in the same way it brought Coca-Cola and westerns to France.[42]

Auguste Lecoeur, CGT president of the Mining Federation for le Nord and Pas-de-Calais commented on the American coal strike of April 1948.[43] After months of anticipation, the conflict began when the Coal Welfare Fund still remained closed. A trustee backed by coal magnates refused to disburse money to the miners' pension fund, which pushed UMW leader John L. Lewis to call for another strike.[44] He insisted that every UMW member regardless of whether they had signed a contract with coal operators or not should receive $100 per month when they retired.[45]

Lecoeur did not seem surprised to see coal barons postpone the release of pension funds. He recalled visiting American coalfields in his youth, when he met an interpreter who had spent thirty-six years working below ground. The elderly miner had no pension, and since he was sixty-two and crippled with rheumatism, feared he could soon lose his job. He could not afford to retire.[46] Lecoeur's disgust at America's lack of social security

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[40] 'L'Amérique croit-elle à la guerre? VII- Le Monde du Travail', *L'Aurore* [Paris], no.873 (8th July 1947), p.2 col a.

[41] For French Anti-Americanism, see P. Roger, *The American Enemy: The History of French Anti-Americanism* (London, 2005), pp. 320-335. S. D. Armus, *French Anti-Americanism 1930-1948: Critical Moments in a Complex History* (Lanham, 2010), pp.74-82.

[42] See R. F. Kuisel, 'Coca-Cola and the Cold War: The French Face of Americanization, 1948-1953', *French Historical Studies,* 17/1(1991), pp.96-116. D. Bellos, 'Tati and America: *Jour de fête* and the Blum-Byrnes Agreement of 1946', *French Cultural Studies,* 10/29 (2009), pp.153-157. P. Mayol, 'La consommation des Français et leur vie culturelle 1944-1955', in J.C. Klein and P. Gumplowicz (eds.), *Paris 1944-1954: Artistes, intellectuels,publics: la culture comme enjeu* (Paris, 1995) http://www2.univ-paris8.fr/scee/repdupasse/consommation_et_vie_culturelle_053.htm (14th January 2020).

[43] 'Près d'un demi-million de mineurs américains luttent par la grève, pour le pain et la démocratie', *L'Humanité* [Paris], no.1250 (1st April 1948), p.2 col a.

[44] Shurbet, 'John L. Lewis: The Truman Years', pp.275-280.

[45] Ibid, p.274.

[46] 'Près d'un demi-million de mineurs-1st April 1948'.

grew after attending an International Coal Industry Commission in London after the war. An American delegate read out the following statistics: '165,095 travailleurs de 45 à 64 ans: 10,872 travailleurs de plus de 65 ans.' Lecoeur and others saw American workers as exploited from cradle to grave with little hope of respite. Having spent their entire lives in the mines, he believed American workers deserved the same security enjoyed (and only recently acquired) by French colleagues. American society appeared to promote a Darwinian struggle for survival, a system which left behind the ill, aged, Black, and infirm with no remorse, leaving many to die destitute on the streets.[47]

Lecoeur's article not only attacked the United States, but also praised fellow communist Ambroise Croizat for implementing social security in France: 'Mis en pratique par les communistes, cela a abouti à ce que, par exemple, un mineur français qui a travaillé au fond des puits pendant 36 années peut percevoir à 50 ans une retraite annuelle s'élevant à 126,000 francs, à quoi s'ajoutent le logement, le charbon, les soins médicaux, etc…'[48] Unlike their American counterparts, French miners did not have to toil beyond breaking point, and Lecoeur believed welfare laws such as the Miners' Statute, superior to those in America. He cited Condorcet, who believed every state institution should help ameliorate the well-being of the poor. This was a French tradition worth protecting from any encroachment of American labour laws.[49]

For a miner such as Lecoeur, the Marshall Plan represented more than a vague capitulation of French cultural, national, and economic sovereignty. His critique focused on the way American political hegemony would diminish relatively secure French miners, making them more like workers in Pennsylvania bereft of live-saving benefits:

[47] Ibid.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid.

‘Les travailleurs français, les vieux et vieilles qui bénéficient des avantages sociaux… ne sont pas prêts de s’embarquer dans la galère “Démocratie américaine.” ’[50]

Lecoeur also warned that threats to French social insurance would also come from vengeful French bosses influenced by their ‘masters’ in the United States.[51] CGT members also read reports detailing the imprisonment of respected activists or veterans in the US, ruled as criminals due to their communist party affiliations. For example, Ferdinand Smith, an African-American communist activist and co-founder of the National Maritime Union was imprisoned on Ellis Island in March 1948. He could not mingle with inmates in canteens, while white supremacists and Nazis travelled freely outside a double-barbed wired enclosure.[52] Smith soon became friends with fellow internees and trade unionists Irving Potash of the Fur and Leather Workers’ Union, Charles Doyle of the Gas, Coke and Chemical Workers’ Union, and the American Communist party secretary John Williamson.[53] Smith also shared a cell with George Pirinsky, a Bulgarian immigrant who faced deportation for his role in the Fourth National Convention of the American Slav Congress in Chicago.[54] Despite a successful hunger strike which forced authorities to free Smith and his comrades temporarily, the US government was still determined not to let him go. Following a lengthy trial, Smith was deported to Jamaica, mainly due to his tenuous ties to the Communist party in 1951.[55]

[50] Ibid.
[51] Ibid.
[52] G. Horne, *Red Seas: Ferdinand Smith and Radical Black Sailors in the United States and Jamaica* (New York, 2005), p.203.
[53] Ibid, p.203. California Legislature, *Fourth Report of the Senate Fact-Finding Committee on Un-American Activities 1948: Communist Front Organizations* (Sacramento, 1948), pp.202-209.
[54] Ibid, p.203. Committee on Un-American Activities, *Report on the American Slav Congress and Associated Organizations- June 1949* (Washington, 1950), p.68.
[55] Horne, *Red Seas*, pp.212-216.

Members of the CGT knew about of the fate of Ferdinand Smith and his fellow inmates, as the letter below demonstrates:

> 'Le Comité exécutif de l'Union des Syndicats des Travailleurs de la Métallurgie de la Seine a appris avec émotion et indignation que les militants syndicalistes communistes et anti-fascistes:
>
> Ferdinand Smith, de la direction du Syndicat de la Marine et du Commerce.
>
> Charles Doyle, responsable d'un syndicat du C.I.O
>
> Irving Potash, secrétaire du Syndicat des Ouvriers de la Fourrure
>
> John Williamson, militant communiste
>
> Gerhart Eisler, anti-fasciste, réfugié allemand
>
> sont contraints depuis cinq jours de faire la grève de la faim, pour protester contre leur détention arbitraire et contraire au respect de la liberté d'opinion de la personne humaine et de la démocratie dont se réclament les gouvernements des États-Unis d'Amérique. Le Comité exécutif élève sa protestation la plus véhémente contre de tels actes et demande au gouvernement des États-Unis d'Amérique la libération immédiate de cinq représentants de travailleurs américains dont il se déclare solidaire.'[56]

For the House Committee on Un-American Activities and immigration officers, Smith was an alien radical threatening to poison American minds with communism, whereas for French left-wing publications, Smith was another innocent victim of the red-baiting craze overtaking America.[57] Smith's firing from the NMU, arrest, and expulsion further cemented the image of an intolerant America in French left-leaning newspapers. While US foreign policy preached democracy on the world stage, the US government pressured American workers adhering to fringe movements to stay in line.

[56] 'Une lettre à l'Ambassadeur des États-Unis', *Le Peuple* [Paris], no.186 (4th-11th March 1948), p.4. col a.
[57] Horne, *Red Seas,* pp.200-201.

L'Humanité fully exploited Smith's unjustified detention. Pierre Hervé noted Smith faced not only anti-communism but also racism.[58] He framed his arrest as an inevitable consequence of a government propagating the myth of the 'pure American' to root out undesirables. For Hervé, America's racist society was evolving into a proto-fascist state, discriminating minorities, Latinos, mulattos, and the poor.[59] Labourers wishing to speak out against injustice such as Smith became targets for imprisonment or worse. The article ended with a plea: French workers should never forget American governance went hand in hand with the brutal suppression of insubordinate labour. The execution of anarchists during the first post-World War I Red Scare set a disquieting precedent. Hervé warned the French they should resist if similar discriminations ever spread to France.[60]

Les Lettres Françaises published translations of an article by Daniel Gillmor, a journalist affiliated with left-wing democrat Henry Wallace's *The New Republic* magazine, which tracked the muzzling of American labour. The article portrayed the US as a paranoid, xenophobic, and ultra-nationalist surveillance state.[61]

FBI director J. Edgar Hoover, who seemingly possessed unlimited power sent agents to raid various trade union branches which supported Wallace's presidential campaign in New York State.[62] Gillmor clearly emphasized Smith, Doyle, Potash, and Williamson were not the only persons the US government harassed for communist activities. The *New York Journal* reported the Department of Justice issued dozens of

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[58] 'Cinq victimes de la "démocratie américaine"', *L'Humanité* [Paris], no. 1089 (8th March 1948), p.3 col a.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Ibid.
[61] 'L'Amérique sous le talon de fer: l'inquisition est commencée', *Les Lettres Françaises* [Paris], no.215 (1st July 1948), p.8 col a.
[62] Ibid.

other arrest warrants. Joe Weber, former secretary of an agricultural tool-making union, faced deportation on the pretext he had illegally crossed the Mexican border for barely four hours nine years before. It is clear these expulsions served as examples to dissuade anyone from joining communist-leaning unions.[63]

Journalist Vladimir Pozner echoed Gillmor's concerns and outlined the numerous provisions of the Mundt-Nixon Bill.[64] It appeared the House on Un-American Activities wanted to rescind multiple liberties to prevent a communist dictatorship. The Bill proposed any naturalized citizen should have their citizenship revoked if found guilty of engaging in revolutionary activities. Individuals affiliated to every communist organization could be banned from government employment and have their passport withheld. Registers of CPUSA (Communist Party of the United States of America) members (and anyone with the faintest link to communist 'fronts') would be compiled.[65] Pozner feared the FBI was creating a police state and imagined a scenario whereby the Mundt-Nixon Bill came to France, a legislative coup which would entail the closure of Masonic lodges, veteran associations, publishing houses, art galleries, trade unions, or literary and academic societies.[66] In *Les Lettres Françaises* America was sleepwalking into dystopia.

The passing of the Taft-Hartley Act combined with the arbitrary detention of trade unionists painted a grim picture for French observers in the CGT and elsewhere. Taft-Hartley stymied industrial strife, while the Smith Act and Mundt-Nixon Bill

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[63] Ibid.
[64] 'La Loi Mundt légalise les procédés de la Gestapo', *Les Lettres Françaises* [Paris], no.215 (1st July 1948), p.1 col a-d.
[65] R. A. Lee, 'New Dealers, Fair Dealers, Misdealers and Hiss Dealers: Karl Mundt and the Internal Security Act of 1950', *South Dakota History,* no.10 (1980), p.282.
[66] Ibid.

justified the expulsions of trade unionists. This *recul ouvrier* affected countries in Europe as well.

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French trade unions were also well aware of the consequences of the Greek Civil War for workers. Greek textile labourers sent telegrams to their French counterparts which laid bare the chilling reality of the war, truths the mainstream press often romanticized. The Greek Civil War, as French journalists on either side of the political spectrum interpreted, was an epic struggle for supremacy worthy of Homer or Thucydides.[67] In *L'Humanité* and other communist-leaning periodicals, General Markos and his band of guerrilla fighters seemed like Achilles, indomitable in the face of overwhelming odds and embodying revolutionary zeal.[68] Socialist and even right-wing papers despaired the cradle of Western civilization was being torn apart. The French intelligentsia and public opinion unanimously sympathized with the people of Greece.[69] Yet textile workers such as Georges Naslas or Jean Abadjoglou wrote messages which did not resort to the mythological metaphors so prevalent in the press. Instead, French textile unionists saw workers like themselves harassed, imprisoned, and stripped of hard-won rights after the war.

Beginning his correspondence in June 1946, Naslas asked French comrades for information on labour codes, while mentioning the numerous difficulties hampering the creation of trade unions in Greece.[70] Even though they represented 25% of the Hellenic

[67] A. Balta, 'La presse française face à la guerre civile grecque (1946-1949)', *Cahiers Balkaniques,* 1/41 (2013), pp.4-6.
[68] Ibid, p.4.
[69] Ibid pp.5-6.
[70] 'Lettre de Georges Naslas, secrétaire de la Fédération du Textile d'Athènes à la Fédération Nationale du Textile à Paris', 28th March 1948, ADSSD, Fonds Fédération Nationale des Travailleurs du Textile-CGT, 43J 125.

workforce, textile labourers could barely afford weekly sugar rations. Social security was non-existent except in major metropolitan areas such as Athens, Patras, and Thessaloniki. Factories did not enforce basic health and safety procedures due to shortages in heating appliances, adequate lighting, or clean ventilation systems. Industrialists had the right to fire personnel with impunity.[71]

Terrorism added to these problems. Naslas implied trade unionists, ever since the textile union general assembly in 1945, could not do their jobs and dealt with constant threats of disruption. Armed bands of 'monarcho-fascistes' wounded ten workers, a judiciary representative, and attacked hundreds of attendees.[72] Jean Abadjolou's demands for advice soon turned into anguished cries for help. Short telegrams replaced letters stating how the Ministry for Labour ordered police to requisition archives belonging to unions. Police ransacked offices in Athens, culminating in the arrest of four textile workers.[73] The telegram warned fascists and former collaborators were elected into other union federations.[74] The International Trade Union Federation received a copy of the final telegram from secretary general Édouard Aubert in June 1946. The Greek government imposed laws which forbid strikes, public meetings, and a free press. Anyone breaking the law could be sentenced to death: 'Au secours camarades français…'[75]

Throughout 1946 and 1947 the French press depicted Spain, like Greece, as a country under a reign of terror. Myriad articles listed the countless prisons the Phalange

[71] Ibid.
[72] Ibid.
[73] 'Télégramme de la Fédération du Textile d'Athènes à la Fédération Nationale du Textile à Paris', 1946, ADSSD, Fonds FNTT-CGT, 43J 125.
[74] 'Télégramme de Jean Abadjolou à la Fédération Nationale du Textile à Paris', 1946, ADSSD, Fonds FNTT-CGT, 43J 125.
[75] 'Lettre d'Édouard Aubert, Secrétaire Général de la Fédération du Textile, à Louis Saillant, de la Fédération Syndicale Mondiale', 19th June 1946, ADSSD, Fonds FNTT-CGT, 43J 125.

erected since the end of the Spanish Civil War and described police stations in Puerta del Sol as 'Spain's answer to Belsen', while comparing the Guardia Civil's methods to the Gestapo's.[76] Articles related explicit accounts of secret police torture techniques: 'Courant électrique sur les organes génitaux, sur les seins. Étouffement avec masques à gaz...'[77] *La Défense* recorded over multiple issues the final months and weeks of former metal-work trade unionist turned guerrilla fighter Ramon Fernandez.[78] A whistle-blower had betrayed him in Malaga, resulting in his arrest. Fernandez recorded his agonizing ordeal, smuggled a copy of his prison diary out of jail which an underground publisher in Madrid translated into French. Convinced of his impending death, Fernandez hoped his testimony reminded the United Nations of the crimes Franco's regime continued to perpetrate.[79] Fernandez claimed he was beaten for days for refusing to disclose the whereabouts of his home or comrades. [80] Though he survived a suicide attempt and escaped captivity, police soon discovered Fernandez hiding in a safe house two months later and executed him on sight.[81]

Left-leaning newspapers like *La Défense* covered Fernandez's death and expressed disgust and outrage that 'Hitlerian terrorist acts' persisted unpunished in Spain. The 'normalisation' of phalangist rule covered-up heinous violence carried out against workers left behind under Franco's rule.[82]

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[76] 'Tous à l'oeuvre pour sauver Cristiano Garcia, Alvarez, Zapirain, Roman Via et tous nous valeureux frères d'armes: à bas la terreur franquiste', *La Défense* [Paris], no.65 (22nd February 1946), p.3 col b.
[77] Ibid.
[78] 'J'accuse: un document accablant sorti clandestinement de la prison de Malaga', *La Défense* [Paris], no. 64 (15th February 1946), p.4 col a-g.
[79] Ibid.
[80] 'Deuxième Partie: un document accablant sorti clandestinement de la prison de Malaga', *La Défense* [Paris], no.65 (22nd February 1946), p.4 col a-g.
[81] 'Ramon Via assassiné! Une lettre d'Antonio Mije', *La Défense* [Paris], no.85 (12th July 1946), p.1 col a.
[82] Ibid.

Roger Klein of *Franc-Tireur* relayed a similar message in a six-part investigation of post-war Spain in September 1947. One article featured an interview with two women imprisoned for years due to their affiliation with banned communist militias.[83] Klein was horrified to find his contacts with haggard faces, broken jaws, scarred cheeks, toothless smiles, dressed in rags, and living in near destitution: 'J'ai passé onze mois à la prison de Ventas…On torture et on tue toujours dans les commissariats, mais moins dans les prisons.'[84] Republicans, anarchists, socialists, and Basque nationalists, while still meeting in secret and co-ordinating efforts to destabilize the regime, struggled to mount a cohesive front without support from the UN or WFTU (World Federation of Trade Unions).[85] Speaking to a rural trade unionist, Klein discovered villages paralysed with fear and dreaded the slightest stirrings of unrest could result in death. Army regiments invaded local farmsteads, crushed maquis activity, and forced villagers to hand over food to commanding officers.[86] Klein saw the remnants of republicanism pushed deeper underground while the Phalange tightened its grip on power.

Franc-Tireur also published extracts from *Insomnie Espagnole*, a book by journalist Victor Alba which exposed the inner-workings of Franco's regime to a French audience. Alba interviewed a phalangist trade unionist named Gonzalez who was making his way to the Rio Tinto mines to quell a strike.[87] He presented Gonzalez as a corrupt bureaucrat and a 'traitor of the working-class', who was living proof legal union

[83] 'Dis au monde qu'en Espagne on torture. L'O.N.U n'a pas le droit de nous oublier', *Franc-Tireur* [Paris], no.970 (14th-15th September 1947), pp.1-4 col a-e.
[84] Ibid.
[85] 'La férocité du Caudillo a cimenté l'union des sept partis antifranquistes de la résistance basque', *Franc-Tireur* [Paris], no.974 (19th September 1947), p.4 col b-d. 'Et maintenant, qu'en pense la résistance espagnole?', *Franc-Tireur* [Paris], no.976 (21st September 1947), p.4 col a-c.
[86] 'À Valence, un comité secret avec six paysans et l'homme sans nom: famine dans les villes et terreur partout', *Franc-Tireur* [Paris], no.971 (16th September 1947), p.2 col a.
[87] 'Quand Franco ruse pour durer…Images de l'Espagne esclave', *Franc-Tireur* [Paris], no.832 (4th April 1947), p.4 col a-c.

representation was a sham in Spain, while labourers not complicit with the regime faced severe penalties. [88]

Serge Groussard, writing for the right-wing *L'Intransigeant,* witnessed this repression first-hand while visiting Bilbao in May 1947. He liaised with underground trade unionist Santiago Murbe who explained why Basque textile and metal-workers risked going on strike: 'Dans aucun pays du monde il n'existe une misère pareille!'[89] Rationing cards allowed each person to purchase mouldy bread, a single glass of olive oil, and a pound of beans per month. Murbe also cited articles in the pro-phalange *Hoja del Canes*, which also criticized authorities for failing to stabilize prices. Poor workers still relied on the black market to survive. *Époque,* another right-wing daily known for its ambivalent coverage of Franco's prison system even agreed Spanish workers struggled.[90] Murbe distributed tracts urging Bilboan workers to protest soaring prices despite dangers of arrest or torture by the Guardia Civil.[91]

Much to his horror, Groussard discovered police arrested Murbe and other clandestine trade unionists hours after their meeting. He visited Murbe's grieving wife Conchita who feared she would never see her husband again. As he left her apartment, Groussard heard soldiers marching towards working-class tenements. Yet the capture of dozens of UGT (General Union of Spanish Workers) members did not prevent the outbreak of strikes in Baracaldo.[92] Fearing violent reprisals from Madrid, CGT member and WFTU Secretary-General Louis Saillant chaired meetings with exiled UGT and

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[88] Ibid.
[89] '"Aucun pays ne connaît pareille misère" m'a dit le gréviste de Bilbao', *L'Intransigeant* [Paris], no.52, 154 (15th May 1947), p.3 col a-b.
[90] 'L'ouvrier espagnol peut s'offrir le superflu mais non le nécessaire', *L'Époque* [Paris], no.1583 (16th November 1946), pp.1-2 col a-f. 'Les prisons espagnoles vues de ma cellule', *L'Époque* [Paris], no.1589 (23rd November 1946), p. 2 col a-f.
[91] 'Aucun pays ne connaît pareille misère -15h May 1947'.
[92] Ibid.

Spanish socialist party members, who all agreed to send delegations to the Spanish border to help strikers fleeing persecution.[93]

Post-war industrial action in Spain was of great interest to editors of *Le Guide du Métallurgiste,* a monthly bulletin popular amongst CGT metal-work trade unionists, which cited Spanish strike-waves in May 1946 as admirable examples of working-class bravery, tenacity, and organisation, especially for French metallurgists taking part in their own strikes throughout the summer of 1947.[94] Yet reports also outlined the consequences of their militancy. The bulletin explained to readers how death or lengthy prison terms awaited workers affiliated with outlawed unions in Spain. Obtaining higher salaries was a pyrrhic victory as Madrid's heavy-handed response to strikes was ruthless.[95] Minister for the Interior Blas González, when hearing news of disturbances in Bilbao reportedly said: 'Il faut absolument étouffer et anéantir le mouvement ouvrier.'[96] The governor of Bilbao ordered armed forces to scour the streets. Employers temporarily fired an estimated fourteen thousand workers while police detained another six thousand. Factory managers verified readmission letters, which the governor double-checked himself. To go on strike in Franco's Spain was perilous.[97]

Labour relations in post-war Portugal did not fare any better according to the French press. In 1944, Salazar's relationship with the *Gouvernement provisiore de la République* was frosty, with French representatives noting the hostile attitude of the Portuguese authorities sent to recognize liberated France.[98] Therefore, press campaigns

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[93] 'Une délégation de la F.S.M se rend à la frontière espagnole', *Franc-Tireur* [Paris], no.862 (10th May 1947), p.4 col a-b.
[94] 'La grève du Pays Basque. Symbole de la lutte du peuple espagnol', *Le Guide du Métallurgiste CGT* [Paris], no.18 (1st June 1947), pp.9-11.
[95] Ibid.
[96] Ibid.
[97] Ibid.
[98] H.P. Janeiro, 'Salazar et les trois Frances (1940-1944)' tr. Y. Léonard, *Vingtième Siècle-Revue d'histoire,* no.62 (1999), pp.49-50.

began to discredit Salazar's dictatorship.'Vichy's Idol' had to be cut down to size.[99] Portugal's 'neutrality' during the war came under sharp scrutiny, while the regime's use of secret police to quell opposition was equated with Hitler's Germany.[100] Journalists in *Le Monde* recorded the endemic poverty and high illiteracy rates afflicting the countryside, while the Catholic Church's influence caused bewilderment.[101] A fleeting construction boom in Lisbon combined with Salazar's hasty decision to promote 'democratic' elections in response to the collapse of fascism, were greeted with scepticism.[102] Even *La Croix*, a daily which heaped praise on Salazar the Christian statesman, toned down its sympathy for the *Estado Novo*.[103] Translations of Portuguese newspapers such as *A Voz* implied Salazar's 'neutral', and eventually pro-western regime, still harboured Axis sympathies. Portugal's enthusiastic support for German rearmament in 1946 raised eyebrows.[104]

Yet above all else, what French audiences learnt of Salazar was his often unforgiving response to labour unrest. Persistent protest movements decrying the unaffordability of bread prompted prefectures, governors, and industrialists to rely increasingly on the PIDE (International and State Defense Police) to mount pre-emptive

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99 Ibid, p.50.

100 'Un foyer de résistance nazie: le Portugal sous la dictature de Salazar', *La Défense* [Paris], no.49 (26th October 1946), p.3 col a-c.

101 R. G. Escarpit, 'Escale à Lisbonne, capitale de la misère dorée', *Le Monde* [Paris], (5th January 1946), https://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1946/01/05/escale-a-lisbonne-capitale-de-la-misere-doree_1875933_1819218.html (12th January 2020). A. Marvaud, 'Les Embarras du Portugal IV. Incertitudes et perspectives', *Le Monde* [Paris], (17th December 1946), https://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1946/12/17/les-embarras-du-portugal-iv-incertitudes-et-perspectives_3060837_1819218.html (12th January 2020).

102 Marvaud, 'Les Embarras du Portugal I. Reprise de Contact-12th December 1946', 'Les Embarras du Portugal II. Du côté des opposants-13th December 1946', 'V. Considérations Internationales-18th December 1946'.

103 'Un véritable homme d'état', *La Croix* [Paris], no.16,506 (5th December 1936), p.2. *'...grâce à Salazar, leur pays restauré attire tous les regards et fait l'admiration du monde...'* in 'France-Portugal', *La Croix* [Limoges], no.17, 718 (29th October 1940), p.2 col b.

104 'Une "démocratie occidentale". Le Portugal de Salazar, allié de Londres et de Washington', *La Défense* [Paris], no.85 (16th July 1946), p.5 col a-b.

purges in factories to wipe out underground communist cells.[105] When these tactics failed to prevent strikes the Portuguese State employed more rigorous methods. A month-long strike in the docklands and construction sites of Lisbon in April 1947 finally ended when police rounded up trade unionists and shipped them to the penal colony of Tarrafal along the West African coast.[106] For *Le Monde*, *La Défense*, *L'Humanité,* and other publications, Salazar's 'Christian militancy' was tied to concentration camps filled with political prisoners in Cape Verde.[107] Citing reports from the American *Overseas News* journal, articles revealed that over two hundred inmates and union leaders tied to the PCP (Portuguese Communist Party) were dying slowly from untreated cancers, tuberculosis, and forced labour in unbearable heat.[108] After studying Nazi extermination camps, Portuguese military personnel applied their new expertise to Tarrafal. Inmates worked for hours lifting stones in quarries. Esmeraldo Prate, head doctor on the island, admitted that he was summoned to Tarrafal to collect, sign, and deliver death certificates but rarely to cure patients or alleviate pain.[109]

Further articles in 1947-1948 revealed dock workers faced twelve years of forced labour after leading protest strikes against Portugal's intervention during the Spanish Civil War. Glass-worker Antonio Guerra, who had completed his sentence on the island

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[105] C.S.F. Teixeira, 'As greves dos operários de lanifícios da Covilhã no Inverno 1941: O início da agitação operária em Portugal durante a Segunda Guerra Mondial' (Masters thesis, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, 2012), pp.105-106. See also A.F. Mineiro, 'Tortosendo, uma vila durante o Estado Novo – 1933-1974 história e memória de un núcleo industrial' (PhD thesis, Universidad de Salamanca, 2016), pp.455-457. For a summary of the PCP's (Portuguese Communist Party) role in post-war strikes, and the subsequent PIDE crackdowns, see M.J.R. Duarte,'Oposição à ditadura militar e ao «Estado Novo» no Algarve (1926-1958) : o caso do Concelho de Silves '(PhD thesis, Universidade de Lisboa, 2007), pp.337-373. M.F.R. Lopes, 'O sindicalismo português entre 1933 e 1974: orientações políticas e estratégicas do Partido Comunista Português para a luta sindical ' (PhD thesis, Universidade de Lisboa, 2010), pp. 169-230.

[106] 'Les événements du Portugal', *Le Monde* [Paris], (18th June 1947), https://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1947/06/18/les-evenements-du-portugal_1892845_1819218.html (12th January 2020)

[107] 'Les camps d'extermination du dictateur Salazar', *La Défense* [Paris], no.64 (15th February 1946), p.3 col a-b.

[108] Ibid.

[109] Ibid.

for participating in strikes, was sent back to Tarrafal: 'Sa nouvelle déportation correspond à une condemnation à mort.'[110]

The Estado Novo did not rely solely on remote camps to smash dissent. The PIDE, much like the Guardia Civil in Spain spared no expense to deter working-class unrest at home. A picture of young PCP member and docker Alfredo Dinis, described as a prominent participant of the mid-forties strike waves, appeared in *La Défense*. He was assassinated by PIDE officers.[111] Though articles tended to overstate the significance of the PCP's role in instigating what were essentially spontaneous movements, it was undeniable strike ringleaders, whether communist or not, paid dearly for their involvement.[112] Reports covered the aftermath of an enormous Covilha mine and mill strike in 1946, which claimed PIDE agents tortured dozens of workers.[113] PIDE Captain Faria transferred strikers to Caxias prison for interrogation and assaulted them for days. On their return to Covilha many workers had to forge identity documents to find employment.[114]PIDE officers allegedly tortured the head of a cork industry trade union while in custody as well.[115]

In short, Salazar's Portugal seemed no different from Franco's autocracy. Immovable regimes which privileged the rule of force over the rule of law controlled the entire Iberian Peninsula, a reality workers and unionists were aware of in France.

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[110] 'Au Portugal, la P.I.D.E (Gestapo de Salazar) prépare une comédie "électorale"', *La Défense* [Paris], no.192 (8-14th October 1948), p.2 col b-c.
[111] Ibid.
[112] D. L. Raby, *Fascism and Resistance in Portugal: Communists, Liberals and Military Dissidents in the Opposition to Salazar 1941-74* (Manchester, 1988), pp.70-82.
[113] 'Nouvelles du Monde-Portugal', *La Défense* [Paris], no.79 (31st May 1946), p.3 col b-c.
[114] I.F. Pimentel, *A História da PIDE* (Lisbon, 2007), p.50 in C.S.F Teixeira, 'As greves dos operários de Lanifícios da Covilha', pp.104-105.
[115] 'Au Portugal, la P.I.D.E (Gestapo de Salazar)- 8-14th October 1948'. See Duarte, 'Oposição à ditadura militar e ao «Estado Novo»', pp.343-373.

Anarchist dailies like *Le Libertaire,* or monthlies aligned with Force Ouvrière, such as translations of the *Free Trade Union News,* which reflected the AFL's (American Federation of Labour) anti-communism also covered *le recul ouvrier* underway in Eastern Europe.[116] In these publications it was the emerging communist regimes which crushed strikes, revoked trade union liberties, and terrorized the working-class.

For almost three years French anarchist organizations campaigned to draw attention to Bulgaria's war on 'enemies of the people', who were in fact just ordinary labourers. In January 1947, a telegram the Bulgarian legation in Paris sent to *Le Libertaire* emphasized post-war purges mainly targeted people from working-class backgrounds. Victims included Stephan Kotakoff, the leader of countless strikes in the tobacco industry and Athanase Stoietcheff, a labour activist since the September Uprisings of 1923.[117] In the countryside, the BKP (Bulgarian Communist Party) backed police to suppress spontaneous uprisings protesting the murder of a young peasant. Anarchist-leaning workers suffered brutal treatment, spent over twenty days in prisons, and were later transferred to forced labour camps.[118] The September coup d'état of 1944 instituted an oppressive and anti-labour regime: '…comme à l'époque des syndicats fascistes…l'organisation syndicale est devenue un rouage de l'État…'[119] There appeared to be no difference between the Soviet-backed BKP and Tsar Boris III, who suspended

[116] A. Carew, *American Labour's Cold War Abroad: From Deep Freeze to Détente, 1945-1970* (Edmonton, 2018), pp.38-39. For Force Ouvrière's relationship with the AFL-CIO , see T. Régin, 'Force Ouvrière à la lumière des archives américaines', *Cahiers d'histoire. Revue d'histoire critique,* no.87(2002), pp.103118.

[117] 'Des cris derrière le rideau de fer. Les Quislings staliniens en Bulgarie s'acharnent contre nos camarades', *Le Libertaire* [Paris], no. 65 (30th January 1947), p.2 col b.

[118] Ibid, p.4 col a.

[119] 'Persécution en Bulgarie', *Le Libertaire* [Paris], no.52 (25th October 1946), p.1 col b.

the constitution and placed trade unions and the press under state control in the mid-thirties.[120]

Reports listed profiles of activists and unionists locked away in concentration camps. Communists interned machine operator Anton Dominscheiff for distributing fliers demanding the establishment of free trade unions in his hometown. Teachers, medical students, engineering graduates, typographers, chemists, and librarians joined workers in the minuscule cells of Nojarevo-Tutracenscko camp.[121] *Le Libertaire* provided French readers with a comprehensive overview of the vast prison-camp system the BKP administered.[122] The anarchist press singled out detention centres in Koutzian and Bogdanoff-Dol for their cruelty and called them the 'Mauthausens of Bulgaria.'[123] Translated articles recovered from *Umanita Nova* revealed the ghastly living conditions inmates suffered. Workers laboured fifteen hours a day in mines and received low food rations. In January 1947, new regulations prohibited prisoners from receiving packages containing clothing, condemning many to die in freezing weather while guards tortured political dissidents:'Un des châtiments…consiste à passer la nuit dehors, sous la pluie, la grêle ou la neige, avec interdiction absolue de se mouvoir pour se réchauffer.'[124] Trivial offences, such as helping sickly friends or not standing up when wardens marched past in the canteen led to the punishment of entire barracks.[125]

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[120] R.C. Frucht, 'Bulgaria' in R.C. Frucht (ed), *Eastern Europe: An Introduction to the People, Lands and Culture, Volume 1* (Santa Barbara, 2005), p.811.

[121] 'Répressions staliniennes contre les anarchistes bulgares', *Le Libertaire* [Paris], no.122 (25th March 1948), p.1 col a-d.

[122] For Cold War Bulgarian prison camps, see L. Topouzova, 'Reclaiming Memory: The History and Legacy of Concentration Camps in Communist Bulgaria' (PhD thesis, University of Toronto, 2015), pp.42-66.

[123] 'Les Mathausen Bulgares', *Le Libertaire* [Paris], no. 123(1st April 1948), p.3 col a.

[124] Ibid.

[125] Ibid.

Editors of *Le Libertaire* criticized the British, American, and French media's selective outrage when reporting Bulgaria's transformation into a police state.[126] The show trial of Nikola Petkov, leader of the non-communist opposition and the harassment of social democratic parliamentarians received ample coverage which obscured the reign of terror the BKP waged beyond Sofia.[127] *Le Libertaire* laid bare the realities Marxist intellectuals and the mainstream press often ignored.[128]

Les Nouvelles Internationales du Mouvement syndicaliste libre, a monthly newspaper the European branch of the AFL published, featured reports admonishing the Romanian Communist regimes' reaction to unrest in the Anina coal mines: 'Ainsi plusieurs centaines de membres des syndicats furent-ils, pendant la nuit, enlevés de chez eux par la police, et les agents communistes, amenés dans les locaux du syndicat et sévèrement battus.'[129] Though the PCR (Romanian Communist Party) under Miron Contantinescu discreetly arrested and intimidated strike leaders, state violence in post-war communist Romania was comparatively benign. As Adrian Grama argued, no strikes in the towns of Cluj, Anina, Galați, and Mediaș ended in the sound of gunfire.[130] Police rarely intervened in industrial disputes, forcing the PCR to rally street gangs to bring workers back into factories. When angry crowds laid siege to police stations to free detained strikers, outnumbered officers rarely received any support from the army and preferred to release prisoners. The formidable Siguranta secret police, once the weapon

[126] 'La Bulgarie. Nouvelle Espagne', *Le Libertaire* [Paris], no.127 (29th April 1948), p.3 col c.
[127] 'M. Dimitrov menace les neuf députés de l'opposition', *Le Monde* [Paris], 14th January 1948, https://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1948/01/14/m-dimitrov-menace-les-neuf-deputes-de-l-opposition_1911853_1819218.html (7th January 1948)
[128] 'À l'occasion du congrès de Wroclov. Lettre ouverte à M. Pierre Emmanuel', *Le Libertaire* [Paris], no. 149 (1st October 1948), p.3 col a-b.
[129] 'À travers la presse syndicale', *Le Libertaire* [Paris], no.157 (26th November 1948), p.4 col b.
[130] A. Grama, *Laboring Along: Industrial Workers and the Making of Postwar Romania* (Berlin, 2019), pp.110-121. See also S. Bottoni, 'Reassessing the Communist Takeover in Romania: Violence, Institutional Continuity and Ethnic Conflict Management', *East European Politics and Socities,* 29/59 (2010), pp.61-64.

of choice of successive inter-war governments to crush labour unrest had all but collapsed by 1945.[131] Party cadres did not conceal their contempt for uneducated, provincial, pious, uninformed, and ill-mannered strikers in reports to the central committee; but they rarely considered armed interventions.[132] Fines, firings, and expulsions from the PCR were enough to dissuade further agitation.[133] Nevertheless, the press of Force Ouvrière made anti-labour repression appear worse than it was in Romania. Hence, conveying the idea that *le recul ouvrier* also affected emerging communist regimes in Eastern Europe.

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The immediate post-war period saw the French press, radio, cinema, and school books emphasize the strategic importance of France's empire. The Fourth Republic had to cling on to its possessions overseas if it hoped to remain a major power on the world stage.[134] Consequently, as the next chapter will examine further, fears of communist or nationalist revolts overcame colonial administrations and employers abroad, resulting in the arrest or expulsion of indigenous labourers and the often brutal suppression of strikes and other forms of unrest.[135] Word of these imperial *recul ouvriers* soon reached trade unionists and workers in the metropole.

Although French public opinion had little interest for matters regarding overseas colonies or territories between the mid-forties and the early seventies, telegrams CGT

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[131] Ibid, pp.110-121. See F. Banu, 'Strămoșii Securităţii – structuri de poliţie politică din România în perioada 23 august 1944–30 august 1948', in A. Pentelescu and G. Preda (eds), *Clipe de viaţă. Comandorul dr. Ilie Manole la 60 de ani* (Bucarest, 2007), pp.456-484.

[132] Ibid, pp.110-111.

[133] Ibid, p.110. For a thorough examination of post-war Romania's comparatively benign response to strike action, see A. Glont, 'Nihil sine carbo: Politics, labor and the coal industry in the towns of the Jiu Valley 1850-1999' (PhD thesis, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2015), pp.310-316.

[134] C-R. Ageron, 'La survivance d'un mythe: la puissance par l'empire colonial (1944-1947)', *Outre-Mers. Revue d'histoire,* 72/269(1985), pp.390-403.

[135] 'Au Soudan, Marius Moutet s'attaque au mouvement syndical', *La Défense* [Paris], no.137 (8th-14th August 1947), p.2 col a-c.

unions received throughout 1947 tell a different story.[136] Metropolitan union leaders were not only aware of the repression French Indian workers faced but actively tried to help by showing them how to disseminate propaganda and confront bosses who hired brutish *inspecteurs du travail* to enforce discipline. Trade unionist Soundirarajou from the Rodier textile plant reminded his audience social security nets French workers benefitted from in the metropole hardly existed in French India.[137] Although labour laws in April 1937 did include trade union recognition, maternity leave for women, and a nine-hour working day, governors still resisted reform and often refused to allow the 'British invention' of trade unionism to spread in Pondicherry, a trend which persisted after the war.[138] Soundirarajou lamented the inability to update labour laws and the failure to ensure rudimentary health and safety measures, compensation for injuries, or even family allowances after the war.[139]

Trade unions in post-war French India competed for the attention of the French CGT. Indian militants struggling to challenge managerial obduracy hoped affiliation with the CGT could reap benefits for textile labourers.[140] Without the CGT's approval, Indian workers were in fact invisible.[141]

Emmanuelle Guenot argued the colonial press catering to civil servants, merchants, and businessmen portrayed French India as under-siege in the late forties.[142]

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[136] E.C. Guenot, 'Borders, Nationalism and Representations: Imagined French India in the Era of Decolonisation, 1947-1962' (PhD thesis, University of Sydney, 2015), pp.177-182.
[137] 'Lettre du Secrétaire K. Soundirarajou à Monsieur le Secrétaire Général de la Fédération Nationale Ouvrière de l'Industrie Textile', 24th January 1946, ADSSD, Fonds FNTT-CGT, 43J 112.
[138] J.L. Chapman, 'The Origins of a Public Voice for Marginalized Workers in French India, 1935-37', *Web Journal of French Media Studies,* 8(2010), p.7.
[139] 'Lettre du Secrétaire K. Soundirarajou-24th January 1946', p.2.
[140] 'Lettre du Secrétaire du Syndicat de l'Atelier de Filage de Savona à Mr. le secrétaire général de la fédération du textile', 2nd February 1946, ADSSD, Fonds FNTT-CGT, 43J 112.
[141] 'Lettre du Ministre de la France d'Outre Mer à Mr. le Gouverneur des Établissements Français dans L'Inde', 27th March 1946, ADSSD, Fonds FNTT-CGT, 43J 112
[142] Guenot, 'Borders, Nationalism and Representations', p.169.

Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru became a Hitler in waiting, eager to begin his Anschluss to annex Chandernagor, Puducherry, Yanaon, Karikal, and Mahé. A newly independent India initiated an economic blockade which unsettled colonial elites.[143] Bosses dreaded the communist party's popularity amongst textile workers and retaliated against its militancy. CGT unions in France received letters throughout 1946 and 1947 which captured the reactionary turn managers adopted in Pondicherry. Textile baron Mr Ehny refused to negotiate with employees on strike in the Mudaliarpet district. He left for a mountain resort while over a thousand employees were locked-out of the factory, forcing women and children to beg for food.[144] French government officials even intervened on behalf of Indian workers when Ehny refused to compromise and ignored trade union delegations.[145] Furthermore, the French CGT penned a lengthy complaint to the Ministry for Overseas colonies in March 1947, stating employers in the Savana textile plant denied workers the right to form a trade union, triggering a large protest strike in neighbouring industries.[146] Director Herquet justified the firing of 150 workers, claiming they did not work hard enough, an excuse which failed to convince trade unionists in Pondicherry or the metropole. Textile labourers hoped to emulate colleagues in a neighbouring plant by organizing unions, a modest demand inflexible managers refused to grant.[147]

In addition, French CGT members were well aware of the fate of militant Indian trade unionists who supported workers' rights or an immediate merger with India. The

[143] Ibid, pp.169-172.
[144] 'Lettre de V. Subbiah, président des syndicats de l'Inde Française à Mr. le Secrétaire Général de la CGT', 24th August 1946, ADSSD, Fonds FNTT-CGT, 43J 112.
[145] 'Lettre du Directeur des Affaires Politiques à Mr. Roger Louis, Secrétaire Fédéral de la Fédération Nationale de l'Industrie du Textile', 19th August 1946, ADSSD, Fonds FNTT-CGT, 43J 112.
[146] 'Lettre de Roger Louis à Mr. le Directeur des Affaires politiques', 27th March 1947, ADSSD, Fonds FNTT-CGT, 43J 112.
[147] Ibid.

Ministry for Colonial Affairs received complaints from the CGT expressing outrage that the Pondicherry tribunal stripped Caïlacha Subbiah, secretary of the Communist Party of French India and president of the Textile Trade Federation, of his French citizenship in May 1947.[148] Subbiah, an elected member of the Council of the French Republic in 1946, pronounced himself in favour of decolonisation and union with a soon-to-be free India, which made him a target.[149] Judges decreed he could no longer be French on the grounds his father was a British Indian. This was a dubious claim considering Subbiah was born, raised, and educated in Pondicherry.[150] They accused him of not speaking in French at the National Assembly even though he could write and deliver speeches fluently.[151] The CGT warned ministers 'les libertés syndicales' in French India were discredited, yet Subbiah was not alone in facing sustained persecution.[152] On the 3rd September 1947, another CGT telegram described the arrest of Mayor Vaitilingame and Mr Vassoudeyane, members of the French Indian trade union movement by colonial police.[153] Articles in *La Défense* alleged both men suffered torture in custody. Policemen and *goonda* criminal gangs pillaged union property in Orleampeth, while workers fearing for their lives fled their homes in Pillétotam.[154]

In Oceania, members of the *Association des Travailleurs Vietnamiens* wrote numerous telegrams to the CGT and *La Défense* in 1947, highlighting how colonial

[148] 'Lettre de Roger Louis à Monsieur le Ministre des Colonies', 27th May 1947, ADSSD, Fonds FNTT-CGT, 43J 112.
[149] S.N. Sen, *Chandernagore: From Bondage to Freedom, 1900-1955* (Delhi, 2012), pp.55-56.
[150] 'Lettre de Roger Louis-27th May 1947'. 'Biographie de Caïlacha Subbiah', http://www.senat.fr/senateur-4eme-republique/subbiah_cailacha0262r4.html (12th January 2020). V. Subbiah, *Saga of Freedom of French India: Testament of my Life* (Madras, 1990), pp.17-21.
[151] Subbiah, *Saga of Freedom,* pp.239-240.
[152] 'Lettre de Roger Louis-27th May 1947', p.2.
[153] 'Lettre de Roger Louis au Ministre de la France d'Outre-Mer', 3rd September 1947, ADSSD, Fonds FNTT-CGT, 43J 112.
[154] 'Le visage de la France à Pondichery', *La Défense* [Paris], no.147 (17th-23rd October 1947), p.2 col a-b.

authorities attempted to decapitate Indochinese trade unionism.[155] War in Indochina turned Vietnamese and Javanese trade union delegates in New Caledonia and the New Hebrides into targets for further discrimination, racism, and humiliation. Under the leadership of Dong Sy Hua the ATV began to stage strikes and formulate demands for more food and better living conditions.[156] Since 1945, starvation diets replaced the generous rations of the *contrat quinquennal* which granted expatriate miners free bags of rice, bread, green vegetables, pork grease, salt, meat, and tea every single day. Indochinese workers often worked outside urban areas such as the isolated Jeanne-Marie mine situated over three hundred kilometres away from the nearest ration depot in New Caledonia.[157] In January 1947, forced labourers wrote letters listing the physical abuse they endured during and after the war.[158] They petitioned for a fairer distribution of rice either from private enterprises or the French administration. Union representatives advocated new legislation to allow Vietnamese to purchase their own apartments or choose employment outside the mines. Yet above all workers wanted to return home. Many had been trapped in the South Pacific since before 1940 and contracts had long since expired. Calls for immediate repatriations back to Tonkin grew louder.[159]

A 'culture of panic' gripped colonial governors and security forces across the French Empire, especially when freedom fighters in Indochina inspired Vietnamese

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[155] ' "Les travailleurs les plus misérables de la terre"(Les Vietnamiens des Nouvelles-Hébrides)', *La Défense* [Paris], no.133 (11th-17th July 1947), p.2 col a-c.

[156] 'Deux mois de bagne pour "insolence" et au frais du condamné!', *La Défense* [Paris], no.104 (22nd-28th December 1946), p.2 col b-c. See C. Chêne, 'Domination et résistances des engagés tonkinois en Nouvelle-Calédonie et dépendances, 1891-1960', *Revue Transversale du Centre Georges Chevrier,* no.9 (2016), http://tristan.u-bourgogne.fr/CGC/publications/Transversales/Dominants_domines/Claudy_Chene.html#_ftn31 (10th January 2020)

[157] 'Les Vietnamiens de Nouvelle-Calédonie sont toujours astreints au travail forcé', *La Défense* [Paris], no.112 (17th-23rd January 1947), p.2 col a-b.

[158] 'Une lettre des Vietnamiens de Nouvelle-Calédonie', *La Défense* [Paris], no.111(10th-16th January 1947), p.2 col a-b. See C. Bougerol, 'Chronique d'une crise coloniale et son contexte: les vietnamiens de Nouvelle-Calédonie (1945-1964), *Journal de la Société des Océanistes,* no.110 (2000), pp.86-87.

[159] 'Les Vietnamiens de Nouvelle-Calédonie-17th-23rd January 1947'.

abroad.[160] Dong Sy Hua and fellow trade unionists became aspiring nationalists likely to cause trouble.[161] An affiliation with the French CGT did not protect Vietnamese labourers from violent police repression. *La Défense* received telegrams revealing Vietnamese workers dared not venture out at night in Nouméa for fear of being robbed or killed.[162] The son of a police commissioner in Nouméa allegedly assaulted two unionists in broad day-light in Bourail. Dong Sy Hua's militancy nearly cost him his life when he escaped an assassination attempt in a café.[163] The author of the telegrams claimed he sent numerous letters to Paris and Governor Jacques François Tallec, demanding justice for his colleagues but to no avail: 'Toutes ces exactions recommencent en pire. Faites quelque chose pour ces malheureux. Qu'on les rapatrie en masse, et VITE, VITE, surtout pour ceux des Hébrides.'[164]

In North Africa, *le recul ouvrier* was most apparent in Tunisia. In early August 1947, workers gathered to block trains filled with raw materials belonging to the Sfax-Gafsa phosphate company near Sfax. UGTT (Union Générale des Travailleurs Tunisiens) trade unionist Habib Achour was warned such manoeuvres could cause trouble, yet he pressed ahead with the strike anyway.[165] Weeks beforehand, Achour and UGTT leader Farhat Hached had agreed to challenge French authority with strikes.[166] On the 4th

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[160] Keese, 'A Culture of Panic', pp.138-140. Bougerol, 'Chronique d'une crise coloniale', pp.87-89.

[161] C. Chêne, 'La situation des engagés tonkinois sous contrat en Nouvelle-Calédonie et aux Nouvelles-Hébrides: d'une crise tonkinoise à une crise permanente en Océanie', *Revue Transversale du Centre Georges Chevrier,* no.14 (2019), http://tristan.u-bourgogne.fr/CGC/publications/Transversales/Crises_et_precarite/C_Chene.html (10th January 2020).

[162] 'S.O.S. Sauvons les Vietnamiens de Nouvelle-Calédonie et des Nouvelles Hébrides', *La Défense* [Paris], no.144 (26th September-2nd October 1947), p.2 col a-c.

[163] 'Le mouvement syndical vietnamien aux Nouvelles Hébrides décapité par des arrestations et des mesures arbitraires', *La Défense* [Paris] no. 142 (12th-18th September 1947), p.2 col a.

[164] 'S.O.S-26th September 1947'

[165] 'Un syndicaliste français (Henri Chalon) fit remarquer à Habib Achour le danger d'une telle concentration à moins de 100 mètres de la caserne du 4 saphis.' in Gérard Bacquet and Christian Attard, 'L'accession à l'indépendance-Sfax sous Protéctorat', http://www.sfax1881-1956.com/indep/indep2.htm (9th January 2020).

[166] E. Mouilleau, 'Deux figures de l'administration coloniale en Tunisie à la fin du protéctorat: Bardin et Nullet (1946-1956)', *Revue Française d'Histoire d'Outre-Mer,* 87/328 (2000), p. 290. H. Achour, *Ma vie politique et syndicale, enthousiasme et déceptions, 1944- 1981* (Alif, 1989), pp.15-16.

August, civil controller Émile Nullet summoned Achour and ordered him to tell UGTT representatives to stop the strike.[167]

A dedicated imperialist, Nullet took his job as *contrôleur civil* very seriously and imposed laws forbidding Tunisians from protesting and congregating in public areas, allowing strikes only after consultation. Yet, as he was keen to quell any potential rebellion, he ordered the mobilization of reinforcements near the Sfax-Gafsa railway in the early hours of the 5th August.[168]

The crackle of gunfire rang as strikers neared the garrison. Conflicting reports stated workers flung rocks and grenades towards barracks, injuring a soldier.[169] In response the 4th spahis regiment fired indiscriminately. French authorities accused workers of carrying weapons, while Destour(Constitutional Liberal Party) representatives admitted strikers were only hoisting Tunisian flags.[170] Unsubstantiated reports concluded over thirty workers were killed although the actual death toll may have been higher. Habib Achour was wounded and fleeing strikers attacked French and foreign citizens.[171] Workers nearly bludgeoned to death future bishop of Carthage Maurice Perrin.[172]

According to lawyer and nationalist Salad Farhat fears of future 'revolts' compelled settlers to purchase guns and calls for citizen militias grew louder.[173] The colonial press portrayed murdered strikers as marauding nationalists, while soldiers protected peaceful foreign settlers. Nullet, and Commander Raymond Duval who led

[167] Ibid, pp.290-291.
[168] Ibid, pp.289-291.
[169] 'Le sang coule à Sfax. Il y a eu 15 morts et une quarantaine de blessés- Mgr Perrin blessé', *Tunis-Soir* (5th August 1947), http://www.sfax1881-1956.com/indep/incidents2.htm (10th January 2020).
[170] 'Le massacre de Sfax. Déclaration du comité exécutif du Parti Libéral Constitutionnel Tunisien', *La Révolution Prolétarienne* [Paris], no. 306 (August-September 1947), p.16.
[171] L'accession à l'indépendance-Sfax sous Protéctorat' (10th January 2020).
[172] 'Le sang coule à Sfax-5th August 1947'
[173] Ibid, p.16.

counter-insurgency campaigns in Algeria, re-ignited racial tensions between Tunisian and European inhabitants. The French Administration even thwarted attempts at reconciliation with the UGTT as police prevented the Employment Minister from visiting injured strikers in hospital.[174]

The metropolitan CGT issued the following statement a day later: 'Le Bureau confédéral de la CGT tient à dire son émotion devant les événements tragiques qui viennent de se produire en Tunisie. Il réaffirme son opposition aux mesures de contrainte, de réquisition et d'utilisation de la force armée pour régler les différends du travail. Il demande l'ouverture d'une enquête officielle avec la participation d'un représentant de la F.S.M, permettant de situer les responsables dans cette affaire.'[175]

Farhat Hached founded the UGTT to represent indigenous workers only, and it became part of a nationalist movement dedicated to restoring Tunisia's independence. Hached's vision was at odds with the CGT's lack of distinction between native and French workers.[176] Yet the Sfax massacre was exceptional in that it hammered home to CGT onlookers that French authorities were using brutish means to pacify labour protest.

The fate of UGTT unionists in the months following the strike was also alarming. In February 1948, *La Révolution Prolétarienne* reported UGTT unionists stood accused of inciting civil unrest.[177] The UGTT hired French socialist lawyer Duran-Angliviel to defend their colleagues. He persuaded judges not to rule the strike as a politically motivated incident and stressed unionists did not obstruct the right to work. Judges

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[174] Ibid, p.16.
[175] 'Ouverture d'une enquête officielle sur les événements de Tunisie', *L'Humanité* [Paris], no. 906(7th August 1947), p.3.
[176] N. Mizouni, 'L'UGTT, moteur de la révolution tunisienne', *Tumultes,* 38-39/1 (2012), pp.74-76.
[177] 'Les travaux forcés, la réclusion et la prison pour les militants', *La Révolution Prolétarienne* [Paris], no. 312 (February 1948), p.3.

decreed French soldiers did fire on the crowd without warning. The civil controller, taking advantage of *l'effet de surprise*, did not inform UGTT leaders nor the caïd-governor of his orders to mobilize troops and requisition Sfax-Gafsa.[178] Nevertheless, Nullet did not stand trial while unionists paid a heavy price. Despite Farhat Hached's impassioned defence Habib Achour was sentenced to five years in prison, while Moktar ben Mabsour Chibouk was condemned to five years forced labour. Ali ben amour Eli Abdi was fined 5,000 francs.[179] The Sfax massacre and the subsequent purge of UGTT members was another example of *le recul ouvrier* extending throughout the French Empire.

Madagascar also witnessed *le recul ouvrier* in the months preceding the Malagasy Uprising of 1947. *Le Peuple* focused on the case of Pierre Boiteau, secretary of l'Union des Syndicats de Madagascar (USM-CGT), whom the Ministry for Overseas territories threatened with expulsion from the island in August 1946.[180] Articles alleged Boiteau was a victim of right-wing press campaigns aiming at vilifying trade unionists who spoke out against injustices the indigenous population experienced. He sent letters to the Governor of Saint-Marc deploring the imprisonment of fifty-three Malagasy workers after clashes during which police killed two young teenagers. As a result of his involvement in the indigenous peoples' affairs, colonial authorities perceived Boiteau as a nationalist sympathizer.[181]

For years, Boiteau decried the devastating effects of French imperialism on Madagascar. Originally trained as a biologist and agronomist, Boiteau became one of the

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[178] Ibid.
[179] Ibid.
[180] 'Le Gouvernement tolèrera-t-il la violation du droit syndical?', *Le Peuple* [Paris], no.103 (3rd August 1946), p.1 col a.
[181] 'Dans les territoires d'outre-mer, la liberté syndicale doit être respectée', *Le Peuple* [Paris], no.106 (24th August 1946), p.1 col a-b.

founders of the USM-CGT in 1936. He fought for the unionization of Malagasy workers and introduced a commission allowing indigenous labourers to speak their own language during union meetings.[182] His articles in *La Vie Ouvrière*, *La Défense,* and *Esprit* showed his dedication to relieving the poverty the native population endured.[183] Boiteau frequently defended labourers forced to resort to strike actions by employers refusing to negotiate.[184] In September 1946, pharmaceutical company directors sued Boiteau for defamation and for supposedly inciting employees to commit murder. Boiteau simply pointed out employers reaped enormous profits and strikers had the right to demand better pay.[185]

He wrote unflinching exposés revealing the slave-like conditions Malagasy men and women suffered, such as when they carried heavy loads of bricks in baskets strapped to their heads. Navigable roads or modern equipment were scant 'comme au temps des Pharaons.'[186] He excoriated French administrations for not educating the native population and believed illiteracy rates had actually increased since the overthrow of the Merina Kingdom in 1896.[187] Exiled in France, Boiteau continued to publish reports highlighting the fate of Malagasy workers or union leaders tortured following the failed uprising of March 1947, such as Rantoanina Raphael, chief-secretary of a railway trade union, who was arrested with eight other colleagues and driven to the security

[182] 'Biographie de Pierre-Louis Boiteau', (20th October 2008), http://maitron.univ-paris1.fr/spip.php?article17097 (10th January 2020)
[183] Ibid.
[184] 'La Défense a déjà cité les brutalités exercées par le chef du district d'Andapa, qui fit emprisonner les ouvriers de l'entreprise Alidor…Pierre Boiteau était un obstacle à ces actes odieux; c'est pour cela qu'on voulait le renvoyer dans la métropole…' in 'À Madagascar on condamne les démocrates en applicant des décrets du gouverneur vichyste Cayla!', *La Défense* [Paris], no.93 (6th-12th September 1946), p.2 col c.
[185] 'Comment on fomente des troubles à Madagascar', *La Défense* [Paris], no.94 (13th-19th September 1946), p.2.
[186] 'La situation matérielle et morale des travailleurs malgaches', *Esprit* [Paris], no.142 (2nd February 1948), p.245.
[187] Ibid, p.254-255.

directorate.[188] A committed activist who often spoke his mind, Boiteau openly criticized French colonialism, which antagonized authorities intent on silencing detractors.

When French CGT representatives heard of Boiteau's impending expulsion they tried to negotiate a deal to re-instate him as USM secretary. Yet their interventions amounted to nothing and they could not prevent Boiteau's deportation: 'La CGT a protesté, elle a écrit... Une demande d'audience a été adressée au ministre. Il n'a même pas daigné répondre.' Headlines in *Le Peuple* warned the CGT was undergoing a malicious campaign overseas.[189]

Colonial authorities in Madagascar portrayed trade union leaders as untrustworthy elements. In February 1946, USM-CGT assistant-secretary Jean Jaubert wrote a stern letter to the Governor-General which was published in the bilingual *Ny Rariny (La Justice)*.[190] Jaubert claimed an article in the *Journal Officiel Malgache* reported that USM members and their families allegedly engaged in subversive activities during a Christmas party that known nationalist or communist figures attended. Jaubert was outraged by such allegations and accused the Administration of propagating misinformation, and deliberately misinterpreting USM-CGT activities.[191]

Although it is unclear if the Administration had any conclusive evidence to support their theory, Jaubert and his colleagues in the USM-CGT believed colonial officials misrepresented the USM as a seditious or communist organization bent on

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[188] 'Le tortionnaire Baron fait école à Madagascar. C'est son procès qu'il faut faire!', *La Défense* [Paris], no.189 (3rd-16th September 1948), p.2 col b.
[189] 'Le Gouvernement tolèrera-t-il la violation du droit syndicat-3rd August 1946'
[190] 'Lettre Ouverte- Le Secrétaire-Adjoint de l'Union des Syndicats de Madagascar et Dépendances à Mr le Gouverneur Général de Madgascar', *Ny-Rariny- La Justice* [Tananarive], no.23 (19th February 1946),
p.2 col a.
[191] Ibid.

overthrowing French rule. If authorities in Tananarive considered militant unionists as communist revolutionaries, they could then justify employing drastic measures. Therefore, Boiteau's deportation only a few months later was not surprising as he was a leading member of a trade union associated with rebellion.

Moreover, local CGT branches in the Vaucluse region were also aware of Boiteau's expulsion from the island, declaring 'au nom des 25,000 adhérents qui s'élèvent contre la politique de soumission devant la réaction malgache et les dirigeants vichystes de l'île de Madagascar."[192] The announcement urged the Ministry for Overseas Colonies to ensure Pierre Boiteau, father of seven children, retain his responsibilities as secretary of the USM. Yet Boiteau was not the only trade unionist to become a target in Madagascar. *Le Peuple* received further letters in August 1946 confirming the 'displacement' or forced exile of two members of the USM, and alleged numerous Malagasy journalists were in jail. The message was undeniable: 'Nouvelle atteinte au libre exercice du droit syndical.'[193]

These expulsions came at a time when tensions between native Malagasy workers and French colonisers were spiralling out of control. When Governor Marcel de Coppet arrived in Tananarive crowds hurled stones to welcome him. Conflicting reports alleged there were people holding placards shouting 'Vive le Madagascar Libre' or 'À bas les français, assez du torchon tricolore.'[194] Anti-French sentiments spread widely. Angry mobs lynched Comorian police to avenge the shooting of Malagasy war veterans. Senegalese troops frequently fired on unarmed people as on-looking officers intervened hours later. The abolition of forced labour meant little for Malagasy labourers earning

[192] 'Dans les unions départementales-Vaucluse', *Le Peuple* [Paris], no.108 (7th September 1946), p.4 col b.
[193] 'Dans les territoires d'Outre-Mer-Madagascar', *Le Peuple* [Paris], no. 107 (31st August 1946), p.4 col b.
[194] 'Et voici ce qu'ils ont adressé en France ces colonialistes à épurer', *Ny Rariny- La Justice* [Tananarive] no.47, (13th August 1946), p.1 col a-b.

fifteen or twenty francs per day, while barely a kilo of rice could cost up to 12.50 francs.[195] Jules Castellani, representing Madagascar in the National Assembly, frequently criticized Governor de Coppet for not being more forceful in containing deadly strikes in Majunga and other regions. Castellani greatly feared industrial action was the product of militias comprising numerous *fonctionnaires indigènes*.[196] Walk-outs spread rapidly and threatened to shut-down the economy, incurring the wrath of armed plantation owners. Yet Castellani was disappointed time was spent putting Europeans on trial. He insisted more manpower was necessary to hunt down and eliminate Malagasy rebels prodding workers to go on strike.[197]

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The years after World War II are often described as an era defined by change. Socialist and communist parties, after decades of activism and sustained repression had finally come to power. Social democratic and Labour governments in France, England, and much of Western Europe enjoyed unprecedented influence. Social agendas once deemed utopian or unfeasible became law.[198] Yet there was a flip side to this picture. For some French workers, events in the late forties had much in common with the often state-sponsored counter-revolutionary violence which swept through Europe and America in the aftermath of the First World War. Massive strikes and walks-outs, either inspired by the Bolshevik revolution or not, engulfed Allied nations as well as the defeated Austro-Hungarian and German Empires.[199] The brutal response to the November/December

[195] 'Comment on fomente des troubles à Madagascar- 13th-19th September 1946'
[196] 'Et voici ce qu'ils ont adressé-13th August 1946'
[197] Ibid, pp.1-2 col c.
[198] C.M. Bush and R. Morris, 'Empires Crumble, Movements Fall: Antisystemic Struggle 1917-1968' in W.G Martin (ed), *Making Waves: Worldwide Social Movements, 1750-2005* (2008, New York), pp.99-100.
[199] For the post-World War I strike waves in Europe, see C. L. Bertrand, 'The Biennio Rosso: Anarchists and Revolutionary Syndicalists in Italy, 1919-1920', *Historical Reflexions,* 9/3(1982), pp.383-407. J. Böhler, *Civil War in Central Europe, 1918-1921: The Reconstruction of Poland* (New York, 2018),

strikes, along with other anti-labour trends occurring abroad simultaneously, before or thereafter seemed to announce that history was repeating itself. Although this renewed *recul ouvrier* was certainly not the main reason why French miners went on strike in 1948, it nonetheless reminded many CGT unionists, such as Auguste Lecoeur, they needed to fight to preserve hard won rights.

This chapter highlights that French workers did not perceive the post-war world as an era conducive to transformational social change. On the contrary, by mid-1947 and throughout 1948, it appeared the French State, in tandem with governments or colonial administrations across the globe began to push back against the accomplishments and legislative gains labour unions and other mass movements had made. The French national and trade union press, combined with letters and telegrams leading individuals or federations affiliated with the CGT received painted a grim picture. Whether in democracies such as the United States, dictatorships in the Iberian Peninsula, French and British colonies overseas, or even in the ascendant 'popular' regimes of Eastern Europe workers throughout the globe were still locked in a state of war.

p.108. M. Mireanu,'Romania's Great Union and Anti-Communist Discourse', *European Regional Studies,* no.16 (2019), [DOI: 10.2478] pp.45-47. J.E. Cronin, 'Labor Insurgency and Class Formation: Comparative Perspectives on the Crisis of 1917-1920 in Europe', *Social Science History,* 4/1(1980), pp.125-152. In Latin America, see R. Hora, *The Landowners of the Argentine Pampas: A Social and Political History* (New York, 2001), p.154.

5. Beyond the Metropole

If World War II and the Occupation loomed large among participants and opponents of strike action in mainland France in 1947-1948, the Cold War also made it difficult to demobilise administrations across the French Empire. Post-war strikes in Algeria, Morocco as well as the overseas *départements* of La Réunion, Martinique, Guadeloupe, and French Guiana exacerbated pre-existing colonial fears of indigenous or communist revolts. Governance in French North, West and Equatorial Africa, Indochina, Oceania, and Madagascar relied heavily on surveillance and suspicion to control potentially mutinous or untrustworthy subjects. As Kathleen Keller and Laurent Fouchard maintain, a series of anxieties infected French rule abroad.[1]

This chapter will argue 'cultures of suspicion' thrived after World War II and particularly permeated colonial policing.[2] The line between police and army in the French Empire was virtually indistinguishable.[3] Even in more 'civilized' and densely populated Algeria, *gendarmes* trained to be vigilant in detecting rebellions even when there was none to be found.[4] Police often cut-off from populations, and blinkered by

[1] K. A. Keller, 'Colonial suspects: Suspicious persons and police surveillance in French West Africa, 1914-1945' (PhD thesis, Rutgers University of New Jersey, 2007), pp.9-20. Colonial anxieties afflicted metropolitan intelligence services throughout the inter-war years as well. See D. Brückenhaus, *Policing Transitional Protest: Liberal Imperialism and the Surveillance of Anti-colonialists in Europe, 1905-1945* (New York, 2017), pp.73-107. C. Rosenberg, 'Republican Surveillance: Immigration, Citizenship, and the Police in inter-war Paris' (PhD thesis, Princeton University, 2000), pp.111-120.

[2] Ibid, pp.20-27.

[3] C. Evrard, 'L'interpénétration des éléments de maintien de l'ordre dans le Sahara mauritanien sous domination coloniale française (1920-1958)', in J.P. Bat and N. Courtin (eds), *Maintenir l'Ordre Colonial:Afrique et Madagascar. XIXe- XXe siècles* (Rennes, 2012), pp.111-124. B. Brunet La Ruche, '"Discipliner les villes coloniales: la police et l'ordre urbain au Dahomey pendant l'entre-deux-guerres', *Criminocorpus. Histoire de la Police,* no.4 (2012) https://journals.openedition.org/criminocorpus/1678 (2nd January 2020).

[4] E. Blanchard, 'French Colonial Police- Pré-publication non éditée et corrigée, version finale parue' in G. Bruinsma and D. Weisburd (eds), *Encyclopedia of Criminology and Criminal Justice vol.8* (New York. 2014), p.9

racism or indifference, considered strikes as challenges to colonial domination. Reports relied on facile stereotypes such as the communist threat or pan-Arabism to explain complex movements and to justify intrusive or oppressive legislation.[5]

A near identical stiffening of colonial suspicions occurred in the UK's overseas territories, demonstrating the Cold-War links which bound together British and French imperial interests. The Accra riots of 1948 sparked debates and inquiries arguing for the reform or de-militarization of colonial police forces throughout British possessions.[6] However, mounting instability, crime, corruption, poverty, and nationalist sentiments, especially in Kenya and Rhodesia, insured even a mild demobilization of security and intelligence services did not occur.[7] Just like their counterparts in Algeria, Morocco, or overseas *départements*, British colonial administrations regarded strikes and labour unrest as tantamount to communist revolutions.[8] Various governors in Singapore and British Guiana continued to employ curfews, detentions, torture, censorship, espionage, and para-military units to stem opposition.[9]

[5] Ibid, p.8.
[6] G. Curless, 'The Stun Gun is mightier than the Pen: The Failure of Colonial Police Reform after 1945' in M. Thomas and G. Curless, *Decolonization and Conflict: Colonial Comparisons and Legacies* (London, 2017), p.79.
[7] D. Percox, 'Circumstances short of Global War: British defence, colonial internal security and decolonization in Kenya, 1945-65' (PhD, University of Nottingham, 2001), pp.25-45. For the Rhodesian general strike of 1948, see T. Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness and Guerilla war in Zimbabwe: A Comparative Study* (London, 1985), pp.118-124. D. Lowry, 'The Impact of Anti-Communism in White Rhodesian Political Culture, ca. 1920s-1980', *Cold War History* 7/2 (2007), p. 174.
[8] Curless, 'The Stun Gun is mightier…', pp.80-81.
[9] Ibid, pp.85-88.

However, in comparison to England or Belgium, France's hold on her colonies after the war loosened considerably.[10] The political and social divisions left over from the German Occupation and Vichy meant the Quai D'Orsay and Gaullist faith in imperialism fuelled fantasies of a powerful French Union, poised to counter Anglo-American or Soviet hegemony.[11] These delusions dissipated in 1945 when French forces retreated from Syria and Lebanon. Yet most political parties shared a strong devotion to empire in the Fourth Republic.[12] Thousands of French troops prepared to invade Thailand in response to the Siamese government's reluctance to hand over provinces lost during World War II.[13] Dreading another embarrassment and further loss of prestige, France declared war against the Viet Minh in December 1946. Rebellions in Madagascar followed suit, while nationalist movements gained momentum in Oceania.[14]

This siege mentality resulted in the misinterpretation of generally benign strike movements. Although trade unionists certainly appealed to mounting nationalist sentiments among indigenous labourers, particularly in Algeria and Morocco as argued below, demands were mostly rooted in material need.

[10] Belgian colonies in Africa remained unrattled by pro-independence movements after World War II. See A. Lauro, 'Suspect Cities and the (Re) Making of Colonial Order: Urbanization, Security Anxities and Police Reforms in Post-War Congo' in J.Campion and X. Rousseaux (eds) *Policing New Risks in Modern European History. World Histories of Crime, Culture and Violence* (London, 2016), p.59.

[11] M. Thomas, 'Divisive decolonization: The Anglo-French withdrawal from Syria and Lebanon, 1944-1946', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 28/3 (2000), pp.71-75.

[12] Ibid, p.72.

[13] S. Strate, 'The Lost Territories: The Role of Trauma and Humiliation in the Formation of National Consciousness in Thailand' (PhD thesis, University of Wisconsin, 2009), pp.165-182.

[14] On the rise of Polynesian nationalism after World War II, see D.A. Elliston, 'Engendering Nationalism: Colonialism, Sex and Independence in French Polynesia', (PhD thesis, New York University, 1997), pp.84-86. J.M. Regnault, 'La survivance des institutions coloniales après 1945. L'exemple du Conseil Privé du Gouverneur des établissements français d'Océanie: l'occasion manquée de 1947', *Outre-Mers. Revue d'histoire,* 86/324-325 (1999), pp.294-304.

Against this background, this chapter will demonstrate that strikes in metropolitan France prompted colonial authorities to overreact to labour protests, particularly when strikes in overseas *départements,* Algeria, and Morocco took place either in tandem with metropolitan movements or shortly thereafter. In November/December 1947, when word of communist-led riots in Marseille reached Algerian security personnel facing their own outbreaks of industrial action in Algiers, police reports feared a vast communist and/or nationalist conspiracy threatened to overturn the colonial order in Algeria. A year later, when miners in Béni-Saf and Le Nord-Pas-de-Calais went on strike simultaneously, Algerian intelligence services dreaded once again that metropolitan unrest would somehow incite insurrections in the colony. Shortly after the end of the November/December strikes, French authorities increased their surveillance of trade union activity in La Martinique and Morocco. Though many indigenous workers hoped to gain the same wages and benefits their contemporaries in France enjoyed, very few strikes in Guadeloupe, French Guiana, Algeria or Morocco were actually 'inspired' or directly linked to movements in the metropole. Nevertheless, strikes in the metropole influenced panic-stricken colonial administrations to react with even greater suspicion or violence to unrest in their respective territories.

Like in France, the United Kingdom experienced walkouts in the London docklands between the 28th June and 23rd July 1949. The Labour government headed by Clement Attlee responded by declaring a state of emergency and prepared to mobilize nearly 35,000 troops to ensure the docklands remained open.[15] Compared to France, however, unrest was relatively calm despite the government's fear of the USSR's

[15] P. Deery, '"A Very Present Menace?": Attlee, Communism and the Cold War!', *Australian Journal of Politics and History,* 44/1(1998), p.72.

expansionist foreign policy and the increasingly sectarian behaviour of the CPGB (Communist Party of Great Britain).[16] British soldiers refrained from firing on crowds and unlike in France, did not employ excessive violence, intimidations, mass firings, or interrogations to persuade dockers to return to work.

The strikes which rattled London in 1949 did not have the same impact on the British Empire as the November/December strikes did on French colonial administrations. French strikes often aroused enormous popular support and encompassed multiple professions.[17] Thousands took to the streets bolstered by local or regional solidarity networks. Transport services shut down and people died in clashes with the CRS. The November/December strikes did not announce a communist coup d'état, yet they scared colonial prefects in Martinique, Guadeloupe, or French authorities in Morocco. Strikes in the metropole heightened colonial 'anxieties' abroad.[18]

Finally, this chapter will also explore how strikes overseas revealed the aspirations of workers and their representatives far away from the metropole. Contrary to what communist unionists uttered in public, namely that labourers both in France and its territories shared common goals, strikes abroad took place in very different geographical, political, social, and economic contexts. Demands for the same wages or benefits French colleagues enjoyed concealed motivations which did not always align with edicts the

[16] Ibid, pp.87-93. C.J. Davis, *Waterfront Revolts: New York and London Dockworkers, 1946-61* (Illinois, 2007), p.190.
[17] Mencherini, *Guerre Froide, Grèves Rouges*, p.53.
[18] See H. Fischer-Tiné (ed), *Anxieties, Fear and Panic in Colonial Settings: Empires on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown* (Cham, Switzerland) for a survey of the various 'fears' which infected colonialists in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

CGT issued from Paris.[19] Industrial action represented an opportunity, either to move closer, or drift further away from French rule.

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Deputies debated at length *les lois Schuman* in the National Assembly as strike waves raged on the 29th November 1947. They argued viciously, with many communist backbenchers wondering if laws permitting the mobilisation of troops to protect *la liberté du travail* could lay the seeds of dictatorship. With formidable eloquence communist Deputy Aimé Césaire admonished the Schuman decrees, comparing them to a criminal act designed to suppress dissent.[20] He decried the government for waging war on the French working-class and feared slavery regimes in the former colonies of Martinique, Guadeloupe, La Réunion, and French Guiana now encroached on the factories or mines of France.[21] The role of saviour and servant was reversed as Césaire, a descendant of slaves, defended the white worker. He reminded the Assembly it was not merchants, businessmen, property owners, or intellectuals who spoke out against slavery before its abolition in 1848.[22] Césaire paid homage to a worker named Julien Galli who, in 1844, petitioned to end the cruel debasement of coloured labourers. Seeing the whip now aimed

[19] For a history of how West African unions gradually veered away from the CGT's embrace, see B. Fall, 'Le mouvement syndical en Afrique occidentale francophone. De la tutelle des centrales métropolitaines à celle des partis nationaux uniques, ou la difficile quête d'une personnalité (1900-1968)', *Matériaux pour L'Histoire de Notre Temps,* 84/4 (2006), pp.49-58. Dewitte, 'La CGT et les syndicats d'Afrique occidentale française', pp. 3-32.

[20] *Journal Officiel de la République Française, Débats parlementaires, Assemblée Nationale*, 29th November 1947, p.5345.

[21] Ibid, p.5345-5346.

[22] Ibid, p.5346.

at men in the metropole, Cesaire swore citizens of newly departmentalized territories would not sit idly and do nothing.[23]

What concerned Césaire was how lawmakers or prefects could exploit these measures overseas.[24] If white, and therefore comparatively privileged workers risked being charged with fines or prison sentences, might coloured or indigenous militants face even worse consequences? Césaire feared imperialist governor generals, administrators, and entrepreneurs, eager to preserve traditional racial and class hierarchies could react to unrest even more harshly than in the metropole.[25] For Césaire, 'la grande espérance' which swept over populations of new *départements* after the Liberation came to an end.[26] The November/December strikes, as Césaire interpreted, added an uncomfortable dimension to the question of assimilation. Did industrial action in France inspire or deter onlookers in overseas *départements*? Did prefects and governors mimic superiors in the metropole when faced with similar disturbances?

The social and cultural context was fundamentally different overseas. The legacy of slavery, and less the trauma of the Occupation, haunted labourers and trade unionists in overseas *départements*.[27] As 1948 marked the centenary of the official abolition of slavery in the Second Empire, politicians and founders of the *négritude* movement proclaimed their loyalty to the Fourth Republic, but assimilation could not hide the

[23] Ibid, p.5346.
[24] Ibid, p.5346.
[25] Ibid. The Guadeloupian *patronat,* was very disappointed local governors agreed to grant wage increases to placate militant unions shortly after the Liberation. See M. C. Touchelay, 'La Guadeloupe, une île entreprise, des années 1930 aux années 1960: les entrepreneurs, le territoire, l'État' (PhD thesis, Université Sorbonne Paris Cité, 2017), p.320.
[26] Ibid, p.5346.
[27] M. Lavenaire-Pineau, 'Décolonisation et changement social aux Antilles françaises. De l'assimilation à la"Départementalisation"; socio-histoire d'une construction paradoxale (1946-1961)' (PhD thesis, Université des Antilles, 2017), pp.116-118.

endemic poverty of the overwhelming majority of citizens living in the islands.[28] Editors of far-left leaning newspapers, such as *L'Étincelle* in Guadeloupe or *Justice* in Martinique, repeatedly reminded workers toiling in sugar cane fields of the endurance of slavery in everyday life.[29] Wealthy *Béké* inheritors of vast plots of land and enterprises reaped profits while *les petites gens* fled to the nearest urban centres in search of employment, causing unsustainable overcrowding. Sub-standard sanitation and poor rationing resulted in decreasing levels of output and motivation. Fat and protein intake was chronically low, while makeshift housing remained dangerous.[30] Thatched roofs caught fire easily, while homes became unbearably warm and stiflingly humid during summer nights. Deadly diseases such as leprosy and tuberculosis spread like wildfire.[31] An unforgiving environment heightened disillusionment and frustration with the sluggish pace of departmentalization. In early 1948, hurricanes inflicted devastating structural damage in La Réunion, leaving trails of shattered bodies, broken minds, and diminished expectations in their wake. Inadequate, outdated, and poorly maintained meteorological apparatus detected the incoming storm only hours before hitting shore.[32] Reconstruction was painful and aid took weeks to land. France appeared further away than ever and nothing seemed to change for the better.

Deputy Raymond Vergès and his communist cohorts highlighted the injustices and discontent afflicting workers in La Réunion in an interview for *La Défense*.[33] Factory-workers, dockers, railway conductors, agricultural labourers, and small business

[28] J. Michel, 'A Study of the Collective Memory and Public Memory of Slavery in France', *African Studies,* 75/3 (2016), pp.398-399.
[29] Lavenaire-Pineau, 'Décolonisation et changement...', pp.116-117.
[30] C. Robequain, 'Le sucre dans l'Union française', *Annales de Géographie,* 308/57 (1948), pp 338-340.
[31] Ibid, p.340.
[32] I. Mayer Jouanjean, 'L'île de La Réunion sous l'oeil du cyclone au XXème siècle. Histoire, société et catastrophe naturelle' (PhD thesis, Université de la Réunion, 2011), pp.46-52.
[33] 'Histoire d'une provocation: interview de personnalités réunionnaises', *La Défense* [Paris], no.200 (3rd December 1948), p.2 col a-e.

owners lost faith in the French government's ability to foster security or prosperity. In short, they considered departmentalization a failure.[34] Civil servants even staged their first strike as fully-fledged citizens between the 18th and 25th May 1948. The regional daily *Démocratie* reported over 90% of services on the island closed, while *L'Agence France Presse* claimed the public supported the strike unanimously.[35] A key factor in understanding this movement's popularity was because islanders earned significantly lower wages compared to metropolitan civil servants.[36]

In spite of these disappointments, industrial action in the metropole resonated with islanders. Reunionese trade unionists showed their support for miners in le Nord and Pas-de-Calais by collecting money: 'C'est pourquoi ils ont envoyé dernièrement 40,000 francs CFA(Franc of the French colonies in Africa), soit 80,000 francs métropolitains aux mineurs en grève et que les étudiants réunionais de Paris ont recueilli un enfant de gréviste et participé activement à la solidarité.'[37] This solidarity was a way of validating their new-found citizenship.[38]

However, if strikes allowed workers in La Réunion to feel somewhat closer to the Republic than ever before, CRS tactics to maintain order in the metropole also inspired officials and employers in overseas *départements*.[39] Cold War logic dictated that the Red menace lurked everywhere and anti-communist prefects and police officers reacted accordingly by intensifying surveillance in areas rife with trade union activity.[40] The

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[34] Ibid.
[35] ' "Départements d'outre-mer"- Il y 60 ans, les grèves des fonctionnaires', *Lutte Ouvrière* (Paris), no.155 (13th November 2013) Lutte Ouvrière Archives, https://www.union-communiste.org/en/2013-11/departements-doutre-mer-il-y-a-60-ans-la-greve-des-fonctionnaires-3694 (9th January 2019).
[36] Ibid.
[37] Ibid, p. 2.
[38] Ibid p.2.
[39] Lavenaire-Pineau, 'Décolonisation et changement…', pp.126-128.
[40] Ibid, pp. 128-130.

polarisation wrought by the November/December strikes soon trickled down to La Martinique.

In the Carbet commune, factory and land owner Mr Bally refused to fulfil labour agreements, which specified employees cutting sugar cane in fields clogged with tall grass should receive higher wages than workers toiling on clearer ground. In response, employees went on strike on the 1st March 1948.[41] Bally hired a dozen young people to replace his absentee workforce and a small police detachment to guard the premises. Strikers, according to *La Défense,* did not return to the plantation until Bally granted their demands, having no intention to provoke fully-armed policemen. Bally announced he would honour back-payments due since January, but only if strikers returned to collect them at the plantation.[42] Even though police threatened them, they received their pay without harm. However, as they drove away policemen in jeeps forced them to pull over. Rifle butts in hand, they beat André Jacques, shot his sister Yvonne in the leg, and killed their brother Henri who tried to help. Police fired indiscriminately forcing strikers to disperse. André Jacques, a father of five, and co-worker Mathurin Dalin lay dead on the road. Yvonne and André Balmer, although seriously wounded, recovered in Fort-de-France.[43] Conflicting reports claimed local CGT divisions deliberately provoked and overwhelmed police, although most reports agreed no striker was armed. Local newspapers such as *L'Information de la Paix* praised Prefect Pierre Trouillé for his uncompromising stance against 'communist agitators.'[44]

[41] 'Le sang de cinq travailleurs a coulé à la Martinique', *La Défense* [Paris], no. (2nd April 1948), p.2 col a-b.
[42] Ibid, p.2
[43] Ibid. p.2
[44] Lavenaire-Pineau, 'Décolonisation et changement…', pp. 130-131.

Two months later in the National Assembly, Deputy Césaire argued the Carbet massacre was another example of extreme anti-communist policies. The predictions he made on 29th November 1947 had become a reality, with prefectures in overseas *départements,* especially since the November/December strikes, now using brutal methods to stifle dissent. Césaire even considered events prior to the Carbet incident as part of a larger right-wing campaign to exterminate labour insubordination.[45] He cited the clash between police and protestors in Fort-de-France on the 6th February 1948 as another example of authorities using unwarranted force.[46] PCF mayor George Graitiant led a counter-protest against a right-wing RPF march. According to Césaire the confrontation ended with police squads protecting RPF members, routing the counter-protest, and arresting Graitiant.[47] MRP deputy Charles Viatte disputed Césaire's interpretation of the riot, yet his closing remarks neatly summarized the rationale of both Minister Jules Moch and prefect Trouillé: 'Nous pensons qu'il est le devoir du gouvernement de protéger l'ordre contre tous les trublions.'[48] The French government regarded both incidents as predictable consequences of an overheated political climate. The duty of French citizens demanded they obey the law. Conversely, Césaire and his compatriots saw the tightening of a noose first drawn during the November/December strikes.

[45] *JO, Débats*, 4th May 1948, p.2486.
[46] Ibid, p.2486.
[47] Ibid, p.2486.
[48] Ibid, p.2486.

Guadeloupe witnessed a similar stiffening of authority. Despite good harvests and agreements between prefect Gilbert Philipson and socialist ministers to increase slightly the minimum wage in January 1948, UD (Union Départementale) trade unionists pushed for greater gains.[49] Following departmentalization in 1946, social security was still virtually non-existent in Guadeloupe. From April till June 1948 workers in sugar and rum enterprises went on an unprecedented strike wave for fifty-five days. Every major industry in Beauport and Darboussier shut-down. Militants residing in the predominantly communist and socialist communes of Capesterre, Moule, and Pointe-à-Pitre mobilized to increase further the minimum wage. By early June, thousands of metal-workers and agricultural labourers from Retraite and labourers in isolated workshops on Marie-Galante Island all went on strike.[50] Yet once again, a generally benign workforce faced jail. Approximately a hundred soldiers and armed police arrested three employees in the small village of Duzer and detained eleven trade union representatives.[51] Why such a heavy-handed response? Studies on the sale and export of sugar in l'Union française by geographer Charles Rabequain in late 1948 provide a clue. He argued the severity of industrial action in the French Antilles imperilled the production of sugar in Guadeloupe and other territories in the French Empire. They barely exported 28,000 tonnes in 1947, a much lower total than exports in 1946.[52] Protecting the economy and markets required upholding order. CRS troops deployed to Guadeloupe after the sugar cane strikes prevented further disruption.[53]

[49] Lavenaire-Pineau, 'Décolonisation et changement...', pp. 134-135.
[50] Ibid, p. 135-139.
[51] 'Assimilation…par la répression à la Guadeloupe', *La Défense* [Paris], no.187 (6th August 1948), p.2 col a-d.
[52] Robequain, "Le sucre dans l'Union française", p.340.
[53] Lavenaire-Pineau,'Décolonisation et changement...', p.141.

French Guiana was an exception to the rule. In May 1947, negotiations between the LUD (L'Union Départementale) and labour inspectors faltered, bringing the regional capital of Cayenne to a standstill for nearly a week. Construction workers went on strike and dockers refused to discharge cargo from ships.[54] Labourers in water and sanitation enterprises stopped working while municipal grave diggers dropped their shovels. Countless grocers and shops shut their doors as well. Labour inspector Coru received a letter from the LUD specifying strike action would continue unabated until they received a guaranteed 35% wage increase.[55] To diffuse rising tensions Coru swiftly organized meetings with employee and managerial delegations, noting the determination of union representatives to reach an agreement.[56]Coru acted as a mediator between the two parties. Mr Bellony, secretary of the LUD, explained to the managerial delegation why strike action was necessary: '[les] revendications sont motivées par une augmentation du coût de la vie et la nécessité d'assurer au moins payé un salaire lui permettant de vivre décemment.' Employers relented and granted a 35% wage increase for regular workers and a further 45% increase for specialized labourers as well.[57]

This was a stunning victory for the LUD. Coru's report did not mention any heated arguments or violent outbursts during negotiations, and apart from brief moments of tension, the strike and its resolution remained professional and courteous. The administration and employers refrained from deploying police or army to protect *la liberté du travail*. In contrast to strikes in Martinique or Guadeloupe no trade unionists or

[54] 'Rapport à Monsieur le Gouverneur sur les grèves du 22 au 27 mai 1947, p.2', May 1947, ANOM, Fonds Ministère des Colonies. Direction des Affaires politiques- Guyane, 1AFFPOL/2968.
[55] Ibid, p.2.
[56] 'Procès-verbal de la Réunion Patronale du 23 mai 1947, p.1.', May 1947, ANOM, Fonds Ministère des Colonies- Guyane, 1AFFPOL/2968.
[57] 'Rapport à Monsieur le Gouverneur…', p.4.

militants faced imprisonment. Considering the LUD was still in its infancy, the apolitical character of the demands assuaged fears of greater disorder.[58] There was virtually no communist or socialist presence in French Guiana by 1946, and it took another two decades for anti-colonial and autonomist movements to develop fully in the Guyanese trade union movement.[59] Nevertheless, the successful strike still sent a chill down the spine of local administrators. Coru addressed reports to Governor Jean Peset, in which he expressed surprise at the LUD's preparedness. In an effort to reassure Peset he insisted that like all young unions, the LUD was undisciplined and inexperienced. However, he conceded that he was surprised by a strike of such a scale in French Guiana and hinted the LUD would only grow in strength with time.[60]

This strike rattled both employers and managers because they had little experience of dealing with industrial action and did not know how to respond. They hoped the administration would solve these confrontations on their behalf.[61] Demands for higher salaries or better working conditions could explode into social conflicts, questioning the very legitimacy of a predominantly white, metropolitan, and distant administration.[62] Coru's report betrayed the colonial anxiety of unruly workers challenging the established order still permeating the Guyanese administration. French authorities still perceived labourers in overseas *départements* as subjects to watch and control, and not as free thinking citizens worthy of being heard.

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[58] 'Compte rendu de la Commission Paritaire des Salaires du 22 mai 1947", p.2', May 1947, ANOM, Fonds Ministère des Colonies- Guyane, 1AFFPOL/2968.

[59] E. Maurice, 'Le préfet face aux enseignants autonomistes en Guyane de 1946 au tournant des années 1960. Une inédite rencontre administrative en contexte post-colonial', *Politix,* 116/4 (2016), p.63. S. Mam Lam Fouck, 'L'Union du Peuple Guyanais et l'invention du nationalisme en Guyane française (1955-1965), *Outre-Mers- Revue d'histoire,* 93/352-353 (2006), pp.259-292. M. J. Jolivet, *La question créole. Essai de sociologie sur la Guyane Française* (Paris, 1982).

[60] 'Rapport à Monsieur le Gouverneur…', p.4.

[61] Ibid, p.4.

[62] Ibid, p.4.

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Yet the November/December strikes had an even greater impact in Algeria, a colony in which European settlers already felt threatened not only by the expansion of citizenship rights to Muslims and Jews, but also by the rapid development of independence movements.[63]

Algerian communist deputy Pierre Fayet had history on his mind when speaking at the National Assembly on the 3rd December 1947. Delivering a lengthy summary of the apartheid against Muslims in Algeria, Fayet attacked *les lois scélérates*.[64] He claimed Algerians did not want to go on strike even though they could not feed their children. Fayet criticised laws which ignored the well-being of indigenous workers, while supporting the incarceration of trade-unionists for up to six years in Algeria.[65] Fayet reasoned there was no longer any difference between Muslim and French proletarians. Apart from the communists, Algerian labourers knew hardly anyone in the Assembly had their best interests at heart. Fayet claimed Muslim militants learnt to think for themselves and understood they should not repeat the mistakes of their French colleagues, having carefully studied the pitfalls of French trade unionism in prison cells.[66] If the intensity and duration of strikes in metropolitan France waned by the 3rd December, the exact opposite happened in Algeria.

Fayet's speech was hyperbolic but not inaccurate. Head engineers in the dockland area of Algiers requested aid from port police because workers took over residence halls

[63] S.B. Roberts, *Citizenship and Antisemitism in French Colonial Algeria, 1870-1962* (Cambridge, 2017), p.331.
[64] *JO, Débats*, 3rd December 1947, p.5474.
[65] Ibid, p.5474.
[66] Ibid, p.5474.

and restaurants.[67] Strikes also affected primary and secondary schools. The École Indigène in Affreville, which catered to Muslim students and staff saw ten classes cancelled for two days.[68] The wives and daughters of masons, metal-workers, and train-conductors came out in force to support the strike. Members of the UFA (L'Union des Femmes Algériennes) such as scientist Maryvonne Harmone or activist Mrs Garoby, pledged their unconditional support to the UFA.[69] UFA militants crowded the entrance hall of the Majestic cinema in Algiers collecting over 6,300 francs in half an hour.[70] When *Alger Républicain* interviewed strikers employed in the Globe enterprise, they commended women enlisted in the Bab-El-Oued division of the UFA. Women patrolled picket lines three times every night until six o'clock in the morning, serving coffee, drinks, and snacks to strikers keeping guard.[71] The UFA even made sandwiches and vegetable soup. Young girls donated half-eaten loaves of bread and spare tea bags in Jacques Cartier Street, while women working in the Melia enterprise slammed their shoes against locked factory gates in protest.[72]

News of derailed passenger trains and rumours of industrial sabotage in the Hexagon rattled colonial officials and the general public in Algeria. University students sent letters to Governor Yves Chataigneau, assuring him of their support in case of further disruption. Vincent Rosello, president of the catholic student association of Algiers and Henri Mauzarares, vice-president of the General Association of Algerian

[67] 'Rapport de l'ingénieur en chef', 3rd December 1947, ANOM, Fonds Préfecture d'Alger, 91-1K883.
[68] 'Rapport de l'Adjudant-Chef Riveron...sur une Grève du corps enseignant', 10th December 1947, ANOM, Fonds Préfecture d'Alger, 91-1K883.
[69] 'L'Union des Femmes d'Algérie fête Mme. Maryvonne Hamon', *Alger Républicain* [Algiers], no. 1357 (30th November 1947), p. 2 col a-b, ANOM, Fonds Préfecture d'Alger, 91-1K883.
[70] Ibid.
[71] 'Sur le Front de la Grève', *Alger Républicain* [Algiers], no. 1359 (3rd December 1947), p.1-2 col a-e , ANOM, Fonds Préfecture d'Alger, 91-1K883.
[72] Ibid.

Students, pledged over a hundred engineering graduates and apprentice technicians readied to ensure a minimal tramway service.[73] Company directors, fearing for the safety of factory equipment and staff, hurriedly sent messages to the prefect demanding the dispatch of weapons or guards to ward-off potentially troublesome strikers. Managers from the SEBCA (Société d'exploitation des Bois Coloniaux en Algérie) described the arrival of ten Muslim strikers inside the factory who ordered people to stop working.[74] Mr Pana, the SEBCA factory foreman, fled his home to find refuge in the factory's spare offices for the strike's duration.[75] Fearing for his safety in an isolated corner of the dockland area of Algiers, Pana requested an exceptional loan of firearms since he was unable to call for assistance due to a telephone strike. Men registered to a local CGT construction union intimidated brick-layers working in the El-Biar commune by frequently interrupting the building of a climatology school.[76]

The November/December strikes spread to Algiers at a time when Algeria was becoming a police state. As Martin Thomas argued, massacres in May 1945 marked a shift in the practice of information gathering among *gendarmes* and analysts in the prefectures of Algiers and Constantine. Before May 1945, intelligence services carefully differentiated between Muslims allied with nationalist movements such as the PPA (Parti du Peuple Algérien) or AML (Amis du Manifeste et de la Liberté).[77] Yet after failed uprisings in Sétif, which subsequently culminated in the massacre of thousands of native Algerians by settler militias and military bombardments in Guelma, police departments

[73] 'Rapport Général sur les Grèves-p.3', December 1947, ANOM, Fonds Préfecture d'Alger, 91-1K883.
[74] 'Lettre de la Société d'Exploitation des Bois Coloniaux en Algérie', 2nd December 1947, ANOM, Fonds Préfecture d'Alger/Cabinet du préfet d'Alger, 91-1K883.
[75] Ibid.
[76] 'Lettre de l'Entreprise Jean-Marie Chavy à Monsieur le Commissaire de Police', 6th December 1947, ANOM, Fonds Préfecture d'Alger, 91-1K883.
[77] M. Thomas, 'Intelligence and the Transition to the Algerian Police State. Reassessing French Colonial Authority after the Sétif Uprising, 1945', *Intelligence and National Security,* 28/3 (2013), pp.387-388.

perceived the entire Muslim population as potentially dangerous. Reports invariably portrayed Muslims as violent, aggressive, and prone to cruelty or criminality.[78]A dispassionate scrutiny of political, ideological, or religious Muslim organizations was no longer possible.[79]

Fears of resurgent Arab nationalism coalesced with fears of communism. By late 1947, the central committee of the PCA (Parti Communiste Algérien) drifted further away from the PCF's directives. Young and educated recruits from urban centres questioned the PCA's aversion to an independent Algeria. Newspapers such as *Liberté* developed a distinctly Algerian identity with articles in French and Arabic.[80] Nora Benallègue-Chaouia and Drew Allison argued both the PCA and Algerian trade union movement became more Algerian, with indigenous workers almost outnumbering Europeans in late 1948.[81] As a member of the French Popular Relief organisation Maurice Priaud understood why Algerian workers flocked to the PCA. Peasants abandoned swathes of arable land following scorching temperatures and dry spells between 1945 and 1946. A chronic lack of irrigation forced thousands of ill-equipped and ill-trained herders to flee to urban areas to find employment.[82] Flocks of sheep and camels, the lifeline of Algerian farmers, died of starvation. Medicine was in short supply by March 1947. The town of Berrouaghia near the coastline only had one doctor and his wife to care for a population of approximately 50,000 inhabitants. One hospital operated

[78] Ibid, pp.391-392.
[79] Ibid, p.388. M. Thomas, 'From Sétif to Moramanga: Identifying Insurgents and Ascribing Guilt in the French Colonial Post-War', *War in History,* 25/2 (2018), pp. 235-243.
[80] A. Drew, *We are no longer in France: Communists in Colonial Algeria* (Manchester, 2014) pp.146-159.
[81] N. Benallègue-Chaouia, *Algérie: mouvement ouvrier et question nationale, 1919-1954* (Algiers, 2005), pp.380-383.
[82] 'Dans les douars, des milliers de gosses vont nus sous la neige', *La Défense* [Paris], no.117 (21st March 1947), p. 2 col a-c.

with only eight beds with no central heating or running water.[83] Starving crowds staggered into the shantytowns of Algiers, fuelling support for the PCA.

Police and prefects, petrified of insurrection, paid little attention to the economic and social ills fuelling industrial action in Algiers. Instead of famished workers, they saw a potential army roused by scheming communists. Once again, a failure to demobilize is apparent in dossiers compiled by apprehensive police, prefects, and analysts, who tended to exaggerate the nationalist or communist impulse of the strikes in late 1947 and throughout 1948.

At a CGT committee, officer Touron eavesdropped on deputy Fayet who had returned to Algiers to support the waning strike. Touron believed a communist plot spanned both the metropole and Algeria. In reality, Fayet was only attempting to extend the strike to extract concessions from the Governor-General.[84] Fayet claimed fellow communists in France urged him to inform Algerians that North African workers headlined marches in Saint-Etienne, where thirty-thousand miners, railwaymen, and textile labourers stormed CRS turrets armed with stones and crowbars. Touron noted 'les musulmans en particulier ont longuement applaudi cette déclaration.'[85] Police and authorities in Algiers searched for nefarious motives hidden behind legitimate demands. The Red menace appeared to be joining forces with Arab nationalism.

Officials in Algeria viewed the storming of the Marseille courthouse as a critical turning point, and as a signal for PCA activists to stage similar actions in Algiers.[86] When electricians in Algiers went on strike on the 4th and 5th December, leaving phone

[83] Ibid.
[84] 'Rapport de police des renseignements généraux du district d'Alger p.1.', 9th December 1947, ANOM, Fonds Préfecture d'Alger, 91-1K883.
[85] Ibid, p.3.
[86] 'Rapport Général sur les grèves-p.6', December 1947, ANOM, Fonds Préfecture d'Alger, 91-1K883.

lines exposed, the frightened colonial administration fretted French and Algerian communists planned paramilitary campaigns to overthrow the regime.[87] Reports spoke of a mysterious *État-major* scheming at the heart of the PCF, coordinating strike movements with Algerian comrades. Police believed PCA members liaised with the PCF with hidden radio transmitters, thus explaining how the PCA central committee in Algiers was informed of events in Marseille hours before local press received any information of the riots. Analysts focused on the PCA's impressive communication network and suggested some communist members received conspiratorial or seditious orders which could comprise security.[88]

Speculation abounded as to who in the PCA or PCF gave the orders. Reports suspected it was the PCF's representative in Algeria, who maintained contact with the central committee in Paris and was always accompanied by a mysterious PCA member.[89] Police feared this *État-major* intended to transform the strike into a revolution, and thought this theory was confirmed when militants received orders to continue the strike at any cost. This myopic view bore no resemblance to reality. There was no transnational plot to provoke a coup and topple either the French government or the Algerian administration. The PCA and its allies in the CGT did not have enough support in Muslim or European populations to carry it out. Most CGT unionists were hostile to calls for a general strike even though it was justified on economic grounds. They believed it was ill-advised due to a fraught national and international context.[90]

[87] Ibid, p.6.
[88] Ibid, p.7.
[89] Ibid, p.7.
[90] Ibid, p.8.

Psychiatric hospital staff in Blida on strike against *les lois Schuman* in December 1947 still remembered the massacres French authorities committed in Sétif and Guelma only two years before in 1945.[91] As Jean-Pierre Peyroulou mentioned, moderate and extreme nationalist newspapers such as *Égalité* or *La République algérienne* commemorated the victims every year.[92] Heated meetings between the HPB (Hôpital Psychiatrique de Blida) director and vice-prefect did not end well. The latter confronted HPB representatives relentlessly.[93]

Officials threatened to revoke or fire every participant, but CGT trade unionists retaliated by accusing prefecture officials of complicity during the Constantine massacres in May 1945.[94] Blida's prefect in 1947 was a protégé of Lestrade Carbonnel who incited violence against Muslim nationalist rallies in Guelma. Carbonnel gave incendiary speeches to European settlers and promoted the formation of militias in Constantine. Hospital staff feared Carbonnel's protégé in Blida would provoke strikers and provide an excuse to mobilize troops to quell the movement.[95] This explains why hospital workers in Blida, and other labourers elsewhere in Algeria, did not tempt police into using force, especially in comparison to compatriots in the metropole. They knew the danger they were facing and did not want to risk another massacre.[96]

Though commissioners ignored damaging articles in *Travail* or *Alger Républicain* and dismissed journalists' letters accusing gendarmes of excessive force, the Algiers

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[91] 'Syndicat Départemental des Hôpitaux Psychiatriques', Nov-Dec 1947, ANOM, Fonds Préfecture d'Alger, 91-1K883.
[92] Jean-Pierre Peyroulou, 'Le cas de Sétif-Kherrata-Guelma(Mai 1945)', (21st March 2008), https://www.sciencespo.fr/mass-violence-war-massacre- resistance/fr/document/le-cas-de-sa-tif-kherrata-guelma-mai-1945.html (23rd December 2018).
[93] 'Comité de grève de l'Hôpital Psychiatrique de Blida-Joinville', Nov-Dec 1947, ANOM, Fonds Préfecture d'Alger, 91-1K883.
[94] Ibid.
[95] Peyroulou, 'le cas de Sétif-Kherrata-Guelma (Mai 1945)'.
[96] 'Comité de grève de l'Hôpital Psychiatrique...'.

strike wave was a relatively calm affair.[97]Only one mass demonstration took place outside courthouse gates, protesting the arrest of four workers charged with grave offences. However, right-wing RPF representatives did approach administration officials, intending to lend armed *compagnons* to stand with security forces.[98] Even police reports admitted strikers lacked the numbers needed to mount anything more than parades and the use of RPF militiamen was not necessary. Strikers stayed away from mayoral offices, radio stations, and train depots. The brief takeover of electric plants was exceptional and another Sétif did not take place.[99]

Reports from police informants stationed in Miliana, who gathered intelligence regarding local nationalist groups reveal that, although the Algiers strike was not successful, it did attract the attention of Muslim nationalists living outside metropolitan areas who overwhelmingly sympathized with workers leading the movement.[100] Police agents Constans and Tcham monitored PPA activity for weeks and concluded Algerian nationalists watched strikes in Algiers attentively. It seemed some PPA militants really did hope a political coup d'état would take place either in the metropole or Algeria.[101]

Informants overheard PPA members envisioning multiple 'what if' scenarios. Hypothetically, what prevented Algeria from ceding from the French empire if strikes toppled the Fourth Republic, replacing it with a communist dictatorship? [102]If the United States invaded a sovietised France, could nationalists take advantage of this situation and finally bring about an independent Algeria? The PCF, if true to its anti-imperialist

[97] 'Lettre du Syndicat National des Journalistes ...', 5th December 1947, ANOM, Fonds Préfecture d'Alger, 91-1K883.
[98] 'Rapport Général sur les grèves- p.4', December 1947, ANOM, Fonds Prefecture d'Alger, 91-1K883.
[99] 'Rapport Général sur les grèves, December 1947, ANOM, Fonds Préfecture d'Alger, 91-1K883.
[100] 'Lettre à monsieur le commissaire divisionnaire chef de la PRG-Alger', 5th December 1947, ANOM, Fonds Préfecture d'Alger, 91-1K883.
[101] Ibid.
[102] Ibid.

ideology could surrender the colony.[103] To some nationalist observers the Algiers strike was a means to an end. The PCA and its trade union adherents in December 1947 appeared, at least from afar, as forces capable of challenging colonial domination via sustained industrial action. The PPA envisioned a liberated Algeria under the temporary stewardship of a benevolent United States. A brief transition period under US protection and tutelage would precede independence: 'Les milieux PPA souhaitent une résolution en France, qui d'après eux, ne manquerait pas de placer l'Algérie sous l'occupation et le contrôle des États- Unis.'[104] However, only a few Muslims shared these fantasies which petered out when strikes ended.

Reactions from the indigenous population in Algiers are difficult to gauge. Muslim community representatives thought it best that Muslims stay out of the conflict, and not pick a side, either with the administration or CGT. They generally agreed Muslims would gain nothing from getting involved in a political and distinctly French strike.[105] However, many railwaymen and dockers employed in Algiers were native Algerians and most of them endorsed the CGT's support for industrial action. In addition, reports written after the strike-waves stated PPA members did contact the PCA leadership. Some nationalists intended to lend tactical and material support to the CGT.[106] This demonstrates the Nov-Dec strikes in Algiers did, for a small minority, elicit a variety of passions and speculations. Briefs often omitted or downplayed Muslim's perspective in the post-war era, although they did follow these developments closely. Yet, not all Muslim onlookers or workers backed the movement and contrary to what

[103] Ibid.
[104] Ibid.
[105] 'Rapport général sur les grèves- p.3-4', December 1947, ANOM, Fonds Préfecture d'Alger, 91- 1K883.
[106] Ibid, p.3-4.

intelligence services feared, strikes did not prove the existence of a communist or nationalist plot to overthrow colonial rule.

The mobilization of indigenous farmers, miners, and women throughout 1948 continued to frighten an Algerian colonial infrastructure shook by the November/December strike waves of 1947.[107] Industrial action continued, with some encouragement from the PCF in the metropole and opportunistic nationalists, as Algerian workers grew disillusioned with a regime condoning rampant poverty. In July 1948, Deputy Fayet admonished his colleagues in the National Assembly for once again ignoring the plight of agricultural labourers in Algeria. In far-flung farms, cut-off from militants or aid in cities, they struggled to survive on 170 francs for fifteen hours work and went on strike for a month. Fayet claimed that during raids, police confiscated farmers' water and cereal rationing cards and he also mentioned rumours of police chasing women and children out of villages[108] Deputy Mohamed Mokhtari noticed mounting discontent in Oran as well, where civil servants did not receive rewards employers promised them after the winter strikes.[109] The Algerian administration increased its surveillance of unions affiliated with the CGT, and seemed to back powerful proprietors such as Henri de Saintpierre in harassing workers who formed trade unions.[110] It is not surprising unionists kept referring to 'les grèves de novembre/décembre' in the speeches they gave in CGT assemblies in early 1948, adding to the anxiety already spreading among colonial authorities.

[107] 'Deux années de lutte pour la liberté et la paix, la terre et le pain', Rapport du comité central pour le Ve congrès national du Parti Communiste Algérien, (April 1947-May 1949) pp.12-15', https://www.socialgerie.net/IMG/pdf/1949_PCA_1947-1949.pdf (2nd December 2019).
[108] *JO, Débats*, 27th July 1948, pp. 4925-27.
[109] *JO, Débats*, 6th February 1948, p. 503.
[110] *JO, Débats*, pp. 4925-27.

Unlike compatriots in the metropole, crippled by divisions and reeling from recriminations and arrests, Algerian trade unionists emerged relatively unscathed. They saw the strikes not as damaging failures but as a stepping stone towards greater reform. The promises the administration and employers made did not materialize as swiftly as many had hoped, however. Consequently, the November/December strikes served both as a warning to onlooking police and rallying cry for the rank-and-file. In late February 1948, CGT delegates organized marches which saw hundreds gather near Strasbourg Street in Sidi-bel-Abbès.[111] Railwaymen, electricians, bargemen from Oued Sarno, and communal workers chanted slogans and branded placards saying: 'Application de la Sécurité Sociale', 'Ouverture des chantiers de chômage…', 'Lutte contre la hausse des prix' or 'Augmentation du niveau du coût de la vie.'[112] Seven hundred people, among which a third were Muslim, listened to speeches praising the endurance of the working-class. Mr Soler, leader of the CGT railway division, reminded everyone not to forget the November/December strikes and more importantly, how employers did not deliver on their promises for higher wages.[113] The number of strikes in the metropole dropped after December 1947, only to peak faintly again in late 1948. However, strike action rose steadily in Oran and Constantine.

In mainland France, the CGT, CFTC, and FO unions released pamphlets asking moderate demands such as the rise of the minimum wage to 13,500 francs, the re-instating of punished or revoked staff, and the removal of sanctions against railwaymen guilty of 'faute de grève ou manifestation revendicatrice' in the wake of the 1947

[111] 'Rapport Spécial- Manifestation publique organisée par l'Union locale CGT', 27th February 1948, ANOM, Fonds Préfecture d'Oran- Police Générale, 92-1F-62.
[112] Ibid.
[113] Ibid.

summer and winter strike waves.[114] In contrast, Algerian demands were more radical. In October 1948, railwaymen in Beghal, Medjaed, and Marnia demanded full social welfare programmes.[115] Muslim and European dockland trade unionists in Algiers became more militant, as a series of 24-hour and week-long strikes in the summer and autumn 1948 attest.[116] To Algerian authorities, the so-called 'insurrectionary' movements in France encouraged Algerian workers to ask for more.

On the 4th February 1948, PCF delegates referred to the winter strikes once again at a CGT meeting in Oran. Thousands of workers, of which 70% were Muslims according to police transcripts, gathered in a theatre to hear Mr René Arrachard.[117] The Secretary of the CGT construction union arrived in time to witness strikes taxi drivers and millers had instigated in response to the colonial administration's failure to secure diesel supplies for cabs, and employers who refused to implement hourly indemnities worth only seven francs.[118] He bellowed amidst thunderous applause that the CGT was a match for the unholy alliance between capitalism and colonialism. He recalled a memorable incident in the mines of le Nord during the November/December strikes, when North-African soldiers laid down their weapons rather than shoot unarmed civilians.[119] Arrachard declared the hundredth anniversary of the 1848 revolutions should inspire Algerian taxi drivers striking against feckless colonial officials carousing in expensive jeeps.[120] For police informants listening to Arrachard's speech in the crowd, it

[114] 'Affiche Fédération Nationale des Travailleurs, Cadres et Techniciens des Chemins de Fer…pour l'unité totale, pour le triomphe de nos revendications', 14th October 1948, ANOM, Fonds Préfecture d'Oran- Police et R.G, 92-2476.
[115] 'Affiche des Syndicats d'Ingénieurs, Cadres, Techniciens et Agents de Maîtrise des Chemins de Fer Algériens', 2nd November 1948, ANOM, Fonds Préfecture d'Oran- Police et R.G, 92-2476.
[116] 'Lettre du Chef de la Police Spéciale du Port d'Oran à Monsieur le Commissaire...', 12th August 1948, ANOM, Fonds Préfecture d'Oran-Police Générale, 92-1F-62.
[117] 'Rapport: Activités syndicales-CGT-Meeting, p.1', 5th February 1948, ANOM, Fonds Préfecture d'Oran-Police Générale, 92-1F-62.
[118] Ibid, p.1.
[119] Ibid, p.2.
[120] Ibid, p.2.

appeared the PCF planned to incite unrest in the colony once again, although other reports mentioned Arrachard urged Algerian workers to exercise caution and restraint, confiding that he had forebodings of violence when travelling to Bone, Philippeville, and Constantine.[121] Yet despite such dangers, Arrachard's message was clear. The unfinished work begun by the November/December strikes in France must continue in Algeria.

This would not be the first time Arrachard appeared to be kindling unrest abroad on the PCF's behalf. According to journalists reporting from Stockholm for the Swiss *Nouvelle Gazette* over a year later, Arrachard visited Finland during the Kemi lumberjack strikes in September 1949. Finnish authorities accused him of inciting fissures between social democrats and communists in the Finnish trade union movement.[122] Peaceful marches on August 18th ended in bloodshed when police fired on advancing crowds, killing one worker and severely injuring many more, which triggered sympathy strikes among communist-controlled construction, metallurgy, and docker unions.[123]Arrachard backed the outnumbered communists against the predominantly socialist leadership of the Finnish trade union congress, and poured fuel on an explosive situation after attacking President Juho Kusti Paasikivi for sending troops into Kemi to arrest dozens of strikers.[124]Like Algerian police, the Finnish and Swedish press automatically suspected Arrachard was a spy and branded him a puppet of the Cominform, sent to sow disruption in countries vulnerable to Soviet invasion.[125]

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[121] 'Rapport: Meeting organisé par la CGT...au Théâtre Municipal d'Oran", p.3', 6th February 1948, ANOM, Fonds Préfecture d'Oran-Police Générale, 92-1F-62.
[122] 'Finlande: le rôle d'Arrachard dans les grèves Molotov', *La Révolution Prolétarienne* [Paris], no. 336 (February, 1950), pp.3-4.
[123] J.M. Hanhimäki, *Containing Coexistence: America, Russia and the"Finnish Solution", 1945-1956* (Ohio, 1997), pp.74-77.
[124] 'Finlande: le rôle d'Arrachard…February 1950', p.3-4.
[125] Ibid, pp.3-4.

Arrachard's interventions, whether in the municipal theatre in Oran or during the Kemi strikes in Finland a year later, did not prove the PCF co-ordinated disruptive strikes abroad. Arrachard was generally much more forceful in his support for industrial action than his fellow PCF members, who actually accused him of prolonging workers' unrest unnecessarily after the November/December strikes in France.[126] His inflammatory speeches and confrontational demeanour drew attention but did not have a significant impact, contrary to what Algerian police may have suspected. Muslim workers in Algeria had modest grievances and practical concerns rather than overturning the French colonial order or spreading the communist faith. Algerian workers did not need to be prodded into strike action by PCF delegates such as Arrachard. Low living standards and calamitous working conditions galvanized miners without foreign interference.

In the Kénadsa coalmine, located north of the Sahara and approximately 700km away from the nearest harbour, a fire broke out in pit nine resulting in the deaths of fourteen miners between the 4th and 9th May 1948.[127] The fire began between levels C and D of the mineshaft, and in less than an hour, it had spread and prevented any chance of rescue as it was impossible to descend below. The exact cause of the incident became a lively subject of debate in the National Assembly a few days later.[128] Deputy Alice Sportisse, member of the PCA, ruled out the possibility of a faulty pipeline causing the fire, as investigative teams from Lens discovered the pipes were still intact after the catastrophe. Sportisse suggested the cause was industrial sabotage, listing a series of suspicious occurrences before and after the incident.[129] For example, a blacksmith triggered an explosion after lighting an oven and burglars broke into some offices. She

[126] Mencherini, '*Guerre froide...',* pp.237-239.
[127] *JO, Débats,* 8th June 1948, p. 3278.
[128] Ibid.
[129] Ibid.

emphasised the significance of Pit nine in the overall rate of production. It replaced four pits due for decommissioning later that year, which implied the most likely culprits were foreign competitors who employed criminals to disrupt the outflow of coal from Algeria.[130]

Conversely, Deputy Charles Serre, member of the Algerian Mouvement Républicain gave a more grounded explanation. He felt mines in South-Oran were hastily constructed during World War II and generally ill-equipped to comply with safety regulations. Kénadsa was running short of vital materials, which occasionally obliged miners to extract coal via unconventional means.[131] It was plausible Kénadsa's isolation and a precarious environment hampered the miners' ability to adhere to safety measures and regulations.

When PCF Deputy Auguste Lecoeur intervened, he declared the Kénadsa incident was but one tragic accident in a long series of catastrophes which struck mines in preceding months, both in France and abroad. Lecoeur referred to the coal dust explosions which claimed the lives of dozens of miners in the Courrières basin in Pas-de-Calais.[132] This did not include accidents taking place on a daily basis.[133] Lecoeur accused the government of cowardice and implied Prime Minister Schuman and Minister Jules Moch prioritized economics over the miners' safety.[134]

The Kénadsa incident accentuated the gulf between miners in mainland France and Algeria. Despite promises for more inquiries into who or what was responsible for

[130] Ibid.
[131] Ibid.
[132] P. Roger, 'Un second Courrières: la catastrophe minière du 19 avril 1948', *Revue du Nord,* 1/414 (2016), pp.113-144.
[133] *JO, Débats*, p. 3279.
[134] Ibid.

the disaster, no conclusive evidence was ever found. The incident represented more than a failure of management or security, but rather brought to light the plight of 4,000 miners forced to work in scorching temperatures and deprived of basic rights and protections miners enjoyed in the metropole.[135]Lecoeur's impassioned warnings against the emergence of a corporate state, which cloaked enslavement in patriotism, seemed to describe the lives of Algerian miners. Lecoeur complained that trade unionists were rarely able to raise safety concerns because of indifferent authorities.[136] Deceased miners of Arabo-Berber descent worked in the most hazardous areas, and the Kénadsa catastrophe was an example that Algerian mines were even more dangerous than those in the metropole.[137]

Shortly after touring Algerian mines in the winter of 1945, Henri Martel, communist mayor from Sin-Le-Noble in the north of France, recorded that North-African workers lacked education, nourishment, accommodation, and even the necessary clothing to work in the mines.[138] It was unfair to ask of these men to exploit the zinc, copper, steel, and nickel Algeria possessed in its soil. Martel read telegrams at the South Oranian trade union conference, revealing the hardships of indigenous miners toiling in distant basins. Miners in Miliana and Colomb-Béchar were furious at congress members for failing to reinstate trade union delegates since the end of the Occupation.[139] A prolonged absence of unionists endangered the maintenance of security measures. By December 1945 and early 1946, Miliana and surrounding regions still did not receive enough supplies to feed miners or their families. None of the workers had received a wage-

[135] Ibid., p.3278.
[136] Ibid., pp.3279-3280.
[137] Guy Mangini, 'Catastrophe Minière au siège 9 de Kénadsa les 4 et 9 mai 1948', (27th March 2014), http://alger-roi.fr/Alger/kenadsa/texte/3_accident_1948_resume_mangini.htm (18th October 2017).
[138] 'Deuxième Congrès de l'Union des Syndicats Confédérés d'Oranie', 30th December 1945, AMDT, Fonds Henri Martel, 2008-028-028.
[139] Ibid, p.4.

increase for over a year, while most could only survive through bartering on the black market.[140] Women and children no longer went outside because of their tattered clothes. Miners accused local cäids of reaping profits while workers starved.[141]

In light of these deplorable conditions, it is not surprising strike movements in Algerian mines shadowed the miners' strike in France. In fact, Deputy Sportisse claimed nearly two-month long strikes in Kouif took place in April and June 1948.[142] Yet calls for improved health and safety regulations from Algerian miners grew even louder later that year. The engineers' trade union in Kénadsa sent messages to the FNSS in France in Oct/Nov 1948, complaining that Algerian miners voted to go on strike without warning them. They backed the movement but very reluctantly. In contrast to their colleagues, engineers felt nationalisation programmes implemented in France and Algeria worked well.[143] They joined the fray for the sake of solidarity.[144] It is possible engineers believed other factors motivated a downtrodden workforce in a remote outpost, such as perhaps mounting nationalist sentiments.

French authorities were afraid strikes in France would trigger even more disruption in Algeria. It was illegal for Algerian cinemas to screen newsreels containing footage of strikes unfolding in the metropole.[145] In December 1948, Mr Coppolani, manager of the Aumale Cinema, received newsreels the Algiers censorship bureau reviewed, yet they still contained footage deemed inappropriate for indigenous audiences. The forbidden footage featured violent confrontations between CRS officers

[140] Ibid, p.4.
[141] Ibid, p.4.
[142] *JO, Débats,* p. 3278.
[143] 'Lettre de la section S.N.I.N des Houillères Sud-Oranaises', Nov-Dec 1948, ADSSD, Fonds FNSS-CGT, 239 J12.
[144] Ibid.
[145] 'Rapport a/s projection d'actualités sur les grèves', 3rd December 1948, ANOM, Fonds Préfecture d'Alger, 91-1K880.

and miners in le Nord and crowds of strikers shouting obscenities and hurling stones at overwhelmed police.[146] Following an investigation, Coppolani removed this part of the film, which lasted only two minutes. Officer Coudret in Algiers also ordered the proprietor of another cinema to withdraw the same newsreel containing the passage entitled 'Strikes in France.'[147]

Algerian police and authorities feared that footage showing French communities confronting the CRS would inspire Algerian strike movements in turn, which could then spiral out of control or foment rebellion. The prospect of another Sétif or Guelma continued to haunt them, although this paranoia was overblown.

Yet trade unionists did use increasingly combative rhetoric to rouse the miners of Béni-Saf. On the 23rd October 1948, delegate Mahrouz, addressing an overwhelmingly Muslim audience of miners and speaking exclusively in Arabic, compared mining company managers to dogs.[148] He proclaimed France always exploited Algerian miners, either as mindless slaves or cannon fodder.[149] He claimed French officials discriminated injured Muslim miners by stitching ribbons on their clothes to indicate their incapacity to work, which, at best, diminished their chances of finding employment or increased their risk of getting fired.[150] Muslim union delegates employed confrontational tactics, especially compared to European colleagues.[151] Distant bosses or the French administration were not only adversaries holding keys to better livelihoods or working conditions, but also a monstrous enemy they had to defeat. CGT members endeavoured

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[146] Ibid.
[147] 'Rapport: Actualités cinématographiques sur les grèves', 5th November 1948, ANOM, Fonds Préfecture d'Alger, 91-1K880.
[148] 'Rapport Spécial-grève des mineurs de la Cie Mokta-el-Hadid', 24th October 1948, ANOM, Fonds Préfecture d'Oran-Police et R.G, 92-2476.
[149] Ibid, p.2.
[150] Ibid, p.2.
[151] Ibid, p.2

to prolong strike actions in Béni-Saf by repeatedly haranguing Muslim miners.[152] Indigenous populations and *fellahs* (farmers) in Aïn-Témouchent and Sidi-Bel-Abbès organized makeshift relief organizations, donating chickpeas and bread in vast quantities. Protests melded with traditional and religious rituals, with strikers assembling in marketplaces and marching through villages to receive blessings from local preachers.[153]There certainly was a rising nationalist consciousness, but this did not mean miners planned for a vengeful revolution or wanted to overthrow the French colonial regime.

Divergences between Muslim and European miners in Béni-Saf were noticeable when strike committees assembled in a local cinematheque, where delegates told miners not to return to work even though most of their demands had been granted.[154]They mainly wanted to defy mining director Jouhaud for assuming miners would automatically resume work.[155] The Muslim audience applauded rapturously, but the European miners did not like the idea of pits closing indefinitely. Many French, Spanish, or Italian miners defied CGT orders to continue the strike and returned to the mine in droves. Police intended to exploit these differing opinions and hoped to recruit European miners to defend fragile mining apparatus against predominantly Muslim strikers.[156] European miners thus hesitated to abandon work, not only for financial reasons, but also because they disapproved of the radical direction of the CGT upper-echelons.[157] Moreover, the prefect of Oran received letters from subordinates relating exceptional outbursts of

[152] 'Rapport sur l'activité des membres de la CGT à Béni-Saf', 27th November 1948, ANOM, Fonds Préfecture d'Oran- Police et R.G, 92-2476.
[153] Ibid.
[154] 'Le Commissaire de Police de Béni-Saf à M. le Sous-Préfet de Tlemcen', 3rd November 1948, ANOM, Fonds Préfecture d'Oran, 92-2476.
[155] Ibid.
[156] Ibid, p.2
[157] Ibid, p.2.

violence taking place in Béni-Saf. On the 29th and 30th October, two Muslim strikers wielding batons harassed and assaulted a European worker, while a European striker provoked and injured a Muslim chauffeur ferrying workers to the mines.[158]

A fearful intelligence-gathering community in Algiers and beyond, blinded by rabid anti-communism, looked for insurrection where there was none. A brewing nationalism was faintly noticeable among some PCA members, CGT unionists, and imaginative PPA supporters, especially in strikes staged throughout 1948. However, its role in prompting Algerians to turn out en masse was minimal. As a result, the reasons workers from many different industries went on strike were often ignored. Individual actors within the French CGT and PCF, such as René Arrachard, saw industrial action in Algeria as an opportunity to continue, if not redeem, the failed strike waves begun in the winter of 1947. The shadows of Sétif and Guelma loomed large and deterred indigenous and European workers from escalating industrial action; and when strikers confronted uncooperative colleagues, prefects, or employers, their attacks consisted mainly of verbal threats and fiery speeches. Conversely, police commissioners, informants, and gendarmes stationed in Algiers and Oran always looked out for any likely signs of insurrection. When strikes involving many Muslim workers progressed without incident, colonial authorities still left nothing to chance. Anything likely to embolden or inspire indigenous workers to pursue strike action, such as news footage or bulletins critical of security forces and troops stationed in Le Nord and Pas-de-Calais, was immediately censored or banned. These factors probably explain why post-war strikes in Algeria did not often end in bloodshed like in the metropole.

[158] 'Le Sous-Préfet de l'Arrondissement de Tlemcen à Monsieur le Préfet(Cabinet/Police Générale) p.2', 2nd November 1948, ANOM, Fonds Préfecture d'Oran, 92-2476.

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However, in the case of Morocco, French authorities dealt with mining strikes very differently. Communist mayor of l'Indre-et-Loire Jean Guillon addressed the National Assembly less than a month after the culmination of the deadly French miners' strike of November 1948.[159] He lamented that only three years after the end of the war, the French Union was in a state of siege. No one seemed to hear opinions criticizing or read articles denouncing General Juin and his tenure as head of the Moroccan Protectorate.[160] Guillon claimed this silence extended to the Assembly. Communist deputy Jean Pronteau also spoke ill of Juin's repressive measures against the miners of Khouribga in May 1948. He argued everyone should condemn the outrageous repression ongoing in Morocco, where mining communities witnessed multiple police raids, disappearances, and deportations of entire families.[161] The Residency's ruthless reaction to the Khouribga strike undoubtedly inspired the French government's brutal suppression of mining strikes in le Nord and Pas-de-Calais six months later.[162]

Guillon added the Moroccan press censored deputy Pronteau's speech, and as a result, few people knew General Juin mobilized army regiments, equipped with tanks, machine-gun turrets, and planes against unarmed miners.[163] Guillon saw the Khouribga strike as another tragic episode in the futile quest to crush worker movements flourishing throughout a crumbling French Empire. The politics of destruction the French government pursued in Madagascar and Indochina was creeping into North Africa.[164]

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[159] *JO, Débats*, 10th December 1948, p. 7519.
[160] Ibid.
[161] Ibid.
[162] For how colonial counterinsurgency methods shaped domestic policing, see S. Schrader, *Badges without Borders: How Global Counterinsurgency Transformed American Policing* (Oakland, 2019), pp.1-30.
[163] Ibid.
[164] Ibid.

Strikes provided a perfect excuse for General Juin to escalate his war on Moroccan nationalism. The torture and terror French forces unleashed to suppress dissent in Algeria a decade later can be traced back to the March-April miners' strike in the Moroccan protectorate. Why did the Residency react the way it did? What compelled outnumbered trade unionists to trigger such a disastrous movement? And more importantly, did 'insurrectionary' winter strikes in France precipitate this chain reaction?

American anthropologist Walter Cline claimed Morocco was a country unsuited for inspiring nationalism.[165] The population was fragmented along unbridgeable cultural, geographic, and religious lines. If General Lyautey had not imposed some semblance of order in the region, Morocco, he argued, would have surely succumbed to a state of tribal warfare. Berber and Arab populations rarely referred to each other as Moroccans.[166] Professor Cline partly blamed the 'timidity' of urban inhabitants in Rabat, Fez, and Casablanca, while rural inhabitants remained in small villages and had little in common with urban dwellers.[167] Cline poured scorn on what he perceived to be the minuscule clique of educated Moroccans espousing independence. They were nothing more than a self-interested cabal of merchants and intellectuals wishing to become equals with the French oppressor they never tired of emulating. It was a nationalist movement unconcerned with alleviating the poverty, diseases, and daily scourges the vast majority of the population faced.[168] Privilege, ingratitude, and entitlement were among the foundations of the nationalist cause according to Cline.

[165] W.B Cline, 'Nationalism in Morocco', *Middle East Journal*, 1/ 1 (1947), pp.18-19
[166] Ibid, p.19
[167] Ibid, p.19.
[168] Ibid, p.22.

This dismissive assessment is not entirely inaccurate. Frustrated at having received little support from the Allied powers and the United States in particular, the scholar Allal al-Fassi, merchant Ahmed Mitwar, and diplomat Ahmed Balafrej spearheaded a doomed attempt to remove the French from Morocco in January 1944.[169] Multiple actors spanning the entire political spectrum drafted and signed a declaration of independence. On January 18th, the Sultan and tribal leaders pledged their support for the draft. The Residency's reaction was swift, detaining nationalist leaders temporarily while quelling demonstrations in Rabat and Fez. Nationalists struggled to rouse popular support and squandered a potentially ground-breaking show of force against the colonial regime.[170]Aside the astute and assertive Sultan Sidi Mohammed ben Yussef, Cline saw no other standard-bearer for Moroccan independence. Nationalists appeared incapable of surmounting divisions ingrained in Moroccan society.[171]

However, Cline was unaware of another strand of patriotism brewing away from upper-class conservatives in the Istiqlal party. By 1946, members of the PCM (Parti Communiste Marocain) significantly altered their manifesto. A young trade unionist named Ali Yata presented a report to the Central Committee on the 3rd and 4th August aiming to abolish the French Protectorate. French and European members gradually left the PCM and were replaced with indigenous workers.[172] Yet adherence to the PCM was a risky endeavour. The party was officially banned for indigenous Moroccans and as early

[169] Ibid, pp.25-26.
[170] Ibid, pp.26-27.
[171] Ibid, p.28.
[172] R. Gallissot, 'Les mouvements ouvriers au Maghreb : étude comparée', (paper delivered between the 22-26 June 2006, *Pour une histoire critique et citoyenne. Le cas de l'histoire franco-algérienne* seminar, Lyon, ENS) http://colloque-algerie.ens-lyon.fr/communication.php3?id_article=238 (5th January 2019). A. Yata and J. Paul, 'The Moroccan CP and Sahara', *MERIP Reports*, no.56(1977), p.16.

as 1943 protectorate security enhanced its surveillance of communist activity in trade unions.[173]

PCM activists found attentive audiences in mining basins. According to *Le Libertaire*, working conditions in the mines of Aouli had not improved since the Liberation.[174] Approximately sixty Europeans, women and children included, presided over a thousand indigenous labourers.[175] They were mainly foremen supervising workshops and electrical services. Nicknamed *les Penarroya* after the Spanish company running the mine, European staff enjoyed numerous privileges such as paid leave to France every two years, free heating, and much higher pay. Five workshop chiefs earned between 28,000 and 30,000 francs per month, while indigenous miners received 27.50 francs an hour.[176] There was no drinking water in any lodging or encampment. Due to lengthy dry spells, cheaper and ineffective medicines replaced quinine to treat malaria. French military compiled reports which revealed there were only six showers for over 1,500 people. Soap was rarely available and only two showers provided warm water.[177] Companies often dragged poorly trained and underfed peasants from the countryside to work in the mines, which became breeding grounds for anti-colonial resentment, sentiments the PCM easily exploited. At any given opportunity, European staff reminded indigenous workers of their subaltern status in the mine, speaking to them in French, a language they never learnt and only to receive abuse, fines, or punishment.[178]

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[173] A. R. Heckman, 'Radical Nationalists: Moroccan Jewish Communists 1925-1975' (PhD thesis, University of California), pp.118-157.
[174] 'Une mine de plomb au Maroc', *Le Libertaire* [Paris], no.168 (11th February, 1949), p.3 col a-b.
[175] Ibid.
[176] Ibid.
[177] Ibid.
[178] L. David, 'The role of the state in the development of the mining industry in Morocco under the French Protectorate 1912-1956'(D.phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 1980) pp.287-290.

Sultan Mohammed's infamous Tangier speech in April 1947, which advocated a fully independent Morocco, was not the only reason why General Juin intensified efforts to stymie nationalism among indigenous Moroccan labourers.[179] Banned articles in *L'Espoir,* the main organ of the Moroccan Communist Party, recounted the purge of CGTM (Confédération Générale des Travailleurs Marocains) members during the winter of 1947. The November/December strikes in France and Algeria prompted the French residency to escalate its anti-union operations already underway in Morocco. Minister for Foreign Affairs Georges Bidault, the Sultan, and General Juin all received telegrams from Ali Yata which decried the Residency's repressive acts against clandestine trade unionists and PCM militants, yet they did nothing to stop them .[180] His pleas to stop the arrest of activists hanging posters in Port-Lyautey, and free victims, among which was a World War I veteran 'mis en cellule, laissé trois jours sans boire ni manger…', all fell on deaf ears.[181]

At first glance, the Moroccan Protectorate enjoyed a relatively peaceful state of affairs in 1947-48. A Moroccan correspondent for *La Révolution Prolétarienne* revealed the surprising lack of agitation among urban workers. Though still subject to a rationing regime, Moroccans did not suffer from the general hardship affecting France and Europe at the time. A good harvest and no outbreaks of disease or famine helped maintain peace.[182] Journalist Jean-Pierre Finidori wrote articles praising the variety of food available in shops and markets, such as American butter, Roquefort, and Dutch cheddar cheeses.[183] Yet purges or mass arrests taking place in the countryside and mines far

[179] J. Wyrtzen, 'Constructing Morocco: The colonial struggle to define the nation, 1912-1956' (PhD, Georgetown University, 2009), pp. 210-214.
[180] 'Au Maroc on continue à jeter en prison démocrates et syndicalistes', *La Défense* [Paris], no.132 (4th July 1947), p.2.
[181] Ibid.
[182] 'Nouvelles du Maroc', *La Révolution Prolétarienne* [Paris], no.305 (July 1947), p.23.
[183] 'Visite au Maroc. Un prolétariat sans défense', *La Révolution Prolétarienne* [Paris], no.321 (November,

removed from Marrakech and Casablanca told a very different story. By the end of 1947, the CGTM was undergoing its own *recul ouvrier*.

Less than two months before the 1948 March-April strike waves, caïds in the service of civil governors and residency commissioner Mr Brua detained suspected communist elements in villages of the rural Safi region.[184] Moghazni guards forced PCM member Mehdi ben Lancen to hand them 100 francs each just to take a short walk outside his prison cell. A warden summoned Bachir ben Ahmed to a nearby police station and allegedly whipped him.[185] Sheikhs searched douars and villages, chained suspects, stole their life savings or livestock, blackmailed PCM members into silence, and dissuaded peasants and working-class nationalists from adhering to the CGT. One caïd insisted suspects surrender a lamb each to avoid further persecution. Raids snared trade unionists and party cadres throughout the Chemaia and Ahmer regions.[186] Salah Zehli, bakery union organiser and member of a regional PCM cell, fell victim to this silent purge as well.[187] He wanted to lower monthly taxes bakers had to pay. This displeased a local caïd greatly, who locked him in a room until Zehli's father paid a hefty fine to release him. To punish the baker further, he forbid him from using the village oven.[188] For some, weeding out communists and nationalists to pre-empt future insurrections became another opportunity to rob and mistreat the poor.

The dismissal of a PCM militant working in the Jerada basins set off sporadic strikes in March 1948. According to Jean-Paul Trystram, miners began a strike to gain

1948), p.11.

[184] 'Ce que les Marocains n'ont pas pu lire. La répression dans la région de Safi', *La Défense* [Paris], no.158 (9th January 1948), p.2 col a-b.

[185] Ibid.

[186] Ibid.

[187] Ibid.

[188] Ibid.

the right to form trade unions which mining companies disapproved. No European staff voted in favour of supporting the movement when over six hundred miners voted to call-off the strike only twenty-four hours after it started.[189] Yet word quickly spread to miners employed in the Khouribga and Louis-Gentil phosphate basins. Approximately fifteen-thousand miners demanded the Protectorate make the *statut des mineurs* law, echoing their colleagues in the Algerian mines of Kouif and Kénadsa. Mining delegates insisted the general wage increase of 11.5% General Juin signed on the 8th March become effective immediately. The *Office des Phosphates*, officially under the complete control of the Residency, refused to implement the pay raise to the fury of a hungry populace.[190]

The Residency's brutal response to the strike had much in common with a counter-insurgency campaign. Police and army units surrounded mining cities in Boulanouare and Boujniba.[191]They diverted food rations and cut water supplies. Reconnaissance planes flew low to survey the cities. The police arrested six Moroccan miners and brought them to a public square where they were stripped naked and flogged as villagers gathered. One miner died of his wounds, while another fled through ventilation chimneys.[192] Police cancelled strike committees and union meetings throughout the region, trapped miners in offices where they almost starved, and marched agricultural labourers into the mines at gunpoint to replace strikers.[193]

Crackdowns in urban centres followed. The Casablanca trade union federation organised rallies that ended in chaos after police charged crowds and cut off

[189] J.P. Trystram, *L'ouvrier mineur au Maroc. Contribution statistique à une étude sociologique* (Paris, 1957), pp.184-186.
[190] 'Famine, bastonnades publiques, censure…ou l'ordre du Général Juin au Maroc', *La Défense* [Paris], no.177 (21st May 1948), p.2 col a-c.
[191] Ibid.
[192] Ibid.
[193] Ibid.

loudspeakers.[194] The sale of the newspaper *Mundo Obrero*, the main organ of the Spanish Communist party was banned.[195] The three week-strike ended in failure. Miners did not obtain social security or even a meagre pay raise. Instead the strike set an ominous precedent. As René Gallissot argued, strike action only emboldened the Juin administration. Metal-workers and train conductors also faced unyielding opposition from managers backed with firepower the Residency provided later that year.[196] The miners' strike succeeded in luring working-class nationalists out in the open and exposed them to further attacks.

The most significant casualty was the Moroccan trade union movement. *La Défense* published an article in August 1948, where an anonymous PCM militant revealed the horrific suffering mining delegates endured in the weeks and months following the strike.[197] Despite inconclusive evidence, mining federation members Tayeb, Benali, Azzaoui, Metaui and Ali Belgaem were all accused of inciting riots, which resulted in the murder of Jewish residents in Jerada and Oujda. Security forces prohibited the sale of mining federations' newspapers or bulletins and shut-down the offices they rented.[198] The letter claimed approximately eight hundred Moroccans suspected of treason were captured and abandoned in barren pens. Guards whipped and tortured suspected militants and trade unionists during interrogations. They tied Azzaoui's feet, spread his arms, hung him from the ceiling, and released large rats between his feet.[199] Furthermore, anyone affiliated with a trade union could not enter

[194] Ibid.
[195] Ibid.
[196] R. Gallissot, *Le Maghreb de traverse* (Paris, 2000), pp.117-119.
[197] 'Les camps de concentration de Juin au Maroc n'ont rien à envier à ceux d'Hitler', *La Défense* [Paris] no.188 (20th August 1948), p.2 col a-c . 'Terreur colonialiste au Maroc', *La Défense* [Paris], no. 187 (6th August 1948), p.2 col a.
[198] Ibid.
[199] Ibid.

Jerada. The treasurer of the Moroccan mining federation went to Saint-Etienne to attend a trade union congress, while his colleagues in Morocco were in prison. The Residency banned him from re-entering the territory.[200] Tayeb was eventually released following a local protest movement. In France, the Secours Populaire urged French readers to help the 'Comité de défense des Marocains emprisonnés' raise funds to hire lawyers to defend delegates and workers in court.[201]

Pierre Hervé, journalist at *L'Humanité* and parliamentarian, tried to investigate what really happened during the Khouribga strikes. In Boulanouare, he discovered most inhabitants refused to speak about the strike.[202] Authorities forbade leading members of the PCM, such as Abeslam Bourquia and Mohammed Ben Amar, from entering mining settlements.[203] The few people willing to talk to Hervé did not reveal much as they feared 'rats' were listening to them. A Corsican-born unionist named Michel Colonna told Hervé that authorities still took away random miners.[204] In Boujniba, Hervé met briefly with the wives and children of imprisoned strikers. Most were illiterate and signed benefit forms with thumbs dipped in ink. Many risked eviction for supporting their husbands on strike. It was only moments after Hervé left a homestead that he noticed a police car waiting across the street.[205] A police commissioner then ordered him to leave Khouribga immediately.

In his final report Hervé criticized police actions in Khouribga.[206] According to witnesses, all communication with the outside world was cut-off for nearly a month.

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[200] Ibid.
[201] Ibid.
[202] 'Avec les parias de la mine. Dans Khouribga-cité interdite', *L'Humanité* [Paris], no.1160(30th May 1948), p.1 col a.
[203] Ibid, p.2 col d. See also A. Ayache, *Le mouvement syndical au Maroc: la marocanisation 1945-1948* (Paris, 1990), pp.272-274.
[204] Ibid, p.2 col b-c.
[205] Ibid, col c-d.
[206] 'Au coeur du Maroc. La terreur à Khouribga', *L'Humanité* [Paris], no.1061(1st June 1948), p.4 col b.

Moroccan unionists could not fraternize with European colleagues and police informants helped disperse gatherings. The sound of sirens every morning saw armed guards barge into homes to force miners back to work, and women could not buy food from nearby souks.[207] Echoing similar articles in *La Défense*, Hervé remarked Moroccan trade unionists suffered the most: 'À Boujenba, le responsable syndical est arrêté dans le local, giflé par le commissaire de police et emmené menottes aux mains.'[208] Hervé even wrote a letter to the Residency admonishing General Juin for sending dozens of miners to prisons in Bouznika.[209]

Humanitarian concern did not only motivate Hervé's reporting of the Khouribga strike. He also wanted to take aim at the anti-communist Force Ouvrière.[210] Police commissioner Violle and inspector Tissot, who both oversaw the siege of Khouribga with civil controller Barbot, were socialists and members of the Moroccan FO union according to Hervé.[211] For the PCF, the strikes repression was not only the product of an implacable colonial regime, but the evil doing of socialists masquerading as friends of oppressed peoples overseas. Hervé's article paints the PCF as a virtuous whistle-blower, sending emissaries around the globe to hear, listen, and learn about the horrors of imperialism. Communists were the *real* radicals, while socialists were made to appear as pretenders.[212] The suffering of Moroccan miners was instrumentalized for petty party squabbling.

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[207] Ibid.
[208] Ibid.
[209] 'Mon crime. J'ai écouté et regardé ce qui se passait à Khouribga', *L'Humanité* [Paris], no.1157 (27th May 1948), p.2 col a-b.
[210] 'Au coeur du Maroc. La terreur à Khouribga', p. 4 col b.
[211] Ibid, col c.
[212] Ibid.

Hervé channels the PCF's paternalist mindset when interpreting events in Khouribga. The first article lavished praise on Michel Colonna the Corsican unionist, a European who inspired respect from indigenous miners.[213] Everywhere Colonna went he represented the PCF, a European who understood his Moroccan comrades and acted as a bridge between the mother party in Paris and her offspring the PCM in Morocco. This misleading coverage failed to mention the PCM veered away from the PCF's support for L'Union française.[214] The Khouribga strike was a means to mend ties between the two parties, if not in reality than at least in print.

When *L'Humanité* demanded to know why Hervé was not allowed to investigate the Khouribga strike, the Quai d'Orsay gave an intriguing response. Minister for Foreign Affairs George Bidault's spokesperson gave a statement published in *Agence France Presse*, alleging Pierre Hervé's expulsion was a consequence of anti-Semitic comments Jean Seine, a CGT and PCF member, made in a speech to besieged miners in Khouribga: 'Nous savons, aurait dit M. Seine, que vous avez été frappés, martyrisés, mitraillés par des avions, que vos femmes ont fait des fausses couches, le Moghzen(royal class or elite) du Maroc est un Moghzen de juifs, il ne compte pas. La seule chose qui compte, c'est la CGT. Vos frères sont emprisonnés sans raison, nous les ferons sortir de prison, les fonctionnaires du Maroc sont des Juifs qui travaillent pour un autre pays que la France.'[215]

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[213] 'Avec les parias de la mine. Dans Khouribga- cité interdite', pp.1-2

[214] The PCF, which supported an independent Morocco within the federal framework of L'Union française in 1945, was not pleased with Ali Yata's vision of a fully sovereign Morocco. See Heckman, 'Radical Nationalists', pp.157-164. A. Berramdane, *Le Maroc et l'Occident (1800-1974)* (Paris, 1987), pp.89-90. Albert Ayache, René Gallissot and Georges Oved, 'Biographie de Michel Mazzella', (December 2011), https://maitron.fr/spip.php?article121431 (2nd November 2019)

[215] 'Incapable de justifier l'expulsion de Pierre Hervé, M. Bidault monte une provocation contre la CGT', *L'Humanité* [Paris], no.1157 (27th May 1948), p.2 col a-b.

As Alma Heckman argued, pervasive anti-Zionism frequently shifted into blatant anti-Semitism in post-war Morocco. Articles in *Jeune Maghrébin* spoke of the 'Zionist poison' afflicting Moroccan Jews, leading them to shun nationalism at home in favour of going to Palestine.[216] Protectorate authorities wrote reports wondering how to secure the divided loyalties of young Jews attracted to communism or other global causes.[217] Even the PCM, a party which counted many Jewish teachers in high-ranking positions, rarely commented on developments occurring in Palestine. As seen in columns featured in *L'Espoir*, editors and contributors framed the Khouribga strike as a universalist struggle affecting every race, creed, and ethnicity without exception: 'Rien ne détachera notre esprit des trois cents mineurs, ces fils parmi les plus braves du peuple marocain, qui moisissent dans les geôles d'Ain Moumen d'El Ader de Casablanca. En agissant ainsi, nous venons en aide, et d'une façon efficace, aux masses populaires arabes et juives de Palestine.'[218]

It would not be surprising if Seine invoked this trope of the inherently foreign Jew to rile up crowds of angry miners in Khouribga, especially when one accounts for the international context in May 1948. According to the Quai d'Orsay, Seine gave his speech on the 23rd, exactly nine days after David Ben-Gurion formally proclaimed the State of Israel's independence after a six-month long civil war.[219] In response, Egyptian, Syrian, Iraqi, and Transjordan armies poured into Palestine's Arab territories, announcing the final stage of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The Muslim world was now literally at war with the new-born Jewish nation, triggering anger and resentment towards

[216] Heckman, 'Radical Nationalists', p.147.
[217] Ibid, p.151.
[218] *Espoir*, 29th May 1948 in Heckman, 'Radical nationalists…', p.167 and A. Chakib, 'Contribution à l'étude de l'histoire du PCM durant la période coloniale' (PhD, Université Hassan II, 1985), pp.180-181.
[219] 'Incapable de justifier l'expulsion de Pierre Hervé-27th May 1948'.

Jewish communities throughout North Africa.[220] It was further proof Jews really were the eternal, rootless 'other', providing ample material for hatemongers and populists.

Seine and by extension the CGT denied any allegations of anti-Semitism. Victor Duguet, Secretary-General of the French mining federation, defended his colleague and claimed Minister Bidault was drawing media attention away from what happened in Khouribga.[221] The CGT was convinced the Quai d'Orsay cited police reports that the Residency falsified. *L'Humanité* found suspicious that Bidault's spoke-person never acknowledged police repression against Moroccan miners, the consequences of which Seine exposed days later.[222]

When he returned to France, Seine brought back a dossier compiling first-hand accounts of the repression against strikers in Khouribga.[223] He had interviewed miners' wives or relatives, such as Neghia Ben Embark, who claimed miners in local union headquarters were beaten with whips and sticks. She was so shocked and horrified, she miscarried that very day.[224] Fatima Ben Hamed and her husband Hammou remembered fighter planes flying low over the village during the strike, causing Fatima to lose her unborn child out of fright. Rahma Ben Ahmed witnessed a caïd handcuff her husband, shove him into a car, and drop him off at the mine where colonial troops beat him with batons.[225] Moghazni troops punched Mohamed Ben Mohamed repeatedly while his wife Fatima watched helplessly. She died after giving birth to their still-born child days later.

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[220] For anti-Semitic riots or pogroms in North-Africa during the post-war period, see H.E. Goldberg, *Jewish Life in Muslim Libya* (Chicago, 1990), pp.97-122. M.A. Charguéraud, *Cinquante idées reçues sur la Shoah: Tome 2* (Geneva, 2013), pp.55-57.
[221] 'Incapable de justifier l'expulsion de Pierre Hervé - 27th May 1948'.
[222] Ibid.
[223] 'Ce que M. Bidault ne veut pas qu'on sache. Les mineurs de Khouribga en grève, ont été terrorisés et sauvagement frappés', *L'Humanité* [Paris], no.1158 (28th May 1948), p.3 col a-b.
[224] Ibid.
[225] Ibid.

Seine added miners suffered terribly in cells laced with poisonous lime, where they emerged with their throats clogged with blood.[226]

Responding to anti-Semitic accusations, Seine dismissed the Foreign Minister's claims as slanderous lies.[227] To make his case, he cited the arrest of Jewish CGTM member Ben Chimol in Casablanca during the strike. Moreover, Seine declared he confronted inspector Viol and civil controller Barbot regarding his Khouribga speech, and both admitted he had not made anti-Semitic remarks.[228]

A military tribunal in Casablanca condemned Mohamed Bouhamida, chief secretary of the Jerada mining union to years of forced labour for allegedly instigating anti-Jewish pogroms in 1948. Hervé insisted anti-Semitic charges levelled against communist unionists were part of a conspiracy the Residency hatched to quell working-class dissent.[229] It exploited the killing of Jews as an excuse to finish off what security forces during the Khouribga strike began, namely to seek out and punish militants tied with the anti-colonialist PCM. Hervé pinned the blame on three individuals: Oujda Governor Brunel, Vice-Governor Surrugue, and civil controller André Chenebaux. The last served as the former head of the Protectorate's Bureau du Travail and Hervé singled him out for his 'violent hatred' of trade union activities when he was a civil controller in Oujda.[230] He interpreted the subsequent detention and dispersal of CGTM members throughout Morocco as another attempt to dismember an organisation hostile to the French colonial regime.[231]

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[226] Ibid.
[227] Ibid.
[228] Ibid.
[229] 'Bouhamida doit sortir du Bagne', *La Défense* [Paris], no.223 (13th May 1949), p.2 col a-d.
[230] Ibid.
[231] Ibid.

To this day, the question of whether the Residency wielded anti-Jewish pogroms as weapons of war against communist and nationalist leaning mining unions remains unanswered. Previous studies provide conflicting arguments as to why anti-Jewish riots in Oujda got out of hand.[232] Hervé's analysis aligns closely with the conclusions of the *Ligue Française des Droits de l'Homme et du Citoyen*. He believed regional Governor Brunel knew about rumours of impending violence, but he was absent from his post the day the massacres took place. No official called reinforcements to support police until it was far too late.[233] It is still unclear if CGTM unionists such as Mohamed Bouhamida were guilty of inflaming anti-Jewish sentiments.[234]

Allegations of anti-Semitism aimed at the CGT, whether true or false, and the eruption of anti-Jewish riots less than three weeks after the strike's denouement, overshadowed violence meted out against Moroccan miners. Everyone then forgot about the bloody repression of the Khouribga strike.[235] The French press, apart from minuscule articles detailing the expulsion of Pierre Hervé in *Le Monde*, *Combat*, *L'Humanité,* and *La Défense* ignored incidents at Khouribga. The November/December strikes pushed the Residency to over-react with tragic results to its own strikes.

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[232] J. Baïda, 'The Emigration of Moroccan Jews, 1948-1956', in E. Gottreich and D.J. Schroeter, *Jewish Culture and Society in North Africa* (Indiana, 2011), pp.331-332.
[233] Ibid, p.331.
[234] 'Constructing Morocco…', pp.270-275.
[235] *JO, Débats*, p. 7519.

In conclusion, strikes undoubtedly rattled, to varying degrees, administrations, and intelligence agencies across the French Empire. Fear was evident among prefects and landowners in overseas *départements* before and after the November/December strikes, particularly in Martinique, Guadeloupe, and to a lesser extent French Guiana. Industrial action, however, was minimal and infrequent. Workers in the DOM were eager to 'catch-up' with French colleagues, but apart from select incidents the repression and polarization in the metropole did not spread to these territories.

Strikes in mainland France had a noticeable impact on how security personnel perceived and responded to unrest in North Africa. In Algeria, both the November/December and miners' strikes appeared to announce impending communist revolts likely to spread to the colony or even inspire anti-colonialist forces waiting to topple French rule. Although a nationalist consciousness amongst both Algerian and Moroccan trade unionists was growing, demands for social security and better pay took precedence.

Mining strikes in Morocco proved exceptional in that they provoked the most uncompromising reaction from French authorities outside the metropole. One tentative explanation is presented here: the Residency's unsparing response to the Khouribga strike reflected General Juin's 'jackbooted' style of governance as head of the Moroccan Protectorate.[236] Juin believed that he upheld democracy or party politics, despite his soldiering past. In practice, he remained a military man willing to deploy force to preserve France's interests in North Africa. When arriving in Casablanca shortly after his appointment as Resident-General in May 1947, Juin even shouted to welcoming crowds

[236] G. Denglos, *Juin, le maréchal africain* (Paris, 2018), p.3.

'Je suis un soldat.'[237] In memoirs and autobiographies, he emphasized his victories as head of French expeditionary forces on the battlefields of Tunisia and Italy in World War II.[238] For Juin and likeminded individuals in the Moroccan administration and throughout the French Empire, strikes represented a clear and present danger to colonial order, on par with the Rif rebellions the General fought against in his youth.

[237] Ibid, pp.1-4.
[238] Ibid, p.1.

6. ‘Ils sont français aussi…’

The 1947-48 strike-waves rattled colonial administrations and caused police to overreact to unrest abroad, but they particularly frightened metropolitan intelligence services and security forces. This chapter will explore how these strikes and the paranoia they unleashed adversely affected the lives of numerous Polish, Spanish, Italian, and Romanians within France.

East and Central European residents, refugees, and associations were caught between two extremes after the Liberation. Poles, Romanians, Hungarians, and Czechs in France who criticized the rise of supposedly popular democracies appeared suspicious.[1] French post-war intellectual and working-class culture was overwhelmingly left-wing and seduced by the blinding spirit of Yalta.[2] The USSR and her satellites could do little wrong and Eastern European countries were seen as among the first to experience the inevitability of a brighter socialist future. To question this narrative was sacrilege, especially if one were an exile. The PCF labelled such expatriates as former fascists or collaborators fleeing retribution.[3]

Mainstream politics exhibited an equally powerful and myopic anti-communism. The SFIO, Christian Democrats, Radicals, and RPF were all anti-communist as

[1] A. Marès , ‘Exilés d’Europe Centrale de 1945 à 1967’, in P. Milza and A. Marès, *Le Paris des étrangers depuis 1945* (Paris, 1995), pp.129-168.
[2] T. Judt, *Past Imperfect. French Intellectuals, 1944-1956* (Paris, 1992), pp.40-140.
[3] Ibid.

exemplified by the rhetoric of Charles de Gaulle.[4] The PCF, as in the thirties, became 'l'ennemi intérieur' or 'le parti de l'étranger' once more.[5]

Both extremes displayed the same urge to exclude, fostering the expulsions witnessed during and after the 1947-48 strikes. The DST's (Direction de la Surveillance du Territoire) ruthless methods were products of a long-standing mistrust of immigrant labourers, combined with an exclusionary *xénophobie de la Libération*, entwined with virulent anti-communism.[6]

I argue the November/December strikes unleashed a wave of terror and violence, perpetrated by individuals who had yet to recover from the the Occupation and the war, to purge immigrant communities of suspect elements. Even labourers who never took part in French strikes, such as Italians or Poles, suffered terribly at the hands of the CRS or DST.

Moreover, this chapter shall examine the many reasons why immigrant labourers decided either to support or avoid participating in post-war French strikes, and will also explain how violence committed against Polish immigrants and individuals linked to Romanian communist organizations was directly responsible for hastening the break-down of diplomatic and cultural relations between France and Eastern Europe.

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[4] J.J. Becker and S. Berstein, L'anticommunisme en France', *Vingtième-siècle. Revue d'histoire,* no.15 (1987), pp23-24.

[5] N. Texier, ' "L'ennemi intérieur": l'armée et le Parti communiste français de la Libération aux débuts de la guerre froide', *Revue historique des armées,* no.269 (2012), pp.53-54. For a history of anti-communism in the French military and society at large during the inter-war period, see G. Vidal, 'L'armée française face au problème de la subversion communiste des années 1930', *Guerres Mondiales et conflits contemporains,* 204/4 (2001), pp.41-65.

[6] Y. Gastaut, 'La délinquance immigrée: tranche d'histoire d'un préjugé à la peau dure', *Migrations Société,* 1/109 (2007), pp.49-70. F. Lambert, 'Les "étrangers" dans une société en épuration (Bretagne 1944-1946)', in *Saint-Malo et son pays. Les Bretons et l'étranger: Tome LXXXIX Actes du Congrès de Saint-Malo* (Rennes, 2011), pp.357-358.

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Communist Deputy Alfred Biscarlet was keen to point out that 1949 could have been a fruitful year in Franco-Polish relations.[7] It marked the centenary of the death of composer Frédéric Chopin who was born in Warsaw and died in Paris. He was the symbol of two nations culturally and politically entwined since the early eighteenth century. His journey mirrored that of countless Polish immigrants, intellectuals, and miners who moved to France in search of employment or liberty.[8] Biscarlet proclaimed the French should be proud to have welcomed so many Poles since their contributions to society deserved to be honoured. No one in France could forget the many Polish partisans who perished during the Nazi Occupation. Moreover, Poles were on the frontlines of the battle of production.[9] Celebrating the life of Chopin was a chance to re-discover shared values. As the cleavages of the Cold War grew wider, Chopin was the ideal diplomat to mend strained ties between France and Poland.

However, whenever deputies at the National Assembly mentioned Polish immigrants or workers during the weeks and months preceding Biscarlet's speech, it was rarely in a positive light. On the 18th November 1948, while the miners' strike entered its sixth week, Deputy Anne-Marie Schell stood up to speak. Her speech listed countless acts of brutality inflicted upon women and foreign labourers. She focused on the case of Michel Vaziesko, a twenty-four year veteran of the coalmines who was arrested and deported on the 3rd November.[10] Two weeks later in Carmaux five Polish miners and their relations were expelled, soon followed by several families in December.[11]

[7] *JO, Débats*, 22nd February 1949, pp.778-779.
[8] Ibid.p.779
[9] Ibid.p.779.
[10] *JO, Débats*, 18th November 1948, p.7090.
[11] Vivens, 'Conflit social…', p.144.

Numerous journalists attended a press conference the secretary of *Esprit* convened, describing similar incidents. Popular Relief member Charles Désirat spoke about the beatings immigrants endured, such as Polish teenager Mataziak in Carvin.[12] In la Loire, police smashed miner Rudsowski's two front teeth and the CRS crushed his feet with rifle butts.[13]

Judicial ramifications for Polish strikers were severe. On 17th December 1948 in Albi, a tribunal condemned Edwige Palkowski to eight days in prison for insulting a police officer dispersing crowds of picketing women. Teenage and young adult miners fared no better. Wladislas Walkowicz, Richard Frankiewicz, and Alexandre Wrotny were each fined 4,000 francs and sentenced to a month in prison.[14] Deputy Biscarlet wondered how the French could celebrate the memory of Chopin, and by extension Franco-Polish friendship, while dozens of Poles, many of whom had proven their loyalty to the Republic, were being expelled.[15]

In a special commemorative issue of *La Défense* the names Victor Pickiewiez and Émile Lascowitch featured prominently.[16] The former was incarcerated in a forced labour camp during the war, only to escape and join the resistance in Châteaudun. The latter was barely sixteen when he joined the maquis in Auvergne. His father had passed away from silicosis, leaving behind four brothers and sisters without parents.[17] As late as May 1949, the commune of Auby near Douai witnessed protest marches against the impending expulsion of miner Tonier Mieczyslaw. For nearly twenty-two years, Tonier toiled in the

[12] 'La vérité sur les arrestations et expulsions d'étrangers', *La Défense* [Paris], no.199 (26th November-2nd December 1948), p.2 col a.
[13] 'Comportement des CRS- p.2', January 1949, ADSSD, Fonds FNSS-CGT, 239J-12.
[14] 'Bilan juridique du Syndicat des Ouvriers Mineurs de Carmaux-p.1.', 18th December 1948, ADSSD, Fonds FNSS-CGT, 239J-12.
[15] *JO, Débats,* p.779.
[16] 'Le Livret Blanc des "Gueules Noires"', *La Défense* [Paris], (May-June 1949), p.35.
[17] Ibid.

Escarpelle pits and received both a resistance commemorative medal and the Order of Grumwald Cross. On the 6th January 1947, he was forced to retire due to severe silicosis.[18]

The mines of le Nord, Pas-de-Calais, and Tarn saw hundreds of Polish labourers flock to various clandestine groups during the Occupation.[19] The miners' strike of December 1941, long-considered one of the most significant acts of dissent against the Nazi occupier, ended with the deportation and execution of dozens of mining personnel, many of whom were Polish. Future leaders of the FTP-MOI (Franc-Tireurs- main-d'oeuvre immigrés) took part in the strike.[20] Former officers, soldiers, and other remnants of the Polish army who had fled to France in the wake of the invasion of Poland in 1939 and later joined the resistance, found eager volunteers in mining pits.[21] Nearly half the men recruited and killed in the POWN (Polish Organisation for the struggle for Independence) were miners living in Béthune and Montceau-les-mines.[22] Some Poles were veterans of the International Brigades who fought on the Republican side.[23] Marek Zgorniak estimated approximately 50,000 Poles participated in multiple resistance groups throughout the war, representing over 10% of the Polish population in France.[24] Their rate of engagement with the maquis was proportionally far higher than French citizens.[25] Polish factions of the MOI in le Nord were among the first clandestine cells to sabotage Nazi regiments despite considerable risk and heavy casualties. Polish fighters ambushed and destroyed supply trains or arm depots at the earliest stages of the

[18] 'Mauvais renseignements recueillis', *La Défense* [Paris], no. 223(13th May 1949), p.3 col a.
[19] J.P. Przybylski, *La résistance polonaise dans le Tarn* (Toulouse, 2016).
[20] M. Zgorniak, 'La résistance polonaise en France sous l'occupation hitlérienne', *Revue du Nord,* 57/226 (1975), p.470.
[21] J. Ponty, 'Les Polonais dans la résistance en France', *Hommes et Migrations,* no.1148 (1991), p.27.
[22] Ibid, p.29.
[23] Zgorniak, 'La résistance polonaise…', p.469.
[24] Ibid, p.474.
[25] Ponty, 'Les Polonais dans la résistance en France', p.29.

Occupation.[26] Though solidarity campaigns perhaps exaggerated the wartime credentials of convicted miners, sympathy in some regions was genuine and widespread. The expulsion of distinguished war veterans, either French or foreign, was met with scorn.[27] Petitions to postpone or cancel expulsion orders, and frequent reports in local and national newspapers were proof the public resisted these expulsions.[28]

Yet pity was in short supply in the National Assembly. On the 18th November 1948, Deputy Louis Rollin of the PRL (Parti Républicain de la Liberté) reminded PCF member Benoît Frachon that if the Soviet Union and her satellites abolished the right to strike, it was because they were dictatorships, not because they were 'free from capitalists'.[29] French miners had been tricked into believing that state-sanctioned violence ensuing in le Nord was now impossible in popular democracies behind the Iron Curtain. Rollin cited the example of Polish textile weavers in Łódź who defied foremen and party cadres by going on strike due to stagnant wages in autumn 1947.[30] His inaccurate summary of industrial action in Poland indicated how the PRL, and right-wing parties more generally, justified the eviction of immigrant workers. Polish authorities would have surely reacted in a similar fashion, had workers sympathizing with western powers such as France led wild-cat strikes in the pits of lower Silesia. Poland's

[26] Zgorniak, 'La résistance polonaise…', p.470.

[27] 'Le polonais Duszynski, militant de la CGT, vient d'être expulsé… participe activement à la grève des mineurs en 1941…' in 'Un mauvais sujet', *La Défense* [Paris], no.209 (4th -10th February 1949), p.3 col a. See J. Zamojski, 'La participation des Polonais à la Résistance dans le Pas-de-Calais et le Nord (1940-1944)', *Revue du Nord,* 57/226 (1975), p.445.

[28] The mayor of Amblimont in the Ardennes region tried to prevent the expulsion of a Belgian national named Albert Adam, a farmer who helped feed escaped French prisoners during the war. 'Questions à Jules Moch', *La Défense* [Paris], no. 212 (25th February-3rd March 1949), p.2 col d.

[29] *JO, Débats*,16 november 1948, p.6992.

[30] Ibid. For more on the Łódź textile strikes of 1947, see J. A. de Graaf, 'Across the Iron Curtain. European Socialism between World War and Cold War 1943-1948', (PhD, University of Portsmouth, 2015), pp.86-169. P. Kenney,'Working-class community and resistance in pre-Stalinist Poland. The Poznánski textile strike, Łódź, September 1947', *Social History,* 18/1 (1993), pp.31-51.

nationalized industries were organized and ran no differently or more fairly than those in le Nord.[31]

The expulsion of Polish workers was not without precedent. They began on the 29th November 1947 when newly appointed Interior Minister Jules Moch warned that foreign nationals guilty of obstructing laws upholding the right to work during strikes would be expelled immediately, amidst the shouts of communist backbenchers: 'Allez-vous expulser les ouvriers polonais de nos mines?' and 'Vous refusez donc le droit de grève aux Polonais travaillant dans les mines?'[32] Moch claimed twenty-nine immigrant workers had already been selected for deportation. His speech outlined a policy security forces, keen to root out foreign labourers, faithfully obeyed for nearly two years, regardless of the damage they inflicted on vulnerable communities and innocent individuals. What drove Polish workers either to back or ignore the 1947-48 strikes? Did their internment and expulsion hasten the destruction of potentially troublesome organizations? And above all, how did such actions influence the post-war Polish diaspora in France?

For many Polish workers, participating in French strikes in 1947 was a sign of gratitude as the PCF and CGTU had tried in vain to prevent the expulsion of Polish miners and families in the thirties.[33] Communist Arthur Ramette sent letters of protest to the president of the National Assembly, denouncing the government for sowing divisions

[31] Ibid.
[32] *JO, Débats*, 29th November, p.5257.
[33] 'Les travailleurs français défendront les mineurs polonais menacés d'expulsion', *L'Humanité* [Paris], no.13,022 (11th August 1934), p.5 col a-b. As Henryk Zielinski stated, 'Le PCF et la CGTU-CGT étaient au fond les seules forces politiques en France qui défendaient conséquemment les émigrés polonais …Le PCF jouissait à leurs yeux d'une grande autorité et de leur sympathie' in ' Le gouvernement polonais et le problème de l'émigration polonaise en France' tr Michal Michalak, *Revue du Nord,* 57/226 (1975), p.423.

between French and Polish workers.[34] In Douai, communist and socialist representatives led demonstrations paying homage to imprisoned Polish miners.[35] Jacques Duclos, parliamentary deputy and second-in-command of the PCF in 1947, wrote articles criticising the targeting of militant Poles in 1934.[36] Journalists such as Pierre Lacan investigated the rumoured abuse immigrant labourers suffered after the Leforest expulsions and revealed how Poles would be randomly ordered to report to engineering offices and have lamps thrown at them.[37] Simone Téry recorded 'le malheur des ouvriers polonais' in the mines of Wazier.[38]

Yet the PCF's, CGTU's, and to a lesser extent the SFIO's solidarity with Poles was not entirely selfless, and these organizations were not free from xenophobia or anti-Polish sentiment. However, *L'Humanité* and other regional communist organs were among the few dailies remotely interested in arguing against anti-immigrant hatred, while mainstream outlets encouraged the abuse.[39]

Les grèves de joie in the spring and summer of 1936 saw French and Polish workers share the short-lived victories of the Popular Front together.[40] The mines of Liévin in the Pas-de-Calais witnessed a general strike in early June. Amongst the 94,000 miners absent from the pits of Bully, Grenay, Hénin-Liétard, and Montigny-en-Gohelle,

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[34] 'Ramette dépose une demande d'interpellation', *L'Humanité* [Paris], no.13021 (10th August 1934), p.1 col a.
[35] 'Deux mille travailleurs communistes et socialistes manifestent à Douai'', *L'Humanité* [Paris], no.13024 (13th August 1934), p.2 col a-b.
[36] 'Ouvriers français et immigrés faites bloc contre notre ennemi commun: le capitalisme', *L'Humanité* [Paris], no.13,022 (11th August 1934), pp.1-2 col a-b.
[37] 'Les provocations de la Compagnie de l'Escarpelle', *L'Humanité* [Paris], no.13,025 (14th August), p.2 col b.
[38] 'Les malheurs des ouvriers polonais', *L'Humanité* [Paris], no.13,645 (26th April 1936), p.4 col a-b.
[39] G.S. Cross, *Immigrant Workers in Industrial France: The Making of a New Labouring Class* (Philadelphia, 1983), pp.187-197.
[40] J. Ponty, 'Les travailleurs polonais en France, 1919-1939', *Revue des Études Slaves* 57/4 (1985), pp.690-691.

approximately 28,000 were Polish.[41] Their demands were granted, which included a 12% wage increase for every mining employee, the abolition of hated *chronométrage*, equal rents for both surface level and below-ground employees, and finally a guarantee strike action would no longer entail sanctions.[42] The Popular Front did not end the segregation of Polish communities, but succeeded in chipping away barriers and prejudices. The mass expulsions ended.[43] New laws were enshrined, ensuring immigrant children had to remain in school until the age of fourteen just like their French comrades.[44] Left-wing parties cemented a degree of solidarity with Polish immigrants in the mid-thirties which continued to develop under the Occupation and beyond.

However, it would be deeply misleading to believe all Polish immigrants supported strikes. The splintering of the CGT in December 1947, and the formation of the FO trade union federation, exacerbated fissures between Polish workers defending the new regime in Warsaw and those still hoping for a Poland free from Soviet domination.[45] Polish miners and metallurgists wanting to break away from the grasp of the PCF flocked to FO unions. Separatist cells emerged in the communes of Bruay, Houdain, and Valenciennes.[46] Meetings in Marles-les-Mines saw aggressive confrontations between Polish FO and CGT loyalists, tensions which escalated during the miners' strike.[47] FO member Jean Ostrowski refused to take part in strikes and

[41] P. Bréemersch and J.M. Decelle, *1936: Le Front Populaire dans le Pas-de-Calais* (Arras, 1997), pp.68-69.
[42] R. Hainsworth, 'Les grèves de mai-juin 1936 chez les mineurs du Nord-Pas-de-Calais' in J. Bouvier (ed), *La France en Mouvement 1934-1936,* (Paris, 1986), p.108.
[43] Ponty, 'Les travailleurs polonais en France', pp.690-691. See also P. Rygiel, 'Les renvois de Polonais de France dans les années 1930', in J. Ponty (ed), *Polonia. Des Polonais en France de 1830 à nos jours* (Paris, 2011), p. 129.
[44] J. Ponty, *Polonais méconnus: Histoire des travailleurs immigrés en France dans l'entre-deux-guerres* (Paris, 2005), p.321.
[45] P. Sękowski, ''Les Polonais en France dans l'immédiat après-guerre (1944 – 1949)' (PhD thesis, Université Paris-Sorbonne, 2015) , pp.447-448.
[46] J. Ostrowski, 'Le syndicalisme ouvrier et les Polonais en France après la seconde guerre mondiale' in E. Gogolewski (ed), *Les ouvriers polonais en France après la seconde guerre mondiale, actes du colloque de Lille, 26-27 octobre 1989,* (Lille, 1992), p.170.
[47] Ibid, p.165-166.

condemned the use of Molotov cocktails thrown into homes belonging to miners indifferent or critical of them.[48] He praised the short-lived alliance between the Polish FO and CFTC in the face of a CGT over-run with communists. Ostrowski, and the majority of Poles who joined the FO, chose not to participate in strikes to protest what they believed to be the gradual take-over of the CGT by scheming radicals.[49]

Not to partake in strikes deemed *politiques* was also a way of resisting the influence of Polish trade unionists sympathetic to Warsaw. Ostrowski was outraged French Poles could convince their own countrymen to abandon relatively comfortable lives in France and return to an unrecognizable Poland.[50] The occasionally unjustified dismissal of mining delegates, accused of collaboration during the Liberation, often replaced by dogmatic communists left a bitter aftertaste. For a significant minority of Polish miners, non-participation in strikes was a subtle act of defiance aimed not only at the PCF, but also at Poles who obeyed the dictates of the overly pro-communist CNPF (Comité National des Polonais de France).[51]

Furthermore, even within the PCF Polish sections had a history of acting independently and sometimes strayed away from directives issued from above. In July 1945 Armand Moche, member of the PCF's regional committee in le Nord, wrote reports in which he complained that Polish personnel in the Bonnel, Gayant, Vuillemin, and Notre-Dame pits in Wazier were filled with 'de mauvais éléments', namely miners who

[48] Ibid, p.166.
[49] Ibid, p.170. Sękowski, 'Les Polonais en France', p.451.
[50] Ibid, p.163.
[51] Ibid, p.160-174.

elected their own representatives and committees without prior approval from PCF cadres.[52] Party affiliation was no guarantee of participation during the strikes.

One cannot underestimate the influence of the anti-communist Polish Catholic press embodied by the weekly *Polska Wierna*.[53] The immediate post-war years saw a minor resurgence of newspapers catering to the religious sensibilities of Polish communities in France. Printing houses affiliated with the *Mission Catholique Polonaise* in Paris and Lille, published articles supporting the anti-Soviet Polish government-in-exile since the Liberation. It adopted a stridently anti-communist and often anti-strike by-line.[54]

A prefect in the Pas-de-Calais wrote reports concluding that miners and families belonging to the Polish colony generally hesitated to support French strikers in November 1948.[55] After studying lists of arrest notices, the prefect noted less than a tenth of people detained in relation to the strike were immigrants. Reports implied Polish consulates played a part in convincing Poles to refrain from any involvement.[56] It is understandable Poles decided not to support strikes considering the expulsion of militant miners linked to the Polish communist party throughout 1948. Immigrants had far more to lose than their French counterparts.

For many Polish miners in le Nord and Pas-de-Calais, the deportation of thousands of immigrants in the early thirties remained a powerful memory. In his

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[52] 'Rapport à la région sur les groupements polonais p.1-2', July 1945, AMDT, Fonds Henri Martel, 2008-028-001.
[53] R. Dzwonkowski, 'La presse catholique en France dans les années 1923-1983', in D. Beauvois (ed), *La presse polonaise en France, 1918-1984* (Lille,1988), p.72.
[54] Ibid, pp.72-78.
[55] 'Les étrangers sont restés pour la plupart dans l'expectative. La colonie polonaise...avait semble-t-il reçu des consignes de son Consulat pour rester hors du conflit...la menace d'expulsion a dû freiner bien des ardeurs', 'Rapport du préfet sur le mois de novembre 1948 p.9' in Vivens, 'Conflit social...', p.140.
[56] Ibid. p.140.

memoirs, the former leader of the Polish CGTU faction Thomas Olszanski recalled how the French media demonized his countrymen for staging strikes in the Leforest mines in August 1934.[57] Radio announcements and company directors spread false rumours of Polish miners murdering French colleagues.[58] Dozens of families received word of their expulsion a few days later, culminating in the repatriation of nearly 100,000 Poles from France by 1936.[59] It is unlikely anyone in the post-war Polish community was again willing to risk such disastrous consequences.

Moreover, numerous miners who volunteered to return to Poland in 1946-47 had few good things to say about this new popular democracy.[60] Contrary to their mono-lingual French colleagues inundated with articles lauding, downplaying, or ignoring the rise of authoritarian communist regimes in Eastern Europe, as seen in chapter three, Polish miners read reports in *Narodowiec* which revealed the endemic economic and social ills plaguing post-war Poland.[61] Miners relocated to Upper Silesia wrote letters to relatives or Polish consulates, lamenting the lack of trade unions, accommodation, and social security in Poland. Working conditions were poor and the centralized factory hierarchies and pits did not satisfy French Poles used to democratic representation.[62] Repatriated miners found shocking the rampant anti-Semitism and xenophobia in Poland. Traditional norms clashed with the secularized upbringing of French Poles. Furthermore,

[57] T. Olszanski, *Un militant syndicaliste franco-polonais. "La vie errante" de Thomas Olszanski 1886-1959*, tr. M. Mihout (Lille, 1993), p.312.
[58] Ibid, pp. 312-313.
[59] Ibid, p.314. See Mémoires des Mines, 'L'expulsion des familles polonaises à Leforest en 1934' https://fresques.ina.fr/memoires-de-mines/fiche-media/Mineur00232/l-expulsion-des-familles-polonaises-a-leforest-en-1934.html (30th December 2019)
[60] A.J. Prażmowska, 'Frenchmen' in Polish Mines: The Politics of Productivity in Coal Mining in Poland', *Europe-Asia Studies,* 2/70(2018), p.241.
[61] Ibid, p.241.
[62] Ibid, pp.240-241.

expatriate miners in Zabrze became ringleaders responsible for triggering numerous strikes.[63]

Poles residing in France, though initially sympathetic to patriotic calls for help from the homeland, were disinclined to return. France, for all its faults, was home to thousands of Polish workers. The children and grandchildren of the *première génération* had integrated well into French society.[64] Young and enthusiastic French Poles, initially seduced by propaganda promising a fundamental reconstruction and renewal of Poland, witnessed first-hand the creeping totalitarianism infesting politics and everyday life. They changed their minds and yearned to return to France, but too late.[65] By 1947, even French managers began to regret sending home over 12,000 healthy workers.[66] Poles had no intention of sacrificing considerable gains made in their legal status by taking part in politically-charged strikes. The new naturalization code of October 1945 made it much easier for Polish immigrants to acquire French citizenship. Social security, family allowances, and pensions were now available.[67] The Miners' Statute passed in 1946 which guaranteed numerous benefits for Polish miners, especially in the potash pits of Alsace. Wages increased 30.7% on the 1st July 1946 and raised by a further 36.7% on the 1st September 1947. Added advantages were free accommodation and heating.[68] Going on strike and risking being deported was not an attractive option. Many Poles knew what kind of future was waiting for them behind the Iron Curtain.

[63] Ibid, pp.242-243.
[64] Sękowski, 'Les Polonais en France', p.223.
[65] Prażmowska, 'Frenchmen' in Polish Mines', p.241-248.
[66] Sękowski, Les Polonais en France', p.208-215. Prażmowska, 'Frenchmen' in Polish Mines', p.247.
[67] Sękowski, 'Les Polonais en France', p.222.
[68] Y. Frey, *Polonais d'Alsace: pratiques patronales et mineurs polonais dans le bassin potassique de Haute-Alsace 1918-1948* (Besançon, 2003), p.495.

Yet the most decisive factor which persuaded Polish workers either to support or criticize the miners' strike, was the intimidation campaigns French security forces waged throughout 1948. Individuals prone to needless violence led these operations. Domestic counter-espionage services or regular police which hunted down communists, recruited men who had yet to recover from the brutal impact of war.[69] Polish suspects, often accused of bad behaviour or outright treason during the strikes, suffered terribly in their custody.

By 1948, DST members still had difficulty acknowledging the war was over.[70] Founded by Roger Wybot in 1944, the infant DST attracted young policemen, diligent civil servants, and traumatized servicemen alike.[71] The last proved problematic. In his memoirs former agent Pierre Levergeois recalled DST headquarters filled with 'peculiar' personalities, among whom were resistance veterans and shell-shocked commandos or paratroopers.[72] Levergeois remembered colleagues walking into the office with machine guns strapped to belts and waists. One DST officer made a habit of wearing his khaki trousers: 'ils ne comprennent guère que les hostilités avaient pris fin.'[73] Years spent as outlaws in the maquis affected not only their behaviour, but their adherence to regulations. The rule of law was of little concern to fringe elements in the DST. They carried out interrogations with little regard for legal norms. Some agents acted above the law because they believed it cowardly or unproductive to do otherwise.[74] They frequently used unconventional methods to acquire information from suspects.

[69] P. Levergeois, *J'ai choisi la DST. Souvenirs d'un inspecteur* (Paris, 1978), pp.16-17.
[70] Ibid, p.16.
[71] Ibid, p.16.
[72] Ibid, p.16.
[73] Ibid, pp.16-17.
[74] Ibid, p.17.

The late forties was a fertile period for the DST to practice such methods on a regular basis, mainly on immigrants and workers fleeing from Eastern Europe. The Prague coup announced the displacement of thousands of Polish, Czech, Hungarian, and Bulgarian refugees, many of whom tried to settle in France. Fears of Cominform spies hiding amongst incoming crowds were high in DST headquarters.[75] As a young recruit in 1948, Levergeois and his colleagues questioned hundreds of immigrants. Discerning fact from fiction was difficult and interviewees were often unresponsive. Levergeois' colleagues boasted of using heavy-handed tactics to extract information.[76] Once, Levergeois had to calm a former commando who threatened suspects near a steep ravine in the forest of Fontainebleau.[77] Perhaps exaggerated for effect, passages in Levergeois' memoirs bear an eerie resemblance to the 'méthodes d'interrogatoire infaillibles' used to torture suspect Poles in the months following the November/December strikes.[78] Police and DST divisions in Metz were also populated with unstable agents.

A miner from Lorraine named Wdowiak was among the most prominent victims of purges unleashed on the Polish community in the wake of the November/December strike waves.[79] He was charged with committing acts of espionage, presumably on behalf of communist subversives either in Poland or USSR.[80] Police raided Wdowiak's abode and found 'secret' plans describing the location of mining installations in Meurthe-et-Moselle. Police accused Wdowiak of scheming to sabotage French industries in

[75] Ibid, p.20.
[76] Ibid, p.20.
[77] Ibid, p.20.
[78] Ibid, p.20.
[79] Sękowski, 'Les Polonais en France', p.450. See also L. Turajczyk, *Społeczno-polityczne organizacje polskie we Francji 1944-1948* (Warsaw, 1978), p.179.
[80] 'Le mineur Wdowiak est en prison depuis 2 mois pour détention d'un "secret"…de Polichinelle', *La Défense* [Paris], no.175(7th-13th May 1948), p.3 col b.

preparation for a future Soviet invasion.[81] Likewise, former Polish prime-minister Stanisław Mikołajczyk also peddled this false narrative of hidden (and preferably foreign) communist cells launching strikes in France to mask nefarious aims. He feared communist-inspired strikes in France portended civil war.[82] When *France Soir* interviewed him in January 1948, Mikołajczyk claimed Russian armies intended to invade France if the PCF was not up to the task. Moreover, American dailies also portrayed strikes in France as the work of communist operatives eager to undermine the Marshall Plan.[83]

However, Wdowiak's charges were false. In fact, the so-called 'secret plans' were copies of maps available to any engineer, manager, and employee stationed in the mine.[84] Consequently, Wdowiak's arrest and four-month long imprisonment in Metz became a minor *cause célèbre* in the Lorrainian mining community. Jacques Duclos expressed his support in *La Défense* and wished to participate in the *comité d'honneur* formed to challenge Wdowiak's sentencing.[85] He finally stood trial in front of a military tribunal in Metz.[86]

Despite evidence to the contrary, government commissioner Colonel Kérautet insisted 'ultra-secret' plans were in Wdowiak's possession.[87] However, Wdowiak's co-workers' testimonies confirmed all staff received maps of the mine for safety purposes. They described Wdowiak as one of the best miners in the region and not a saboteur

[81] 'La leçon de l'acquittement de Wdowiak. Inculpez Jules Moch et les chefs de la DST d'atteinte à la sécurité de l'état', *La Défense* [Paris], no. 180 (11th- 17th June 1948), p.2 col a-e.
[82] 'L'Amérique peut-elle faire la guerre/veut-elle faire la paix?', *France-Soir* [Paris], no.1068 (7th January 1948), p.1 col a-b.
[83] Ibid.
[84] 'Un procès en baudruche: l'affaire Wdowiak', *La Défense* [Paris], no.177 (21st- 27th May 1948), p.2 col a-b.
[85] 'Une lettre de M. Jacques Duclos', *La Défense* [Paris], no.177 (21st- 27th May 1948), p.2 col a.
[86] 'La leçon de l'acquittement de Wdowiak-11th- 17th June 1948'.
[87] Ibid.

planning to slow down production rates.[88] Lawyers Davidson and Joe Nordmann, the latter employed by the Secours Populaire to represent Wdowiak, discredited the 'secret plan' theory. Nordmann in particular saw the trial as an opportunity to lambast the French government's tendency to condone police brutality to hunt down communists.[89] Judge Rosenberg acquitted Wdowiak who was released and returned home to his family in Piennes.[90]

The trial marked the culmination of what became known as *l'affaire Wdowiak*, a humiliating plot which damaged the credibility of French security forces. Even non-partisan publications criticized the police.[91] Rather than perpetuating fears of Soviet agents infiltrating mining pits and converting gullible young men, the trial vindicated PCF members accusing the government of conjuring any excuse to wage war on the working-class, with Polish labourers becoming the most vulnerable targets.[92] However, the Wdowiak affair did little to convince French police to alter their methods.

On the 11th February 1948, two Polish miners from Lorraine, Michał Martyński and Henryk Warchoł, were ferried to DST headquarters in Metz. Journalist Jean Bedel, writing in *La Défense*, questioned Martyński, Warchoł, and two other Polish workers deported to the French occupation zone in Germany.[93] Martyński claimed he was beaten, starved for three days, and subject to psychological torture while incarcerated in Metz. He underwent a simulated execution.[94] DST agents blindfolded Martyński and ordered him to go down on his knees. They taunted him, offered him a final cigarette and wanted

[88] Ibid.
[89] Ibid.
[90] Ibid.
[91] Sękowski, 'Les Polonais en France', p.450.
[92] Ibid.
[93] 'Quatre Polonais retrouvés en Allemagne racontent les traitements subis avant leur déportation arbitraire', *La Défense* [Paris], no. 173(23rd-29th April 1948), p.1 col b.
[94] Ibid.

to know if he had any last words to pass on to his family. Nothing happened until an inspector finally tore-off the blindfold and laughed: 'Tu vois, nous ne sommes pas des bandits!'[95]

In Algrage, Jóseph Jurczak endured identical treatment from police. When *Ce Soir* interviewed him in March 1948, he claimed he had no idea why two men in plain clothes waited in the local mining office and arrested him: '…je suis resté chez moi tout le temps des grèves…j'avais été ce jour-là au travail comme d'habitude.'[96] They ransacked his shack, confiscated his belongings and letters before taking him to Metz. They kept beating him, forced him to strip naked, and shone a blinding light into his face while laughing.[97] Jurczak spent his first night in custody handcuffed to a chair and the second chained to a door: 'Monsieur, cela fait onze ans que je suis en France; j'ai été arrêté par la Gestapo sous l'Occupation, jamais ils ne m'ont tant battu.'[98]

When *Combat* interviewed him Jurczak added telling details to his testimony.[99] During his second day of torture, police asked if he approved of the Marshall Plan, something he had only heard of in passing. Finally, officers gave him a piece of bread and some soup to eat. Adding insult to injury, he received a bill for the food twenty days after his release from Metz.[100]

Bedel discovered Warchoł suffered similar or worse abuse from police. Officers punched his stomach, twisted his ankles, crushed his kneecaps, and beat his feet with

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[95] Ibid.
[96] 'Je suis resté nu, avec la lumière du reflecteur dans les yeux; ils frappaient et ils riaient…raconte l'un des sept polonais arrêtés à Metz', *Ce Soir* [Paris], no.1991(13th March 1948), p.3 col c.
[97] Ibid.
[98] Ibid.
[99] 'Sept Polonais brutalisés par la police sont ensuite acquittés mais l'on expulse deux d'entre eux', *Combat* [Paris], no.1147 (13th March 1948), p.5 col c-d.
[100] Ibid.

rulers.[101] Warchoł remembered fellow Poles in neighbouring cells hearing him scream, while the chief inspector yelled 'Alors pas encore crevé, salaud de Polonais!'[102] These miners talked about their brutal treatment in Metz, which led to an investigation by a special commission to determine whether police employed excessive force. However, reports concluded officers never crossed a line when interrogating prisoners. A judge dismissed the case two weeks later. Martyński and Warchoł were shipped-off to Germany.[103] The three victims above reported their mistreatments to Polish consulates, which then relayed their testimonies to authorities in Warsaw, as will be discussed further in the final chapter.[104]

In other regions Bedel discovered more examples of Poles, supposedly guilty of subversive activities, expelled arbitrarily from France.[105] In the Rhône region, two policemen escorted Stanislas Dulinski, a twenty-year old employed in a textile factory, out of the plant. They drove him to Strasbourg without letting him contact his family or friends. Policeman answered 'Fallait pas faire le c** pendant les grèves' when Dulinski asked for an explanation[106] Bedel noted textile union members had voted against going on strike in the region. In May 1948, following a brief interrogation police also drove Josef Franczyk to the border.[107] Police offered a young waitress named Marie-Hélène Kardik a chance to stay in France if she spied on her fellow countrymen. Kardik soon joined Dulinski in Germany, leaving behind a sister and brother.[108]

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[101] 'Quatre Polonais retrouvés en Allemagne racontent les traitements subis avant leur déportation arbitraire- 23rd-29th April 1948', p. 1 col b-c.
[102] Ibid, p.1.
[103] Ibid, p.1
[104] Jarosz and Pasztor, 'Conflits brûlants…', pp.123-126.
[105] Ibid, p.4 col d.
[106] Ibid, p.4.
[107] 'Moch fait expulser le travailleur polonais Franczyk', *La Défense* [Paris], no.177 (21st-27th May 1948), p.2 col a-b.
[108] 'Quatre Polonais retrouvés en Allemagne -23rd-29th April 1948', p.4.

Interventions from Warsaw or Franco-Polish associations could not stymie expulsions. The Polish embassy in France even sent a note to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, criticizing the unlawful persecution of Polish civilians throughout the metropole.[109] The note cited the egregious case of Piotr Janczak who was arrested by police on the 28th November 1947 in Metz. They took his personal documentation and deported him to the French occupation zone in Germany. By law, Polish consulates in France should have been notified of his expulsion, yet none received any word from French authorities.[110]

According to Pawel Sękowski and Alexis Spire, purges after the 1947 strikes adversely affected militant communists affiliated with *Les Amis du Parti Ouvrier Polonais* and other Franco-Polish organizations. Secretaries and leaders of committees, weakened by the repatriation of activists in 1946, became prime targets for French authorities keen to extinguish dissident elements in the Polish community.[111] Władysłow Degórski, head of the OPO (L'Organisation d'Aide à la Patrie) was expelled in spring 1949, followed by Szymulewski, secretary of *l'Union des anciens des Brigades Internationales*.[112] The OPO was closely aligned with the pro-communist CNPF because it organized Polish repatriation campaigns.[113] In addition, scattered remnants of the PPR (Polish Workers Party) in France went through multiple police raids and arrests in February and March 1948. Police recovered documents and files in PPR headquarters revealing Polish embassies and consulates throughout France passed on confidential

[109] 'Protestation du gouvernement de Varsovie contre les mesures prises à l'encontre des organisations et citoyens polonais en France', *L'Humanité* [Paris], no.1071 (15th February 1948), p.3 col a-b.
[110] Ibid.
[111] Sękowski, 'Les Polonais en France', pp. 416-418. A. Spire, *Étrangers à la carte: l'administration de l'immigration en France 1945-1975* (Paris, 2005), pp.70-71.
[112] Ibid, pp. 416-418.
[113] Ibid, pp.410-411.

information from Warsaw to PPR militants.[114] Strike waves granted security forces an opening to harm associations already bled dry by repatriation schemes.

Because of the French police's relentless campaign, Polish participation in strikes in 1948 fell dramatically. A return to *les années noires* was fast becoming reality. Yet expulsions did not cease after the miners' strike. On the contrary, paranoia unleashed during the winter of 1947 resurfaced at the height of what became known as the Robineau affair.

In November 1949, Polish authorities arrested diplomat André Robineau, based in the consulate of Szczecin, as he was boarding a plane headed for Paris. They accused him of spying for the French government, sparking outrage in the National Assembly. Deputy Edmond Barrachin castigated the Polish government for not informing French consulates in Poland of Robineau's welfare, while forgetting France did not inform Polish consulates about the arrest, mistreatment, and expulsions of its citizens.[115] Robineau's arrest and the subsequent expulsion of a small number of French citizens from Poland, was motivated only in part by his clandestine activities (it is likely that Robineau worked for the Service de Documentation Extérieure et de Contre-Espionnage).[116] Revenge certainly played a part as well.

Articles in *Dziennik Polski* reveal the Polish state did not look kindly on the expulsion of Poles from France, portraying socialist minister Jules Moch as a cynical class-traitor, diverting national and international attention away from strikes by

[114] Prażmowska,'Frenchmen in Polish mines', p. 249.
[115] *JO, Débats*, 13th December 1949, p.6775.
[116] Jarosz and Pasztor, *Conflits brûlants,* pp.196-197.

triggering 'les dramatiques arrestations, les véritables rafles et les déportations de Polonais.'[117]

Vice-Consul Szczerbinski's imprisonment in Lille four days after Robineau's arrest exacerbated tensions between Warsaw and Paris. Even though Barrachin and the Minister for the Interior insisted the Szczerbinski case was unrelated to the Robineau affair, many remained unconvinced.[118] French police viciously beat the Vice-Consul, while French civilians exiled from Poland never experienced such abuse.[119] Nevertheless, Barrachin kept on portraying the expulsion of French citizens as an unprovoked attack by an ungrateful nation obeying orders from the Kremlin. He railed against the francophobia rampant in Poland following Robineau's sudden detention, claiming the French embassy was under constant threat of siege and secretaries feared stepping outside unguarded.[120]

Barrachin argued the government should not wait any longer to retaliate. If France was generous enough to welcome approximately 400,000 Poles, Barrachin wondered why Poland could expel French citizens in turn.[121] He referred to the miners' strike for inspiration: 'Est-il exact, tout d'abord, que les Polonais ont joué un rôle actif dans certaines régions de France, au moment des grèves, dans le Nord et la Loire notamment, qu'ils poussent très loin leur réseau dans notre territoire?'[122] Instead of evicting ordinary Polish workers with faint connections to communist groups, Barrachin implied security forces should monitor, interrogate, and banish members of the Polish intelligentsia residing in France, comparing them to preachers of civil war.[123] Numerous

[117] *JO, Débats*, p.6776.
[118] Ibid, p.6780.
[119] 'Les Français expulsés de Pologne accusent les méthodes de Moch', *La Défense* [Paris] no.250 (16th - 22nd December 1949), p.4 col b-c.
[120] *JO, Débats*, p.6775.
[121] Ibid, p.6776.
[122] Ibid.
[123] Ibid.

police crackdowns followed suit in Paris on the 24th November 1949. Police raided offices belonging to the Polish National Council, Polish Red-Cross, Polish Scouts and the Grumwald Youth League.[124]

Jean Noaro, Secretary-General of *L'Amitié franco-polonaise* was not surprised by the expulsion of over twenty-eight Polish citizens in the wake of the Robineau affair. This began after the November/December strikes in 1947 and continued during the mining strikes in 1948.[125] He knew many of the expelled such as Arja Kowalski, chief editor of *Gazeta Polska* and a resistance veteran whose wife and daughter died in Auschwitz. Arja remarried a French woman who was pregnant when he received his expulsion order.[126] Noaro knew Claudia Nicolas as well. She studied in a French university and lived in France for twenty-years.[127]

How did the Polish community react to evictions? In his letter addressed to President Vincent Auriol, miner Stanislas Napieracz captured how he and by extension most of the Polish community felt after his expulsion without explanation.[128] He had moved to France in 1923, volunteered to fight in the French army in 1940, and was deported to Buchenwald, Flossenburg, and Dachau. As a result his health deteriorated and he could not work as well as before the war. He received la Croix de Guerre with full honours, as well as his wife. In light of these sacrifices his indignation is understandable:

[124] 'De l'espion Robineau à M. Jules Moch', *La Défense* [Paris], no.248 (2nd-8th December 1949), p.1 col a-d.
[125] Ibid.
[126] Ibid.
[127] Ibid.
[128] 'Expulsé par Moch, Stanislas Napieracz renvoie au Président de la République sa décoration française', *La Défense* [Paris], no.216 (25th-31st March 1949), p.2 col a-d.

‘Que me reproche-t-on? Ai-je agi à un moment quelconque contre les intérêts de la France?’[129]

Despite the borderline terror campaigns French authorities unleashed on Polish communities during and after the 1947-48 strikes, not all immigrant labourers were dissuaded from partaking in industrial action. On the contrary, in comparison to Polish miners, Spanish labourers in post-war France preserved their militant streak, perhaps due in part to their history as combatants among left-wing groups during the Spanish Civil War. As will be seen in the next section, many Spanish workers, either out of loyalty or gratitude to the CGT’s anti-Francoism, did not hesitate to go out on strike alongside their French colleagues.

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On the 28th February 1946, a large crowd gathered at Hautpal Square in the town of Gaillac at the behest of the local CGT.[130] A procession soon followed three standard bearers. The French tricolour stood high, flanked on either side by Spanish flags. Mr Bastide of the CGT alongside two Spanish comrades delivered speeches admonishing General Francisco Franco. Each speaker implored the French government to cut all diplomatic ties with the regime. In preceding weeks, General Franco had ordered the execution of ten republican rebels.[131] One of whom was Cristino Garcia, a veteran of the Free French Forces.[132] Socialist and communist federations in the Tarn region expressed their condolences to all Spanish republicans in exile on French soil.

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[129] Ibid.
[130] ‘Gaillac- Manifestations contre Franco’, *Le Cri des Travailleurs* [Albi], no.22 (9th March 1946), p.2 col a.
[131] ‘Franco Assassin!’, *Le Cri des Travailleurs* [Albi], no.21 (2nd March 1946), p.1 col a-b.
[132] ‘Avec vous, camarades espagnols!’, *Le Cri des Travailleurs* [Albi], no.23 (16th March 1946), p.1 col a-b.

Though emblematic of cordial relations between French and Spanish workers, such solidarity masked deeper uncertainties and bitter feelings. By 1947, countless Spanish refugees had been transferred multiple times through numerous detention centres, only to be confined once again in dilapidated camps.[133] Exiles surviving in La Meyze found the immediate post-war era more forbidding than the conditions they faced on their arrival in 1939. Singing and merry dancing which breathed life in camps under the Vichy regime had vanished by 1947.[134] Deliveries of food and supplies were cut back drastically to conserve rations for French citizens. Disabled and incapacitated refugees were forgotten, resigned to living in border towns, and forced to rely on charitable funds the exiled republican government or relatives abroad provided.[135] Many French and Spanish workers shared not only a hatred of Franco but deprivation.

Journalist Arthur Adamov was shocked to find Spanish refugees and workers still languishing in downtrodden barracks in Masseube.[136] As he approached the camp, Adamov noticed an internee called Matta clutching a piece of wood, recognizing him as a former cellmate in the Argelès detention centre during the war. For six years, Matta was detained for his Republican past and transferred from one prison to the next.[137] When arriving in Masseube after the Occupation, Matta became insane due to torture and malnourishment during the war. Adamov looked on in horror as Matta kept swinging a piece of wood madly while shouting 'fascism trembled before his might.'[138]

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[133] 'L'agonie des survivants de la guerre d'Espagne: 25frs par jour pour subvenir à leurs besoins', *Combat* [Paris], no.951 (29th July 1947), pp.1-3 col a-c. 'Nous mourons de faim et personne ne s'occupe de nous, me dit un Espagnol du camp de Masseube', *Combat* [Paris], no.955 (2nd August 1947), p.3 col a-b.
[134] Ibid, p.3 col d-e.
[135] Ibid,
[136] 'Nous mourons de faim et personne ne s'occupe de nous-2nd August 1947'
[137] 'Il faut faire quelque chose pour ces hommes qui ont été les premières victimes du nazisme', *Combat* [Paris], no.954 (3-4th August 1947), p.3 col a-b.
[138] Ibid, p.3.

This harrowing scene crystallized what many Spanish republicans felt after World War II. Memories of the Occupation accentuated feelings of captivity among French workers, while the crushing defeat of the Spanish Popular Front haunted the minds of exiled Spanish labourers. The civil war was not yet over. The demise of Hitler and Mussolini, combined with the sacrifice of hundreds of Spanish volunteers in the liberation of Paris and invasion of Germany, raised hopes amongst Spanish expatriates that General Franco would be next in line to fall.[139] The election of the Labour Party in Britain and the closing of the Franco-Spanish border in February 1946, were met with euphoria among Spanish Republicans in France, eager to finish what began in 1936.[140] However, international condemnation of Franco's regime in the United Nations did not translate into action.[141]

The United States and United Kingdom, fearing communists would overrun Madrid after Franco's overthrow, refused to press for regime change in Spain.[142] Victory over Nazism inspired French and Soviet politicians who were keen to export universalist Republicanism and Stalinist imperialism, yet they failed to convince allies that fascism still endured in Spain.[143] The Republican government-in-exile in Toulouse, as well as Catalan and Basque nationalist committees in Paris, led energetic diplomatic campaigns which did not succeed. Anti-Franco factions residing in France and beyond, including anarchists, socialists, communists, monarchists, and even right-wing conservatives, failed to devise an alternative to the regime.[144] By late 1947 and 1948, disappointed exiles

[139] L. Stein, *Beyond Death and Exile: The Spanish Republicans in France, 1939-1955* (Cambridge, 1979), pp.181-185.
[140] Ibid, p.183.
[141] D. A. Messenger, 'France, the Allies and Franco's Spain 1943-1948' (PhD thesis, University of Toronto, 2000), p. 260.
[142] Ibid, p.299.
[143] Ibid, pp.301-304.
[144] C. Güell Ampuero, 'The Failure of Catalanist Opposition to Franco (1939-1950)' (PhD thesis, London School of Economics, 2004), pp.171-182.

realised Franco would not be deposed. Minister Robert Schuman re-opened the border, while talk of further economic blockades dissipated.[145] The emerging Cold War ensured communism replaced fascism as the main threat to world order. Spanish language newspapers in France, alongside the few clandestine pamphlets and journals printed in Spain, cried betrayal.[146] Republicans felt abandoned once again. Service alongside the Allies reaped no rewards.

Yet participation in the maquis did help change the image of Spanish exiles in France. The French no longer regarded them as refugees stealing jobs or committing crime.[147] Spanish combatants received medals for bravery from Charles de Gaulle and Philippe Leclerc. Crowds chanted 'Vive les Espagnols' when Spanish volunteers spearheaded army regiments entering Paris in August 1944.[148] Despite suffering nearly a decade of mistreatment, dislocation, internment, and persecution under Vichy and the Third Republic, Spanish exiles considered France their home.[149] Apart from secluded anarchist communities, many Spanish families and labourers integrated well into French society.[150] Though powerless to influence foreign policy, trade union delegates devoted time to support guerrilla fighters. CGT newspapers and bulletins, especially *Le Travailleur Textile,* covered industrial action and the activities of underground trade unions still operating in Spain.[151] The CGT were among the first to raise funds for remnants of the UGT (L'Union Générale du Travail).

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[145] Messenger, 'France, the Allies and Franco's Spain', pp. 291-294.
[146] Stein, *Beyond Death and Exile,* p.193.
[147] Ibid, p.185.
[148] Ibid, p.185.
[149] For more on the treatment of Spanish refugees in France before and after World War II, see J.F. Berdah, 'The Devil in France: The Tragedy of Spanish Republicans and French Policy after the Civil War (1936-1945), *Discriminations and Tolerance in Historical Perspective,* vol.3 (2008), pp.304-314.
[150] Ó.F. Hernández, 'Les exilés anarchistes espagnols en France. Un paradigme de militantisme transnational', *Modern and Contemporary France,* 24/2 (2016), p.133.
[151] 'Les grèves en Espagne', *Le Travailleur Textile* [Paris], no.8 (January-February 1947), p.12', January 1947, ADSSD, Fonds FNTT-CGT, 43J 120.

In the winter of 1946 strike waves spread throughout the Peninsula. Dozens of textile workshops in Barcelona shut down for days, followed by walk-outs in the towns of Mataró, Badalona, Sabadell, and Terrassa.[152] Electricians refused to work, plunging Barcelona into darkness for four nights. Miners in Catalonia also went on strike while Cirene textile plant labourers refused to attend their post. The Governor called heavily armed police to disperse crowds and ordered reserve troops to replace absent workers. Members of the UGT, CNT (National Confederation of Labour) and Basque nationalists penned a manifesto urging Spanish workers to continue resisting the regime. Barcelona's Governor-General issued statements to the press claiming 'certaines attitudes de rébellion sont en train de se produire de la part des ouvriers de l'industrie textile qui réclament aux entreprises dans lesquelles ils travaillent des augmentations de salaires.'[153] Some employers did grant a meagre pay increase, yet reprisals were unforgiving. Jacques Comas, a member of the *Groupement Professionel de l'Industrie Textile Espagnole* based in Aveyron, thanked French workers for donations worth nearly 20,000 francs, later transferred to militias plotting further industrial action to sabotage the regime.[154]

Despite shortages of money, French trade unionists allocated jobs to skilled Spanish refugees seeking employment. CGT secretary Coisme received letters from Comas regarding the availability of jobs for fellow exiles, sending him information about union delegates in the Tarn and Hérault *départements* who could help.[155] Spanish refugees scattered throughout France and struggling to find jobs were grateful for the

[152] Ibid. On post-World War II strikes in Spain, see L. Ferri, J. Muixí and E. Sanjuán, *Las Huelgas contra Franco. Aproximación a una historia del movimiento obrero español de posguerra* (Barcelona,1978), pp.74-93.
[153] Ibid.
[154] 'Lettre de Jacques Comas à Roger Louis, Secrétaire Fédéral de la Fédération Nationale Ouvrière de l'Industrie Textile', 31st December 1946, ADSSD, Fonds FNTT-CGT, 43J 124.
[155] 'Lettre de G. Coisme, Secrétaire Fédéral à Jacques Comas, Groupement Professionnel de l'Industrie Textile Espagnole- p.2', 12th April 1947, ADSSD, Fonds FNTT-CGT, 43J 124.

material and political support French unions provided.[156] Train conductors donated small yet regular sums of money to keep Spanish *Groupes Professionnels* afloat in hard times. French workers even paid for the printing and distribution of tracts aiming to incite further unrest in Spain's industrial heartlands.[157] This aid was beneficial in May 1947, when approximately 50,000 Basque miners went on strike. The 'shadow war' waged by former Spanish *résistants* who had crossed the Pyrenees to fight Franco was escalating. According to Comas, this was the most significant act of mass protest since Franco came to power in 1939, culminating in the Guardia Civil arresting hundreds of workers in Biscaya. He praised the CGT once again for its unflinching solidarity and loyalty to Spanish workers.[158]

Gratitude, loyalty, and shared hardship all played a part in motivating Spanish workers to protest and strike in 1947-48 with French colleagues, yet they suffered severe consequences for their participation. Domingo Lera, a Spanish republican, STO labourer and veteran of the FFI (Forces Françaises de l'Intérieur) faced expulsion during the November/December strikes in Boulogne-sur-Mer. Local campaigns tried to prevent it by sending petitions to the Prefecture.[159] A general meeting took place on the 21st July 1948, culminating in the signing of a resolution to allow him to reside in France. [160] It is unknown whether Lera could stay, yet his ordeal foreshadowed what many of his countrymen would soon endure.

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[156] '"Nous…pouvons vous faciliter l'entrée de camarades ouvriers espagnols dans les différents centres de notre industrie…" ' in 'Lettre de Jacques Comas à Roger Louis- p.2', 17th March 1947, ADSSD, Fonds FNTT-CGT, 43J 124.

[157] Ibid, p.2.

[158] 'Lettre de Jacques Comas à G. Coisme', 20th May 1947, ADSSD, Fonds FNTT-CGT, 43J 124.

[159] 'Les honnêtes gens de Boulogne laisseront-ils expulser Domingo Lera?', *La Défense* [Paris], no. 181 (18th-24th June 1948), p.3 col a-b.

[160] 'Domingo Lera croyait à ce qui est écrit dans la Constitution', *La Défense* [Paris], no.187 (6th-19th August 1948), p.3 col a.

Lera's case was neither the first nor last to rattle Spanish expatriates. Distinguished war records and anti-fascist credentials no longer guaranteed clemency from Ministries and prefects keen to dispose of undesirable elements. Spanish workers joined the ranks of Polish labourers accused of misbehaviour during and after the 1947 strike waves despite little evidence and random arrests. Spanish miners on strike in Aveyron faced even harsher punishment less than a year later.[161] While exhausted French comrades returned to the Aubin pits by the end of November 1948, Spanish miners still stood their ground.[162] Mining company inspectors compiled reports noting Spanish employees were some of the more stubborn and determined strikers.[163] Tarn prefect Max Moulin noticed a similar trend in the Carmaux mines.[164] Though Minister Jules Moch claimed no Socialist would ever dare deport Republicans back to Spain, President Auriol admitted security forces considered transferring Spanish strikers into concentration camps. Instead, Spanish miners were banished to Corsica or eastern *départements* and forced into 'les grands travaux', a polite term for forced labour.[165]

Two miners, reportedly former inmates in Dachau, were put under house arrest in the town of Moltifao in Corsica.[166] In May 1949, police summoned seven miners to a station in Bruyères. The Interior Minister decreed they could not attend trade union assemblies and he revoked their identity cards indefinitely.[167] Nunez Navarro, a civil war veteran and father of five, was denied a foreign worker visa. His colleagues in the

[161] Vivens, 'Conflit social…', pp.111-112.
[162] Ibid, p.142.
[163] Ibid, p.140.
[164] Ibid, p.144.
[165] 'Je suggère…d'en envoyer en Corse et d'autres dans l'Est, pour les grands travaux....
il faut les avertir qu'ils ont simplement à travailler, que nous agissons avec générosité, mais que, s'ils ne sont pas dignes de notre générosité on les renverra dans leur pays conformément à la loi internationale' in V. Auriol*, Journal du septennat 1947-1954, Tome II-1948,* (Paris, 1974), p.517 in Vivens, 'Conflit social…' p.144.
[166] 'Les emprisonnés chez eux pour Noël', *La Défense* [Paris], no.250 (16th December 1949), p.1 col b.
[167] ' "Mauvais renseignements recueillis" ', *La Défense* [Paris], no. 223 (13th-19th May 1949), p.3 col b.

SNECMA aircraft-manufacturing plant along the Seine claimed police already beat and imprisoned Navarro during a protest march in Haussmann Boulevard in 1948.[168] Authorities ignored French workers' petitions and articles in defence of Spanish comrades months and years after the strikes ended. Calls for amnesty fell on deaf ears.[169] Spanish miners, many of whom labelled honorary patriots by French colleagues or neighbours, were expelled from Decazeville and separated from their family.[170] For them nothing changed.

The French government's brutal response to the miners' strike, and the expulsion of Spanish republican and communist immigrés in particular, sent a clear message to Spain: the unanimous international condemnation of Franco's regime at the UN was nearing its end.[171] The French mining strike capped-off a year of diplomatic successes for the beleaguered Franco, and it certainly provided his propaganda machine another excuse to stoke fear and nationalism in Spain.[172] Criticism of the regime from Soviet diplomats or Eastern European satellite states, combined with the rash of 'red-run' strikes in France, propelled a fierce anti-communist media offensive which justified the political, ideological, and geographical isolation of Spain from the rest of Europe.[173]

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[168] 'Un antifasciste espagnol menacé d'expulsion', *La Défense* [Paris], no. 224 (20thMay 1949), p.4 col a.
[169] Vivens, 'Conflit social…', p. 147.
[170] Ibid, p.140.
[171] On Spain's diplomatic strategy during its post-war isolation, see M. Artajo, *La política internacional de España en 1945-1950* (Madrid, 1950), pp.69-74. D. Brydan, *Franco's Internationalists: Social Experts and Spain's Search for Legitimacy* (Oxford, 2019), pp.114-136.
[172] F. Portero, 'Spain, Britain and the Cold War', in S. Balfour and P. Preston (eds), *Spain and the Great Powers in the Twentieth Century* (London, 1999), p.220.
[173] Ibid, p.220. S. Gorostiza, '"There are the Pyrenees!": Fortifying the Nation in Francoist Spain', *Environmental History,* 23/4 (2018), pp. 798-813.

Yet strikes in the French imperium pleased observers in Spain's possessions overseas as well. A resurgence of anti-colonial sentiments, spearheaded by figures like the Rifian statesman Abd al Krim, plagued Spanish authorities in post-war Morocco.[174] Reports exchanged between Tétouan and Madrid reveal the High Commissioner feared Moroccan nationalists threatened to drive out the Spanish occupier once again, just as Berber tribesmen did during the Rif War of the early twenties, a disastrous pacification campaign which claimed the lives of 13,000 Spanish troops and traumatized a generation.[175] In light of these concerns, it is probable the French Protectorate's ruthless anti-communist and anti-nationalist campaign, especially during the Khouribga strikes examined in the previous chapter, received a favourable response from the Rif veterans governing Spanish Morocco in 1948. It signalled France shifted away from its anti-Francoist foreign policy and was preoccupied instead with keeping her own house in order.

The crushing of 'insurrectional' strikes was a sign French authorities were now fully devoted to the anti-communist crusade underway not only in the Spanish dictatorship, but as argued in the next section, in new democracies such as Italy.

Indeed, French strikes appeared to influence similar movements taking place in Italy in 1947 and 1948. However, Italian workers stranded in France, especially in comparison to the Spanish miners discussed above, had more in common with Poles as they generally avoided participating in French strikes after November/December 1947 out of fear of provoking authorities. Yet, French police and CRS units still accused

[174] R.Velasco de Castro,'Políticas de sustitución, guerra fría y descolonización. La paradoja del Protectorado Español en Marruecos' in C. Navajas Zubeldia and D. Iturriaga Barco (eds.), *Acte del V Congresso Internacional de Historia de Nuestro Tiempo* (2016), p. 354.
[175] Ibid, pp.355-356. C.R. Pennell, 'How and why to remember the Rif War (1921-2021)', *The Journal of North African Studies,* 22/5 (2017), pp.799-816.

communist-leaning Italian unionists or miners of misbehaviour during strikes, and as seen in the Polish case study, these often baseless charges resulted once again in brutal repression and unjustified expulsions.

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The CGT mining committee distributed a short message of thanks to Italian miners who joined their French comrades in the three-week long strike in le Nord and Pas-de-Calais in December 1947.[176] The notice praised Italians for their bravery. Socialist or Christian trade unionists were unable to woo Italian miners away from the CGT's embrace. The CGT urged Italian miners to replenish their strength for greater battles lay ahead. They proved themselves worthy of carrying CGT membership cards, making elderly Italian immigrants proud of their achievements and honouring compatriots still on strike in Italy.[177]

The idea that Italian workers flocked under the banner of the CGT or PCF during post-war strikes was misleading.[178] How Italian immigrants perceived and participated in such movements depended on many factors, one of which was how long they had lived and worked in France. It is necessary to distinguish between a well-integrated, French-speaking, former partisan trade unionist, and the disoriented Italian labourer fresh off the train. The former spent most of his life on the run or as a combatant. He endured loss, imprisonment, or exile. He read widely on national and international affairs. Political and ideological struggle informed his worldview, either in the workplace or as a resistance

[176] 'CGT: Sindacato dei Minatori del Nord e del Pas-de-Calais', December 1947, AMDT, Fonds Henri Martel, 2008-028-001.
[177] Ibid.
[178] R. Damiani, 'Les communistes italiens dans la zone interdite (1939-1945)', in A. Tasca and D. Peschanski (eds), *Vichy 1940-1944: quaderni e documenti di Angelo Tasca* (Paris, 1986), p.153.

fighter.[179] Wartime experience coloured his interpretation of events, such as strikes occurring in France and Italy simultaneously. In his point-of-view, strikes were rooted in battles of the last war. Conversely, a recently-arrived miner or bricklayer was motivated less by geopolitical factors than by personal or local matters.[180] With this in mind, what could the 1947-48 strike waves tell us about the priorities and differences of Italian labourers in France from before and after the war? And above all what were the social and legal ramifications of their participation?

For Italian PCF and CGT members, the autumn and winter of 1947 announced civil war in Italy. Reports in *France-Soir* revealed Communists in Bitanto proclaimed their own 'république rouge.'[181] Outbreaks of terrorism and arson engulfed Rome. Leftists firebombed Christian Democrat headquarters and attacked printing houses belonging to *L'uomo qualunque*, a right-wing populist party.[182] Pietro Nenni, leader of the Italian socialist party, ordered seven-hundred train conductors to block the Milan-Rome railway track and threatened to call a general strike if Prime Minister Alcide De Gasperi refused to curb mounting unemployment. Rumours of American aircraft carriers approaching Naples stoked fears of invasion.[183] Headlines screamed 'Grève Générale en France et en Italie le 1er décembre!'[184] *Risorgimento Liberale* warned of a synchronisation of strike action in both countries, the culmination of the PCI's (Italian communist party) campaign to overthrow Gasperi in preparation for a Soviet dictatorship. Far-right and fascist newspapers imagined even worse scenarios whereby

[179] Ibid, p.153.
[180] Ibid, p.153.
[181] 'Une république rouge éphémère a été proclamée dans le sud de l'Italie', *France-Soir* [Paris], no.1030 (23rd November 1947), p.1 col a.
[182] Ibid.
[183] Ibid.
[184] ' "Grève générale en France et en Italie le 1er décembre" annonce un journal italien', *France-Soir* [Paris], no.1033 (27th November 1947), p.1 col a.

Giuseppe di Vittorio, communist leader of the CGIL (Italian General Confederation of labour), sanctioned widespread chaos. Strikers would take over communication grids in metropolitan areas, occupy railway stations, erect roadblocks to delay army battalions, and ultimately facilitate a communist coup.[185]

In an interview for *La Vie Ouvrière* a week before the end of the winter strikes in France, Di Vittorio almost lent credence to this 'synchronisation' theory the Italian press insisted on propagating.[186] At an FSM meeting in Paris, he blamed a 'glissement à droite' in French and Italian politics for this uptake of industrial action.[187] 1947 marked the decline of the PCI in Italian parliamentary politics. De Gasperi ousted the PCI from government which ended a fragile coalition.[188] Mario Scelba, Conservative Minister of the Interior, waged a successful purge of former partisans in the *carabinieri*, while riot police swiftly put-down walk-outs and protests.[189] Factory workers facing determined bosses eager to erase laws forbidding proprietors from sacking employees who missed work due to partisan activity, proved powerless.[190] Exaggerated reports claiming the PCI prepared to trigger a civil war for control of Italy inundated police departments.[191]

La Vie Ouvrière warned French workers a similar trend was happening in France. The murder of metallurgist Vincent Voulant on the 12th November seemingly backed up this theory. While marching towards Place de L'Opéra in Marseille alongside hundreds

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[185] Ibid.
[186] 'Les travailleurs italiens savent qu'ils défendent la république nationale et la paix', *La Vie Ouvrière* [Paris], no.168 (26th November-2nd December 1947), p.10 col a-d
[187] Ibid.
[188] A. Brogi, 'Ending Grand Alliance Politics in Western Europe : US Anti-communism in France and Italy, 1944-47', *Journal of Contemporary History,* 53/1 (2017), pp.155-156.
[189] P. Ginsborg, *A History of Contemporary Italy: Society and Politics 1943-1988* (London, 1990), pp.93. See I. Rossini, 'Conflittualità sociale, violenza politica e collective e gestione dell' ordine pubblico a Roma (luglio 1948-luglio 1960)' (PhD thesis, University of Rome, 2014), pp.75-79.
[190] Ibid, p. 95-96.
[191] P. Girard, 'La perception de la menace communiste en France et en Italie au début de la Guerre Froide', in P. Buton, O. Büttner and M. Hastings (eds), *La Guerre Froide vue d'en bas* (Paris, 2014), p.43.

protesting the arrest of workers who refused to pay for train tickets, Voulant was gunned down amidst the looting of restaurants and night-clubs.[192] The assailant was never caught, yet left-wing newspapers speculated the culprits were RPF members or Corsican gangsters.[193] Either way, the PCF spun a narrative accusing the socialist-controlled Marseille prefecture, and by extension the French government, of permitting far right-wing Gaullists to commit violence and terror against democratic workers.[194]

Yet the CGT and CGIL did not plan to co-ordinate industrial action. The dreaded strikes never took place on the 1st December in Italy, though less than 24-hours after 'l'expérience française', over 600,000 labourers in Rome stopped working.[195] Di Vittorio, returning from Paris, failed to take advantage of a bloody incident in the Primavelle quarter in Rome where police opened fire on crowds of unemployed workers, killing one and wounding countless more.[196] Armoured trucks and crowds clashed briefly in Colonna Plaza but rapidly dispersed. The CGIL did not rouse enough support for the strike which lasted barely three days.[197] Journalist Bernard Valéry best captured this lack of enthusiasm for the movement when he related a telling scene between a café owner and strikers. When ordered to close his establishment the manager politely refused and offered each picketer an expresso on the house instead, bringing the strike to an end.[198]

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[192] Mencherini, '*Guerre froide, grèves rouges*', p.210.
[193] Ibid, p.210. The CIA tasked Corsican Mafiosi with breaking CGT-led strikes along the docklands of Marseille in 1947 and 1950. See A. Marchant, 'La French Connection, entre mythes et réalités", *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d'histoire,* 115/3 (2012), p.93. A. McCoy, *The Politics of Heroin in Southeast Asia* (New York, 1972), pp.44-75.
[194] 'Sous la protection du préfet de Ramadier, les Gaullistes assassinent Vincent Voulant', *L'Humanité* [Paris], no.989 (13th November 1947), p.1 col a-c.
[195] 'Grève générale illimitée à Rome: 600,000 travailleurs débrayent ce matin dans la ville éternelle et dans la province romaine', *France-Soir* [Paris], no.1046 (12th December 1947), p.1 col a.
[196] Ibid.
[197] 'Atmosphère de troubles à Rome', *France-Soir* [Paris], no.1047 (13th December 1947), p.1 col a-b.
[198] 'Dans la ville éternelle, la grève générale ne va pas sans résistance' [Paris], no.1047 (13th December 1947), p.3 col a.

Di Vittorio and the PCF framed industrial action both in France and in Italy, not only as a fight for higher wages but as reactions against resurgent fascism.[199] It was a message intended to galvanize Italian workers in France.

Yet as Rudy Damiani argued, the CGT and PCF still had difficulty convincing young Italian men to go on strike.[200] Evocative fliers or articles in *L'Humanité* or *La Vie Ouvrière,* subtly portraying strikes both in France and Italy as renewed popular fronts against the restoration of fascism, did not rouse Italian workers earning barely enough money to send back home.[201] Di Vittorio's words appealed to surviving Italian communists and anti-Mussolini exiles still part of the CGT in post-war France. Di Vittorio himself fled to Paris in the early twenties. Memories of past struggles did not appeal to new Italian workers who barely read or spoke French and had not joined partisan militias. Veteran Italian trade unionists such as Egidio Seghi garnered support for strikes by criticizing the often abysmal barracks reserved for immigrant labourers.[202] Living conditions in the pits of northern France were no better than what Italian workers endured in Belgium. Politician Achille Delattre's speeches, which described 'le mauvais accueil des Italiens' stacked into alienating barracks, echoed what many Italian miners experienced in France.[203]

For four years, the Nazi occupier erected dozens of internment camps in Alsace and Lorraine. Belgian, French, Soviet, Polish, and Yugoslav inmates were scattered throughout Moselle.[204] Italian POWS, while avoiding high mortality rates, suffered the

[199] 'Les travailleurs italiens savent qu'ils défendent la république nationale-26th November 1947'.
[200] Damiani, 'Les communistes italiens dans la zone interdite (1939-1945)', pp.153.
[201] Ibid, p.153.
[202] Ibid, pp.153-154.
[203] C. Detraux, L. Hardenne, F. Larochette and J. Weytjens (eds), *Blegny-Mine: La Bataille du Charbon (1945-1957)* (Herstal, 2003), p.33.
[204] Michaël Landolt, 'Les lieux d'internement nazis en Moselle-p.48', (2013), https://www.academia.edu/3265681/Les_lieux_dinternement_nazis_en_Moselle (1st January 2020). See

cramped barracks, miserly rations, and sustained abuse their Russian counterparts experienced. [205] Gestapo terror campaigns ended after 1945 yet the legacy of forced labour lived on.[206] To some Italian immigrants, the French state inherited these camps and made them their own. As journalist Paul Durand remarked in 1949, a booming mining and steel-work economy could not hide thousands of workers and farmers still living in barracks.[207]

In Valenciennes, much like French workers living in the ONCOR, Italian workers complained about crowded barracks resembling concentration camps.[208] Hygiene was non-existent and it was not uncommon to find faecal matter, mud, and mounds of dust everywhere. New arrivals found cramped rooms with dirty bed mattresses stuffed with hay[209]: '…il est nécessaire que les syndicats promeuvent une action visant à obliger la direction à changer les draps au moins une fois par mois…'[210]

Such letters conveyed the feeling no one seemed to care about Italians stranded in northern coalfields.[211] Family allowances granted to long-term residents were frequently delayed, while French managers showed little interest in improving living conditions for citizens of a former enemy power.[212]

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also C. Neveu, C. Leclercq, A. Méaux and O. Jarrige (eds), *Trous de mémoire. Prisonniers de guerre et travailleurs forcés d'Europe de l'Est en Moselle annexée (1941-1945)* (Metz, 2011).

[205] E. Vlossak, 'Regimenting Unfree Labour: Alsace and Moselle'(working paper nine, 2017, Independent Commission of Historians Investigating the History of the Reich Ministry of Labour (Reichsarbeitsministerium) in the National Socialist Period), pp.7-9.

[206] L. Erbs, 'La Gestapo en Moselle. Pratiques d'incarcération en temps d'annexion', *Revue historique des armées,* no.270 (2013), pp.105-111.

[207] *Le Lorrain* (15th February 1949) in B. Meddahi, 'La Moselle et l'Allemagne 1945-1951' (PhD thesis, Université Paul Verlaine-Metz, 1979), p.135.

[208] 'Allogi indecenti, discipline da campo di concentramento e vitto caro ed insufficiente', *L'Operaio Italiano* [Paris], no.9 (26th August 1948), p.2 col a.

[209] Ibid.

[210] 'Cantine impossibili, dormitori fetidi, assegni in ritardo', *L'Operaio Italiano* [Paris], no.22 (25th November 1948), p.2 col a-c.

[211] 'Licenziamenti e disciplina da campo di concentramento', *L'Operaio Italiano* [Paris], no.25 (23rd December 1948), p.2 col a-b.

[212] 'Cantine impossibili -25th November 1948'.

Italians also complained about food served in canteens because portions were too small and overpriced.[213] Reports grumbled soups and acidic pâtés served in Meurthe-et-Moselle tasted like prophylactics.[214] In desperation, many laborers avoided canteens and learnt how to cook for themselves. *L'Operaio Italiano* alleged nearly half of the Italian workforce based in Anzin cooked their own meals.[215] Guards confiscated frying pans and electric lamps in Zimming to force Italians to use canteens.[216] Those who refused to comply risked being sacked and replaced by German POWS. On the rare occasion French employers ordered new and improved barracks, such as construction company owner Mr Desbarbieux in Harly, Italians paid extortionately high rents.[217]

A newly arrived Italian immigré sent a letter to Gino Boscherini, the CGT's Italian faction leader. It showed *l'univers concentrationnaire* was alive and well in Moselle.[218] A private police force monitored labourers housed in the Zimming camp. In Falquemont, Italians complained they could never take time off to visit family or friends back home. Employers fired the rare few who requested temporary leave: 'Nous sommes fermés comme dans un camp de concentration et nous travaillons avec les prisonniers jour et nuit…'[219] Immigrant workers compared barrack security personnel to prison guards.[220] Pattin, a former colonial officer, garnered a reputation for his xenophobia.[221] He ran the camp like another 'colonie' and ignored complaints about poor barracks, food, or hygiene.[222]

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213 'Allogi indecenti -26th August 1948'.
214 'Cantine impossibili -25th November 1948'.
215 'Allogi indecenti -26th August 1948'.
216 'Licenziamenti e disciplina - 23rd December 1948'.
217 'Allogi indecenti-26th August 1948'.
218 'Licenziamenti e disciplina da campo di concentramento -23rd December 1948'.
219 Ibid.
220 Ibid.
221 'Hanno messo il guardia ciurma alla colonia di Rouvroy', *L'Operaio Italiano* [Paris], no.5. (15th July 1948), p.2 col a.
222 Ibid.

Italophobia was widespread in post-war France. Italy's alliance with Hitler's Germany in 1940 was a 'stab in the back' most French citizens did not forgive.[223] A gulf lay between *Le Monde*'s conciliatory rhetoric and popular opinion. Articles described Italians as essential to France's recovery.[224] They portrayed Italy as a vibrant new republic ready to exorcise her fascist past and looking onward to a better future with her democratic neighbour.[225] Italians ranked among the more 'acceptable' expatriate communities living in France.[226] The two Latin nations shared cultural, religious, and gastronomical affinities.[227] Reconstruction represented an unmissable opportunity to bury the hatchet.[228]

In reality, it took years to purge the memory of Mussolini's dictatorship, particularly in the former Italian occupation zones of Provence and Savoy.[229] The population did not forget the Italian air-forces' bombardment of fleeing refugees during the early stages of World War II.[230] The stereotype of the untrustworthy *macaroni* resurfaced in Niçois newspapers after the Liberation.[231] Italian workers were blamed for destabilizing the French economy.[232] Editors of *L'Ergot* published lists of Italian collaborators or informers and dissected the wartime crimes of OVRA agents (Organization for the Vigilance and Repression of Anti-Fascism) in detail. Italians

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[223] N. Violle, 'La représentation des Italiens dans "Le Monde", 1944-1951', (2003), https://hal.uca.fr/hal-01722778/document (1st January 2020), p. 2.
[224] Ibid, p.4.
[225] Ibid, p.4.
[226] Ibid, p.5-6.
[227] Ibid, p.5. See J.C. Vegliante (ed), 'Notes de Caen sur le presque-même. Problèmes de réception" in *Gli Italiani all'estero. Ailleurs, d'ailleurs* (Paris, 1996), pp.3-30.
[228] Ibid, p.4.
[229] Y. Gastaut, 'Les tendances italophobes dans l'opinion niçoise à la Libération', *Cahiers de la Méditerranée,* 1/52(1996), pp.33-57. S. Mourlane, 'Que reste-t-il des préjugés? L'opinion française et l'immigration italienne dans les années 50-60', *Centre d'information et d'études sur les migrations internationales,* 109/1 (2007), p.135.
[230] Violle, 'La représentation des Italiens', p.2.
[231] R. Schor, 'L'image de l'Italien dans la France de l'entre-deux-guerres', *Publications de l'École Française de Rome*, no.94(1986), p.100. L. Teulières, 'Mémoires et représentations croisées du temps de guerre', *Studi Emigrazione,* no.146 (2002), p.408.
[232] Gastaut, 'Les tendances italophobes', p.51.

became scapegoats for many kinds of petty crime, misdemeanors, and terrorist acts.[233] Squalid detention centres for illegal immigrants resembled what a CGT delegate thought were concentration camps replete with surveillance and armed guards.[234]

Prefects and the Italian ambassador in Paris feared French public opinion was still hostile to Italians in the late forties.[235] Hatred and a desire for vengeance overruled any admiration or respect for the many Italian partisans who fought with French *maquisards* in Lyon or Grenoble.[236] When looking back on the Occupation and its aftermath, immigrants remembered the animosity the French aimed at them and their children.[237] This climate of exclusion was literal for Italian workers shipped to eastern *départements*. Barracks aggravated this sense of separation not only from home but from French society.

Yet communist CGT members who tried to address or alleviate the discontent of Italian immigrant labourers such as Egidio Seghi, paid dearly for their militancy. Seghi was imprisoned for his role in the strikes and charged with the same sentence as Spanish and Polish workers before and after him.[238] Seghi's eviction masked a French crusade to undermine communists in Italian expatriate communities. In a message imploring French miners to challenge the deportation of Italian colleagues, *La Défense* noted Seghi was a prominent member of *L'Italia Libera*, a pro-communist organisation heavily involved in the social and political lives of Italian workers and immigrants on French soil.[239] Left-

[233] Ibid, pp.34-51.
[234] Ibid, p.53.
[235] Teulières, 'Mémoires et représentations croisées', p.404.
[236] C. Collin, 'Les Italiens dans la MOI et les FTP-MOI à Lyon et Grenoble', *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains,* 218/2 (2005), pp.67-83.
[237] Teulières, 'Mémoires et représentations croisées', p.408.
[238] 'Le mineur Seghi sera-t-il obligé d'abandonner ses enfants?', *La Défense* [Paris] no.180 (11th-17th June 1948), p.2 col a-b.
[239] E. Vezzu, 'L'encadrement des migrants italiens par les autorités italiennes en France' (Research Masters, Université Paris I Panthéon Sorbonne, 2013), pp.46-51.

leaning or communist partisans replaced the fascist upper cadres of *L'Italia Libera*, which soon developed into a major diplomatic body threatening the authority of Italian consulates and embassies in Marseille, Nice, and Paris.[240]

After the Liberation *L'Italia Libera* consolidated its hold over Italian immigrant colonies, creating its own *Union des Femmes* and exerting power over trade unions. This caused considerable distress to a French government fearful of espionage and Soviet infiltration.[241] The Italian embassy in Paris admitted that since consulates were poorly staffed, diplomats had to contact representatives of *L'Italia Libera* to deliver passports.[242] *L'Italia Libera* aimed to become the only mediator between Italian immigrants and consulates in France, soon drawing scorn for criticizing the Italian embassy for not purging former fascists amongst its employees.[243] Unwilling to accept any further communist incursions, both French and Italian embassies endeavoured to abolish *L'Italia Libera*.

Fears of Stalinized consulates were not unfounded, yet by October 1947 it had been stripped of all power and declared illegal.[244] Disorderly conduct during the strikes was a perfect excuse to eliminate remaining traces of the organization. Therefore Seghi, a life-long anti-fascist was portrayed as a subversive associated with those loyal to the Kremlin.[245]

The French Popular Relief fund mounted a campaign on the grounds his expulsion was a betrayal. To sway public opinion journalist Gilbert Avril interviewed

[240] Ibid, pp.46-56.
[241] Ibid, p.46.
[242] Ibid, p.49-53.
[243] Ibid, p.53-54.
[244] Ibid, p.56.
[245] 'L'art de déshonorer la France', *La Défense* [Paris], no.170 (2nd April-8th April 1948), p.3 col a.

Seghi's acquaintances.[246] Two former employers wrote the following telegram to *La Défense* in June 1948, describing his ' caractère honnête et travailleur, bon esprit, s'assimilant bien les tâches qui lui sont confiées, d'un bon rapport avec nous et ses camarades de travail. Il nous a toujours donné satisfaction.'[247] Charles Levêque, treasurer of the Association for the Deported and Interned, deplored the French government could banish a former freedom fighter. Madame Cherlet, Seghi's landlord, admired his sincerity and described him as a labourer devoted to his children.[248] Correspondents even visited his son's secondary school teacher, Madame Dehout, who thought Seghi's predicament 'créerait une situation génante pour l'avenir du petit Seghi qui peut très bien faire.'[249] The campaign was ultimately unsuccessful and Seghi was expelled in late 1948.[250]

Other Italians, many of whom never participated in the November/December strikes faced deportation as well. In Antibes, Paul Cocco was busy cutting down trees during the strike, yet police accused him of taking part in the strike committee assembled in the region.[251] In Albi, another miner named Egidio was found guilty of harassing non-strikers in October 1948. He spent two months in jail, paid a hefty fine, and was expelled. Communist Deputy Alfred Biscarlet cited further examples, such as an unnamed Italian man threatened with deportation for running a canteen for miners' children.[252]

The miners' strike provided another opportunity for security services to dismantle Italian communist cells. In Longwy, the CGT published a pamphlet decrying the

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[246] 'Le Nord gardera Seghi', *La Défense* [Paris], no. 182 (25th June-1st July 1948), p.4 col a-b.
[247] Ibid.
[248] Ibid.
[249] Ibid.
[250] Damiani, 'Les communistes italiens dans la zone interdite', p.154.
[251] 'Les antifascistes italiens "indésirables en France"', *La Défense* [Paris], no.163 (13th-19th April 1948), p.3.
[252] *JO, Débats*, 18th February 1949, p.701.

expulsion of Probo Martinelli in December 1948.[253] Yet it was too late to help him, as according to a separate report his expulsion order went directly from the Interior Ministry to a local gendarmerie in Longwy.[254] Tribunals were generally powerless to intervene, as authorities regarded men such as Martinelli and Seghi as threats to public order and therefore could not defend themselves in court. As in the thirties, when French police deported exiled Italian communists without warrants and seemingly overnight, expellees were not told why they were deported.[255]

Trade unionist Salvatore Mondolfo, who worked to improve relations between immigrants and French miners in Forbach, wrote a letter to *L'Operaio Italiano* after his expulsion, claiming the Ministry for Interior bypassed departmental authorities and ordered his immediate repatriation to Italy for strike activity in Moselle.[256] Like fellow expatriate Martinelli, Mondolfo had no chance to appeal his case. From the CGT's perspective another trade unionist was purged, not only for participating in strikes but for his communist leanings.[257]

Italian immigrants expelled from France did not receive warm welcomes after returning home.[258] Italian authorities arrested miners Pietro Marchetti and Oguibene immediately after they crossed the border into Vintimille. The CGT had no time to organise a protest movement and Pietro's mother went on her own to Italy to free her

[253] 'Chi è Probo Martinelli?', *L'Operaio Italiano* [Paris], no.25 (16th December 1948), p.1 col a-b.
[254] 'Espulsione ingiustificata', *L'Operaio Italiano* [Paris], no.24(9th December 1948), p.1 col a.
[255] R. Schor, 'La police et la surveillance de la frontière des Alpes-Maritimes de 1919 à 1939' in M.C. Blanc-Chaléard, C. Douki, N. Dyonet and V. Milliot (eds), *Police et Migrants. France 1667-1939* (Rennes, 2001), pp.263-278.
[256] 'Mai gli uni contro gli altri', *L'Operaio Italiano* [Paris], no.18 (28th October 1948), p.1 col a.
[257] Ibid.
[258] 'Espulsi dalla Francia, arrestati in Italia', *L'Operaio Italiano* [Paris], no.19 (4th November 1948), p.2.

son.[259] Considering the anti-communist and anti-partisan rulings underway in Italy's courts and prefectures, it is unlikely Pietro was easily released.[260]

The late forties and early fifties saw judges who served under the fascist regime put thousands of Italian resistance veterans on trial.[261] Laws enacted to punish partisans causing disorder or sabotage during the war persisted. The resounding electoral victory of De Gasperi's Christian Democrats in April 1948 triggered a wave of anti-communist measures, which reached their peak after a massive general strike began following the attempted murder of PCI leader Palmiro Togliatti.[262]

The Abbadia riots in Tuscany gave Minister Scelba a perfect excuse to escalate his war on the PCI.[263] He cited the Abbadia incident as justification for harsher repression against PCI-controlled worker councils.[264] In July, authorities sent a letter to prefects urging them to take action against 'insurrectionary' organizations.[265] The detention of hundreds of miners in Abbadia announced a nationwide crackdown of CGIL members.[266] As socialist CGIL secretary Fernando Santi said to French journalists: 'Des centaines et des centaines d'ouvriers, surtout des militants syndicalistes, sont en prison… Il y a aussi beaucoup d'arrestations pour de soi-disant "entraves à la liberté du

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[259] Ibid.

[260] G. Briguglio, N. Caroli, S. Del Prete and G. Fedele, 'L'avvocato Leonida Caroli e la difesa dei partigiani emiliani', *Diacronie,* 4/20 (2014) https://doi.org/10.4000/diacronie.1672 S. Del Prete, 'Il delitto di Roncosaglia', *Diacronie,* 4/20 (2014) https://doi.org/10.4000/diacronie.1691(1st January 2020). L. Alessandrini and A.M. Politi, 'Nuove fonti sui processi contro i partigiani 1948-1953. Contesto politico e organizzazione della difesa ', *Italia contemporanea,* no.178(1990), pp.41-62.

[261] M. Ponzani, 'Trials of partisans in the Italian Republic: the consequences of the elections of 18th April 1948', *Modern Italy,* 16/2 (2011), p.122.

[262] Ibid, pp.121-123.

[263] Giancarlo Scarpari, 'Amiata: dall'uso politico al falso storiografico', http://storieinmovimento.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Zap-39_2-Zoom1.pdf (1st January 2020), pp.13-24.

[264] Ibid, p.17.

[265] Ibid, p.17. See D. Sassoon, *Contemporary Italy: Politics, Economy and Society since 1945* (London, 1986), pp.135-136.

[266] Ibid, p.18.

travail"…Le ministre de l'Intérieur Scelba a proféré des mesures très précises contre les droits des organisations syndicales.'[267]

This *recul ouvrier* was evident in Sicily as well. The Portella della Ginestra massacre marked the beginning of a ruthless campaign to quell worker movements on the island. Landowners dreading the loss of their social and economic power relied increasingly on former fascists, Mafia hitmen, and corrupt police to prevent the occupation of uncultivated land by *Federterra* cooperatives.[268] Newspapers such as *La Voce della Sicilia* or *L'Oro* chronicled the weekly intimidations various socialist, communist, and trade union representatives endured.[269] The assassination or disappearance of *braccianti* leaders brought an unchallenged reign of terror.[270] The creation of the National Centre for Judicial Aid was a response to the widespread suppression of *braccianti* protests in 1948.[271] Farmer strikes on the mainland proved even deadlier, with police killing dozens of men and women in Ossalengo and other communes in northern Italy.[272]

The post-war period saw thousands of miners in Sardinia go on strike as well, often against the orders of the PCI and CGIL.[273] Walkouts erupted into riots as strikers

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[267] 'Le pacte atlantique tue déjà en Italie…Interview de M. Santi', *La Défense* [Paris], no.221 (29th April-5th May 1949), p.1 col a.

[268] G. Montalbano, 'La repressione del movimento contadino in Sicilia 1944-1950', *Diacronie,* 4/12 (2012) https://doi.org/10.4000/diacronie.2556(2nd January 2020). D. Gavini, 'Sicilia 1944-1948: la mafia e le vittime del movimento sindacale nelle carte della prima Commissione Antimafia', in P. Basile, D. Gavini and D. Paternostro (eds.), *Una strage ignorata. Sindacalisti agricoli uccisi dalla mafia in Sicilia 1944-48* (Rome, 2014) https://www.academia.edu/8239964/Sicilia_1944-1948_la_mafia_e_le_vittime_del_movimento_sindacale_nelle_carte_della_prima_Commissione_Antimafia_in_Fondazione_Altobelli_Fondazione_Turati_a_cura_di_Una_strage_ignorata._Sindacalisti_agricoli_uccisi_dalla_mafia_1944-48 (3rd January 2020).

[269] Ibid.

[270] Ibid.

[271] Ibid.

[272] 'Au tableau de chasse du Moch Italien', *La Défense* [Paris], no.231(8th-14th July 1949), p.2 col a.

[273] 'Legato alla guerra il periodo d'oro dell'occupazione ', https://ricerca.gelocal.it/lanuovasardegna/archivio/lanuovasardegna/2002/10/28/SL403.html (3rd January 2020)

besieged properties owned by mining directors in January 1947, leading to clashes with *carabinieri* and arrests of dozens of anarchist and communist militants.[274] The mass movements launched in the wake of Togliatti's shooting gave authorities another chance to clamp down hard on the CGIL, which saw many members detained and put on trial in August 1948.[275] Managers and employers tied to the SMCS (Sardinian Mining Society) joined the fray and fired two thousand miners during conflicts lasting over seventy days that same year.[276]

A low-key civil war engulfed the entire Italian archipelago by the winter of 1948, with the PCI sustaining the most casualties. An acute persecution complex overcame the upper ranks of a weakened CGIL and trickled down to cadres in the industrial heartlands of Genoa, Milan, and Turin. Workers in Fiat factories grew tired of aloof CGIL unionists more interested in obeying the USSR's foreign policy than resolving grievances.[277]

The expulsion and incarceration of former Italian partisans during the French miners' strike demonstrates both French and Italian governments 'synchronized' their efforts to neutralize potentially rebellious elements. It is therefore highly unlikely the Italian government was at all concerned by the expulsion of veterans or trade unionists aligned with communism. Although this campaign was more discreet in France, the

[274] 'Procédés Staliniens', *Le Libertaire* [Paris], no.125 (15th April 1948), p.3 col a-b. 'En Sardaigne, l'opinion publique soutient les anarchistes', *Le Libertaire* [Paris], no. 176 (8th April 1949), p.3 a-b.

[275] Angelo Abis, '70 anni fa le violenze a Carbonia dopo attentato a Togliatti: 44 persone condannate a 108 anni di carcere',(18th July 2018), http://247.libero.it/rfocus/35857454/1/70-anni-fa-le-violenze-a-carbonia-dopo-attentato-a-togliatti-44-persone-condannate-a-108-anni-di-carcere-angelo-abis/ (2nd January 2020).

[276] F. Sanna, 'La Miniera e il petrolchimico. Una questione storica nella Sardegna e nell'Italia del secondo dopoguerra', *Diacronie,* 1/17 (2014), https://doi.org/10.4000/diacronie.1063 (2nd January 2020).

[277] J. De Graaf, 'No Italian Stalingrads. The CGIL and the working class in the northern industrial heartlands 1945-1955', *Journal of Italian Studies,* 23/5 (2018), pp.636-637. For the PCI's rigid adherence to Soviet foreign policy, see S. Pons, 'Stalin, Togliatti and the Origins of the Cold War in Europe', *Journal of Cold War Studies,* 2/3 (2001), pp.26-27.

collateral damage expatriate communities endured was substantial. Marginalized Italian miners were pressured to stay in line via intimidation and violence.

Altercations between Italian workers, most of whom chose not to get involved in the miners' strike, and CRS troopers were not uncommon in le Nord. Police wielding batons or sticks chased inhabitants of the Guise camp out of barracks and drove them back into mines.[278] CRS units stormed Zimming encampments at three in the morning, and since Italians refused to move out they threw asphyxiating gas through barrack windows. The raid ended with sixteen labourers wounded, while Adimeno Forlani sustained very serious injuries after being kicked repeatedly. The CRS left miners 'dans un état d'horreur' after the raid. In Boulay, police incursions resulted in the expulsion of multiple miners. Only a handful such as miner Dionisio went to prison or spent a day in court.[279]

Yet even after the miners' strike ended Italians were subject to reprisals. The police often used brutal tactics to frighten immigrant labours, as evidenced by the letter below:

> 26 novembre 1948
>
> Mr Boscherini,
>
> Nous sommes un groupe de travailleurs italiens de la fosse Renard à Denain frappé par la police. Dans la nuit du 21 au 23, vers 3 heures du matin, alors que nous étions tous endormis, la police armée de matraques…de pistolets et de mitraillettes, s'est lancée dans une attaque brutale contre Renard.
>
> Voici ce qui s'est passé: le courant a été coupé, puis les policiers sont entrés dans le dortoir et ont commencé à battre sans merci et sans discrimination, comme ils faisaient en Italie avec la SS allemande lors de

[278] 'Soprusi e violenze contra i lavoratori italiani nella Mosella', *L'Operaio Italiano* [Paris], no.20 (11th November 1948), p.2 col b-c.
[279] Ibid.

> leurs raids notoires en 44 et 45. Il suffit de dire qu'il y a chez nous un petit groupe qui a repris le travail et qui a été hué.
>
> Plusieurs travailleurs ont été blessés aux yeux, au front, à la tête et aux bras.
>
> Ils ont pris un ouvrier qui était solidaire avec les grévistes…Encore un autre a été trouvé avec un document prouvant qu'il a passé trois ans en prison en Allemagne. Il a été battu dans son propre lit et blessé. Trois frères qui travaillaient ont été battus à mort.
>
> Tout cela…est contraire aux lois sanctionnées par la Constitution. Et puis on parle du droit à la grève…
>
> Mais que font le gouvernement italien et les diplomates italiens en France? Ils ne se soucient pas de ces choses!
>
> Ce sont des systèmes féodaux: réaction, misère dure et guerre. Mais que dieu nous donne la paix. Pour l'obtenir, cependant, nous voulons la victoire de la classe ouvrière: alors il y aura la paix et le vrai christianisme sur terre.
>
> Nous envoyons cette lettre à nos délégués afin qu'elle soit publiée dans "L'Operaio Italiano" et, si possible, dans les journaux de notre pays.
>
> Les Mineurs de Denain.[280]

Letters from the Pas-de-Calais related similar stories. The CRS reportedly 'occupied' every Italian colony in the *département* for a few days, although they initially did not use violence to force miners back to work.[281] When Italians refused to go underground, some saying they would rather return to Italy than become strike breakers, police decided to starve them by taking away all their food. Local CGT members made meals for Italians, prompting police to finally intervene with force. Multiple arrests and expulsions ensued and large groups of Italians could not congregate in streets.[282]

Yet the CRS were probably not alone in attacking Italian miners. An article featured in *La Voce d'Italia*, a conservative newspaper popular amongst Italians affiliated

[280] 'Violenze inutili e dannose', *L'Operaio Italiano* [Paris], no.23 (2nd December 1948), p.1 col a.
[281] 'Ancora dello sciopero: intimidazioni ed espulsioni', *L'Operaio Italiano* [Paris], no.25 (16th December 1948), p.2 col b-c.
[282] Ibid.

with the CFTC, alleged communist miners threw miniature bombs at Italians, while *La Domenica* blamed immigrant labourers for starting the miners' strike itself.[283] Victorin Duguet , secretary-general of the FNSS, published a short op-ed condemning *La Voce d'Italia* for accusing communist miners of terrorizing Italian immigrants.[284] Although it remains uncertain who was telling the truth, it is clear many in the Italian community did not approve of these strikes nor of the violence they engendered.

The CGT and CGIL both tried to prevent further expulsions. Boscherini sent protest letters to emigration officer Grazioli in the Italian embassy in Paris, describing how French police and courts violated labour accords which permitted immigrants to strike and join unions like their French colleagues. He also condemned terror campaigns the CRS waged in the communes of Escaudain, Aniche and Hames-Boucres.[285] Di Vittorio and Fernando Santi sent telegrams to the Italian Minister for Labour, Amintore Fanfani, to emphasize the vulnerability of immigrant miners forced to act as strike-breakers. They feared xenophobic attacks against Italian residents would only increase if expatriates were hired to undermine strikes in France.[286] The CGIL even promised to confront foreign minister Carlos Sforza in the Italian Chamber of Deputies regarding deportations if government officials did not take action.[287]

In response, the Italian Ministry for Foreign Affairs sent the following reply to the CGIL: 'En se référant à la lettre susmentionnée, le ministère, bien qu'il ne puisse confirmer ce que représente le télégramme du 18/11/48, a le mérite de signaler que

[283] 'Qualche bombetta', *L'Operaio Italiano* [Paris], no.26 (23rd December 1948), p.1.
[284] Ibid.
[285] 'Perche cessino le persecuzioni contro i minatori italiani', *L'Operaio Italiano* [Paris], no.22 (25th November 1948), p.1 col a.
[286] 'La CGIL in difesa dei minatori italiani immigrati in sciopero', *L'Operaio Italiano* [Paris], no. 20 (11th November 1948), p.1.
[287] 'Rammarico e indignazione dei lavoratori italiani per l'espulsione del comp. Gino Boscherini. La CGIL interviene presso il Governo Italiano', *L'Operaio Italiano* [Paris], no. 26 (23rd December 1948), p.1 col a-f.

l'ambassade de Paris a été intéressée car elle fait connaître le nombre total de travailleurs expulsés récemment en France et…mène les enquêtes appropriées sur le cas des travailleurs Salvatore Mondolfo et Dante Boaroli.'[288]

However, the CGT's and CGIL's interventions did very little to stop French authorities from deporting Italian communists. In fact, Gino Boscherini himself was among the last to receive an expulsion order in December 1948.[289] Italian delegations in Metz and Nancy tried in vain to postpone or cancel Boscherini's departure, although consulates did communicate their demands to the ambassador in Paris. The CGT held a farewell ceremony in his honour. Secretary Julien Racamond gave a speech lauding Boscherini for his tireless commitment and defence of Italian immigrants.[290] Fleeing fascist persecution, he originally came to Paris in 1926 for a few years before his first expulsion. Boscherini saw action in 1943 before his capture by Nazi forces.[291] Accompanied by his wife Maria and four month old son Vittorio, Boscherini took the final train headed for his hometown of Florence on the 19th December 1948.[292]

In conclusion, while many Italians refrained from participating in industrial action, especially in the wake of purges afflicting immigrant communities after the November/December strikes, French authorities continued to use strikes as a pretext to root out and dispose of communist militants or trade unionists, despite the often sterling war and professional records of the deported. Cold War paranoia and xenophobia converged, as seen previously in the treatment of Polish miners, resulting in the harassment of Italian labourers abandoned in forbidding barracks far away from home.

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[288] Ibid.
[289] Ibid.
[290] Ibid.
[291] 'L'espulsione del comp. Boscherini è un affronto ai lavoratori italiani', *L'Operaio Italiano* [Paris], no. 25(16th December 1948), p.1 col a-b.
[292] 'Rammarico e indignazione dei lavoratori italiani-23rd December 1948'.

One could even argue these strikes marked a certain rapprochement between French and Italian security services. Yet as we shall see in the final section, post-war strikes were not a source of rapprochement between France and Romania.

In contrast to the preceding sections which found that immigrant Polish, Spanish, and Italian workers or trade unionists bore the brunt of police repression during and after the 1947-48 strikes, the final section will make clear French security forces also interrogated, expelled, and occasionally even tortured members of the Romanian intelligentsia and French citizens in the employ of Romanian organizations. As a spokesperson for the Romanian Legation in Paris remarked so pointedly to journalists, French authorities had no Romanian miners to pick on during strikes in November 1948.[293]

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From 1940 until 1944, the anti-Semitic Antonescu regime was allied to Nazi Germany. Despite the efforts of post-war Foreign Minister Gheorghe Tătărescu to remind the Great Powers of Romania's late contribution to Hitler's downfall, much of the world considered Romania a former satellite of the Third Reich.[294] The US and Britain were not convinced Romania could shed its anti-democratic past given the USSR's increasing dominion over the country's internal and external affairs.[295] Added to these hindrances were persistent prejudices which coloured Western imaginaries of Romania since the late

[293] 'À propos des expulsions d'étrangers', *Le Monde* [Paris], (20th November 1948), https://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1948/11/20/a-propos-des-expulsions-d-etrangers_1910137_1819218.html

[294] P. du Bois, 'La politique étrangère roumaine de 1944 à 1947', *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine,* 29/3 (1982), pp.411-425.

[295] Ibid, pp.426-428.

nineteenth century.[296] They still perceived it as an underdeveloped Balkan region and a near-feudal state inhabited with corrupt and untrustworthy peoples.[297] These preconceptions, combined with Romania's transformation into a Stalinist People's Republic, and the eventual host of the Cominform, lent credence to the narrative that Romanian communists conspired to foment rebellious French strikes in 1948.

In late July 1948, gendarmes raided a school the Romanian legation partly owned in Fontenay-aux-Roses.[298] Police detained and tortured Lucien Labouret, a concierge at the school. According to medical reports, he sustained multiple contusions and a cracked rib after his ordeal which lasted until two o'clock the following morning.[299] They believed Labouret possessed letters containing information regarding the transfer of money from Cominform spies to contacts hiding in Romanian expatriate communities. A backlash against the Interior Ministry followed when *L'Humanité* printed an article displaying Labouret's swollen face two days later.[300] The ARAC (Association Républicaine des Anciens Combattants) addressed a message to Minister Jules Moch deploring the French government's gestapo-like tactics to torture a Spanish Civil War veteran.[301] This resulted in the dismissal of men responsible for beating Labouret, but only temporarily.[302]

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[296] M. N. Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (New York, 2009), pp.118-130.

[297] Ibid, p.130. For Romania's unfavourable image in other European nations in the early twentieth century, see O. Lăculiceanu, 'Danish Perceptions on Interwar Romania', *Revista Română pentru Studii Baltice şi Nordice,* no.1(2009), pp.101-111. S. Miloiu, 'Mindsets and Perceptions across Europe: Karl Gustaf Idman's portrayal of Romanian Corruption', *Annales d'université "Valahia" Târgovişte,* 11/2 (2009), pp.97-100.

[298] 'Provocation contre la République Populaire Roumaine. Jules Moch emploie les méthodes nazies d'interrogatoire', *L'Humanité* [Paris], no.1215 (3rd August 1948), p.3 col a.

[299] Ibid.

[300] Ibid.

[301] 'Protestation de l'amicale des anciens volontaires de l'Espagne républicaine contre les sévices infligés à Lucien Labouret', *L'Humanité* [Paris], no.1217 (5th August 1948), p.3 col a-b.

[302] 'La gestapo de J. Moch arrête des démocrates roumains et brutalise un résistant', *La Défense* [Paris], no.187 (6th August 1948), p.2 col a.

The interrogation of Romanian citizens ensued. French authorities accused Mr Herkovits, a doctor based in *L'Institut du radium* in Paris, and one of the founders of the *Front National Roumain*, of possessing secret documents which could endanger state security. Police questioned Mr Alexandrescu, a close associate of the Romanian Legation.[303] They also rounded up seven more Romanian residents such as Doctor Banu and the leader of the Franco-Romanian student group *Lamartine*.[304] Seven guards escorted all nine suspects to Marseille, and despite the accused professing their innocence to prefect Jean Bayol, police forced them onto a ship named Transylvania.[305] Mihail Dragomirescu, chargé d'affaires at the Romanian legation complained to diplomat Maurice Couve de Murville about the mistreatment of Romanians at the hands of French police, but nothing changed.[306]

A week later, Romanian journalist Joseph Soru went missing. A World War I veteran and thirty-year resident in France, Soru contributed to the *Cahiers France-Roumanie* and *La Roumanie Libre*.[307] According to reports in *La Défense*, police escorted him to Strasbourg and later Bregenz in the Austrian occupation zone. He only had time to write a farewell note to his wife before his expulsion to the East.[308] The far-left press claimed remnants of the fascist Iron-Guard cooperated with French intelligence to identify and eliminate pro-communist Romanians in France.[309] Unlike the Wdowiak affair, these expulsions and scandals did not receive much attention, yet they announced

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[303] 'Neuf Roumains expulsés ont été conduits à Marseille et embarqués', *Le Monde* [Paris], 6th August 1948, https://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1948/08/06/neuf-roumains-expulses-ont-ete-conduits-a-marseille-et-embarques_1905475_1819218.html (3rd January 2020).
[304] 'Moch fait expulser de France neuf personnalités scientifiques et quatre étudiants Roumains', *L'Humanité* [Paris], no.1218 (6th August 1948), p.3 col a.
[305] 'Neuf Roumains expulsés-6th August 1948'.
[306] 'Bucarest proteste contre les brutalités de la police française envers des citoyens roumains', *L'Humanité* [Paris], no.1219 (7th August 1948), p.3 col a.
[307] 'Jules Moch s'acharne sur les démocrates roumains', *La Défense* [Paris], no.188(20th August 1948), p.2 col b.
[308] 'Qu'avez-vous fait de Joseph Soru?', *La Défense* [Paris], no. 189 (3rd September 1948), p.3 col b-c.
[309] Ibid.

the scapegoating of persons and diplomatic bodies related to Romania during the miners' strike four months later.

In a lengthy speech to the National Assembly on the 16th November, Interior Minister Jules Moch declared money funnelled illegally into France from Romania helped the PCF stage strikes. He claimed the Cominform, which was based in Romania after June 1948, trained spies for deployment to France.[310] According to classified documents the minister reviewed, the miners' strike had been planned for months. He stated Swiss police already caught the man responsible for transferring millions to Belgian and French communists two months before the strike began.[311] Moch did not name this mysterious man, yet judging from Swiss press releases he was likely referring to Solvan Vitianu.[312] An economic attaché in the Romanian Legation based in Bern, Swiss authorities arrested him in July 1948 and later charged him for extorting Romanian nationals, and espionage, in 1949.[313] Yet Moch provided hardly any compelling evidence proving Vitianu was involved in funding 'agitation' in France.[314] Swiss dossiers make no mention of Vitianu facilitating the transfer of money to Belgian or French communists to foment unrest.[315]Besides, French miners did not receive financial aid exclusively from

[310] *JO, Débats*, 16 November 1948, p.7005.
[311] Ibid.
[312] 'L'accusation contre Solvan Vitianu comprend des manoeuvres interdites pour un état étranger, service de renseignements politiques et économiques, extorsion et chantage, corruption et fausses accusations…' in 'Le procès Vitianu', *Nouvelliste Valaisan* [Vallé du Rhône], no. 137 (14th June 1949), p.5 col a. See C. Chinezu, 'Les relations entre la Roumanie et la Suisse 1938-1948: Entre *Realpolitik* et perceptions idéologiques' (PhD thesis, University of Fribourg, 2006), p.546.
[313] 'Dans le cas Ramniceanu, Vitianu aurait touché un montant de 145,000fr comme 'règlement de compte' avec le parti communiste après que Ramniceanu, dans les négociations à Bucarest eut été forcé de céder ses avoirs en Suisse…' in 'Vitianu et sa femme se refusent à parler', *Feuille d'Avis de Neuchâtel* (Neuchâtel), no.135 (19th June 1949), p.1 col c. See H. E. Lauterpacht, *Annual Digest and Reports of Public International Law Cases* (London, 1955), pp.281-285.
[314] *JO, Débats,* p.7005.
[315] 'Notice concernant l'espionnage et l'activité politique des attachés militaires et, en général, des membres des légations des pays satellites', 14th June 1948, Diplomatic Documents of Switzerland 1848-1975, https://dodis.ch/5693 (4th January 2020).

the Communist bloc. Dozens of telegrams from Belgium, the Netherlands, Italy, Switzerland, England, the United States, and Canada promised money as well.[316]

The Romanian Cominform plot was in fact the continuation of an anti-communist narrative French socialist and right-wing politicians propagated to sell a distorted image of post-war France to undiscerning US intelligence services.[317] As Susan Perlman argues, the dismissal of communist ministers both in France and Italy in 1947 sparked an avalanche of rumours, such as hidden arms caches.[318] The November/December strikes triggered many reports which shouted unfounded rumours that communist traitors unearthed weapons leftover from the war.[319] The PCF never ordered its members to pick up arms, yet such news travelled across the Atlantic to paranoid diplomats in the US. Fears of a possible civil war destroying France engulfed Washington, fears which Minister Jules Moch encouraged. To gain legitimacy in American eyes he intended to discredit the PCF. This strategy succeeded and many regarded workers' demands as fronts for communist subversion during the miners' strike a year later.[320] Jules Moch and other socialist ministers exaggerated the gravity of the communist threat in France, and by extension Europe, to US intelligence services.[321]

Yet despite the PCF's weakened state, Jules Moch believed communists would stop at nothing until they gained power. Following the November/December strikes, US embassies dreaded the PCF would soon plot a coup.[322] The Cominform plot in 1948 was an elaborate fabrication designed to appeal to two different audiences. It recycled the

316 Vivens, 'Conflit Social…', pp.80-82.
317 S. M. Perlman, 'US Intelligence and communist plots in postwar France', *Intelligence and National Security,* 33/3 (2018), pp.385-386.
318 Ibid, pp.379-382.
319 Ibid, p.383.
320 Ibid, p. 386.
321 Ibid, p.385- 386.
322 Ibid, p.383-385.

Cold War narrative that spoke to Americans, while implicitly adding anti-Romanian sentiments to convince French audiences.

Many observers in the US believed in the Cominform plot that Moch described in his speeches. *The New-York Times* generally agreed that industrial action in le Nord and Pas-de-Calais was an act of sabotage aiming to scupper the Marshall Plan.[323] Paul G. Hoffman, head of the Economic Cooperation Administration also believed Moscow was behind the miners' strike and pressed for urgent action to prevent the slow-down of petrol and merchandise imports to France.[324] AFL President William Green said: 'Nous ne pouvons et ne voulons accorder ni notre sympathie, ni notre soutien au mouvement ouvrier communiste en France…'[325] Finally, American ambassador Jefferson Caffery deplored the Soviet Union and its satellites sent money to French strikers and trade unions.[326] Ironically, Caffery and AFL envoy Irving Brown collaborated to finance the FO trade union since the November/December strikes.[327] UMW leader John L. Lewis was exceptional in that he urged Green to persuade President Truman to condemn the French government's excessive use of force to break the strike.[328]

The Romanian Cominform plot made headlines in France and the United States, enhancing fears that Romanians or Russians pulled the strings in the miners' strike, and might attempt to foment more disruptive strikes again.[329] The hard-line Cold War

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[323] 'Où la propagande communiste fait du Plan Marshall le banquier des grèves françaises!', *La Croix* [Paris], no.19971 (2nd November 1948), p.2 col a-b.
[324] Ibid.
[325] Ibid.
[326] I. M. Wall, *The United States and the Making of Postwar France, 1945-1954* (Cambridge, 1991), p.107.
[327] Ibid, p.108.
[328] 'Où la propagande communiste- 2nd November 1948'
[329] 'Les communistes écoutent en silence M. Jules Moch', *Combat* [Paris], no.1358 (17th November 1948), p.3 col a-c. 'C'est l'or étranger qui finance l'agitation en France. M. Jules Moch fait devant l'Assemblée la preuve de la trahison communiste', *L'Aurore* [Paris], no.1299 (17th November 1948), pp.1-4 col a-c.

narrative deployed so effectively in 1947 still worked, but Moch's xenophobic rhetoric proved disastrous for Franco-Romanian relations. Minuscule organisations, committees, and associations sympathetic to Romania's new popular democracy in France now appeared complicit in Moch's Cominform plot.

During the miners' strike, the Legation for the Popular Republic of Romania sent a strongly worded message to the French Ministry for Foreign affairs, protesting the arrest of Miss Levanson who worked as a secretary in the Legation. The message also condemned the confiscation of archives belonging to *L'Association des Roumains amis de la France,* and the banning of the monthly *La Roumanie Libre*.[330] *Ce Soir* reported police raided the home of Janine Tillard.[331] Articles in *L'Humanité* claimed DST officers questioned Ms Tillard and threatened to torture her if she did not admit to receiving 'money from the Cominform.' It is unknown whether Tillard accepted bribes from Romanian communists, although her release from jail twenty-four hours after her arrest implied she was innocent.[332]

Yet Tillard was not alone. Police also detained André and Monique Patouillard, members of *L'Association Franco-Roumaine*. Agents arrested the couple after they came back from a holiday in Romania, suspecting them of ferrying money from 'les fonds du Cominform' to France. They too were soon released without charge.[333] The Cominform

[330] 'Protestation de la Légation de Roumanie à Paris contre les mesures policières de Moch', *L'Humanité* [Paris], no.1306 (17th November 1948), p.3 col a-b.
[331] 'Mesures policières arbitraires contre des résistants et des amis de la France', *Ce Soir* [Paris], no.2202 (17th November 1948), p.3 col a.
[332] 'Protestation de la Légation de Roumanie-17th November 1948'.
[333] 'Un détraqué malfaisant est-il tabou?', *La Défense* [Paris], no.198 (19th November 1948), p.1 col a-c.

plot succeeded only in disbanding marginal pro-communist bodies and alienating Romanian diplomats.[334]

The Romanian Grand National Assembly reacted unsparingly to this unjustified harassment. On the 19th November 1948, deputies passed a law officially severing cultural ties with France, resulting in the eventual closure of l'Institut français de Bucarest. Telegrams immediately notified French diplomats in Romania and the Quai d'Orsay in Paris about the law just passed.[335] At a small conference Mihail Dragomirescu sounded the death-knell of Franco-Romanian cultural relations for the next decade.[336] He announced the miners' strike revealed France's true colours. He denied Minister Moch's accusations that Romania conspired to fund civil war via industrial action in French mining pits. He listed the French police's brutal crackdowns against Romanian organizations. Writing for *Le Monde*, Jean Schwoebel admitted that if Minister Moch had reasons to authorize some expulsions, the French security forces were guilty of many mistakes and violations. The ambassador finally disavowed the Franco-Romanian cultural convention signed in 1939, which authorized the opening of French language institutes, schools, and clerical missions in Romania.[337]

It is therefore not surprising that 1949 marked the retreat of French intellectual and political clout in Romania, with Paris portrayed as a decadent, capitalist city. Any

[334] 'La légation de Roumanie proteste contre les "vexations" infligées à ses ressortissants', *Combat* [Paris], no.1359 (18th November 1948), p.3 col a-b.
[335] *Documents Diplomatiques Français: 1966 Tome 1(1er Janvier-31 Mai),* (Bruxelles, 2006), pp.634-635.
[336] J. Schwoebel, 'Vers la suppression totale de l'influence française en Roumanie', *Le Monde* [Paris], 25th November 1948, https://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1948/11/25/vers-la-suppression-totale-de-l-influence-francaise-en-roumanie_1910548_1819218.html (3rd January 2020).
[337] Ibid.

trace of France's cultural or scientific influence in Bucarest, Prague, Sophia, and Budapest consequently declined.[338]

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In conclusion, this chapter demonstrates the 1947-48 strikes served as an excuse for French security forces to expel and intimidate communist-sympathizing elements in immigrant communities, although many Polish or Italian workers refrained from participating for multiple reasons, such as out of fear of judicial retribution or for simply not adhering to the PCF or CGT. Conversely, Spanish workers, particularly those living in southern regions, were perhaps more inclined to support French colleagues during strikes due to their integration into French society or out of a sense of loyalty and gratitude to the CGT.

Moreover, the torture and violence against immigrant labourers are proof that police, DST, and CRS members suffered from an 'impossibility of demobilization'. Their brutal methods succeeded in deterring Poles, Italians, or Spaniards from taking part in strikes, but such tactics had a detrimental impact on France's relations with Poland and Romania.

The scapegoating of Romanian organizations or the expulsion of Polish workers before and after the miners' strike, were not the only factors which contributed to France's diplomatic reversals. The sovietisation of Eastern Europe was a threatening reality. For instance, Serban Pavelescu noted that French embassies in Bucarest recorded the widespread suppression of free speech, banning of Catholic and Orthodox churches,

[338] A. Guénard, 'De la reconstruction à l'éviction. Entre 1944 et 1949, une politique culturelle française en Europe centrale et orientale confrontée à l'organisation du bloc communiste', *Matériaux pour l'histoire de notre temps,* no.36 (1994), pp.24-26.

and detention of individuals labelled enemies of the communist regime throughout 1948.[339]

Yet French security personnel committed unnecessary acts of violence against immigrants which hastened the rejection of French culture in Eastern Europe. The closure of French-language schools in Romania and Bulgaria less than a few days after the beating and interrogation of employees in Fontenay-aux-Roses is evidence of this.[340] Purges unleashed during and after the 1947-48 strikes weakened France's standing in Eastern Europe, a topic which needs to be revisited.

Ultimately, France, while free from the massive and traumatic population transfers convulsing Central and Eastern Europe at the time, was not exempt from the climate of exclusion afflicting the entire continent.[341] The consolidation of decimated nations after World War II came at the expense of numerous minorities, refugees, or immigrants. In the Soviet Union, the 'Great Patriotic War' replenished a dormant Russian nationalism.[342] Stalin found a new set of 'traitors', 'collaborators,' or 'undesirables' in the Crimean Tatars, Muslim Ingush or Chechens and Mongol Kalmyks, resulting in the exile and deaths of thousands.[343] The myth of 'proletarian internationalism' shared amongst emerging communist regimes, and a doctrine which

[339] S. Pavelescu, 'Entre suspicion et confidence: les relations franco-roumaines dans les deux premières décennies de la guerre froide', *Revue historique des armées*, no.244 (2006), pp.102-104.
[340] 'Roumanie, Tchécoslovaquie et Bulgarie décident la fermeture des écoles étrangères', *L'Humanité* [Paris] no.1217 (5th August 1948), p.3 col a.
[341] S. Prauser and A. Rees (eds), 'The Expulsion of the 'German' Communities from Eastern Europe at the End of the Second World War*',* (European University Institute, Florence, Working paper HEC No. 2004/1), pp.4-8. P. Ther, 'A Century of Forced Migration: The Origins and Consequences of "Ethnic Cleansing"', in P. Ther and A. Siljak (eds), *Redrawing Nations: Ethnic Cleansing in East Central Europe 1944-48* (Lanham, 2001), pp.47-62.
[342] V. Dobrenko, 'Conspiracy of Peace: The Cold War, the International Peace Movement, and the Soviet Peace Campaign, 1946-1956' (PhD thesis, London School of Economics, 2016), pp.44-46.
[343] B. G. Williams, *The Crimean Tartars: From Soviet Genocide to Putin's Conquest* (New York, 2015), pp.89-114.

will be discussed further in the final chapter, masked lingering mistrust and inter-ethnic tensions.[344]

Anti-communist sentiments and xenophobia motivated the mistreatment and eviction of immigrant workers in France. It is unfortunate their sacrifices and wartime records did not matter.

[344] S. Anderson, *A Cold War in the Soviet Bloc:Polish- East German Relations 1945-1962* (New-York, 2001), pp.1909-1921. R. Knight, 'Ethnicity and Identity in the Cold War: The Carinthian Border Dispute 1945-1949', *The International History Review,* 22/2 (2000), pp.275-300.

7. Aftermaths

How were French strikes exploited and interpreted abroad? It is important to emphasize that the impossibility of demobilization rife in intelligence services, police, and colonial administrations was not limited to France or its empire. By 1947, the United States prepared to wage war, reliant on propaganda instead of arms against the Soviet menace which replaced the Japanese aggressor or Nazi brownshirt.[1] In the words of W.H Auden and Arthur Schlesinger Jr, these emerging battle lines bred an 'age of anxiety.'[2] The enemy now lurked in the shadows, waiting to destroy democracy not by conventional warfare but via sabotage or manipulation. As early as November 1947, both American and British press releases began to exaggerate the role of communists during strikes in Allied-occupied Germany.[3] Frequent and disruptive industrial action now formed part of this landscape of fear and paranoia.[4]

The British Empire in particular was unsettled by multiple waves of labour unrest throughout its possessions in the immediate post-war period. In Cyprus, thousands of construction workers and miners rallied by left-wing parties demanded free medical care and a minimum wage.[5] These movements lasted for over two-hundred and sixty days in 1948, despite the often brutal repression by colonial police.[6] The arrest of trade union

[1] R. MacDougall, 'Red, Brown and Yellow Perils: Images of the American Enemy in the 1940s and 1950s', *Journal of Popular Culture,* 32/4 (1999), pp.59-75.
[2] K. A. Cuordileone, ' "Politics in an Age of Anxiety". Culture and the Crisis in American Masculinity, 1949-1960', *The Journal of American History,* 87/2 (2000), pp.516-539.
[3] A. Defty, 'British anti-communist propaganda and cooperation with the United States, 1945-1951' (PhD thesis, University of Salford, 2002), p.63.
[4] Some employers labelled the successful Hawaiian sugar strike of 1947 as a communist plot. See T. M. Holmes, *The Specter of Communism in Hawaii* (Honolulu, 1994), p.37. It is also highly likely that US intelligence kept a close eye on labour unrest unfolding in its sphere of influence in Latin America. See R.K. Longley, 'Resistance and Accommodation: Costa Rica and the United States during the rise of José Figueres, 1942-1957' (PhD thesis, University of Kentucky, 1993), pp.96-97. J. Pavilack, *Mining for the Nation. The Politics of Chile's Coal Communities from the Popular Front to the Cold War* (Pennsylvania, 2011), pp.274-280.
[5] G. Neocleous, *Social Insurance and Older People in Cyprus 1878-2004* (Cham, 2018), p.113.
[6] G. Ioannou, 'The connection between trade unions and political parties in Cyprus' in G. Charalambous

leaders on strike in Sudan triggered massive demonstrations and riots in Khartoum and Atbara, while work stoppages in oil fields or docklands of the Caribbean, such as in Trinidad and Tobago, incurred similar reactions from security forces.[7] Industrial action in South Africa prompted governments and intelligence services in Australia and other Dominion states to monitor or even purge their own trade unions of communist elements deemed likely to cause trouble in future.[8] Gulf sheikhdoms 'protected' by British governors refused to allow workers to form trade unions.[9] Even in a newly independent India, the Chief Minister of West Bengal passed repressive legislation inherited from the British Raj to quell industrial and rural unrest in Calcutta.[10] The one common denominator amidst all these conflicts, aside the fact authorities frequently used force to restore order, was the invocation of the communist threat either by employers or administrations to demonize and subdue industrial action. There is no doubt that fears of turbulent strikes helped foster this Cold War climate of anxiety afflicting the West.

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and C. Christophorou (eds), *Party-Society Relations in the Republic of Cyprus. Political and Societal Strategies* (New-York, 2016), p.112. See A. Alecou, *Communism and Nationalism in Postwar Cyprus, 1945-1955: Politics and Ideologies under British Rule* (New York, 2016), pp.106-113.

[7] E. Vezzadini, 'An Uphill Job Demanding limitless Patience'. The Establishment of Trade Unions and the Conflicts of Development in Sudan, 1946-1952', *International Developement Policy/ Revue Internationale de politique de développement,* no.8 (2017), pp.81-108. For unrest in the post-war Caribbean, see S.B. MacDonald, *Trinidad and Tobago: Democracy and Development in the Caribbean* (New York, 1986), pp.76-78. S.W. Campbell, '"En' less pressure":The Struggles of Caribbean working-class in their International Context, Trinidad 1919-1956' (PhD thesis, Queens' University, 1995), pp.289-300. C. A. Williams, 'Labor Organization, Political Leadership, and Gender Exclusion in Antigua and Barbuda, 1917-1970' (PhD thesis, City University of New-York, 2007), pp.233-237. J.D. Esposito, 'Institutional Decolonization: The Internationalization of the Conflict over Organized Labor in British Guiana 1946-1961' (PhD thesis, West Viginia University, 2015), pp.171-193.

[8] E. Smith, 'Policing Communism Across the "White Man's World". Anti-Communist Co-operation between Australia, South Africa and Britain in the Early Cold War', *Britain and the World,* vol.2 (2017), pp.171-193.

[9] H. Saleh, 'Labor, nationalism and imperialism in eastern Arabia: Britain, the Shaikhs and the Gulf oil workers in Bahrain, Kuwait and Qatar 1932-1956' (PhD thesis, University of Michigan, 1991), pp.149-156.

[10] S. Bandyopadhyay, 'The Story of an Aborted Revolution: Communist Insurgency in Post-independence West Bengal, 1948-1950', *Journal of South Asian Development,* 3/1(2008), pp.9-16. S. Das, 'The Nehru Years in Indian Politics: From a Historical Hindsight', *Edinburgh Papers in South Asian Studies,* no. 16(2001), pp.7-9.

However, what still remains understudied is how strikes in France contributed to hardening these anxieties of sabotage or revolt in nations beyond the French Empire. 'Disturbances' in France stood as templates of what should not be allowed to happen. They were cited as reasons why often unnecessary legislation were imposed to break 'red' infected walk-outs or other sources of disorder. Therefore, the first section of this chapter argues coverage of the French miners' strike in the Quebecois press was inadvertently responsible for pushing politicians and company directors to over-react to outbreaks of unrest in the Asbestos mines months later. Secondly, it maintains the Netherlands, a country relatively free of strikes and possessing a political class less fearful of communism than the Americans or British, still deployed the example of the French miners' strike in its war against communist trade union leaders.

In addition, the Cominform in June 1947 concretised the USSR's 'enemy-making' process through media campaigns discrediting capitalist nations.[11] The US and by extension its allies in the West were invariably associated with crisis, corruption, or evil doing.[12]

This chapter will explain that French strikes, and especially the violent clashes between security forces and miners in Oct/Nov 1948, were essential to communist parties in Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia in creating 'enemies' during the late forties. The mistreatment, incarceration, torture, or deportation of workers in France allowed Soviet satellite states to portray themselves at home, in France, and beyond as the 'true' representatives of the working-class. The Eastern bloc weaponized French strikes, not to

[11] R. Magnúsdóttir, *Enemy Number One: The United States of America in Soviet Ideology and Propaganda 1945-1959* (New-York, 2019), pp.17-37.
[12] A. Fătu-Tutoveanu, ' "America is Sad": Images of Crisis and Media Construction of an American Anti-utopia in Early Cold War Communist Propaganda', *Caietele Echinox,* 25 (2013), pp.237-251.

destabilize enemies behind the Iron Curtain but to mobilize support for the communist cause.

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Coverage of the French miners' strike flooded the Quebecois press throughout October/November 1948. Pierre de Grandpré, French correspondent for *Le Devoir*, wrote searing articles depicting France caught in a civil war akin to the religious conflicts of the sixteenth century.[13] France had become once again the unwilling testing ground for two warring ideologies. CGT delegates seemed to obey the tenets of the Zhdanov doctrine, which supposedly encouraged communist-controlled trade unions in the West to foment disorder, instead of prioritizing the economic well-being of the nation.[14]

De Grandpré also lamented the disintegration of French trade unionism and argued the CGT had become a tool of 'repressive liberty'. Conversely, he admired FO and French Christian trade unionists whose officials wrote a strongly worded telegram to John Lewis, criticizing him for legitimizing political strikes.[15] He also lambasted the toxic 'impregnation' of French trade unions and governmental bodies by agents of the Cominform, while praising French officials for acting decisively.[16] He believed security personnel should protect and takeover the mines, no matter the cost to miners and their

[13] 'Le Kominform et les grèves françaises', *Le Devoir* [Montréal], no.252 (27th October 1948), p.2 col a-b.
[14] Ibid. 'Une stratégie: les grèves tournantes. Quand un parti politique fait son miel des malaises sociaux', Le *Devoir* [Montréal], no.246 (20th October 1948), p.2 col a-b.
[15] 'Un coûteux épisode de la guerre froide, le conflit des houillères-Droits et devoirs des citoyens-Le temps de l'énergie', *Le Devoir* [Montréal], no.260 (6th November 1948), pp.1-2 col b-c.
[16] 'La rentrée parlementaire et le grave débat sur l'action du parti communiste en France', *Le Devoir* [Montréal], no.279 (29th November 1948), p.2 col b. For a history of communism and its equation with sexual deviancy or disease, see P. Corriveau, *Judging Homosexuals. A History of Gay Persecution in Quebec and France,* tr. K. Roth (Vancouver, 2011), pp.90-93. G. Kinsman and P. Gentile, *The Canadian War on Queers. National Security as Sexual Regulation* (Vancouver, 2010), pp.8-10.

families. De Grandpré promised his readers the miners' strike was a seminal episode of the Cold War, which contained many lessons worth studying.[17] Of course, he did not suspect the Quebec administration, led by the anti-union and anti-communist Premier Maurice Duplessis, was also taking notes. It is ironic that *Le Devoir*, a newspaper renowned for its support for Christian trade unions against the Johns-Manville company, was partly responsible for propagating the distortions which prompted Quebecois authorities to over-react to their own strikes.

In *Action Catholique*, commentators claimed communists were distributing machine-guns and ammunition to embattled miners in Saint-Etienne.[18] Photographs of miners fleeing CRS troopers near the Dolomieuz pit in Saint-Etienne illustrated front pages of *La Presse*. Reports described the airborne landing of four hundred reserve troops sent to keep coal pits free from strikers. The Quebecois press accused communist unionists of trying to spread strikes to the docklands of Dunkirk, which would cause untold disruption to shipping schedules.[19] *Le Canada* emphasized how the strike wrought bloodshed and declared the French public held communists responsible for the disturbances.[20] *La Tribune* was quick to portray Communist Deputy Auguste Lecoeur as a proud servant of Moscow, infiltrating strikes to deprive the West of vital infantry supplies needed to face Russia.[21] Even regional newspapers such as *L'Union des Cantons de l'Est* believed the miners' strike announced the ruin of France and the downfall of European reconstruction.[22] Dailies and weeklies across the political spectrum were

[17] 'Un coûteux épisode de la guerre froide…- 6th November 1948'.
[18] 'La France appelle les réservistes: grévistes dirigés par les communistes', *Action Catholique* [Quebec], no.12843 (23rd October 1948), p.1 col a.
[19] 'Centrale prise d'assaut en France', *La Presse* [Montréal], no.6 (21st October 1948), p.1 col a.
[20] 'Série de bagarres en France, morts et blessés', *Le Canada* [Montréal], no.157 (9th October 1948), p.1 col a.
[21] 'Grévistes français expulsés par l'armée', *La Tribune* [Sherbrooke], no.190 (8th October 1948), p.1 col a.
[22] 'Grèves communistes en France', *L'Union des Cantons de l'Est* [Arthabaska], no.46 (28th October 1948), p.1 col c.

unanimous in their condemnation of the PCF, while only mentioning French miners' demands in passing. Editors loyal to the Liberal Party at a federal level or reporters adhering to the nationalist and conservative Union Nationale in Quebec, warned Canadians already petrified by communism that strikes targeted the economic prosperity and social stability of the West.

By late 1948, Canada was in the grip of a low-key yet pernicious red scare. The Gouzenko Affair involved a Russian typist who defected to the West with classified documents proving the existence of Soviet spy rings in Ottawa. Ensuing investigations warned Canadians to remain vigilant since communist agents could infiltrate any organization.[23] Pamphlets advised citizens to look out for scheming revolutionaries. The trial of communist trade unionist Fred Rose was further proof Canada was a target for subversion.[24] Law enforcement agencies tightened security and introduced rigorous background checks of foreign nationals and public employees.[25] Canadian politicians avoided implementing anti-union legislation in the style of Taft-Hartley, although ministers encouraged right-wing trade unionists to purge communist members from the CCL (Canadian Congress of Labour).[26] During the shipping seasons, bosses and shipowners even refused to deal with the communist-controlled CSU (Canadian Shipman Union).[27] Frustrated employers hired American criminals such as Hal Banks to frighten

[23] S. Enoch, 'The Engineering of an Enemy.The Catholic Church, United Steel Workers, Canadian Labour Congress, and International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers Local 598' (MA Thesis, McMaster University), pp.1-5.
[24] D.W. Muldoon, 'Capitalism Unchallenged. A Sketch of Canadian Communism 1939-1949' (MA thesis, Simon Fraser University 1977) pp. 116-126.
[25] R. Whitaker and G. Marcuse, *Cold War Canada. The Making of a National Insecurity State 1945-1957* (Toronto, 1994), pp.207-210.
[26] Ibid, pp.310-312.
[27] Ibid, pp.322-326.

workers.[28] Canadians looked upon industrial action with suspicion, especially in light of developments in France.

Norman A. Hasler, President of the Canadian Managers'Association, illustrated this fear in a speech he gave to company directors in June 1949. Hasler believed trade union leaders' main objective was to cleave communities in half, foment unrest within industries, and provoke the government to intervene with force.[29] He was convinced ceding ground to unions marked the first step towards the establishment of a tyrannical communist regime akin to those flourishing in Eastern Europe.[30] Hasler regarded strikes as weapons wielded to paralyse industry, throw company managers into disrepute, and usurp the balance of power in the workplace.[31] While adhering in theory to the need for good relations with labour, Hasler was adamant social security provisions would not be granted no matter what course of action unions took.[32]

Developments in France unsettled businessmen and other members of Montréal's elite. On the 28th October 1948, French Ambassador Francisque Gay discussed the challenges of European reconstruction at a banquet in Trois-Rivières.[33] Guests included Édouard Simard, chairman of Simard Incorporated, Dominion Foils (Canada) Limited and Vice-President of Marine Industries and industrialist Pierre-Horace Boivin.[34] The French Ambassador was introduced by businessman and Mayor Alfred Rousseau who expressed concern about the miners' strike unfolding in France. While assuring his

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[28] Ibid, pp.321-323.
[29] 'Le syndicalisme est le proche parent du communisme', *Le Devoir* [Quebec], no.131 (7th June 1949), p.3 col a-b.
[30] 'Syndicalisme n'est pas communisme', *L'Action Catholique* [Quebec], no. 13032 (9th June 1949), p.1 col a.
[31] 'Le syndicalisme est le proche parent du communisme- 7th June'.
[32] Ibid.
[33] 'La reconstruction en France et aux Trois-Rivières', *Le Devoir* [Montréal], no.254 (29th October 1948), p.2 col a-b.
[34] Ibid.

audience that strikes began with legitimate demands for higher wages, Gay repeated Moch's conspiracy theory: 'Il y a la grève des mineurs où la main étrangère- celle de la Russie…est manifeste…'[35]

This 'grande inquiétude' travelled to Ottawa. George Drew, the Progressive Conservative leader of the opposition in the House of Commons, spoke on the 21st February 1949 after the beginning of the Asbestos miners' strike in Quebec.[36] The four-month long labour dispute, which began as a struggle for higher wages, a social security fund, and the reduction of poisonous dust inside the mines, changed into a social conflict between the conservative provincial government allied with the Johns-Manville company on the one hand, and the CTCC (Confédération des Travailleurs Catholiques du Canada) supported by the Church and public on the other. Albeit unsuccessful the strike posed a challenge to traditional centres of authority in Quebecois society.[37]

Drew was troubled by the suppression of religious freedoms in Eastern Europe, citing the trials of Cardinal Mindszenty in Hungary and twelve Protestant evangelicals in Bulgaria, as proof of the unspeakable tyrannies of communist rule.[38] Veering away from christian oppression, Drew focused instead on the communist threat brewing in Canada. He condemned intellectuals defending the legitimacy of the Communist party.[39] He was determined to expose the LPP (Labour Progressive Party) as a subversive front designed by the Kremlin to dismantle Canadian liberties. Drew cited material Ottawa communist party leader Tim Buck had written before his trial in 1932: ' "The political line of our

[35] Ibid.
[36] Canadian Parliament, House of Commons Debates, 20th Parliament, 5th Session, Vol. 1, 21st February 1949, p.724.
[37] For the Asbestos strike's role in triggering Quebec's 'Quiet Revolution', see I. Abella, *On Strike. Six Key Labour Struggles in Canada 1919-1949* (Toronto, 1974), pp.163-190.
[38] Canadian Parliament, House of Commons debates, p.724.
[39]Ibid, p.726.

party is to utilize this tendency of radicalization by adopting a policy of developing demands and initiating movements in different industries… and developing strike movements.'"[40]

Solon Earl Low, representative of Peace River in Alberta and leader of the anti-Semitic Social Credit Party, seconded Drew's aversion to strikes. While discussing the United Nations Security Council's inability to stop the red menace, Low urged fellow MPs and Canadian citizens to look carefully at what was happening in India and Europe.[41] He begged Canadians to heed Prime Minister Nehru who claimed Indian communists were 'using strikes to create chaos…'. He painted an apocalyptic vision of post-war France where PCF leader Maurice Thorez favoured a Soviet invasion.[42] Riotous strikes in Canada would surely follow if drastic action did not take place immediately.

Drew argued it was necessary to re-instate Section 98 of the criminal code. Robert Borden's conservative cabinet passed Section 98 in the wake of the bloody Winnipeg general strike in 1919, which saw military personnel injure or kill dozens of workers and labour leaders.[43] It stipulated that associations or individuals advocating 'any governmental, industrial or economic change within Canada by use of force…or defending the use of force, violence, terrorism, or physical injury to person or property…', could face up to twenty years in jail.[44] Responsible for imprisoning Tim Buck and his comrades in Kensington penitentiary during the early thirties, this law had

[40]Ibid, p.726.
[41] Canadian Parliament, House of Commons Debates, 20th Parliament, 5th Session, Vol. 3, 28th March 1949, p.2077.
[42] Ibid, p.2077.
[43] D.G. Molinaro, *An Exceptional Law: Section 98 and the Emergency State 1919-1936* (Toronto, 2017), pp.2-23.
[44] T. Berger, *Fragile Freedoms. Human Rights and dissent in Canada* (Toronto, 1981), pp.132-133.

been applied to detain trade unionists and harass immigrant Ukrainians, Russians and Finns who joined communist or other leftist organisations.[45] The Liberal Party removed the amendment, yet Drew wanted to re-establish Section 98's provisions to protect Canada from Soviet domination.[46] He believed complacent Canadians allowed communists to plot the downfall of democracy. The French miners' strike was thus partly responsible for exacerbating this sense of Canadian 'national insecurity' felt so strongly by 1949. It prompted right-wing parliamentarians and Quebecois authorities to contemplate the re-introduction of laws and methods proven detrimental to the resolution of labour disputes.

Multiple newspapers such as the *Ottawa Citizen* feared Drew's prescription. Commentators wondered whether Drew touted reactionary measures in a bid to 'ride into office' again.[47] It is possible Drew was only pandering to his anti-communist base. Yet he believed, along with the traditionalist and anti-union Quebec Premier Maurice Duplessis, that beating unruly workers required ruthless measures. The purported chaos in France could not travel to Canada. While Section 98 was not re-instated, provincial police committed many dubious actions during the Asbestos miners' strike, actions the Johns-Manville company condoned.[48] In the name of maintaining order they treated strikers and their leaders in Asbestos as dangerous communists.

Editors of the conservative newspaper *Montréal-Matin* echoed Premier Duplessis' harsh position, despite no compelling evidence that the Asbestos strike was a

[45] Canadian Parliament, House of Commons Debates, pp.727-728. Berger, *Fragile Freedoms,* p.135.
[46] Ibid, p.728.
[47] Ibid, p. 892.
[48] Canadian Parliament, House of Commons Debates, 20th Parliament, 5th Session, Vol. 3, 4th April 1949, pp. 2286-2287. Representative Clarence Gillis cited articles written by Gérard Pelletier in *Le Devoir*, which claimed provincial police sent by Premier Duplessis to break the strike were paid an extra fifty dollars per week by the Johns-Manville company.

communist plot.[49] As with Jules Moch, reports in *Montréal-Matin* downplayed miners' grievances and labelled every provocation a machination of subversives plotting a 'coup de force.'[50] Yet the most flagrant examples of anti-communism were found in the mysterious Custos report released in December 1949, uncovering 'the truth' behind the movement. A group of Catholic militants supposedly wrote the report which accused Soviet agents of secretly abetting the strike.[51] Further extracts claimed Fred Rose, the communist parliamentarian charged with spying for the Soviet Union, told fellow comrades to continue staging illegal strikes to ingrain an insurrectional mentality in readiness for the revolution.[52] References regarding the involvement of the Cominform abounded as well.

Just like in France, bosses and politicians in Quebec mistook determined unions for revolutionary communism, as illustrated in the paranoiac reports of Lewis H. Brown, president of the Johns-Manville mining company. He felt provincial trade unionists no longer promoted the interests of regular miners since their willingness to negotiate with company managers waned over time.[53] Brown remembered when the influence of the Catholic clergy helped purge radical elements from labour movements in Asbestos.[54] Relations between union leaders and managers had been cordial for years. The Church acted as a moderating force, allowing for the resolution of conflicts involving wage

[49] M. Noël, 'Le Montréal-Matin (1930-1978). Un journal d'information populaire' (PhD thesis, Université du Québec à Montréal, 2014) p.121.
[50] G. Pelletier, 'La grève et la presse', in P.E. Trudeau (ed), *La grève de l'amiante. Une étape de la révolution industrielle du Québec* (Montréal, 1956), pp.288-293.
[51] P.E. Trudeau, "Appendice II", in P.E. Trudeau (ed), *La grève de l'amiante. Une étape de la révolution industrielle du Québec* (Montréal, 1956), pp. 408-409.
[52] Ibid, p.411.
[53] 'Rapport de Lewis H. Brown sur la grève dans les mines d'amiante', *Le Devoir* [Montréal] no.93 (22nd April 1949), p.7 http://faculty.marianopolis.edu/c.belanger/quebechistory/docs/asbestos/3n.pdf (28th December 2019).
[54] Ibid.

increases. However, Brown feared the pious and compliant miners he once knew no longer existed.[55]

According to Brown, subversive tendencies ran wild, clouding miners' reason and restraint. Union leaders selfishly preached 'une doctrine s'opposant au capitalisme et soutenant une philosophie plus apparentée au communisme…'[56] Gérard Picard, president of the CTCC, noted public figures and company directors used such misleading rhetoric during the months preceding the Asbestos strike.[57] Picard assured both journalists and fellow miners that communism was not the hidden hand behind the movement. The CTCC would lose its raison d'être had communists infiltrated and taken over the union.[58] He argued if the Duplessis administration really wanted to prevent revolution, it would start by resolving the miners' grievances instead of engaging in useless witch-hunts.[59]

When rumours alleged strikers intended on taking over the mine in early May, provincial authorities charged picket lines and arrested hundreds of strikers. On 6th May, provincial policemen apprehended Gérard Chamberland and other miners and drove them to a secluded house the Johns-Manville Company owned. Police flung Gérard against a wall and accused him of coming to Asbestos under the orders of trade unionists Gérard Picard and Jean Marchand to cause trouble.[60] One policeman claimed the miner hit his brother during clashes, accusations which Gérard denied. The miner was tortured

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[55] Ibid.
[56] Ibid.
[57] G. Picard, 'Rapport du Président général de la C.T.C.C' in *Procès-verbal. Vingt-huitième session du Congrès de la C.T.C.C* (Montréal, 1949), pp.34-54. http://faculty.marianopolis.edu/c.belanger/quebechistory/docs/asbestos/4Ca.pdf (28th December 2019).
[58] Ibid, pp.34-54.
[59] Ibid, pp.34-54.
[60] 'Déclaration sur la brutalité policière au cours de la grève de l'amiante', *Le Devoir* [Montréal], no.127 (1st June 1949), p.2. http://faculty.marianopolis.edu/c.belanger/quebechistory/docs/asbestos/3aa.pdf (28th December 2019).

for nearly nine hours, emerging from his ordeal with permanent scarring to his face and multiple contusions all over his body.[61]

Le Devoir published further articles revealing three other statements from miners Jean-Noël Hamel, Émile Grimard, and Benoît Paquette, who were severely beaten by police in early May 1949.[62] They were in shock and remained in hospital for days. While police officers suffered minor injuries in scuffles with strikers, tortured miners sustained almost life-threatening wounds.[63] Miner Alfred Blanchette stated police tried to make him admit to hitting a fellow officer.[64] He denied these charges and was whipped with a cat-o'nine tails as a result.[65] In total, fourteen affidavits were signed by strikers apprehended by police on the 6th May.[66]

Industrial action in France not only triggered violence at Asbestos, but also inspired Quebecers and clergymen to lend a helping hand to struggling workers. When provincial police began to use tactics similar to those the CRS troopers employed in post-war France, editors of *Le Devoir* amended their opinion on the French miners' strike. An article entitled 'L'Église de France et les grèves' revealed that French priests encouraged people to side with miners in Lorraine fighting for higher wages. It was cited as an example worthy of emulation in Quebec.[67] *Le Devoir* praised the French clergy for adopting 'une attitude de charité et de compréhension' towards the unfortunate. The newspaper quoted in full sermons priests read aloud during strikes in the mining towns of

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[61] Ibid.
[62] 'Quatre actions de $25,000 contre la Johns-Manville', *Le Devoir* [Montréal], no.121 (25th May 1949), pp.1-3 col a-d.
[63] 'Le témoignage du Docteur Cooper', *Le Devoir* [Montréal], no.124 (30th May 1949), p.9 col a-b.
[64] 'Nouvelles accusations contre la police provinciale', *Le Devoir* [Montréal], no.126 (2nd June 1949), p.12 col b.
[65] 'Quatre actions de $25,000 contre la Johns-Manville- 25th May 1949', p.3.
[66] 'Pourquoi la C.T.C.C demande une enquête royale à Ottawa', *Le Devoir* [Montréal], no. 127 (1st June 1949), p.5 col a.
[67] 'L'Église de France et les grèves' *Le Devoir* [Montréal], no.122 (27th May 1949), p.10 col a-b.

Longwy and Briey.[68] French priests argued strikes were a legitimate course of action for workers to acquire just demands.[69]

French Archbishops made similar declarations in the wake of the November/December strike waves in January 1948. In Paris, Cardinal Suhard, founder of the worker-priest movement argued that preventing communism was no excuse for ignoring demands for higher wages.[70] The State had to prioritize the well-being of the working-class above all other considerations. In Lyon, Cardinal Gerlier was equally sympathetic, stating the misery families endured was an undeniable and widespread reality.[71]Archbishop Gerlier understood extreme poverty led to desperation and was not surprised to see grievances expressed in such a violent manner. He scolded politicians who arrogantly accused workers of being ill with communism.[72] It was an avoidable sickness if the government was prepared to act. Citing the social doctrine Pope Leo XIII outlined in *L'Encyclical Rerum Novarum*, Gerlier declared governments who refused to grant the minimum wage to its citizens were rife with sin.

In Aix-en-Provence, Archbishop Charles de Provenchères also relayed this message to churchgoers and leaders of *L'Action Catholique*, arguing there was no sense in promoting anti-communism while remaining indifferent to the poor.[73] Although he condemned communism as an atheist cause, he believed the Church should not interfere with French trade unions or their members. In fact, de Provenchères felt Catholic doctrine could learn from communist economic theories. Finally, priest and MRP Deputy

[68] Ibid.
[69] Ibid.
[70] 'L'épiscopat français devant le problème ouvrier', *Luxemburger Wort* [Luxembourg], no. 10/11(10th January 1948), p.9 col a-b.
[71] Ibid.
[72] Ibid.
[73] Ibid.

Abbé Pierre reiterated the French church's position in the National Assembly: 'Si nous ne nous attelons pas à cette tâche d'abord…les crises se poursuivront et le mal de la nation continuera de s'accroître…et ce sera notre faute.'[74]

Le Devoir published extracts of sermons distilling the socially-conscious message French priests preached after strikes in France. True Christians had a vital role to play in strikes. They should not stand idly when in mind and soul they knew brothers or sisters lived in misery.[75] As decreed in the Gospels, Christians had an obligation to improve the well-being of all. Solidarity, either spiritual or financial, was a means of fulfilling this duty.[76]

The French clergy's compassionate response to strikes in Lorraine presaged and perhaps inspired similar acts of charity in the Quebecois church. On the 1st May 1949, Archbishop of Montréal Joseph Charbonneau urged parishioners to remember mothers who did not know if their children would have enough food to survive.[77] He declared war was waged on a working-class who helped solidify the reign of the Church in Quebec.[78] He wrote a letter to priests, ordering them to set-up fundraising stalls every Sunday after mass for the families of Asbestos miners, specifying that scout members and guides should mobilize to collect donations and food. Eight days later father Louis-Philippe Camirand defended miners who erected barricades.[79] The French miners' strike, once considered a product of the Cold War, perhaps also inspired some Quebecois clergymen and their flock to actively support the illegal Asbestos strike.

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[74] Ibid.
[75] 'L'Église de France et les grèves- 27th May 1949'.
[76] Ibid.
[77] 'Intervention de Mgr Joseph Charbonneau dans la grève de l'amiante', *Le Devoir* [Montréal], no.101 (2nd May 1949), p.3. http://faculty.marianopolis.edu/c.belanger/quebechistory/docs/asbestos/3s.pdf (28th December 2019).
[78] Ibid.
[79] 'L'acte d'émeute retiré depuis hier à Asbestos', *Le Soleil* [Quebec], no.111 (9th May 1949), p.1 col a.

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Moving on from Cold-War Quebec, the next section will examine the surprising impact of the French miners' strike in the Netherlands. Though ferociously anti-communist administrations firmly aligned to the 'West' controlled both territories, the Dutch political classes' reaction to unrest in France was unique in its subtlety. Rather than prompting a general stiffening of security measures, as in Canada, French strikes permitted Dutch authorities to target specific individuals who conducted 'illegal' exchanges or associations with communist miners in France. If the French miners' strike was *indirectly* responsible for the exceptionally brutal suppression of the Asbestos strike in Quebec, it was *directly* responsible for escalating the Dutch government's war on communist trade unionists campaigning for an independent Indonesia.

Deputy Oosterhuis preferred not to discuss strikes in the Upper Chamber and was unimpressed when communist deputy Brandenburg proclaimed he was proud the EVC (Communist Trade Union), and by extension the CPN (Dutch Communist Party), had organized strikes in Amsterdam.[80] For Oosterhuis, these strikes served no purpose other than inflicting more misery on the working-class. They were but toxic products of a neo-Stalinist strategy bent on destroying the West.[81]

Oosterhuis was certain the USSR would stop at nothing to realize Stalin's vision of a world destined for eternal warfare between capitalism and communism. [82] He concluded there was no reason for the PvdA (Dutch Labour Party) to negotiate with Mr

[80] Erste Kamer der Staten-Generaal, 27ste Vergadering, vel. 97, 24th March 1949, p.387.
[81] Ibid, p.387.
[82] Ibid, p.387.

Brandenburg or his comrades, claiming he already spent over thirty years jousting with the CPN to no avail. Why would the PvdA want to parlay with a party in league with a power yearning to replicate Hitler's dream of European domination? The Baltic and Balkan states had already fallen. Would the Netherlands be next in line?[83]

Deputies such as Oosterhuis considered strikes as anti-European, anti-Dutch, damaging to European military cooperation, and threats to the ideal of a United Europe.[84] As if quoting verbatim from parliamentarians in Canada, Oosterhuis insisted industrial action was a Leninist plot communists conceived to infiltrate companies and convert the workforce. Seen from afar, events in France appeared to confirm Oosterhuis' worst fears. He reminded deputies that strikes in Italy and France throughout 1947 and 1948 resulted in inestimable damage to coal production, the loss of millions of francs, and the flooding of mines.[85] Oosterhuis believed the organized terrorism witnessed in French mines would spill onto the streets of Amsterdam, and he repeated the same myths French politicians propagated during the miners' strike; that a minority of strikers were armed and only the deployment of armoured tanks restored calm.[86]

Such alarmist rhetoric bore no resemblance to realities in Amsterdam, a fact Oosterhuis acknowledged during his speech. The 1946 elections marked the first and last time the CPN acquired the kind of mass popularity which so frightened the traditionally anti-communist members of the Netherlands' 'pillarized' political class.[87] CPN leader

[83] Ibid, p.387.
[84] Ibid, p.388.
[85] Ibid, p.388.
[86] Ibid, p.388.
[87] Following the 1946 election, anti-communism grew more prevalent in the PvdA. Speakers at the1947 Labour Party Congress urged members to bring back the "10% of the population who voted Communist…behind the Labour Party." in J.B. Dieker, ' "Godloochened, Ondemocratisch en Onmenselijk." Anticommunisme in Nederland ten tijde van de vroege Koude Oorlog' (MA thesis, University of Amsterdam, 2015), pp.28-30. For a history of Dutch anti-leftism and anti-communism

Paul de Groot was prone to a slavish devotion to the USSR instead of broadening his party's appeal.[88] The possibility the CPN was even contemplating a seizure of power was unlikely. Yet this did not prevent Oosterhuis, and by extension his compatriots in the PvdA, from assuming the 'terror' France experienced would come next to Amsterdam. Relatively minor outbreaks of industrial action were framed as threats to peace and stability. An announcement released during a factory strike was cited as evidence of the 'terrorist' tactics communists employed in the Netherlands.[89]

According to the PvdA, the intimidation against workers who refused to take part in strikes announced what was to come if the CPN ever gained control. Democratic norms and freedom of choice would cease to exist. Denunciation campaigns could ruin lives. Could communists pressure wives, children, or reluctant labourers to obey their commands?[90] The future commissars of a Sovietized Netherlands prepared to eliminate opposition to their rule.[91] In light of events in France a dispassionate examination of strike action was difficult in the Netherlands.

Labour Deputy Van der Goes van Naters was also keen to express concern about French strikes in November 1948.[92] He feared Bolshevism was both an internal and

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before World War II, see T. Sinke,'Dutch communism in transition. The CPN, the national front strategy and political reconstruction of the Netherlands' (MA thesis, University of Utrecht, 2015), pp.10-16. For studies dealing with the various political, social and religious "pillars" of Dutch society, see P. de Rooy, *A Tiny Spot on the Earth. The Political Culture of the Netherlands in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Century,* (Amsterdam, 2015), pp.185-227. A.P.M. Lucardie, 'The New Left in the Netherlands 1960-1977. A Critical Study of New Political Ideas and Groups on the Left in the Netherlands with Comparative references to France and West Germany' (PhD thesis, Queen's University Ontario, 1980), pp.19-29. H. te Velde,'Politics and the People: Perceptions of the Masses in Dutch politics', in B. Moore and H.F.K von Nierop (eds), *Twentieth century Mass Society in Britain and the Netherlands* (Oxford, 2006), pp.17-26. H. Bakvis, *Catholic Power in the Netherlands* (Kingston, 1981), pp.15-28. K.E. Knibbe, *Faith in the Familiar. Religion, Spirituality and Place in the South of the Netherlands* (Boston, 2013), pp.31-74.

[88] Dieker, 'Godloochened Ondemocratisch', pp. 16-17. See A.A. de Jonge, *Het communisme in Nederland: de geschiedenis van een politieke partij* (The Hague, 1972), p. 98.

[89] Erste Kamer der Staten-Generaal, 24th March 1949, p.388.

[90] Ibid, p.388.

[91] Ibid, p.388.

[92] Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, 8ste Vergadering, vel. 38, 9th November 1948, p.146.

external threat popularized by agitators obeying the laws of an undemocratic state. Citing the official organ of the Cominform, Van der Goes offered another unoriginal diagnosis of France's predicament. He characterized French strikes as 'supranational' and feared they threatened the stability of Western Europe and the success of the Marshall Plan.[93] Prime Minister Willem Drees also shared this view and believed they served a purpose.[94] If strikes led to more poverty for the French working-class, Dutch labourers could expect the same consequences if they joined communist-led strikes at home.[95] The fate of starving families or dislocated children did not incur sympathy from most Dutch parliamentarians. Avoiding France's impasse was all that mattered for members of PvdA and their coalition partners in the KVP (Catholic People's Party).

The only dissenting voice in the lower chamber was CPN Deputy Wagenaar, who stated it was too limiting to blame communists for disturbances in coalfields.[96] Apart from *De Waarheid*, the press parroted the same fears PM Drees conveyed. In *Gereformeerd gezinblad*, the miners' strike was a communist ploy powered by unrestrained and fearless radicals.[97] *Trouw*, while briefly acknowledging the worsening poverty in mining basins, focused mainly on the lootings committed by fanatical strikers, keen to impose a reign of terror.[98] Headlines in *De Tijd* claimed Zhdanov was the culprit responsible for ordering strikes in France, and regional dailies such as the *Limburgsch Dagblad* also referred to the Cominform, and saw the strike as an economic threat to

[93] Ibid, p.146.
[94] Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, 10de Vergadering, vel. 53, 11th November 1948, p.203.
[95] Ibid, p.203.
[96] Ibid, p.230.
[97] 'Het spel der communisten', *Gereformeerd gezinsblad* [Rotterdam], no.15 (27th October 1948), p.2 col a-b.
[98] 'Communistische rancune-terreur na een verloren mijnstaking', *Trouw* [Amsterdam], no.1074(2nd November 1948), p.3 col a-b.

France and Europe in general.[99] The human cost of these events, such as the death of unarmed miners or expulsion of immigrant workers was only mentioned in passing, whereas the supposed communist menace received almost all the Dutch media's attention.

Yet it is worth noting the French miners' strike did not trigger the kind of chain reaction witnessed in Quebec. Militarized police never quelled sporadic outbreaks of unrest in the docks of Rotterdam.[100] Scaremongering rhetoric was rarely matched by violent actions against communist-led strikes. This restrained anti-communism in the Netherlands had much in common with its Nordic equivalent.

In the words of Norwegian socialist Martin Tranmæl, the goal of Scandinavian social democratic parties and their allies in trade union movements was to isolate communist opponents: ' If there is to be a communist party, it is to be a sect.'[101] Socialist labour leaders, especially in Denmark, Sweden, and Norway, swiftly abandoned any attempts at unification with communist contemporaries.[102] Military intelligence agencies recorded the names, whereabouts, and activities of suspect labourers, information acquired via spies or unionists aligned with social democratic clubs and organizations.[103] The practice of 'personnel control' was widespread in Nordic security services, which denied outspoken communists employment or promotion in industries deemed sensitive to national interests.[104] Transnational networks spanning the entire northern hemisphere saw various socialists, such as Sven Andersson or Haakon Lie, exchange advice on how

[99] 'Zhdanov gaf opdracht tot staking in Frankrijk', *De Tijd* [Amsterdam], no.33943 (12th October 1948), p.1 col a. 'Communistische mijnstaking bedreigt Frankrijk's economisch leven', *Limburgsch Dagblad* [Heerlen], no.250 (25th October 1948), p.1 col a-b.
[100] Sinke, 'Dutch communism...', p.53.
[101] I. Bjørnsson, 'Norse Brothers. Social democratic anti-communism in Norden 1945-1962' (PhD thesis, University of Copenhagen, 2012), p. 120.
[102] Ibid, pp.120-122.
[103] Ibid, pp.70-77.
[104] Ibid, p.63 and p.77.

to establish a subtle *cordon sanitaire* to contain communism after the Prague coup, when rumours of harmful strikes were rife.[105] Yet, while Swedish Prime Minister Tage Erlander emphasized that communism was an ideology wholly incompatible with Nordic values, the predominantly left-leaning Scandinavian governments did very little to provoke the USSR or vassal states in Eastern Europe.[106] Finland and Denmark especially had nothing to gain from angering a heavily militarized superpower at their doorstep.[107]

Consequently, anti-communist measures implemented in the countries above, while by no means democratic, never reached the kind of ferocity seen in the coalfields of France or Canada. Genuine fears of a possible Soviet invasion tempered any urge to adopt the overblown securitization models other Western nations possessed.[108] Restraining communism in Scandinavia, even during tense periods in the late forties, did not involve the 'boots on the ground' approach France witnessed. A careful monitoring of the communist threat by social democratic parties often in close cooperation with the state, was enough to ensure confrontations between strikers and armed police were largely absent in Scandinavia.[109] It was a strategy the Dutch political class favoured as well.

Although a paranoid anti-communism was pervasive throughout Dutch society and politics by late 1948, the gradual isolation of the CPN and its members was a cautious affair.[110] The BVD (Dutch Security Services), then under the leadership of Louis Einthoven, did not react rashly to reports of strikes in September 1948. The

[105] Ibid, pp.68-117. See E.W. Sundvall, 'Propaganda 'Worth an Army': The Norwegian Labour Party, Haakon Lie and the Transnational dissemination of Cold War propaganda, 1945-55', *The International History Review,* 42/4 (2019), pp.1-19.
[106] Ibid, p.75.
[107] Ibid, p.234.
[108] Ibid. p.234.
[109] Ibid, p.133.
[110] Sinke, 'Dutch communism in transition', p.87-98.

infiltration of trade unions was favoured over confrontation on the streets.[111] As Constant Hijzen argued, the Beels cabinet refrained from utilizing extreme security measures to counter communist activity in the Netherlands. A robust economy and full employment were the most effective antidotes to keep the red plague at bay.[112] Labour unions not affiliated to the CPN, such as the socialist NVV (Dutch Association of Trade Unions), catholic KAB (Catholic Trade Union Federation) or Protestant CNV (National Federation of Christian Trade Unions), did much to isolate the EVC.[113] The corporatist *Stichting van de Arbeid* agreement, which saw the Dutch State, employers, and unions pledge to work together for the nation, excluded the EVC from negotiations.[114] Churches sent letters to labourers begging them not to join the EVC.[115] Talks aiming to finalize a merger between the NVV and EVC dragged on until 1947, only to end in failure. This process contributed to the fragmentation of the EVC less than a year later, resulting in syndicalists and communists drifting further apart in the labour movement.[116] This certainly weakened the CPN's influence and boosted the NVV's standing amongst Dutch labourers.[117] Norwegian socialists had also embarked on purposely drawn-out 'merger' talks with communists in 1946, without actually intending to form a united party; perhaps the splintering of the EVC was the desired outcome.[118]

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[111] C.W. Hijzen, 'The Perpetual Adversary: How Dutch Security Services Perceived Communism (1918-1989)', *Historical Social Research,* 38/1(2013), p.185.
[112] Ibid, p.184. See also H. De Liagre Böhl, 'De rode beer in de polder. Een herinterpretatie van de "lange jaren zestig"', in C. Kristel (ed), *Met alle geweld. Botsingen en tegenstellingen in burgerlijk Nederland* (Amsterdam, 2003), pp.214-229.
[113] J. G. Walker, 'The Labour Market and Rising Living Standards in 1950's Western Europe. The Case of the Netherlands' (PhD thesis, London School of Economics, 2000), p.40.
[114] P. Pasture,'Window of Opportunities or trompe d'oeil? The Myth of Labour Unity in Western Europe after 1945', in G.R. Horn and P. Kenney (eds), *Transnational Moments of Change. Europe 1945, 1968, 1989* (Oxford, 2004), pp. 39-40.
[115] Walker, 'The Labour Market...', p.40.
[116] Ibid, p.40.
[117] Pasture, *Transnational Moments of Change,* pp.39-40.
[118] Bjørnsson, 'Norse Brothers', pp.122-123.

This strategy proved very successful. By 1949, the CPN was hounded out of regional councils, while the EVC gradually lost the popularity it enjoyed in metropolitan areas shortly after the war.[119] The communist threat was virtually non-existent. Yet Dutch authorities still used the French miners' strike as a bludgeon to further isolate and condemn the EVC.

In an open letter addressed to the readers of *De Waarheid* in early December 1948, EVC chairman Berend Blokzijl revealed Dutch workers collected the equivalent of over 1,400,000 francs for French miners. Moreover, nearly three thousand working-class families volunteered to adopt French children temporarily. Yet the Ministry for Justice ended the transfer of money and food packages.[120] The following message was sent to the EVC by Minister for Justice and Security René Wijers: 'In response to your letter on the 28th October, in which you request permission for the temporary stay of 1000 French children in the Netherlands, we have the honour to inform you this request has been denied on the grounds that this initiative does not involve exclusively humanitarian considerations.'[121]

Blokzijl was outraged the Dutch government was suspicious of people who wished to help French miners feed their children. He implied the EVC was willing to pursue the matter further by urging representatives of the World Trade Union Federation to force Dutch authorities to change their mind.[122] Scathing articles inquired why Dutch tourist boards convinced politicians to lift restrictive identity checks for American

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[119] S. Keesman, 'The Communist Menace in Finsterwolde. Conspiring against local authorities? Case study on the Dutch battle against communism, 1945-1951', *Historical Social Research,* 38/1(2013), pp.211-231. Sinke, 'Dutch communism in transition', p.64.

[120] 'E.V.C. protesteert tegen afwijzing van Franse Kinderen', *De Waarheid* [Amsterdam], no.176 (2nd December 1948), p.3 col a.

[121] 'Justitie tot Franse kinderen:"Verboden toegang!" ', *De Waarheid* [Amsterdam], no. 172(27th November 1948), p.1 col a.

[122] 'E.V.C protesteert tegen afwijzing van Franse Kinderen.'

soldiers crossing the German border into the Netherlands, while starving French children could not enter the country.[123]

One hundred construction workers from the Vlaswinkel and Pasma firms based in Amsterdam, and sixty labourers from Geel and Hoorn building sites, sent telegrams protesting the Ministry's decision.[124] A Dutch national living in the South of France wrote a short message to *De Waarheid*: 'For the children of the strikers they have even kept a collection here in the church…After all, it is only human to aid such innocent victims…The strike is now over, yet one wonders which profession will go on strike next. This would not happen if everyone had the necessary means to provide for their families.'[125]

Dutch authorities were very selective when choosing which French children could stay in the Netherlands. Less than two weeks after Minister Wijers refused to grant entry to French strikers' children, Dutch headlines covered the commendation of Dutch mayors in the Elysée Palace for adopting French children in early 1948.[126] President Vincent Auriol, who attended the short ceremony, expressed hope these 'small ambassadors' could help forge links between France and the Netherlands".[127] Mayors Witschey and J.A.H van der Dussen were given a first-class tour of Paris in return for housing French children in Twende and met Pierre de Gaulle, brother of Charles de Gaulle.[128]

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[123] 'Gezond toerisme', *De Waarheid* [Amsterdam], no.176 (2nd December 1948), p.4 col a.
[124] 'Bouwvakkers protesteren tegen afwijzing Franse kinderen', *De Waarheid* [Amsterdam], no.179 (6th December 1948), p.2 col a.
[125] 'Franse stakerskinderen en de bisschop van Nice', *De Waarheid* [Amsterdam], no.186 (14th December 1948), p.4 col a.
[126] 'Twentse burgemeesters te Parijs', *Twentsch dagblad Tubantia en Enschedesche courant en Vrije Twentsche courant* [Enschede], no.262 (8th November 1948), p.2 col a.
[127] '"Franse kinderen-kleine ambassadeurs" Vincent Auriol dankt Nederlandse volk', *Twentsch dagblad Tubantia en Enschedesche courant en Vrije Twentsche courant* [Enschede], no. 259 (5th November 1948), p.2 col a.
[128] 'De Burgemeester van Parijs', *Twentsch dagblad Tubantia en Enschedesche courant en Vrije Twentsche courant* [Enschede], no.259 (5th November 1948), p.1 col a. 'Twentse burgemeesters te

Yet there was no shortage of charity amongst Dutch families. In *Het Parool*, we learn German children arrived in the Netherlands in late November and early December 1948.[129] *Trouw* also recorded the arrival of nearly five hundred Austrian children in Venlo after a thirty-hour train journey organized by Red Cross foster home schemes.[130] The 'Interchurch Bureau for Foster children' also helped house malnourished children.[131] Protestant organizations called for volunteers to adopt German children in November 1947. As editors chanted repeatedly, the war was over. The Dutch were morally, spiritually, and politically obligated to help save German youth from poverty and hunger.[132] However, due to the misrepresentation of the miners' strike as a communist plot, hundreds of French children barely surviving in northern coalfields could not avail the opportunity to escape starvation and disease.

In 1949, staff from the Central Council of Foreign Childcare noticed French children appeared more vulnerable and weak compared to their European neighbours.[133] Ms J. Smits, director of the Maastricht and Well transit camps, stated children from Arras, Lille, and Paris still lived in foster homes in November 1949.[134] Doctor den Hartog, director of a transit camp nutrition office, insisted every child be washed, fed, and clothed the moment they arrived in the Netherlands.[135] Based on numerous physical and dietary examinations, he concluded French children often lacked essential nutrients

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Parijs', *Twentsch dagblad Tubantia en Enschedesche courant en Vrije Twentsche courant* [Enschede], no.260 (6th November 1948), p.1 col a.

[129] 'Door bemiddeling der kerken: Zeven en twintighonderd Duitse kinderen naar ons land', *Het Parool* [Amsterdam], no.1191 (25th November 1948), p.5 col a-b.

[130] 'Gastvrij Nederland ontvangt opnieuw Oostenrijkse Kinderen: Verblijf Van drie Maanden', *Trouw* [Amsterdam], no.1079 (8th November 1948), p.3.

[131] 'Door bemiddeling der kerken...'

[132] Ibid, p.5.

[133] 'Franse kinderen hebben vacantie in Nederland het meest nodig', *De Tijd* [Amsterdam] no.34270 (5th November 1949), p.1 col a-c.

[134] Ibid.

[135] Ibid.

and needed help the most.[136] Many arrived in Venlo with only a few litres of wine or beer in hand because pints of milk were still a rarity in France.[137]

The anti-communism which blocked the arrival of French strikers' children into the Netherlands is exemplified in short announcements written by chief editor Thijs of *De Tijd* in November 1948.[138] He stated nuns running a small denominational primary school in the suburb of Montreuil in Paris struggled to feed their students. Supplies of American milk powder had run out. The message highlighted that a communist majority ran the municipality of Montreuil.[139] Thijs implied devout and hard-working parents suffered discrimination and received hateful comments from their mainly communist neighbours.[140] For many Dutch politicians, refusing to grant temporary asylum for the children of French workers labelled as 'terrorists' or 'radicals' was of no consequence. Godless communists, and by extension their offspring, deserved neither remorse nor aid.

The EVC's involvement in the miners' strike continued to haunt chairman Blokzijl throughout 1949. Barring French children from entering the Netherlands only marked the opening salvo in a judicial offensive designed to vilify the EVC. Blokzijl would pay dearly for wanting to help his French comrades.

It was Labour Deputy Evert Vermeer who first drew attention to the EVC's transfer of 400,000 francs to French miners in early November 1948.[141] He believed this transaction was a way of helping finance the Soviet Cold War against Western Europe.[142] He asked Minister for Finance Lieftinck to verify whether any provisions had been

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[136] Ibid.
[137] Ibid.
[138] 'Wie helpt deze Franse kinderen?', *De Tijd* [Amsterdam], no.33983 (29th November 1948), p.2 col a.
[139] Ibid.
[140] Ibid.
[141] Tweede Kamer der Staten-General, 10de Vergadering, vel.53, 11th November 1948, p.201.
[142] Ibid, p.201.

violated and insisted the government was duty-bound to initiate criminal proceedings if such transfers proved illegal. Preliminary findings concluded payments had not been made via government agencies or De Nederlands Bank.[143] Furthermore, according to transcripts of the EVC's yearly congress, three detectives paid a visit to Blokzijl and he was ordered to appear in court seven months later.[144]

Public prosecutor A. Reigersmen accused the trade unionist of violating article fourteen of the 1945 Foreign Exchange Decree.[145] In court, Blokzijl's lawyer Benno Stokvis argued the British government did nothing to prevent the transfer of solidarity funds from British trade unions to the CGT, and that Blokzijl and the EVC only intended to help starving children.[146] However, Amsterdam's economic judge was indifferent to these pleas for clemency and sentenced Blokzijl to pay a hefty fine.[147]

Blokzijl's conviction condemned the EVC's association with French strikes and served as a warning to any member of the CPN intending to disturb the status quo in the Netherlands. It is also probable Blokzijl was penalized more for his rabble-rousing record at home than for sending money to French miners.

Blokzijl was an active supporter of anti-colonial demonstrations against the ongoing conflict in Indonesia. In late December 1948, he joined hundreds of workers gathered at the Diamond exchange in Amsterdam to protest against the Dutch government's latest 'police action' in Indonesia.[148] He addressed crowds waving banners

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[143] Ibid, p.202.
[144] 'CPN Party Congress transcript November 1948, p.27', http://www.stichtingargus.nl/bvd/1948-11.pdf , (24th December 2019)
[145] 'Duizend gulden boete voor voorzitter der E.V.C.', *De Tijd* [Amsterdam], no.34137 (1st June 1949), p.4 col a-b.
[146] 'Berend Blokzijl voor Economische Politierechter', *De Waarheid* [Amsterdam], no.22(1st June 1949), p.2 col a-b.
[147] 'Duizend gulden boete voor voorzitter der E.V.C-1st June 1949'
[148] 'Jeugd protesteert tegen koloniale oorlog', *De Waarheid* [Amsterdam], no.195 (24th December 1948), p.2 col a.

urging Dutch soldiers to return home.[149] Undoubtedly, his anti-imperialism played a part in his upcoming conviction.[150]

Furthermore, one must consider Blokzijl's reckless actions as a member of the VNI (Vereniging Nederland-Indonesië), an organization assembled by Dutch and Indonesian youths searching for a resolution to the Indies question.[151] Many leftist intellectuals questioned the Netherlands' imperial practices overseas in Suriname and Indonesia. Inspired by Queen Wilhelmina's speech, who promised a new relationship between the Dutch and her subjects in the East Indies, the VNI began to imagine what this future 'relationship' would entail.[152] Sukarno's declaration of independence caught the VNI off-guard.[153] Hopes of a cooperative commonwealth between the Netherlands and its overseas territories evaporated. The Indies question polarized public opinion and proved an effective rallying point for Calvinist conservatives, eager to restore the Dutch Empire after suffering humiliating defeats by Nazi Germany in Europe and later Imperial Japan in Indonesia.[154] On the one hand, publications such as *Trouw* perceived nationalist uprisings in Indonesia as unforgiveable betrayals.[155] On the other, members of the VNI accepted that Indonesian autonomy was inevitable.[156]

By 1948, the VNI was no longer considered an irritating academic think-tank, but a subsidiary of the anti-colonialist CPN.[157] Berend Blokzijl and other communists within the VNI actively drove out voices vouching for an association between the Netherlands

[149] Ibid.
[150] See D. Duindam, *Fragments of the Holocaust. The Amsterdam Hollandsche Schouwburg as a Site of Memory* (Amsterdam, 2019), p.59.
[151] Sinke, 'Duth communism in transition', p.56
[152] Ibid, pp.56-57. See also J.L. Foray, *Visions of Empire in the Nazi-Occupied Netherlands* (Cambridge, 2012), p.274.
[153] Ibid, p.57.
[154] Ibid, p.57-58. Foray, *Visions of Empire,* pp. 295-297.
[155] Foray, *Visions of Empire,* pp.288-289.
[156] Sinke, 'Dutch communism in transition', p.57.
[157] Ibid, p.61.

and the Indonesian Republic.[158] Blokzijl was an advocate of a fully independent Indonesia and encouraged nationalists to sabotage peace agreements. Although Blokzijl and his comrades left the VNI, his unpopular opinions did not go unnoticed by the economic court a few months later.[159] His mishandling of solidarity funds gave Dutch authorities the perfect excuse to punish his dissent.

In conclusion, the French miners' strike elicited an intriguing response from the Dutch political class. While the PvdA feared scenes of carnage in France could spread to the Netherlands, these were tempered by the knowledge the CPN and its allies could not stage similar actions. The post-war consensus prioritizing cooperation, stability, and recovery held fast. However, the French miners' strike did allow the Dutch government to further isolate an already weakened CPN.

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While the first part of this chapter examined the impact of the miners' strike in North America and Western Europe, the second half will explore how French strikes resonated across the emerging Eastern bloc.

The following sections will demonstrate that Joseph Stalin's conception of proletarian internationalism survived World War II and was later adopted by communist parties in Eastern Europe. Stalin deemed the doctrine of 'world revolution' outdated by the late 1920s.[160] 'Socialism in one country', combined with an inward and domestic oriented narrative of 'friendship among peoples' ensured the practice of Soviet

[158] Ibid, p.61.
[159] Ibid, p.62.
[160] G. J. Albert, *Das Charisma der Weltrevolution: Revolutionärer Internationalismus in der frühen Sowjetgesellschaft 1917-1927* (Cologne, 2017), pp. 556-559 and 'International Solidarity With(out) World Revolution. The Transformation of Internationalism in Early Soviet Society', *Monde,* 10/2 (2016), pp.33-50.

internationalism was transformed during the 1930s. Stalin imposed a nationalist and Russo-centric narrative of Soviet superiority, while Western capitalist nations were invariably portrayed as bellicose, poverty-ridden, and backward.[161] The USSR was no longer the temporary vanguard of the revolution waiting for more advanced proletariats in France or Britain to break their chains. Oppressed workers and revolutionaries abroad, once considered the equals if not betters of their Russian comrades, became the objects of pity under Stalin's rule. A charitable internationalism prevailed instead.[162]

The PPR, MDP and KSČ adapted this Stalinist model of charitable proletarian internationalism in their response to post-war strikes in France. French workers were seen as the poor victims of counter-revolutionary forces and capitalist repression who had to be 'shown the way' or 'looked after' by enlightened and successful revolutionaries in Eastern Europe. Hungarian, Czech, and Polish communist regimes became the new 'big brothers' coming to the aid of their inferior kin languishing in French jails.[163]

Polish communists in particular used the hook of proletarian internationalism during the miners' strike as a weapon to further their own interests.The town of Międzylesie welcomed twenty Polish families deported from France in November 1948.[164] Representatives of the Polish government greeted Jan Kot, a Polish miner from Blaye-les-Mines. According to *Dziennik Polski*, Kot was a man of courage, both as a miner and a French resistance veteran. When he disembarked, Kot burst into tears and

[161] Ibid, p.557.
[162] Ibid, p.557.
[163] Ibid, pp.558-560.
[164] 'Polska wita was z otwartymi ramionami jak najlepszych swych synów', *Dziennik Polski* [Cracow] no.322 (24th November 1948), p.4 col a-c. 'Powrócili do Polski', *Dziennik Polski* [Cracow] no.323 (25th November 1948), p.1 col a.

exclaimed he would not be working for foreigners anymore, but only for Poland.[165] Jan was accompanied by his wife Ginette, a French citizen, who was saddened to leave France, a nation she no longer recognised. Fellow expatriate Jan Błaszczak, in contrast, was unfazed by the ordeal and gleamed with patriotic fervour. He stood firmly by his communist faith, despite repeated attempts by gendarmes to make him renounce his beliefs and refused to leave his children behind to receive a French education.[166]

Committees and crowds gathered at the station to welcome expelled strikers' families. Representatives of the Lower Silesia Mining Union, PPR, and army greeted deportees one-by-one.[167] Newly-arrived Poles promised they were ready to work diligently for their motherland. Everything was in order to re-settle deportees. The Polish government shipped new arrivals to various provinces and immediately assigned them work on housing projects.[168]

To assert control over an economically devastated and politically fractured country, the PPR (Polish Communist Party), and the PUWP (Polish United Workers' Party) after December 1948, exploited the anti-minority discourses right-wing National Democrats promoted during the inter-war period.[169] Hatred against Germans, Ukrainians, Jews, Lithuanians, and Belarusians, while officially condemned, was rarely discouraged in practice.[170] The PPR had to distract a population frustrated by privations, rampant disease, civil war, and administrative chaos.[171] Unpopular Polish communists had to prove their legitimacy not only through force of arms, but also by manipulating

[165] Ibid.
[166] Ibid.
[167] Ibid.
[168] Ibid.
[169] M. Fleming, *Communism, Nationalism and Ethnicity in Poland, 1944-1950* (New York, 2009), pp.54.
[170] Ibid, pp.54-59. See also A. Paczkowski, *The Spring Will be Ours: Poland and the Poles from Occupation to Freedom,* tr. by J. Cave (Pennsylvania, 2003), pp.148-151.
[171] Ibid, p.58.

prejudices in Polish society.[172] The designation of internal and external foes fostered an artificial unity. According to the PPR, foreign capitalists, imperialists, home-grown reactionaries, and underground fascists threatened Poland's newly-acquired ethnic and religious homogeneity.[173] Polish intellectuals, politicians, exiles, and even peasants shared the consensus that Poland needed an ethnically stable state.[174] This pernicious rhetoric of 'us' versus 'them' was therefore fused with Marxist-Leninist ideology.

Soviet advisors or military personnel were not the only forces which imposed Stalinized communism onto subjugated peoples in Eastern Europe.[175] Poles and Hungarians were particularly unreceptive to a political creed imported from the ancestral Russian enemy or 'agents of Moscow.'[176] To overcome this impasse and gain electoral support, national communist parties in Poland, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary packaged Marxism in a language and iconography understandable to ordinary people.[177] The PPR and sister parties throughout the Eastern bloc turned to nationalist symbols to win over reluctant masses.[178] By November 1948, Poland was caught in a tide of 'Marxist' nationalism sweeping through the Soviet sphere.[179] Distinctly pan-Slavic elements infiltrated into party bulletins or manifestos. Committees took Slavic titles to

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[172] Ibid. p.55 and pp.144-145. See also M.S. Kunicki, *Between the Brown and the Red. Nationalism, Catholicism and Communism in 20th century Poland. The Politics of Bołeslaw Piasecki* (Athens, 2012), pp.78-84. D.H. Reilly, *Scattered. The Forced Relocation of Poland's Ukrainians after WW2* (Wisconsin, 2013), pp.9-12.

[173] Ibid, pp.1-3. See also

[174] Ibid, pp.27-62. See also P. Brykczynski, 'Political Murder and the Victory of Ethnic Nationalism in Inter-war Poland' (PhD thesis, University of Michigan, 2013), pp.29-46.

[175] Y. Sygkelos, *Nationalism from the Left: The Bulgarian Communist Party during the Second World War years and the early Post-War Years,* (Boston, 2011), pp.119-123. See also R. Zuzowski, 'The Impact of Nationalism on Communism: The Case of Poland', *History of Ideas,*18/1(1994), p.37

[176]Ibid, p.4. J.C. Behrends, 'Nation and Empire: Dilemmas of Legitimacy during Stalinism in Poland (1941-1956)', in M. Mevius (ed) *The Communist Quest for National Legitimacy in Europe 1918-1989* (London, 2011), p.68.

[177]Ibid, p.248. See also M. Mevius, *Agents of Moscow. The Hungarian Communist Party and the Origins of Socialist Patriotism 1941-1953* (New York, 2005), p.20. W.A. Kemp, *Nationalism and Communism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. A Basic Contradiction* (London, 1999), pp.94-124.

[178]Sygkelos, *Nationalism from the Left,* pp.3-6.

[179] Ibid*,* p.240.

sound more appealing, while medals awarded to partisans both in France and Poland alluded to the battle of Grunwald, when the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth vanquished Teutonic knights.[180] In various domains, including education and media, nationalist and Marxist discourses became indistinguishable from each other.[181]

This exclusionary 'Marxist' nationalism also appeared in articles discussing foreign policy in the official press.[182] If the PPR were to build an indivisible Polish nation, the outside world and especially capitalist countries such as the United States had to appear villainous in comparison.[183] Articles discussing deteriorating relations between the West and Eastern blocs applied the same logic used to exclude undesirable minorities in Poland. Yet dailies such as *Dziennik Polski* were careful not to jettison proletarian internationalism. Poland was now a communist state, which had to set an example for other nations to follow and express sympathy for the oppressed when necessary. For this reason, the French miners' strike was useful to PPR propagandists. Not only were unarmed French workers confronted with militarized police, but Polish immigrants were either deported or killed in the crossfire. As discussed in the previous chapter, the French miners' strike vindicated the PPR's worldview, envenomed relations between two allied nations, and inflamed socialist patriotism in Poland.

Polish ambassador Jerzy Putrament reported the torture and expulsion of Polish PPR activists in France to Foreign Minister Modzelewski in early February 1948.[184] His

[180] Ibid, p.123. Behrends, 'Nation and Empire', pp.72-74.
[181] Sygkelos, *Nationalism from the Left,* p. 235.
[182] For an analysis of post-war anti-German and anti-American discourse in the Polish communist press, see B. Kamiński, 'Fear Management: Foreign Threats in the Post-War Polish Propaganda. The Influence and Reception of the Communist Media' (PhD thesis, European University Institute, 2016), pp.50-110.
[183] Ibid, pp.228-296.
[184] D. Jarosz and M. Pasztor, *Polish-French Relations 1944-1989,* trans by A. Shannon (Frankfurt, 2015), pp. 51-53.

report concluded not only did Polish citizens suffer terribly in French custody, but France accused Polish consulates of subsidizing individuals and societies loyal to the PPR.[185]

In addition, the Polish press relayed the mistreatment of Polish nationals in France. It published Putrament's memos to French diplomats, describing the administrative harassment Polish organizations endured.[186] Reports in *Dziennik Polski* declared French authorities compiled lists of Polish citizens and confiscated their identity cards, while Polish consulates did not receive information about the detention of Poles.[187] The Polish press had more material at its disposal to portray France as a regressive and intolerant power when the miners' strike broke out months later.

Ambassador Putrament's letters to the Quai d'Orsay in early November 1948 reported damning testimonies.[188] One miner called Teofil Obetkon was arrested a few days after withdrawing from a strike committee. Other Poles were arrested while having their cards stamped.[189]Some faced questioning for hours. French police asked them about their relationship with the communist party or if they intended to return to Poland. Zarembski, was released because he was only fifteen years old, yet even he was reportedly beaten in custody in the Condé police barracks. Franciszck Barański claimed he was handcuffed and beaten during an interrogation.[190] In Stiring Vendel, miners suffered terribly at the hands of police as well. In Moselle, numerous police raids resulted in more incidents of brutality. Miner Wacław Wajciechowski was also assaulted while being interrogated in Merlebach. Crackdowns on barracks in Zimming, which contained

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[185] Ibid, p.53. 'Szykany władz francuskich wobec Polaków we Francji', *Dziennik Polski* [Cracow] no. 45(15th February 1948), p.2 col a-c.
[186] 'Protest ambasadora R.P u paryżu', *Dziennik Polski* [Cracow], no.46 (16th February 1948), p.2.
[187] Ibid.
[188] 'Rząd polski protestuje przeciwko szykanowaniu górników polskich we Francji', *Dziennik Polski* [Cracow], no.308 (10th November 1948), p.5 col a-c.
[189] Ibid.
[190] Ibid.

over one hundred and fifty Polish workers, saw miners awakened with blows from rifle butts.[191]

The wife of imprisoned miner Antonin Gorcski stated police came barging into her home asking for bottles of vodka and cognac.[192] Similar accounts involving policemen abusing their power were recorded in other towns. Two young miners received warrants confirming their immediate deportation only three days after leaving prison. Poles were shipped away to French and British Occupation zones in Germany without having time to pack or bid farewell to family.[193] Michał Wosiesczko, president of the Polish National Council of France, was jailed on the 26th October. A week later police summoned him to a station where he heard of his impending expulsion. Putrament's memo concluded with a plea to the French government to stop such discriminations, insisting Polish immigrants deserved to be protected under French law and treated with dignity.[194]

The pro-communist press in Poland weaponised the death of Polish miner Jansek Bartel after clashes with CRS troops in Merlebach.[195] Portrayed as a fallen soldier of freedom, Bartel's sacrifice demonstrated the failures of capitalism and the moral superiority of socialism. The murder of French and Polish miners benefited PPR propagandists. They painted Bartel and his French colleagues as real democrats and socialists dying in the name of a better tomorrow.[196] In the eyes of the PPR, the West had

[191] Ibid.
[192] Ibid.
[193] Ibid.
[194] Ibid.
[195] 'Za co zginął Jan Bartel?', *Dziennik Polski* [Cracow], no.284 (16th October 1948), p.2 col a-b.
[196] Ibid.

no right to lecture Poland or the USSR on freedom when a French socialist minister sanctioned violence against his own workforce.

The language of class-warfare and working-class internationalism melded with the ethno-nationalism the PPR manipulated to consolidate its grip over the Polish population after World War II.[197] An innocent Pole was again persecuted, bullied, and killed by an aggressive foreign power. Yet unlike his forefathers struggling against Russian or Prussian domination, Bartel did not die fighting for an independent Poland. Yet his death spoke to a distinctly Polish sense of victimization strongly felt after World War II. The Allies already betrayed Poles in 1939 when France and Britain watched as Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union tore Poland apart. Russian tanks rested kilometres away from Warsaw, leaving the Polish resistance to die.[198] Bartel's death and the horrendous treatment his countrymen endured in France represented another tragic episode in Poland's long history of experiencing betrayal by its neighbours.

This narrative of betrayal was powerful given the number of Polish immigrants who had fought in the French resistance. This was a recurring theme in interviews with Polish men and women expelled in November 1948.[199] When reporters questioned Jan Kot, he deplored that neither his military awards nor his eighteen years in the mines were taken into consideration.[200] Likewise, police questioned Karol Sonka for hours before expelling him from Carmaux, where he had toiled in the mine for twenty-eight years.[201] These testimonies may have been exaggerated, but they served a purpose: they

[197] Ibid.
[198] J.C Behrends, 'Nation and Empire', p.73-75.
[199] 'Polska wita was z otwartymi ramionami jak najlepszych swych synów-.24th November'
[200] Ibid.
[201] 'Przeliczyli się…', *Dziennik Polski* [Cracow], no.325 (27th November 1948), p.3.

effectively painted France and its political class as xenophobic, reactionary, and prone to evicting unwanted minorities.[202]

This nationalist sentiment was apparent in protest letters the Polish National Congress of Miners assembled in Sosnowiec wrote to Prime Minister Henri Queuille.[203] Polish miners sent messages to Minister for Foreign Affairs Modzelewski, pledging their support to the Polish government and criticized the 'inhuman' policies French authorities applied against immigrants.[204]

What the PPR hoped the strike would ultimately accomplish was best summarized by deportee Błaszczak, who believed police repression would force many Polish families to leave France and return to Poland in the spring of 1949.[205]However, his predictions did not materialize. The miners' strike did not stimulate a grand exodus of French Poles back to the motherland. As stated in the previous chapter, for all its faults, France was still home for most Polish immigrants. Yet the strike had a noticeable impact on the way Poland perceived France. It drove a wedge between the two countries and triggered a wave of reprisals from the PPR, often in the form of spy trials and the gradual severing of cultural ties.[206]

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[202] 'Walczyli o wolność Francji: Za co prześladują Francuzi polskich górników', *Dziennik Polski* [Cracow], no. 319 (21st November 1948), p.1 col a-b.
[203] 'Protest polskich górników przeciwko gnębieniu Polaków we Francj', *Dziennik Polski* [Cracow], no. 309 (11th November 1948), p.2.
[204] Ibid.
[205] 'Przeliczyli się …27th November'.
[206] See chapter 6 for more details on how the miners' strike precipitated a breakdown in Franco-Polish political and cultural relations.

The PPR's vengeful proletarian internationalism had little in common with the MKP's (Hungarian Communist Party) solidarity campaigns for French workers during the 1947-48 strike waves. When Hungarian communists did weaponize the French miners' strike to discredit France as a capitalist nation, it was not to exact revenge, but to impose greater ideological conformity at home.

By 1946, diplomatic and cultural exchanges between Paris and Budapest appeared to be improving. The legacy of the treaty of Trianon which deprived Hungary of vast amounts of territory after World War I, was briefly put to rest. French language institutes were founded and interest in France's historical links with Hungary renewed. Dignitaries were eager to prove Hungary had shed its Germanic past and inched towards a democratic future.[207] This fruitful period came to an abrupt standstill after the Prague Coup. A friendship treaty the USSR and Hungary signed brought an end to any meaningful cultural partnership with France.[208] Yet the MKP could not afford to cut all ties with the Fourth Republic. 1948 marked the one hundredth anniversary of the 1848 revolutions which rattled empires across Europe. Insurgents in France and Habsburg-controlled Hungary were at the forefront of movements demanding economic and social reforms, the abolition of feudal privileges, universal suffrage, and representative government.[209] The Spring of Nations witnessed the birth of Hungarian nationalism and the heroes the MKP appropriated after World War II.[210] Festivals and parades organized by grassroots MKP activists in March 1948 stressed the difference between 'chauvinistic' nationalism the Horthy regime promoted and the 'true patriotism' the

[207] A. Macher, 'La diplomatie culturelle entre la France et la Hongrie de 1945 à 1949, vue de Hongrie', *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome. Italie et Méditerranée,* 114/1(2002), pp. 252-254.
[208] Ibid, p.257.
[209] R. Brubaker and M. Feischmidt, '1848 in 1998. The Politics of Commemoration in Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia', *Comparative Studies in Society and History,* 44/4 (2002), p.704.
[210] Mevius, 'Agents of Moscow', pp.87-100.

communist party espoused.[211] Posters hailed 'the interdependence of workers.'[212] As seen in Poland, internationalism was also woven into the fabric of Hungarian 'Marxist' nationalism.

The MKP posed as the inheritor of this universalist 'spirit' of 1848.[213] Although the bourgeoisie now ruled France, propaganda told Hungarians to remember the French masses. The Hungarian government invited a PCF delegation to commemorate the 1848 revolutions in Budapest.[214] The French government was snubbed in favour of 'real' democrats who, by virtue of being communist, represented the ideological descendants of 1848 radicals. Moreover, in the Hungarian house of parliament party theoretician József Révai saluted the 'revolutionary' French communists who attended the festivities.[215] The freezing of diplomatic exchanges between Hungary and France did not entail a complete shut-down in relations. The MKP still had to maintain this artificial proletarian internationalism.

This charm offensive began in earnest after the November/December strikes. The secretary of the Hungarian Popular Relief organisation, a body closely affiliated with the MKP, sent condolences and food parcels to the families of Alfred Puzzuoli and Vincent Voulant, two French workers killed during the strikes. As seen in the letter below, Voulant's mother was moved by this gesture:

> Monsieur et cher ami,
> Je viens de recevoir par l'intermédiaire du Secours Populaire Français, le colis de vivres que vous m'avez envoyé le jour de l'an en souvenir de mon fils regretté et lâchement assassiné alors qu'il luttait pour la cause des travailleurs de notre pays.

[211] Ibid, p.101.
[212] Ibid, p.101.
[213] Ibid, p.100
[214] Macher, 'La diplomatie culturelle entre la France et la Hongrie', p.258
[215] Ibid, p.258.

> Ce geste de solidarité vous honore et nous prouve la sympathie de votre peuple à l'égard du peuple de France.
> Merci de tout mon coeur pour ce petit cadeau, preuve de votre amitié et de votre solidarité.
>
> Veuve Voulant.[216]

This act of solidarity, cited by *La Défense* as an example of the MKP's benevolent concern for the fate of workers across the globe, marked the first time Hungarian communists appropriated post-war industrial action in France to uphold a narrative of transnational worker unity.

The French miners' strike provided an even greater opportunity for the MKP, which had merged with the socialists and became the MDP (Hungarian Working People's Party) by October 1948, to replenish this myth. Articles featured in *Dunántúli Napló* lacked the revanchist tone of Polish dailies, probably because Hungarian immigrants did not sustain the abuse Poles experienced. The life story of miner György, and other testimonies of factory-workers published in *Dunántúli Napló,* demonstrate how the miners' strike fed this illusory narrative of Hungarian and other Eastern European labourers being duty-bound to help liberate their brothers and sisters behind the Iron Curtain.[217]

György was a former soldier who fought as a volunteer in the Red Army for the Hungarian Soviet Republic in 1919.[218] After Romanian troops overran Budapest, Miklós Horthy spearheaded reprisal campaigns against communists, Jews, and leftist activists,

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[216] 'Un beau geste du Secours National de Hongrie', *La Défense* [Paris], no.163 (13-19th February 1948), p.4 col a.

[217] 'Osszetartozunk: A francia munkásosztály hősi harcáról beszél kiss György vájár, aki ilthon a termelés növelésével falytatja a küzdelmet a szocializmiséri', *Dunántúli Napló* [Pécs], no.251 (31st October 1948), p.7 col a-c.

[218] Ibid. E. Ablovatski, ' "Cleansing the Red Nest". Counterrevolution and White Terror in Munich and Budapest, 1919' (PhD thesis, Columbia University, 2004).

resulting in mass executions.[219] Fleeing across the Mediterranean, György reached French North Africa where he joined thousands of displaced workers.[220] In 1925, he was discharged and travelled to France and found employment in the mines of Alsace.[221] György took part in the post-war strike waves and paid dearly for his participation. He was forced to leave France and returned home to Hungary.[222]

According to the article, György worked in the northern coalfields of Pécs in October 1948 'where there was no need for miners to go on strike because workers were in government.'[223] Yet despite his expulsion from France, György sympathized with the plight of his former French co-workers and ended the interview by saying Pécs' miners stood alongside them.[224]

Employees in a Hamerli Glove factory helped collect money for French workers, with some explaining they understood what it meant to go on strike for eight weeks with barely enough food to survive, and resisting police brutality at the same time.[225] One employee recalled when his father returned home without sufficient money to feed his family, while another also contributed money to solidarity funds because he worked for a year in France.[226]

Yet it is unlikely these accounts were entirely truthful. Judging from an article in *Szabad Nógrád*, not everyone was so charitable.[227] Some people refused to donate money

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[219] Ibid. See P. Hanebrink, *A Specter Haunting Europe. The Myth of Judeo-Bolshevism* (London, 2018), pp.11-82.
[220] Ibid.
[221] Ibid
[222] Ibid.
[223] Ibid.
[224] Ibid.
[225] 'Miétünk is Harcolnak: A péci dolgozók ezreinek szive egyült dobog a francia bányászokkal', *Dunántúli Napló* [Pécs] no.270 (24th November 1948), p.3 col a-c.
[226] Ibid.
[227] 'Hol van az ellenség?', *Szabad Nógrad* [Salgótargán], no.46 (11th November 1948), p.2 col a.

for they did not understand what was happening in France or sympathize with French miners' demands.[228] A sinister note concluded the article, stating the newspaper would single out individuals exhibiting a lack of charity.

Telegrams Hungarian trade unionists sent to the FNSS expressing their pity for French strikers should therefore be read with a pinch of salt as well.[229] Members of the Hungarian trade union congress, such as Apro Harustyak or Antal Jonisef, wrote messages alluding to France's subservience to American imperialism and how victory for miners would reclaim lost sovereignty.[230] When over 800,000 florins, the equivalent of sixteen million francs were transferred from the HTUC (Hungarian Trade Union Congress) to the French National Bank, it was neither out of sympathy for strikers nor to help finance sabotage which Jules Moch feared so much.[231] It was simply a means of making the West look wicked, not only to miners in France, but to Hungarians still unconvinced by the superiority of communism.

Hungarian students from Salgótarján compared the miners' strike to the trial of Mátyás Rákosi, which took place in the inter-war years.[232] Defying Admiral Horthy's anti-Bolshevik legislation, Rákosi became an international communist martyr during his trial in 1935.[233] Students thanked French miners for their support before Rákosi's acquittal. It was only fair they return the favour when French miners faced their own impasse. The strike was of far-reaching significance for Hungarian communists, not in

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228 Ibid.
229 'Lettre de la Fédération Hongroise des cuirs et peaux à la FNSS', November/December 1948, ADSSD, Fonds FNSS-CGT, 239J 12.
230 'Télégramme du Conseil Central des Syndicats Hongrois', November/December 1948, ADSSD, Fonds FNSS-CGT, 239J 12.
231 'Télégramme du Conseil Central des Syndicats Hongrois', 28th December 1948, ADSSD, Fonds FNSS-CGT, 239J 12.
232 'Lettre des étudiants de l'école du Parti des Travailleurs Hongrois à Salgótarján', 27th October 1948, ADSSD, Fonds FNSS-CGT, 239J 12.
233 B. Apor, *The Invisible Shining: The Cult of Mátyás Rákosi in Stalinist Hungary 1945-1956* (New York, 2017), p.101.

terms of humanitarian concern for strikers' families, but for how much damage it could inflict on France's reputation as a liberal democracy.[234]

It is therefore ironic a regime praising French strikers, deprived its own workforce of the right to strike. Exiled Hungarian train conductors revealed independent trade union movements did not exist in communist Hungary.[235] André Lafond, secretary of CGT-Force Ouvrière, interviewed Mr Samuel, ex-secretary general of the Hungarian railway union for *Le Réveil Syndicaliste* in November 1948. He declared there was no difference between dictatorial policies Admiral Horthy unleashed during the inter-war period or those imposed by the 'People's Republic' following World War II.[236]

Repression was a recurring theme in Hungarian trade union history. Samuel described the great railway strike of 1905, after which the Austro-Hungarian monarchy warred against trade unions. Military authorities in the Habsburg Empire continued to crack down on syndicalism throughout World War I.[237] Both communist leader Béla Kun and Admiral Horthy showed no sympathy for autonomous trade unions. A brief détente in 1922 allowed the passing of pro-labour laws guaranteeing an eight-hour day, paid leave, and retirement funds. However, the outbreak of World War II impeded further progress.[238] Samuel implied the arrival of Soviet tanks bred excitement. Activists looked forward to a time when trade unions would flourish, but Hungary's stalinization put paid to such hopes. Unions became another appendage of a centralized bureaucracy unable to escape the whims of the MKP.[239]

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[234] 'Lettre des étudiants de l'école du Parti…'.
[235] 'La fin du syndicalisme en Hongrie', *La Révolution Prolétarienne* [Paris], no.323 (January 1949), p.31.
[236] Ibid.
[237] Ibid.
[238] Ibid.
[239] Ibid.

The communist-controlled Ministry for Transport purged railway unions of social-democrats. Police exerted immense pressure on railwaymen who refused to comply, either with bribes or by force.[240] Conversion to the MKP guaranteed material benefits and career advancement. Membership was often the only way to escape imprisonment or worse. By January 1948, over half of suspect railwaymen surrendered, while the rest mysteriously 'disappeared'. Anyone found participating in strikes or possessing propaganda urging other labourers to take part would be sentenced to five years in a concentration camp.[241]

La Révolution Prolétarienne translated a leaked transcript of a telegram the Hungarian government published in September 1949. Its contents corroborate Samuels' comments: that Rákosi's authoritarian leadership abolished the right to strike and destroyed trade union liberties.[242] The telegram mentioned a statement issued on the 16th July, which condemned construction worker union representatives for launching strikes without authorization. A committee concluded construction worker unionists had failed to adapt to conditions the new regime imposed.[243] The telegram warned labourers not to stray from the Party line. The committee castigated the trade union movement for failing to steer Hungarian workers down the right path. Offenders had to be replaced with obedient cadres.[244]

It is likely genuine sympathy for French miners was rare in Hungary. Donating money was an order imposed by the MDP and rarely a choice. Why would shopkeepers

[240] Ibid, p.32.
[241] Ibid, p.31.
[242] 'Hongrie. Rákosi veut mettre les ouvriers au pas', *La Révolution Prolétarienne* [Paris], no.331 (September 1949), pp.7-8.
[243] Ibid.
[244] Ibid, p.8.

or factory-workers in Salgótarján sacrifice wages for foreign strikers struggling for 'freedom', when they were denied such rights?

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In sharp contrast to the MDP's often perfunctory solidarity with French workers, the KSČ's proletarian internationalism, especially in the wake of the November/December strikes in 1947, was far more pro-active and ambitious. While Polish and Hungarian communist parties limited their support for French labourers to organizing fundraisers, the KSČ went a step further in its propaganda campaigns by reaching out to individual strikers and offered them a chance to visit Czechoslovakia so they could see for themselves the beginnings of a socialist state free from anti-labour repression.

On the 16th April 1948, Dr Antonin Rezek, chief-secretary of the Central Committee of Czech trade unions, came to Paris to sign an accord with the CGT to allow over a hundred French workers to visit Czechoslovakia.[245] Every labourer chosen for this journey had been fined or imprisoned for participating in the November/December strikes.[246] Fifteen women and many youths selected from forty *départements* were invited. They each spent four days in Prague and ten days in the spa town of Karlovy Vary. Czech labourers raised funds to pay for all the expenses including air fare, accommodation, meals, and pocket money.[247]The PCF greatly appreciated this gesture of good faith, but with hindsight it only perpetuated a fiction in order convince onlookers of the prosperity and progress behind the Iron Curtain.

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[245] 'Solidarité des travailleurs tchécoslovaques à leurs camarades français', *L'Humanité* [Paris], no.1124 (17th April 1948), p.3 col a.
[246] Ibid.
[247] Ibid.

Immigrant Czech workers barely took part in French industrial action. The eviction of Czech embassy staff during the miners' strike sparked outrage, yet the KSČ did not possess the historical memory or emotional baggage manipulated by the Polish press.[248]

Even though a substantial Czech minority lived in France during the inter-war years, Czechs did not hold the same admiration for France as the Poles.[249] In sharp contrast to Polish miners or factory labourers, the rate of unionization among Czech workers was extremely low.[250] In the thirties, joining the CGTU was not an attractive proposition as Czechs hoped to return home as soon as possible.[251] This lack of engagement was perhaps a wise decision, considering the number of immigrant trade unionists who became targets for repression both before and after World War II. Apart from select episodes in recent memory, such as Czech volunteers fighting on behalf of France in World War I or the Munich betrayal of 1938, ties between France and Czechoslovakia were tenuous at best.[252] Cold War tensions and a fraught international context were the KSČ's main sources of inspiration when exploiting French strikes for their own political gain.

By April 1948, relations between France and Czechoslovakia were at their lowest ebb since the invasion of the Sudetenland. While American and Soviet troops had evacuated Bohemia since 1946, the USSR continued to loom large over Czechoslovak foreign policy.[253] Unwilling to endure further betrayals at the hands of England or France

[248] 'Contre la xénophobie de Jules Moch', *L'Humanité* [Paris], no.1308 (19th November 1948), p.3 col a.
[249] J.P. Namont, *La Colonie tchécoslovaque: une histoire de l'immigration tchèque et slovaque en France 1914-1940* (Paris, 2011), pp. 207-208.
[250] Ibid, p.209-210.
[251] Ibid, p.207.
[252] J.P. Namont, 'The Czechoslovak Colony in France: Stakeholder in the Relationship between France and Czechoslovakia in 1914-1940' *Slovak Foreign Policy,*6/2(2005), pp.97-109.
[253] A. Marès, 'La politique étrangère tchécoslovaque (1948-1989): un cas généralisable?', *Relations Internationales,*148/4 (2011), p.61.

and fearing a resurgent Germany, Socialist President Edvard Beneš chose to strengthen ties with the Soviet Union. Since 1943, Prague and Moscow signed multiple bilateral treaties pushing Czechoslovakia further away from the American sphere of influence.[254] Hopes in the Quai d'Orsay of seeing Czechoslovakia become a bridge between the West and East turned sour when Stalin continued to assert his influence inside the country. The annexation of Ruthenia, combined with the proliferation of Soviet spy rings caused alarm.[255] The Ministry for Foreign Affairs was purged of any anti-communist elements, leaving diplomat Jan Masaryk powerless and at the mercy of Slovak communist Vlado Clementis.[256] Stalin dissuaded Czech representatives from accepting Marshall Aid in the summer of 1947, a decision French diplomat Maurice Déjean greeted with trepidation.[257] Relations dampened further when negotiations seeking to re-affirm friendship treaties floundered during the winter of 1947.[258] The chaos wrought during the November/December strikes convinced Minister Georges Bidault not to pursue any rapprochement with Czechoslovakia.[259] The erosion of democratic norms climaxed when the KSČ mobilized parades of armed militias in February 1948, prompting Beneš to back down and dismiss non-communist ministers.[260] Czechoslovakia was now firmly ensconced in the Eastern bloc.

This downturn in Franco-Czech relations did not prevent the KSČ from reaching out to gullible spectators in France. Since May 1946, the central committee of the KSČ

[254] Ibid, p.61.
[255] Ibid, pp.61-62.
[256] Ibid, p.62.
[257] Ibid, p.62. M. Allard, 'La France face à la soviétisation de l'Europe de l'Est: le cas tchécoslovaque' in F. Bozo (ed), *Relations Internationales et stratégie. De la guerre froide à la guerre contre le terrorisme* (Rennes, 2005), pp.13-28.
[258] Ibid.
[259] Ibid.
[260] Ibid.

adopted a resolution to expand propaganda operations in the West.[261] The communist-controlled ministry of information conceived a new diplomatic strategy which sought to sell a sophisticated image of the 'Czech road to socialism' to observers in France.[262] A new information bureau in Paris disseminated news extolling political, social, and economic developments taking place in Czechoslovakia for the French public.[263] Émile Sicard wrote travelogues describing a nation undergoing a spiritual and economic revolution.[264] Professor Pierre George, while visiting miners in Lidice, admired their seemingly inexhaustible will to rebuild a fairer society.[265] Journalist Daniel Sterne saw 'un pays libre' with stalls stacked with the latest novels by Louis Aragon.[266]

However, weeklies such as *Paris-Prague*, re-titled *Parallèle 50* in 1947 had a limited impact. The literary and artistic content of this newspaper was a reflection of the interests of chief editor Artur London and journalist/artist Adolf Hoffmeister.[267] Both men sought to seduce the Parisian intelligentsia and less so the masses of French workers beyond the West Bank.[268] Yet this message had to spread beyond the confines of consulates or bistros. It was not enough to rely on opinion pieces praising Czech avant-garde cinema to convince French labourers to convert to communism. The KSČ had to be creative in finding ways of appealing to a foreign audience, especially in light of the coup d'état in February 1948. Offering a tourist getaway to poor French strikers was an ideal opportunity to showcase the hospitable side of Czech communism. It was a chance to test a different form of diplomacy, catering not to the refined tastes of a scholarly elite

[261] F. Noirant, 'La naissance d'un malentendu. Les intellectuels communistes français et les non-dits de la soviétisation tchécoslovaque (1949-1950)', *Matériaux pour l'histoire de notre temps,* 59/1(2000), p.35
[262] Ibid, pp.35-36.
[263] Ibid, p.35.
[264] 'Témoignage par Émile Sicard', *Paris-Prague* [Paris], no.27(18th December 1946), p.1 col a-c.
[265] 'Que pensez-vous de "notre" république?', *Paris-Prague* [Paris], no.26 (11th December 1946), pp.1-3 col a-d.
[266] 'J'ai vu un pays libre', *Paris-Prague* [Paris], no.22 (9th December 1946), pp.1-3 col a-c.
[267] Noirant, 'La naissance d'un malentendu', p.36.
[268] Ibid.

but to the more grounded desires of regular labourers. A holiday away in Karlovy Vary, which surely included visits to therapeutic spas, was ample demonstration of the KSČ 's magnanimity and communism's superiority.[269]

For centuries Karlovy Vary had been a magnet for the wealthy.[270] In the 18th century, German poet Johann Wolfgang von Goethe spent years frequenting the spa town.[271] Lord James Ogilvy Findlater funded the expansion of nature preserves in the region during the Napoleonic wars, which soon seduced aristocrats from all across Europe.[272] For the next century, the healing properties of spas were transformed into a lucrative business attracting industrialists and intellectuals.[273] Schiller, Wagner, Chopin, Freud, and Paganini were just a few of the illustrious figures who enjoyed curative spas renowned for relieving chronic pain caused by arthritis, diabetes, or tuberculosis.[274] Resorts were forever associated with an international elite, and now incompatible with the National Health Service both Czech communists and socialists envisioned at the end of World War II.[275] Spas could no longer cater to privileged guests. Proven health benefits should be available to every Czech citizen, especially in the wake of such a devastating conflict. As specified in draft legislation written in 1945, spas were resources the state now owned and protected.[276]

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[269] 'Solidarité des travailleurs tchécoslovaques…17th April 1948'. 'Karlovy Vary compte sur 30000 hôtes', *Parallèle 50* [Paris], no.89 (8th April 1948), p.2 col b.
[270] Stanislav Burachovič, 'Chapters in the History of Karlovy Vary', p.9, http://lavernaromana.com/app-content/files/karlovy-vary/history-of-karlsbad-en.pdf (23rd December 2019)
[271] Ibid, p.6-7.
[272] Ibid, p.9.
[273] M. Sarova, 'Czech Spa and its History: Karlovy Vary traditional drinking cure with mineral and treatments', *The Journal of the Japanese Society of Balneology, Climatology and Physical Medicine,* 70/1(2006), p. 9.
[274] Ibid, p.9. Burachovič, 'Chapters in the History of Karlovy Vary', p. 9.
[275] *Karlovarský lázeňský časopis* (Karlovy Vary Spa Journal) no.2 (1950), pp.4-5 in T. Lebrová, 'Československé lázeňství v letech 1948-1960' (Czechoslovakian balneology in the years 1948-1960) (Bachelors thesis, Prague University of Economics, 2012), p.6.
[276] Lebrova, 'Czechoslovakian balneology', p.6

The nationalization of spa resorts in Karlovy Vary and Teplice became a priority for communists eager to win the hearts of a suspicious populace. Magazines advertising spas to Czech workers promised facilities once reserved for the bourgeoisie.[277] Less than a few weeks after the visit of former French strikers, Act number 125 passed in parliament, confirming the nationalization of the management of all medicinal resources in Czechoslovakia.[278] The Czechoslovak State Spa and Hot Spring commission ended private ownership of thermal assets.[279]

The Czechoslovak state exhibited a carefully crafted façade for visiting French strikers. It portrayed a benevolent communist state devoted to the welfare of the working-class both at home and abroad. Much like in Hungary, empathy for French labourers was probably rare. Selling a positive image of a newly-Sovietized Czechoslovakia was all that mattered for a KSČ desperate to make a good impression.

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In conclusion, post-war strikes in France had far-reaching repercussions abroad. They envenomed pre-existing fears of chaotic or communist-led strikes in Canada, pushing politicians and company directors in Quebec to overreact to unrest in Asbestos. Conversely, the French clergy's support for miners may have inspired priests in Quebec to help strikers in their own communities. Meanwhile, Dutch politicians and magistrates, while unencumbered by the blinding anti-communism which prompted Quebecois authorities to react so harshly to unrest in Asbestos, also used the French miners' strike to weaken an already diminished and isolated EVC. Transferring money to French strikers and offers to house French children were used to punish communist trade unionists who

[277] Ibid, p. 6.
[278] Ibid, p. 8.
[279] Ibid, p. 8.

sympathized with Indonesian nationalism. Cold War logic, combined with the often hysterical coverage of the strike both in Quebec and the Netherlands, ensured strikes in France inflamed fears of economic or industrial strife in the West.

Moreover, the impact of the 1947-48 strikes and their aftermaths in Eastern Europe have thus far been understudied. There is no doubt the Stalinization of Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, and Romania was primarily the result of Soviet imperialism. However, incidents such as the miners' strike in France gave credence to the rhetoric the PPR, MDP or KSČ promulgated. The abysmal treatment of Polish miners and their families did not go unnoticed. Their deportation was not ignored. French strikes were wielded as an instrument, either to assert more control domestically or to propagate the communist faith abroad. They gave ammunition to propagandists searching for an excuse to push Soviet satellites further away from reconciliation with the West. French authorities either unintentionally or otherwise, were partly to blame for precipitating this trend.

However, it is also likely that apart from a few enthusiastic party activists, genuine solidarity for French strikers and their demands was rare. The killing and unwarranted expulsion of Polish miners certainly did legitimise the PPR's 'enemy-making' narratives, but for Hungarian and Czech workers forced to suffer wage reductions or pressured into donating money, expressing 'solidarity' became another ritual to appease the ruling regime. As in the fundraising campaigns imposed on Soviet miners during the British General Strike of 1926, intimidation, fear, and coercion played their part in convincing people in Salgótarján or Czech factories to help French

workers.[280] By late 1948, proletarian internationalism had already become, in the words of Achim Landwehr, an 'empty signifier' for many living under communist rule. Instead of raising political awareness, 'solidarity' turned into a hollow slogan bereft of any significance and repeated without conviction.[281] Strikes in France proved the PPR, MDP, and KSČ had only one real concern: to keep up appearances for their benefactors in Moscow and to uphold a fiction for true believers at home and abroad.

[280] Ibid, p.553. See G. Gorodetsky, 'The Soviet Union and Britain's general strike of May 1926', *Cahiers du Monde Russe,* 17/2-3 (1976), pp.287-310.
[281] Ibid, pp.552-562.

Conclusion

Post-war strikes were battlegrounds littered with the grudges and divisions left over from the Occupation. The first chapter emphasized how much the lingering shadow of World War II needs to be reconsidered to understand the post-war strikes. In le Nord-Pas-de-Calais, anger at the firing or judicial persecution of respected maquisards festered before the 1948 miners' strike. The memory of wartime hardships, torture, and the physical scarring workers had sustained remained long after hostilities ended. Physiological factors, such as exhaustion from overwork, crippling wounds or disease, and the resentment born out of the selective heroism of the 'battle of production', which alienated bargemen and other labourers, rank highly among the subterranean motors of discontent. The preservation of concentration-camp-like detention centres for Indochinese or German prisoners, and the erection of confining ONCOR barracks, ensured *l'univers concentrationnaire*, particularly perceptible in the writings and observations of labour journalists, was a permanent fixture in the psychological and architectural landscape of the immediate post-war years.

These factors, combined with the rose-tinted portrayal of a thriving Soviet sphere in the communist and occasionally even centrist press reveal how easy it was to feel that the war was somehow not over. In Saint-Chamond, metal workers summoned the memory of the STO and anti-communist purges before and during the Phoney War to attack uncooperative bosses. *Cadres* in car-manufacturing plants went on strike to counter accusations of wartime treachery, while the Seine teachers' strike was framed as another conflict between French secular and denominational schools. But who emerged

victorious from this continuation of the war? Traditionally powerful and influential *patrons,* such as the Schneiders, proved impervious to the social-democratic *zeitgeist* of the era and resisted strikes led by the CGT. Engineers in north eastern *départements*, disillusioned with the coal industry's nationalization and mourning the authority they enjoyed under Vichy, took advantage of the severe judicial repression against miners in 1948 to reclaim their lost status as masters of the workplace.

Events abroad also accentuated this inability to demobilize afflicting French workers. For PCF-oriented CGT unionists, the press and correspondences with unions in and outside the French Empire sketched a world filled with democracies, dictatorships, colonial administrations, and other regimes united in waging war against workers. In the late forties local, national, and trade union newspapers, whether biased in favour of communist, socialist, right-wing, anarchist, and independent causes or parties, all imparted this message to varying degrees.

Yet this awareness should not be mistaken for sympathy. As Nicolas Delalande argued in his study of mutual aid and transnational support for strikes during the mid-nineteenth century, trade unionists throughout Europe did not trust each other. The mainly urban and British-oriented members of the First International looked down on miners and other workers who organized strikes spontaneously.[1] There is no reason to believe the relationship between the metropolitan CGT and sister unions in and outside the imperium was any different. Leading Cameroonian unionists saw the November/December strikes as a chance to further local anti-colonialist politics instead

[1] A. Knotter, 'Nicolas Delalande. La lutte et l'entraide. L'âge des solidarités ouvrières', *International Review of Social History,* 64/2 (2019), pp.331-333.

of an opportunity to express solidarity with metropolitan demands.[2] At best, the CGT proved mildly useful when lobbying the French government to release imprisoned workers or to condemn colonial repression.[3] While caring little for the fate of indigenous or foreign labourers, French unionists were nonetheless well informed about the various *reculs ouvriers* sweeping through the imperium and the world at large. Some certainly feared similar measures had begun to intrude on French soil, thereby fueling desires to preserve legislation favourable to workers via strikes and other forms of protest throughout 1948.

As a concept, the 'impossibility of demobilization' proved very useful in dissecting the discontent of the many professions examined in the first four chapters. It grounds the anxieties, stresses, worries, and frustrations which drove unrest firmly in the context of the 'long Second World War'. However, this concept is ill-equipped to tackle questions about the aftermath of the 1947-48 strikes in the private lives of former strikers and their families. What happened to households when trade unions or charities could no longer pay for debts accrued during the 1947-48 conflicts? Did wives find jobs to survive after employers had fired and blacklisted their husbands? What was the experience of French children sent to live in Belgium or Switzerland and how did this affect their relationship with parents or communities after returning home?[4] As Gina Millar stated in her oral history of the New Zealand Waterfront strikes, labour historians should look

[2] Kaptue, *Travail et main-d'oeuvre...',* pp.196-202.
[3] N.M. Tchouake, 'La construction de l'imaginaire socio-politique bamiléké et les prémices de la rébellion dans l'Ouest-Cameroun', *Outre-Mers. Revue d'histoire,* 94/354-355 (2007), p.266.
[4] 'Lettre de Hans Stebler à la CGT', December 1948, ADSSD, Fonds FNSS-CGT, 239J 12.

beyond the political ramifications of industrial action and explore the private sphere instead.[5]

Moreover, the first four chapters covered only a small fraction of the many professions that went on strike in post-war France. Predominantly female laundresses and textile workers initiated multiple walkouts after the war; a topic which scholars have neglected. Yet it is thus far unclear how the 'impossibility of demobilization' could apply to this profession. Despite its limitations, this concept could still help uncover the discontent afflicting indigenous workers in the French Empire. As Ruth Ginio amply demonstrated in her work on the demobilization of African soldiers serving in the French Army after World War II, thousands of indigenous troops returned to the workplace deeply disillusioned by their wartime experiences.[6] It would be fascinating if further studies could determine whether an inability to demobilize compelled Algerian, Moroccan, and Tunisian miners or factory-workers to go on strike in their respective territories in the post-war period as well, and to discover how this inability was similar or distinct from the experience of metropolitan workers.

While the first part of the thesis argued the spectre of World War II or Occupation is crucial for understanding the outbreak of French post-war strikes, the second part demonstrated Cold War paranoia and growing fears of anti-imperialist movements bred a similar mentality among security branches and colonial administrations facing unrest throughout the French Empire.

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[5] G. Millar, 'Families and the 1951 New Zealand Waterfront Lockout' (PhD thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, 2013), pp.173-189.
[6] R. Ginio, *The French Army and its African soldiers: The Years of Decolonization* (Lincoln, 2017), pp.30- 41.

When examining 'anxieties' afflicting European colonialism in the immediate post-war years, previous studies typically focus on the menace that American or Soviet geopolitical ambitions in the Middle-East or North Africa posed to European interests.[7] Political scientists such as Peo Hansen and Stefan Jonsson repeatedly emphasized the humiliation and weakness which haunted policy makers in France, Britain, and the Netherlands throughout the first post-World War II decade. Scholars often cite the resurgence of anti-colonial and nationalist movements in Asia, exemplified by the independence of India, Burma, and Ceylon, or the outbreak of wars in Indochina, Indonesia, and the Malayan 'emergency' as the main shocks responsible for stoking fears of rebellion among colonial administrations in Africa.[8] This applies to the French Empire in particular, considering the Algerian uprisings of 1945, Malagasy revolts two years later, and the growing popularity of the UPC (Union des Populations du Cameroun) in Cameroon.[9] Yet 'external' shocks only partly explain what happened to French colonial police or intelligence services. This thesis has demonstrated that relatively minor and little-known 'shocks' such as strikes in sugar cane fields in overseas *départements* or the mines of Algeria and Morocco, were also perceived and treated as dangers to colonial order. As part of these 'shocks', the November/December strikes in the metropole inflamed pre-existing fears of communist or nationalist insurgencies, blinding colonial authorities to the mostly apolitical demands of strikers.

The 1947-48 strike waves also rattled metropolitan intelligence services and security forces. Disruptive industrial action provided a perfect excuse for DST, CRS, or

[7] P. Hansen and S. Jonsson, *Eurafrica: The Untold History of European Integration and Colonialism* (London, 2015), pp.71-146.
[8] Ibid.
[9] T. Deltombe, M. Domergue and J. Tatsitsa, *Kamerun! Une guerre cachée aux origines de la Françafrique, 1948-1971* (Paris, 2019).

police, afflicted with their own inability to feel that the war had ended, to dismember foreign communist cells. Long-standing prejudices, coupled with a 'xénophobie de la Libération' and myopic anti-communism led to the violent mistreatment of immigrant labourers between, during and after the 1947-48 strikes. The expulsion of Italian trade unionists from France prompted no reaction from De Gasperi's government, considering the anti-communist and anti-partisan crusade taking place in Italy. Moreover, the exile and imprisonment of Spanish republicans signaled the abandonment of France's anti-Franco foreign policy, which had so isolated Spain on the world stage after World War II. Yet the deportation or mistreatment of Polish miners and pro-Romanian organizations or individuals had the opposite effect. As a result, this severely harmed France's diplomatic and cultural standing in Eastern Europe. It gave the PPR another opportunity to paint France, and by extension the West, as untrustworthy and ungrateful enemies seeking to betray Poland once again.

Solidarity campaigns the MDP and KSČ initiated in response to the French miners' strike also reveal Eastern European communist regimes inherited a distinctly Stalinist conception of proletarian internationalism. In local or national presses, imprisoned French strikers became the objects of pity, while coercive fundraisers, donations, or choreographed holiday gateways advertised the so-called 'superiority' of communist rule to reluctant domestic audiences and credulous foreign observers. This paternalistic brand of proletarian internationalism persisted long after Stalin's demise and Nikita Khrushchev's coming to power in the early fifties. Warsaw Pact members, unshackled from Stalinist isolationism and free to conduct relatively independent foreign policies in Africa or Latin America, used the hook of proletarian internationalism to gain

influence throughout the Third World.[10] The People's Republics recycled and expanded this propaganda model over and over again, while also sending hundreds of economic advisors, teachers, doctors, engineers, and arms to developing countries.[11] French post-war strikes arguably represent the first time this model was tested.

This thesis also proved Western nations such as the Netherlands were equally adept at weaponizing French strikes to discredit or marginalize internal enemies and, while never explicitly mentioned by name, French strikes certainly prompted Quebecois authorities to react violently to unrest in Asbestos.

Yet questions still remain unanswered. Should the 1947-48 strike waves, given their global ramifications outlined throughout the second half of this thesis, rank alongside other events in France's transnational revolutionary tradition?

Global histories generally position Paris as the world's capital of radical agitation since the late eighteenth century. The French Revolution sent shockwaves throughout Europe and led to the creation of various 'sister' republics, a failed rebellion in Ireland, and triggered the first successful slave rebellion in Saint Domingue.[12] The abdication of Charles X in 1830 announced further revolutionary waves which gave birth to Belgium, reinvigorated Polish resistance to Tzarist oppression, sparked revolts in the German

[10] P.E. Muehlenbeck and N. Telepneva, *Warsaw Pact Intervention in the Third World. Aid and Influence in the Cold War* (London, 2018), pp. 2-17. See also T. Rupprecht, *Soviet Internationalism after Stalin: Interaction and Exchange between the USSR and Latin America during the Cold War* (Cambridge, 2015).
[11] R. Hornsby, 'The post-Stalin Komsomol and the Soviet fight for Third World Youth', *Cold War History,* 16/1 (2016), pp. 90-98.
[12] S. Desan, L. Hunt and W. Max Nelson, 'Introduction', in S. Desan, L. Hunt and W. Max Nelson (eds), *The French Revolution in Global Perspective* (New York, 2013), p.1.

Confederation, and galvanized calls for liberal constitutions in Swiss cantons.[13] In 1848, upheaval in Paris had an even greater impact abroad. Frightened presidents, princes and kings from Prussia to Latin America, granted pre-emptive concessions to their peoples as they feared another 1789 would overthrow the established order.[14] The Paris Commune of 1871 inspired Vladimir Lenin, Irish nationalists like James Connolly, former abolitionists in the United States, and even labourers in Shanghai.[15] The international appeal of the May 1968 *événements*, especially in Eastern Europe, South Africa, and Mexico is well documented, while dozens of left and right-wing groups on every continent adopted the symbolism of the 2018 Yellow Vest movement as their own.[16]

In comparison, the 1947-48 strikes did not diffuse unrest across Europe or beyond. French workers were not a vanguard eager to spread industrial contention abroad. As the fourth chapter argued, France looked to the world just as much as the world looked to France. The suppression of labour rights and strikes which occurred simultaneously in the United States, the Iberian Peninsula, Eastern Europe, and the French Empire propelled strike action in France by late 1948. Yet to what degree could events in such varied sectors influence French workers' decision-making? Many variables still need to be examined. It is also debatable as to whether colonial *reculs*

[13] J.A. Schmidt-Funke, 'The Revolution of 1830 as a European Media Event' (16th August 2017), http://ieg-ego.eu/en/threads/european-media/european-media-events/revolution-of-1830 (24th November 2020)

[14] K. Weyland, 'The Diffusion of Revolution: '1848' in Europe and Latin America', *International Organisation,* 63/3(2009), pp.391-423.

[15] S. Bernstein, 'The Impact of the Paris Commune in the United States', *The Massachusetts Review,* 12/3(1971), p.443. J. Bergman, 'The Paris Commune in Bolshevik Mythology', *The English Historical Review,* 129/541(2014), pp.1412-1441. E.J. Perry, 'From Paris to the Paris of the East and Back: Workers as Citizens in Modern Shanghai', *Comparative Studies in Society and History,* 41/2(1999), p.353. D. Fallon, 'Ghosts of the Paris Commune' (14th April 2016), https://jacobinmag.com/2016/04/james-connolly-paris-commune-easter-rising-tactics (24th November 2020)

[16] R. Gildea, 'The Global 1968 and International Communism', in J. Fürst, S. Pons and M. Selden (eds), *The Cambridge History of Communism* (New York, 2017), p.39. A. von der Goltz and J. Mark, 'Encounters', in R. Gildea, J. Mark and A. Warring (eds), *Europe's 1968: Voices of Revolt* (Oxford, 2013), pp.132-163.

ouvriers could be considered foreign. Yet, as Timothy Snyder argues, post-war economic reconstruction and integration quickly loosened the hold of empire in the minds of many European citizens and it is possible that French trade unionists perceived imperial *reculs ouvriers* as foreign matters.[17]

The strikes of 1947-48 possessed none of the heroes of 1789, none of the ideals of 1830 or 1848, none of the symbolism of 1871 or 2018, none of the triumphs of *Le Front Populaire* and certainly none of the romanticism, media exposure, or youth appeal that the *soixante-huitards* enjoyed.[18] Yet more importantly, the 1947-48 strikes simply did not inspire any other movements across the globe. Although some Martinican, Guadeloupian, Reunionese, Guyanese, Algerian, and Moroccan workers in the French Empire went on strike hoping to obtain the same wages and rights metropolitan workers had already acquired, the few attempts at 'exporting' any insurrectionary fervor leftover from France into Algeria or Finland, either fell on deaf ears or never gained any momentum.

Instead, the 1947-48 strikes are exceptional in that they unleashed what Kurt Weyland called a 'reactionary solidarity' throughout post-war imperial, European, and even Francophone worlds.[19] As the last three chapters made clear, colonial administrations in the French empire, along with Dutch, Quebecois, Spanish, Italian politicians to the 'West', and the 'popular democracies' in Eastern Europe, were all unconsciously united in using the example of strikes in France either to clamp down on

[17] T. Snyder, 'Europe's Dangerous Creation Myth' (1st May 2019), https://www.politico.eu/article/europe-creation-project-myth-history-nation-state/ (24th November 2020)
[18] K. Kornetis, ' "Everything Links" ? Temporality, Territoriality and Cultural Transfer in the '68 Protest Movements, *Historein,* vol.9(2012), p.40.
[19] Weyland, 'The Diffusion of Revolution', pp.403-404.

dissent *overtly* via violent means or to impose ideological conformity *covertly* via solidarity campaigns. Yet this thesis only covered a fraction of this reactionary internationalism. Australian commentators and perhaps government insiders cited the French government's uncompromising response to mining strikes as examples worth emulating. It is likely Prime Minister Ben Chifley, in order to thwart accusations of cowardness, heeded this advice during the New South Wales coal strike of 1949.[20] Months later, Prime Minister Peter Fraser also mentioned the French miners' strike in a speech justifying compulsory military training in New Zealand.[21] More research is needed to find out to what degree French strikes were responsible for fueling 'reactionary solidarity' in the post-war Anglosphere.

Ultimately, the 1947-48 strike waves did not leave behind a political, social, intellectual, or cultural afterlife comparable to other global or transnational moments in modern French history. There are few monuments or memorabilia commemorating the lives of workers killed in clashes with the CRS. Bar certain exceptions, like Kent miner Jack Collins who recalled the 1948 French miners' strike when he thanked the CGT for sending food and gifts in 1984, hardly anyone outside metropolitan France remembers these events.[22] The French State did all in its power to ban or censor the rare films and newsreels the CGT and PCF produced.[23] It took until 2019 for a street in Saint-Étienne to be named after miner Antonin Barbier who was killed by security forces in October 1948.[24] The anger and betrayal felt so strongly by surviving workers who were

[20] P. Deery, *Labour in Conflict: The 1949 Coal Strike* (Canberra, 1978), p.29.
[21] New Zealand House of Representatives, 28th Parliament, 3rd session, 30th June 1949, p.90.
[22] Nicholas Jones, 'Untold story of international help in the 1984-85 miners' strike', (8th February 2016), http://www.nicholasjones.org.uk/article-categories/40-trade-union-reporting/314-untold-story-of-international-help-in-1984-85-miners-strike (15th June 2020)
[23] Vivens, 'Conflit social', p.70.
[24] 'Firminy rend hommage à Antonin Barbier avec une rue à son nom' (20th April 2019), https://www.leprogres.fr/loire-42-edition-ondaine/2019/04/20/firminy-rend-hommage-a-antonin-barbier-avec-une-rue-a-son-nom (24th November 2020)

persecuted, stigmatized, blacklisted, and stripped of wartime medals for their involvement in post-war strikes persists to this very day. Former miners like Norbert Gilmez still wonder how OAS (Organisation de l'Armée Secrète) members were forgiven for their sins, while patriots who fought against Nazi Germany were punished with a lifetime of unemployment and disgrace.[25]

Everyone who either participated or opposed these strikes had compelling reasons to forget about them. Yet this is precisely why the study of the 1947-48 strike waves is so important. These events were unlike any other in contemporary French history, both in terms of the motivations which made them happen on a national scale and on their wider repercussions in the imperial, francophone, and European worlds of the immediate post-war era. This thesis represents the first, and hopefully not the last, investigation into their significance.

[25] H. Sabéran, 'Les vies brisées des mineurs grévistes de 1948 au grand jour' (24th July 2014), https://www.liberation.fr/societe/2014/07/24/les-vies-brisees-des-mineurs-grevistes-de-1948-au-grand-jour_1069834 (24th November 2020)

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