University of Oxford

Faculty of History

Cultures of Time:

radical political movements in France, 1899–1913

Alexandra Catherine Marie Paulin-Booth

Balliol College

Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Trinity Term 2017





Short abstract

This thesis argues that understandings and experiences of time were a central element in the creation and the development of radical political movements on the far right and the far left in France in the period from 1899 to 1913. I establish this argument on three levels: first, time was of particular importance to the characters of this study and to the groupings they formed; next, it was a source of contestation which groups often used to distinguish themselves from one another or which could divide them internally; and finally, different understandings and experiences of time caused radical movements to evolve in certain ways and were at the heart of how they developed.

The study draws its sources from several overlapping circles of thinkers, writers, and activists: those who engaged in the Dreyfus Affair, those active in independent socialist and syndicalist groups, and those involved in nationalist leagues. Diverse though these groupings were, they all asked parallel questions about the nature of and the relationship between the temporal categories of past, present, and future. On the far left, thinkers and activists sought to bridge a perceived gulf between present and future while on the far right, many pondered how to overcome a present they perceived as worthless and attempted to heal the rift between past and future in the French national timeframe.

Exploring ideas about time allows us to enrich our understanding of these circles, the nature of their activism, and the broader makeup of the French political landscape of the time. Ultimately, the thesis offers an original perspective on an important moment in French history and, in so doing, seeks to make a methodological contribution by demonstrating that understandings and experiences of time provide a useful analytical tool for historians.

Long abstract

It might be expected that a thesis about time in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries would address a number of issues related to the scientific, intellectual, and social history of the era. These could include, for example, the adoption of Greenwich as the location of the meridian in 1884 (a move not accepted in France until 1911); the work of the philosopher Henri Bergson on the apprehension of time (*Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience*, 1889); or the contraction of time which resulted from the increase in railway travel and the growing use of the telegraph.

This thesis is not about any of these things. Instead, they provide a vibrant backdrop for a study which is focused on time in the political arena. This is a study of the conceptualisation and the experience of time in radical political movements in France in the era from 1899 to 1913. I argue that understandings of time were a central element in the creation and the development of radical movements. I establish this argument on three levels: first, time was of particular importance to the characters of this study and to the groupings they formed; next, it was a source of contestation which these various groups often used to distinguish themselves from one another or which could divide them internally; and finally, different understandings and experiences of time caused radical movements to evolve in certain ways and were at the heart of how they developed.

The central figures in this study have been drawn from three overlapping circles of writers and activists: those who became engaged in the Dreyfus Affair and subsequently in the Universités populaires, which were founded in the wake of the scandal; the left-wing activists who were involved with the reviews *Le Mouvement socialiste*, *Cahiers de la Quinzaine*, and *Pages libres*; and those on the right who were associated with the Ligue des patriotes, the Ligue de la Patrie française, Action française, or the Cercle Proudhon. These groups were highly diverse, but they were nonetheless asking parallel questions about past, present, and future, and the relationship between these three temporal categories. Such questions tended to centre on how and when social and political change might be brought about, as well as whether such change would be an attempt to create an entirely new future or recover a lost past. Between the Dreyfus Affair and the First World War, those on the far right and the far left who sought to alter society profoundly became especially concerned with conceptualising time and with articulating their individual and collective experiences of it.

Throughout this thesis, I have insisted on focusing on the conceptualisation of time and not on its content—that is to say, I am interested in the ways in which past, present, and future were conceived of as ideas, and not primarily in the discussions surrounding what had happened in the past or what might be brought about in the future. Excellent accounts of the past's contested role in history have already been provided by, for example, Robert Gildea (*The Past in French History*), or by the many contributions to Pierre Nora's imposing *Lieux de mémoire* project. What I have tried to do is something quite different: I have sought to understand how past, present, and future were understood as concepts and how these concepts can have an influence of activism and on the development of political ideologies and movements. In other words, what were the actual characteristics of these temporal categories and how were they seen to interrelate? Clearly, this has involved assessing the 'content' of time to a certain extent—but I use this to access what I see as the more significant questions of concept. It is questions of concept, ultimately, that get us closer to understanding time's motivating power.

My choice to focus on radical (rather than moderate) political thinkers was influenced by the notion that most of those who seek a drastic break with the present are pushed to reflect on the nature of the future and, by extension, the past and the present. All attempts to bring about change have the potential to be configured as a fight for possession of the future—but the more ruptured that change is the more it provides an impetus to think about the passage between the here-and-now and the what-might-be. This is not, of course, to say that cultures of time did not exist on other parts of the political spectrum—merely that rupture provides one fruitful starting point. The radical thinkers of France provide an especially propitious testing ground for the hypothesis that time gives a unique insight into political culture for the same reason: the upheaval of 1789 and its heritage—which for many was one of the greatest ruptures imaginable, whether they conceived of it positively or negatively—occasioned explicit discussions about the nature of past, present, future, and the connections between them. Again, though, my contention is not that this feature renders France (or, for that matter, any other country which has undergone tumultuous changes) uniquely appropriate for the study of time; the notion of revolutionary heritage has served as one among many possible entry points.

The different groupings studied here and their attendant cultures of time provide the justification for the layout of this thesis, which proceeds in three parts divided into either two or three chapters each. Part I focuses on the Dreyfus Affair and its aftermath; Part II on the left; and Part III on the right. Within these parts, each chapter is based around a particular idea about time.

It is in Part I where experiences of—as opposed to ideas about—time come to the fore most prominently. In order to interrogate these experiences to their fullest, I have used different planes of time as lenses through which it is possible to trace Dreyfus Affair activism, its subsequent developments, and its eventual disappointments. These planes are emotional or personal, national, political, and historical time. I argue that notions of time shaped the nature of engagement in the Affair, and that—at least in the initial period of tumult—people felt their personal and emotional planes of time aligning powerfully with the time of history and the nation. In the wake of the Affair, the reconfiguration of the French political landscape and its division into more distinct cultures of left and right saw political time became bifurcated, with the left claiming the concept of the future and the right rallying to the past.

Chapter 2 explores two distinct ideas about time: the attempt and then the failure to unite personal, individual timeframes with a broader political timeframe in the form of the Universités populaires; and the temporal isolation that many Dreyfusards began to feel as the Affair receded into history. The case of the Universités populaires allows us to see how a movement could be both animated by and then bedevilled by particular ideas about time. The initiative was conceived in what was seen as a vivid and narrow window of opportunity for effecting long-term change. This window really was short-lived, however, and activists were never able to resolve the dilemma of how to make their rather epic timeframe of change meaningful within the context of individual lives. It was not just the Universités populaires which failed, however: Dreyfusard activism more broadly drifted into disenchantment. I argue that this was a feeling which had a particular sense of time at its core. As they saw their personal experiences being transmuted into history—the two timeframes no longer matching up—many members of the 1890s generation were left feeling that they were beached on the shores of the past, cut off from present and future.

Parts II and III do not pursue the analysis through particular lenses that proved so useful for Part I. This is because these sections of the thesis move on to assess the creation and the development of right- and left-wing political movements, and the focus shifts from experiences to conceptualisations (though the former still features). In designing the layout of Chapters 3–8, I have endeavoured to be guided by the particularities of the material, which is of course very different for left and right respectively.

The overarching argument of Part II is that the principal concern of the left in France during this period was the perception of a gulf between present and future. Caught between the end of an apocalyptic revolutionary timeframe and without having properly established a basis for profound change in the present or the near future, many writers and activists fretted

about the relationship between present and future. Chapters 3 and 4 demonstrate how debates about reform and revolution (surrounding the 'Millerand question', for instance) and criticisms of Marxism and religion were really expressions of an overriding anxiety about time. The left, sometimes taken to be hopelessly fragmented, is in this sense revealed as having a broad and quite significant point of commonality—though this was not enough to unite them. Chapter 4, which contains sections on futurist fiction and on the use of evolutionary theory, allows us to see how broader contemporary shifts in intellectual culture were interrogated by the left to see whether they held the potential to bridge the gap between present and future that so exercised thinkers at this time. Chapter 5 brings to the fore the contribution made by syndicalist thinkers in terms of the broader left's dilemma: it was within these circles that a concerted focus on the working classes themselves produced what looked like, for a time at least, the most viable way of solving the pressing problem of time.

Part III explores the far right nationalist leagues which either emerged during or were reinvigorated by the Dreyfus Affair. It is not, however, the Affair with which this section of the thesis begins. Chapter 3 assesses the legacy of the defeat in the Franco-Prussian War to argue that the nationalist conception of time was based predominantly on a rejection of the present. I insist on this as a vitally important starting point for ideas about time on the far right. In order to illustrate the depth of the scorn felt for the present, I have decided to employ evidence from earlier in the 1890s and the 1880s in this chapter, a period which otherwise falls outside of the remit of this thesis. The hatred of the present and what it represented as a concept resulted in the attempt to bring together past and future in an 'eternal France'; this became a cornerstone of the far right's doctrine. It was not always entirely clear what this appeal to eternity meant—its most concrete expressions were ideas about the popular voice, mothers, and the monarchy—but its very nebulousness attests to the fact that it was the concept of time which mattered rather than the tangible things that it represented. The right underwent a dramatic change after about 1905: activists did not renege on their mission to bring forth what was eternal about France, but they reconciled themselves to the present and its power as a time for action. I illustrate how this new posture of ebullience was dependent on a different understanding of time from that which had animated the movement initially.

The primary sources that form the basis of this thesis are highly diverse. Reviews and newspapers are at the crux of the study, since they provide the forums through which it is possible to trace the evolution of political tendencies and the debates between and within them. Working with reviews and newspapers has also allowed me to bring a variety of activists and writers to the fore and thus avoid overreliance on certain key figures (Maurice Barrès and

Georges Sorel, for instance) who might otherwise come to dominate such a study. These sources are supplemented by longer texts, pamphlets, speeches, and congress proceedings. At various points, I make use of letters, novels, and police reports. Letters are of particular importance in Chapter 1 because of its personal and experiential focus. Novels come to the fore in Chapter 4 in a section on fiction and futurist imaginings; such projections sometimes fell outside of the kind of political debate found in reviews. Police reports are especially significant in Chapters 7 and 8, when I place more emphasis on what the right was actually doing. In dealing with a potentially quite slippery topic such as that of time, I have found it particularly important to allow different types of source material to suggest themselves at various points. There are moments when letters or police reports have yielded wonderful results, for instance—and other times when they have proved fruitless. For this reason I have sought to draw on a wide base of sources and I have allowed particular kinds of sources to come to the fore at certain points in the thesis.

There are several reasons that I have decided to use the years 1899–1913 as the predominant timeframe for this study. I focus on the moment of change that took place between the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the First World War to illustrate how understandings of time, shifting and contested though they were, were at the heart of the reconfiguration of particular ideologies and movements. Specifically, the Dreyfus Affair provides a fertile starting point as it occasioned deeper reflections on time and on the place of individuals within it. It also set in motion changes to the political landscape which were rooted in time—it is the process of political formation and development based in ideas about time which this thesis is concerned with, and this process was to a large extent ignited by the Affair. I have chosen 1913 as the endpoint to this study for two related reasons. It was the year when syndicalist hopes for a general strike, already waning, truly abated (at least for the time being), and it was the year when the Cercle Proudhon, an initiative which brought together monarchists and syndicalists, ended its brief efflorescence. On the one hand, this signified the left's acceptance of a focus on the present at the expense of the future and, on the other, it announced the right's reconciliation with the present. These two events provide a symbolic moment which marked the end of the intense period during which thinkers and activists had insisted on configuring their attempts to enact change in terms of time. Ideas about time had been of central importance across the previous fourteen or so years as nationalists, syndicalists, and socialists had struggled to articulate and find meaning for their political missions but, once their particular ideologies became more firmly established, such ideas receded into the background.

I believe that this chronological focus has proved valuable. In particular, the thesis provides both a new insight into French political culture of the period and offers something of a *point de départ* for other studies of how conceptions of time can be used as a tool in historical research. There is, however, nothing (or almost nothing) that is truly unique about the period I focused on. In experiential terms, it was a period when the passage of time—and especially the fractures between past, present and future—were keenly felt by political activists, by wider political culture, and by society as a whole. But, for all of that distinctiveness, the exploration of concepts of time could clearly be extended to other periods in France's modern and contemporary history. The interwar years would be an obvious field in which such research could be undertaken. Similarly, it would also be possible to extend this concept to the political debates of the period that has retrospectively come to be known as the *trente glorieuses*. The experiences of the Second World War, the conflicts of decolonisation, the rapid modernisation of rural France, and the development of new forms of urban and suburban living created a political culture which in some respects was reminiscent of the 1899–1913 period in which time acquired particular prominence.

These are all fields that could provide fruitful new developments. But, for now, I shall be satisfied if this somewhat experimental thesis demonstrates that time is a useful tool for historians to think and work with.

Acknowledgments

The financial support for this thesis came from the Arts and Humanities Research Council and from Balliol's Peter Storey Scholarship: I am grateful for their generous funding of this work. The Charterhouse Foundation provided a grant for my research in 2013–4, enabling me to spend a whole year in Paris. The Vice Chancellors' Fund and the Peter Storey Scholarship then provided indispensable further support while I was writing up.

I would like to thank Jeremy Jennings and Ruth Harris for a stimulating and challenging viva examination. Their thorough reading of the thesis was hugely appreciated, and their suggestions for how to improve it for publication were helpful and thought-provoking.

I am hugely privileged to have been supervised by Robert Gildea. At every turn, he has encouraged me make my arguments broader and to think harder; his input throughout has been invaluable, from the initial shaping of the project to the finessing of the final drafts. I am especially grateful to him for supporting me in my decision to complete the thesis part time while taking up a demanding teaching position. I would have been lost without Robert's no-nonsense approach, immense patience, careful guidance, and foul-mouthed good humour.

Martin Conway, my College Advisor and senior colleague at Balliol, has become increasingly important throughout this process. I often had the feeling that Martin believed in me and in the project far more than I did. He guided me through several crises of confidence and one heart-stopping laptop failure with the sort of self-effacing and gentle unflappability of which only he is capable. He has read and provided immensely helpful comments on many parts of this thesis. On numerous occasions, he has pointed out to me what I was trying to say much more eloquently and succinctly than I was managing to say it. I am very lucky and deeply grateful to have had him as my mentor and colleague.

There are three other historians whose input has been of vital importance. Oliver Zimmer was my examiner for both Transfer and Confirmation of Status. He read early drafts of Parts I and II attentively and I am grateful to him for numerous suggestions, especially when it came to shaping the thesis as a whole. Oliver's belief in the project and its significance made a big difference to how I conceived of it. Christophe Prochasson, a historian who I have always looked up to, kindly gave up his time to read a very early draft of Part I and provided invaluable insights, comments, and suggestions for the rest of the thesis. Julian Wright, who taught me during my BA and my MA, got me started on this whole mad thing in the first place,

encouraging me to think about time as an analytical tool when I was an undergraduate. I will always be grateful to him for this. On a practical note, I would also like to thank him for kindly sending me the page-proofs of *Socialism and the Experience of Time* several months before it came out, which allowed me to revise the introduction to include a discussion of his book.

Debts to friends and family are too numerous to list here. Some, though, strike me as especially pertinent. Tom Cuthbertson, my best friend and longstanding housemate, generously shared his translating expertise and provided insights on several of the trickier passages quoted in this thesis. More importantly, he has been a source of unstinting support and laughter across the years that we have lived together. I have hugely valued his thoughtfulness and his warm-heartedness. He is a truly mint person.

Liz Schwarz (and her family, including the cats) and Alice Holt provided invaluable practical and moral support throughout the time I lived in Paris. Both also generously offered accommodation on several subsequent return trips. Liz has put me up in both Paris and London during research trips, and I am grateful to her for her generosity. Some of the final revisions for the thesis were undertaken while I was staying with Alice in Paris in the summer of 2017, and I thank her both for putting me up and for putting up with me. Her good humour and ceaseless encouragement were very precious.

I'm not sure Ellen Crabtree ever realised how much she helped. Her infectious enthusiasm for French history has often reinvigorated me when I was at a low ebb. For laughter, understanding, kindness, and a particularly well-timed box of chocolates, I would like to thank Ursula Minton. Thank you to Simon John for his endless encouragement and his companionship on a great many head-clearing bike rides. Dan Brookes was a constant source of support and warmth during the time I spent writing up, and I would also like to thank him wholeheartedly for his diligent proof-reading of the thesis—and for the amusing comments he left in the margins to boost my morale.

My parents, Bernice Paulin and Geoff Booth, have always been keen to instil two things in me: the importance of working hard and the even greater importance of being able to laugh at yourself. It is a mark of their support that they never felt the need to ask what baffling thing I was researching and writing about: they simply grasped how important it was to me and gave their wholehearted support. As a child, I spent a lot of time at places like the Imperial War Museum and Bletchley Park with my dad and, although this is not necessarily the sort of history that interests me now, it was nonetheless with him that I first learnt to love history. This thesis is dedicated to him, with much love.

Contents

Acknowledgements *ix*

List of abbreviations *xiv*

Note on translation *xv*

Introduction 1

Characters, sources, and timeframe 6

Historiography 13

Part I. Time and the Dreyfus Affair

Introduction 30

Historiography 35

Chapter 1: *Pleine action*

The experience of rupture: emotional time 40

France at stake: the times of the nation 44

Past versus future: political time 52

Chapter 2: *Un certain coup de minuit*

The founding of the Universités populaires 63

The failure of the Universités populaires 73

A generation adrift: from personal time to historical time 76

Conclusion 85

Part II. Time and Revolution

Introduction 88

Historiography 93

Chapter 3: *Du rêve à l'action*
The crumbling present 101
The 'Millerand question' and revolutionary heritage 104
Between present and future 107

Chapter 4: *Ce que nous pouvons espérer de l'avenir*
Marxism and religion: challenges to the future 115
Scientific time: the use and abuse of evolutionary theories 122
Futurist fiction: the return of utopia? 128

Chapter 5: *L'idéal n'est pas atteint!*
The time of the worker 137
Dual action 143
A general strike: the future in the present 148
Failure 156

Conclusion 159

Part III. Time and the Nation
Introduction 162
Historiography 167

Chapter 6: *La nuit et le vide*
The defeat: time and memory 178
The present: content and concept 190

Chapter 7: *Un avenir plus éloigné*
Conceptualising time: the eternal nation 201
Instinct and popular belief: overcoming the present? 207
Embodying time: women and the eternal nation 210
Monarchy and time 216

Chapter 8: *La politique du tumulte*
Reconciling with the present 223

The Cercle Proudhon 231

Conclusion 236

Conclusion 238

Broader vistas: the future of time 240

A contemporary concern? 242

Bibliography

Primary sources

Manuscript and archival sources 245

Printed sources

Newspapers and reviews 247

Books 248

Pamphlets 251

Speeches 252

Articles 253

Published correspondence 254

Secondary sources

Books 254

Articles and essays 265

Ph.D. theses 270

Internet sources 271

List of abbreviations

AF	Action française
AN	Archives nationales
APP	Archives de la Préfecture de Police
BNF	Bibliothèque nationale de France
LCI	*La Coopération des idées*
CQ	*Cahiers de la Quinzaine*
CCP	Centre Charles Péguy
CGT	Confédération générale du Travail
CHSP	Centre d'histoire de Sciences politiques
CP	Cercle Proudhon
FBT	Fédération des Bourses du Travail
IFHS	Institut français d'Histoire sociale
LMS	*Le Mouvement socialiste*
LPF	Ligue de la patrie française
LDP	Ligue des patriotes
LDH	Ligue française pour la défense des droits de l'homme et du citoyen
MS	Musée social
PL	*Pages libres*
UP	Université populaire

Note on translation

Quotations are provided in English and, unless otherwise acknowledged, all translations are my own. Where issues of translation are of particular importance or the wording of the original is especially interesting, I have provided the original French either in squared brackets in the text or in the relevant footnote.

INTRODUCTION

'Tell me how you handle the present and I'll tell you what your philosophy is'.[1] This quotation is taken from one of the final texts writer Charles Péguy penned in 1914 before he left for the front, where he would soon be killed.[2] His declaration—which was, characteristically, at once bullish and ambiguous—might at first seem simply to refer to the events which Péguy was witnessing and involved in during this time. There was, after all, no shortage of momentous occurrences to write about in the summer of 1914. However, it is clear that Péguy was writing about the present as a concept and not merely as a set of events. In the *Note conjointe*, he went on to plead for a conception of time which met the present on its own terms rather than seeing it as an 'anterior future' or a 'medium term between future and past'; it was not a mere 'bisector of future and past', but its own distinct and precious temporal category.[3] The present might have been ephemeral and easily elided in favour of the grander notions of past or future, but it was nonetheless imperative to hang on to its uniqueness. Appreciating this focus on time as a series of concepts is vital for understanding Péguy's worldview and, in a broader sense, opens the way for viewing ideas about and experiences of time as constitutive of particular philosophical or political positions.

---

[1] Charles Péguy, *Note sur M. Bergson et la philosophie bergsonienne; Note conjointe sur M. Descartes et la philosophie cartésienne* (Paris: Gallimard, 1935), p. 254. The first of these texts was originally published in Péguy's review *Cahiers de la Quinzaine* (*CQ*) in 1914, while the second was left unfinished and published posthumously. The texts are interdependent and together they form a whole; this quotation is taken from the second part, *Note conjointe sur M. Descartes*.

[2] Péguy was shot in the head on 5 Sept. 1914 in Villeroy, Seine-et-Marne (northern France), the day before the Battle of the Marne began.

[3] Ibid. 272. A significant proportion of the *Note conjointe* is given over to theorising about the present and to restating its special status, see ibid. 228–88.

This thesis argues that understandings of time were a central element in the creation and the development of radical political movements of right and left in France in the period from 1899 to 1913. I establish this argument on three levels: first, time was of particular importance to the characters of this study and to the groupings they formed; next, it was a source of contestation which these various groups often used to distinguish themselves from one another or which could divide them internally; and finally, different understandings and experiences of time caused radical movements to evolve in certain ways and were at the heart of how they developed.

Between the Dreyfus Affair and the First World War, those on the far right and the far left who sought to alter society profoundly became especially concerned with conceptualising time and articulating their individual and collective experiences of it. All attempts to bring about drastic change have the potential to be configured as a fight for possession of the future, but radical thinkers in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century France had a particular proclivity for configuring their social and political missions in terms of time and for allowing their understandings of time to guide them in those missions. They certainly did not all espouse Péguy's privileging of the present; instead, what emerged was a shifting panoply of competing ideas about how past, present, and future should be conceived.

Time was contested terrain: it was a battleground imbued with specific and loaded meanings upon which power and influence were fought over. It became a source of conflict between and within various groups precisely because it was so very often fundamental to the beliefs and instrumental in the actions of those engaged in radical politics in France during this time. Ideas about time mattered and were worth arguing over because they changed how people thought and what they did. Time was being talked about, debated, and—most significantly—it was shaping the way people thought about their political programmes. The particular cultures

of time that the far right and the far left created and cultivated were a key facet of their identities, informing their ideologies and influencing their directions.[4]

Radical political groups presented differing versions of past, present, future, and the flow of time. Their various visions suggested how and when social and political change might be brought about, as well as whether such change would be an attempt to create an entirely new future or recover a lost past. Despite manifest differences, a common set of questions was being asked about the nature of and the relationship between the three temporal categories on both the far left and the far right. This thesis is not primarily a study of the content of these ideas about time (what had happened, was happening, or might happen); rather, I seek to understand how time and its attendant categories were figured as concepts.[5] Socialists, syndicalists, and nationalists were all attempting to think through how notions of time might be employed in their political programmes, where the boundaries lay between categories of time, and how to grasp a time of action which could seem elusive. Their answers to these problems were varied, multifaceted, and protean, but parallel questions were being posed by all the thinkers and activists studied here. These questions and answers were, ultimately, more significant than any particular content ascribed to past, present, or future.

Through its focus on concepts of time, this thesis contributes to existing historiography in three areas: that of the particular movements under consideration and of political culture in France during this period; that of European intellectual and cultural history; and the literature surrounding historical methodology.

---

[4] My use of the phrase 'cultures of time' is inspired by Peter Osborne, who called modernity a 'culture of time', see *The Politics of Time: modernity and avant-garde* (London: Verso, 1995), p. x.

[5] The meaning of the past in terms of its content forms a lively field of study, but one which is distinct from that in which this thesis situates itself. On the use and abuse of the past, see Robert Gildea, *The Past in French History* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1994); Claire Andrieu, Marie-Claire Lavabre, and Danielle Tartakowsky (eds), *Politiques du passé. Usages politiques du passé dans la France contemporaine* (Marseille: Publications de l'Université de Provence, 2006); Maryline Crivello, Patrick Garcia, and Nicholas Offenstadt (eds), *Concurrences des passés. Usages politiques du passé dans la France contemporaine* (Marseilles: Publications de l'Université de Provence, 2006). The desire to interrogate the past, its function, and its spaces and events was at the heart of Pierre Nora's monolithic *lieux de mémoire* project; see Nora's reflections on this, 'Entre mémoire et histoire: la problématique des lieux' in his *Les lieux de mémoire*, vol. 1: *République* (Paris: Gallimard, 1984), pp. xv–xliii.

First, studying the conceptualisation of time allows us to appreciate an important aspect of radical thought which has hitherto not been analysed systematically. Ideas about time were an essential facet of the 'microclimate' of nationalist, socialist, and syndicalist groups during this period, influencing their ideologies and their collective self-definition.[6] Time also provides an original angle on how individual people in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century France conceived of themselves as political thinkers and activists, and it enables us to understand what motivated them to develop certain ideas and projects, adhere to one movement over another, or change allegiances. Furthermore, it sheds light on the disputes between and within political groups, which are too easily assumed to be clashes over power or tactics but which often had time at their core and which were also expressed using the language of time. In this way, my thesis contributes to the historiography of political activism as well as adding to the literature about the wider landscape of radical movements and their interactions in France during this period. Ultimately, it opens the way for original conclusions to be drawn about France's political culture at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries.

Second, thinkers and activists on the far left and the far right in France in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries offer a kaleidoscopic perspective on a moment in European history when ideas about time and politics were being reconceptualised. Between the Dreyfus Affair and the First World War, radical thinkers were articulating refreshing and often surprising ideas about the conceptualisation of past, present, and future which were intimately bound up with larger issues such as national identity, revolution, the nature of activism, and the emergence of what was felt to be a modern political culture. Discourses surrounding time were occasionally only semi-articulated, residing just below the surface of debates about these more

---

[6] Jean-François Sirinelli used the phrase 'microclimate' to describe the groupings in his seminal study, *Génération intellectuelle: khâgneux et normaliens dans l'entre-deux-geurres* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1994, 1st edn 1988), p. 12.

conspicuous issues but always shaping them powerfully. Ideas about time formed a lens through which broader notions were filtered, and this thesis demonstrates how profoundly understandings of time influenced these key concepts. Clearly, issues such as national identity and revolution go far beyond France—they are ubiquitous in and central to the study of European history in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Exploring ideas about time thereby allows us to add a new dimension to how we think about a period which has at times risked appearing too familiar.

Finally, at its broadest, this thesis also seeks to make a methodological contribution to the field of history by demonstrating how time can be productively used as an analytical category. This is not the first work to have done this but, as this introduction will go on to show, previous work has sometimes made generalisations about ideas about time in particular cultures, or has been too quick to impose its own categories on the characters being studied. I seek to establish that a focus on time can be beneficial for our understanding of individuals and political movements, as well as for the range of important issues outlined above—but only if we take seriously the need to examine carefully what historical figures were writing about and debating before moving outwards to explore those bigger issues. By combining a narrow timespan with a focus on several different far-left and far-right groups, I am better able to draw out nuances and to pinpoint exactly how, why, and for whom time was important, as well as analyse significant debates between and within those groups. My contention is not that time was uniformly important for all political tendencies during every period of history: instead, I aim to prove that at certain points it was a fundamental facet of the emergence and subsequent development of particular groups. In this way, the thesis provides an example of how time can be fruitfully deployed to understand political cultures and thereby contributes to an ongoing conversation about methodology and the best way to deploy time in historical studies.

Characters, sources, and timeframe

In his essay on the Second Republic, Jean-Claude Caron made the point that the years 1848–51 were 'a dense time, where history's different temporalities met'.[7] I would like to suggest that the period 1899–1913 was another such intense and vivid landscape of time, a moment when a diverse set of ideas about past, present, and future emerged in various spheres, mingling with one another to be refracted and splinter off to create a series of sometimes unpredictable influences. In the sphere of radical political culture, against a backdrop of unusually effervescent cultural and scientific activity, those on the far left and the far right were undergoing a particularly intense period of formation or reformation with new and potent ideas about time at its core.

The movements and the individuals I focus on were highly diverse, but they had in common their desire to usher a different France into being and a propensity to configure this mission in terms of time. I employ the term 'radical thinkers and activists' in referring to the characters of this study, and I define this phrase loosely as those politically active people who sought, mostly through their writing but also through other forms of involvement, to attempt to implement or proselytise for profound change. For some, this would entail bringing down the Third Republic, while others desired its extensive reform. Their push toward rupture already begins to suggest a particular preoccupation with time—when could this rupture happen? Would the past provide guidance or would the future be entirely new? Was the present a time of action or a category which should be dismissed? These writers and activists situated their missions within alternative temporalities and thereby interrogated the meanings of past, present, and future more closely than most; this is why this thesis focuses on thinkers at the fringes of the political spectrum. France provides an especially pertinent case study for time in

[7] Jean-Claude Caron, 'La gauche pendant la Deuxième République' in Jean-Jacques Becker and Gilles Candar (eds), *Histoire des gauches en France*, vol. 1: *l'héritage du XIXe siècle* (Paris: La découverte, 2004), p. 69.

radical political movements as it was the site of the biggest rupture yet, the French Revolution of 1789. Whether they celebrated the event, heaped opprobrium on it, or treated it with ambivalence, the radicals studied here all saw 1789 as a touchstone in some way, and its legacy prompted deeper reflections on the nature and the flow of time.

This thesis has at its heart the networks of ideas and the exchanges which were a vital part of the fabric of far-left and far-right political movements; these networks of ideas constituted the all-important cultures of time which I study. Though important and well-known individuals appear across the following eight chapters, this is not primarily a work about those individuals. On the other hand, nor is this a thesis which provides a broad survey of the right and the left during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Instead, I home in on particular political tendencies in order to provide a clear picture of their intellectual life and their development. The characters of this study are drawn principally from three overlapping milieus: those involved in the Dreyfus Affair; those on the far left; and those on the far right. The networks within these broader groupings and their attendant cultures of time provide the justification for the layout of this thesis, which proceeds in three parts divided into either two or three chapters each.

Part I studies the Dreyfusards and the anti-Dreyfusards who became passionately involved in the Affair and who found that it thrust them into a temporality defined by both possibility and urgency. Chapter 1 establishes how the intense emotionality of personal timeframes interacted with a wider feeling of France's past and future being at stake to produce a deepening and largely time-based division between left and right. Chapter 2 focuses more closely on the Dreyfusards, and particularly those of them who went on to be involved in the Universités populaires movement, a popular education initiative. These activists found their entire movement ruled by and then ruined by the failure of ideas about time which had emerged as a result of the Dreyfus Affair as they struggled to marry personal, political, and historical timeframes.

Part II considers the networks of independent socialists and syndicalists who were involved with three reviews: *Pages libres*, *Cahiers de la Quinzaine*, and *Le Mouvement socialiste*. These thinkers and activists grappled with the sense that the likelihood of a catastrophic revolution was receding, leaving them with the problem of how to meaningfully connect the idea of change in the future to the present in which they lived; this dilemma is the subject of Chapter 3. Chapter 4 considers cultures of the future on the left, analysing the threats to the future which were perceived to come from Marxism and religion on the one hand and, on the other, the opportunities for new conceptualisations of time potentially offered by evolutionary theory and futurist fiction. Chapter 5 explores how the syndicalist movement attempted to overcome the problem of the lack of connection between present and future, and the significance of its notion of a separate plane of time occupied by the proletariat.

Part III focuses on radical right movements, namely the Ligue des Patriotes, the Ligue de la Patrie française, and Action française. Those who were active in these movements often perceived the present to be devoid of meaning and hope as a result of events such as the Franco-Prussian War and the Dreyfus Affair; Chapter 6 studies the creation of this understanding of time and how it resulted in a dismissal of the very concept of the present. Chapter 7 moves on to analyse how many on the right endeavoured to create an eternal nation which could provide refuge from the ravages of the present, producing a culture of time which for several years defined the far right. Chapter 8 examines the volte-face made by Action française after 1905; the movement was henceforth marked out by its reconciliation with the present and its subsequent desire to seize it as a time of action. This resulted in a short-lived alliance between syndicalists and nationalists, the most prominent example of which was the Cercle Proudhon.

The primary sources that form the basis of this thesis are highly diverse, and in selecting them I have endeavoured to be guided by the material itself rather than specifying bodies of sources. Reviews and newspapers form the backbone of the study, since they provide the

forums through which it is possible to trace the evolution of political tendencies, as well as the debates between and within them. These are supplemented by longer texts, pamphlets, speeches, and congress proceedings. At various points, I make use of letters, novels, and police reports. Letters are of particular importance in Chapter 1, which aims to understand the personal impact of the Dreyfus Affair and the subsequent influence of this on political allegiances and movements. Novels come to the fore in Chapter 4 in a section on fiction and futurist imaginings—such projections sometimes fell outside of the political debates found in reviews and more speculative source material needs to be sought out. Police reports are especially significant in Chapters 7 and 8, where I assess the actions of those on the right, who after 1905 became particularly concerned with doing rather than writing and whose full mission cannot be captured by looking at their reviews alone.

This thesis begins in 1899, in the heat of the Dreyfus Affair, and it ends in 1913, when the Cercle Proudhon fizzled out and international conflict loomed. The Affair—a miscarriage of justice that mobilised vast swathes of the nation to take sides for or against a Jewish army officer wrongly accused of spying—provides a fertile starting point for the present study for several reasons. When it came to light, the far right and the far left were loose and unfixed groupings who were not always easy to distinguish from one another, often sharing reviews.[8] *La Cocarde*, directed by Maurice Barrès, is the pre-eminent example of this, but a variety of political tendencies could also be found in *La Revue blanche*, as well as in other publications. The 'caesura' that was the Dreyfus Affair changed this by sparking rapid political crystallisation and creating long-lasting divisions which would come to define people's outlooks for many years.[9] It is not the case that the sides taken during the Affair were predictable and unbending, or even that they precisely mirrored a left–right divide; rather, the episode marked individuals in

[8] Gilles Candar, 'La gauche en République' in Becker and Candar (eds), *Histoire des gauches*, vol. 1, p. 129. Candar stated that right and left had been in flux since the beginning of the Third Republic.

[9] Gilles Le Béguec and Jacques Prévotat, 'L'éveil à la modernité politique, 1898–1919' in Jean-François Sirinelli (ed.), *Histoire des droites en France*, vol 1: *politique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1992), p. 213.

particular ways which influenced their political adhesions and which then went on to have a significant impact on the movements which were emerging at this time. The Affair not only forms the starting point for this study but also provides much of the material for Part I. It is the process of political formation and development based in ideas about time which this thesis is concerned with, and this process was to a large extent ignited by the Dreyfus Affair.

After tracing how understandings and experiences of time influenced the emergence and the evolution of political movements on the left and the right through the first decade of the twentieth century, the thesis closes with the dying out (for the time being, at least) of hopes for a general strike on the one hand and, on the other, a renaissance of right-wing activism in the streets. This did not signify the demise of the left and the ascendency of the right, however: the right became more visible again but not necessarily more successful, while the left was changing its priorities and becoming more attentive to its status as a mass political movement. But at both extremes of the political spectrum, a particular period had come to a close. The short-lived Cercle Proudhon and its demise around 1913 provides a date, symbolic at least, for the ending of a formative moment on both and right.[10] The Cercle was an initiative which married far-right notions of an eternal nation with leftist desire to instigate change in the near future, and with the end of its brief efflorescence came the waning of the concern for describing and deploying conceptualisations of time. These ideas had been of central importance across the previous fourteen or so years as nationalists, syndicalists, and socialists had struggled to articulate and find meaning for their political missions, but once their particular ideologies became more firmly established such ideas receded into the background.

The short period I focus on here has an important place in the broader sweep of the history of radical politics in the Third Republic. The sense of political flux that preceded the Dreyfus Affair had been particularly marked since the Boulanger Affair of the late 1880s, when

[10] The *Cahiers du Cercle Proudhon* carried on being published into 1914 but the movement was already moribund.

the Republic was rocked by an upstart general who opportunistically blended ideas from diverse political milieus, from monarchism to socialism.[11] That episode had marked a watershed for radical politics broadly conceived, initiating a process of reconfiguration on both left and right.[12] But, a decade later, it was the Dreyfus Affair which brought the truly significant ideological hardening.[13] In the aftermath of the Affair there was a new self-consciousness about political positions and, though there was overlap and changing of allegiances, the landscape of left and right had changed dramatically.[14] This thesis focuses on the moment of change that took place between the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the First World War to illustrate how understandings of time, shifting and contested though they were, were at the heart of the reconfiguration of particular ideologies and movements.

During these 'electric years', there were many factors which caused ideas about time to be brought to the fore and problematised.[15] For decades, the industrial revolution had been creating a process of 'temporal shrinkage' as railways obliterated previously intimidating travelling times and sections of society became caught up in a process of accelerating production.[16] Concomitantly, there was an increasing need to manage and to track time, and the 1884 Prime Meridian Conference in Washington DC provided a starting point for time

---

[11] The Boulanger Affair is a fascinating episode, but one which falls outside of the remit of this thesis. For literature on it, see for example: Frederick H. Seager, *The Boulanger Affair: political crossroad of France, 1886–9* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1969); William D. Irvine, *The Boulanger Affair Reconsidered: royalism, Boulangism, and the origins of the radical right in France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989); or Bruce Fulton, 'The Boulanger Affair revisited: the preservation of the Third Republic', *French Historical Studies* 17 (1991), pp. 310–29.

[12] Robert Gildea, *Children of the Revolution: the French, 1799–1914* (London: Allen Lane, 2008), p. 265. Gildea emphasised this watershed aspect on the left, but it was true across the political spectrum.

[13] Laurent Joly noted, with reference to the right, that the difference between Boulangism and anti-Dreyfusism was the ideological specificity of the latter, see *Naissance de l'Action française: Maurice Barrès, Charles Maurras et l'extrême droite nationaliste au tournant du XX^e siècle* (Paris: Bernard Grasset, 2015), p. 20.

[14] On the notions of left and right in broader historical context, see Marcel Gauchet, 'La droite et la gauche' in Nora (ed.), *Les lieux de mémoire,* vol 2: *la nation (i) Conflits et partages* (Paris: Gallimard, 1992), pp. 394–467; or Marc Crapez, *Naissance de gauche* (Paris: Éditions Michalon, 1998). Despite its title, Crapez's book is about both right and left.

[15] This image is borrowed from the title of Christophe Prochasson's brilliant *Les années électriques, 1880–1910* (Paris: La découverte, 1991).

[16] Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey: the industrialization of time and space in the nineteenth century* (Berkley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1986, 1st edn 1977), p. 34.

reform, confirming Greenwich in London as the location of the meridian.[17] Scientific discoveries, meanwhile, intensified this reconfiguration of the very nature of time. The development and subsequent popularisation of evolutionary theories placed mankind on a plane of time which had suddenly been vastly expanded—ancestors were to be found in the distant past and descendants would only make themselves known in the distant future. Discoveries in geology and chemistry prompted the realisation that the earth was much more ancient than previously supposed, compounding the sense of a magnified timeframe.[18] In 1905, Albert Einstein published a paper 'on the electrodynamics of moving bodies', one of the consequences of which would be the acceptance that time was relative. Einstein's contentious theories about the laws of physics would not percolate through European public consciousness for some years, but they are further evidence of the range and the depth of the ways in which time was probed and understood anew during this period.

It was not just scientific or technological advances which had an impact on how time was understood: the very experience of time was interrogated directly. In 1889 (the same year, incidentally, that a 'Paris time' was adopted on all French railways), French philosopher Henri Bergson published his *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience*, a work which theorised that the purest apprehension of time came in the form of what he called the *durée*, an ideal state in which past, present, and future intermingled.[19] Authors such as Marcel Proust followed him in 'affirm[ing] the reality of private time and […] defin[ing] its nature as heterogeneous, fluid, and

---

[17] Note that Greenwich Mean Time was not adopted in France until 1911. Vanessa Ogle recently provided an excellent account of global time reform, see *The Global Transformation of Time, 1870–1950* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2015). David S. Landes also explored the measuring of time and its significance, see *Revolution in Time: clocks and the making of the modern world* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983).

[18] For example, Pierre Curie and Albert Laborde used the fact that radium salts constantly release heat to reason that the earth had to be hundreds of millions of years old. See Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space, 1880–1918* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003, 1st edn 1983), p. 38.

[19] Bergson, *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1991, 1st edn 1889), especially pp. 56–104. Bergson and Einstein would debate one another on 6 April 1922, causing two competing understandings of time— respectively, time as absolute and time as relative—to meet head-on. For a highly detailed and richly textured account of this debate, see Jimena Canales, *The Physicist and the Philosopher: Einstein, Bergson, and the debate that changed our understanding of time* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015).

reversible'.[20] Bergson exercised an important—if diffuse—influence on the characters of this study, many of whom attended his scintillating lectures at the Collège de France ('you are our doyen', one activist would write in later years).[21] But the philosopher was just one part of a cultural, intellectual, and political landscape which was shifting rapidly and profoundly. In terms of time, this was a landscape characterised by acceleration, expansion, and flux.

This is not, however, a thesis about Bergson and his influence; nor is it a thesis about how science and technology altered understandings of time during the late nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth—an excellent overview of these shifts has already been provided by Stephen Kern's *The Culture of Space and Time*.[22] But these developments provided an exciting and an important backdrop against which socialists, syndicalists, and nationalists elaborated their own conceptions of past, present, and future. As Christophe Charle put it, '[i]t was not an accident that this period saw the interrogation of time's multiple modalities'.[23] The impact of the discoveries and changes described above was not always immediately discernible, but they nonetheless lent urgency and power to radical thinkers' mission to understand how best to fit people, individually and collectively, into emergent new timeframes.

Historiography

Time is at once history's setting and its substance: the discipline hinges on moments in time and it tracks changes across time. As such, time is 'at the heart of all historical inquiry'—but

---

[20] Kern, *The Culture of Space and Time*, p. 34.

[21] Bibliothèque littéraire Jacques Doucet, fonds Henri Bergson, BGN 796, letter from Daniel Halévy to Bergson (27 Oct. 1938). For Halévy's description of these lectures, see *Péguy and* Les Cahiers de la Quinzaine, tr. Ruth Bethell (London: Dennis Dobson, 1946). Halévy claimed that the philosopher 'transformed the conception of reality of his students', ibid. 29. On Bergson's influence, see for example A. E. Pilkington, *Bergson and his Influence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976); and Jeremy Jennings, *Revolution and the Republic: a history of political thought in France since the eighteenth century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 381–6 (on Bergson and Georges Sorel), and pp. 440–506 (for a broader perspective).

[22] Kern, *The Culture of Space and Time*, pp. 10–130 for the section on time.

[23] Christophe Charle, *Discordance des temps: une brève histoire de la modernité* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2011), p. 335.

that does not mean that historians have always viewed it as a useful subject in and of itself.[24] Walter Benjamin posited that '[t]he nourishing fruit of what is history conceptualised has time at its core, its precious but flavourless seed', poetically capturing the way in which time is essential for historical study while also being easy to overlook.[25] Until the 1970s, anthropologists and sociologists tended to show greater acumen than historians in studying experiences of and ideas about time. For much of the twentieth century, the intervention on time to which historians paid the most attention was a paper asserting time's unreality—small wonder, then, that there has sometimes been a certain 'pallor' to historians' analyses of time.[26] But over the last thirty or so years, a number of historians (Reinhart Koselleck and François Hartog foremost among them) have carved out a distinctive set of arguments about the importance of time for historical study.[27] These arguments are largely concerned with analysing modernity as a temporal category, or with identifying particular 'time regimes' which characterise epochs. More recently, historians such as Alya Aglan and Julian Wright have sought to build on these broad and often theory-based notions. They have drilled down into experiences and understandings of time among particular groups or individuals in order to assess how these had an impact on their identities or political developments.

---

[24] Nils Roemer, 'Between hope and despair: conceptions of time and the German-Jewish experience in the nineteenth century', *Jewish History* 14 (2000), p. 345.

[25] Walter Benjamin, *On the Concept of History*, tr. Dennis Redmond (1940) https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/benjamin/1940/history.htm (last accessed 7 June 2017). For more on Benjamin's views on time, see Ronald Beiner, 'Walter Benjamin's philosophy of history', *Political Theory* 12 (1984), pp. 423–34 or Michael Löwy, *Fire Alarm: reading Walter Benjamin's* On the Concept of History (London: Verso, 2005).

[26] I am of course referring to idealist philosopher J. M. E. McTaggart's 'The unreality of time', *Mind* 17 (1908), pp. 457–74. Michael Bentley has termed this article 'the most fruitful mistake in modern philosophy', see 'Past and "presence": revisiting historical ontology', *History and Theory* 45 (2006), p. 352. For more on the reality and unreality of time, see Penelope Corfield, *Time and the Shape of History* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2007), pp. 2–26. Heinz D. Kittsteiner and Bill Templer refer to history's 'pallor' when it came to analysing time ('Reflections on the construction of historical time in Karl Marx', *History and Memory* 3 [1991], p. 48).

[27] Lynn Hunt has also made the point that historians fell behind in the study of time until figures like Koselleck and Hartog emerged, see *Measuring Time, Making History* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2008), p. 16. Hunt's short text is an excellent overview of the literature on time.

Social scientists have been especially keen to understand time's place at the heart of human experience. Thomas Hirsch recently traced how sociologists approached the issue of time between 1901 and 1945 in his recent book *Le temps des sociétés*, arguing that concern with time emerged alongside social science itself.[28] The practitioners of sociology and anthropology have tended to insist on two key ideas in particular: the mutability of time between and within cultures, and time's status as a resource or a source of power.

Georges Gurvitch squarely situated the 'problem' of time as 'absolutely primary to sociology' and, in his infrequently studied essay *The Spectrum of Social Times*, he explored both how time was structured at a macro level in distinct types of societies, and how various modes of time differentiated social groups at a micro level.[29] Variations in the understanding and the experience of time are at the heart of this analysis, and this idea has become a cornerstone in the literature on time. As the Marxist philosopher Louis Althusser put it, 'there can be no single Now in which all elements of a social formation come into play'; economic, religious, and political time might all run parallel to another but they have disparate rhythms.[30] Anthropologists have been more likely to configure this in experiential terms with, for example, Arjun Appadurai following Clifford Geertz in suggesting that 'concepts of time (and indeed the perception of duration itself) are fundamental cultural variables'.[31] This had previously been explored in E. P. Thompson's brief but ground-breaking article, 'Time, work-discipline, and industrial capitalism'. In this article, which was firmly situated within a broader trend of historical work strongly influenced by anthropology, Thompson assessed how 'important changes in the apprehension of time' between around 1300 and 1650 had affected labour

[28] Hirsch, *Le temps des sociétés: d'Émile Durkheim à Marc Bloch* (Paris: Éditions de l'École des hautes études en sciences sociales, 2016), p. 13.
[29] Georges Gurvitch, *The Spectrum of Social Times*, tr. Myrtle Korenbaum (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1964), p. 11.
[30] Althusser quoted in John R. Hall, 'The time of history and the history of times', *History and Theory* 19 (1980), p. 119.
[31] Arjun Appadurai, 'The past as a scarce resource', *Man* 16 (1981), p. 201. Appadurai pointed out that this idea hails from Émile Durkheim.

discipline and workers.[32] The notion that time consists of disparate levels and is experienced and thought about in a wide variety of ways according to place, period, and social class is highly significant because it introduces the possibility of seeing social or political groups as defined by their experiences or their understandings of time.

The second aspect of social-science studies of time which has been particularly valuable is the idea that time can be configured as a resource and as a source of power. This has been especially prevalent in anthropologists' discussions about the importance of time (though, curiously, the future—the most obvious battleground when it comes to social or political change—has often been absent from these analyses).[33] Appadurai argued that the past was not limitless and infinitely plastic, but that it was bound up with a careful process of negotiation through which social change was understood. It was a 'scarce resource' because it was circumscribed by its status as a mediator between change and continuity within the context of a specific society: the past offered neither a bottomless repository of experiences and potential directions, nor an eternal map for stability and endurance into the future.[34] Time was also looked upon a resource by political scientists Andreas Schedler and Javier Santiso, who described late twentieth-century democratic societies as facing a shortage of both past and future: 'the future ha[d] lost […] its former promise', they noted, while the past was a 'devalued asset', a troublesome 'source of identity crises'.[35] Democracies caught between the demise of a

---

[32] E. P. Thompson, 'Time, work-discipline, and industrial capitalism', *Past & Present* 38 (1967), p. 56. For more on the relationship between the two disciplines, see Thompson, 'History and anthropology' in his *Making History* (New York: The New Press, 1994), pp. 200–25 or Keith Thomas, 'History and anthropology', *Past & Present* 24 (1963), pp. 3–24.

[33] Nancy D. Munn has also cited the way in which the discipline has 'poorly tended to' the future, see 'The cultural anthropology of time: a critical essay', *Annual Review of Anthropology* 21 (1992), p. 116.

[34] Appadurai, 'The past as a scarce resource', pp. 201–19. Appadurai was taking issue with a lecture given by Maurice Bloch at the London School of Economics and subsequently published as 'The past and the present in the present', *Man* 12 (1977), pp. 278–92. Bloch seemed to believe that the past was malleable and without limits, and he argued for the existence of 'two cognitive systems': a ritual timeless one in which the present was simply a manifestation of the past, and one which was more thoroughly present-oriented. Appadurai wanted to add a third means of apprehending time which essentially consisted of a way of debating the first two.

[35] Andreas Schedler and Javier Santiso, 'Democracy and time: an invitation', *International Political Science Review* 19 (1998), pp. 6–7.

Communist future and the shadow of the Holocaust in the recent past needed to be aware that they existed in a depleted landscape of time and think about how to contend with this, Schedler and Santiso implored. They sought to demonstrate that past and future had become etiolated categories, while the present was ephemeral and therefore limited in its power.[36] It is tempting to think of time as endless and infinite because it is an all-encompassing dimension which comprises the entirety of existence, past and future. However, this is not a useful way to understand time in social and political contexts, as work by those such as Appadurai and Schedler and Santiso reminds us; under particular circumstances, it has become painfully apparent that it can be a precious resource. This is not to say simply that time was in short supply and that it was running out (though that was a frequent concern, too)—rather, the very concepts of past, present, and future could have functional limitations when it comes to apprehending social change or developing political programmes.

If time could be a scarce resource it follows that it could also become an instrument of power, a notion which Carol Greenhouse developed in her 1996 book *A Moment's Notice*. In this ethnographically inflected work, Greenhouse delved in-depth into three strikingly disparate case studies (China in the third century BC, sixteenth-century Mexico, and twentieth-century USA) to argue that 'social time has no reality apart from circumstances directly or indirectly involving claims of legitimacy'.[37] In other words, time only becomes socially meaningful when it is deployed by particular groups of people or by political regimes to establish or to shore up their power. This is an extreme position since it tends to presuppose a top-down view of time, assuming that its conceptualisation is usually imposed on people, but work such as

---

[36] There is a clear link here to Francis Fukuyama's ideas about the crisis of 1989 and death of ideologies heralding an 'end' to history. He published his reflections in the very well-known *The End of History and the Last Man* (1992); for his original article on the subject, which is passionate and raw, see 'The end of history?', *The National Interest* (1989) https://www.embl.de/aboutus/science_society/discussion/discussion_2006/ref1-22june06.pdf (accessed 1 February 2017). Schedler and Santiso were bringing a more time-specific approach to some of the ideas outlined by Fukuyama.

[37] Carol J. Greenhouse, *A Moment's Notice: time politics across cultures* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), p. 175.

Greenhouse's nonetheless allows us to see how time could be tightly bound up with politics and how it could be an intensely charged source of power and, by extension, contestation. Ged Martin pursued the idea that conceptions of time and power could be intimately related, analysing controlling minorities (the Protestants of Northern Ireland and the whites of the Central African Federation, for example) to conclude that a rejection of the future was an attribute of these 'privileged but insecure [groups] who doubted their long-term ability to hold onto power'.[38] Here, we see that those in power were subjected to the influence of their own apprehensions of time, which they could then impart onto those under their dominion. Fundamental to Greenhouse's and to Martin's work was the notion that different understandings of time could actually change the way people thought about or did things. This is a key concept which I have sought to develop in what follows.

There are lacunae and flaws in much of this work. In Greenhouse' case, her study is astounding in breadth but it falls into a common trap in the study of time, 'fragment[ing] into […] other dimensions and topics' rather than retaining its focus on time: the book is, in fact, far more about power and legitimacy than it is about time.[39] Thompson's article was a leap forward in terms of historical work on time, but it was a general and exploratory piece, tackling more than three centuries of history in forty pages. In the cases of Gurvitch, Appadurai, and Santiso and Schedler, there is a broader problem. In these studies, time is a category which is imposed from the outside, by the scholar in question. It can be a fruitful way of understanding or classifying people and groups, but at its worst it has little to do with those being studied and is simply a tool for the convenience of those studying them. As Abdelmajid Hannoum asked of Hartog's work on regimes of historicity, was any particular idea about or experience of time

[38] Ged Martin, *Past Futures: the impossible necessity of history* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), p. 115.
[39] Munn, 'The cultural anthropology of time', p. 93. Munn was making a general point about anthropological studies of time which was not aimed specifically at Greenhouse.

'truly specific to a […] period, to a society, and to a culture, or is it only a perception constructed by the historian, who may pick and choose?'[40]

I seek to avoid these pitfalls by focusing on how the characters of my study thought about and wrote about time, and in this sense my work is influenced by Thompson's 1967 article—though I seek to bring a greater sense of specificity to the source material and eschew generalisations. The radical thinkers and activists I look at were often intensely aware of the fault lines between different perceptions of time, and they were alert to the idea that the concepts past, present, and future could be instrumentalised as sources of power. This was the case whether they were arguing that the proletariat's unique apprehension of time needed to be taken into account in order for social change to occur or whether they were describing their heady and matchless experiences of accelerated activism during the Dreyfus Affair. My approach allows for the reconstruction of the importance of and the changes in ideas about time from the inside rather than relying on overarching categories.

Much of the historical work on time of the last forty or so years has pursued an understanding of modernity as a specifically temporal phenomenon.[41] German conceptual historian Reinhart Koselleck made one of the most significant contributions in this regard: in the late 1970s, he theorised modernity as a change in the perception of time. Koselleck asserted that modernity began around 1750 and that its defining characteristic was a sense of acceleration coupled with the feeling that there was a new relationship between past, present, and future.[42]

---

[40] Abdelmajid Hannoum, review of François Hartog's *Régimes d'historicité. Présentisme et expériences du temps*, *History and Theory* 47 (2008), p. 465.

[41] We should not, however, assume that time is only of importance in modern history: even a brief foray into, for example, some of the work on millenarianism and eschatology demonstrates that time was of vital importance during other epochs, and some historians have sought to bring this to the fore. See for example, Marjorie Reeves, *The Influence of Prophesy in the Later Middle Ages: a study in Joachimism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969); Norman Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium: revolutionary millenarians and mystical anarchists of the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970, 1st edn 1957); and Bill T. Arnold, 'Old Testament eschatology and the rise of apocalypticism' and William Lane Craig, 'Time, eternity, and eschatology' in Jerry L. Walls (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Eschatology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 23–39 and 596–613 respectively.

[42] See Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past: on the semantics of historical time*, tr. Keith Tribe (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004, 1st edn 1985) and his *The Practice of Conceptual History: timing history, spacing concepts*, tr. Todd Samuel Presner (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2002). Hayden White's synthesis in the latter volume

The French Revolution, with its self-conscious and concerted thrusts into the future and away from the past, hastened the arrival of modernity.[43] Henceforth, the future was no longer dictated by what had come before, but defined instead by a radical newness; the 'horizon of expectation' had broken free from the 'space of experience', meaning that the number of potential outcomes in sweeping historical processes as well as individual lives was perceived to have increased vastly.[44] Sociologist Niklas Luhmann colourfully described how, in the latter part of the eighteenth century, 'the future became what it is today: an overstocked storehouse of possibilities'.[45] And as Koselleck himself put it in *Futures Past*,

> [a] consistent discovery in the following studies is the fact that the more a particular time is experienced as a new temporality, as 'modernity', the more that demands made of the future increase.[46]

Essentially, then, modernity forced a confrontation with a future that was distinct from the past, and history—now conflated with time itself—became a process of ongoing progress, an expectation of improvement.[47] Concomitantly, ideas about the past changed: it was increasingly separated from the present and the future, an artefact marooned on a distant shore.[48] But this

---

is helpful and neat: for his foreword, see pp. ix–xiv. The emphasis on acceleration has been picked up on and expanded by many scholars, see for example, the contributions in Alexandre Escudier and Ingrid Holtey (eds), 'Vitesse et existence. La multiplicité des temps historiques' [Special issue], *Trivium* 9 (2011) at https://trivium.revues.org/4027 (accessed 25 Feb. 2013).

[43] Other historians have placed greater emphasis than Koselleck on the role of the French Revolution: see Hunt, *Measuring Time*, p. 72 and Peter Fritzsche, *Stranded in the Present: modern time and the melancholy of history* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004), pp. 11–54. François Furet discussed how the Revolution advertised itself as a rupture, see 'The Revolution is over' in his *Interpreting the French Revolution*, tr. Elborg Forster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 1–79.

[44] These phrases are both widely used throughout Koselleck's work and that of subsequent theorists, though they have been problematised: Peter Osborne, for example, was reluctant to attribute experience solely to the present and expectation exclusively to the future, see 'Global modernity and the contemporary: two categories of the philosophy of historical time' in Chris Lorenz and Berber Bevernage (eds), *Breaking up Time: negotiating the borders between present, past and future* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), p. 69.

[45] Niklas Luhmann, *The Differentiation of Society*, tr. Stephen Holmes and Charles Larmore (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982).

[46] Koselleck, *Futures Past*, p. 3.

[47] Hayden White pithily put it that modernity was 'nothing other than […] the discovery of history's concept in our age' (foreword to Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History*, p. xiv), while Osborne called modernity 'a totalising temporalisation of history' (*The Politics of Time*, p. x).

[48] Describing this particular process is a speciality of Peter Fritzsche's, see *Stranded in the Present*.

didn't mean that the past became less interesting—quite the opposite, and the nineteenth century has been described as an era 'whose self-conception was framed by a disciplined obsession with the past'.[49] These ideas about the changes wrought by modernity on past, present, and future remain monolithic in the literature on time, underlying virtually all subsequent developments in the field.[50]

The most recent attempts to move beyond Koselleck have sometimes struggled for originality. Javier Fernández Sebastián's edited volume, *Political Concepts and Time*, proposed to build on Koselleck and bring something new to the field of conceptual history, but its contribution was in the end very firmly to the study of political concepts rather than to time. More seriously, it is crippled by impenetrably dense jargon, and Alexandre Escudier's essay on temporalisation and modernity in politics, the most promising sounding in the volume, is especially abstruse.[51] Chris Lorenz' and Berber Bevernage's collection *Breaking up Time* shared the aim of developing Koselleck's arguments, but the contributions therein ended up systematising the German conceptual historian rather than surpassing him.[52] New directions were suggested in the field of global history (to what extent was the modern time regime global?

---

[49] Richard Terdiman, *Present Past: modernity and the memory crisis* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), p. 5.
[50] This is just a very short list of the works influenced by Koselleck: Luhmann, *The Differentiation of Society*; Osborne, *The Politics of Time*; François Hartog, *Régimes d'historité. Présentisme et expériences du temps* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2012, 1st edn 2003); Hartmut Rosa and William E. Scheuerman (eds), *High-Speed Society: social acceleration, power and modernity* (University Park, Penn.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009); Fritzsche, *Stranded in the Present*.
[51] Take, for example, the following sentence: '[t]he second case in point of the "innen/außen" secondary derivation corresponds, at a level of specification which is thereby ternary, to the "geheim/öffentlich" pair and to the necessity for any effective political entity, of maintaining a grey area with regard to its motivations, its tactical resources, its strategies and goals so that it is able to efficiently intervene in concrete reality conflictually pre-structured by other effective political entities.' Alexandre Escudier, '"Temporalization" and political modernity: a tentative systematization of the work of Reinhart Koselleck' in Javier Fernández Sebastián (ed.), *Political Concepts and Time* (Santander: Cantabria University Press, 2011), p. 136. Escudier's essay is subdivided into sections arranged variously by numbers, roman numerals, and bullet points; he has also appended a confusing series of tables.
[52] This is especially true of Aleida Assmann's essay, 'Time and modernity: critical approaches to Koselleck's legacy' in Lorenz and Bevernage (eds), *Breaking up Time*, pp. 37–84.

What impact did globalisation have on time?), but these are tentative and exploratory only, and the questions they posed await fuller studies.[53]

The other scholar who has made a significant impact on historical approaches to the problem of time is Hartog.[54] In 2003, he released *Régimes d'historicité. Présentisme et expériences du temps*, a book which investigated the 'orders of time' which defined particular epochs and places.[55] He began with the notion that the early 2000s was characterised by the sense of a never-ending present which stretched forwards somewhat bleakly into what once would have been called the future.[56] He argued that the whole of modernity had, to different extents and in different ways according to place and period, been defined by a crisis of time which consisted in the present gaining preponderance over the past and the future, both of which were now yoked to the present and had been shorn of their independence, power, and meaning. His work sought to tease out the 'distance' between and the 'tensions' within what Koselleck had previously described as a 'space of experience' and a 'horizon of expectation'.[57] Hartog identified the eighteenth-century historian François-René de Chateaubriand as straddling the old and the new time regimes.[58] In contrast to Koselleck, he provided an account of modernity which was oriented toward a concept of the present, and in so doing he provided a powerful way of understanding the contemporary political landscape. However, both historians

---

[53] See Osborne, 'Global modernity' and Lynn Hunt, 'Globalisation and time' in ibid. 69–84, 199–215. This is also a direction suggested by Hartog, see 'De l'histoire universelle à l'histoire globale? Expériences du temps', *Le Débat* 154 (2009), pp. 53–66.

[54] For evidence of his influence, see for example the 2017 special issue of *Past & Present* on presentism, especially Alexandra Walsham, 'Introduction: past and…presentism', *Past & Present* 234 (2017), pp. 213–7; and S. A. Smith, 'China, revolution and presentism', *Past & Present* 234 (2017), pp. 274–89.

[55] Hartog, *Régimes d'historicité*, pp. 19–42. Hartog inherited the notion of 'orders of time' from Krzysztof Pomian, who identified four ways of apprehending or visualising time: calendars, clocks, and time-measuring instruments; accounts of change taking place; series of dates and periods; and the wider, deeper sweep of time connected to the environment. These formed discrete but interlocking levels which could all interact with one another; see *L'ordre du temps* (Paris: Gallimard, 1984). Hartog pursued a rigorous conceptualisation of Pomian's systematising of the understanding of time.

[56] This recalls the work by Schedler and Santiso, discussed above. Harry Harootunian also cited the sense of an endless present, describing how the events of 11 Sept. 2001 had propelled the United States into a timeframe without a future, see 'Remembering the historical present', *Critical Inquiry* 33 (2007), pp. 471–94.

[57] Hartog, *Régimes d'historicité*, p. 39.

[58] Ibid. 97–133.

nonetheless proffered sweeping accounts of time conceptions which were not always attentive to the variety of ideas about past, present, and future within a particular society or epoch. Moreover, their source material came largely from historians and—in Koselleck's case especially—revolved around historical methodology. A claim could be made for historians' special role in articulating changing conceptualisations of time, but it would not be true to suggest that they had a monopoly over those conceptualisations.

While Koselleck and Hartog have provided a broad model to work with, the most interesting interventions on modernity and its status as a temporal category have often come from those who have sought out the cracks in the idea of a totalising and ever-accelerating timeframe of ceaseless improvement. Koselleck himself sensed these openings but his exploration of them tended to be cursory.[59] Historians working on modernity in Africa, on the other hand, have been particularly successful at developing a more nuanced approach to temporal categories. In his work on the Zambian Copperbelt, James Ferguson outlined how sudden shifts toward urbanisation were first understood in terms of 'newness' and futurity—until the price of copper plummeted and living standards on the Copperbelt similarly waned. Its inhabitants were left 'haunted by ideas of modernity' and their ugly clash with the 'actually existing present'.[60] The bifurcation of modernity into potentiality and actuality was echoed by experiences in Cameroon and Nigeria.[61] In all these cases, modernity's failure produced a collective temporal experience undergone by new social groups which had been created by the drive to modernise; this experience was characterised by the sense of a present shadowed by a thwarted and lost future. Sociologists Hartmut Rosa and William Scheuerman similarly

---

[59] See, for example, Koselleck's essay on 'Concepts of historical time and social history' in *The Practice of Conceptual History*, pp. 115–30.

[60] James Ferguson, *Expectations of Modernity: myths and meanings of urban life on the Zambian Copperbelt* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1999), pp. 4, 21.

[61] F. Nyamnjoh and Ben Page, 'Whiteman Kontri and the enduring allure of modernity among Cameroonian youth', *African Affairs* 101 (2002), p. 613; Lynn M. Thomas, 'Modernity's failings, political claims and intermediate concepts', *American Historical Review* 116 (2011), pp. 727–740. See also Jean and John L. Comaroff, *Modernity and its Malcontents: ritual and power in postcolonial Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).

described how, for certain (usually disadvantaged) social groups—the elderly, the sick, the homeless, the unemployed—deceleration rather than acceleration provided the dominant timeframe.[62] Such work alerts us to the fissures in the archetypal 'modern' experience of time: it is just as important to study these as to identify an overarching trend. While the characters of my study did not tend to appeal directly to ideas of modernity, they often saw themselves as going against the grain of doctrines of progress and an assured future of prosperity, which could be taken to be the dominant culture of time on other parts of the French political landscape at end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth.[63]

In recent years, the most fruitful contributions to the literature on time have come from those historians who have studied a particular group or an individual and have explored their distinctive understandings about time. This work includes articles by Roemer about the German–Jewish experience of the nineteenth century; by Heinz Kittsteiner and Bill Templer on Karl Marx' ideas about historical time; and by Matthew Rainbow Hale on the American reception of the radicalisation of the French Revolution.[64] Alya Aglan's 2008 monograph, *Le temps de la Résistance*, is particularly noteworthy: she argued that the mind-set of Resistance fighters could only be grasped by looking at their understandings and experiences of time. The Resistance as a whole involved a special conception of time, Aglan explained, and within this overarching conception various tendencies could be distinguished.[65] At points, however, her method easily became a scheme for classifying different strands within the Resistance as well as a tool for analysing it, meaning that she often tended to replicate divisions that were already

---

[62] Hartmut Rosa and William E. Scheuerman, introduction to Rosa and Scheuerman (eds), *High-Speed Society*, p. 6.
[63] An exception to this could be Péguy, who did discuss modernity frequently—and with perfervid hatred. See 'Zangwill', *CQ*, 6th ser., no. 3 (1904), pp. vii–lxxxx. However, as Hans A. Schmitt pointed out, modernity was not always a temporal category in Péguy's mind, but rather a way of describing France's elites; see *Charles Péguy: the decline of an idealist* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1967), p. 179.
[64] Roemer, 'Between hope and despair'; Kittsteiner and Templer, 'Reflections on the construction of historical time in Karl Marx'; Matthew Rainbow Hale, 'On their tiptoes: political time and newspapers during the advent of the radicalised French Revolution, c. 1792–3', *Journal of the Early Republic* 2 (2009), pp. 191–218. Hale's article is especially interesting.
[65] Alya Aglan, *Le temps de la Résistance* (Arles: Actes Sud, 2008), pp. 13–32.

well documented. Alon Confino's recent book about the Nazi imagination and the Holocaust went a step further than using time to categorise particular ways of thinking. In *A World Without Jews*, he demonstrated how the Nazi genocide had to be made possible at an intellectual level before it could be actualised; this was done by extirpating the Jews from past, present, and future (for instance, Confino explained how book burnings were part of a process of creating a world in which Jews had never existed).[66] In other words, Confino showed how understandings of time could create a basis for action. This approach has provided important inspiration for this thesis, as I seek to pinpoint how ideas about past, present, and future could change not only how people thought but what they actually did.

Julian Wright's *Socialism and the Experience of Time: idealism and the present in modern France*, published in 2017, marks the most recent and one of the most significant contributions to the field. This book, about the idea of the present in the socialist movement circa 1870–1950, is a serious attempt to analyse what role understandings of time played in the formation of individual ideologies and, more broadly, the development of socialism. It is both an exploration of how leading socialists situated themselves within the flow of modern time, and a study of how socialism was shaped by the particular understandings of time that emerged from these individuals' theorisations.

Wright takes as his starting point the notion that 'there was, within the socialist movement […] a growing critique of revolutionary temporality'. Left-wing figures from Benoît Malon to the German-Jewish Walter Benjamin 'were concerned with understanding what it meant to live between the Revolution and its ultimate fulfilment', Wright argues. In the yawning gulf between 1789 and some promised future upheaval, time—and especially time present—needed to be reconceptualised.[67] Wright begins by analysing the *Histoire socialiste*, directed by

---

[66] Alon Confino, *A World Without Jews: the Nazi imagination from persecution to genocide* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2014), especially pp. 3–4, 120.

[67] Julian Wright, *Socialism and the Experience of Time: idealism and the present in modern France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), pp. 14, 6.

Jean Jaurès, positing that this project was an attempt to understand socialism's 'transition' 'from the time of revolution into the era of democratic politics'.[68] He then moves on to discuss socialist conceptions of the flow of time more broadly, seeking to dissolve the binaries of past and future, reform and revolution, and to replace them with a more nuanced understanding of a present-minded socialism in which these categories were actively problematised.[69] The driving mission of all the socialists whom Wright studies was to rescue the vitality of the present, which they sensed was in danger of getting lost in an understanding of time that prioritised the future. There was, furthermore, increasing recognition on the left of the need to admit to and resolve the 'discordance' between socialist intellectuals' 'own temporal visions and those of the society in which they lived'.[70] In response to this problem, Jaurès, Malon, Eugène Fournière, Georges Renard, and Léon Blum (among others) developed a vision of the present that 'tilt[ed] into the future'—they wanted to reinvigorate the present without falling into bland reformism, and they did this by retaining a powerful streak of idealism.[71]

Wright interweaves three distinct timeframes in his study: the time of modern political culture, that of the socialist movement, and that of its individual leaders, activists, and writers.[72] He astutely emphasises the centrality of this reformist–idealist strand of thought across all three timeframes, highlighting its importance in the near-century that spanned the period from the Commune to the aftermath of World War II. His fundamental insight is ingenious and vital: he claims that a reconfiguration of the meaning of the present was at the core of the development of socialism, propagated by some of its most charismatic leaders and its most important

---

[68] Ibid. 47; see Chapter 3: 'Socialists and their history', ibid. 41–78.

[69] Ibid. 16, 22; see Chapter 4: 'Socialism and the flow of time in modernity', ibid. 79–97. Mira Adler-Gillies has also expressed frustration with the fact that historiography has been coloured by the idea of a divide between reform and revolution; see 'Cooperation or collectivism: the contest for meaning in the French socialist movement, 1870–90', *French History* 28 (2014), p. 388.

[70] Wright, *Socialism and the Experience of Time*, p. 16.

[71] Ibid. 81.

[72] Wright was inspired in his use of interwoven timeframes by Georges Gurvitch: see ibid. 7–11.

theorists. 'Temporality', Wright states, 'was theorised inconsistently and uncertainly in socialist writing', but concern about it was nonetheless 'remarkably persistent'.[73]

However, while the first part of the book establishes this very fruitful set of arguments, the main bulk of *Socialism and the Experience of Time* (some 150 of 250 pages) is given over to intellectual biographies of Malon and his partner André Léo, Renard, Marcel Sembat, and Blum—and this approach creates pitfalls. Many of Wright's depictions and arguments remain eloquent and convincing, particularly in the case of Georges Renard, whose copious papers, preserved in the Bibliothèque Historique de la Ville de Paris, provide the richest source material.[74] The historian brings to the fore these men's lovers and wives, pointing to their formative importance for his set of socialist men; in doing so, he develops an intimate and sensitive portrait of political networks and sociability, attentive to the quotidian rhythms established by the couples he studies as well as to the wider intellectual import of their writings.[75] But this focus creates a consistency which can be frustrating: at every turn, from Jaurès' differences with Eduard Bernstein in the early 1900s to Léon Blum's lonely struggle during the period he spent in captivity in the early 1940s, we are told that the response and the contribution of these socialists was to focus more on the present while still retaining some hope in the future. The different routes that these figures took in pursuit of this central ideal are fascinating, and the uniformity of their mission attests to the vitality and the importance of present-minded socialism. Ultimately, though, this approach means that the monograph offers more to the study of these particular individuals than it does to the study of cultures of time. By the end of the book, the reader is persuaded of the importance of present-minded socialism for these key figures and for their influence on the socialist movement more broadly, but is left

[73] Ibid. 30–1.

[74] See especially Chapter 6 on Georges Renard, ibid. 131–75, although Wright uses Renard's papers throughout for revealing vignettes of many of his characters.

[75] The chapters on André Léo and on Marcel Sembat and his wife Georgette are particularly strong in this regard, see ibid. 101–30, 176–207.

wondering about some key questions. What was the wider political landscape around 1900 that allowed or caused these ideas about time to emerge? What changes might these ideas have undergone, and what challenges did they weather? *Socialism and the Experience of Time* is a brilliant book about socialists and socialism, but one which undoubtedly leaves space for further exploration of ideas about time.

This thesis shares its inspiration with Wright's book: both endeavour to assess the impact of ideas about time on political activism and ideology. Wright has broken important ground in this regard. However, there are crucial differences between this thesis and his monograph in terms of both methodology and argument. I seek to understand how time was thought about across a range of political movements, and this calls for sources in which debates come to the fore, such as newspapers and reviews. Furthermore, I argue that ideas about past, present, and future cannot be reduced to one central theme but were highly diverse; time was a concern at both extremes of the political spectrum, but its conceptualisation differed dramatically. There was no centrality or stability to concepts of time—and that, of course, was the point. It was precisely because of the instability of different notions of time that they provided a fruitful means by which those who are the subject of this study thought about themselves, their ambitions, and the times in which they lived.

PART I.

TIME AND THE DREYFUS AFFAIR

Introduction

In January 1898, Dreyfusard activist Daniel Halévy scribbled a smudged diary entry: 'I no longer have time to write—I'm hard at work' [*en pleine action*].[76] France was in the spasmodic grip of the Dreyfus Affair, and Halévy was whirling through Paris collecting signatures for a petition demanding the revision of Alfred Dreyfus' conviction for passing military secrets to the Germans.[77] His hurried diary entry offers a glimpse of the experiences of many of those engaged in the Affair, both Dreyfusards and anti-Dreyfusards: there was a frenetic explosion of action in the press, in meeting halls, and on the streets; there was a pressing and desperate desire to prove Dreyfus innocent or guilty.[78] One observer described how 'a wind of madness [had] blown across France'.[79] Coupled with the speed and the intensity of events was their sheer magnitude, their colossal importance, as the Affair came to be seen as nothing less than a matter of national salvation which would have a profound impact on France's future and perceptions of her past. In the words of historian and Dreyfusard Ernest Lavisse, the Affair 'overflow[ed] into infinity'.[80]

This section of the thesis argues that experiences and conceptualisations of time were fundamental to engagement in the Dreyfus Affair and in the Universités populaires (UP) movement, a popular education initiative which began in 1899 as a result of the Affair. Later,

---

[76] Bibliothèque nationale de France (BNF), NAF 28147, papiers Daniel Halévy, box 81, Carnet 13 (entry for 4–20 Jan. 1898), p. 67. This diary entry has provided the title for Chapter 1 of this thesis. Halévy was a prolific writer, at this time very active in left-wing circles, whose diaries and received correspondence provide important primary material for this section of the thesis. An authoritative (if descriptive) biography of this fascinating character was produced by Sébastien Laurent, see *Daniel Halévy: du libéralisme au traditionalisme* (Paris: Bernard Grasset, 2001); see pp. 95–187 for this period of Halévy's life.

[77] For their petition, see 'Une protestation', *L'Aurore*, no. 88 (14 Jan. 1898), p. 1.

[78] For an example of a street brawl during the Affair, see Archives nationales (AN), F 7 12451, police report of 6 Dec. 1898: this report describes how a pro-Dreyfus meeting led by anarchist Sébastien Faure was confronted by Paul Déroulède's anti-Dreyfusard Ligue des Patriotes.

[79] Émile Duclaux, *Avant le procès* (Paris: Pierre-Victor Stock, 1898), p. 9.

[80] Ernest Lavisse, 'La réconciliation nationale', *La Revue de Paris*, vol. V (Sept.–Oct. 1899), p. 648. Lavisse was a historian whose research focused largely on Germany; he was also interested in questions concerning higher education in France.

understandings of time were also decisive in the breakdown of the UPs and were a key part of broader disenchantment with Dreyfusard activism. Time allows us to understand what participants felt to be at stake during the Affair both personally and nationally; how they established and expressed their increasingly hostile political divisions; why they believed that it was so urgent to implement change; and why they felt their perceived failure to do so quite so acutely. Four different planes of time are discernible across the following two chapters: emotional or personal, national, political, and historical. These timeframes constitute a set of intersecting and interdependent lenses through which it is possible to trace Dreyfus Affair activism, its subsequent developments, and its eventual disappointments.

The episode began unremarkably—young Jewish army captain Dreyfus had been convicted of spying in 1894 and it was not until several years later that his case came to public attention. But from late 1897 onwards, the Affair gathered pace until the nation seemed to be 'cut in two'.[81] Those proclaiming Dreyfus' innocence were matched in their zealous campaigning by those who were convinced of the captain's guilt and who chose to prioritise the national interest and the protect the French army. Between 1897 and 1899, the Affair became 'the pivot around which all domestic politics in France turned'.[82] Following vociferous campaigning, Dreyfus was returned to France from his imprisonment on Devil's Island for a retrial in Rennes in August 1899, where he was convicted again before being hastily pardoned following exchanges between his principal supporters and President Waldeck-Rousseau. After Dreyfus' pardon the Affair became a much narrower battle, ceasing to be a matter of immediate and all-encompassing national importance. He would only be fully exonerated in 1906.[83]

---

[81] Péguy, 'Notre jeunesse', *CQ*, 11th ser., no. 12 (1910), p. 120.

[82] Fernand Gregh, *L'âge d'or: souvenirs d'enfance et de jeunesse* (Paris: Bernard Grasset, 1947), p. 292. Gregh was a literary critic and a friend of Halévy's who became involved with the Dreyfusards and, briefly, with the UP movement.

[83] There is a huge amount of literature covering the Affair, its events, and its characters. For a comprehensive and recent history, see Ruth Harris, *The Man on Devil's Island: Alfred Dreyfus and the Affair that divided France* (London: Penguin, 2011, 1st edn 2010). For an exhaustive day-by-day account of events, see George R. Whyte, *The Dreyfus Affair: a chronological history* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, 1st edn 2005). For studies of the individuals and groups involved, see Michel Drouin (ed.), *L'affaire Dreyfus de A à Z* (Paris: Flammarion, 1994).

The initial intense period of action (1897–9) is where Chapter 1 begins. Those involved in the Affair felt this to be a particularly charged time. The combination of obsessive and absorbing action in a vividly perceived present and the feeling of deep past and distant future being at stake constituted a particularly powerful experience of time which shaped the nature of their engagement and which deeply marked them. For Dreyfusards and anti-Dreyfusards alike, experiences of and ideas about time formed an essential aspect of ruptures in personal friendships.

These personal experiences coloured their understandings of what was at stake in a broader sense—France itself, and its past and its future seemed to hang in the balance. The sudden urgency of this national timeframe gave rise to sharpened political action. Both Dreyfusards and anti-Dreyfusards tended to configure their conflict as one which pitted past against future, conservation against change, and as well as being fundamental to understanding engagement in the Affair on both left and right, time was used by its participants as a rhetorical tool to outline their positions. These opposing political timeframes would come to be key to how left and right conceived of themselves and how they viewed the direction that France might take.

After Dreyfus' pardon in 1899, Dreyfusards such as Halévy, Georges Deherme, and Dick May went on to engage in a different type of *pleine action*. They channelled their desire for change, sharpened and given a sense of urgency by the Affair, into the founding of the Universités populaires. The UPs were institutions for the informal but holistic education of workers which housed modest lecture rooms and libraries; they offered evening talks on a

---

For concise histories, see Vincent Duclert, *L'affaire Dreyfus* (Paris: La découverte, 2006, 1st edn 1994) or Éric Cahm, *L'affaire Dreyfus: histoire, politique et société* (Paris: Librairie générale française, 1994, 1st edn 1966). For source-based works, see Léon Lipschutz, *Bibliographie thématique et analytique de l'affaire Dreyfus* (Paris: Éditions Fasquelle, 1970) or Michael Burns, *The Dreyfus Affair: a documentary history* (Boston, Mass.: St Martin's Press, 1999). For historiography, see Emmanuel Naquet, 'L'historiographie récente de l'affaire Dreyfus (2005–2006)', *Revue historiographique* 642 (2007), pp. 369–378. For anti-Semitism and the Affair, see Michael R. Marrus, *The Politics of Assimilation: a study of the Jewish community at the time of the Dreyfus Affair* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971).

varied range of topics, including history, philosophy, art, and hygiene. The UP movement was predicated on twin desires: to push back a past which threatened to swallow France, and to bring the country out of the torment of the Affair. Many of those involved believed that these educative centres were destined to be a crucial part of a bright and new (if somewhat distant) future, and they saw themselves as building and preparing for this future in the present.

Conceived as a way of escaping the past and gradually ushering in the future, the UPs were rooted in a certain conceptualisation of time. Activists felt that they existed in an exploded timeframe in which action in the present was vital—but because of the high stakes involved, any action could (and indeed should) have a profound impact far into the future. The distant future provided a vague focal point for UP activists, who did not expect the fruition of their aims in the present or the near future. However, a few years after the movement's enthusiastic and successful beginning it had all but fizzled out, and its instigators and supporters were left disenchanted. The perception of a highly-charged present and a distant future which held fulfilment had animated the UP endeavour, but it eventually helped precipitate the movement's demise. The movement crumbled because, among other things, it could not reconcile its very long-term aims with action in the short term. There was a disconnect, an unbridgeable gap, between these two modes of perceiving time and bringing about change.

Broader disenchantment with the Dreyfusard movement emerged shortly after the waning of the UP movement. For authors such as Daniel Halévy and Charles Péguy, disillusion was a condition with a sense of time at its core, arising not simply from bitterness at the disintegration of the Dreyfusard coalition but also from the conviction that the generation of the 1890s was adrift in time, detached from that which followed it. The initial ire of the Dreyfus Affair had fostered a particularly intense experience of time which in turn influenced the actions of those involved and helped shape the UP initiative. But when the fervour faded there was a corresponding sense of temporal disorientation created by the activists' sense that their personal or emotional time was being transmuted into historical time.

Time provides a novel and a fruitful theme through which to explore involvement in the Dreyfus Affair and the UPs, as well as the disappointment later produced by both. Exploring experiences and understandings of time opens the way for a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the vitally important episode, in particular why and how it produced the impassioned responses it did, and the ways in which these responses lived on and were transposed onto the UP initiative before withering away. Ideas about time also allow us to reconceptualise the divide between right and left in France, which became increasingly sharp during the Affair and in its wake.[84] Time was one of the predominant ways in which left and right defined themselves against one another, and it continued to be an essential feature of how various political groups of left and right emerged and developed in the first decade of the twentieth century.

Studying the way in which time was conceptualised in the UP movement, which provides much of the material for Chapter 2, allows us to assess some of the important ramifications of the Dreyfus Affair—such as the desire for change and the nature of that change—but it is not restricted to this. It affords a wider perspective on education initiatives in early twentieth-century France and underscores the left's emerging obsession with building the future in the present. It is difficult to overstate the importance of the Affair and its aftermath: the event created divisions and established outlooks which persisted for decades and which shaped the political, cultural, and intellectual landscape of France at a fundamental level.[85] It was, in short, the 'founding event' for a generation in their twenties in the mid-1890s—and this generation was an especially significant political and cultural force.[86] Studying perceptions of

---

[84] Prochasson cited the increased left–right polarisation that followed the Affair, see *Les années électriques*, pp. 21, 253; and Christian Topalov made the same point in 'Les "réformateurs" et leurs réseaux' in Topalov (ed.), *Laboratoires du nouveau siècle: la nébuleuse réformatrice et ses réseaux en France, 1880–1914* (Paris: Éditions de l'École des hautes études en sciences sociales, 1999), p. 11.

[85] To give just one example, Michel Winock figured the Affair as vital in the founding of Action française, see *Le siècle des intellectuels* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1997), pp. 72–80. Action française and other right-wing groups are explored in-depth in Part III of this thesis.

[86] Vincent Duclert, 'Élie et Daniel' in Henri Loyrette (ed.), *Entre le théâtre et l'histoire: la famille Halévy* (Paris: Fayard, 1996), p. 222; Duclert, *L'affaire Dreyfus*, p. 3. This idea has been emphasised in many primary and

time allows us to offer an original interpretation of the ways in which the Affair came to define this generation. At its broadest, tracing how time was experienced and conceptualised from the Dreyfus Affair to the demise of the UPs enables us to reflect on the nature of activist experiences in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; these experiences were often characterised by vivid apprehension of the present and fear for the distant future followed by a sense of temporal dislocation.

Historiography

Despite its amplitude and its range, the historiography on the Dreyfus Affair remains strikingly and frustratingly uneven.[87] Analyses of the emergence of the engaged French intellectual abound, and the preponderance of this literature is explained by the fact that the very definition of the intellectual was born in the Dreyfus Affair.[88] However, the aftermath of the scandal and the unravelling of the Dreyfusard alliance form a 'rarely told story' in the Affair's historiography.[89] This section of the thesis sheds light on important but largely unexplored

secondary works: see for example the memoirs of Dreyfusard and socialist deputy Alexandre Zévaès, *Une génération* (Paris: Marcel Rivière, 1922), pp. 47–90. Anna von der Goltz described how some generations could become 'particularly important social forces' with reference to May 1968: see her introduction in von der Goltz (ed.), *'Talkin' 'bout my Generation': conflicts of generation building and Europe's '1968'* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2011), p. 8.

[87] To illustrate something of the range of this literature, see the debate about the Affair in the countryside between Michael Burns (*Rural Society and French Politics: Boulangism and the Dreyfus Affair, 1886–1900* [Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984]) and Nancy M. Fitch ('Mass culture, mass parliamentary politics, and modern anti-Semitism: the Dreyfus Affair in rural France', *American Historical Review* 97 [1992], pp. 52–95), who ask important questions about popular culture and the rural reception of national events; or Roger Glenn Brown's exposition of its colonial dimension in *Fashoda Reconsidered* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1969).

[88] Pascal Ory and Jean-François Sirinelli, *Les intellectuels en France de l'affaire Dreyfus à nos jours* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1992), p. 5; Jeremy Jennings and Anthony Kemp-Welch 'The century of the intellectual' in Jennings and Kemp-Welch (eds), *Intellectuals in Politics: from the Dreyfus Affair to Salman Rushdie* (London: Routledge, 1997), p. 7. See also Winock, *Le siècle des intellectuels*, a seminal work on intellectuals in France whose first seven chapters were devoted directly to the Affair (see pp. 11–71).

[89] Harris, *The Man on Devil's Island*, p. 12. Prochasson referenced the *noyés de l'affaire Dreyfus*, but his discussion was confined to the anti-intellectual turn on the left rather than exploring broader post-Dreyfusard discontent: see *Les intellectuels, le socialisme et la guerre, 1900–38* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1993), pp. 32–6.

aspects of the Affair, such as the breakdown of Dreyfusard activism and the emergence, development, and demise of the UP movement.

In 2010, Ruth Harris made a major contribution to the historiography of the Affair by arguing for the primacy of the role of emotion in 'shap[ing] the Affair's direction and meaning'. Harris asserted that the importance of emotion has often been overlooked in history, first by scholars employing the social-scientific methodology of the 1960s and then by those under the influence of the linguistic turn who were fixated on texts and discourse.[90] In her history of the Affair, the emotion of those involved was seen not merely as a lurid sideshow but as the root of the Affair's power and even its development. This had been tacitly acknowledged by Richard Griffiths in his book on the highly emotional polemics of the Affair, though he remained focused on language rather than emotions: '[w]ords do not merely reflect events; they often create them'.[91] My analysis builds on these argument, examining how emotion interacted with ideas about time to produce a heightened notion of what was at stake during the Affair and of the importance of implementing long-term change in its wake.

One of Harris' other main contributions was to complicate the divide between Dreyfusards and anti-Dreyfusards; often depicted as monolithic blocs, the two sides were in fact formed of delicate, shifting, and sometimes surprising webs of association.[92] This was also acknowledged in a special issue of the review *Mil Neuf Cent* in 1993, which was dedicated to in-depth exploration of the issue of why and how activists became Dreyfusards or anti-Dreyfusards. *Mil Neuf Cent*'s series of articles uncovered a complex matrix of social, intellectual, political, and familial influences which brought to bear on engagement in the Dreyfus Affair:

---

[90] Harris, *The Man on Devil's Island*, p. 8. Harris' contribution in this regard was part of a broader recognition of the importance of emotions in shaping past events, see William M. Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: a framework for the history of emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001). Reddy's book included insights from anthropology and cognitive psychology, and he set out how historians could incorporate the emotions of those they studied into their works.

[91] Griffiths, *The Use of Abuse: the polemics of the Dreyfus Affair and its aftermath* (Oxford: Berg, 1991), p. xi; Griffiths also described how the Affair 'was marked by the bluntness and violence of emotions', ibid. 5.

[92] Harris, *The Man on Devil's Island*, p. 7.

positions were rarely predetermined.[93] This chapter contributes to revision of the entrenched view of two strictly defined and radically different camps by pointing out that they had more in common than has previously been recognised, particularly in terms of their understanding of what was at stake and their experiences of rupture in personal friendships, both of which were entwined with ideas about time.[94]

Although the Affair has often been cited as a foundational event for activists, it is usually cast in a positive light, as it is in Paul-Henri Bourrelier's monumental study of the *génération dans l'engagement*.[95] But there is insufficient recognition of the disaffection—and the sense of temporal disorientation that was integral to it—which quickly came to overshadow Dreyfusard engagement. After the heightened emotions of the Affair, there was a sense of sobering up, and of readjusting after intense excitement. Many studies gloss over the post-Dreyfusard disappointment, but it was an important feature of the early 1900s.[96] Examining these murkier facets—which were marked by disappointment and failure as well as hope and grand visions—alongside the period of devoted engagement in the Affair affords a richer perspective on a scandal which is too often seen as a simple victory for justice. Studying the experience and the conceptualisation of time offers a particularly constructive way of unpicking the Affair's outcomes because it can help explain how and why initial zeal faded to reveal a sense of impotence and disenchantment.

I view Péguy as the theoretician of the change in the perception of time that was integral to that shift: sometimes overlooked texts such as 'À nos amis, à nos abonnés', as well as the much better known 'Notre jeunesse', highlight the importance of the slippage between personal

---

[93] See Jacques Julliard (ed.), 'Comment sont-ils devenus dreyfusards?' [Special issue], *Mil Neuf Cent* 11 (1993), and especially Julliard, 'Comment sont-ils devenus eux-mêmes?', ibid. 5–14.

[94] Griffiths similarly pointed out that the techniques of the two sides were similar, see *The Use of Abuse*, p. 5.

[95] Paul-Henri Bourrelier, *La Revue blanche: une génération dans l'engagement, 1890–1905* (Paris: Fayard, 2007). Bourrelier in turn owed much to Sirinelli's study of the interwar years, see *Génération intellectuelle*. Duclert was also too unremittingly positive about the Affair and its aftereffects, see 'L'affaire Dreyfus et la gauche' in Jean-Jacques Becker and Gilles Candar (eds), *Histoire des gauches en France*, vol. 2: *XXe siècle: à l'épreuve de l'histoire* (Paris: La découverte, 2006), pp. 199–214.

[96] Duclert was guilty of this, see *L'affaire Dreyfus*.

timeframes and historical and generational ones. Péguy has been studied extensively, but works on him tend to fixate on his development.[97] Placing him alongside other activists, notably Halévy and Blum, allows us to access an important moment of change for this generation—as well as allowing us to contextualise Péguy himself.

Only one monograph has been written about the UP movement, which otherwise receives its scholarly attention solely in the form of scattered mentions in works on the broader political and intellectual climate in France at the turn of the twentieth century or in a clutch of articles on popular education.[98] Lucien Mercier's 1986 book provides a thorough analysis of the emergence of the movement, its initial success and subsequent failure, but it leaves gaps to be filled. Most significantly, Mercier insists on the importance of the Dreyfus Affair as a short-term factor in the creation of the UPs, but he does not explore this in-depth and he obfuscates the ways in which the Affair might have influenced the character of the UP movement as it developed.[99] In the following chapters, the UPs are not seen simply as having been partly caused by the Affair—they were also profoundly shaped by it. Specifically, the desperate desire for immediate change stretching into the long-term future which was produced by the Affair was at the heart of the UP initiative.

---

[97] This is especially true of Géraldi Leroy's scholarship. Leroy is the leading scholar on Péguy and has written extensively about him, see *Péguy: l'inclassable* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2014) or *Péguy entre l'ordre et la révolution* (Paris: Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1981). Schmitt also focused obsessively on Péguy's development, see *Charles Péguy: the decline of an idealist*. When Péguy is looked at in context, as in Jacques Julliard's *Les gauches françaises, 1762–2012: histoire, politique, et imaginaire* (Paris: Flammarion, 2012) or in André Robinet's *Péguy entre Jaurès, Bergson et l'église* (Paris: Seghers, 1968), study of him tends to be more fruitful.

[98] For such articles, see Sanford Elwitt, 'Education and the social questions: the Universités populaires in late nineteenth century France', *History of Education Quarterly* 22 (1982), pp. 55–72 or Vincent Goulet, '"Transformer la société par l'enseignement social." La trajectoire de Dick May entre littérature, sociologie et journalisme', *Revue d'Histoire des Sciences Humaines* 19 (2008), pp. 117–42. The UPs were mentioned by Winock, *Le siècle des intellectuels*, pp. 90–7; by Sandra Dab, 'Bienfaisance et socialisme au tournant du siècle: la Sociétés des visiteurs, 1898–1902' in Topalov (ed.), *Laboratoires du nouveau siècle*, pp. 224–5; and finally by Prochasson in his doctoral thesis, see 'Place et rôle des intellectuels dans le mouvement socialiste français (1900–20)', Ph.D. thesis, Université de Paris I Panthéon–Sorbonne, 1989, pp. 108–39 (though the UPs play a smaller role in Prochasson's subsequent monograph).

[99] Lucien Mercier, *Les Universités populaires: 1899–1914. Éducation populaire et mouvement ouvrier au début du siècle.* (Paris: Éditions ouvrières, 1986, 1st edn 1979), pp. 11, 32–8, 177.

Vincent Duclert pointed out that there are no mysteries left in the Dreyfus Affair, and though his assertion may be true of the facts of the scandal, there are certainly, as Laurent Gervereau and Christophe Prochasson argued, rich seams still to be mined when it comes to the Affair's meaning and interpretation.[100] The experience and the conceptualisation of time during and following the Affair and throughout the founding, development, and failure of the UPs constitute one such seam.

[100] Duclert, *L'affaire Dreyfus*, p. 112; Laurent Gervereau and Christophe Prochasson, *L'affaire Dreyfus et le tournant du siècle, 1895–1910* (Nanterre: Bibliothèque de documentation internationale contemporaine, 1994), p. 8.

Chapter 1

Pleine action

The experience of rupture: emotional time

The experience of rupture in close personal friendships as a result of believing in Dreyfus' innocence or guilt was a major feature of the Dreyfus Affair for many of those involved.[101] Intense emotionality was a marked aspect of the period 1897–9, and the vituperative outbursts and strong but unpredictable opinions that the episode so frequently produced divided old friends and even families.[102] Deeply painful schisms between formerly close associates were constitutive of the particular way in which activists experienced time at the height of the Affair. This emotional landscape of time was characterised by immediate uncertainty coupled with fear for the distant past and the distant future; these features were in turn intensified by the tumult and speed of events. This particular experience of time was an essential feature of engagement in the Affair, deeply affecting participants and influencing their understanding and their actions.

When the Halévy family broke with artist Edgar Degas over the Affair the young Daniel saw this as a catastrophic event which would have a profound impact on both his past and his future. Degas had expressed his opposition to the revision of Dreyfus' conviction and, with the question of his anti-Semitism coming uncomfortably to the fore, the artist wrote to Louise

[101] Péguy insisted on both the making and breaking of friendships as the major feature of the Affair in the very first issue of his review, see 'Lettre du Provincial', *CQ*, 1st ser., no. 1 (1900), pp. 17–8.

[102] Bertrand Joly described how cousins Paul Déroulède (an anti-Dreyfusard nationalist) and Ludovic Trarieux (a Dreyfusard) were divided by the Affair, though they hadn't been divided by the Boulanger Affair, see *Déroulède: l'inventeur du nationalisme français* (Paris: Perrin, 1998), p. 9. See AN, F 7 12719: a police report dated 13 Feb. 1902 described how a Madame Godillot gave generously to nationalist organisation Ligue de la Patrie française, while her husband was a devoted Dreyfusard.

Halévy (Daniel's mother) to inform her that he would no longer be dining at theirs on Thursdays, as had been his longstanding custom. 'The laughter is over—that youth that you were good enough to include me in'.[103] The aging Degas' comment spoke for the sense, acute among a younger generation, of lost innocence; it also foreshadowed the generational rift that would come to be so important in Affair's aftermath. Halévy was distraught after Degas' withdrawal from the family. He wrote in his diary that this was 'civil war': 'the most beautiful memories of my past, shattered; my greatest hopes for the future, threatened'.[104] It would be easy to dismiss his lamentations as overly dramatic, the product of youthful exaggeration, but when Halévy returned to the Affair much later in his life, the break with Degas was an event which he still recalled clearly and regretted forcefully. 'One can hardly believe that such old and such fruitful relationships can have been broken in one fell swoop', he wrote in 1960, two years before his death at the age of ninety.[105] Halévy's diary entry and his later recollections speak for the way in which he and many of his generation had an indistinct but nonetheless overwhelming sense of the profound impact the Affair would have on their personal lives, both on the memories they held of their pasts and the futures they envisaged.

A similar phenomenon can be seen in the rupture between Léon Blum and Maurice Barrès.[106] Formerly close comrades both writing for the spirited and eclectic *Revue blanche*, the two men ceased to be friends as a result of the Affair.[107] Blum would one day become Prime Minister, but at this time he was a young writer and former *normalien* whose socialist leanings were being stoked by the Dreyfus Affair; he was one of the many of his generation who looked

---

[103] *C'est fini de rire—cette jeunesse, votre bonté pensait m'y intercaler.* See Degas' letter (23 Dec. 1897) quoted in Maurice Braud, 'Edgar Degas et l'affaire Dreyfus: entre avant-garde et réaction', *Mil Neuf Cent* 11 (1993), p. 107. Ludovic (Daniel's father) had expressed his concern at Degas' anti-Semitism, asking his sons not to talk to the painter about the Affair; see Duclert, 'Élie et Daniel', p. 226. The Halévys were Protestants but had Jewish ancestry, hence their disquiet: on the family and its assimilation, see Laurent, *Daniel Halévy*, pp. 23–46.

[104] BNF, NAF 28147, box 81, Carnet 13 (entry for 1–20 Jan. 1898), p. 19.

[105] Daniel Halévy, *Degas parle…* (Paris: La palatine, 1960), p. 119.

[106] This rupture was also described in Winock, *Le siècle des intellectuels*, pp. 11–7.

[107] On the *Revue blanche* cohort and the Affair, see Bourrelier, *La Revue blanche: une génération*, pp. 529–792.

up to Barrès, the avant-garde writer, as a master.[108] Barrès, to Blum's surprise and consternation, declared himself an anti-Dreyfusard, and sought to align himself with those who upheld the national interest over justice for one individual.[109]

Barrès' letters to Blum in February 1898, which are at times protracted to the point of being circumlocutory, reveal that his decision was fraught with hesitation, distress, and a sense of the magnitude of the Affair. After announcing the decision, he stressed that he would cherish the past he had shared with his friend and appealed to Blum to remember that there was 'another, more eternal world' in which things like 'fidelity to friendship' took precedence.[110] But the reality, as he admitted two years later, was that life 'walks on corpses. It is cruel'.[111] The harsh present trampled Barrès' and Blum's common past, and in an instant a breach had opened up and past friendship was abruptly juxtaposed with future enmity. Barrès had to resort to imagining another world in order to envisage a time when the Affair would no longer matter and his friendship with Blum could be resurrected. In doing so he was articulating the way in which the incident had provoked decisions which placed certain friendships irretrievably and regrettably in the past and which would have a profound impact on the future. In Péguy's words, ruptures in friendships occasioned a kind of 'interior exile'—there was a feeling of being isolated in an exploded timeframe.[112] This was a marked feature of what Griffiths described as activists' entry into 'a new reality of their own'.[113]

Many years later, when Blum put together *Souvenirs sur l'affaire* (a collection of articles originally published in the newspaper *Marianne* and prompted by Alfred Dreyfus' death in 1935), he expressed a similar sentiment, evoking the break with Barrès as a moment when

---

[108] Serge Berstein, *Léon Blum* (Paris: Fayard, 2006), pp. 30–3, 52–60. Barrès was a writer and journalist who had made his name in the late 1880s and early 1890s with the *Culte du moi* trilogy; he had come to politics through Boulangism and came to be a leading nationalist. His work is studied in greater depth in Part III of this thesis.
[109] Blum, *Souvenirs sur l'affaire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1935), p. 88; Centre d'Histoire de Sciences politiques (CHSP), fonds Léon Blum, inventaire 4, dossier 23, letter from Barrès to Blum (5 Feb. 1898).
[110] CHSP, fonds Blum, inv. 4, dr 23, letter from Barrès to Blum (9 Feb. 1898), pp. 3–4.
[111] CHSP, fonds Blum, inv. 4, dr 23, letter from Barrès to Blum (18 May 1900), p. 1.
[112] Péguy, 'Lettre du provincial', p. 18.
[113] Griffiths, *The Use of Abuse*, p. 16.

something had been 'broken, finished; one of the avenues of my youth had closed'.[114] For both Barrès and Blum—as for many other members of the generation of 1890—there was the sense that the Affair was a moment of crystallisation when enduring divisions consigned certain friendships irrevocably to the past. Halévy's diaries and Blum and Barrès' correspondence alert us to the way in which those involved in the Affair felt themselves to be operating in a highly charged emotional and personal timeframe in which past and future were at stake. Their later recollections reinforce this, lending credence to these earlier and more nakedly emotional statements by allowing us to see that they had meaning beyond the heightened feelings and the tempestuous atmosphere of the Affair. These writers were articulating a very real and enduring experience of time.

As Blum had realised, much to his chagrin, it was difficult to tell who would fall on which side of the divide during the Affair, and it was in part this situation which created the vicissitudes which so troubled him and Halévy. Blum latter recalled the illogical nature of associations during the Affair: why, contrary to all expectations, had radical politician and establishment figure Georges Clemenceau become a Dreyfusard while avowedly anti-establishment Barrès rallied to the anti-Dreyfusards?[115] The element of uncertainty and unpredictability constituted a key feature of participants' experience of time and was compounded by the speed of events. Halévy's 1898 diary entries agonised over the impossibility of foreseeing what would happen day by day and week by week, while in his monumental history of the Affair, Dreyfusard Joseph Reinach cited the 'vertiginous speed' with which events proceeded.[116] Uncertainty and suddenness combined with the charged emotional timeframe

---

[114] Blum, *Souvenirs*, p. 88. Bourrelier also picked up on the 'nostalgia' felt by Barrès and Blum, but he did not develop the observation, see *La Revue blanche: une génération*, p. 614.

[115] Blum, *Souvenirs*, pp. 74–81. On Clemenceau and the Affair, see Julliard, 'Clemenceau et l'affaire Dreyfus: histoire d'une conversion', *Mil Neuf Cent* 11 (1993), pp. 45–9. Clemenceau threw himself into the Affair and his published articles on the matter occupy seven volumes.

[116] See BNF, NAF 28147, box 81, Carnet 13 (entry for 'jours divers', Jan. 1898), p. 19; Joseph Reinach, *Histoire de l'affaire Dreyfus*, vol. 1 (Paris: Robert Laffont, 2006, 1st edn 1901–11), p. 37. Reinach was from an illustrious German family of bankers and historians; he was a well-known deputy who had worked for Léon Gambetta in the early 1880s (see http://data.bnf.fr/12511843/joseph_reinach/ [accessed 20 July 2017]).

described above to produce a particularly intense experience of time: at the stroke of a pen shared pasts and common hopes for the future could be struck away.

Ruptures such as those between the Halévys and Degas and Barrès and Blum were a crucial facet of the 'rare kind of passionate involvement' and the 'unusually intense process of emotional mobilisation' which was such a marked feature of the Affair.[117] The breakdown of friendships was explicitly linked to the idea that pasts were becoming fixed or even destroyed while the distant future was being shaped powerfully. This went beyond the use of hyperbolic language related to time to express anguish at the loss of friends; the conviction that past and future were being radically altered as result of the breakdown in personal friendships was a fundamental part of the experience of the Dreyfus Affair. This unsettling awareness of the mutability and the fragility of past and future was further intensified by the speed and the unpredictability of events, which constituted another crucial facet of activists' experiences of time during the Affair.

France at stake: the times of the nation

The personal emotional timeframe outlined in the previous section interacted with and was transposed onto a much larger one: that of the nation. France itself seemed to be at stake, its distant past and its distant future hanging in the balance. In 1901, right-wing observer Christian Schefer gave a particularly penetrating description of how the Affair had become so all-consuming. The ongoing crisis that had marked the final years of the nineteenth century and would drag on into the early twentieth was seemingly small, even 'quite banal' at its root—'but', he went on:

[117] Harris, *The Man on Devil's Island*, pp. 7–8.

> as new factors were introduced and the vortex of polemics grew, people worked themselves into a frenzy; their actions became more serious and the decisions they took became, in turn, increasingly likely to have ever weightier consequences.[118]

Schefer's analysis encapsulates how, through the fervour of those involved, the issue had become an urgent matter of national importance. This section argues that France's national timeframe came to the fore during the Affair: both Dreyfusards and anti-Dreyfusards were asking parallel questions about the significance and the place of past and future in a national context—but, of course, with very different results. For many of those who upheld Dreyfus' innocence, the Affair seemed to strip back the veneer of progress, allowing ugly and ancient animosities to rear their heads and threaten to engulf the country in a past which the Dreyfusards held to be superannuated and deeply distasteful. On the other hand, anti-Dreyfusards saw their opponents as a mortal threat to the continuity of a long and glorious past. Their emphasis on continuity and on national over individual interests were values they held equally deeply.

There is little doubt as to how much was felt to be at stake during the Affair: '[t]wo Frances, or so it seemed, fought for the nation's soul'.[119] This succinctly conveys how the battle over Dreyfus' innocence or guilt was essentially a battle over the country itself.[120] Indeed, the very concepts of nation and *patrie* were at stake; these formed 'the core of political debates during the Dreyfus Affair'.[121] Barrès described the Affair as the life or death of France, and on

---

[118] Christian Schefer, *La crise actuelle: essai de psychologie contemporaine* (Paris: Plon-Nourrit, 1901), pp. 1–2. Schefer taught at the École des Sciences politiques and wrote in the *Journal des débats* (see http://data.bnf.fr/12529888/christian_schefer/ [accessed 3 May 2017]).

[119] Harris, *The Man on Devil's Island*, p. 3. Many historians have emphasised this point: for example, see also Jean-Denis Bredin's section on 'two Frances', *The Affair: the case of Alfred Dreyfus*, tr. Jeffrey Mehlman (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1987), pp. 243–356. It was also evident to those involved in the Affair: see Péguy, 'Notre jeunesse', p. 120.

[120] For the broader 'culture wars' in France at this time, see for example Frederick Brown, *For the Soul of France: culture wars in the age of Dreyfus* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2010).

[121] Pierre Sorlin, 'Words and images of nationhood' in Robert Tombs (ed.), *Nationhood and Nationalism in France: from Boulangism to the Great War (1889–1918)* (London: Harper Collins, 1991), p. 74.

both sides there was a highly charged feeling of the country's critical state.[122] For the nationalist, the entirety of the country had been contained in the Rennes trial in the summer of 1899.[123] With the stakes being so high and its potential effects so clearly far-reaching, it is perhaps unsurprising that the Affair came to be spoken about in terms of distant past and distant future—but the extent to which these temporal categories were explicitly contested and highly politically charged is nonetheless noteworthy.

Halévy gave the sense of a nation at stake a striking temporal inflection: in his diary in the autumn of 1899, shortly after the retrial and Dreyfus' pardon, he described how the Affair was searching for its 'means of acting on ~~po~~ eternity'.[124] The crossed out beginnings of what was almost certainly going to be the word 'politics' and its replacement with the far more solemn 'eternity' highlights the Affair's profound, long-term importance and the way in which language surrounding time was a cornerstone of how this was expressed by participants. As with their personal destinies, those involved in the Affair had a temporally totalising and emotionally fraught sense of what was at stake, fearing for the country's distant past and distant future as well as its present and its near future. There was also a realisation, expressed implicitly by both Barrès and Halévy, that their personal experiences were part of an event of immense historical significance. In this sense, their emotional timeframes seemed to align with the timeframes of the nation and of history, with each giving the other heightened importance.

The Dreyfus Affair drew much of its power from the way in which it at once catalysed and revealed, in Michel Winock's pithy phrase (he called the Affair *un événement révélateur–catalyseur*).[125] For many Dreyfusards what had been revealed was an invidious past which had

---

122 Barrès, *Mes cahiers*, vol. 2 (Paris: La Palatine, 1930), p. 116. There are numerous examples of this: see also Claude Actan, 'Les précurseurs', *Le Précurseur*, no. 1 (20 Oct. 1898), p. 2, who insisted that France was imperilled. *Le Précurseur* was an anti-Semitic, anti-Dreyfusard publication.

123 Barrès, *Scènes et doctrines du nationalisme* (Paris: Éditions du Trident, 1987, 1st edn 1902), p. 9.

124 BNF, NAF 28147, box 81, Cahier 14 (entry for Nov. 1899), p. 7.

125 Michel Winock, 'Les affaires Dreyfus', *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d'histoire* 5 (1985), p. 20. Winock has not been the only historian to point this out: Martin P. Johnson described the Affair as 'a kind of x-ray', see *The Dreyfus Affair* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999), p. x. Participants were well aware of this aspect, too: Lavisse wrote that the country had been exposed as troubled and uncertain, see 'La réconciliation', p. 648; and syndicalist Hubert

come to disturb the present and which urgently needed to be pushed back. They continually alluded to the way in which the Affair had uncovered perturbing aspects of France, characterising the threat as the resurgence of a past which they had been believed to be gone. At its worst, this was depicted as the sensation of having been thrown back into the *ancien régime*: '[h]ere we are, returned to the time before the Revolution'.[126] For Fernand Gregh, what had been unearthed was the tenacity of 'blind religious hatred, pulled up from the depths of the Middle Ages'.[127] Reinach also pointed to the past's unwelcome intrusion on the present, describing Dreyfus' meeting with Du Paty de Clam, Gribelin, and Cochefert at his handwriting test as a confrontation between two worlds, that of 'a past [...] believed to be dead but which has been resuscitated' and that of 'Freedom and Justice, in danger of perishing'.[128] For many, what needed to be fought was the resurrection of a nefarious past. On the Dreyfusard side, the idea that France had been exposed in this way powerfully contributed to the magnitude of what was at stake. The references to a dark and distant past portrayed the Affair as playing out across an epic timeframe and began a process of characterising the anti-Dreyfusards as emblems of an undesirable past and intractable opponents of the very concept of the future.

As this evidence begins to suggest, two radically opposed ways of conceptualising time broadly structured debates about the fate of the nation at the time of the Affair. Dreyfusards tended to espouse a new and different future which advanced and built upon the past or even broke away from it entirely, whereas anti-Dreyfusards wanted to conserve the past and use it as a model for a stable future which would be a continuation of what had come before. Barrès stated this explicitly in *Scènes et doctrines du nationalisme*, a large part of which was given over to study of the Affair: Dreyfusards, he explained, sought to 'transform France' whereas he wanted

---

Lagardelle described how the country had been 'stripped naked', see 'L'amnistie et les socialistes', *CQ*, 2nd ser., no. 4 (1900), p. 69.

126 Georges Lefrançais, 'Au révérend Père Didon', *Les Temps nouveaux*, no. 14 (30 July 1898), p. 1.

127 Gregh, *L'âge d'or*, p. 288.

128 Reinach, *Histoire*, vol. 1, p. 66.

to 'conserve' the country.[129] Insistence on using conceptions of time as a tag to be attached to one side or the other was, however, more common among Barrès' opponents, and references to a battle between past and future abound in Dreyfusard literature. This is largely explained by the idea that transforming the present to produce a radically different future required greater engagement with the meaning of past and future—the idea of a past which continues forward indefinitely somewhat negates the future, relegating it to a mere chronological category as opposed to something defined by change. But both the perception of a past which continued into the future and a future which broke with the past implied politically charged choices: neither was a neutral idea about the workings of time and history. The two competing notions of time attained heightened importance during the Dreyfus Affair.

Charles Péguy, Ernest Lavisse, and the anarchist novelist and Dreyfusard Octave Mirbeau all characterised the Affair as a battle between past and future. In one of his many articles on the Affair (in this instance from Émile Pouget's bellicose syndicalist paper *Le Père Peinard*), Mirbeau sought to rouse readers 'to defend the present and safeguard the future' against 'the defeated forces of the past'.[130] Temporal categories were employed as emotive shorthand, intended to incite readers immediately to identify with and fight for an aspirational present which looked towards the future as opposed to a past which was a dead weight. In an article about the Affair in the *Revue blanche*, Péguy similarly contrasted the 'conservative parties', 'looking to the past, by their very definition' with the 'revolutionary parties' who were 'always turning to the future'.[131] His statement indicated how the basic opposition between left and right could be identified as a difference between the way in which each side viewed time. This analysis can be misleading, however—it would be difficult to define a figure such as Joseph

---

[129] Barrès, *Scènes et doctrines*, p. 30.

[130] Mirbeau, 'Aux hommes libres', *Le Père Peinard* (23 Oct. 1898) in Mirbeau, *L'Affaire Dreyfus*, ed. Pierre Michel and Jean-François Nivet (Paris: Librairie Séguier, 1991), p. 140.

[131] Péguy, 'L'affaire Dreyfus et la crise du parti socialiste' in Péguy, *Notes politiques et sociales* (Paris: L'amitié Charles Péguy, 1957), p. 133. This article was originally published in *La Revue blanche* in late 1899.

Reinach as left wing, even though he rejected the atavistic past he perceived to be embodied by the anti-Dreyfusards. But this is an exception, and Péguy's use of past and future in this context is noteworthy nonetheless. As these examples illustrate, the concepts of past and future were very deliberately employed as a way of describing political differences, both between Dreyfusards and anti-Dreyfusards and often more broadly between left and right. Furthermore, this use of time was not simply rhetorical or descriptive, as Mirbeau's impassioned statement alone might suggest—it was perceived to be at the heart of political divisions.

In his article on national reconciliation in the wake of Dreyfus' pardon, Lavisse identified the coming together of past and future as a crucial part of healing the wounds of the Affair, thereby indicating a perceived opposition between the two. But it is clear where Lavisse's sympathies lay, as he went on to specify that 'resistance to' and 'liberation from the past' would make for a better France; his article was therefore ultimately less about reconciling Dreyfusards' and anti-Dreyfusards' visions of the country than it was about highlighting the need to push back the past. This is certainly borne out by what Lavisse meant in practicality by a resolution between past and future: the separation of Church and State, the acceptance of the Republic on all sides as the most appropriate form of government, a reformed army—all proposals likely to be extremely unpopular among anti-Dreyfusards but widely praised by Dreyfusards.[132] Lavisse's apparently contradictory desire to knit together past and future while simultaneously breaking free of the past is an expression of the way in which many Dreyfusards sought to pick out certain aspects of history and carry them forward while at the same time resisting the totalising concept of the past espoused by some of their anti-Dreyfusard opponents. Put simply, Lavisse wanted to marry a specific version of the past with the future. Different political groups claimed and emphasised different aspects of French heritage—this is a well-established point and there is a rich literature which explores the particular versions of the past taken up in

[132] Lavisse, 'La réconciliation', pp. 666, 668. Burns also cited the separation of Church and State as 'a major factor in what Dreyfusards defined as a battle against a reactionary past', see *France and the Dreyfus Affair*, p. xi.

various strands of political thought.[133] But there is a more important point to be made here about the way in which the very idea of the past was constructed and utilised.

At first, the fact that Dreyfusards such as Mirbeau, Jaurès, and Péguy feared for the heritage of Enlightenment thinkers and the French Revolution while anti-Dreyfusards fretted over the unity of the past seems to suggest a battle which was simply between differing versions of the past. There is certainly an element of this, and it was heightened by the fact that Dreyfus seemed to embody a republic in need of defence, as Duclert pointed out—and the republic was bound up with the hard-fought gains of the French Revolution.[134] Péguy depicted a particularly strong bond between the Revolution and the Dreyfus Affair when he referred to the anonymous revolutionary masses as 'all the Dreyfusards of the past', while part of Mirbeau's reason for engaging so passionately in the Affair was the defence of the legacy bequeathed by Enlightenment thinkers.[135] However, the content of clashing pasts was ultimately not as important as their conceptualisation. Péguy railed against a history which was imposed on its descendants whole (*je refuse l'héritage en bloc*); what was paramount for him was plucking the golden thread of revolutionary heritage from the grey mass of the past to weave it into the present and the future.[136] Moreover, the revolutionary tradition to which many Dreyfusards clung was resolutely future-oriented: in Furet's words, it was founded upon 'a promise of such magnitude that it [became] boundlessly elastic', meaning that its potential lived on almost indefinitely.[137] Therefore, this group's frequent insistence on the French Revolution, while it

---

133 One of the best examples of this is Gildea's *The Past in French History*, and many of the contributions to Pierre Nora's *Lieux de mémoire* also tackle the issue (for just two examples, see Winock, 'Jeanne d'Arc' in Nora [ed.], *Les lieux de mémoire*, vol. 3: *les France [iii] De l'archive à l'emblème* [Paris: Gallimard, 1992], pp. 674–733; and Pascale Ory, 'Le centenaire de la Révolution française: le prevue par '89' in Nora [ed.], *Les lieux de mémoire*, vol. 1: *République* [Paris: Gallimard, 1984], pp. 523–560).

134 Duclert, *L'affaire Dreyfus*, p. 56.

135 Péguy, 'Le ravage et la réparation', *La Revue blanche*, vol. XX (Sept.–Dec. 1899), p. 428; Michel and Nivet's introduction to Mirbeau, *L'Affaire Dreyfus*, p. 23.

136 Péguy, 'Le ravage', p. 428.

137 Furet, *Interpreting the French Revolution*, p. 3.

may look like an argument about the past, is in fact more precisely and more fruitfully understood as a further expression of attachment to the future.

We can contrast Péguy's comments directly with those of Barrès, who proudly claimed the heritage which had been 'transmitted whole' by his ancestors.[138] For the nationalist, the potency of the past lay in its indivisibility; it was a monolith. Chip away one part of this cogently imagined but brittle edifice and the whole was at risk of crumbling. In an early article in Action française' (AF) review in 1899, Georges de Villebois-Mareuil (an artillery captain who would be killed the following year in the Boer War) developed this idea, using it to take issue with the legacy of the Revolution. He exclaimed:

> Nothing can stop us in our journey, we are heading at full speed towards the past—jumping over the screen of the revolution, if necessary—to take back from it everything that can strengthen the present.[139]

For Villebois-Mareuil, 1789 had broken the thread of time whose strength and completeness the nationalists so prized. They, too, saw the French Revolution in temporal terms, sometimes even more explicitly than the Dreyfusards. Juxtaposing Péguy's claims about the past with those of the nationalists alerts us to the way in which it was the conceptualisation of the past and not merely its content which came to the fore during the Affair. Furthermore, it allows us to discern how two disparate planes of national time were being formulated and proposed as solutions to the country's ills.

Integral to the concept of the French nation were the competing notions of time—dominated to a large extent by the heritage of 1789—with which it was imbued, and these

---

138 Barrès, *La terre et les morts: sur quelles réalités fonder la conscience française, troisième conférence* (Paris: Bureaux de la Patrie française, 1899) p. 23.

139 *Rien ne limite notre parcours, nous cheminons à toute voile vers le passé, en sautant s'il est nécessaire par-dessus l'écran de la révolution, pour lui reprendre tout ce qui peut affermir le present.* Georges de Villebois-Mareuil, 'Action française (action militaire)', *L'Action française: revue bi-mensuelle*, no. 2 (1 Aug. 1899), p. 30. The mention of a 'screen' sounds curious, but is probably explained by the way in which many on the right had come to feel that the profound changes that had followed the Revolution were masking a 'real' France which needed to be uncovered. See the BNF information available on Villebois-Mareuil at http://data.bnf.fr/12217280/georges_de_villebois-mareuil/ (accessed 3 May 2017). Not all those on the far right were against the French Revolution, but Villebois-Mareuil was nonetheless articulating a sense that the right had about time as a whole.

notions came to be a fundamental part of what was at stake during the Affair. Both sides had a sense that the Affair's effects would play out across an epic timeframe, fearing the impact it would have on distant past as well as distant future. In this fraught atmosphere, many Dreyfusards pointed to what they perceived as an ancient and pernicious past looming over the present. The heritage of 1789 was in need of protection against resurgent, abhorrent forms of the past and, furthermore, it contained aspirations for the future which also seemed threatened by the anti-Dreyfusards. Nevertheless, Dreyfusards did not reject the idea of the past wholesale; rather, they selected a very specific version of it—a version which in fact emphasised the importance of the future. Anti-Dreyfusards such as Barrès and Villebois-Mareuil proposed a diametrically opposed conception: that of an infrangible, complete past which needed to be recovered and brought forward into the future by unearthing the pre-revolutionary era. These starkly divergent ideas about what the past was how it should be used in the present were pivotal in the split between Dreyfusards and anti-Dreyfusards. They illustrate the importance of studying the conceptualisation of time as well as its content and, ultimately, demonstrate the urgency of the debate about France's national plane of time.

Past versus future: political time

It is clear that the Dreyfus Affair was a time when ideological and political demarcations became sharper than ever, and that these divisions persisted beyond the Affair. This section explores direct confrontations between left and right and argues that time was a vital aspect of a markedly more factionalised political discourse and its subsequent crystallisation. Through study of, for example, the furious debates that surrounded the publication of Jules Soury's *Campagne nationaliste* in 1902, I develop the observation that right and left came to define themselves against one another by signalling their attachment to either past or future, and assess how the

divergent ideas about time that had gained prominence during the Affair became a central feature of the political landscape.

Notions of time had been used before the Affair to indicate political positions: this was not an entirely new phenomenon. In 1895, Barrès found that a speech he had made in Bordeaux about federalism was repudiated by Georges Dalbert, a commentator on political events who took issue with Barrès' desire to maintain the status quo and to protect or resurrect certain traditions. In the final lines of his article, Dalbert implored so-called federalists such as Barrès to choose between continuity and change (the latter being, of course, the correct choice according to Dalbert).[140] But this criticism was not the backbone of Dalbert's article, and worries about militarism and living conditions in the provinces took precedence, with time being woven in much more subtly. It was during and after the Dreyfus Affair that the issue of time came to the fore. It became sharper and it was used much more insistently while pre-Dreyfus era debates about time were much rarer and tended to be neither so rancorous nor so consequential.

It can be tempting to think that describing something of the past was simply a generalised slur that could be deployed by either right or left and, indeed, the idea of something being of the past was occasionally used with negative connotations by the right. Writing about collectivism, Jules Lemaître (founder and leader of the Ligue de la Patrie française [LPF] an anti-Dreyfusard league aimed at right-wing intellectuals) frowned upon public ownership of capital, lands, and factories, insisting that it was 'a step backwards', 'a recoil'.[141] His resistance to collectivism, he argued, stemmed from reluctance to revert to 'a rather naïve way of

---

[140] Georges Dalbert, 'Fédéralisme et provincialisme', *La Revue blanche*, vol. IX (July–Dec. 1895), p. 93. The speech that prompted Dalbert to write the article was Barrès' *Assainissement et fédéralisme, discours prononcé à Bordeaux le 29 juin 1895* (Paris: Librairie de la Revue socialiste, 1895). Dalbert wrote a column called 'Mouvements politiques' in the *Revue blanche*.

[141] Jules Lemaître, 'Le collectivisme', *Annales de la Patrie française*, no. 45 (1 March 1902), p. 690. Jean-Pierre Rioux pointed out that the LPF existed to prove that not all intellectuals were Dreyfusards, see *Nationalisme et conservatisme: la Ligue de a Patrie française, 1899–1904* (Paris: Éditions Beauchesne, 1977), p. 12. The LPF will be explored in greater depth in Part III.

organising society'.[142] Lemaître claimed that it was not nationalism which was backward-looking; rather, this impulse came from the left. This at first seems to suggest that calling a political programme retrograde was a catch-all insult which could be deployed from either end of the political spectrum, but it is notable that Lemaître did not develop the aspects of his critique that centred on time. His was a point about the naivety of the collectivist mission and the futility of a certain vision of how to organise society—it was emphatically not a wholesale rejection of the past. Moreover, instances of the right using the notion of the past in a negative sense are far harder to find, and overwhelmingly it was the nationalists who emphasised its importance rather than denigrating it.

In an article in the *Revue blanche* in 1902, journalist Théodore Duret produced a piercing analysis of far-right activists which encapsulated the feelings of many on the left towards this group. Nationalists were a diverse group of individuals, Duret noted, but what they all had in common was that they were imbued with 'the oldest instinct', the 'ancient and irrational cult' of militarism. The simple march of time, of change and revolutions, had dampened or even entirely erased this spirit in others, but nationalists had retained it. A nationalist was, then, 'a stranger to the movement of his time'.[143] To Duret, this group appeared to have been washed up on the shores of the present, a curiosity from the past whose vestiges were alien to contemporary society. This particular criticism was relatively benign—Duret was acting as an observer rather than a participant in politics, and as such his comments did not carry the same vitriol that other critiques of the far right did—but it was telling nonetheless, and there were many instances of the right being attacked for its attachment to the past. For example, Bernard-

[142] Lemaître, 'Anglo-Saxons et français' in his *Opinions à rependre* (Paris: Société française d'imprimairie et de librairie, 1901), pp. 29, 31. *Opinions à rependre* is a collection of Lemaître's columns for *Le Figaro*, and this article was originally published there on 14 May 1897.

[143] Théodore Duret, 'Le nationalisme', *La Revue blanche*, vol. XXVII (Jan.–April 1902), pp. 481, 488. Duret was principally known as an art buyer and critic. He had observed and written about the Commune: see his *Histoire de quatre ans, 1870–3*, 3 vols (Paris: Charpentier, 1876–80). He also contributed articles to reviews and newspapers on other subjects, including politics.

Lazare, the Jewish journalist who had been so important in bringing the Affair to the French public, was in earnest when he described leading anti-Semite Édouard Drumont as a 'representative of the past'.[144] These descriptions enable us to discern the contours of the left-right confrontation in the early years of the twentieth century—a confrontation which was both rooted in and found its clearest expression in differing ideas about time.

One of the many hostilities of the Affair in which issues of time figured prominently was between Lemaître and two of the founders of the Ligue française pour la défense des droits de l'homme et du citoyen (LDH), Francis de Pressensé and Ludovic Trarieux.[145] In his inaugural speech for the LPF on 19 January 1899, Lemaître spoke of a 'total vision' of France's 'past and present community'; this vision resided in the minds of the country's 'most cultivated' citizens (he was referring to himself and to other members of the high-brow nationalist organisation).[146] Part of Lemaître's aim for his speech was to carve out a longer-term place for the Ligue within the political landscape by citing its mission as intellectual spearhead of the nationalist movement.[147] But he was also elaborating an understanding of time which was coming to prominence on many sections of the far right—itself a very molten phenomenon at this time—and which irked and disturbed the Dreyfusards and the left. This was an understanding which centred on the idea that past and present were one and must be preserved as a whole and,

---

144 Bernard-Lazare, *Antisémitisme et révolution* (Paris: Pierre-Victor Stock, 1898), p. 15. Bernard-Lazare was a fascinating figure whose writings have provided some of the material in Part III of this thesis. For his early intervention, see his pamphlet *Une erreur judiciaire: la verité sur l'affaire Dreyfus* (Paris: Pierre-Victor Stock, 1896), which he republished in an augmented edition the following year. For more on his role in the Affair, see Jean-Denis Bredin, *Bernard-Lazare: de l'anarchiste au prophète* (Paris: Éditions de Fallois, 1992), pp. 141–214; and for another comprehensive biography, see Nelly Wilson, *Bernard-Lazare: anti-Semitism and the problem of Jewish identity in late nineteenth-century France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978).

145 Trarieux was the founder and first president of the LDH, while Pressensé presided over it from 1903 until his death in 1914; see Madeleine Rebérioux, 'La naissance de la Ligue des droits de l'homme' in Drouin (ed.), *L'affaire Dreyfus de A à Z*, pp. 414–7. Pressensé was editor of *Les Temps* and would become a socialist deputy in 1902; he was one of the principal architects of the Separation between Church and State, see Jean Baubérot, 'La séparation des églises et de l'état en 1905' in Baubérot, Paul d'Hollander, Mireille Estivalèzes (eds), *Laïcité et séparation des églises et de l'état* (Limoges: Presses universitaires de Limoges, 2006).

146 Lemaître, *La Patrie française: première conférence, prononcée le 19 janvier 1899* (Paris: Bureaux de la Patrie française, 1899), pp. 16–7.

147 The speech opened by setting out this long-term aim; it was clearly important to Lemaître, who insisted that his organisation would 'place itself above the famous Affair', see ibid. 3.

furthermore, it was an understanding which was right at the core of the LPF's formation and which dictated its entire mission.

What is noteworthy in this case is that Lemaître's comments provoked very direct debate, and a few days later, on 9 February, Pressensé and Trarieux made speeches refuting his 'shrill nationalism'. They were shocked and angered to find their own devotion to France being called into question because of their pursuit of justice. Lemaître's understanding of time provided the starting point for their denunciation: 'it is not true', asserted Trarieux, 'that we find [in France] only continuity and unity of traditions'—there were many different ways of conceiving of the *patrie*.[148] Pressensé then spoke, going on to make a thorough attack that named Lemaître, Coppée, and Déroulède directly, and arguing that what was 'at stake [was] nothing less than the soul of France' and the gains of the French Revolution. Lemaître could not be allowed to hold a monopoly on the notion of patriotism and on what was best for the country.[149] Trarieux's comments got to the heart of the matter: the Dreyfusards may have deplored many things about the far right (militarism, ugly and base chauvinism), but at the root of all these things was the conceptualisation of time that Lemaître and others espoused.[150] Trarieux and Pressensé were able to see that it was this totalising vision of time which gave rise to all other features of the far right as it was emerging during this time. This debate enables us to see how France's political landscape was beginning to be more sharply defined by an opposition between two conceptions of time. This went beyond disagreements about the conceptualisation of the past and the French Revolution established in the previous section: it was broader than this and it was something which activists were willing to dispute explicitly.

Many on the right, as we began to see in the previous section with Barrès' assertions and as we have seen here in Lemaître's speech, held to a vision of an indivisible past which

---

[148] This comment is from Trarieux's introduction to Pressensé's longer speech: see *L'idée de patrie, conférence faite à Paris le 9 février 1899* (Paris: Ligue française pour la défense des droits de l'homme et du citoyen, 1902), pp. 3–4.
[149] Ibid. 6, 34, 15–6.
[150] Pressensé named all these things in his own speech: see ibid. 12, 18, 19.

provided France with a clear destiny. In order to convey this, they proudly claimed the very words which would later be repurposed as insults by the left. As AF was establishing itself in the heat of the Affair in 1899, it placed an emphasis on the past centre-stage. Prominent activist and director of AF's review, Henri Vaugeois, explained that the nascent nationalist movement relied on 'Catholic atavism', which was a vital facet of 'everything acquired, the whole past'.[151] In his article in the same issue of the review, Villebois-Mareuil asserted that France was 'a military country by geographic, *atavistic*, and sentimental necessity'.[152] Both authors clung to a version of France dictated by the past, and they believed that they had a duty to safeguard this precious cargo—be it military or religious—into the future. By contrast, Georges Deherme, the Dreyfusard founder of the UP movement, explicitly deployed the term atavism as an insult, scorning those who were 'slave[s] to their own atavisms'.[153] Here we see a conscious and precise opposition in the very language of the two sides—atavism signifying strength and continuity or atavism denoting submission to a retrograde view of the world. More significantly, however, we also see a debate forming around two issues: whether the past had to be accepted as a whole which encapsulated the present, and whether it provided a direction or even a destiny for the future.

The notion of whether the past should serve to provide direction for the future was returned to again and again in left-wing critiques of the right. Writing about Maurras' text *Anthinéa*, Daniel Halévy was cutting, citing the nationalist writer's obsession with the past as the root of 'blind' traditionalism.[154] Halévy was later won over by AF and would contribute articles to the far-right periodical *Je suis partout* in the 1930s, but in the early years of the twentieth century he was still decidedly left-leaning. *Anthinéa* was an exercise in literary history—or, according to Halévy, 'a sort of ideological journey into the disciplines of the past'. Maurras'

---

151 Henri Vaugeois, 'Réaction d'abord…', *L'AF: revue*, no. 2 (1 Aug. 1899), p. 4.
152 Villebois-Mareuil, 'Action française (action militaire)', p. 27. My emphasis.
153 Georges Deherme, 'Les Universités populaires', *La Coopération des idées*, no. 2 (17 April 1900), p. 1.
154 Daniel Halévy, 'Charles Maurras et la tradition', *La Grande France*, no. 23 (Jan. 1902), p. 45.

entire programme (political and literary) revolved around 'fidelity to the past', while Halévy stressed that 'the past could never suffice to guide us through the ever-new phenomenon that is the present'.[155] Even an assessment of Maurras' literary criticism could present an opportunity to contest the right-wing argument about how the past provided a manifest destiny for France, demonstrating the extent to which the dispute about time structured the newly-sharpened divide between left and right.

The most marked example of this is provided by the furore created by the publication of Jules Soury's *Campagne nationaliste*. In the 1890s, Soury had been hugely influential for a generation of young writers in diverse milieus; he was even praised by Jewish symbolist poet Gustave Kahn in the *Revue blanche*.[156] But by the time he published the highly anti-Semitic and rabidly nationalistic *Campagne* in 1902, he had come to be vilified by many on the left. Frenzied in his denunciation of France's current state ('today's pigsty' [*porcherie contemporaine*], as he termed it) and desperate in his hopelessness for the future, Soury put forward a bellicose and severe notion of what it meant to be French.[157] 'Life', Soury exclaimed,

> only has meaning for those who understand it as the perpetual exaltation of a cult of honour and as the constant observance of ancestral virtues.

The heroic function of the Frenchman, according to him, was to fight in an 'eternal war' for 'the ideals of our ancestors and the salvation of our descendants'. This war was vital, even if it was already lost and the best that could be hoped for was to 'die well'.[158] The text was one of the most extreme examples of the tendency of certain elements of the right to reduce the present to an homage to or a continuation of a past emblematised by 'ancestors' (who were at times invoked as a nebulous group and at other times represented by figures like Joan of Arc).

---

155 Ibid. 43, 45.

156 See Gustave Kahn, 'Jules Soury', *La Revue blanche*, vol. IX (July–Dec. 1895), pp. 449–54. Kahn was impressed by Soury's command of science, religion, and history and his ability to blend them.

157 There is a whole section of the book called *la porcherie contemporaine*: Jules Soury, *Campagne nationaliste, 1899–1901* (Paris: Plon-Nourrit, 1902), pp. 149–80.

158 Ibid. 71, 185, 14.

That past was sacrosanct, inviolable, and was to be handed down from generation to generation untouched. It was, in other words, not merely the past; it contained the entirety of the present and the future as well.

It is clear enough why many on the left might take exception to Soury's view, but what is significant is that they did so on the grounds of time and how it was conceptualised. They objected, of course, to Soury's anti-Semitism and to his reverence of a cult of death—but these aspects were amalgamated into an overarching critique of Soury's fixation with the past. Ferdinand Buisson, a republican pedagogue and another member of the LDH, published a pamphlet in response to Soury's text. In *Pourquoi nous sommes patriotes et ne sommes pas nationalistes*, he emphasised the heritage of the Revolution of 1789, and in particular of the Declaration of the Rights of Man. The men of '89 were patriots and so are we, he insisted, continuing: '[w]e repudiate nothing, we forget nothing of this long past'. Crucially, though, the *patrie* was not merely composed of the past, but 'made at once of past and future'.[159] Buisson's vision was not one which espoused the future at the expense of the past, but one which saw the two concepts combining in a dynamic and fluid way. As we saw in the previous section, the Dreyfusards' desire to protect and cherish their version of the past was not simply about preserving the gains of the Revolution. Rather, it was a matter of privileging a conceptualisation of time which accepted the possibility of a future that was distinct from the past, though informed by its best aspects.

In a much lengthier exposition than Buisson's pithy pamphlet, socialist deputy Eugène Fournière developed some of these criticisms and conducted a wide-ranging attack on nationalism. In what he stated was clear was a 'direct response to Soury's book', the socialist asked repeatedly why the 'servitude' of a generation was necessary 'for the faults of that which

---

[159] Ferdinand Buisson, *Pourquoi nous sommes patriotes et ne sommes pas nationalistes* (Paris: Ligue française pour la défense des droits de l'homme et du citoyen, 1902), pp. 20–3. Buisson was a professor at the Sorbonne and a leading figure in primary school education.

had preceded it'; '[w]hy is it the duty of man to venerate his ancestors?' Again, at the heart of his critique was the way in which nationalists such as Soury were the 'partisans of […] immobility'. Soury's 'glorification of death' and his 'aspiration to nothingness' had consisted of him entering a sepulchre into which he now called the living.[160] For Fournière, the aspect of Soury's doctrine that was worst of all was the implication that contemporary citizens would have to allow their actions to be guided by those of their predecessors—they were, in other words, chained to the past. This objection to a fixed past and to the denial of the present and the future underpinned both Buisson's and Fournière's arguments about the nationalists who, they claimed, represented nothing more than 'hypertrophy'.[161] Soury was well aware of these sorts of accusations even when he wrote *Campagne nationaliste*, noting that men like Ernest Lavisse described anti-Dreyfusards as 'wedded to their past *by their timidity and their spirit of servitude*'.[162] But he discarded these criticisms, simply restating his points about the vital importance of the past, its unity, and the duty of those currently alive to take heed of their ancestors. By around 1902, the issue of time had become a fixture of how right and left defined themselves against one another. In this regard, the angry debates over *Campagne nationaliste* provided a catalyst for a process which had begun in earnest during the Affair.

This was, furthermore, a phenomenon which would endure: time continued to reinforce the deepening left–right cleavage and to provide a way of expressing that cleavage. In 1905, Charles Guieysse—a prominent figure in the UP movement and editor of the left-leaning review *Pages libres* (*PL*)—penned an article prompted by the First Moroccan Crisis, which occurred that year. The Crisis was provoked by Kaiser Wilhelm mooring a gunboat in Tangier on 31 March in an attempt to challenge French dominance in North Africa; it was a flashpoint

---

[160] Eugène Fournière, *L'artifice nationaliste* (Paris: Eugène Fasquelle, 1903), pp. iii, ii, 99, 291, 296. Fournière's passionate volume was dedicated to the memory of Émile Zola, who had died in an accident while Fournière was finishing the book.

[161] Buisson, *Pourquoi nous sommes patriotes*, p. 23.

[162] Soury, *Campagne nationaliste*, p. 76. Soury's emphasis.

for nationalists (French and German alike), providing another opportunity for competing notions of patriotism to surface.[163] Guieysse wrote that, when conceived exclusively as an effort towards conservation, patriotism was 'a religion of the past', or even 'a cult of the dead'. Contemporary Frenchmen were neither superior nor inferior to their ancestors, he insisted pointedly (a clear reference to Soury's idolisation of ancestral values). He went on to explain that the past was not to be neglected but, equally, it could not represent a fixed point of arrival 'where we have to hold ourselves'. He reiterated a persistent theme of left-wing criticism of the right, stating that the past was 'the point of departure for our action' and not a destination in itself.[164] In common with others such as Halévy, Buisson, and Fournière, Guieysse rebuked the idea that the past presented a pathway to be followed. This example allows us to appreciate how this dispute about the relationship between past and future endured beyond the Dreyfus Affair, when it had become firmly established, and came to constitute a cornerstone of political discourse.

We have seen, then, that left and right defined themselves against one another by using their divergent understandings of time. Time provided not only the substance of their self-definition, but also its language; claiming either past or future became a clarion call. This was, in part, a case of signalling one's political allegiance, especially in the tumultuous years that followed the Dreyfus Affair, and we should remember that many of the characterisations on both sides were little more than parodies—but, nonetheless, the issue of time went much deeper than this. The left continued to espouse an understanding of time which appreciated the past but which prized the fundamental dynamism of the present and the future, while the right clung to an all-encompassing vision of the past as a wellspring of guidance for the country.

---

163 On the First Moroccan Crisis, see Gildea, *Barricades and Borders: Europe 1800–1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003, 1st edn 1987), pp. 410–2. Gildea placed the crisis in an international context.

164 Charles Guieysse, 'Action patriotique et action révolutionnaire', *Pages libres*, vol. X (July–Dec. 1905), p. 287. Guieysse was the son of a former Minister of the Colonies and had begun a promising military career, which he abruptly stopped with the arrival of the Dreyfus Affair; see Prochasson, *Les intellecutels, le socialisme et la guerre*, p. 56.

The left frequently attacked the right not just for its fixation on the past, but for the way in which it conceived of it as an infrangible monolith. But, ultimately, it is not so surprising that right and left had distinct understandings of past and future, nor that they valued these temporal categories in different ways. What is surprising is the extent to which the two groupings conceived of their differences and fashioned their programmes and their aims according to those disparate notions of time: they formed the basis of the critiques exchanged and they were at the heart of the reconfiguration of the political landscape after the Affair.

Chapter 2

Un certain coup de minuit

The founding of the Universités populaires

Before the Affair was even over, a sense of resolve about the need to rectify some of the problems so starkly exposed by the scandal had set in. The increasingly fraught emotional, national, and political times explored above combined to create the sense that activists existed in an exploded timeframe in which present action was urgent. One of the directions that this sense took was the establishment of the Universités populaires, and in October 1899, just after Dreyfus' retrial at Rennes, the first UP was formally opened in Paris' Faubourg St. Antoine.[165] Many of those who were involved in or supported this popular education initiative had also rallied to the Dreyfusard cause—notably Halévy, Gregh, and Péguy—and the UPs stemmed directly from the Dreyfus Affair. While the broader intellectual climate of Europe at this time was propitious when it came to setting up education initiatives, the UPs had grown out of personal links and collective dynamics created during the Affair and, furthermore, the form they took was also moulded by the scandal.[166] Specifically, the initiative was both propelled by and shaped by a particular understanding of time which had emerged from the Dreyfus Affair.

[165] It is tempting to say that the trial directly precipitated the opening of the first UP, but it had in fact been planned for several months and the October date is of symbolic rather than practical importance: '[n]ext October, we will open […] the first UP', Deherme had declared that spring, see 'Les UPs en France', *LCI*, no. 39 (April 1899), p. 33.

[166] Charles Guieysse described how the UPs were made possible by increased contact beween workers and intellectuals during the Affair, see 'Les UPs et le mouvement ouvrier', *CQ*, 3rd ser., no. 2 (1901), pp. 13–4.

The UP movement was animated by the sense that France was in grave danger, threatened by being swallowed by a dark and menacing past. Action (in the form of education) in order to combat this was paramount, but activists were also keenly aware of the potentially profound effects of this action on the future. The UPs were intended to be the nuclei of a new society, a society which would be built gradually and continuously and which would only be fully realised at an unknown point in the future. This section will demonstrate how the particular conceptualisation of time elaborated by those involved in the UPs was fundamental to the movement's creation, outlook, and development. The UPs provide a distinct group of sources through which some of the Dreyfus Affair's ramifications can be traced and explored, but they also have a significance which reaches far beyond this, shedding light as they do on the ubiquitous interest in popular education, and on an increasing obsession (particularly on the political left) with building the future in the present.

This recondite education initiative deserves a fuller introduction than it is usually accorded: in stark contrast to the Dreyfus Affair itself, very little is known about it. The UPs were the brainchild of Georges Deherme, a self-taught wood sculptor who had long cherished the dream of founding a popular education movement.[167] In February 1896, Deherme created a review, *La Coopération des idées* (*LCI*), subtitled *revue mensuelle de sociologie positive*, with a view to developing his education initiative. His vision gradually took shape following the all-important catalyst of the Dreyfus Affair. In the years following the opening of the UP du Faubourg St. Antoine more than 200 institutions were founded, both in Paris and in the provinces, and by the end of 1901 the movement had gained 50 000 adherents.[168] The staple of the UPs were their series of informal evening lectures on an eclectic range of topics; a typical programme

[167] Winock, *Le siècle des intellectuels*, p. 90; Mercier, *Les Universités populaires*, pp. 15, 38.
[168] Ibid. 47, 59.

might include subjects as diverse as Gothic art, the colonisation of southern Algeria, poetry, alcoholism, and the history of the 1848 Revolution.[169]

In the very first issue of his review, Deherme established that it was aimed at the 'proletarian élite', and this remained the case when the UPs were founded three years later.[170] The same is true of Charles Guieysse' *PL*, which 'pursu[ed] the same goal as' and was very close to the UP movement; Guieysse admitted that his and Deherme's endeavours could never hope to reach anything but a small section of 'élite' workers.[171] The UPs were trying to reclaim these educated workers from three detrimental forces in particular. They sought to combat and provide an alternative to 'retrograde and chimerical communist dreams', in the first instance, and they also claimed to proffer 'higher' and 'more durable' joys than cabarets and to distract from the ever-present danger of alcoholism.[172] Finally, insistence on the 'secular' nature of the UPs coupled with weekend visits to, for example, museums and flower shows constituted a concerted attempt to dissuade workers from Church services.[173]

The tripartite aim of extirpating socialist utopias while fending off the dangers of religion and founding something more 'durable' than evening entertainment begins to indicate that ideas about time were fundamental to the intellectual basis of the UP movement, since its founders were seeking to replace what they held to be bankrupt ways of conceiving of the future with more socially useful visions. Of course, any endeavour to change society is

---

[169] Musée social (MS), fonds des Universités populaires, B2 239 4 63 077; B2 239 7 63 086: programmes for the Institut populaire du Ve arrondissement (April 1901) and the UP du Faubourg St. Antoine (Oct. 1899). See also CHSP, fonds Daniel Halévy, DH1 Dr 1–4, DH2 Dr 3 for more programmes and pamphlets relating to the UPs.
[170] La Rédaction, 'Notre but', *LCI*, no. 1 (Feb. 1896), p. 1.
[171] BNF, NAF 28147, box 128, letter from Guieysse to Daniel Halévy (4 Oct. 1900). Some members of the editorial board of *PL*, namely Guieysse, Émile Kahn, and Gabriel Séailles, were heavily involved in the UPs.
[172] La Rédaction, 'Notre but', p. 1; MS, B2 239 7 63 102, poster advertising the discussion group, 'LCI pour l'Enseignement supérieur et l'Éducation éthique-sociale du Peuple' (May 1898); on the danger of alcoholism, see for example, letter from the Ligue des Travailleurs contre l'Alcoolisme, *PL*, vol. I (Jan.–June 1901), pp. 269–70 and the issue of *PL*, vol. IX (Jan.–June 1905), pp. 191–208, which is entirely dedicated to the problem.
[173] MS, B2 239 1 63 069, programme for the UP du IIIe arrondissement (Nov. 1907). Unfortunately, we do not know whether these visits were organised for Saturdays or Sundays, so whether they meant to replace mass in a very direct way remains unclear.

necessarily situated partly in the future, but what is important here is that the idea of the future—and especially the distant future—was explicitly addressed here.

As Mercier pointed out, the UP movement was very much of its time, 'insert[ing] itself naturally into the climate of the 1890s', which was 'impregnated with positivism' and concerned with opening the social sciences to a broad public.[174] Other education initiatives, such as Dick May's Collège libre des Sciences sociales and later her École des Hautes études sociales, attest to this.[175] Activists such as May had been directly and powerfully inspired by the need to change France after a succession of upheavals—defeat in the Franco-Prussian, the Boulanger Affair, the Panama Scandal—the most recent, most noxious, and most important of which was the Dreyfus Affair.[176] These initiatives evince a broad interest in education as a tool for reinvigorating citizens' relationship with the republic ('regenerat[ing] the republican pact', in Vincent Goulet's phrase).[177] Although those who founded and supported the UPs largely had Dreyfusard sympathies, education was a concern which cut across the political spectrum, and there is evidence of donations to *LCI* by Barrès.[178] Nor did concern for popular education always have to be secular in nature—the right-wing editor of the *Revue des Deux mondes*, Ferdinand Brunetière, helped to establish a religious education initiative.[179] As well as the UPs' domestic context, it is also worth acknowledging the wider international backdrop against which they were situated: Christophe Prochasson pointed to the Université Libre de Bruxelles and the London School of Economics as examples of a Europe-wide desire to bring the social

---

174 Mercier, *Les Universités populaires*, p. 22.

175 Dick May was the pseudonym of Jeanne Weil, a Dreyfusard activist, novelist, playwright, and journalist with a deep and enduring interest in education. For more on her, see Goulet, '"Transformer la société par l'enseignement social." La trajectoire de Dick May'; or Prochasson, 'Place et rôle des intellectuels', pp. 108–39.

176 May's education initiatives were a response to the Dreyfus Affair according to Prochasson, see 'Sur l'environnement intellectuel de Georges Sorel: l'École des Hautes études sociales (1899–1911)', *Mil Neuf Cent* 3 (1985), p. 22.

177 Ibid. 118.

178 Deherme spoke about Barrès' donation in 'Rapport sur l'enseignement social en France' in Henri Hauser (ed.), *Congrès international de l'enseignement des sciences sociales, tenu à Paris du 30 juillet au 3 août 1900* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1900), p. 1. Barrès' concern with education was also evident throughout his trilogy, *Le Roman de l'énergie nationale*.

179 On Brunetière and the Ligue pour l'enseignement libre, see documents in AN, F 7 12720.

sciences to the public.[180] The concern for social reform did not stop at education, and the UPs were situated within a broader move towards social reforms which encompassed work and housing, too.[181]

It is obvious, therefore, that popular education, the social sciences, and broader social reforms did not become a concern simply because of the Dreyfus Affair. However, its role as the 'immediate cause' of the UPs, a fact which was cited by many activists and affirmed in Lucien Mercier's analysis, should not be overlooked: the Affair shaped the inception and the subsequent development of the UP movement.[182] There were crucial differences between how the movement's founders viewed change and the future before and after the scandal which reveal the nature of the Affair's impact—it altered the perceived importance of education and the ways in which social change could be brought about.

Early articles by Deherme posit change as occurring in a vague future which would come about of its own accord: 'social regeneration is coming'.[183] An enquiry which formed the core of many of the early issues of *LCI*, entitled 'What will tomorrow's ideal be?', invited contributors to make predictions about how they expected social, political, and religious attitudes to change or the remain the same.[184] Contemplation of the future was the focus, but again in passive terms; change was not posited as something which would be brought about actively. It would, as Deherme's phrasing in both these examples implies, arrive independently of any intervention.

---

[180] Prochasson, 'Sur l'environnement intellectuel de Georges Sorel', p. 17.

[181] See Topalov (ed.), *Laboratoires du nouveau siècle*: this volume contains many essays discussing various initiatives for social reform.

[182] See for example Dick May, 'Quelques réflexions sur les UP', *La Revue socialiste*, no. 193 (Jan. 1901), p. 33; Émile Kahn, *La question des Universités populaires* (Paris: Éditions de la Revue socialiste, 1902), p. 9. For secondary works mentioning this idea, see Mercier, *Les Universités populaires*, pp. 32, 38, 177; Winock, *Le siècle des intellectuels*, p. 90; and Dab, 'Bienfaisance et socialisme', p. 224.

[183] Deherme, 'Les affirmations de la conscience moderne', *LCI*, no. 17 (June 1897), p. 219.

[184] The enquiry (*Quel sera l'idéal de demain?*) was started in May 1896 (issue no. 3) and continued to run throughout that year and the next.

This was to change radically with the Dreyfus Affair. The expectation that change would simply happen evaporated and action became the watchword. Deherme's articles throughout the summer and autumn of 1899 are replete with references to action; broad interest in popular education was sharpening to 'ardent desire'.[185] On the eve of the opening of the UP at the Faubourg St. Antoine, Deherme penned a combative article which provides us with a striking and appropriate image for the effect of the Dreyfus Affair on his long-cherished dream of opening popular education centres:

> A lightning bolt has torn through the night in which we basked, and basked hypocritically since we did not see the fissures in our social conscience—but now we have seen evil and disillusion.[186]

He went on to stress the need for education in the wake of the 'torment' of the Affair.[187] His impassioned rallying cry exemplifies the way in which many former Dreyfusard activists saw the 'lightning bolt' of the scandal as having violently and suddenly exposed the need for change to begin immediately.[188] Halévy mirrored this sentiment in a diary entry in November 1899, opining that the anger of the Affair was being directly transformed 'into action, into institutions: [...] the UPs'.[189] It was the end, in the grandiose words of Gabriel Séailles, UP activist and *PL* contributor, 'of a period of waiting and dreaming' and the beginning of 'a time of clear thought and action'.[190] A window of opportunity seemed to have opened up in which it was vital to instigate change in the present which would endure far into the future. Moreover, this window

---

185 See, for example, 'Les UP', a short article emphasising the need to build the UPs instead of talking about them, *LCI*, no. 41 (June 1899), pp. 65–8; May, 'Quelques réflexions', p. 33.

186 *Un éclair a déchiré la nuit dans laquelle nous nous complaisions hypocritiquement pour ne pas apercevoir les lézardes de notre conscience sociale, et nous avons vu le mal, l'erreur.* Deherme, 'Appel avant l'action', *LCI*, no. 45 (Oct. 1899), p. 130. It is interesting to note that Deherme's language here bears a strong resemblance to the language of the far-right activists—also obsessed with action and struggle—who we will study more thoroughly in Part III.

187 Ibid. 130.

188 There is no evidence that Deherme campaigned actively for Dreyfus' innocence, but he nonetheless aligned himself with the Dreyfusards.

189 BNF, NAF 28147, Cahier 14 (Nov. 1899–Sept. 1901), p. 1.

190 Gabriel Séailles, 'Introduction à la pensée moderne et l'action sociale', *PL*, vol. III (Jan.–June 1902), p. 210. Séailles was a philosophy professor at the Sorbonne and president of the Société des UPs (Winock, *Le siècle des intellectuels*, p. 90).

of opportunity would not be indefinitely available—activists were vividly aware that the chance to effect change was transient. The earlier way of conceptualising time, which saw a future gently and autonomously emerging from 'prophetic clouds', had given way to a sharper and more present-oriented conception.[191] In short, during the period leading to the opening of the first UPs, popular education came to be seen not only as 'essential' and 'urgent', but also 'crushing' and 'immense'.[192]

A fundamental part of taking advantage of this window of opportunity was pushing back the sort of past which had so disturbed Fernand Gregh, Joseph Reinach, and others during the Dreyfus Affair. Often this old world was evoked as dead—and, implicitly, in need of burial. In a slightly cryptic paragraph in his 'Appel avant l'action', Deherme characterised 'those who keep trotting out, after such a torment, the credo they have learnt' as the 'colourless ghosts of the actors in a dead world'.[193] This may be a veiled reference to the anti-Dreyfusards, but really Deherme was making a wider point about anyone who thought change was unnecessary. Séailles echoed these bluntly negative sentiments towards the past when he described it as 'burdened' and holding nothing.[194] Deherme believed that in order finally to bury this dead world people needed to stop being 'unconscious slave[s]' to the past they had inherited and move forward into a future of clarity and consciousness.[195] The past, then, was associated with unquestioningly obeying 'instinct'.[196] Clearly, the vision of moving from an unconscious past to a conscious future was a key aim of the UP movement, and here again we see the technique of ascribing negative values to the past and imbuing the future with positive and inspiring sentiments. In this case, the past was portrayed as senseless and obscure, while the future was

---

191 May was highly critical of early UP activism for shrouding initiatives in 'prophetic clouds', 'Quelques réflexions', p. 32.
192 Deherme, 'Les UPs en France', *LCI*, no. 39 (April 1899), p. 33.
193 Deherme, 'Appel avant l'action', p. 130.
194 Séailles, 'Introduction', p. 213.
195 Deherme, 'Les UPs', *LCI*, no. 2 (April 1900), p. 1; Deherme, 'Appel avant l'action', pp. 129, 130.
196 Ibid. 129.

purposeful and lay in considered thought. As this suggests, UP founders were resolutely focused on creating a future defined by change and by putting as much distance as possible between the past and the present and the future that they were striving to build.

The UPs were established as a way of building the desired future within the present, an idea which was a cornerstone of the movement and which emblematised the type of rhetoric which was gaining traction on the left during the late 1890s. Deherme posited the UPs (and other institutions he was working to found, such as the Palais du peuple) as 'the embryo of the future, in which the best and the most sincere aspiration of our day is crystallised'.[197] May similarly described the UPs as being 'pregnant with the future'.[198] UP activists sought to capture distant future dreams of a better society to make them live more convincingly in the present; this provided a way of evoking the future without consigning it to the much-maligned Marxist timeframe in which revolution lay at the end of a period of inactive waiting.[199] Descriptions of initiatives as examples of building the future within the present were common on the left at this time. In a well-known article on intellectuals and socialism, Hubert Lagardelle insisted that the proletariat was slowly working to build a new order within itself which would be the beginning of a new society, while revolutionary syndicalist Fernand Pelloutier spoke of an embryonic 'future economic organism' which would be 'prepared' before a revolution.[200] Sanford Elwitt insisted that the UPs were resolutely apolitical, '[making] a virtue of political

---

[197] Deherme, 'Le monde reflète l'homme', *LCI*, no. 3 (Sept. 1901), p. 67. The Palais du peuple, which did not come to fruition, were intended as holistic workers' institutions with accommodation, museums, libraries, shops, and exercise areas. See Deherme, 'Le Palais du peuple' and A. Dervaux, 'Une maison commune dans un faubourg travailleur', *PL*, vol. II (July–Dec. 1901), pp. 14–5, pp. 16–20.

[198] *Grosse d'avenir*. May, 'Quelques réflexions', p. 32.

[199] This timeframe was particularly strongly criticised in *PL*, and the debates surrounding this issue will be studied in-depth in Part II of the thesis. See, for example, Séailles, 'Introduction', p. 213; Michel Augé-Laribé, 'Socialisme scientifique et agriculture', *PL*, vol. V (Jan.–June 1903), pp. 459–70; and Charles Guieysse, 'Les syndicalistes révolutionnaires', *PL*, vol. VIII (July–Dec. 1904), pp. 309–28.

[200] Hubert Lagardelle founded the review *Le Mouvement socialiste*, which provides much of the primary source material for Part II, in 1899. See Lagardelle, 'Les intellectuels devant le socialisme', *PL*, vol. I (Jan.–June 1901), p. 118; Fernand Pelloutier, 'L'action populaire, ses raisons, ses ressources', *L'Ouvrier des deux mondes* (May 1898) in Jacques Julliard (ed.), 'Textes choisis', *Fernand Pelloutier et les origines du syndicalisme d'action directe* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1971), p. 267.

disengagement', but he has simply taken the movement's insistence that it did not root for any particular party at face value: it was nonetheless firmly situated within a broader desire on the left to make the future live in the present.[201] This particular way of seeing time—the desire to evoke a future which was at once about radical change and which was situated in a graspable timeframe—was central not only to the UP endeavour but to many other movements on the left, too.

Fittingly, then, the UP movement was based on continuously working towards an aim, the fruition of which would be in an ill-defined but not-too-distant future. UP rhetoric is saturated with the emphasis on continuity. In a speech to inaugurate the opening of the UP du Faubourg St. Antoine on 8 October 1899, Séailles was careful to insist that revolution and sudden ruptures were dangerous and that continuity was the key to success.[202] He was not referring to the continuity of the past—which was a burdensome millstone—but rather to steady and 'durable' improvement into the future in order to realise a 'better society', which was a cornerstone of the UP movement.[203] May similarly maintained that the UPs were about 'regular application and continual patience with difficult progress, slow but solid formation'.[204] In Deherme's more pugnacious prose, this amounted to a declaration of permanent social revolution (*[c]'est la Révolution sociale en permanence que nous proclamons*)—but in reality his proclamation is merely a more belligerent way of expressing the steady, uninterrupted improvement espoused by May and Séailles.[205] These ideas echoed throughout UP literature and constituted one of the theoretical mainstays of the movement. It is perhaps unsurprising that an education initiative should have long term goals which rest on continuing

[201] Elwitt, 'Education and the social questions', p. 62.
[202] Séailles, *Éducation et révolution, conférence faite à l'inauguration de l'Université populaire le 8 octobre 1899* (Paris: La Coopération des idées et la Société des Universités populaires, 1899).
[203] Séailles, 'Introduction', p. 213; MS, B2 8 63 102, poster for *LCI* meeting (May 1898); MS, B2 2 63 072, programme for Maison du peuple (Nov. 1907).
[204] May, 'Quelques réflexions', p. 182. May's italics.
[205] Deherme, 'L'action positive', *LCI*, no. 1 (April 1900), p. 2.

amelioration—but the repeated insistence on rhetoric surrounding the future and the steady creation of a 'new France' reveal that a certain understanding of time, privileging continuous work towards the fruition of goals in an indistinct future, was integral to the UP initiative.[206] Nonetheless, the determination to avoid the chimerical promises of a 'utopia'—a fully formed paradise in an unreachable future—through continual improvement and insistence on the revolutionary qualities of present work rendered the movement's ultimate aims nebulous; Séailles' proud claim to 'leave the future open' was potentially more of a weakness than a strength.[207]

The Dreyfus Affair sharpened a broad concern with popular education to a desperate and pressing desire for it. Activists such as Deherme and May abandoned vague rhetoric about the future in favour of a passionate discourse about how to shape it. Given the movement's aim of challenging the visions for the distant future set out by communism and Christianity and dictated by the looming threat of alcoholism, it is clear that the UPs were concerned with constructing a different way of conceptualising time: the future could no longer be about waiting—instead, it needed to be shaped much more actively. In what they perceived as a window of opportunity, a vivid but ephemeral chance for change, UP activists sought to push back an atavistic past and bring consciousness, awareness and critical thinking, to their adherents. They posited the UPs as the core of a nascent society which needed to be gradually built.

---

[206] Édouard Petit, *Rapport sur l'éducation populaire en 1898–9 adressé à M. Georges Leygues, Ministre de l'Instruction publique et des Beaux-Arts* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1899), p. 88.
[207] Séailles, 'LCI et les UPs', *La Revue politique et littéraire*, vol. XXII (July–Dec. 1899), pp. 201, 194.

The failure of the Universités populaires

The movement began to wane almost as quickly as it had sprung up. As early as October 1901, Deherme was bemoaning the diminishing audiences in many UPs, feeble when compared with the 'promising beginning' they had shown two years earlier; by 1902, Émile Kahn was also fretting over shrinking audiences.[208] Delegates at the 1908 Congrès des UPs wondered how they could rescue a movement that had by then been moribund for some time.[209] Within a short few years the UPs' failure had become stark and incontrovertible. Some institutions limped on but the majority closed.[210] The failure was perceived to be due in part to an inability to prolong the desire for change, produced in the highly-charged, exploded timeframe of the Dreyfus Affair, indefinitely into the future to fulfil very long-term aims. In this way, the two divergent conceptualisations of time which had animated the UPs ended up precipitating their failure.

Diverse reasons for the waning of the UP movement have been advanced. The awkward mixture of intellectuals and workers meant that programmes were rarely gauged appropriately, often uninteresting to one group or the other (mostly being too 'bourgeois' for workers, Édouard Berth insisted); the fragmented series of lectures did not lead to any continuous building of knowledge; there was an inherent ambiguity or lack of clarity in the movement's aims; and finally, it was alleged that the UPs were losing their adherents to the preaching of their clerical enemy.[211] All of these things played some part. But there is a further

---

[208] Deherme, 'Aux Universités populaires', *LCI*, no. 4 (Oct. 1901), p. 97; Kahn, *La question*.

[209] Unisgned article, 'Compte rendu du Congrès des Universités populaires, 19–21 avril 1908', *L'Université populaire*, no. 5 (June 1908), p. 5.

[210] The Musée social's archives contains programmes from institutions which remained open into the 1920s, for example the UP de Saint-Denis (see MS, B2 239 23 63 401/1, programme for March 1923)—but such examples were rare.

[211] The first reason has been advanced by Mercier, *Les Universités populaires*, p. 71, Prochasson, *Place et role des intellectuels*, p. 108, and by syndicalist Édouard Berth, see BNF, NAF 28147 (box 125), letter from Berth to Halévy (23 Nov. 1909), p. 7; the second reason by a commission reporting to the Congrès des UPs (see 'Rapport de la troisième commission' in 'Congrès des UP, mai 1904', *CQ*, 5th ser., no. 20 [1904], pp. 74–101) and Émile Durkheim cited in Goulet, 'La trajectoire de Dick May', p. 132; the third by Mercier, *Les Universités populaires*, p. 87; and finally the fourth by Deherme, 'Aux UPs', p. 97. For a broader discussion of intellectuals and the workers' movement, see Prochasson, *Les intellectuels, le socialisme et la guerre*, pp. 36–42.

reason for the failure, offered as an explanation by both Halévy and Séailles: the difficulty of rendering long-term goals meaningful in the context of individual lifetimes and of sustaining the initial élan which had sparked the movement. The difficulty, in other words, of successfully uniting the two disparate conceptualisations of time upon which the UPs had been founded—the urgency of acting in the present on the one hand, and the desire to carry this action into the distant future on the other.

Halévy's story 'Un épisode', which he based on his experiences of involvement with Enseignement mutuel, a UP in Paris' 18th *arrondissement*, encapsulated this.[212] It told the story of Julien, a disenchanted UP devotee who became morose and slipped into depression after having been exposed to tantalising glimpses of art and literature at his evening lectures. His own life, he ruminated mournfully, could never be as beautiful as these artworks. The UP which he frequented gradually lost members, with one former attender claiming that learning the thoughts of poets on the stories of the past was bankrupt—what was required was energy for the future. Julien's parents sent him to a sanatorium, where he languished. His only solace lay in nullifying 'the passage of time', entering a state in which he '[forgot] the past' and 'never [thought] about the future'. When forced to contemplate 'the memories of his sordid past' and his 'unbearable future' they seemed to close in on him. Unable to countenance the lack of beauty and meaning in his life, Julien committed suicide. At his funeral, in the story's final pages, an old comrade of Julien's from his days as an anarchist appeared and denounced the way in which the UPs focused on literature rather than action: he 'was a revolutionary but they made an artist out of him!'[213]

Upon reading the story when it appeared in Péguy's *CQ* in 1907, Gregh remarked plaintively to his friend, '[n]ow what conclusion to draw? [...] What trouble in the ideas which

---

[212] Halévy dedicated the story to members of Enseignement mutuel, who would 'recognise traces of the experiences' of UP activism, 'Un épisode', *CQ*, 9th ser., no. 6 (1907), p. 9.
[213] Ibid. 30, 37, 69.

seemed so clear to us 10 years ago!'[214] As Gregh's open-ended question indicates, Halévy's fable did not identify a single decisive cause for the UPs' failure but obliquely suggested several, and two of those in particular identified issues relating to the conceptualisation of time. Most obviously, there was the lack of action—nurturing energy for change in the future had been neglected in favour of texts from the past, Halévy felt. The UPs were looking backward as they tried to move forward. More seriously perhaps, the texts that were taught brought only dissatisfaction to Julien and his ilk, at once engendering disenchantment with working-class roots while impeding the ability to advance into the future. Halévy's insinuation is that the sort of education offered by the UPs could not have enough meaning in the context of one individual's lifetime to embed change for the better. Julien was left floating outside of any meaningful timeframe. In other words, there was a failure to unite individual, personal timeframes with the longer, generational timeframes which the movement's aims tended to occupy.

Less poetically powerful and much pithier, Séailles' diagnosis for the failure of the UPs nonetheless pointed to a very similar conclusion. He railed against a general 'inability to work towards broad and long term aims', opining that this had brought about the movement's downfall. In this explanation, wider social trends—indiscipline and egotism—were at fault. A movement all about 'discipline', 'effort', and 'duty' was bound to fall 'out of fashion'.[215] Halévy, on the other hand, blamed the sort of education typically offered by UPs. But both posited the failure as the result of a certain conceptualisation of time; the long-term aims of the UPs had no meaning in the context of these individuals' lifetimes. Lurking behind this there is also the idea that the immediate and profound change craved for in the wake of the Dreyfus Affair had not been—perhaps could never have been—sustained.

---

[214] BNF, NAF 28147, box 44, undated letter from Gregh to Halévy. Gregh was highly complementary about 'Un épisode', calling it the best thing Halévy had done, 'soberly strong' and 'tender'.

[215] *[L]'impuissance à se concerter pour des fins générales et lointaines.* Séailles, 'L'UP et l'éducation du peuple', *L'Université populaire*, no. 6 (Nov. 1909), pp. 1–2.

Ultimately, the ire of the Affair could not be bottled and served up at the UPs as an ever-inspiring elixir to keep alive the ardent desire for change—no matter how much activists like Halévy, who saw the anger which had arisen from the Affair solidifying and being transmuted into institutions, might have wished this to be the case.[216] There were myriad reasons advanced for the failure of the UPs, but the inability of activists to unite the two disparate ways of conceptualising time which had been at the heart of the initiative was key according to both Séailles and Halévy. On the one hand, the burst of energy produced by the Dreyfus Affair could not be sustained indefinitely, while on the other the very long term aims of the UP movement could not always be made meaningful for individuals in the shorter term. In other words, this was a failure to unite personal and political timeframes and to make the two work together across the long term. The UPs were born of, and modelled on, a contradictory twofold understanding of time—and in the end this contributed powerfully to their failure.

A generation adrift: from personal time to historical time

The Dreyfusard coalition unravelled rapidly after the pardon in 1899 (and was even in difficulty during the trial in Rennes that summer), and widespread disillusion with the Affair soon set in among Dreyfus' supporters—especially those who had been involved in the UP movement. By 1902, Charles Guieysse was already deploring how the Affair seemed to belong to a distant past in which change had appeared possible: 'no sooner had the innocent man been pardoned than the old errors returned', he lamented.[217] The collective failure of those emerging from the Affair truly to bring about that change was acutely felt by Dick May, Georges Sorel, Daniel Halévy,

[216] BNF, NAF 28147, Cahier 14 (Nov. 1899), p. 1.
[217] Guieysse, '13 janvier 1899–29 septembre 1902', *PL*, vol. IV (Jul–Dec. 1902), p. 277.

Charles Péguy, and Léon Blum among others.[218] Deherme would later explain to arch-nationalist Maurras that 'popular action' had ended up making him feel like a mere 'functionary', unable to impose any real change.[219] In 1909 and 1910, Halévy and Péguy famously exchanged articles in *CQ* on the subject of the aftermath of the Affair. Their reflections provide a fertile starting point for exploration of the disenchantment which emerged after the Dreyfus Affair. I argue that this was a feeling with a particular sense of time at its core; the generation of activists who had fought for Dreyfus' innocence was left feeling adrift in time, disconnected from the generation which followed them.

Halévy's 'Apologie pour notre passé' was more strongly titled than its central message warranted: the author only partly reneged his Dreyfusard past, emphasising that he held no regret for the 'fundamental decisions' of supporting Scheurer-Kestner, Picquart, and Waldeck-Rousseau, but cautiously intimating that the politicians who rode the Dreyfusard wave to power needed to be watched carefully.[220] Nonetheless, he maintained that the Affair had essentially been won.[221] Péguy, on the other hand, in 'Notre jeunesse' and the earlier 'À nos amis, à nos abonnés', opposed Halévy on both these counts.[222] He stated that the Affair had been lost, leaving Dreyfusard activists utterly defeated, but he defiantly asserted all the same that his 'past need[ed] no apology'.[223] Ostensibly then, the two texts are diametrically opposed—but there is one important, though subtle, area of agreement in the form of both authors' reflections on their generation's formation and its place in history.

---

[218] See Goulet, 'La trajectoire de Dick May', p. 139: May didn't feel that her failure was a 'personal' one, but rather a one of a whole 'group of progressive intellectuals'. See also Georges Sorel, *La Révolution dreyfusienne* (Paris: Marcel Rivière, 1909), a powerful text which developed this theme.

[219] AN, 576AP, box 78, letter from Deherme to Maurras (3 March 1909).

[220] Halévy, 'Apolgie pour notre passé', *CQ*, 11th ser., no. 10 (1910), pp. 84, 100, 101.

[221] Ibid. 106.

[222] Most mentions of Halévy and Péguy's disagreement mention only 'Apologie' and 'Notre jeunesse', regarding the latter as a reaction to the former. However, Halévy's 'Apologie' actually seems to be explicitly refuting Péguy's earlier 'À nos amis, à nos abonnés'; this is most obvious when he insists that the Affair was won ('Apologie', p. 106), a direct contradiction to Péguy's insistence that it had been lost ('À nos amis, à nos abonnés', *CQ*, 10th ser., no. 13 [1909], p. 24).

[223] Ibid. 24; Péguy, 'Notre jeunesse', p. 91.

Halévy described the Dreyfus Affair as his generation's equivalent to 1789, the revolutionary wars, 1848, or the Commune; the years of the scandal were the years during which the friendships and feelings which would govern activists' futures were solidified.[224] In Halévy's view, the endless divisive potential engendered by the Affair's status as the ultimate formative event is both why it was so difficult to overcome and why it was crucial to lay it to rest and no longer allow it to intervene in life.[225] Though he never said so explicitly, Halévy was evidently keenly aware of the potential for his generation to be isolated by the experience of the Dreyfus Affair, trapped by a vividly remembered past which was not shared by younger people. This worry contributed to his disillusionment with the Affair and his desire to distance himself from Dreyfusard activism. Péguy similarly viewed the Affair as profoundly formative, especially in its final phases, stating that the 'decomposition of Dreyfusism' 'commands our entire lives, all our fortunes'.[226] However, he went further than Halévy in emphasising how their generation had been cut off from the younger generations following in their wake. Former Dreyfusards were left adrift in time, 'sacrificed' to political opportunism and forming an *arrière garde* for a 'Republican mystique' which had largely disappeared.[227] Their temporal isolation was simultaneously compounded by distance from what Péguy perceived to be prevailing political ideology and became a way of describing that distance.

In 1913, the notion of the generation of 1890 having been sacrificed was picked up by right-wing authors Henri Massis and Alfred de Tarde when they wrote *Les jeunes gens d'aujourd'hui* under the pseudonym Agathon. Massis and de Tarde used the idea of the 'intermediate, sacrificed generation' to dismiss Péguy's cohort, describing how they had been supplanted by a new generation of energetic nationalist youth.[228] These ebullient young students were

[224] Halévy, 'Apologie', p. 8.
[225] Ibid. 100.
[226] Péguy, 'À nos amis', p. 23.
[227] Ibid. 24; Péguy, 'Notre jeunesse', p. 13.
[228] Agathon, *Les jeunes gens d'aujourd'hui*, ed. Jean-Jacques Becker (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1995), p. 56.

described at length in this enquiry and, though its veracity was questionable, it was nonetheless a noteworthy exercise in self-definition.[229] The key similarity between Péguy and Agathon does not necessarily centre on the references to a sacrificed generation but more on the attendant idea that this generation had been consigned irrevocably to the past and that it was isolated there. That the Dreyfus Affair should have been repeatedly cited by authors such as Péguy, Halévy, and Agathon as having been vital in shaping its participants is a given; the notion of such intense and destabilising experiences as moulding generations is a well-established formulation.[230] As Winock put it, '[n]o one experienced the conviction that they belonged to a generation more strongly than Péguy'.[231] But Péguy, Halévy, Agathon—and later Blum—all went beyond this, suggesting that a kind of temporal isolation was a constituent part of the disappointment which followed the events of the scandal. Ultimately, this sense of time was also constitutive of their generation.

The sensation of being an outsider came easily to Péguy; it was even a predilection. As Dick May shrewdly remarked in a letter, Péguy's repudiation of the positive results of the Affair arose partly from a desire always to be the underdog: 'I know very well that it bores you to no longer be among the vanquished; I know that it was more fun to rage and to rail'.[232] Péguy himself voluntarily embraced a lifetime of 'apostasies', of constant breaks with former comrades, which he felt were demanded by adherence to the truth.[233] He was not just cut off from younger generations—he was cut off from everyone, and often willingly so. These breaks

---

229 Winock, 'Les générations intellectuelles', *Vingtième siècle. Revue d'histoire* 22 (1989), pp. 22–4.

230 See Karl Mannheim's authoritative essay, 'The problem of generations' in his *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge*, ed. Paul Kecskemeti, vol. 5 (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1952), pp. 276–320. Mannheim described in unlovely academic jargon how exposure to 'a process of dynamic destabilisation' (p. 303) could form tight-knit 'generational units'; the Dreyfusards could be considered one such unit. Though it is tempting to cast the anti-Dreyfusards as an equivalent 'generational unit', their diverse ages preclude this (similar age range, or location in time, is of course a prerequisite for a generation or a generational unit, according to Mannheim).

231 Winock, 'Générations intellectuelles', p. 20.

232 Centre Charles Péguy (CCP), CORCQ-IV-29, inv. 1665, letter from Dick May to Péguy (12 Dec. 1906), p. 3. Similarly, Shlomo Sand perspicaciously remarked that Georges Sorel's disappointment outstripped his initial enthusiasm: see 'Georges Sorel entre utopie et politique', *Mil Neuf Cent* 11 (1993), p. 93.

233 Péguy, 'De la situation faite à l'histoire et à la sociologie dans les temps modernes', *CQ*, 8th ser., no. 3 (1906), p. 55.

were not always described in terms of time. But although Péguy might have revelled in a feeling Halévy only hinted at, the central point remains: both authors articulated the way in which a formative experience, such as that of the Dreyfus Affair, could later isolate a group, welding it to a particular past and cutting it off from the future as represented by younger generations. Of course, this could be argued to be an obvious truth about any generation aging—but the initial intensity of experiences such as the Dreyfus Affair produced an unusually acute feeling of temporal isolation.

Both Péguy and (much later) Blum used similar anecdotes to illustrate the incommunicability of the Affair and their remoteness from younger people. In his *Souvenirs sur l'affaire*, Blum recalled talking to a younger person about the Affair and concluded that 'the generations which followed us no longer realised [...] how it was as though life was suspended, how everything converged on one single question'.[234] Blum was pointing to the particularly intense timeframe, the sense of suspension, that he and his cohort had inhabited during the Affair; this landscape of time had an ineffable quality. Péguy, in 'À nos amis', described talking a younger man on the subject in more poetic terms, explicitly probing questions of time and history:

> I gave him reality, he received history […] he heard me already as a man from another time [...] it was the same time for me, but for him, on the other hand, it had disintegrated into another time, a foreign time.[235]

Péguy pinpointed this as the moment at which he grasped the radical separation between past and present, between history and reality:

> Never had I seen in such a flash, with a such a shock, that there is the present, and there is the past […] For each man and for each event, for every elementary event, for every element, for every molecule of an event there comes a minute, an hour, there comes a point when it

---

[234] Blum, *Souvenirs*, p. 13.

[235] *Je lui donnait du réel, il recevait de l'histoire [...] le même temps pour moi, pour lui au contraire [...] se décomposait en un temps autre, en un temps étranger.* Péguy, 'À nos amis', pp. 65–6.

> becomes historical, the stroke of midnight rings out, on a particular village clock, and the event falls from the real to the historical.[236]

Reality might have seemed immutable to Péguy but history was always the subject of vying interpretations; the experience of the Dreyfus Affair, once it had fallen irreversibly into history, no longer held the same authority that it had done previously. A crucial part of Blum's and Péguy's disappointment following the Affair arose from the way in which they felt themselves to have been cut off from the future as constituted by younger generations. These passages from Péguy's 'À nos amis' illustrate the feeling that many activists had of their personal experiences being transmuted into history. In the heat of the Affair, the sense that their personal and emotional timeframes were matched by national and historical times had been a powerful and a positive one—but now that feeling was slipping into one of isolation.

The impossibility of conveying the experience of the Affair to others was compounded by the way in which it always remained immediately accessible to many of those who had lived through it—there was a sense in which it was always present to them, at their fingertips. In late 1901, Guieysse responded angrily to a suggestion from a *PL* reader that the Affair had already been forgotten: '[w]e are absolutely still Dreyfusards; the years can run by and we will not hesitate in our Dreyfusism'.[237] This remained true. Péguy was proud of his status as a 'Dreyfusard of all hours', a notion reinforced by the anecdote quoted above.[238] For Péguy, Guieysse, and many others, the Affair was not something that could be consigned to the past.[239]

---

[236] *Jamais je ne vit d'un tel éclair, dans un tel saisissement, qu'il y a le présent, et qu'il y a le passé [...] Pour chaque homme et pour chaque événement, pour tout événement élémentaire, pour tout élément, pour toute molécule d'événement il vient une minute, une heure, il tombe une heure où il devient historique, il sonne un certain coup de minuit, à une certaine horloge du village, où l'événement, de réel, tombe historique.* Ibid. 67–8. This poetic quotation has inspired the title for this chapter.

[237] Guieysse, 'Réplique sans hésitations', *PL*, vol. II (July–Dec. 1901), p. 51. Guieysse was responding to a letter 'from a hesitant subscriber', p. 50.

[238] Péguy, 'Reprise politique parlementaire', *CQ*, 4th ser., no. 20 (1903), p. 4. Péguy was using this phrase to refuse the amnesty that he said Jaurès had imposed on the Dreyfusards; Péguy still wanted to struggle for justice.

[239] Harris pointed out that the Affair would come to 'overshadow' the lives of Blum and Péguy as well as Charles Maurras (*The Man on Devil's Island*, p. 115); Wilson made a similar point about Péguy and Maurras, stating that for the latter, the Affair was equalled only by the 'cataclysm of 1940' (*Bernard-Lazare*, p. 272); Géraldi Leroy described how it was 'an inexhaustible source of reflections and references' for Péguy (*Péguy entre l'ordre et la révolution* [Paris: Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1981], p. 104); and Julliard made the point that everything that Péguy did was somehow about the Affair (*Les gauches françaises*, p. 431).

Blum claimed that in writing his *Souvenirs* he had abandoned himself to memory, recalling details with little recourse to sources and notes.[240] In an article in 1913, libertarian journalist Victor Méric described how, upon reading the name du Paty de Clam, he was thrown immediately back into the Affair, witnessing it all again 'as in a vertiginous cinema'. He wrote that 'the Affair is too close; it still bleeds', and du Paty de Clam himself was like 'something vomited up that they want to make us swallow again'.[241] Halévy, too, returned obsessively to the Affair in his writing, which suggests that for him, too, it was never entirely in the past.[242] The way in which the Affair was ever-present for these former Dreyfusards served to enhance their isolation from younger people. Dreyfusards remained trapped within the intense experiences of their past and, as time moved on, these experiences only became more incommunicable to present and future generations.

Péguy's acclaimed 'Notre jeunesse' was a text which, while rooted in the Affair, reached far beyond bemoaning its failure to herald change and fulminating against the modern world of political opportunism. It was a philosophical discourse which contained deep, if at times perplexing, reflections on the nature of the temporal and the eternal—'a continuing meditation on the human being's position in time', as Annette Aronowicz put it.[243] When it was published,

---

[240] Blum, *Souvenirs*, p. 16.

[241] Victor Méric, 'Du Paty de Clam', *Les Hommes du jour*, no. 261 (18 Jan. 1913), pp. 1–2. Armand Mercier du Paty de Clam was a senior figure in the French armed forces and had been instrumental in Dreyfus' initial conviction, see Drouin's 'Précis' in his *L'affaire Dreyfus de A à Z*, pp. 23–6.

[242] See for example, 'L'affaire Dreyfus (1938)' in Halévy, *Regards*, pp. 223–52.

[243] Annette Aronowicz, *Jews and Christians on Time and Eternity: Charles Péguy's portrait of Bernard Lazare* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1998), p. 24; see pp. 24–39 for the section entitled 'Péguy's philosophy of time'. It is disappointing that the section on time was so short given that it was at the centre of the book's title. There are varying interpretations of 'Notre jeunesse': Nelly Jussem-Wilson, for example, argued that it was primarily a reaction to hostile press concerning Péguy's *Le mystère de la charité de Jeanne d'Arc*, which had been published in January 1910, see 'L'affaire Jeanne d'Arc et l'affaire Dreyfus: Péguy et "Notre jeunesse"', *Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France* 3 (1962), pp. 400–15. Maximilien Kopriwa underlined the importance of Christian thought in the text, see 'La notion de chrétienté dans "Notre jeunesse"', *Bulletin de l'Amitié Charles Péguy* 143–4 (2013), pp. 369–84. Aronowicz stressed that the text was about Bernard-Lazare and the Jewish people, see *Jews and Christians on Time and Eternity*; and Simone Fraisse similarly pointed out how attached Péguy was to Bernard-Lazare's memory, see 'Les grandes étapes des *Cahiers de la Quinzaine*' in Fraisse (ed.), *Charles Péguy: les* Cahiers de la Quinzaine (Paris: Minard, 1983), p. 38.

Péguy received complimentary letters from Bergson, Ernest Psichari, and Joseph Reinach.[244] Ideas of time were at the heart of 'Notre jeunesse', suffusing it at every level. The manuscript was written on long, thin strips of paper which give it the appearance of a list, and the sentences build gradually through short clauses to which the author added repetitively, even hypnotically, giving the writing itself an air of self-consciousness about its inherently temporal aspect as it pushed forward then looped backwards incessantly.[245]

It was in 'Notre jeunesse' which Péguy developed his often-quoted notion of *mystique* as defined against *politique*, deploring how everything began in the former and ended in the latter; this key idea was itself attached to Péguy's notion of time.[246] *Mystique*, boundless in its energy and power, was elevated to the plane of eternity, while the grubby and limited world of *politique* was associated with what was temporary. Péguy went on to make a further association, positing that the Dreyfusards were linked to *mystique*, as what they desired was the 'eternal salvation' of France, whereas their opponents, with their short-sighted longing for 'temporal salvation' were aligned with *politique*.[247] Péguy employed overtly religious notions in order to suggest that the disenchantment experienced in the wake of the Affair was merely a prelude to eternal salvation; his generation's position as the *arrière garde* of Republican mystique was 'temporal, temporary, chronological' but their redemption would be forever.[248] Time was seen to operate on two distinct planes, the eternal and the temporal, and through adherence to *mystique* over *politique* one could escape the latter and enter the former.[249] The juxtaposition of

---

[244] CCP, CORCQ-IV-8, inv. 463, letter from Bergson to Péguy (2 Dec. 1910); CORCQ-IV-82, inv. 4652, letter from Reinach to Péguy (18 Aug. 1910); CORCQ-IV-76, inv. 4339, letter from Psichari to Péguy (16 Jan. 1911). Psichari, the grandson of Ernest Renan and a close associate of Péguy's at this time, wrote that he cried with joy upon reading that 'Notre jeunesse' was dedicated to him.

[245] See CCP, Inv. 31, MP 132–3 for the manuscript of 'Notre jeunesse', July 1910. Griffiths also pointed to this aspect of Péguy's writing, stating that it proceeded by 'litanies and repetitions', see *The Use of Abuse*, p. 155–6.

[246] *Tout commence en mystique et fini en politique.* Péguy, 'Notre jeunesse', p. 27.

[247] Ibid. 208–9. Jussem-Wilson pointed out that for Péguy, 'the national ideal was superior to the national interest' ('L'affaire', p. 404).

[248] Péguy, 'Notre jeunesse', p. 18.

[249] Aronowicz also indicated that Péguy thought it possible for humans to overcome time's power in their mystiques, see *Jews and Christians*, p. 28.

mystique and *politique* illustrates how, for Péguy, time was at once creative and destructive.[250] Péguy's affirmation of his religious beliefs in 1910–1 has been well documented, especially with reference to his epic poem *Le mystère de la charité de Jeanne d'Arc* (1910)—but it is easy to overlook the extent to which his fervour was based in a longing for the eternal.[251] Furthermore, while 'Notre jeunesse' offered the author's own idiosyncratic interpretation of the post-Dreyfusard breakdown, Péguy can also be seen as the theoretician for a sacrificed generation. Through 'Notre jeunesse', he offered his cohort a diagnosis for their malaise and a potential balm for it—and both were based in time.

It could be argued that generations or, as Mannheim has it, 'generational units' such as the Dreyfusard activists, are not only created by their similarity in age or their exposure to intense and difficult experiences; their membership of a particular group can be further reinforced by the isolation they feel from younger generations. Péguy, Halévy, Blum and others all came to sense that their vividly remembered past divided them sharply from following generations, and this was an important part of the disillusionment which followed so quickly after Dreyfus' pardon in 1899. This was a facet of the way in which personal time was transmuted into historical time: this generation of activists felt time slipping out of their control as experiences which had to them been highly personal became history.[252]

---

[250] Leroy pointed to this dual aspect of time in Péguy's mind-set, see 'Les idées politiques et sociales de Charles Péguy', vol. 2, Ph.D. thesis, Université de Paris III, 1977, p. 781.

[251] For a recent example, see Claire Daudin, 'Péguy et la chrétienté: du mythe médiéval au défi moderne', *Bulletin de l'Amitié Charles Péguy* 143–144 (2013), pp. 385–98. For a broader analysis of the Catholic revival during this period, see L.-A. Maugendre, *La Renaissance catholique au début du XX^e siècle*, vol. 2 (Paris: Beauchesne, 1964).

[252] Gildea discussed the interface between the personal and the historical in generation formation in the context of May 1968: see '"La hantise de devenir vieux cons comme ses parents": activist definition of the 1968 generation in France' in von der Goltz (ed.), *'Talkin' 'bout my generation'*, pp. 31–50.

Conclusion

Studying the experience and the conceptualisation of time contributes to understanding various facets of both the Dreyfus Affair and the UP initiative which emerged as a result of it; ideas about time illuminate to some extent every stage of the Affair's development, the emergence and failure of the UPs, and the post-Affair experiences of activists.

The Affair's initial turbulence, characterised by ruptures in friendships and dramatic events which came thick and fast, created an atmosphere in which past and future were immediately uncertain but nonetheless deeply affected. In this intense, exploded landscape of time, both Dreyfusards and anti-Dreyfusards perceived France's history and its destiny to be at stake. Their personal, emotional timeframes matched the national, historical timeframe. Ideas about time were often employed to illustrate the differences between the two camps, with the Dreyfusards tending to champion the concept of the future while their opponents stood for continuity and the unity of the past. Though concepts of past and future were used as descriptive shorthand to delineate the beliefs of each group, they were not mere decoration—competing ideas about time cut to the heart of what it meant to support Dreyfus or to condemn him, and they went on to be a vital part of the reconfiguration of the political climate in the wake of the Affair.

After Dreyfus' pardon in 1899, many activists ardently desired to make concrete the possibility for change, a possibility which they felt existed in a finite window of opportunity. The UP movement resisted the unchanging past to which the anti-Dreyfusards clung and which had threatened to swallow France during the Affair; citizens, UP activists insisted, should consciously strive towards a future which needed to be shaped carefully and gradually rather than passively waited for. However, there was a profound and ultimately crippling contradiction between the need to effect change immediately and the very gentle way in which a new future

would take shape, between the larger political plane of time and the more restricted time of the individual; these were two differing conceptualisations of time which pulled against one another. The desire for intense and immediate action could not be prolonged indefinitely, just as incremental progress towards an ideal could not always be rendered meaningful in the short term.

The disenchantment which was acutely felt by some after the Affair and following the breakdown of the UP movement was associated with a particular sense of time, as activists felt that their experiences had sharply separated them from younger generations. This generational gulf was produced by many activists' feeling that their personal experiences were being consigned to history; the emotional and the historical timeframes that had aligned so well during the Affair's headiest moments were now out of step.

PART II.

TIME AND REVOLUTION

Introduction

At a Congress in Bourges in 1904, Édouard Berth declared that the syndicalist movement 'want[ed] to give the idea of revolution a renewed vigour'. The notion of a catastrophic revolution was reawakening, but 'in an entirely new form'. Gone were the fatalistic and 'mechanical' elements of a top-down revolution.[253] Gone, too, were the 'utopias, the reveries, the abstract ideologies'.[254] For several years, there had been growing discomfort in many sections of the left about precisely when and how a revolution might happen or be brought about. The left oscillated between all-out revolution and piecemeal reform, and some factions were bitterly opposed along these lines. I argue that this was a dispute based in understandings of time more than it was a dispute about tactics: Berth and many others were arguing for the need to take control of the present and not simply wait for a far-off redemptive future to intervene. The idea that there should be a greater degree of present-mindedness on the left grew into a broader consensus but, as the following three chapters show, a focus on the here-and-now was not always easy to achieve and it was often not a solution which held for long, since it raised deeper questions about the status of the past and the future.

This section explores left-wing understandings of time at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth to argue that there were two overriding concerns among socialists and syndicalists during this period: the perception of a widening gap between present and future, and the feeling that the concept of the future was under threat. These concerns dictated the debates between and the actions of various left-wing thinkers and groups; discussions about the relationship between past, present, and future were a key feature of left-

---

[253] Édouard Berth, 'Révolution sociale ou évolution juridique?', *Le Mouvement socialiste*, no. 143 (15 Nov. 1904), p. 121. Berth, who from 1903 worked as a hospital administrator, was a syndicalist theorist who was powerfully influenced by Georges Sorel. He was also a regular commentator on the German socialist movement; see Jeremy Jennings, *Syndicalism in France* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1990), pp. 71–8.

[254] Berth, *Les nouveaux aspects du socialisme* (Paris: Marcel Rivière, 1908), p. 3.

wing political culture around the turn of the century. The writers and activists studied across the following chapters are drawn from three independent but left-leaning reviews which were widely read during this period: *CQ*, *PL*, and *Le Mouvement socialiste* (*LMS*).[255] Those associated with these publications provide a kaleidoscopic perspective on socialism and syndicalism in the period from 1899 to 1913.

Chapter 3 takes as its starting point the idea that the present was seen to be crumbling, the bourgeois capitalist order falling rapidly away under the weight of its own decadence—but, troublingly, the future was not forthcoming and no revolution was heralding a new world. At the same time, a renewed series of debates emerged about the relationship between the present and the future, concepts which were often epitomised by the notions of reform and revolution. Debates about revolution versus reform were not new or unique to our period; by the end of the nineteenth century they had already been evident for some time. As K. Stephen Vincent insisted, Benoît Malon (former Communard and editor of *La Revue socialiste*) and his generation had already broached these issues. Ultimately, Malon and others 'helped the republican socialist left shed its revolutionary associations, pointing the way for later reformist socialists'.[256] But discussions about the merits of reform and revolution and their wider significance for the left were given a sharp new impetus by the controversial entry into government of socialist Alexandre Millerand in the final year of the nineteenth century. This episode prompted many to think more deeply about reform and revolution—including the heritage of revolutions past—which were configured quite consciously as exemplifying two different ways of understanding time.

The discussion about revolutionary timeframes was developed in *CQ*, *PL*, and *LMS*. These reviews shared common writers, concerns, and outlooks, and have previously formed

---

[255] Prochasson noted that these three reviews had among the largest readership of any political reviews at the turn of the century, see *Les années électriques*, p. 192.

[256] K. Stephen Vincent, *Between Marxism and Anarchism: Benoît Malon and French reformist socialism* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1992), p. 6.

the basis of useful comparisons.[257] They were founded by three idiosyncratic, passionately idealistic, and often obstinate activists and writers: Péguy, Guieysse, and Hubert Lagardelle. The three were connected to one another not only through their articles but through afternoons spent in Péguy's bookshop on the rue Cujas (in Paris' 5th *arrondissement*) or at Lagardelle's apartment in the 14th *arrondissement*.[258] When they founded their reviews between 1899 and 1901, spurred on by the need for change in the wake of the Dreyfus Affair, the first articles these editors wrote or chose to include asked questions about how to conceive of time when the revolutionary timeframe inherited from the nineteenth century was no longer fit for purpose. Touching on the history of civilisation and on natural history, such articles attempted to reconceptualise past, present, future, and the relationship between them. The solutions they proposed were never clear-cut and were sometimes even contradictory, but what is evident is that time was a central concern in the elaboration of political ideologies and in the attempts to enact them.

What emerged from such discussions was the need for greater focus on the present and the desire to maintain a close link between the present and change in the future. This was not a model which was easy to enact, however, and the very concept of a future which grew out of the present was often seen as being endangered. Threats to the future and potential solutions to those threats form the subject matter of Chapter 4, which assesses how Marxism and religion both seemed to offer a model of a future which was distant and disconnected, promising to arrive at some unspecified moment and thereby discouraging action in the present. However, on closer inspection it becomes clear that Marxists and radical Catholics often did not espouse

---

257 See for example Géraldi Leroy, 'Le débat sur les intellectuels dans les *Cahiers de la Quinzaine*' in Fraisse (ed.), *Charles Péguy*, pp. 43–60. See Prochasson, *Les intellectuels, le socialisme et la guerre*, pp. 47–60 for a more wide-ranging comparison of the three reviews, and Winock, *Le siècle des intellectuels*, pp. 90–7 for a discussion of their place on the left.

258 See Jennings, *Syndicalism in France*, p. 1: the book starts with an anecdote based on visits to Lagardelle's apartment. Winock discussed the circle who met in Péguy's bookshop, see *Le siècle des intellectuels*, pp. 81–9. Lagardelle was a journalist who had first made his name by establishing the review *La Jeunesse socialiste* in Toulouse in 1895.

this conception of the future—they, too, were concerned with fostering a more present-oriented approach. This allows us to see that the need for focus on the present produced a broad consensus on the left, and to understand that socialist and syndicalist critiques of other groups, rather than being disputes over political allegiance, might be more accurately described as the expression of anxieties about time.

Some left-wing thinkers sought solace from their anxieties in evolutionary theory, which seemed to provide a certain path to a better future: it held no meretricious promise of a change that never came (this was what 'utopias' did), but offered instead a scientifically assured improvement which grew organically from the present. Nevertheless, evolutionary theory—which was deployed inconsistently and with little attention to the details of the science—also provoked further debate about time, as it in some quarters it was seen to endanger agency and merely recreate the idea of a future change which would gradually arrive unbidden.

The options for discussing the future seemed to have become somewhat limited, so severely were 'utopias' and 'dreaming' frowned upon. Those who sought to imagine the distant future found an outlet in the realm of literature, producing a plethora of futurist works of fiction in the years around 1900. These novels form the closing section of Chapter 4, which assesses the extent to which fiction enabled left-wing writers and activists to provide answers to the problem of time. I argue that, ultimately, these futurist works were a further illustration of the difficulties of developing a meaningful conceptualisation of the distant future.

It was in the syndicalist movement that the most successful attempts to safeguard the link between present and future emerged. As Winock pointed out, the political culture of the left was produced by the interweaving of the socialist movement with the workers' movement—as such, any thorough analysis of the left must be attentive to the latter as well as the former.[259] Chapter 5 therefore pursues the discussion of how to bridge the gulf between

[259] Michel Winock, *La gauche en France* (Paris: Perrin, 2006), p. 208.

past and future through more detailed exploration of revolutionary syndicalism. In this milieu, ideas about how to balance work in the present with hope in the future emerged as a defining feature which dictated action. Thinkers such as Berth or Lagardelle had quickly tired of the more moderate or playful solutions of writers like Guieysse, regarding them as yet another form of waiting. Instead, they sought in earnest to reinvigorate the present and bring the future closer to hand. In order to do this, they elaborated a notion of the general strike which could be conceived of as being brought about in the present while at once being seen to represent a route to a radical and new future.

Crucially, syndicalists theorised that the proletariat operated on its own plane of time, which was separated from that of other sections of society. That the workers' past, present, and future was distinct and unique was a fundamental part of syndicalists' understandings of the working classes. It allowed them to liberate the proletariat from bourgeois notions of progress and to take control of the timeframe of revolution. Lagardelle and Berth's deep disquiet with notions of 'progress' had a temporal basis, and could only be resolved by an altered conceptualisation of time: this is what directed their key ideas of the general strike and the time of the proletariat. Equally, when the general strike failed to materialise they once again reformulated their understandings of time.

Writing about the left is often dominated by the rift between Jean Jaurès and Jules Guesde, and by focus on a narrow vision of politics as a struggle for power, often within the Chamber or at the polls. This section of the thesis adopts a different perspective, studying independent socialists and syndicalists, as it was within these circles that many of the debates of the wider left were played out. Some historians have emphasised the separateness of branches of the workers' movement from the socialist movement, and though this might have been true in terms of methods and doctrines, they nonetheless shared some of the major concerns of those vying for votes or proselytising top-down revolution—notably, how to

mobilise and motivate the working class, and how to effect profound change.[260] In trying to tread a tightrope between reform and revolution, the activists who populate the following three chapters had to grapple very directly with understandings of time, and they therefore provide a broader perspective on political culture at the end of the nineteenth century. Their debates and discussions did not just concern the French left, but also encompassed the European left—the groups I focus on here were determinedly internationalist and they invited colleagues from across the continent to contribute to their reviews. They were driven by a particular set of ideas about how present and future needed to interact, but they only came to this understanding after succumbing to deep frustration at promised utopias on the one hand and present-obsessed myopia on the other.

Historiography

There is widespread recognition in much historical writing that time, and particularly the future, has always been an important feature of left-wing thought. As Manu Goswami succinctly put it, '[t]he temporal referent of radical politics was the future'.[261] Its importance seems natural in a series of movements so explicitly and so insistently focused on creating change—change that was often profound and sudden, bringing drastic rupture with the present. Equally, it has been recognised that the event that might be said to have founded this understanding of time—the French Revolution of 1789—constituted a difficult heritage, at once weighty and exalted. By studying this, historians have explored left-wing relationships with the past. But while visions of the future and versions of the past have been mined for their specific content,

[260] See for example Julliard, *Les gauches françaises*, p. 417.

[261] Manu Goswami, 'Imaginary futures and colonial internationalisms', *American Historical Review* 117 (2012), p. 1431.

conceptualisations and experiences of time have only rarely been a central feature of enquiries into left-wing thought.

One exception to this, of course, is Wright's *Socialism and the Experience of Time*. Wright has identified the move towards present-mindedness on the left around 1900 as a central feature in the thought of those he studies. The following two chapters of this thesis expand on this observation to contend that it was, in fact, an element which featured on many sections of the left. It was also, as we saw in Chapter 2, fundamental to the activist initiatives which grew out of the Dreyfus Affair. Wright has sometimes taken the claims of the socialists he studies at face value, accepting too readily their contention that their adversaries were damagingly obsessed with revolution while they alone could offer a more present-oriented model for change. This can obscure rich and diverse ideas about time emerging and being contested on the left.

The other work which has very recently made a powerful contribution to the study of concepts of time on the left is Enzo Traverso's *Mélancholie de gauche*, published at the end of 2016. Time was not Traverso's main concern, but throughout his book it is revealed to be a key feature of the political culture of the left. *Mélancholie* is a wide-ranging exploration of the desolation and sadness that has suffused left-wing culture since the nineteenth century. Dispensing with the study of individuals and their political fortunes—and even with what he regards as the reductive category of ideas—Traverso explored the 'concepts' and the 'images' of the left across the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, positing that the events of 1989 'revealed' a profound but not 'pathological' sense of mourning.[262] When communism collapsed, a particular dialectic between past and future also died. Marxist memory, which was imbued with memories of revolutions past but was fundamentally oriented towards the future (since the final apocalypse of capitalism was yet to occur), found itself forestalled. It had previously

[262] Enzo Traverso, *Mélancholie de gauche: la force d'une tradition cachée (XIX^e–XX^e siècle)* (Paris: La découverte, 2016), pp. 6, 9.

acted as 'a memory of the future', but this future now abruptly disintegrated.[263] The collapse contributed, Traverso argued, to what Hartog famously termed *présentisme*, and Traverso concurs with him in claiming that our contemporary landscape of time is a desolate one: the past 'is reified by a cultural industry that destroys all transmitted experience' while the future has been abolished by a 'neoliberal temporality' dominated by 'permanent but empty' [*dépourvue*] acceleration.[264]

Traverso's most important insight for our purposes is his argument that the left was underpinned by a specific interplay of past and future; he goes beyond merely describing communist visions and disappointments in temporal terms to illustrate how fruitful consideration of time can be for the study of this particular political culture. Combined with his principal focus on melancholy, this allows failure to come to the fore in an unusual and valuable way. Indeed, failure is figured as a fundamental component of the left-wing experience. Shuttling between past disappointment and anticipated future glory, the latter being churned up by the mill of history only to be spat out as the former, it has been difficult for the left to reconcile two divergent conceptions of time. This thesis follows Traverso in figuring failure and its attendant temporal conceptions as central in the study of the left, a fact which has too often gone unacknowledged. Nevertheless, in eschewing sustained study of people in favour of clusters of images, Traverso's work becomes somewhat diffuse—at times even nebulous—and it was not, in any case, his intention to pinpoint the emergence or the contestation of notions of time, but rather to highlight how a variety of concepts have shaped the left across the last two hundred or so years.[265]

---

[263] Ibid. 6, 93; for the chapter on 'Marxisme et mémoire' see ibid. 71–100.

[264] Ibid. 16.

[265] Traverso mentions plenty of individuals, but it is concepts and images which are centre-stage. The final chapter, on Daniel Bensaïd and Walter Benjamin, provides more of a sustained focus on people: see ibid. 175–216.

Marc Angenot's *L'utopie collectiviste* is more squarely situated in the tradition of works which analyse the content of left-wing ideas about the future: he tackled these head-on by examining various collectivist utopias produced between 1889 and 1917. Angenot argued that these depictions of the future were not the projects of 'isolated dreamers' but were at the heart of militant activity. The many collectivist visions that emerged in this period may have been contested, questioned, or even ridiculed, but they remained a central feature of the left from Guesde to Jaurès. Angenot's interest in collectivist futures stemmed from a desire to understand what activists posited would or should happen and how they expressed this. How, he asked, did ideologues and militants '*represent* the society that would emerge from the social revolution?'[266] His emphasis was on understanding the form, the practicability, and, most importantly, the content of these desired or proposed futures. This emphasis, however, can have a flattening effect, as the focus on exactly what was being imagined often comes at the expense of sometimes more important questions about the mechanisms of change and the meaning of time.

While revolution in the future has been acknowledged as a crucial reference point, revolutionary heritage has been regarded as the French left's principal touchstone in the past. However, studies of the left's attitude towards the French Revolution or the Commune have tended to examine either the content of these past events, or have simply insisted on a generalised sense in which they were vital for the left.[267] They have not, in other words, been directly concerned with any particular conceptualisation of time that may have been shaped by revolutionary heritage, though in some cases they have provided insights indirectly. Jean El Gammal has underscored how memories of the revolution and the left are, in many ways,

---

[266] Marc Angenot, *L'utopie collectiviste: le grand récit socialiste sous la Deuxième Internationale* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1993), pp. 45, 18, 10. Angenot's emphasis. The centrality of utopian visions for socialism more broadly was also acknowledged in Julliard, *Les gauches françaises*, p. 629 and in Winock, *La gauche en France*, p. 144.

[267] One exception to this is Wright's 'Réformisme et historiographie révolutionnaire: Georges Renard et Eugène Fournière, historiens du XIX^e^ siècle', *Mil Neuf Cent* 30 (2012), pp. 21–38, though this article focused just on Renard and Fournière.

inseparable. In his essay, El Gammal assessed the commemoration of the Revolution and its gradual institutionalisation in the late nineteenth century, insisting that the memory of 1789 retained its mobilising power and resisted becoming neutral or fixed until much later.[268] The Revolution's commemoration, as well as the constellation of imagery and symbols that it bequeathed to republicans, have provided a fertile avenue of enquiry for many historians of the French left, most famously Maurice Agulhon.[269]

Pierre Lévêque went beyond images and celebrations to assess ideas about revolution, pointing out that 1789 was both 'heritage' and 'model'.[270] Casey Harison made similar points about the Commune, highlighting how it was part of bygone era but could function nonetheless as a potential harbinger of future revolution.[271] In Lévêque's words, there were at least three ways that the left could approach the notion of revolution: they might seek to 'defend' 1789, 'continue' it, or 'complete' it.[272] In discussing the symbolic weightiness of previous revolutions and the left's approach to commemorating it and carrying it forward, these works alert us to the way in which revolution was not merely a matter of the past for the left: it was a concept which blended past and future. However, Lévêque's claim that in the early twentieth century, 'the entire left […] defined itself by its fidelity to the heritage of the French Revolution' is unsubtle and not strictly true.[273] As Jennings pointed out in an article in 1991, syndicalists were at best ambivalent about the French Revolution, a fact which has sometimes gone

---

[268] Jean El Gammal 'La mémoire de la Révolution au XIXe siècle' in Becker and Candar (eds), *Histoire des gauches en France*, vol. 1, pp. 135–6, 147. These works can be situated in a broader trend of analysing memory and the French left. See, for example, Sudhir Hazareesingh's more wide-ranging assessment, 'Conflicts of memory: republicanism and the commemoration of the past in modern France', *French History* 23 (2009), pp. 193–215.

[269] See Maurice Agulhon, *Marianne au combat: l'imagerie et la symbolique républicaines de 1789 à 1880* (Paris: Flammarion, 1979). This was also a major theme of Pierre Nora's *Les lieux de mémoire*, see especially vol. 1: *République* (particularly Pascale Ory, 'Le centenaire de la Révolution française: le prevue par '89', pp. 523–60) and vol. 2: *la nation (i) conflits et partages*.

[270] Pierre Lévêque, 'La gauche et l'idée révolutionnaire au XIXe siècle' in Becker and Candar (eds), *Histoire des gauches en France*, vol. 1, pp. 299–300.

[271] Casey Harison, 'The Paris Commune of 1871, the Russian Revolution of 1905, and the shifting of the revolutionary tradition', *History and Memory* 19 (2007), pp. 5–42.

[272] Lévêque, 'La gauche et l'idée révolutionnaire', p. 300.

[273] Ibid. 314.

unacknowledged in the historiography of the left. He argued that syndicalism provided 'the greatest challenge to the ascendency of the French Revolution', rejecting its tactics and spurning its principles as 'hollow'. Their break with 1789 was not total—they continued to appeal 'to the classic revolutionary experience of the French people'—but they nonetheless sought to create a rupture with this particular heritage and to fashion a new way of bringing about social change.[274] Barbara Mitchell similarly cited syndicalists' 'rich but oddly dualistic' approach to 1789, noting how they had regarded it as a 'political success' but a 'moral failure'.[275] All of these works, whether they see the left as wholeheartedly celebrating previous revolutions or whether they point out the ways in which this tradition was undercut, obliquely tackle the issue of time. They allow us to see that the left has, to a considerable extent, been at once animated by and crippled by the sense of a future full of overwhelming hope and a past littered with underwhelming failures. For many around the turn of the century, 1789 seemed to recede ever further into the past while the future revolution was not forthcoming.

Many of the broader studies of the left have suffered from two problems: their desire to categorise endlessly its tendencies, and their largely exclusive focus on parliamentary politics. These approaches have sometimes impeded more organic analysis of people and their ideas. In his seminal book on the French left, Jean Touchard outlined several left-wing variants at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth: that born with the Confédération générale du Travail (CGT) in 1895; that of the 1899 government of republican defence; that of the 1901 Radical Party; and so on. In his painstaking picking over of the left's tendencies, he had argued himself out of any notion that they might share common themes, and he ended his chapter on the early twentieth-century left with a melancholy remark: 'I am

---

[274] Jennings, 'Syndicalism and the French Revolution', *Journal of Contemporary History* 26 (1991), pp. 71, 74–6. Julliard also cited syndicalists as wanting to present a rupture with 1789, though he didn't expand on the remark, see *Autonomie ouvrière*, p. 44.

[275] Barbara Mitchell, *The Practical Revolutionaries: a new interpretation of the French anarchosyndicalists* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987), p. 264.

therefore inclined to conclude that the unity of the French left in the early 1900s is, to a great extent, a myth'.[276] Touchard's categorisations remained too closely wedded to particular dates and to parliamentary politics, but it is the very exercise of classifying which creates the most serious issues. Michel Winock's series of essays on the left succumbed to the same temptation, beginning (as many studies have done) with an introduction to the 'four families of the left' and then reproducing a lengthy list of 'republican sources'.[277] Scholars have occasionally made a virtue of focusing on schisms and their resulting categorisations, assessing how the left could be broken down and reconstituted through a process of dividing and reforming—but more often than not this approach has been a disadvantage.[278] Though categorising and classifying provides useful orientation and clarity about various left-wing groupings, it can overwhelm more nuanced study of political groupings and their adherents. Examining the blurred frontiers between groups, or individuals who sit more easily in the gaps between movements than squarely into the movements themselves, can sometimes be just as illuminating as studying the sharp boundaries and strict divisions that historians such as Touchard and Winock hold to and thereby reinforce. There is also a marked risk in taking figures' insistence on schisms at face value, when in fact their insistences may belie a deeper unity of aims and have resulted merely from political expedience or small disagreements. The study of time enables us to problematise previous categorisations in three ways: it allows us to point to elements of broad cohesion or unexpected similarity; or, on the other hand, perceive divisions along different lines from those usually outlined; and finally, it reveals the importance of some of those thinkers who were on the fringes of movements rather than at their centre.

---

[276] Jean Touchard, *La gauche en France depuis 1900* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1977), p. 88. For the whole chapter, see pp. 41–88. Touchard co-taught with René Rémond at Sciences-Po and, in many ways, he can be said to have done for the left what Rémond had done for the right in the 1950s (see http://chsp.sciences-po.fr/en/fond-archive/touchard-jean [accessed 30 Aug. 2017]).

[277] Winock, *La gauche en France*, pp. 7–31, 33–126. Julliard also began his study like this, see *Les gauches françaises*, pp. 17–34.

[278] This is true of, for example, Christopher K. Ansell's social science study, *Schism and Solidarity in Social Movements: the politics of labour in the French Third Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

The second issue with the most authoritative recent books on the French left—namely, the way in which they have been too closely attached to parliamentary politics—is present in Touchard's and Winock's work but is even more marked in other studies. Jacques Julliard's carefully crafted but somewhat confusing *Les gauches françaises* centred on historical moments and on the left's place in the political system. His principal concerns were twofold: exploring which categories presented a fruitful way of understanding the left, and studying how key individuals shaped the movements they led within the left. The book is, as Émile Chabal has also pointed out, much stronger on people than it is on ideas—and as such there is little room for conceptual topics.[279] Furthermore, while Julliard's expertise on syndicalism allowed him to explore that movement's relationship with the wider left, he never quite shed the focus on political power and parliamentary politics that formed the backbone of his book.[280] A similar issue was present in many of the contributions in Gilles Candar and Jean-Jacques Becker's aforementioned two-volume history of the left. In seeking to prioritise the 'concrete' over the 'esoteric' or the 'abstract', some of these essays advanced on a rather narrow front, concentrating on political aims or on the left's relationship with institutions.[281] This is a focus which was often not foremost in independent socialist and syndicalist circles in the early twentieth century: the most pressing or profound concerns for these activists often did not centre on the ballot box or on political alignments within the Chamber. I contend that it is precisely when certain sections of the left operated outside of official political spheres and institutions, when they tried to find different ways of reshaping their relationship with society more broadly and, ultimately, when they recognised their own shortcomings and faced their failures, that they are at their most interesting and most enlightening.

---

[279] Émile Chabal, review of Jacques Julliard's *Les gauches françaises, 1762–2012: histoire, politique et imaginaire*, *French History* 28 (2014), pp. 267–8.

[280] The same criticism could be made of Touchard, though he did have a short section on revolutionary syndicalism which broke away from parliamentary and governmental politics, see *La gauche en France*, pp. 64–9.

[281] Becker and Candar, 'Avant-propos' in Becker and Candar (eds), *Histoire des gauches en France*, vol. 1, p. 19. This is true of Candar's essay, 'La gauche en république (1871–1899)', pp. 113–31.

Chapter 3

Du rêve à l'action

The crumbing present

Although activists were inspired by a desire to enact change in the present, as we saw in the previous chapter, there was a good deal of uncertainty as to what the concrete outcome of that change might be, as well as a certain nervousness about the very possibilities of action. There was a vivid desire to reinvigorate the present—but at the same time it was often perceived to be a state of disintegration. There were calls from various sections of the left suggesting that the bourgeois order was crumbling, soon to fall. The sense of being—or, as was perhaps more frequently the case, the desire to be—on the cusp between present and future provided a sense of urgency and purpose, but it could also undercut the left-wing mission to breathe life into the present.

In early issues of the *CQ* in 1900, Péguy penned a series of articles on *grippe* ('flu) in which he took on the voices of different personas in order to explore the state of the left and of contemporary French society. In the first article, he developed an extended metaphor centring on a fever to describe his conviction that society, having believed itself almost invincible, was succumbing to a sudden sickness.[282] Articles in Marc Sangnier's nonconformist and radical Catholic review *Le Sillon* had employed similar images of illness in the late 1890s,

---

[282] Péguy, 'De la grippe', *CQ*, 1st series, no. 4 (1900), p. 3. Subsequent *grippe* articles included: 'Encore de la grippe', *CQ*, 1st ser., no. 6 (1900), pp. 1–44, and 'Toujours de la grippe', *CQ*, 1st ser., no. 7 (1900), pp. 3–46. Simone Fraisse has written persuasively about Péguy's use of personas in the early issues of *CQ*: see 'Les grandes étapes', pp. 5–42.

deploring the 'sick' and 'dying' social organism of the Third Republic and evoking the 'collapse' and 'general ruin' of contemporary France.[283] Sangnier himself would describe in 1904 how the 'sinister cracks of a crumbling building' were audible—the edifice of contemporary society was ready to crumble at any moment.[284] Early issues of *PL* were equally dramatic. Gabriel Colomb claimed in 1901 that he could 'already' hear the old world 'cracking all over'; it held 'itself up only by some diabolical miracle of equilibrium'.[285] This type of rhetoric endured: in 1908, Édouard Berth insisted urgently that the current bourgeois order was slowing down fatally, unable to sustain its desire to '*consume*' at the expense of '*creating*'.[286] Only revolutionary syndicalism, according to Berth, could assure safe passage to an as yet uncertain future. It is clear, then, that there was a vivid sense of the frailties of the current social and political order of France, and its demise was viewed as inevitable.

Such articles were, of course, a reflection of the sense of crisis that had periodically gripped France and which now shook the country more profoundly in the wake of the Dreyfus Affair.[287] The references to illness were commonplace in circles where there was a broader disquiet about modernity and progress. They were also in part an urgent call to arms: many on the left sought to spur on their supporters with cries that the world was on the brink of drastic and profound change—just one more push and the bourgeois capitalist system would fall once and for all! This incendiary rhetoric was common on the left, and it harked back to the foreboding and often violent anarchist rhetoric of the early 1890s.[288] The notion that society

---

[283] Jean Montalouet, 'Chronique sociale: maux et remèdes sociaux', *Le Sillon*, no. 5 (10 May 1897), pp. 319–20. For an overview of the review, see Odile Gaulthier-Voituriez, 'Marc Sangnier et les débuts du Sillon', *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d'histoire* 47 (1995), pp. 205–7; and on Sangnier himself, see Madeleine Barthélemy-Madaule, *Marc Sangnier, 1873–1950* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1973).

[284] Marc Sangnier, 'Pour l'espérence', *Almanach du Sillon* (1904), p. 11.

[285] Gabriel Colomb, 'Histoire d'un grand cuvier et d'une petite tasse (suite)', *PL*, vol. I (Jan.–June 1901), p. 76.

[286] Berth, *Les nouveaux aspects*, p. 26. Berth's emphasis. The idea that capitalism would implode in a crisis of overproduction was prominent in Guesdism, too; see Jennings, *Revolution and the Republic*, p. 405.

[287] Prochasson references the earlier atmosphere of crisis that ran from the mid-1870s to the mid-1890s in *Les années électriques*, p. 6.

[288] See for example Les uns, 'Des faits', *La Revue anarchiste*, no. 7 (30 Nov. 1893), pp. 85–7, an article celebrating a recent anarchist bombing in Barcelona and hailing the event as the beginning of the end for the bourgeois social order.

was crumbling was also potent on the far right, and references to the idea were frequent and pressing, albeit with rather different meanings and results—as we will see in Part III.

Nevertheless, behind the political fever and the rhetorical flair, the authors cited above present us with the expression of an understanding of time which at once provided a framework and presented a stumbling block for many on the left. What is most striking about examples such as these is that they do not adumbrate revolution *per se*, they merely predict the crumbling of the current order. And this is important: Péguy, Colomb, Sangnier, and Berth were all articulating the sense or the hope that the present was about to end abruptly, but there is a conspicuous absence of an emergent future. What would come next? This future was variously proposed as growing organically and gradually out of workers' institutions, or being at the end of a cataclysmic general strike, but what is certain is that the collapse of present society was near while the blissful future was not. Guieysse exhibited perspicacious awareness of this situation, describing how living in this liminal period had produced a 'confused' workers' movement who were aware that the era of revolutions had passed but who were still waiting for new ideas about mechanisms of change (the general strike was one such idea) to permeate the proletariat's mind-set and political habits.[289] In other words, there was a nervousness about the imminent end of the present and the still-distant nature of the future—there seemed to be a gulf between these two timeframes.

Socialists and syndicalists during this period often found themselves in a breach in time, trapped between a receding revolutionary timeframe whose promise of sudden change no longer held sway and a present which was perceived to be disintegrating rapidly. The notion of collapse continued to provide a residual framework, but questions about whether it was desirable and how to bring it about became more pressing. For how were political movements to operate if the present was a fragile state about to fall away while the future was as yet

[289] Guieysse, 'Millerand et la lute des classes', *PL*, vol. V (Jan.–June 1903), p. 370.

uncertain and even entirely unknowable? This remained a central problem for many on the left throughout our period.

The 'Millerand question' and revolutionary heritage

The conflict between those who aligned themselves with reform and those who favoured revolution was most famously encapsulated in the debates prompted by the actions of socialist Alexandre Millerand, which were urgently and ceaselessly discussed at the turn of the century. Millerand entered into the government of President Waldeck-Rousseau as Minister for Commerce in 1899, provoking international uproar among socialists, many of whom were unsure whether they wanted 'to function within a political system' which they were also 'seeking to destroy'.[290] This section argues that the debates about socialist involvement in government were framed by questions about understandings of time; this was as important as issues surrounding politics and tactics.

The 'Millerand question', as it came to be known, was configured explicitly in terms of time. Rosa Luxemburg, the now-legendary Polish–Jewish revolutionary and Marxist theoretician who was active in far left-wing movements in Germany in the early twentieth-century, was frequently contributing articles to *LMS* during this period; she wrote scathingly about Millerand. According to her, his entry into government only made sense if the left desired 'immediate profit' in the form of 'small improvements'.[291] Luxemburg considered this to be a

---

[290] James Joll, *The Second International, 1889–1914* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974, 1st edn 1955), p. 77. Joll's chapter on 'reformism and revision', pp. 77–107, explored these issues more broadly. The international import of the Millerand question was recognised here, as well as in Albert S. Lindemann, *A History of European Socialism* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1983), pp. 155–7. For more on the split within French left, see Leslie Derfler, *Paul Lafargue and the Flowering of French Socialism, 1882–1911* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998), pp. 216–29; and Prochasson, *Les intellectuels, le socialisme et la guerre*, pp. 24–32. For more on Millerand himself, see Marjorie Milbank Farrar, who produced a serious study of his career: *Principled Pragmatist: the political career of Alexandre Millerand* (New York: Berg, 1991); see especially pp. 49–54 for the events referred to above and pp. 57–87 for what he achieved in government as Minister for Commerce.

[291] Rosa Luxemburg, 'Une question de tactique: le cas Millerand', *LMS*, no. 14 (1 Aug. 1899), p. 133. Luxemburg's associate Karl Kautsky also weighed in on the debate, writing about the magnitude of the mistake

pitiful exchange, trapped as it was in a short-term view of what socialism could achieve. As Lagardelle would later affirm, adherence to the concept of revolution required workers and activists to 'subordinate the present moment to a general movement'.[292] Millerand's actions, in other words, were seen as paying insufficient attention to the future and fixating injudiciously on the present.

Guieysse, in a lengthy discussion of the issue, pointed out that there were revolutionaries who disagreed with Millerand's version of reform but who nonetheless acknowledged that revolution was distant and needed to be reached by incremental steps—meaning that there were, he teased, reformist reforms and revolutionary reforms.[293] His mordant comment is revealing: Guieysse was intimating that there needed to be a more subtle combination of present and future on the left, and in so doing he deepened the debate surrounding Millerand. This debate, ostensibly between reform and revolution, might be better described as one which pitted differing notions of present and future against one another. After all, contemporaries were just as likely to describe the Millerand question as a problem of time as one of tactics. This was not the only reason for rejecting Millerand; Victor Griffuelhes, for example, repudiated the existence of a socialist minister because he did not want what he termed political or outside influence on the workers' movement.[294] But time came to be the prominent issue, and for Luxemburg, Lagardelle, Guieysse, and others, there was a gulf between present and future, epitomised at times by reform and revolution respectively, and this gulf needed to be bridged by a more nuanced approach to time and political action.

Millerand had made in allying himself with a bourgeois government, see 'Jaurès et Millerand', *LMS*, no. 15 (15 Aug. 1899), pp. 207–13.

[292] Lagardelle, 'Le Congrès syndical de Bourges', *LMS*, no. 142 (1 Nov. 1904), p. 30.

[293] Guieysse, 'Millerand et la lute des classes', pp. 371–2.

[294] Victor Griffuelhes, 'La leçon du passé', *La Vie ouvrière*, vol. I (1909), pp. 4–7. Griffuelhes was general secretary of the Confédération Générale du Travail 1902–9 and was highly influential in the syndicalist movement. He came to syndicalism from Blanquism. He has not been the subject of many individual studies, but Bruce Vandervort produced a good account of his thought, see *Victor Griffuelhes and French Syndicalism* (Baton Rouge: Louisana State University Press, 1996).

The debates about Millerand did not just concern the relationship between present and future: the status of the past was at stake, too. In the government that Millerand had entered into, the Minister of War was a General Gallifet, a man who was vilified by left-wing militants as the *fusilleur de la Commune*. His most infamous act had been commanding a brigade during the bloody repression in 1871 under the orders of Adolphe Thiers. Many were shocked and disgusted that Millerand would consent to be part of the same government as a man who was viewed almost universally on the left as a brutal murderer. For Lagardelle, this called into question the left's relationship to the Commune, its memory and, by extension, the past itself. In an unusually dispassionate article, he explained the thought process of those who were opposed to Millerand's decision:

> You can't amnesty the past like that. The morality of a party is made up of its traditions and its historical memories. You can't just recklessly deny those things.

Especially not, he continued, when the French left had spent thirty years heaping glory on the dead of the Commune. On the other hand, however, Lagardelle pointed out that '[n]ot forgetting the past doesn't mean living off the past'. One could be in government with Gallifet without showing solidarity with him, and without this involvement meaning that all attachments to the Commune were being disavowed.[295] Lagardelle's article was simply intended to elucidate the problem rather than offer a view on it, and as such it does not reveal his views on the matter (in actual fact, Lagardelle supported Millerand at first and later reversed his position).[296] What is clear, though, is that the editor of *LMS* was outlining two disparate possibilities for how the left could conceptualise the past. The first vision was one which saw the revolutionary past as needing to be preserved and honoured in its entirety—similar to the right-wing notions of the past we encountered in Part I—while the other was a more malleable version. Gallifet's presence in the government remained a sore point, but views on the Commune and the past

---

[295] Lagardelle, 'Le parti socialiste et la crise', *LMS*, no. 12 (1 July 1899), pp. 2–4.
[296] See Jennings, *Syndicalism in France*, pp. 88–90.

tended to be at least partly resolved by claims that 1871 represented a set of lessons to learn from. In other words, the left should look to the past for examples without being fixed by that past.[297]

The arguments that swirled around Alexandre Millerand's decision in 1899 illustrate how the question of whether to privilege incremental improvements in the present over grand apocalyptic transformations in the future—which had already come to be posed perennially on left—became more insistent and weightier and was accompanied by renewed questions about the status of the past. The time dimension of the Millerand question was manifest at every turn, as left-wing militants and writers described the matter as one which pitted present against future and juxtaposed differing understandings of the past. Their solution to the problems raised by the debate was to suggest a combination of the present and future and insist on the need for a firm link which bound present work to future change; they were not merely disagreeing with the Minister for Commerce's actions but repudiating the very idea of a dichotomy between reform and revolution.

Between present and future

The concerns about Millerand's entry into the government were only the most obvious and pointed illustration of a wider set of concerns about the receding of the revolutionary timeframe and the relationship between rupture and gradual change. Balancing the idea of a leap into the future with continuous improvement in the present had become a vivid concern on many sections of the left, and formulating and articulating an altered understanding of time was a crucial mission for many. Early issues of *PL*, *LMS*, and *CQ* had reflections on revolution and time at their heart: across articles published in the period 1899–1902, Guieysse, Lagardelle, and

[297] See Guieysse, 'Action patriotique et action révolutionnaire' *PL*, vol. X (July–Dec. 1905), pp. 287–8. For a further example, see J. B. Clément, 'Après la fête', *La Petite République*, no. 8379 (24 March 1899), p. 1.

Péguy established their new reviews by facilitating discussions about the timeframe of social change, and they were beginning to grapple with solutions to the problems described above. Contributions to the early numbers of these reviews are often meandering and sometimes contradictory, but they nonetheless demonstrate that writers and activists strongly felt the need to develop new understandings of time in relation to social revolution.

The very first article in *LMS* in 1899, which took the form of a declaration by the editors, demonstrated the importance that syndicalists placed in complicating the relationship between present and future. It focused on exactly how much of the future it was appropriate to imagine: neither 'dogmatism' nor 'empiricism' would suffice as a guide since the first dictated that a revolution would occur spontaneously, while the latter led to 'conservative reformism'. These options represented, respectively, too much of the future and too much of the present. The editors claimed that their aim was to be able to visualise just enough of a desired future society that they could understand what was needed to make it come about. In this way, the twin pitfalls of overly detailed descriptions of the future and deliberate ignorance of it could be avoided.[298] Essentially, Lagardelle and his colleagues sought to create a timeframe which combined the possibilities of the future with the realities of the present. Their declaration emblematised the desire, particularly ardent among syndicalists and independent socialists, to tread a path between insistence on an abstract and distant future of sudden change and a relentless focus on a present that was already seen to be crumbling. These pitfalls were (supposedly) epitomised by Marxists such as Guesde on the one hand, and parliamentary socialists such as German revisionist Eduard Bernstein on the other.[299] The alternatives they presented were deadening in their own ways, and both were often described as ways of making

---

[298] La rédaction, 'Déclaration', *LMS*, no. 1 (15 Jan. 1899), pp. 2–3. It seems sensible to suggest that Hubert Lagardelle was the principal architect of this piece.

[299] For more on Bernstein, the key reformist figure who was perhaps as important in France as he was in Germany, see Manfred B. Steger, *The Quest for Evolutionary Socialism: Eduard Bernstein and social democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

the proletariat 'sleep' rather than act.[300] The syndicalists of *LMS* were emphasising and shoring up the political boundaries that they found to either side of them in order to create their own space and reinforce their particular mission. To a certain extent, they were using the language of time as a rhetorical device to mark out what they saw as their territory—but the issue went much deeper than that. Lagardelle and the syndicalists allied to him were unswerving in their determination to find a fresh way of combining present and future, and the fact that this mission was the subject of the very first article of their review attests to the considerable importance of time in framing their political and social vision.

The issue was not always clear-cut and in searching for a different conceptualisation of time, syndicalists sometimes resembled the political poles to either side of them—more than they would have been willing to admit. At times, they seemed to oscillate uncertainly between insistence on work in the present and attachment to a glorious future which might arrive suddenly. It is important, then, not to take their insistence that they alone could combine present and future at face value. Indeed, in this regard they demonstrated a striking similarity with socialist leader and deputy Jaurès.[301] Throughout his *Études socialistes* (an important text originally published in *CQ* in 1901 which sketched out his ideas about socialism's potential and development), Jaurès posited the near future as a grey area, a period of transition which needed to be worked at to ensure future change. He wanted his mission to be informed by past, present, and future, and he was attentive to the pitfalls of becoming overly reliant on any one of these particular categories (by not simply recreating the past or fixating on future revolution, for example).[302] Present work and future hope were held in delicate tension, and he was wholly

---

[300] This is what Berth accused parliamentary socialists of in 'Révolution sociale ou évolution juridique', p. 124, and it was Émile Pouget's implied criticism in 'La conquête de la journée de huit heures', *LMS*, no. 151 (15 March 1905), p. 371.

[301] Julliard also mentioned the similarities between Jaurès and the CGT, see *Les gauches françaises*, p. 472. Jaurès even (at this point) declared himself a partisan of the general strike, a hallmark of the CGT: see *Études socialistes* (Paris: Slatkine, 1979, 1st edn 1902), p. xxxv.

[302] Ibid. Rebérioux also pointed out the fixation with a period of transition throughout this text in her introduction to ibid. (unnumbered pages). I have previously published reflections on Jaurès' conceptualisation of time: see A. Paulin-Booth, 'A period of transition: political time in the thought of Jean Jaurès' in Lisa Jeschke

sympathetic with the syndicalists' desire to avoid both 'dogmatism' and 'empiricism'. This similarity is important but it does not resolve the complex relationship between Jaurès and the syndicalists, and nor should we allow it to cloud the latter's emphasis on their own particular way of combining present and future.[303] What this comparison does enable us to ascertain, however, is that the search for a reconfigured relationship between present and future was a broader mission on the left.

Early articles in *PL* contributed to the discussion about revolutionary timeframes by focusing on when a revolution might be brought about. In a playful piece in the first issue of the review, Guieysse purported to be in conversation with an imagined revolutionary, 'Jean Prolète' (in much the same way that Péguy had deployed different personas in the early articles of *CQ*). Asked by Jean when and how revolution could be brought about, the *PL* editor elaborated an extended analogy based on cracking a nut. Crack the nut too early, he explained, and it wouldn't be ripe; crack it too hard and it would be completely shattered. At the end of the article he teased, 'when we've cracked all of the almonds and all of the hazelnuts, in a revolutionary and very gentle manner, well, then the waiter will pour us coffee'.[304] Behind Guieysse' mischievous tone lay a clear set of prescriptions for how and when to go about revolution: not too soon and not too violent, he advised. This was about timing as much as it was about tactics, and it was becoming obvious that preaching imminent apocalypse was not a useful way to proceed—there needed to be a subtler approach to the future and how to bring it about. Nevertheless, calls like this seemed to leave the present as a liminal period without a

---

and Adrian May (eds), *Matters of Time: material temporalities in twentieth-century French culture* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2014), pp. 27–40; and Julian Wright emphasised Jaurès' combination of study of the past, present action, and hope in the future, see *Socialism and the Experience of Time*, pp. 41–8, 79–97.

303 Jaurès later renounced his support of the general strike and was often criticised by revolutionary syndicalists; see for example, 'Réponse à Jaurès' in Commission des grèves et de la grève générale, *Grève générale réformiste et grève générale révolutionnaire* (Paris: Confédération Générale de Travail, 1903), pp. 3–16; or Berth, 'Les "discours" de Jaurès', *LMS*, no. 144 (1 Dec. 1904), p. 214: Berth noted bitterly that Jaurès was 'a partisan of everything and nothing'.

304 Guieysse, 'Consultation de Jean Prolète', *PL*, vol. I (Jan.–June 1901), pp. 6, 9.

manifest route to the future. At their worst, these articles could look like an apology for falling back on the often-criticised model of simply waiting for a revolution.

Gabriel Colomb, another *PL* writer, followed the warning against revolutionary haste with his own cautionary tale in the third and fourth issues of the review. In two curious articles, he took a long view of human development, arguing that society paid homage to great men while ignoring the much longer-term contribution of ordinary people.

> I could show you—there are numerous examples—how much continuous effort, how much perseverance, man had to expend to arrive at just one of the sensational discoveries that mark a stage in humanity's progressive march.[305]

In a subsequent article, Colomb explained at painstaking length the stages man had had to go through in order to make bread: first, the discovery of fire; then, the growing of the appropriate crops; harvesting those crops and grinding the grain; later, finding a recipe that worked, and so on and so forth.

> So you see, comrades, […] how many years—what am I saying!—how many *centuries* of incessant effort and unswerving determination it took for mankind to make a simple hunk of bread.[306]

Colomb's message looks gloomy at first sight—if it took humanity centuries to arrive at doing something as basic as producing a morsel of bread, how long would it take to overturn the deeply entrenched and all-encompassing capitalist system? But his tone contained hope, too, particularly in the reference to 'humanity's progressive march', as well as in his cry in the final paragraphs of the piece: '[e]verything arrives, even Justice!'[307] On the whole, the implication for revolution was not especially heartening: it was certain, but likely to take place in an extremely distant future after innumerable smaller struggles. The crucial point here, though, is that the present was placed on a clear continuum towards the future; the two were connected by ceaseless work towards an ultimate goal.

---

[305] Colomb, 'Histoire d'un grand cuvier et d'une petite tasse', *PL*, vol. I (Jan.–June 1901), p. 46.
[306] Colomb, 'Histoire d'un grand cuvier (suite)', p. 75. My emphasis.
[307] Ibid. 75.

A similar sentiment was echoed in stories by Anatole France. The 'Histoire contemporaine' fables were originally published in the *Écho de Paris* and the *Figaro* and were reprinted in *CQ* and, in common with some of the other writings discussed in this chapter, they took the form of a series of dialogues.[308] In an imagined conversation between a Monsieur Bergeret and his daughter Pauline, France advocated an attitude of restrained hope towards the future. Upon being asked by Pauline whether there would soon be a new society, Bergeret explained, 'the future has to be worked on as weavers work on their hanging tapestries—without seeing them'.[309] In the second instalment of the Bergeret stories France developed this, declaring that imagining future utopias was important: 'our thought creates the future'. Just as weavers had to visualise what their tapestries looked like from the front, bringing the images to life without fully being able to see them, activists had to envisage the future they desired in order to be able to coax it into being. Towards the end of the story, France reassured readers that new social relations, while they might be 'slow and imperceptible' in coming, were ultimately inevitable. He cited the work of geologist Charles Lyell to explain how changes in landscapes might appear suddenly but were in reality the result of prolonged subterranean shifts.[310] Just as Colomb had done, France employed natural history to give a cautiously optimistic vision of how profound change could occur in the future. And, like Colomb, he argued that this future would emerge through careful and continuous work in the present.

This measured approach to the timing of revolutions and the dependence of the future upon the present was accompanied by a nuanced approach to the conceptualisation of the past.

---

308 Some of the stories were summarised in in *PL*: see Maurice Kahn, 'Les étapes d'un intellectuel: M. Bergeret d'après l'*Histoire contemporaine* d'Anatole France', *PL*, vol. II (Jul–Dec. 1901), pp. 281–9 and pp. 301–9.

309 Anatole France, 'Histoire contemporaine: Clopinel', *CQ*, 1st ser., no. 4 (1900), p. 14. In order for this metaphor to make sense it is important to know that weavers work on the reverse side of a tapestry; they cannot, therefore, see how it appears from the front as they are working on it. The name Clopinel, present in the title of these stories, refers to a homeless man who Bergeret and Pauline encounter on a roadside on their travels and have in-depth discussions with. These stories were collected in a single volume, *Monsieur Bergeret à Paris* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1901).

310 France, 'Histoire contemporaine: après Clopinel', *CQ*, 1st ser., no. 4 (1900), pp. 21, 22–3. Lyell was from England and he was an important geologist and a close friend of Charles Darwin.

In an opening declaration signed by a group of *PL* contributors, the past was described as a burden: workers and peasants were 'crushed by the weight of the old world'. But it was not sufficient simply to destroy that world—destruction was useless, they insisted, unless accompanied by creation.[311] A few pages later, Séailles picked up on this latter point, emphasising that attributing 'glory to negation' was empty. He went further, contradicting the earlier declaration and stating that activists shouldn't seek to destroy the past at all: '[l]et us not be ungrateful towards the past, it is behind us, it pushes us, we should not abolish it but continue it'.[312] *PL* was certainly varied enough to house these two distinct attitudes towards the past—creation of a largely new social order versus an element of continuation—and the review was certainly not given to imposing an editorial line on its authors.[313] Nonetheless, the proximity coupled with the striking divergence of these two views is noteworthy, and indicates a certain confusion about how to enact change and how radical that change should be. It is significant, moreover, that neither of these articles specified which past they might either recreate or continue. It is not clear, therefore, whether this was a matter of a revolutionary past in contrast with an oppressive past. Rather, it points to a more generalised sense of unease about how the past should be treated as a concept and what sort of connection the future should maintain with it. The sense of a broader uneasiness about the status of the past is reinforced if we consider Séailles' article in tandem with Lagardelle's piece on Millerand and the heritage of the Commune, cited above—the failure of the Commune had forestalled a simple and pure celebration of the past and produced something more complex.

Early issues of *PL*, *LMS*, and *CQ* presented a complex set of views on time and change, but their editors and writers shared a common mission to reconceptualise past, present, future,

311 Le rédaction, 'Courte déclaration', *PL*, vol. I (Jan.–June 1901), p. 2. This was signed by Gustave Kahn, Guieysse, and Halévy, among others.
312 Séailles, 'Il ne suffit pas de détruire, il faut créer', *PL*, vol. I (Jan.–June 1901), pp. 13, 14.
313 Prochasson pointed out that Guieysse did not keep such a tight grip on *PL* as Lagardelle on *LMS* or Péguy on *CQ*: see *Les intellectuels, le socialisme et la guerre*, p. 60.

and the relationship between them. Time was an acute concern, and the attempt to formulate and to articulate a conceptualisation of it which established a manifest connection between present and future and which drew from the power of both of them constituted a foundational mission for those involved in all three reviews studied in this section. This was, furthermore, something that these authors had in common with socialist leader Jaurès. Time was not, therefore, simply a tool which could be used to delineate political positions and express dissatisfaction with a certain status quo—it was at the heart of the elaboration of many activists' social missions. Three major features emerge from the examples employed above: the notion that a sudden and apocalyptic revolution in an undetermined future was not desirable; the notion that change was incremental and the future relied on gradual developments in the present—though the present, already perceived to be fragile and even disintegrating, could not be overly relied on—and finally, the notion that the status of the past was uncertain and contested.

Chapter 4

Ce que nous pouvons espérer de l'avenir

Marxism and religion: challenges to the future

It is clear that shifting expectations of when revolutionary change might occur gave rise to new understandings of time. These in turn altered debates about how past, present, and future should interact. These emergent conceptualisations of time were often—perhaps unjustly—configured as opposition to Marxist ideas, which were seen to overemphasise the future. Religious notions of time also had a role to play here, as Catholic socialists found themselves under attack and attempted to bring their own views into line with a more present-oriented approach. This section discusses these debates and argues that critiques of Marxism and Catholicism were subordinate to fears about the status and the nature of the future.

It was Gabriel Séailles, in an article in *PL* in 1902, who provided the clearest and most eloquent description of the receding of the revolutionary timeframe. The piece was ostensibly about the UP movement but the point it made was much broader and it is worth quoting at length.

> It seems that the era of Apocalypses is at an end, and that we are weary of raising up the image of an earthly Jerusalem in the ringing clamour of words […]. The workers have had enough of waiting for the day when the Messiah, who is nowadays called Revolution, performs a sudden miracle that they wouldn't have been able to perform themselves; they are discovering that this providence without God that we ask to produce results from nothing is illusory. They want to start something, they want to make progress in different areas, to organise their questions and their efforts […]. They do not, though, disavow or betray their old faith, and nor do they renounce their long-standing hopes: they are simply passing from dream to science and action, from utopia to ideal, if it is true that an ideal is an idea understood in relation to what is possible—that is to say, the conditions which make its realisation possible.[314]

[314] Séailles, 'Introduction à la pensée moderne et l'action sociale', *PL*, vol. III (Jan.–June 1902), p. 211.

Séailles was reiterating points that had already been made about the gulf that had opened up between a revolutionary future and a constructive present, but he added implicit critiques of Marxism and an explicit critique of religion. Séailles was articulating at least three essential and interrelated features of the understanding of time which had by then come to prominence on the left. Most significantly, the notion of waiting for a sudden and redemptive future to intervene—an idea associated with both religion and Marxism—was now looked upon unfavourably. Instead, workers wanted action in the present—a present which, moreover, had a manifest and feasible route to the future. And this leads to our third feature: these efforts toward change in the near future did not mean that workers reneged their revolutionary heritage ('old faith'); rather, the shift marked a different way of carrying forward enduring aspirations. What these three facets amounted to was a desire to bring both past and future closer to the present, thereby invigorating the sometimes isolated and etiolated timeframe of the present. The broad understanding of time described by Séailles did not always hold true and it was not without its complications, but it nonetheless provided a model to which much of the left turned in the early years of the twentieth century.

In the late 1890s and early 1900s, Marxists, along with an older generation of socialists, increasingly came under attack for their approach to time and revolution; Séailles' elegiac outburst typified this disdain ('the Messiah, who is nowadays called Revolution'). It was often said that these groups were simply '[waiting] for a violent revolution'.[315] This particular comment is taken from an article by Daniel Halévy about the socialist congress in Lyon in 1901; he was referring to both the First and the Second Internationals. Another *PL* contributor, agricultural expert Michel Augé-Laribé, described Marxism's inability to escape 'old utopias'—it needed to realise that indolently waiting for a new society or frivolously imagining one was

[315] Halévy, 'Avant le Congrès de Lyon', *PL*, vol. I (Jan.–June 1901), p. 408.

no longer sufficient.[316] Relying on 'miracles' and 'destiny' in the future was continually disparaged, and it is difficult to emphasise enough how common were such criticisms.[317] The same notions also formed a cornerstone of Jaurès' critique of Marxism and of his rival Guesde. In a letter to Péguy which formed the introduction to his *Études socialistes*, Jaurès scornfully pointed out that an unpredictable future (and, by extension, human agency—for how could people have the power to act if their fortunes were already established for them?) was absent from *The Communist Manifesto*.[318] Guesde had allowed himself to be 'hypnotised' by the idea of a distant-future revolution.[319] All of these critiques expressed frustration with the way in which Marxism appeared to set the proletariat on a conveyor belt towards inevitable and drastic social change. Rather than building the future in the present (a fixation of Halévy and his UP colleagues, as we saw in Chapter 2), Marxists were accused of leaving the present idle and empty, waiting for sudden change to be visited upon them.

There was also a pronounced religious dimension to Séailles' aforementioned declaration which further illuminates left-wing understandings of the present and the future. His disdain for religion is discernible in the barely-veiled accusation of meretriciousness ('[t]he workers have had enough of waiting for […] the Messiah'), but what is more interesting to note is that the notion of waiting for revolution was derided because it mirrored the pernicious elements of a religious timeframe. Marxism and Catholicism were, in this regard, as bad as each other.[320] Similarly, in the opening speech for the UP of the 15th *arrondissement*, Anatole France

---

316 Augé-Laribé, 'Socialisme scientifique et agriculture', *PL*, vol. V (Jan.–June 1903), p. 459. Augé-Laribé was an expert on agricultural questions, see http://data.bnf.fr/12515882/michel_auge-laribe/ (accessed 26 July 2017).

317 Séailles, 'Le premier mai', *PL*, vol. V (Jan.–June 1903), p. 396. Séailles, in the same article, referred thus to the timeframe of social change (after having derided Marxists' 'old utopias'): 'the harvest will come when it is ready' [*la moisson se lèvera à son heure*], ibid. 397. In other words, there was a very uneasy balance between waiting for a revolution which could only occur organically and hastening it with action, and here Séailles' comments seemed very close to ideas of the Marxists he denigrated.

318 Jaurès, 'Question de méthode (lettre à Péguy, 17 novembre 1901)', *Études socialistes*, p. vii–lviii.

319 Summary of a speech by Jaurès in André Hesse, 'Au Congrès de Limoges', *PL*, vol. XXII (July–Dec. 1906), p. 595.

320 The similarity between Marxism and the Christian religion was most famously expounded by Walter Benjamin at the beginning of his *On the Concept of History* (https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/benjamin/1940/history.htm). According to Benjamin, Marxism

lamented that a 'long religious tradition', still weighty and influential, had managed to persuade people 'to suffer in this world in order to be happy in the next', resulting in an attitude of 'pitiable resignation'.[321] To Séailles and France, religious and Marxist modes of thinking created a breach whereby the distant future was cut off from the present and the near future, leaving workers and activists without the power to change things by bridging the temporal gulf. When it came to ideas about a revolutionary timeframe, Marxism and religion become enmeshed at the turn of the century, with both provoking ire because of their detrimental focus on the distant future, which was perceived to be inimical to emergent left-wing understandings of time.[322]

Religious thinkers had previously been criticised for being overly reliant on the past, too: in the early 1890s, Jaurès had taken issue with Abbé Garnier (a Catholic essayist and proponent of religiously-based social reform) on this basis.[323] He accused Garnier of wanting to recreate the past by constantly evoking a bygone era in which the church had created a 'collective patrimony' for the poor. This was lazy, thought Jaurès, as it amounted to mere repetition. Socialism, on the other hand, appreciated the newness of circumstances and aspired to a collective patrimony in a crucially new form.[324] This criticism was an inversion of that

---

relied on theology for its explanatory power: '[t]he puppet called "historical materialism" is always supposed to win. It can do this with no further ado against any opponent, so long as it employs the services of theology, which as everyone knows is small and ugly and must be kept out of sight.' Benjamin was coming from a different religious tradition, that of Judaism, in which he argued that the future was always injected with hope (see Addendum B in ibid.).

321 Anatole France, 'La liberté par l'étude', *CQ*, 1st ser., no. 3 (1900), p. 5. This speech had also been printed in *La Petite République* on 23 Nov. 1899.

322 There were occasional suggestions that religion and socialism more broadly conceived (i.e. not just Marxism) resembled one another—Guieysse found himself batting away this suggestion in 'Christianisme et socialisme', *PL*, vol. II (July–Dec. 1901), pp. 271–80. In this instance, it had come from an article by Jean Roth in the review *L'Avant-garde*.

323 Garnier had been a prominent figure in the populist Catholic movement Union nationale during the Dreyfus Affair; he was a former papal Zouave and an anti-Semite; see Stephen Wilson, 'Catholic populism in France at the time of the Dreyfus Affair: the Union nationale', *Journal of Contemporary History* 40 (1975), pp. 667–705; or Bertrand Joly, *Nationalistes et conservateurs en France, 1885–1902* (Paris: Les Indes savantes, 2008), pp. 324–8; Joly noted that the Union was maintained solely by Garnier's 'exceptional dynamism', ibid. 324.

324 Jaurès, 'Néant du catholisme social', *La Dépêche* (27 April 1892) in Jaurès, *Action socialiste* (Paris: Société nouvelle de librairie et d'édition, 1899), pp. 147–8.

outlined above, emphasising the past rather than the future; but in both cases, various strands of religious thought were accused of ignoring or eliding the present, and instead favouring the past or the distant future. The issue of religion was not entirely clear-cut, though, and many on the left retained strong religious feelings.[325] Nevertheless, positive engagement with religious notions of time usually tended to come either in a more personal context, or from avowedly Catholic thinkers such as Garnier and Sangnier.

We have seen, then, that there were substantial rifts on the left which were based in time, with many syndicalists and socialists offering robust criticism of currents of thought which they took to be overly preoccupied by past or future (and especially the latter). However, even a brief foray into radical Catholic and Marxist thought reveals that the difference was much subtler than these critiques would have us believe, and bringing together present and future was in fact a much a broader mission on the left.

Marc Sangnier, a radical Catholic, staunch proponent of social reform, and associate of Abbé Garnier, was painfully aware of the accusations being levelled at him and his movement.[326] This prompted him to speak with great urgency about bringing together an eternal religious mission and a quotidian social one. In a speech at the opening of the 10th *arrondissement*'s Institut populaire (an establishment for the education of the lower classes intended to rival the UPs

---

[325] Philippe Boutry, 'La gauche et la religion' in Becker and Candar (eds), *Histoire des gauches en France*, vol 1, p. 329. Perhaps the most striking intimation of an engagement with religious notions of time came from Jaurès himself, in a text written in 1891 but only much later discovered by Rebérioux. Having established that socialism had a clear 'religious promise', Jaurès went on to explain that positivism had eliminated what was at the heart of religious meaning and what lay 'deepest in the human soul', which was 'the feeling of infinity' [*le sentiment de l'infini*]. In fact, humanity only had value as an 'expression of the infinite'. Jaurès went on to say that socialism would be able to recapture or reinvigorate the capacity for infinity because of the religious promise it held. See Jaurès, *La question religieuse et le socialisme* (Paris: Éditions de minuit, 1959), pp. 39–43; and on the discovery and dating of the text, see Rebérioux, 'Socialisme et religion: un inédit de Jaurès, 1891', *Annales. Économies, sociétés, civilisation* 16 (1961), pp. 1096–120. We might also point to Péguy's 'Notre jeunesse' as an example of personal escape into religious ideas about time. For a fascinating broader discussion of the issue, see Gareth Stedman Jones, 'Religion and the origins of socialism', in Ira Katznelson and Stedman Jones (eds), *Religion and the Political Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 171–89.

[326] A police report dated 7 July 1900 cited the abbé Garnier as an attendant of Sangnier's Sillon meetings (Archives de la Préfecture de Police [APP], BA 1540, 'Le Sillon 1898–1908'). On radical and nonconformist Catholic social movements, see Alexander Roper Vidler, *A Variety of Catholic Modernists* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1970).

but, in contrast to them, including some religious elements), he issued a rebuttal to those who claimed that 'there [was] no time for France to be saintly before she is saved'—the implication being that the Sillon should drop its religious bent and throw itself more fully into the political fray. Sangnier appealed instead for a dual focus on the distant and the near future.[327] Bringing together these two timeframes continued to inform the Sillon's mission, and in 1906 Sangnier would proclaim, '[w]e have never felt the future to be so near, and at the same time we have never understood better that life is worth living and what one should do with it'.[328] This was a direct riposte to the claims of those such as Anatole France, who believed that Catholic thought was incompatible with any degree of present-mindedness. Sangnier may have failed to get the rest of the left to really incorporate a Christian understanding of time into their social mission, but his concern to bring together past and future nonetheless evinces a significant point of confluence on the left.[329]

Even Marxists, who tended to be the more constant enemy for those on other sections of the left, demonstrated a similar desire to not allow themselves to be entirely swallowed by the future. In 1899, with pointed timing and under an even more pointed title, Jules Guesde republished a substantial collection of articles which he had originally written in the mid-1880s for the *Cri du peuple*. In *Le socialisme au jour le jour*, Guesde's rhetoric was fiery and his opposition to the bourgeois capital order was implacable, but it would be difficult to argue that the text demonstrated the obsessive fixation on the future of which he was often accused. The long section on the miners' strikes in Decazeville, for instance, sought to place current events in

---

[327] Sangnier, *L'avenir de la démocratie, discours prononcé le 1 février 1903 à l'inauguration de l'Institut populaire du X^e^ arrondissement* (Paris: Éditions du Sillon, 1903), p. 5. A police report dated 9 Dec. 1900 described how Sangnier was worried about the preponderant influence of the UPs, the secular character of whose education was disagreeable to him; he was therefore developing a rival to them (APP, BA 1540).

[328] Sangnier, *La vie profonde: éveils et visions* (Paris: Perrin, 1906), p. 7.

[329] Juilliard gloomily remarked that endeavours such as the Sillon were doomed to fail due to the Separation of Church and State in 1905, see *Les gauches françaises*, p. 449. Despite its focus on the present, the Sillon was spurned by *LMS*, see for example Victor Charbonnel, 'Les jeunes catholiques et l'Action sociale', *LMS*, no. 20 (1 Nov. 1899), pp. 523–9.

historical context and to detect how Marxist theory might illuminate present concerns.[330] Similarly, writers contributing to *Le Devenir social* (a short-lived but much-cited Marxist publication with input from across Europe) were often at pains to illustrate how they were interpreting Marx rather than bluntly applying his ideas—and, significantly, this interpretation always involved deep sensitivity to the realities of contemporary situations.[331] Furthermore, these articles often contained attempts to rescue revolution from its status as a phenomenon which would intervene autonomously in the distant future: 'the optimism of scientific socialism in no way excludes human intervention', insisted Polish thinker Edward Abramowski.[332] Granting the proletariat agency when it came to bringing about change necessarily meant a more flexible approach to the timing of revolution as well as a recognition of the importance of the present in creating it. Marxists tended to be less explicit about their focus on the present, but it was nonetheless amply demonstrated; they were aware of the pitfalls of allowing a gulf to open up between present and future, and they were aware, too, of the accusations being levelled against them regarding their focus on the future. It is also worth noting that the division between Marxists and other sections of the left were by no means clear-cut, and that many of the syndicalists and socialists studied here began their association with the left by engaging with

---

[330] Jules Guesde, *Le socialisme au jour le jour* (Paris: V. Giard & E. Brière, 1899), pp. 80–256. For more on Marxism and Guesdism in France, see Derfler, *Paul Lafargue and the Flowering of French Socialism*; Claude Willard, *Le mouvement socialiste en France (1892–1905): les guesdistes* (Paris: Éditions sociales, 1965), especially pp. 159–68; and Robert Stuart, *Marxism and National Identity: socialism, nationalism, and national socialism during the French fin-de-siècle* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2006).

[331] See, for example, the article by Italian theorist Benedotto Croce (who was a 'lifelong' friend of Sorel, see Jennings, *Georges Sorel: the character and development of his thought* [Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1985], p. 62), 'Essai d'interprétation de critique et de quelques concepts du marxisme', *Le Devenir social*, no. 2 (Feb. 1898), pp. 97–126; or the piece by Polish philosopher Edward Abramowski, 'Le matérialisme historique et le principe du phénomène social', *Le Devenir social*, no. 4 (April 1898), pp. 289–329. Abramowski would go on to become Poland's leading anarchist and to reject the utility of the state, but he nonetheless issued staunch defences of historical materialism. Other contributors to this review included Belgian socialist Émile Vandervelde.

[332] Ibid. 329.

Marxism—Sorel, Pelloutier, and Lagardelle were examples of this, and the latter also wrote for *Le Devenir social*.[333]

While syndicalists and socialists were very clear that they were distinguishing themselves from other sections of the left on the grounds of time, their insistences were not necessarily borne out by reality. They may have been the most explicit about their mission to bring together present and future, but the concern for some measure of present-oriented thought was in fact astonishingly broad on the left, evinced by Marxists and radical Catholics as well as parliamentary socialists and syndicalists. We should not, however, confine ourselves to arguing that an emphasis on ideas about time was merely a question of rhetoric. When thinkers such as Séailles or France criticised Marxism or religion, they were articulating a very real worry about the potential challenge posed by these modes of thought to their understanding of time. Their attacks on largely imagined enemies served only to underscore their fear of losing control of time and allowing the perceived gulf between present and future to widen. In many instances, it was time—and not Marxism or religion—which was the real worry.

Scientific time: the use and abuse of evolutionary theories

The fear of allowing excess hope in the future to overwhelm present-minded action was acute, but engagement with the future was nonetheless essential. This engagement often involved invoking 'science' in contrast to 'utopia', and Lagardelle, like Séailles, accentuated the welcome appearance of a '*passage from utopia to science*' within the socialist movement.[334] It was not always

[333] Jennings noted that Lagardelle was not wholly convinced by syndicalism until 1904, and that Pelloutier had started out as a Guesdist, see *Syndicalism in France*, pp. 91, 11; and on Sorel's engagement and subsequent disengagement with Marxism, see Jennings, *Georges Sorel*, pp. 37–82.

[334] Lagardelle, 'Les intellectuels devant le socialisme', *CQ*, 2nd ser., no. 4 (1900), p. 30. Lagardelle's emphasis. Leading anarchist Jean Grave would later concur with this: 'we are leaving behind the utopian projections to enter into the domain of science', see 'Une utopie', *Les Temps nouveau*, no. 25 (17 Jan. 1908), p. 5. The juxtaposition of utopia and science—both words which were deployed frequently, even insistently, on the left at this time—was not new, harking back as it did to Marxists' claims to be 'scientific' socialists in contrast to 'utopian' socialists.

clear, however, what this meant or whether it was an entirely positive phenomenon. This section explores how understandings of time and contemporary science interpenetrated to produce distinct ideas about the future and its relationship with the present. Evolutionary theory and geology had placed humanity on a greatly expanded timeline and, in the most optimistic scenarios, they also seemed to point the way to a holistic conceptualisation of time in which the connection between past, present, and future was manifest and privileged.

Science, in stark contrast to utopia, was synonymous with progress and it represented gradual but profound change—an assured route to the desired future.[335] Crucially, this was not progress in the sense promised by the distrusted moderate republicans of the Chamber, but improvement based on evidence.[336] 'Science is power', Séailles would remark in 1903.[337] Science's explanatory power was evinced in two of the articles which were cited above and which appeared in early issues of *PL* and *CQ*. Anatole France assured his readers of coming change by elaborating an analogy for social change based on geology, and a similar point could be made of Gabriel Colomb (though he used the history of early civilisation rather than science as such). In both cases, these authors used scientific study to illustrate that future change was inevitable, if slow in coming. Geology had blown open the distant past and the distant future by revealing that the earth was much older than previously thought, but rather than leaving mankind marooned in an endless landscape of time, this discovery was repurposed as a way of bolstering faith in future change. Science—or rather, particular interpretations and uses of it—appeared to provide the much-needed bridge that linked past, present, and future.

---

[335] For more on this idea, see John V. Pickstone's section on 'science, progress and the State' in his *Ways of Knowing: a new history of science, technology and medicine* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), pp. 50–3.
[336] On the left's ambivalent attitude towards the notion of progress, see Anne Rasmussen, 'La gauche et le progrès' in Becker and Candar (eds), *Histoire des gauches en France*, vol. 1, pp. 342–61.
[337] Séailles, 'Le premier mai', p. 396.

In his piece on socialism and agriculture, Augé-Laribé concurred with this, and he used the notion of evolution to demonstrate how political activists could detect future change. He argued:

> [t]here is only one way of knowing what we can hope for from the future: by considering mankind as an organism which evolves and studying the direction of its evolution.[338]

The influence of evolutionary theory is palpable but imprecise; this was common in appeals to this branch of science during the period. Evocations of evolutionary theory tended to reference a nebulous blend of Darwin's, Haeckel's, and Lamarck's ideas—and especially the latter two.[339] But, regardless of the precision of the science, comments such as these are revealing. In Augé-Laribé's analysis, the way in which the collective being of mankind was developing in the present provided clues for the future, and these clues could be used not only to discern what was to come but to try to shape and mould that change. This had significant implications for the conceptualisation of time. Most importantly, the future maintained an intimate connection with the present, and this rendered it more achievable and gave greater meaning to both present and future. It also suggested that the future was to some extent foreseeable, allowing preparations to be made for it and assuring that change would eventually come. Finally, it meant that the timeframe in which change might take place was vastly expanded—those who adopted these evolutionary ideas felt that they had gained time. In models such as Augé-Laribé's, there was no haste to produce change, but instead a virtually limitless future in which it could be brought about.

The notion of mankind as analogous to a living organism was a striking feature of Augé-Laribé's article. This, too, was common on the left, particularly where there was marked

---

[338] Augé-Laribé, 'Socialisme scientifique et agriculture', p. 459. Part of this quotation has provided the title for this chapter.

[339] On the reception of evolutionary theories in France, see Jean-Marc Bernardini, *Le darwinisme social en France (1859–1918). Fascination et rejet d'une idéologie* (Paris: CNRS éditions, 1997), pp. 215–75; Pietro Corsi and Paul J. Weindling, 'Darwinism in Germany, France and Italy' in David Kohn (ed.), *The Darwinian Heritage* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985), pp. 683–729. Corsi and Weindling stress Haeckel's popularity and Lamarck's ongoing influence, see ibid. 684, 701.

anarchist influence: it was present in the work of Pelloutier (general secretary of the Fédération des Bourses du Travail, FBT) as well as in that of CGT militants Émile Pouget and Émile Pataud.[340] The attraction of this idea for those on the left who flirted with anarchism but who were not willing to subscribe to its sometimes severe individualism was simple: it provided a metaphor in which the individual and the collective were not at odds but were instead harmonious and contained within one another. The significance of this intermingling of individual and collective for the notion of the future was that the two would go forward in tandem, avoiding a scenario in which they became out of step and developed at a different pace from one another, a fear implicit in many syndicalist and socialist writings.[341]

The evolutionary pace of change might at first seem to be inimical to the idea of revolution, as well as to the notion that any change was in the hands of the people—the gradualist vision outlined above might not appear to allow for either rupture or agency. However, the issue was not necessarily viewed in this light. In the mid-1890s, Pelloutier had described how, ideally, evolution would first 'prepare' for revolutions and then, in their aftermath, it would 'coordinate, regulate and develop the ideas and the customs and habits created by revolutions'.[342] He portrayed the workers' movement as being engaged in a

---

340 Pelloutier, 'Évolution et révolution', *La Question sociale* (Dec. 1894) in Julliard (ed.), *Fernand Pelloutier et les origines du syndicalisme d'action directe* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1971), pp. 387–92; Émile Pataud and Émile Pouget, *Comment nous ferons la Révolution* (Paris: Jules Tallandier, 1909). Pouget 'almost singlehandedly' produced France's best-selling anarchist paper, *Le Père Peinard* (see Richard D. Sonn, *Anarchism and Cultural Politics in Fin-de-Siècle France* [Lincoln, Nebr.: University of Nebraska Press, 1989], p. 16). It is reasonable to suggest that these authors were directly influenced by anarchist and geographer Élisée Reclus' well-known *L'évolution, la révolution et l'idéal anarchique* (Loveral: Éditions labor, 2006, 1st edn 1902). Reclus' well-known text abounded with references to society as an evolving organism and had been delivered as a speech in the early 1880s. Maurice Kahn, inspired by Belgian writer Maurice Maeterlinck's essay *La vie des abeilles*, wrote of how a beehive offered an example of a perfectly functioning republic, providing another example of how the natural world was seen to be full of metaphors which could be deployed by the left: see 'Maurice Maeterlinck', *PL*, vol. II (July–Dec. 1901), p. 174. The importance of anarchist influence on this generation more broadly has been discussed by Venita Datta, 'Passing fancy: the generation of 1890 and anarchism', *Modern and Contemporary France* 44 (1991), pp. 3–11.

341 See for example, la rédaction, 'Temps nouveaux', *Les Temps nouveaux*, no. 1 (4 May 1895), pp. 1–2, where the slow pace of institutional and social change was contrasted with the constant evolution of individuals.

342 Pelloutier, 'Évolution et révolution', p. 392. Again this echoed the analysis in Reclus, *L'évolution*, p. 19. Pelloutier's comments were repeated almost word-for-word by Yves Le Febvre in his article 'Propos révolutionnaires', *Les Temps nouveau*, no. 47 (19 March 1898), p. 1.

Darwinian 'struggle for life', stressing that it had to fight for change rather than wait for it; the notion of an ongoing battle enabled Pelloutier to avoid removing the proletariat's agency.[343] Alert to the fact that many left-wing pronouncements bore the inflection of evolutionary theory, we might also point to Lagardelle's demand for the proletariat to make 'efforts towards adaptation' as a further instance of the attempt to enmesh evolution and revolution while safeguarding the workers' ability to mould the future.[344] The same could be said of Péguy and Jaurès, both of whom invoked the idea of 'revolutionary evolution'.[345] Combining recently popularised scientific ideas with pre-existing notions of revolution, many on the left arrived at an understanding of time which saw both rupture and incremental change as part of the same forward-motion of society. In this way, evolutionary theory became a way of safeguarding the future while maintaining some element of control over it.

However, the 'cult' or even 'religion' of science was not always to be trusted, and Karl Kautsky offered a more robust view on the implications of evolutionary theory on left-wing conceptions of the future.[346] Kautsky was a Marxist of Czech-Austrian descent who was highly influential in socialist circles in Germany but who also frequently offered views on matters pertinent to the left in France.[347] Writing in *LMS*, he expressed discomfort at how quickly and how enthusiastically the masses had adopted Darwinian evolutionary theory.[348] The biologist's

---

343 The phrase 'struggle for life' appeared in Pelloutier's 'Lettre ouverte au citoyen Jules Guesde', *La Démocratie de l'Ouest* (5 Oct. 1892) in Julliard (ed.), *Fernand Pelloutier*, p. 312. It is striking that he included the phrase in English, and this alerts us to the fact that it was probably a reference to either Darwin or Herbert Spencer, who used the idea of a 'struggle for life' to develop his famous notion of 'survival of the fittest': see Spencer, *The Principles of Biology*, vol. 1 (London: Williams & Norgate, 1864), pp. 444–5. Spencer's work tended to be better known than Darwin's, especially on the continent; see Richard Olson, *Science and Scientism in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 2007), pp. 207–49 for Spencer's contribution to evolutionary theory.

344 Lagardelle, 'Le socialisme ouvrier', *LMS*, no. 142 (1 Nov. 1904), p. 1.

345 Péguy, 'De la raison', *CQ*, 3rd ser., no. 4 (1901), p. xv; Jaurès' section on 'évolution révolutionnaire', *Études socialistes*, pp. 35–121.

346 Anarchist Auguste Paria referred distrustfully to the 'cult' or 'religion' of science in 'La nouvelle idole', *Les Temps nouveaux*, no. 6 (10 June 1911), p. 11.

347 See for example his aforementioned article on 'Jaurès et Millerand', also in *LMS*. Kautsky also edited the *Neue Zeit*, which had as its subtitle 'review of scientific socialism'.

348 His observation about the enthusiasm of the masses for the biologist was truer of Germany than of France, but was nonetheless still applicable to France. On the reception of Darwin in Germany, see Alfred Kelly's *The Descent of Darwin: the popularization of Darwinism in Germany, 1860–1914* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North

ideas were 'quietist, conservative', minimising change and responding very narrowly to the needs of the bourgeoisie and their ideology; Sorel would later expand such critiques to denigrate the 'charlatan dogmas' of the middle classes.[349] It was no accident that Darwin was English, Kautsky pointed out sourly, since the ruling classes there had spent hundreds of years thwarting revolutionary pushes; Englishmen such as Darwin and Lyell could only imagine change in the most minimal terms possible. The Darwinian version of evolution supposedly 'demonstrated […] the fact that nature [didn't] progress in leaps'. Kautsky went on use the ideas of Hugo De Vries to refute this, arguing that rapid transformations in plants indicated that there was a need to consider rupture as well as gradual change when it came to discussing the development of species. Kautsky also cited the suddenness of childbirth—'the revolutionary act of birth'—as evidence for this.[350] It would be easy to point to these comments and argue that Kautsky, as a Marxist, was simply trying to justify his aim of rapid expropriation of the state. To a certain extent this was true (and Kautsky did argue explicitly in this article that sudden takeover of the government was the only option), but in fact his comments were only the most vociferous example of the ambivalence surrounding evolutionary theory.[351] We have already seen that Pelloutier, Péguy, and Jaurès felt the need to maintain some sense of agency and control over the future, and to inoculate their 'revolutionary' projects against becoming too 'evolutionary', holding these two forms of change in a delicate, if uncertain, balance. For Kautsky, even this was a step too far, and he felt that the very notion of a future which broke from the past was under threat.

Carolina Press, 1981), especially the chapter on 'Darwin, Marx, and the German workers', pp. 115–31; on Kautsky's attitude to Darwinism see ibid. 116–7.

349 Kautsky, 'Réformes sociales et révolution sociale', *LMS*, no. 104 (15 Sept. 1902), pp. 1633–7; Sorel, *Les illusions du progrès* (Paris: Slatkine, 1981, 1st edn 1908), p. 10. Jennings opined that *Les illusions* was also a denunciation of bourgeois 'quietism', see *Georges Sorel*, p. 124.

350 Kautsky, 'Réformes sociales et révolution sociale', pp. 1633–7. Geologist Lyell was mentioned explicitly in this article. De Vries was a plant physiologist who was one of the earliest scientists to develop the idea of genes; he believed that 'macromutations' constituted an important facet of evolution—in other words, the process was quicker than Darwin had supposed; see Ernst Mayr, 'Darwin's five theories of evolution' in Kohn (ed.), *Darwinian Heritage*, p. 763.

351 Kautsky, 'Réformes sociales et révolution sociale', p. 1638.

Scientific understanding presented both an opportunity and a potential threat to the power of the present and the future. On the one hand, theories of evolution or geology seemed to provide a way of linking past, present, and future, thereby endowing the movement of time with greater purpose and direction. Science—at least as it was perceived by the thinkers studied here—also contained a promise of improvement, of a present which could grow steadily into a better future. However, there were pressing questions about how much agency remained for a revolution to be brought about, and the model of a future which would arrive gradually and regardless of any actions taken severely limited the potential of the present as a moment of creation. The writers studied here were much less concerned by the accuracy of scientific claims than by their explanatory or political potential—most assertions about evolutionary theory or other branches of science proceeded by analogy and not through understanding. In short, these were abuses of science as much as they were uses.[352] Nevertheless, it is clear that there was a reciprocal relationship between emergent scientific notions and understandings of time—scientific theories presented challenges or possibilities for conceptions of the present and the future, and the use of these theories then went on to be calibrated accordingly.

Futurist fiction: the return of utopia?

At the same moment that it seemed that science was in the ascendency and the notion of utopia was coming to be spurned, a flurry of futurist fiction emerged—much of it produced by those involved in left-wing political circles.[353] Examples of the trend include Halévy's *Histoire de quatre*

---

[352] In the words of John Wyon Burrow, '[e]xtreme laissez-faire theorists, statists, nationalists, utilitarians, racialists, anti-humanitarians, even utopian believers in a future of universal peace and cooperation, found something apparently Darwinian to hand', see *The Crisis of Reason: European thought, 1848–1914* (New Haven, NY: Yale University Press, 2000), p. 93.

[353] The fiction looked at in this section could variously be termed utopian, dystopian, uchronian, or futurist. Following Paul K. Alkon, I have employed the latter both because it is the most neutral and because it is the term which best accommodates the range of works studied in this section (see *Origins of Futuristic Fiction* [Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 1987]). For a discussion of utopia and uchronia, see Koselleck, 'The

ans (1903), France's *Sur la pierre blanche* (1905), Eugène Fournière's *Chez nos petits fils* (1900), and Maurice Spronck's *L'an 330 de la République* (1894)—though Spronck, it should be noted, was active on the far right rather than the left. These works were part of a wider interest in imagining futures both inspiring and frightening, spearheaded by American Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward* (1888) and Englishman H. G. Wells' *The Time Machine* (1895), both of which were widely read in France.[354] The depiction of distant-future scenarios, particularly on the French left, had found something of an outlet in the domain of literature, though these works were not primarily literary endeavours.[355] Rather, their function was to provide a forum for concerns about the concept of the future and about the conceptualisation of time more broadly. The works by Halévy, France, and Fournière had appeared in *CQ*, *L'Humanité*, and *La Revue socialiste* respectively, indicating that the intended audiences were those who shared the authors' political convictions—these works, whose content could be far-fetched and even comical or baffling, consituted an attempt to partake in the ongoing conversation about time which was taking place across French radical political culture.

---

temporalisation of utopia' in his *The Practice of Conceptual History*, pp. 84–99; or Frédéric Rouvillois' introduction to Halévy's *Histoire de quatre ans, 1997–2001* (Paris: Kimé, 1997, 1st edn 1903), pp. i–xvii.

354 As Kern put it, '[t]he impulse to look ahead is universal, but the quantity of science fiction in this period and its success in the market place suggest that this generation was especially eager to do it', see *The Culture of Space and Time*, p. 98. Wells in particular was mentioned by French authors: see Halévy, 'Natalité et maternité', *PL*, vol. XVI (July–Dec. 1908), pp. 177–80; and France, *Sur la pierre blanche* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1905), p. 187. Bellamy was praised, for example, in *LMS*: see Lionel Landry, 'Chronique littéraire', *LMS*, no. 3 (15 Feb. 1899), p. 168. Kenneth M. Roemer cited the 'tremendous impact' of Bellamy's text across Europe and America, see 'Paradise transformed: varieties of nineteenth-century utopias' in Gregory Claeys (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 80.

355 There is a perennial debate among scholars as to whether futurist fiction can be fruitfully viewed as a specifically literary endeavour or whether it is better explained through other lenses, notably that of politics; I argue for the latter. Raymond Trousson (*Voyages aux pays de nulle parts: histoire littéraire de la pensée utopique* [Brussels: Éditions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 1975], p. 9) and Frederic Jameson (*Archaeologies of the Future: the desire called utopia and other science fictions* [London: Verso, 2005], p. xiii) insisted on the literary or formalist aspects of futurist or utopian works. Miriam Eliav-Feldon, on the other hand, claimed that '[u]topias as a rule have little literary value' (see *Realistic Utopias: the ideal imaginary societies of the Renaissance, 1516–1630* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982], p. 1), and Riikka Forsström proposed using Sébastien Mercier's *L'an 2440* as 'serious documentary evidence of the society in which it was produced' rather than focusing on the work as a piece of literature (see *Possible Worlds: the idea of happiness in the utopian vision of the Louis-Sébastien Mercier* [Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 2002], p. 21).

France and Fournière produced meandering stories which depicted future worlds where technological advances and the adoption of fairer ways of sharing work and produce result in a higher standard of living; working days are short, and outside pursuits (particularly creative endeavours) are encouraged.[356] A greater sense of equality between the sexes has been achieved, and the role of religion has diminished or become more diffuse.[357] Halévy presented a much more pessimistic view, setting his *Histoire* in a decadent future society where people have no need to work. Alcohol and drug addiction are endemic, leaving France's populace vulnerable to an epidemic which eradicates all but the most abstemious members of society. The surviving elite then has to build Europe anew. In terms of his political allegiance, Spronck differed significantly from the other authors mentioned here—he was a right-wing republican deputy who was involved with far-right leagues.[358] His *L'an 330* nonetheless contributed to the conversation about France's future, as he imagined a time in which scientific progress had brought huge benefits but had also made Europeans complacent about the need to defend themselves.[359] Spronck's work, a heavy-handed warning about the need for militarism, ended with a conflagration in which the continent was engulfed by invaders from North Africa and the east.

Like all dystopias, utopias, or uchronias, these texts were an interplay between present-day concerns and anxieties and projected future solutions to—or, indeed, aggravations of—those anxieties. In this sense, the ubiquitous notions of technological acceleration and the

---

[356] See Fournière, *Chez nos petits fils* (Paris: Bibliothèque Charpentier, 1900), pp. 96–8; France, *Sur la pierre blanche*, p. 266.

[357] Gender equality was a particularly marked feature of France's text; he stressed that marriage had been abolished and hinted at fluid gender boundaries, see ibid. 299–302. It is interesting that equality between men and women should have been a feature of these stories, as it was a concern which was often side-lined on the French left: see Wright, *Socialism and the Experience of Time*, p. 182. In Fournière's book, there are many popes and religion is a niche pursuit; the French pope occupies a room on the fifth floor of a non-descript building (*Chez nos petits fils*, p. 56–8). In France's world, diverse religions had developed (*Sur la pierre blanche*, p. 310).

[358] Spronck wrote for *L'Action française: revue bimensuelle*, and he was also involved with Déroulède's Ligue des Patriotes, sending his apologies to one of the league's meetings (which suggests that he was a regular and notable attendee), see AN, F 7 12451, police report of 2 Dec. 1904; and he was present at some of the LDP's Champigny rallies, see for example AN, F 7 12719, police report of 4 Dec. 1909.

[359] See Spronck, *L'an 330 de la République (XXII^e siècle de l'ère chrétienne)* (Paris: Léon Chailly, 1894), p. 122.

increasing speed of society provided fertile ground for discussion in futurist fiction.[360] In all four of these works, mechanisation and advances in chemistry were seen to produce a radically different standard of living. France and Fournière envisaged worlds in which people had adapted well and technology had not overwhelmed them; rather, they had harnessed mechanisation and it had liberated them, allowing them to work for only six hours a day and to pursue personal projects or devote their time to their families and friends.[361] There was a very clear link here to the ongoing push for the eight-hour working day, which was a constant concern in workers' movements at the beginning of the twentieth century.[362] On two levels, change had been harnessed to produce positive results, and people had mastered time. At the macro level, mankind remained in step with acceleration and was even able to mould it, meaning that the future was a welcome phenomenon. At a micro level, healthy daily rhythms were established and people's personal present time remained within their control.

It is not difficult, however, to sense the dystopian elements lurking within the apparent utopias.[363] In their stories, Fournière, France, and Halévy all described how food had been or would very soon be replaced with pills after advances in chemistry had succeeded in creating nutritious but highly compact synthetic foodstuffs. One of France's characters even casually mentions that scientists are working on the removal of the large intestine in order to make digestion of these food replacements more direct.[364] In *Sur la pierre blanche* and *Chez nos petits fils*, the protagonists (both of whom have been transported from the early twentieth century) are

---

[360] See Kern's chapter on 'speed', *The Culture of Space and Time*, pp. 109–30.

[361] In his text, Spronck also mentioned that the eight-hour day had been achieved, see *L'an 330*, p. 49.

[362] The eight-hour day was a focus of the CGT's congress in 1904, see Institut français d'Histoire sociale, 2A 30, *Compte rendu du VIIIe congrès de la Confédération* (12–20 Sept. 1904). The CGT posters gathered by police were often to do with campaigns for shorter working hours, see for example APP, BA 1601, poster of the 'Comité d'action et d'entente des huit heures dans la Métallurgie' (April 1906); or an amazingly well preserved colour poster from 1912 showing how long working hours harmed family life, see APP, BA 1604 (July 1912).

[363] Claeys noted how dystopian elements were often present in utopias, see *Dystopia: a natural history* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), p. 7; and Roemer noted how the industrial revolution had at once presented a 'dystopian challenge' and a 'utopian possibility', see 'Paradise transformed', p. 82.

[364] France, *Sur la pierre blanche*, p. 270. There is an interesting instance of Lamarckian influence here, as France's character claims that removal of the large intestine in one generation would soon mean that the entire population was without the organ—this was in keeping with the Lamarckian theory of inherited traits.

deeply shocked and the discovery prompts them to reflect that they could never live in such a world.[365] This subtly suggests an anxiety about the pace of change overwhelming mankind and the future running out of control—there was only so much acceleration that people could cope with. Halévy's *Histoire* also exhibited this concern, though he was more openly negative about the possibilities for getting time under control. In his futurist novel, cheap and easy production of a nutritious substance known as 'albumine' has almost entirely removed the need for work. But instead of a limitless leisure time used for creative pursuits, the situation creates a formless and meaningless plane of time. Alcohol and morphine are consumed in copious quantities in an attempt to fill the workless time, and their ravages are present everywhere. In the first section of *Histoire*, one of the characters pointedly remarks that work would resolve 'all social ills'.[366] In France's and Fournière's fictions, people have enough free time to pursue their interests—but, crucially, they do not have too much free time. In Halévy's vision, though, people are out of step with the pace of change; their personal, quotidian sense of the present has become meaningless while the future brings uncertainty at best or disaster at worst. At both the macro and the micro levels, time is out of control.

Though all of these texts contained vivid anxieties about what the future might bring and how quickly time might advance, the route for actually getting to the projected future was not always so clearly outlined. France and Fournière both deployed the narrative shortcut of their protagonists being transported forwards in time while sleeping.[367] The elision of the period of the near future—so important on many sections of the left as the time for action and change—is telling. We should, of course, allow for the idea that these authors permitted themselves the

---

365 Ibid. 271; Fournière, *Chez nos petits fils*, p. 16–7.

366 Halévy, *Histoire de quatre ans*, pp. 51–2.

367 This may have been a nod to Sébastien Mercier's famous uchronian tale, *L'an 2440, rêve s'il en fut jamais* (1770), in which the protagonist falls asleep and wakes up in 2440. France mentioned Mercier explicitly (*Sur la pierre blanche*, p. 185) so we know that he was familiar with the book. Mercier's book has often been cited as the moment at which utopia (perfect place) became uchronia (perfect time): see Koselleck, 'The temporalisation of utopia'; or Hinrich Hudde, 'L'influence de Mercier sur l'évolution du roman d'anticipation' in Hudde and Peter Kuon (eds), *De l'utopie à l'uchronie: formes, significations, fonctions* (Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag, 1988), pp. 109–21.

use of this slightly cheap narrative device in order to be able to leap forwards in time and focus their depictions on the distant future. But, even so, the complete evaporation of the passage of time reveals an inability to portray a positive future which emerges from the present and which is linked to it. As Kern put it, many on the left 'had a vision of the future but no concept of it, no explicit analysis of its motivating power independent of its content'.[368] In other words, if a conception of the future relied too heavily on its content, it would lack meaning. By contrast, in Halévy's and Spronck's dystopian works, the movement from present to future is considered more closely: the eventual downfall of Europe is seen to emerge from problems that the authors took to be present in embryonic form in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (namely, alcoholism and pacifism).[369] This would indicate that there was a difficulty with wedding a positive vision of the future to the present in a convincing way.

The problem of depicting the future as a dynamic concept was also present in other themes which were broached in these texts. All four of these works end with the uniting of the European nations, which was a feature common in other futurist works of the period.[370] There is a sense that transnational unity marks a point of arrival, the moment at which the future definitively begins and is distinct from the present. For Spronck, this was a dangerous threat as it meant the disbanding of national armies, while for the other three authors it was regarded as a more positive step. In all cases, however, this is the point at which the future begins to seem rather static—there is little beyond the uniting of nations, little sense of development or change going forward from that event, whether it was conceived of as disastrous or beneficial.[371] Once the future had arrived, it seemed, change was halted. A set of united European nations would

---

368 Kern, *The Culture of Space and Time*, p. 103.

369 Halévy's and Spronck's works can be squarely situated in an emerging dystopian tradition which 'assert[ed] that retrogression as well as progression might define modernity', see Claeys, *Dystopia*, p. 356. This, as we will see in Part III, was a sense which was prominent on sections of the far right.

370 See Georges Duveau, *Sociologie de l'utopie et autres "essais"* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1961), pp. 109–86.

371 Hudde also noted that futurist works could paint a picture of a rather 'static' future, see 'L'influence de Mercier', p. 120.

enter a neutral, international plane of time which seemed to forestall the need to ask further questions about acceleration and change. Again, this had a narrative function, and it could simply be a case of the authors employing the idea as a temporal bookend to mark the future-most point of their works. However, there is a more general sense in which they were grappling with the difficulties of producing a vision of the future which went beyond a slightly flimsy content-based account and which captured the flow of time and the conceptual possibilities of the future in all their dynamism.

Reaction to the texts themselves was somewhat muted and was generally subsumed in wider discussion of whether detailed imaginings of glorious socialist futures or accounts of gone-awry acceleration were to be celebrated or derided. Guieysse provided an especially vehement denunciation of the former, writing an article entitled 'Contre les utopies' in response to a piece in his review which had imagined a reformed relationship between people and their work. Where, the *PL* editor asked irritably, is the utopia that has come into being? 'Utopians who talk about the future are the people who are holding us back', he declared.[372] A further article soon appeared, condemning utopias in similar terms to those used by Guieysse.[373] In descriptions such these, 'utopia' (or simply 'dream') was deployed as shorthand for a future which was cut off from the present, inaccessible and remote. The very idea of a utopia, according to Guieysse, could be detrimental to society's ability to realise its ideal future. Some features of France's and Fournière's works in particular would seem to substantiate this first point, notably the lack of attention given to how present might become future.

Benoist-Hannapier, author of the offending article at which Guieysse was taking aim, defended himself against these accusations a few weeks later, contending that all of mankind's great achievements (sailing around the world and banning slavery were two of the examples he

---

372 Guieysse, 'Contre les utopies', *PL*, vol. XIII (Jan.–June 1907), pp. 580–2. For the article which prompted Guieysse' outburst, see L. Benoist-Hannapier, 'Travail manuel et travail intellectuel', *PL*, vol. XIII (Jan.–June 1907), pp. 351–4.

373 See Max Fuchs, 'Travail manuel…', *PL*, vol. XIII (Jan.–June 1907), pp. 475–9.

cited) had started as far-off dreams—what was 'utopia today' could become 'reality tomorrow'.[374] This is comparable to France's earlier call for the future to be envisaged before it could be created: 'we are allowed to build utopias'.[375] Benoist-Hannapier concluded that there was a need to imagine the future if it was to be changed at all.[376] France's text had been praised in similar terms in an article in 1906: Jean Blum, comparing *Sur la pierre blanche* to William Morris' utopian work *News from Nowhere* (1890), wrote that France's work gave him 'a foretaste' of and a yearning for the future.[377] In these accounts, the content of utopias could be motivating and could produce a push towards a desired future—though they still appeared as a mirage, far-off and unreal.

In these futurist fictions, a widespread contemporary propensity for writing fiction about mankind's destiny met specific political anxieties about the flow of time, the temporal category of the future, and its connection with the present. This curious encounter produced, on the one hand, dystopian texts in which the present and the future were profoundly interconnected and in which the latter was bleak in the extreme (Halévy and Spronck); and, on the other, works in which a predominantly bright future seemed to be cut off from the present (France and Fournière). It is telling that these authors turned to fiction in order to imagine distant futures. The persistent criticism of any mode of thought which was taken to overemphasise the future meant that such endeavours were pushed into the domain of literature, where there was greater liberty to fantasise and to be playful. It is clear, though, that—even with the freedom afforded by the futurist genre—Halévy, Spronck, Fournière, and France were able to provide few answers to the problem of mastering the future and to that of understanding the flow of time more holistically. This in itself is no surprise, but the larger concern which they serve to highlight is the preoccupation—so typical of French political

374 Benoist-Hannapier, 'À propos des utopies', *PL*, vol. XIII (Jan.–June 1907), p. 635.
375 France, 'Histoire contemporaine: Clopinel', p. 14.
376 Benoist-Hannapier, 'À propos des utopies', p. 636.
377 Jean Blum, 'Lectures deux utopies', *PL*, vol. XI (Jan.–June 1906), p. 307.

culture at this time—with the disjuncture between present and future and the difficulty of bridging (other than through the literary tool of time-travel) the two.

Chapter 5

L'idéal n'est pas atteint!

The time of the worker

As we have seen across much of the previous two chapters, syndicalists were embedded in the ongoing conversation about time on the left, and they were particularly concerned with the relationship between the present and the future. These 'practical revolutionaries', as Mitchell called them, tended to seek solutions to the problems of time in the rigorous development of a set of practices which could lead to social change.[378] One of the cornerstones of the syndicalist movement was its emphasis on the separation of the proletariat from other sections of society, and there was a marked temporal element to this aspect of their doctrine and their approach. The proletariat's isolation was social as well as political, deliberate as well as being enforced—and it meant that, in the eyes of syndicalist activists, only the working classes themselves could realise their liberation and build a changed world. The notion that the proletariat developed at a different pace and inhabited a distinct plane of time was fundamental to this perceived distinctiveness.

The sheer speed of technological and economic changes and the upheaval these occasioned for workers meant that they were developing at a faster pace than other sections of society. This was clear for all to see, and it was one of the things which gave workers' movements such impetus at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the

---

[378] Mitchell, *The Practical Revolutionaries*. Many commentators have observed that syndicalism lacked an ideology—the doctrine was, in fact, the ideology, see Julliard, *Autonomie ouvrière*, pp. 15, 44. This was celebrated by syndicalists themselves, see Griffuelhes, *L'action syndicaliste* (Paris: Marcel Rivière, 1908), p. 3.

twentieth.[379] In a debate with revolutionary Griffuelhes published in *LMS*, reformist Auguste Keufer pointed out the significance of the fact that the worker was in a period of profound and rapid change as well as great uncertainty. The transformations of capitalism had thrown this class into a maelstrom of acceleration and they were subject to different temporal forces from the rest of society. Keufer intimated that the important task now was to move 'progressively' into the 'ideal' future, banishing thoughts of returning to the past and trying instead to gain some measure of control over the frantic speed of transformation.[380] Keufer understood that the challenge of the workers' movement in the early twentieth century was one not simply of shaping what would happen in the future but controlling how quickly that future was brought about. Significantly, other sections of society were absent from this vision of the present and the future as they were irrelevant, operating on a different plane of time.

In Keufer's description, the workers' experience of time was largely forced upon them, but other sections of the syndicalist movement were more surefooted in their claims that the proletariat were in control of their own landscape of time. In 1899, Lagardelle had written to Italian Marxist Antonio Labriola in Rome to ask whether he would offer a view on the debates on revisionism within the German SPD, and particularly on Bernstein's recent book, *The Prerequisites for Socialism and the Tasks of Social Democracy*. In an irritable reply, published in *LMS* in May of that year, Labriola declared curtly that he could not see the point of discussing Bernstein's book in a French review as Marxism had hardly penetrated the workers' movement there and the debate was therefore irrelevant.[381] But Labriola did not end his article there: he went on to develop a much broader reflection on socialism and the relationship between

---

379 This was acknowledged in Peter N. Stearns, *Lives of Labour: work in a maturing industrial society* (London: Croom Helm, 1975), see chapter on 'a frenzied pace', pp. 193–228.

380 Auguste Keufer, 'Le syndicalisme réformiste', *LMS*, no. 146 (1 Jan. 1905), pp. 18, 22.

381 The extent to which Marxism had penetrated French political culture and the nature of its influence is a debate which still preoccupies scholars. See Willard, *Les Guesdistes*, pp. 11–26; and Julia C. Nicholls, who recently made a nuanced contribution to the discussion on the arrival of Marx and Marxism in France in the 1870s and early 1880s, see 'French Revolutionary Thought after the Paris Commune, 1871–85', Ph.D. thesis, Queen Mary University of London, 2015, pp. 107–49.

intellectuals and the working classes. He pointed out that 'ardent hopes, very keen and hasty' and full of overly precise details for a future society, were beginning to encounter complicated economic realities. He went on:

> And those who cannot bring their own *psychological time* (that is to say, their patience and their spirit of observation) in unison with the rhythms of the *time of things* simply stop or become derailed. Only the *proletariat* can rely on indefinite time, and only their numbers increase indefinitely.[382]

Labriola was describing how the revolutionary timeframe associated with a sudden and transformative upheaval was no longer a suitable model, as we saw in Chapter 3. According to him, the precipitous theoreticians who propagated this upheaval needed to bring their ideas of how change could unfold into line with present-day facts. The final line quoted above indicated where he, in common with most other syndicalists, thought the emphasis needed to be placed—on the working classes themselves. Time was on the proletariat's side, and only by aligning themselves with the proletariat could activists and writers be in tune with the 'time of things'. But the repetition of the word 'indefinite' alerts us to the idea that any change might be located in the distant future, and Labriola's argument is ambiguous in that there is a clear indication that hastening a revolution into being was neither possible nor undesirable and, at once, a marked sense of frustration that the time of the proletariat could not be accelerated. What is clear, though, is that Labriola was making a case for accepting that social and political change would occur in an altogether more protracted and less predictable timeframe than had previously been believed, and that this timeframe was in the hands of the workers themselves. These two features were to become a defining characteristic of the syndicalists' conceptualisation of time around 1900.

Lagardelle was more insistent in his assertions about the pre-eminence of the proletariat and its timeframe. In his piece on intellectuals and socialism in 1901, the *LMS* editor

---

[382] Antonio Labriola, 'La théorie et la tactique des socialistes d'après Bernstein', *LMS*, no. 8 (1 May 1899), p. 458. Labriola's emphasis.

emphasised that the development of the proletariat was synonymous with the emergence of a new society, and within the working classes a new order was being built. The proletariat 'carrie[d] the socialist movement', 'the mounting force of tomorrow', and its future was intimately bound up with economic progress. '[T]here is no other class that is in step with historical development', he declared. This idea, coupled with that of the proletariat as the 'culmination' [*aboutissant*] of history, was derived from Marx, and in this regard Lagardelle's point was a conventional one.[383] Berth similarly argued that the proletariat represented the forces of a new world yet to come, also deploying simplified Marxist theory in so doing. He attached temporal values to different sections of society to explicate the kind of development he envisaged: the pre-capitalist classes, attached to Catholicism and reactionary in character, were the past; the capitalist classes, wedded to 1789 and currently in power, were the present; and the proletariat, which represented the future.[384]

Lagardelle, Berth, and Labriola were not just seeking to assert the primacy and the autonomy of the proletariat in bringing about revolution, and nor were they simply chest-beating in order to assert their stridency about socialism's future victory—their arguments were subtler than that. The French workers had long been a politically isolated class, formed by violent clashes with the state, and syndicalism existed in part to take that marginalisation and render it a positive characteristic, transforming 'exclusion to secession'.[385] Thinkers such as Lagardelle, Berth, and Labriola were putting forward the idea that their autonomy and their exclusion had a temporal element, consisting of a particular timeframe that was not open to outside influence but which would soon become dominant. This raised the question of how intellectuals, whose status in workers' movements was disputed and uncertain, could access the

---

383 Lagardelle, 'Les intellectuels devant le socialisme', pp. 117, 121, 118. Here Lagardelle updated Marx, stating (somewhat confusingly) that the proletariat was not just the end of history but its future, too.

384 Berth, 'La politique anticléricale et le socialisme', *CQ*, 4th ser., no. 11 (1903), p. 9.

385 Julliard, *Autonomie ouvrière: études sur le syndicalisme d'action directe* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1988), p. 24; Jennings, *Syndicalism in France*, p. 5. Gildea underscored how 'conflict with the State provoked the working classes to develop a political culture which defined their identity', see *The Past in French History*, p. 260.

nascent future that the working classes carried within them and help usher it into being.[386] Waiting for the future to descend—that stereotype scornfully applied to Marxists and others—was no longer acceptable, but present action was not without its issues. It seemed that the only thing that syndicalists could be assured of was that the proletariat's time was its own and that recognition of that was capital.

The distinctness of the proletarian plane of time was not only emphasised with reference to the present and the future: Pelloutier, in his indefatigable efforts to cultivate working class culture and consciousness in the Bourses du Travail, had been attempting since the mid-1890s to point the way to a past that would also belong to the workers.[387] In his *Histoire des Bourses du Travail*, the FBT leader argued that there was a need for workers' museums. As the statistics describing proletarian life mounted up, Pelloutier explained, they seemed to mean less and less, becoming little more than reassertions of the present state of affairs. He went on:

> We need something else. We need to offer people the opportunity to observe social phenomena and allow them extract meaning from them for themselves. What better way to do this than to put before them the very substance of social science: products and their history?

Pelloutier described how each Bourse would ideally have a museum with exhibits which were relevant to the region and its predominant trades, allowing workers to gain a greater depth of understanding regarding the things they used day-to-day—textiles, for instance.[388] In this sense, they would be an educational celebration of working lives, contributing to a tradition which

---

386 This issue was expounded by Lagardelle, see 'Les intellectuels', pp. 117–22. A militant like Griffuelhes embodied this problematic issue: see Vandervort, *Victor Griffuelhes and French Syndicalism*, p. 3, who described how Griffuelhes' poor background made him scornful towards intellectual syndicalists and socialists. And, as noted in Part I, the failure of the UPs illustrated to a large extent the difficulty of bringing together intellectuals and workers in any meaningful and long-term way.

387 From the moment that Pelloutier's signature first appeared in the correspondence of the FBT, there was a flurry of activity—hundreds of letters were sent welcoming new sections to the Bourses and enthusiastically recommending that 'everywhere' open a Bourse; see for example IFHS, Série 2A, correspondence vol. 1, letter from Pelloutier to Secretary of the Bourse of Toulon (1 April 1895), pp. 400–1. An alarmed police report from the same year remarked how Pelloutier seemed to 'appear everywhere', see APP, BA 1216 (12 Jan. 1895).

388 Pelloutier, *Histoire des Bourses du Travail*, ed. Victor Dave (Paris: Alfred Costes, 1921), pp. 182–3.

was proper to the workers.[389] Museums would provide a past of which workers could be proud and, at once, a way of understanding their present situation. In an article in 1898, Pelloutier asked what the French workers lacked in order to change their living and working conditions for the better. The answer came, 'what they lack is *the science of their misery*'.[390] They needed, in other words, to grasp this before they could move on to future emancipation.[391] The idea of workers' museums was predicated on a tripartite understanding of time which involved celebration of the past, recognition of present suffering, and preparation for the future.[392]

There was limited take-up for Pelloutier's idea, but the proposal is noteworthy nonetheless.[393] It enables us to unpick at least partly the idea of an innate paradox in the workers' movement, which was outlined by Jennings: 'at one and the same time, it was committed to both the eradication of the condition of the proletariat and its elevation […] into an exemplary status'.[394] For Pelloutier, elevating the proletariat was an endeavour which focused on the past as much as it did on the present or the future; eradicating its misery, on the other hand, was a task which belonged firmly to the future. Pelloutier's efforts suggest that there was a sense in which the proletariat had to have both a past and a deep understanding of its particular present before it could have any sort of future.

The idea of a past, present, and future which belonged to the workers was a crucial facet of syndicalist attempts to create an exclusively proletarian world within the pre-existing bourgeois capitalist order. There was a 'future economic organism [which would be] prepared

---

[389] Education was fundamental to Pelloutier's endeavour to get workers to free themselves, and the matra 'educate to revolt' appeared throughout his work. See for example Pelloutier, 'L'action populaire, ses raisons, ses ressources', *L'Ouvrier des deux mondes* (May 1898) in Julliard (ed.), *Fernand Pelloutier*, pp. 335–41.

[390] Pelloutier, 'L'enseignement social: le Musée du travail', *L'Ouvrier des deux mondes* (April 1898) in ibid. 497. My emphasis.

[391] Julliard also pointed out that Pelloutier saw the *malheur ouvrier* as a *malheur historique* which could only be alleviated by deep understanding of the past (see ibid. 169).

[392] The notion of preparation was key in the syndicalist movement; see Commission des grèves et de la grève générale, *Grève générale réformiste et grève générale révolutionnaire*, p. 10.

[393] Bourses du Travail did not have museums, but they sometimes organised historical exhibitions: see Peter Schöttler, *Naissance des Bourses du Travail*, tr. Peter Schöttler and Jean-Pierre Lefebvre (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1985), pp. 151–2.

[394] Jennings, *Syndicalism in France*, p. 10.

within present society', consisting of a system of *syndicats* and Bourses du Travail, all linked to one another via the CGT and the FBT.[395] This in turn was bound up with the attempt to catalogue workers' lives, which was undertaken very seriously by syndicalist activists and which would become increasingly important as Pierre Monatte's detailed review *La Vie ouvrière* gained prominence in the 1910s (as its title suggests, the publication was highly attentive to the lives of workers).[396] Knowledge of the conditions in which people lived provided enlightenment about the present day and material to be preserved for posterity—it was the future of the past.

Given the rigorous emphasis of the separateness of the working classes, it was natural that they should also operate on their own distinct plane of time. Syndicalists such as Pelloutier, Berth, Lagardelle, Labriola, and Keufer took seriously their mission to safeguard and nurture that plane of time, putting it at the heart of their rationale for action. It was only within such a framework that the all-important notion of the general strike could be conceived, since this relied on the complete autonomy of the proletariat and their control over present and future.

Dual action

We have seen that many on the left felt that a gulf had opened up between present and future, and the need to bridge that gulf was pressing and urgent; it was in the syndicalist movement that the most concerted practical attempts to resolve this dilemma emerged. The mission to bring together present and future resulted in a 'twofold purpose' which guided the movement, even providing a point of concordance between reformists and revolutionaries—factions who

---

395 Pelloutier, 'L'action populaire', p. 339; Pelloutier, *Les syndicats en France* (Paris: Librairie ouvrière, 1897), p. 31. This idea was at the core of how Pelloutier and other syndicalists conceived of revolution, and Schöttler cited how important the Bourses were to the wider movement, see *Nassaince des Bourses*, p. 12.

396 Just one example of this was a questionnaire sent to workers by the FBT to gather information about employment history, hours worked, housing, numbers of foreigners and their occupation in particular areas, strikes and their outcome; see IFHS, Série 2A, box 3 (undated). Jennings also cited Pelloutier's 'commitment to a meticulous empirical investigation of the conditions of working class life and work', see *Syndicalism in France*, p. 19.

otherwise vehemently disagreed with one another.[397] This section establishes the centrality of that mission for syndicalism, and points out the convergence it provided between Pouget and Griffuelhes on the one hand and Keufer and his associates on the other.

In 1902, Jean Pénat (a writer for CGT organ *La Voix du peuple*) spoke optimistically of how syndicalism was entering a new era in which the 'dual aspects' of the movement—'the present, the future'—could be 'synthesis[ed]'. '[S]ectarians' either 'sacrific[ed] the future and want[ed] to enclose themselves in the present', or 'scorn[ed] contingencies' and chose to 'live in a dream' instead (Pénat was, of course, referring to reformists and revolutionaries respectively). In order to keep from 'withering' and 'atrophying', the syndicalist movement 'had to maintain a good and constant equilibrium', 'occupy[ing] themselves equally with present and future'.[398] This was formalised in the famous Charter of Amiens in 1906; both this document and this year have often been taken to represent syndicalism's 'high-water mark', and the Charter emphasised syndicalism's role to undertake two-pronged action, changing the present and preparing for the future.[399] It referred to a 'dual task, daily and future'.[400] But time did not simply provide a way of talking about syndicalist aims and ideals: it dictated actions, too. The 438,000 working days lost through striking in 1906, for instance, were not the result of random waves of strikes but were seen as a fundamental part of a wider action involving a 'daily practice' which would become increasingly serious and significant—until they resulted in revolution.[401] The move to bring together present and future while avoiding overreliance on either category had been made possible by the syndicalist emphasis on small strikes with well-defined aims which would one day lead to a general strike.

---

397 F. F. Ridley strongly emphasised the importance of both revolution and reform, see *Revolutionary Syndicalism in France: the direct action of its time* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), p. 83.

398 Jean Pénat, 'Assises ouvrières', *La Voix du peuple*, no. 93 (31 Aug. 1902), p. 1.

399 Jennings, *Georges Sorel*, p. 117. Juillard also emphasised the importance of 1906 as a high point for the movement, see *Autonomie ouvrière*, pp. 63, 201.

400 See the Charter itself in IFHS, 2A 31, *XV^e congrès national corporatif (IX^e de la Confédération)* (8–16 Oct. 1906), pp. 170–1.

401 Griffuelhes, *L'action syndicaliste*, p. 26. The figure for the strikes is taken from Julliard, *Autonomie ouvrière*, p. 63; most of these strikes were for an eight-hour day.

The CGT had been enamoured with the idea of the general strike ever since its formation in 1895, and in 1903 its Commission des grèves et de la grève générale produced a report which suggested the reasons for this.[402] A general strike would constitute a revolution, but it would not be like the political revolutions of yesteryear, the Commission insisted; it was a far more authentic and effective way of gaining liberation from exploitation. All strikes constituted a form of action that came directly from the working classes rather than being dictated from above, and the Commission maintained that this would be true of a general strike, too—their report was therefore in keeping with the idea that the proletariat operated within its own timeframe. The Commission posited that a pattern of increasingly serious strikes would lead to a general strike, which would be revolutionary and transformative, the end of the old world and the dawning of the new.[403] Syndicalists such as Pouget seized on strikes in Montceau-les-Mines (in central France), Marseilles, and other places to illustrate how they were mere precursors to widespread insurrection.[404] This tactic was intended to foster a particular relationship between present and future: each piecemeal strike in the present was a glimpse of the future, injecting purpose and possibility into the syndicalist mission and signalling that time was in the control of the working classes.

Pouget developed the idea that the movement should build towards holding an all-out general strike on 1 May (with the year flexible, but often cited as 1906), a tactic intended to bring the future and the present closer together. 1 May was a date with a long history as the *fête de travail*, and in 1891 it had been rendered more poignant by the police firing on and killing nine protesters at Fourmies, in the north-east of France. The event's heightened emotional

---

402 The principle of the general strike had been endorsed at a congress in Nantes in 1894, the year before the CGT's first congress: see Jennings, *Syndicalism in France*, p. 6.

403 Commission des grèves et de la grève générale, *Grève générale réformiste et grève générale révolutionnaire*, pp. 16–7.

404 See, for example, articles by Émile Pouget: 'La grande poussée', *La Voix du peuple*, no. 12 (17 Feb. 1901), p. 1; and 'Le Midi bouge!', *La Voix du peuple*, no. 17 (24 March 1901), p. 1.

appeal and its grisly significance were not lost on Pouget and the rest of the CGT.[405] In an edition of *La Voix du peuple* illustrated by renowned printmaker and painter Théophile Steinlen, an anonymous article proposed to imbue 1 May with its 'revolutionary allure' once more by making it the day of strikes, and—one day soon—of the general strike. Accordingly, Steinlen's drawings depicted seething crowds holding banners aloft.[406] A general strike needed a concrete aim, which would initially be the obtaining of the eight-hour working day—a long-cherished goal in the French workers' movement and a focus of the 1904 Bourges congress. The ultimate goal of emancipating the workers would be the result of a colossal strike emerging from a strike with more restricted aims, with the immediate aim feeding into the longer-term goal.[407] Having suggested the date of 1906, Pouget wanted to make sure that workers and activists did not simply wait until then, and that the short-term focus on the eight-hour day functioned as a stepping stone to more drastic change.[408] In this way, the future was brought into the present and was depicted as being within reach, meaning that every mention of a concrete present action immediately sparked a connection to the more significant future event.

This particular way of combining present and future did not just apply to the event of the general strike, however—it points towards a larger point of confluence between reformists and revolutionaries. In an article in 1905, revolutionary Griffuelhes and reformist Keufer juxtaposed their two visions of syndicalism. Griffuelhes set out how revolution would be created, day by day and piece by piece, until it emerged as a 'conflagration', while Keufer argued

---

405 Government violence against workers was a constant preoccupation during this period—along with the eight-hour day it was the most common theme of the CGT's posters at this time, see for example APP, BA 1602 poster on 'gouvernement d'assassins' (1908).

406 Unsigned, 'Le Premier mai: ce qu'il a été!—ce qu'il peut être', *La Voix du peuple*, no. 23 (1 May 1901), pp. 3–4. It seems reasonable to suggest that Pouget would have penned this article, although it is not in his usually pugnacious style. For more on the illustrations included in *La Voix du Peuple*, see Michel Pigenet and Robert Jean-Louis, 'Travailleurs, syndiqués et syndicats dans les dessins de *La Voix du Peuple* (1900–14)', *Sociétés & Représentations* 10 (2000), pp. 309–22.

407 Louis Bosquet had also previously insisted that longer term goals would not be to the detriment of immediate improvements like the eight-hour day: see 'La réduction de la journée de travail', *LMS*, no. 8 (1 May 1899), pp. 459–67.

408 Pouget, 'La conquête de la journée de huit heures', pp. 357–80.

that continuous resistance to abuses and progressive improvement to working conditions were the route to profound change.[409] Their ideas about the final moment of revolution diverged in terms of their suddenness and their violence, but their conceptions of the present and, to an extent, the future were very similar. Daily work was needed for social improvements: in other words, greater care must be taken over the present—a present which was, furthermore, connected to the future by a series of incremental steps. The reformist vision of strikes could equally involve a series of present actions which brought to mind future change; the only difference is that this future change would not come in the form of a violent upheaval. As Jennings pointed out, Keufer and other reformists 'were locked in a bitter and often acrimonious struggle' with Griffuelhes and the revolutionary leaders of the CGT—but on the issue of time they could exhibit quite striking similarities.[410] Syndicalists themselves sometimes acknowledged such points of commonality: this was the case at the 1904 Bourges Congress as well as in the CGT's report on the general strike, which stressed that there was no inherent contradiction between the reformist and the revolutionary general strike.[411] This demonstrates quite how broad the consensus regarding the present was on the left in the very early years of the twentieth century. In particular, there was widespread agreement that there needed to be greater focus on the present and that it was the starting point for any change.

However, this agreement broke down easily when more specific questions were raised about what precise balance between present and future was appropriate. We should be careful not to overstate the amount of unity in the syndicalist movement in this regard. Police reports and congress proceedings attest to a stormy and often vitriolic atmosphere which was

---

409 Victor Griffuelhes, 'Le syndicalisme révolutionnaire' and Auguste Keufer, 'Le syndicalisme réformiste', *LMS*, no. 146 (1 Jan. 1905), pp. 17, 22; these two sections together formed a lengthy article entitled 'Les deux conceptions du syndicalisme', pp. 1–41.

410 Jennings, *Syndicalism in France*, p. 115.

411 See IFHS, 2A 30, *XIV^e congrès national corporatif (VIII^e de la Confédération)* (12–20 Sept. 1904), pp. iii–iv; Commission des grèves et de la grève générale, *Grève générale réformiste et grève générale révolutionnaire*, p. 8.

detrimental to the movement's ability to achieve its aims.[412] More often than not, one is left with the impression that the revolutionary arm of the movement wanted to absorb the reformist branch by claiming that its proposals and programme could encompass both modes of change; the reformist branch resisted this vehemently. While their respective approaches to time and change demonstrated marked similarities and allowed them to develop programmes which were not entirely at odds with one another, this was not in the end enough to overcome the deep divisions between reformists and revolutionaries.

As we saw in Chapter 3, the need to bind present and future to one another firmly was at the crux of a broader set of concerns and a consensus on the left. Syndicalists placed their desire to bring these two temporal categories together at the heart of their programme. This was manifest in how they described their aims—but the more interesting point to be made here is that this particular conception of time dictated their entire the mission, the key to which, for the revolutionaries, was the general strike.

A general strike: the future in the present

We have seen, then, that the idea of the general strike allowed the future to encroach on the present, dragging it forwards so that change could be brought about. It also allowed syndicalists to overcome the problems with certain visions of the future that had been identified in left-wing circles. This section explores in greater detail the conceptions of time that the general strike involved, making use in particular of Pataud and Pouget's *Comment nous ferons la Révolution* and Sorel's ideas of myth.

In 1904, Hubert Lagardelle described how progress and the concept of scientific development were no longer the route to the future. Socialism and syndicalism had had too

[412] See for example, APP, BA 1603, police report of 20 Jan. 1909; APP, BA 1604, police report of 17 Jan. 1911.

much faith in the '*marche fatale*' towards revolution, he claimed; focus on a 'revolutionary formula' was misplaced and—here he picked up on an earlier theme—there needed to be a greater understanding of the conditions that the proletariat could develop in. If those conditions could be fostered, change would be much sooner in coming. On the other hand, however, Lagardelle abhorred Bernstein's 'reformist revisionism', which amounted to nothing more than 'moral debasement and parliamentary cretinism': piecemeal reform in the present was not enough.[413] Lagardelle, in a fashion which should by now be familiar, was trying to carve a path between the *marche fatale* towards revolution and the myopic insistence on present improvements. Even the cautious optimism propounded in the first issues of *PL* and the *CQ* was beginning to look dull to revolutionary syndicalists, who found moderate socialists' faith in ineluctable progress towards the future exasperating. Lagardelle, writing in 1904, was explaining a feeling which had already been haunting the syndicalist movement for several years.

Lagardelle was to pursue his theme in the years that followed. At a conference held in Paris in April 1907, the subject of syndicalism's relationship to socialism was discussed with renewed fervour. Lagardelle compiled contributions to the conference in a volume which he introduced with a waspish preface. There needed to be a 'twofold movement towards negation of the present and preparation for the future', he explained, and 'traditional socialism […] had been powerless to realise it'. There were to be 'no more idle discussions about future society' since syndicalism was '*empty of all utopianism*'.[414] In his speech at this conference, Lagardelle emphasised how social change was no longer 'envisaged as a far-off phenomenon that would occur instantaneously, but as a quotidian creation'.[415] This is superficially similar to the earlier descriptions by Colomb and France cited in Chapter 3, but there is a crucial—if subtle—

---

413 Lagardelle, 'Le socialisme ouvrier', pp. 1–3. Largardelle's words here are strikingly similar to those of Édouard Berth the same year, which I cited at the opening of this part of the thesis.

414 Lagardelle, 'Avant-propos' in Lagardelle (ed.), *Syndicalisme et socialisme* (Paris: Marcel Rivière, 1908), pp. 4, 8. Lagardelle's emphasis.

415 Lagardelle, 'Le syndicalisme et le socialisme en France' in ibid. 49.

difference. Lagardelle was less insistent on the certainty of victory, and he emphasised human agency over the 'natural' developments which had been favoured earlier. Accordingly, he eschewed concrete statements about when in the future change might occur. Lagardelle's arguments indicate that time was no longer seen as either a conveyor belt towards revolution or a directionless entity; in common with other revolutionary syndicalists, he believed that it was something to be seized and moulded. This was also a feature of Berth's work: for Berth, '[t]ime was invention, creation'.[416] Lagardelle, it is clear, was striking out at both a scientific route to change and a utopian one, and his criticisms allow us to see how the idea of the general strike drew power from its ability to respond the fear of these two pitfalls. In short, it opened the way for viewing the future in more organic terms.

In early 1905, the idea of a general strike as a form of revolution gained greater prominence due to the waves of strikes and protests in Russia. *LMS* had always had a keenly international outlook and had showed interest in Russia before, but this now became much sharper and more purposeful. Two features struck those observing the events of 1905: its spontaneity and its unpredictability. In February, Boris Kritchewsky (social democrat and proponent of 'economism') contributed a long article about the previous month's events to the review.[417] Living in France at the time, Kritchewsky sounded a note that was at once hopeful and cautionary.[418] He enthused about the general strike, locating its revolutionary potential in its ability to bring together workers from disparate occupations. The fall of tsarism was now 'ineluctable', he stated, although the events of January 1905 were not necessarily the beginning of a revolution. Rather, they were preparation for a decisive future act. He went on: '[r]evolution—if there were to be a revolution—would be an inspired act, a spontaneous and

---

[416] Jennings, *Syndicalism in France*, p. 78.

[417] Boris Kritchewsky, 'Le proletariat et la Révolution russe', *LMS*, no. 148 (1 Feb. 1905), pp. 141–65. The article was taken from a longer text written at the end of January and published later in the year, *The Proletariat and the Russian Revolution*. Kritchewsky edited Russia's leading 'economist' newspaper.

[418] Some information on Kritchewsky can be found in Casey Harison, 'The Paris Commune of 1871, the Russian Revolution of 1905, and the shifting of the revolutionary tradition', *History and Memory* 19 (2007), pp. 24–5.

sovereign act of creation'. Revolutions could not be planned; they could not be conceived along certain lines. This also became a dominant feature of Rosa Luxemburg's conception of revolution, and she developed it partly in response to the events in Russia, citing a mass strike's adaptability and the balance it struck between spontaneity and organisation as its chief advantages.[419] In common with many French syndicalists, Kritchewsky's version of revolution consisted of a sudden opening up of the possibilities of the future. But Kritchewsky's comments contain a certain ambivalence toward the nascent revolution and its bearing upon events in France. Change was imminent, but neither its form nor its timing could be predicted—and indeed, even in the midst of these momentous events, Kritchewsky hesitated to confirm that a revolution was occurring. There was also a sense that Russia was sufficiently different from France that its applicability was questionable.[420] Russia in 1905 thus provided hope, but it also illuminated one of the difficulties of the syndicalists' understanding of time: their insistence on a revolution the development of which was completely organic meant that the status of the near future as a time of revolutionary promise was somewhat uncertain.

However, this uncertainty did not stop syndicalists from imagining what a general strike might look like. In 1909, Pataud and Pouget produced a lavish, misty-eyed, three-hundred page volume detailing how a revolutionary general strike would unfold.[421] We have seen that the promise, or even the possibility, of a general strike was a way of bringing present and future closer together, but this text gives us some interesting clues as to how and why time was important during the general strike itself. *Comment nous ferons la Révolution* ['how we will make the Revolution'] opened with a striking proclamation: the editors had made a mistake, insisted Pouget and Pataud. The title of the pamphlet should in fact be *Comment nous avons fait la Révolution*

---

419 Kritchewsky, 'Le proletariat', pp. 149, 154, 157. See Luxemburg, *Socialism or Barbarism: the selected writings of Rosa Luxemburg*, ed. Paul Le Blanc and Helen C. Scott (London: Pluto Press, 2010); section on 'the mass strike, the political party, and the trade unions', pp. 108–25.

420 Kritchewsky insisted on the difference between Russia and western Europe in 'Le proletariat', p. 155, and it is also emphasised in the anonymous article 'Qu'est-ce que la Russie?', *PL*, vol. I (Jan.–June 1901), pp. 335–42.

421 Pataud was general secretary of the electrical industries' union and an important figure in the CGT.

['how we made the Revolution'], and the text is thereafter written in the past tense.[422] This simple switch, transmuting future into past, was an attempt to emphasise that their goals were achievable and it was an important facet of the broader aim of disrupting the idea of a far-off future.

The authors mixed past, present, and future together in other ways, too. There was exploration throughout their text of which aspects of the revolutionary tradition to bring forward into the future. The Hôtel de Ville was dispensed with as the centre of activity: '[w]ell that, it was the past!' The pall of the Commune, its failure and its bloodiness, hung heavy over these activists—but, undeniably, they drew on its spirit, wanting to learn from its mistakes rather than expunge it completely (though, curiously, they retained its focus on barricades).[423] There were also comparisons to the French Revolution, with Pataud and Pouget's imagined countryside riots described as a 'rerun' of the Great Fear and rioters cast as the descendants of 1789.[424] The key point to make here is not about which specific aspects of the revolutionary heritage were being identified as more or less useful: this ground has been well-trodden by Gildea and others.[425] For our purposes, the more pertinent point is about how the past was understood as a concept. It was not a block or a monolith—as it was sometimes depicted on the right. One could select aspects of it and bring them forward into the present and the future to give them new life. The past had real utility, but it was not necessary to take it whole, and its various parts needed the context of the present and the future to invigorate them.

---

422 Pataud and Pouget, *Comment nous ferons*, p. v.

423 Ibid. 101, 105, 2. The mention of barricades is slightly unusual, as by this time there was widespread recognition of the futility of deploying them in Hausmannised Paris. Tony Judt made the point that one of the most 'obvious' lessons of the Commune had been that 'violent confrontation with the state was no longer a serious option', see *Marxism and the French Left: studies in labour and politics in France, 1830–1981* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), p. 97. The Bolsheviks would also learn from the Commune in this sense: see Jay Bergman, 'The Paris Commune in Bolshevik mythology', *The English Historical Review* 129 (2014), pp. 1412–41.

424 Pataud and Pouget, *Comment nous ferons*, pp. 122–3. Jennings saw *Comment nous ferons* as being quite closely tied to the Revolution of 1789: see 'Syndicalism and the French Revolution', pp. 77–8. I contend that the authors' approach is more ambiguous.

425 See Gildea, *The Past in French History* and *Children of the Revolution*.

Perhaps the most crucial aspect of Pataud and Pouget's general strike, emphasised in the conclusion of their work, was the idea that it was not an endpoint. It was not, in other words, an arrival at the long-desired future ('the ideal hasn't been reached!'). Rather, the revolutionary episode opened a path to that ideal: 'the route to the future has been swept clear [*déblayée*], free of obstacles!'[426] This exclamation was replicated in other quarters, and across the syndicalist movement there was the sense that the general strike was the beginning of the future as well as being the end of the present. This assertion may seem paradoxical, since it seems to delay future change—to render it too distant, as was the frequent accusation levelled at other sections of the left. But looked at in another light, we can see that it allowed the syndicalists to create a more flexible timeframe in which a strict point of arrival at the future was blurred. Revolution, then, was a process of continual becoming which drew on past, present, and future and which tried to avoid over-reliance on any one of these categories.

It is striking that, in their rather epic text, Pataud and Pouget spent a great many chapters outlining how the general strike might develop and comparatively few on the new organisation of society. It is clear that there has been an end to expropriation, and the new centres of society are *syndicats* and cooperatives; art has been universalised, free to access and returned to the people; women are freed from household chores as mechanisation spreads to the home.[427] On the whole, though, the length of the section of the book dealing with the strike itself compared to the that of post-revolutionary society indicates an openness about what the future might hold after a general strike. It is reasonable to suggest that, in part, Pataud and Pouget were eschewing overly detailed descriptions to escape accusations of utopianism; but it is important to note, too, that their unwillingness to map a future too carefully was in keeping

---

426 Pataud and Pouget, *Comment nous ferons*, p. 294. Their cry of *l'idéal n'est pas atteint!* has provided the title for this chapter.

427 Ibid. 126–32, 276, 288–93.

with the idea that a revolution would be a starting point which would open up possibilities rather than an endpoint which would fix those possibilities.

Sorel was another thinker who, famously and contentiously, focused on the moment of the general strike itself.[428] His contribution to syndicalist thought in terms of its approach to time was to reinforce the notion that the revolutionary moment had its own particular temporality from which it derived its potency. He did this partly through his idea of 'myth', a word which he used to denote an inspiring and immediately grasped collection of images which would provide incitement to action.[429] Writing of the concept, Sorel argued:

> [t]here can be no national epic about things which the people cannot picture to themselves as reproducible in the near future; popular poetry implies the future much more than the past.[430]

For Sorel, a myth functioned as a mirage which pulled people toward the future; it might have drawn power from the past but it was not focused simply on celebrating it.[431] It is clear enough to see why Sorel has often been accused of repurposing the idea of utopia, or of using myth as a 'deus ex machina'—though notably his 'utopia' had very little in the way of content, and it is much better understood as a method of inviting action through a concept of the future rather than through its content.[432] A myth, collectively perceived by the workers in a revolutionary moment, would allow them to enter together into a state of purposefulness. In this state, the

---

[428] In historiography, Sorel stands in a hall of mirrors—one sees only a parade of warped doubles. His attachment to violence was vastly overplayed by, for example, Jack J. Roth, see *The Cult of Violence: Sorel and the Sorelians* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1980). Level-headed accounts of his thought have been provided by Jennings, *Georges Sorel* (pp. 116–42 for Sorel's syndicalist period); and Shlomo Sand, *L'illusion du politique: Georges Sorel et le débat intellectuel 1900* (Paris: La découverte, 1985).

[429] This bears a strong similarity to the way in which images were used by nationalists, which we will come to in Part III.

[430] Sorel, *Reflections on Violence*, ed. Jeremy Jennings (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 91.

[431] German philosopher Eduard von Hartmann, who was a key part of the shift towards privileging the unconscious underway in Europe at this time, described how picturing the detailed content of a desired state produced 'the endeavour to procure reality', see *Philosophie de l'inconscient*, tr. Désiré Nolen (Paris: Germer Baillière, 1877), p. 118–9.

[432] See for example Jean Grave, 'Un parti de verbiage', *Les Temps nouveaux*, no. 12 (18 July 1908), p. 1; Ridley, *Revolutionary Syndicalism in France*, p. 252; Stanley accused Sorel of employing myth as a 'deus ex machina', see *The Sociology of Virtue*, p. 219; and James H. Meisel astutely noted that a myth was a 'utopia that ha[d] caught on, see *The Genesis of Georges Sorel: an account of his formative period followed by a study of his influence* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: George Wahr, 1951), p. 265. On Sorel's concept of the future, see Kern, *The Culture of Space and Time*, p. 103.

present would be revivified by its intermingling with past and future—a clear analogy for the Bergsonian notion of the *durée*.[433]

Sorel looked back to the early Christian martyrs, to Spartan warriors, and to the soldiers of the revolutionary wars and took from their example the notion that the ideal group would act as one, with each individual subordinating himself willingly to the good of the collective.[434] As the selection of these particular groups begins to suggest, there was an element of violence in Sorel's account of a revolutionary general strike.[435] His ideas about violence coalesced around the notion of class struggle: he suggest that each strike which contained an aspect of aggressive confrontation would become a 'vanguard fight', and a limited number of strikers would martyr themselves in an in inspiring act of self-sacrifice.[436] This would then feed back into the workers' ideal *durée*-like collective mind-set. If the real-life application of this seems shaky and the rectitude demanded rather severe, consider that there had been numerous serious instances of government violence against workers (during the aforementioned strikes at Fourmies, for instance). If we bear this in mind, Sorel's arguments seem almost like a way of making sense of the deaths which already occurred during strikes.[437] Sorel insisted that bloodshed was '*enlightened by the idea of the general strike*'—it was not, as Ridley argued, 'action for its own sake'.[438] Instead, Sorel saw heroic martyrdom as a kind of currency with which future 'historical value' could be

---

433 Bergson's influence on Sorel has been much discussed, see for example Jennings, *Georges Sorel*, pp. 83–115; Jennings, *Revolution and the Republic*, pp. 381–6; and Irving Horowitz, *Radicalism and the Revolt Against Reason* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961), pp. 39–56. Horowitz noted that Sorel's debt to Bergson was 'tinged with ambiguity', ibid. 41.

434 Sorel, *Reflections*, pp. 240–3. Gustave le Bon's influence was palpable here: he had previously written about how the character of a group could become something distinct from the individuals composing it, see le Bon, *Psychologie des foules* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1963, 1st edn 1895). On Sorel and le Bon, see Robert Nye, 'Two paths to a psychology of action: Gustave le Bon and Georges Sorel', *Journal of Modern History* 45 (1973), pp. 411–38.

435 This element was small but noteworthy. As John Stanley noted, the most violent thing about Sorel's *Reflections* was the title, see *The Sociology of Virtue: the political and social theories of Georges Sorel* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1981), p. 221.

436 Sorel, *Reflections*, p. 63. On sacrifice in Sorel's work, see Jesse Goldhammer, *The Headless Republic: sacrificial violence in modern French thought* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), pp. 112–51.

437 Pierre Andreu pointed to Sorel's demand for high ethical standards, see 'Lettres de Georges Sorel à Édouard Berth. Première partie: 1904–1908', ed. Andreu, *Cahiers Georges Sorel* 3 (1985), p. 89.

438 Sorel, *Reflections*, p. 251. Sorel's italics. Ridley, *Revolutionary Syndicalism in France*, p. 240.

purchased.[439] In this way, the future—and then its subsequent metamorphosis into a past—could be augmented. In Sorel's thought, myth and self-sacrifice combined to create an epic temporality in which the workers operated collectively and more powerfully than ever. He strove to give this timeframe meaning outside of the moment of revolution by insisting on the value of controlled and heroic bloodshed and how its importance would live on into the future.

In the general strike, syndicalists combined their focus on dual action with their insistence on a separate plane of time occupied by the proletariat. The idea of a revolutionary general strike enabled them to find a way of treading a careful path between so-called scientific and utopian visions of the future and, in so doing, a way of bringing the future into the present. Their insistences and their imaginings may now look naïve, but at the time they were electrified by events in Russia in 1905, and by the contemporary wave of sometimes violent strikes.

Failure

Needless to say, however, the long-desired general strike of 1 May did not come about. By 1909—even as Pouget and Pataud penned their pugnacious tract—hope for it 'had all but disappeared'.[440] From around 1908, police reports seemed much less concerned about the possibility of a huge upheaval.[441] The sometimes grandiose and ambitious articles found in *LMS* subsided; the syndicalist movement was ceasing to ask big questions about time and change and began to focus on smaller issues (the third conference of the Bourses du Travail, for instance, was all about the purchase of materials for the Bourses).[442] By 1910, syndicalists were lamenting the crisis they were in and bemoaning workers' tendency to see *syndicats* as a way of

---

439 Sorel, *Reflections*, pp. 77, 178.

440 Jennings, *Syndicalism in France*, p. 55. Elsewhere, Jennings made the point that syndicalism's decline was 'not difficult to explain', citing its numerical weakness and the CGT's low budget, see *Georges Sorel*, p. 117.

441 See reports in APP, BA 1602.

442 See Georges Yvetot, 'La troisième conférence des Bourses du Travail', *LMS*, no. 208 (1 March 1909), pp. 224–33.

maintaining the status quo.[443] In reality, the vast majority of CGT members had never been interested in a general strike, even at the supposed apex of revolutionary syndicalism in 1906.[444] Now writers and theoreticians had to accept this. The future they had fought to bring closer was receding once more, and the present was losing its vigour and its power to create and mould change. The final blow came in 1913 with Léon Jouhaux's increased hold on the CGT, and the following year he would take the workers' movement into the Union sacrée, marking the end—for the time being—of hopes for a revolutionary general strike.[445]

For Berth, the loss of faith in progress toward revolution had been profound, and the powerlessness of the workers' movement to enact change in the present or near future only compounded his disillusion. In an article penned in 1909—the year that both he and Sorel withdrew from *LMS*—Berth wrote angrily and desperately of the task that socialism had to undertake. He raged:

> If socialism really is different from democracy, if it really does want to regenerate the world, it would do well to […] no longer blindly run after all the currents of 'modern evolution', that despicable parody of what used to be called Providence.

This piece was published in commemoration of Proudhon's birth in 1809. Berth's aim was to explore how closely the modern-day CGT adhered to their anarchist forefather's thought, and Berth endorsed Proudhon's view of the producer as a warrior, calling for a return to a 'heroic culture founded on Work'.[446] Here we see the earlier reticence to believe in an effortless and inevitable march towards revolution heightened by a more bellicose and urgent tone.

---

443 See Marty-Rollan's contribution to 'La crise syndicaliste: enquête', *LMS*, no. 217 (1 Jan. 1910), pp. 63–5.

444 Julliard, *Autonomie ouvrière*, p. 36. Julliard cited numbers of ballots cast in favour of a general strike, concluding that shorter working days and action on accidents at work were more pressing concerns.

445 Jouhaux had been general secretary of the CGT since 1909, but revolutionary figures still held sway within the institution for another four or so years. See APP, BA 1604, police report of 26 April 1911, which described Jouhaux as a straw man; and APP, BA 1605, police report of 17 Dec. 1913, which confirmed that he was taking charge more seriously.

446 Berth, 'Le centenaire de Proudhon', *LMS*, no. 206 (1 Jan. 1909), pp. 55, 53. Berth also used this article to call for men to stay in the workshop and for women to stay in the home (the 'fortress of their dignity', p. 55): the piece was an all-round call to an order of a distinctly Proudhonian variety.

Revolution was not a matter of waiting, and democracy was nothing but a fad.[447] Articles such as this foreshadow Berth's involvement with the Cercle Proudhon (CP), the far-right group that emerged as a result of monarchist interest in syndicalism. Tired of waiting for incremental change to produce results, Berth—in common with many of the followers of Maurras who became involved in the Cercle—wanted an imminent restoration of the nation's glory, which would of course be based on a past of self-assured Frenchness.

Adrift in time in the same way that some of the old Dreyfusards had been, Berth sought for an anchor in the past. This was not the direction that all syndicalists took, but it does nonetheless speak for a broader inability to sustain an electrified present which could explode at any minute into an emancipatory future, and in this sense there is a clear parallel with UP activism.[448]

[447] The syndicalist movement had never been enamoured of democracy, but its anti-democratic voices now became more prominent.

[448] Lagardelle was probably the most notable example of a shift to the right: he would later go on to be close correspondent of Maurras (see AN, 576AP, box 155, letters from Lagardelle to Maurras [1938–52]) and then a minister under Vichy.

Conclusion

Koselleck configured the future as an 'elusive present', a phrase which emphasises the notion of a state which is constantly just out of reach.[449] For the left in the early years of the twentieth century, that timeframe seemed elusive indeed. This section of the thesis has shown how the left was animated by two ideas: the notion that present and future were moving away from one another, and the notion that the contested and fragile concept of the future needed to be brought under control and mastered. These matters were intimately bound up with questions of agency—it seemed that past, present, and future needed to be returned to the French workers in order for any meaningful change to occur.

The debates discussed in Chapters 3 and 4 at first appear to revolve around questions over the perennial but slippery issue of revolution versus reform. On closer inspection, however, it becomes clear that debates about myriad issues to do with time and the relationship between past, present, and future were lurking behind this apparently simple dichotomy. All three temporal categories were revealed to have some deep element of uncertainty. Even the present, which was most frequently figured as the timeframe for revolutionary action, was seen as crumbling away rapidly and its detachment from the future was a constant source of worry. The status of the past, meanwhile, was also contested—was it to be learnt from, was it to be claimed whole and celebrated? The future was perhaps the most troublesome category of all: it might shimmer tantalising, but one had to avoid becoming fixated on it.

Marxism and religion were often seen to be making claims to the future during this period—and these claims were felt as threats by many socialists and syndicalists. Examining the discourse surrounding time allows us to see that many of the conflicts of the left, particularly

---

[449] Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History*, p. 111.

those concerning Marxism and religion, owed more to time than they owed to anything else. The anxiety surrounding the future played out across futurist fictions and had a powerful impact on the use of evolutionary theory on the left. But neither of these things provided real answers to the all-important questions of time and agency.

It was syndicalism, with its mingling of theoreticians and militants, which would go furthest in directly tackling these issues. It was becoming increasingly clear that many on the left were weary of waiting for a cataclysmic revolution and worried that it was, in any case, an impossibility—but it was not necessarily clear that the model of present-focused activism was adequate. It was not, in the end, so different from the much-maligned version of waiting for revolution, and revolutionary syndicalists in particular expressed frustration with this. Syndicalists renewed their critiques of waiting for change, and attempted to find ways of bringing present and future ever closer together. They put their own distinctive interpretation of a plane of time belonging exclusively to the proletariat at the heart of their programme, and this idea guided their actions and informed their key idea of the general strike. In so doing, they also made an important contribution to the broader political culture of the French left. It was in syndicalism that the mission to recreate time as agency came closest to fruition.

PART III.

TIME AND THE NATION

On 15 June 1901, during AF's second anniversary celebration, Maurice Barrès gave a speech that offered an assessment of the nationalist right's conceptualisation of time. Nationalists were, he exclaimed (to lively applause, if we are to believe the comments in the review's report of the speech) united 'in [their] complete and utter disgust at the present', while the future offered merely a 'spare room' [*chambre de debarras*] for the clutter of vague political dreams. He went on:

> [w]e nationalists, often divided over the future, are in accordance when we envisage France's past. We commend ourselves to the eternal France; we are Frenchmen who have been formed across the centuries.[450]

During its early years, AF and its review housed a heterogeneous blend of right-wing thinkers and activists with diverse political visions, and the republican Barrès (who spoke after Henri Vaugeois, just finding his feet as a monarchist) was treading delicately to ensure that he emphasised ideological unity rather than highlighting discord—ideas about the past seemed like safe terrain for this purpose.

Nevertheless, Barrès' remarks go far beyond political expediency or hollow platitudes, and his comments encapsulate some of the principal elements of his milieu's understanding of time, as well as going some way to illustrating the vital importance of certain ideas about past, present, and future in the construction of far-right political programmes. There was the marked rejection of the present, the nervousness about addressing the uncertain and potentially divisive future, the retreat into a (sometimes largely imagined) past, and the resulting attempt to establish an 'eternal France' which could transcend time's limitations and escape its dangers.

---

[450] Barrès, 'L'anniversaire d'Action française: discours', *L'Action française: revue*, no. 46 (15 June 1901), pp. 986–7. Note that *L'Action française: revue* refers to the twice-monthly review, while *L'Action française* refers to the daily newspaper which began in 1908.

This part of the thesis examines the ways in which certain conceptualisations of time structured far-right political discourse and ideology as it developed in the early years of the twentieth century. This was a moment during which nationalism in France was mutating, shedding its revolutionary origins and its universalist outlook to become more inward-looking and more concerned with identifying and protecting an essentialised Frenchness.[451] I argue that shifting understandings of time were at the heart of this change. Time was fundamental to the political programmes elaborated by the thinkers and activists associated with AF's review (and from 1905 the Ligue de l'AF), the LPF, and the Ligue des patriotes (LDP). In the debates and discussions surrounding ideas about time, past, present, and future emerge as concepts which at once shaped and gave expression to a whole host of right-wing ideas.

As Barrès' speech indicated, the starting point for these groups' understandings of time was a deeply and bitterly held belief that the present had no meaning or significance: it was simply a time of pain and suffering. The present and its corruption provide the theme of Chapter 6. At the forefront of the right's antipathy toward the present was the trauma of defeat in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–1 and the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine by Germany. The War had plunged France into a purgatorial period of mourning whose end, it was intimated, would only be announced when the *revanche* finally came. It is important to emphasise the centrality of the defeat to embryonic nationalist ideology; Philippe Bedouret made the point that far-right figures were not cheaply seeking to 'exploit the myth of the *revanche*', but were

---

451 Many historians of nationalism agree on this change. See for exammple René Rémond, *Les droites en France* (Paris: Aubier Montaigne, 1982, 1st edn 1954), pp. 35, 150–3, and Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: programme, myth, reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 101–30, both of whom emphasised the rightward shift of nationalism. Raoul Girardet maintained that this slide from left to right 'remains capital' in the history of nationalism (*Le nationalisme français, 1871–1914* [Paris: Armand Colin, 1966], p. 12). These slightly two-dimensional analyses have been given nuance by Zeev Sternhell's emphasis on the universalist versus the particularist strands of nationalism, which were often independent of left and right divides (see 'The political culture of nationalism' in Robert Tombs [ed.], *Nationhood and Nationalism in France: from Boulangism to the Great War [1889–1918]* [London: Harper Collins, 1991], pp. 22–38), and by Michel Winock's more sensitive division of nationalism into 'open' and 'closed' strands (see *Nationalism, Anti-Semitism, and Fascism in France*, tr. Jane Marie Todd [Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1998], p. 24).

'defining themselves […] in a fundamental way in relation to this anguish'.[452] This is a point which should be made of all three groups studied here: their interaction with the defeat was not limited to discussion about the need to reinvigorate France—rather, it was an integral component of their thought and its development. It provided part of the basis for nationalist scorn for the present, which in turn informed and structured other debates.

Rejection of the ills caused by the defeat was sharpened by the right's tendency to dismiss the present as a concept—it was often associated with short-sightedness, selfishness, and individualism. Right-wing antipathy to the present went beyond a frustration at the contemporary world to become a revulsion at what the present represented as an idea. This conceptualisation of time provided a point of departure for many right-wing thinkers: appreciating the utter scorn felt not simply for France's current situation but for the very concept of the present is crucial for understanding the far right's mission as it evolved throughout the late 1890s and the early 1900s. Disdain for the present resulted primarily in the displacement of political possibilities onto the distant future and, perhaps more significantly, onto the past.

There was growing concern to articulate a notion of what the past was, what it represented as an idea, and to elaborate suitable metaphors for it; this was especially marked in very early issues of the *L'AF: revue* in the summer of 1899, when Vaugeois (still a republican at this point) effectively appointed himself the AF's theoretician of time and produced several articles discussing the subject.[453] These articles form the starting point for Chapter 7, which begins by exploring how the past's relationship to the future was probed by Vaugeois and others. Their musings indicated that nationalist conceptions of time were more nuanced and

---

[452] Philippe Bedouret, 'Barrès, Maurras, et Péguy face au germanisme (1870–1914)', vol. 1, Ph.D. thesis, École pratique des Hautes Études, 2005, p. 14.

[453] Vaugeois was the creator of AF and, despite his importance, he has often been neglected in the literature on this period. He was a philosophy teacher (though he failed the *agrégation* eight times) and a close friend of Maurras. See Laurent Joly, *Naissance de l'Action française*, pp. 25, 54.

more sophisticated than caricatures (such as those mentioned in Chapter 1) of a straightforward desire to return to an idealised past might suggest. I argue that their mission was based on telescoping past and future so that the best of the past could live on into the future.

The development of the political ideologies of AF, as well as the LPF and the LDP, came to be predicated to a large extent on their attempts to identify and bring to the fore an 'eternal France' comprised of the aspects of their nation's past which they felt to be the most durably and the most essentially French. Thinkers such as Maurice Barrès, Jules Lemaître, and Henri Vaugeois made explicit and concerted attempts to construct a conceptualisation of time which continued the past forward into the future and, in so doing, elided the present. They identified the symbolic characters (chiefly mothers and—for some—the monarchy) who they believed could embody this unshakably strong eternal France. For many of the women who were active on the right, this notion offered an empowering role which saw them as guardians of the future who also had a privileged perspective on the past, and they were keen to deploy these time-based ideas in justifying their allegiances.

Chapter 7 closes with the shift toward monarchism that occurred in some quarters after the far right's disastrous showing at the 1902 elections. Writers such as Vaugeois and Léon de Montesquiou began to see the eternal timeframe offered by a return to the crown as the only route to salvation for France; building on earlier calls for the past to be brought forward into the future, they elaborated a more severe and more desperate conception of an eternal realm. By 1908, however, their pleas had faded into the background as AF—by then the only viable far-right group as the LPF and the LDP were by now moribund—underwent a much more dramatic shift. This shift and its consequences are the subject of Chapter 8. As a younger generation of boisterous activists came to the fore and the international climate grew tenser with the First Morocco Crisis, the overarching conceptualisation of time on the far right was one which reconciled itself with the present and appreciated the possibilities it held for action and change. This new understanding, which encompassed both the need for acceptance of the

present and the importance of the past and of the eternal national timeframe, was synthesised by the short-lived CP.

The three groups at the heart of these two chapters were ostensibly very different and, in any case, it should be remembered that the right was a diverse and constantly shifting set of groupings and ideas. AF was somewhat scholarly and literary until the launch of its daily in 1908, although even then its popular appeal remained very restricted.[454] The LDP, under the leadership of the bullish and boundlessly enthusiastic Déroulède, was at the opposite end of the spectrum; meetings and marches were preferred to highbrow debates. The LPF presented something of a middle ground, having been founded by intellectuals but remaining distinctly more accessible than AF. While the differences are manifest, there is a strong case to be made for studying the three together. A figure such as Maurice Barrès was able to straddle all of these circles ably, attending rallies with Déroulède and conducting intellectual debates with Maurras, and in general there were no strict divisions between the groups. As Barrès' aforementioned speech indicated, there was celebration of the unity of aims across the right, as well as recognition that disagreements were present. Moreover, all three groups shared as their starting point the Dreyfus Affair (although the LDP had existed before, the Affair provided it with a key moment of renewal). René Rémond argued that for these nationalist groups, the Boulanger Affair had marked their 'birth' while the Dreyfus Affair was a 'baptism'.[455] Winock concurred, stating that anti-Dreyfusism had been a 'springboard and unifying principle' for the far right.[456] While historians such as Albert Vaiciulenas emphasise the differences between these

---

454 Paul Mazgaj noted that AF was 'more of a study circle than a populist movement', see 'The origins of the French radical right: a historiographical essay', *French Historical Studies* 15 (1987), p. 291. Laurent Joly emphasised the marginality of AF, see *Naissance de l'Action française*, p. 32. And, as Eugen Weber pointed out, the 'minority character' of radical nationalism as a whole 'cannot be sufficiently stressed', see *The Nationalist Revival in France, 1905–14* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1968, 1st edn 1959), p. 8.

455 Rémond, *Les droites en France*, p. 150.

456 Winock, *Nationalism*, p. 13. For a detailed account of the founding of AF, see Laurent Joly, *Naissance de l'Action française*, pp. 95–117; and on the LPF see Rioux, *Nationalisme et conservatisme*. An anonymous article highlighted the importance of the Dreyfus Affair in the founding of the LPF, see 'Historique de la LPF', *Almanach de la Patrie française* (1901), p. 24, demonstrating that the far-right were conscious of this aspect of their heritage.

movements, I argue that, taken together, they constitute a broad representation of the far right, a milieu in which ideas were circulated and spirited debates caused new ideas to emerge.[457] By tracing these groups from the Affair to the CP initiative, we gain a valuable perspective on how a shifting but influential culture of time shaped the far-right political landscape.

Historiography

Time has not been entirely neglected in the literature surrounding nationalism and the far right. Various historians and political scientists have used ideas about time to further our understanding of these movements and their ideologies, and conceptions of the past have been studied particularly thoroughly. In these studies, however, the theme of time has often been confined to an ancillary role, subordinate to other concerns—and sometimes it has been mentioned only cursorily and not expanded upon at all.[458] Furthermore, the frequent emphasis on disputed notions of the past has produced a body of literature which often overlooks ideas about the present and the future and which only indirectly addresses how time itself was conceived or experienced. By placing the conceptualisation of past, present, and future at the heart of my analysis, I provide an important new perspective on the study of both the far right in France and the study of nationalism more broadly.

Many historians of nationalism agree that nationalists are obsessed by the past; this claim is neither original nor surprising. For much of the second half of the twentieth century, the dominant debate between scholars of nationalism centred on notions of the past: as arch-

[457] Albert Vaiciulenas, introduction to Part II of Tombs (ed.), *Nationhood and Nationalism*, pp. 103–7. Bertrand Joly acknowledged that the Ligues worked together during the Dreyfus Affair but, ultimately, he also emphasised their differences, see *Déroulède*, p. 267.

[458] One frustrating example of this is Lawrence Rosenthal and Vesna Rodic, who mentioned that a 'heightened sense of time' was vital for the changes nationalism underwent at the turn of the century but did not expand on this comment. See their introduction to Rosenthal and Rodic (eds), *The New Nationalism and the First World War* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p. 5.

modernist Ernest Gellner put it, 'primordialists' 'refused to accept that the attribution of an immemorial antiquity to nations [was] an illusion', while 'modernists' held that this antiquity was 'either an illusion or an irrelevance'.[459] It is clear from this statement that Gellner himself was not especially concerned with how the past was imagined or conceived, though he acknowledged that a fixation with it was common among nationalists. Much like John Breuilly, Gellner focused on nationalism as 'a theory of political legitimacy' and concentrated on the question of whether the phenomenon itself was ancient or modern.[460] Nevertheless, the debate between modernists and primordialists put nationalists' beliefs about their nations' origins and histories under the spotlight, thereby opening the way for deeper probing of the function of ideas about time.

And indeed, not all those who agreed that nations and nationalism were specifically modern phenomena thought that representations of the past were an 'irrelevance'. In his introduction to the 1983 volume edited jointly with Terence Ranger, Eric Hobsbawm emphasised the need to 'establish continuity with a suitable historical past' for various states, institutions, and groups, and he went on to stress that this endeavour was 'highly relevant' to nationalism.[461] Their consideration of why certain versions of the past (sometimes wholly fabricated, sometimes containing grains of historical truth) came to be privileged over others brought with it an acknowledgement of the importance of the past in discourses surrounding nationhood. But at the very moment that it opened up an avenue of exploration, *The Invention of Tradition* closed it down again, since its emphasis remained on (somewhat gleefully) exposing

---

459 Ernest Gellner, *Nationalism* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1997), p. 93. For more on the dispute between modernists and primordialists see Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism: a critical survey of recent theories of nations and nationalism* (London: Routledge, 1998) or his *Theories of Nationalism* (London: Duckworth, 1983, 1st edn 1971); and the 1995 Warwick debates on nationalism, where Smith and Gellner exchanged views directly: http://gellnerpage.tripod.com/Warwick.html (last accessed 4 March 2015).

460 Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2006, 1st edn 1983), p. 1. See also John Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003, 1st edn 1982)—Breuilly has long been concerned with the specifically political dimensions of nationalism.

461 Eric Hobsbawm, introduction to Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012, 1st edn 1983), pp. 1, 13.

the fictitious nature of many accepted nationalist myths and legends rather than considering the past—or time as a whole—as concept. There is also a further restriction in this volume's utility: in his essay on late nineteenth century Europe, Hobsbawm adopted a top-down perspective, remarking that the French Republic created and deployed invented traditions in order to shore itself up in the face of threats from both left and right.[462] This institutional focus meant that experiences or understandings of time at the level of political movements or people were elided. Ultimately, the book remained narrowly in the service of the modernist argument, reconfirming the old agenda rather than setting a new one.

Ideas about the nature and the conceptualisation of the past are discussed in greater depth in Susana Carvalho and François Gemenne's relatively recent volume, which was dedicated to investigating how nations or nationalists have constructed, represented, and utilised various versions of the past, and how some of these versions have come to take precedence over others. The parallels with *The Invention of Tradition* are obvious, though Carvalho and Gemenne's book is on the whole a more subtle and probing exploration of notions of the past. The editors established their principal line of enquiry on the first page by declaring:

> Nationalism, whether studied as an ideology, a vision or a political or cultural movement, lays claim to the past as part of its effort to manage the present and to justify its goals for the future.[463]

There is an understanding here, tacit at least, that nationalists' various ideas about the past are linked to—and even dependent upon—their ways of viewing the present and the future, and in this way Carvalho and Gemenne hint at the potential for studying the conceptualisation of time conceived holistically. But their focus, nonetheless, remained on conceptions of history and of the past; as they put it, '[h]istory is […] the backbone of nationalism'.[464] The debate about the validity or the relevance of nations' pre-modern origins has receded, replaced by

---

462 Hobsbawm, 'Mass-producing traditions: Europe 1870–1914', ibid. 270.

463 Susana Carvalho and François Gemenne, introduction to Carvalho and Gemenne (eds), *Nations and their Histories: constructions and representations* (London: Palrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 1.

464 Ibid. 1.

general recognition of the prominence of constructions of the past—but studies of ideas about present, future, or the flow of time have yet to emerge in number.[465]

The hints at the significance of the present and the future made by Carvalho and Gemenne were developed to some extent in Breuilly's essay, 'Nationalism and the making of national pasts'.[466] Breuilly suggested that nationalism sought to '[gather] together past, present and future', arguing that history, in 'itself […] a force', became 'the chief, indeed the only, way of gathering time'.[467] While the phrase 'gathering time' (which Breuilly used insistently without really explaining) had a rather obfuscatory effect, what is clear is that this essay figures nationalism's concern with time as a concern centred entirely on history. And while Breuilly's formulation allowed for history as a theory about the flow of time and national destiny as well as simply the study of events past, he didn't exploit that understanding to its fullest, reverting instead to arguments about the nationalist desire to control the past. He was right to assert that that 'national appropriation of the past' was fundamental to nationalist endeavours, but such a focus only exemplifies two problems that are present throughout much of the literature on nationalism and time.[468]

First, study of nationalist ideas of the past remains welded to the content of the past; questions about what the past is and how it can be conceived are subordinate to questions about 'which past' is being adopted and emphasised. Interesting though these questions are, my work leaves them to one side in favour of studying how past, present, and future were understood as ideas, how they interacted, and how they influenced thinkers' experiences and

---

465 Smith pointed to a way out of the primordialist–modernist impasse with his 'ethnosymbolist' approach, which recognized the power of myths and memories to shape self-understanding at a national level, see for example *Nationalism and Modernism* or *Myths and Memories of the Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).
466 Breuilly, 'Nationalism and the making of national pasts' in Carvalho and Gemenne (eds), *Nations and their Histories*, pp. 7–28. The importance of the future was also developed in two other essays in this volume, albeit in very different contexts: see Don H. Doyle, 'Beginning the world over: past and future in American nationalism', ibid. 77–92, and Jennifer Wenzel, 'Refashioning sub-national pasts for post-national futures: the Xhosa cattle killing in recent South African literature', ibid. 223–6—however, these essays remained heavily reliant on reference to ideas about the past.
467 Breuilly, 'Nationalism', pp. 9, 7.
468 Ibid. 11.

political programmes. The second problem is that present and future are subsumed into discussion of the past. Discussion of the relationship between these temporal categories is absent and, in Breuilly's case, we are left with the impression that nationalists merely 'gathered' all time into the uniquely powerful force that was history in order to forge their nations' destinies.

Benedict Anderson, whose seminal work *Imagined Communities* has defined much of what scholars have thought about nationalism for the past twenty five years, made perhaps the most significant contribution to understanding nationalist timeframes by arguing that a certain idea of time was central to nation-building endeavours.[469] Anderson took seriously the conceptualisation and the experience of time, going beyond writing about beliefs of the past to discuss how the flow of time was homogenised and then instrumentalised by nationalists. He explained how nations 'always loom out of an immemorial past, and, still more important, glide into a limitless future'. In a section on 'apprehensions of time', he described how the nation constituted 'a solid community moving steadily down (or up) history'. Anderson went on to argue that the imagined community of a nation was dependent upon a particular conceptualisation of time, one underpinned by the knowledge that the rest of one's community existed simultaneously and was connected by print culture, whose most important manifestation came in the form of the date-stamped daily newspaper.[470] Anderson's emphasis on a shared understanding of time constituted a key insight for the study of nationalism, but the assumptions that underpinned his arguments were flawed. The assertion that nations emerge from the depths of the past and march unimpeded into the future obscures the struggle that nationalists undergo in order to represent their nations as eternal. Anderson made a broad point about nation-building, but his argument here did not take into account the extent to

---

469 Hunt went so far as to credit Andersen with stimulating historians' broader interest in time, see *Measuring Time*, p. 18.

470 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991, 1st edn 1983), pp. 1–2, 26, 22–36.

which time was contested, or the way in which its conceptualisation emerged out of a process of debate, evolving and developing: I argue that these aspects are crucial for understanding nationalist activism and political programmes.

A fuller investigation of nationalist notions of time came in 2006 with Aviel Roshwald's wide-ranging *The Endurance of Nationalism*. In his chapter on 'the nation in history and the curved arrow of time', Roshwald argued that it was vital for nationalist movements to 'bridge the gap and overcome tensions and contradictions between' the ancient and modern 'dimensions of temporal imagination', centred on continuity and progress respectively. In order to do this, the nation had to 'resist the flow of time', or at least situate itself 'outside the realm of ordinary time', borrowing from religious notions of time in so doing. Roshwald invoked the examples of Charles de Gaulle and the Vichy government, who—though diametrically opposed in many ways—both elaborated notions of an eternal French soul progressing through a regular, linear time which was given meaning and potency by its 'associations with […] the distant past'. He stated, furthermore, that this was not particular to France, making an analogous point about the Czech national revival.[471] Roshwald's contribution was important as he grasped the centrality of notions of time to the whole nationalist endeavour. More specifically, his insight into the dual nature of nationalist time—that the nation is at once inside time and apart from it—is crucial and must be applied to the French nationalists who came earlier than figures such as Philippe Pétain, Pierre Laval, and de Gaulle.

The vast and growing literature on nationalism has become less dichotomised and more diverse over the last twenty years. The modernist argument has 'almost assumed the status of a scholarly consensus', albeit inflected by a greater sensitivity to the influence of myth and memory.[472] In the intellectual space opened up by the 'movement away from the grand theories

---

471 Aviel Roshwald, *The Endurance of Nationalism: ancient roots and modern dilemmas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 51, 74, 57, 55; for the whole chapter, see pp. 44–87.
472 Oliver Zimmer, *Nationalism in Europe, 1890–1940* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p. 5.

of nationalism', the questions asked of the phenomenon have changed and become more varied.[473] Scholars have nuanced their demands about whether it is true that nations have antique origins, but have on the whole remained cautious about going much beyond questions about differing versions of the past when it comes to thinking about time. Sustained explorations of ideas about time, with the exception of Roshwald's chapter, are yet to come in number—though the fact that time is in some sense vital has become a well-established point. Three problems remain, which the following two chapters attempt to overcome: the fixation on the past; the accompanying focus on the content of the past; and the inattention to how time could be contested.

Some of the studies of the French right have dealt more substantively with the theme of time and most notably with the idea of an eternal France. Gildea's essay, 'Eternal France: crisis and national self-perception in France' presents a fruitful starting point for the following two chapters. Gildea argued that the humiliating defeat to the Germans in 1870–1 prompted the French to enter a 'period of mourning during which they constructed a [….] version of closed, fearful but eternal France'. This was a notion based on a

> defensive view of the fatherland in the older sense of an ancestral homeland […] whose identity was constructed against the ravages of change in a turbulent and menacing world.

This insight is crucial to understanding the groups studied in these two chapters. The AF, the LPF and the LDP all sought to identify and cultivate 'eternal' aspects of France, and all three groups engaged in debates—debates in which time was a key component—about how to suppress the pernicious aspects of the present and revivify the past in order to create a more stable, reassuring understanding of the French nation's progress. The parts of Gildea's essay which deal with the late nineteenth century do not, however, expand upon the particular understandings of time which led to and are fundamental to the notion of an eternal France.

---

[473] Ibid. 4.

He rightly recognises that those who upheld the ideas he discusses 'espoused continuity across moments of crisis', but this acknowledgement of time's importance is in left aside in favour of developing the themes of soil, peasants, and national heroes as the bulwarks used by the right in their construction of nationhood.[474] Ideas about time are tackled only obliquely here, but I contend that the elaboration of the eternal French nation is most usefully studied when its specifically temporal aspects are examined.

One exploration of the idea of an eternal France which did recognise the value of exploring understandings of time was a short article on de Gaulle by Lawrence D. Kritzman. Like Roshwald, Kritzman described how de Gaulle 'transform[ed] the image of the French nation into an entity that [was] eternal' by offering the possibility 'of a time that exist[ed] beside itself' as a 'promising alternative' to a burdensome past. Crucially, this was 'a singular time isolated from past, present, and future'.[475] The understanding of time Kritzman eloquently outlined was not, however, particular de Gaulle—it was a feature of earlier nationalist endeavours, too. I apply Kritzman's perspicacious comments to earlier right-wing thought, as well as interrogating *how* nationalist discourse on time produced the obsession with eternal France and what impact it had on political programmes.

The themes of time and eternity were also directly addressed by Colette Capitan-Peter in her masterful study of Charles Maurras. Maurras, Capitan-Peter explained, felt keenly that 'the moment when a nation, a people, arrived at the apogee of its glory or genius needed to be seized' in order to 'immobilise and eternalise it'. She rightly insisted that time was right at the core of Maurras' thought, the 'kernel around which everything gravitat[ed]'. The understanding of time described in her monograph was comparable to that outlined by Kritzman with reference to de Gaulle. While Capitan-Peter did make reference to a broader culture of time

---

474 Gildea, 'Eternal France: crisis and national self-perception in France, 1870–2005' in Carvalho and Gemenne (eds), *Nations and their Histories*, pp. 140, 142.
475 Lawrence D. Kritzman, 'A certain idea of de Gaulle', *Yale French Studies* 111 (2007), p. 162.

within AF, and recognised that 'all conservatism [implied] this temporal dimension' and a 'desire to prolong time', her study nonetheless remained very specific to Maurras and, furthermore, did not explore the development or the impact of the discourse surrounding time.[476] Both Kritzman's and Capitan-Peter's work was limited by their focus on individuals; I broaden their contentions by situating debates about time within a network of right-wing thinkers.

The historiography of the far right in France has long been hobbled by a problem of teleology. Specifically, too many studies of fin-de-siècle nationalism tend to look forward to later developments in nationalism, configuring thinkers such as Maurras and Barrès principally as precursors to the later emergence of fascism.[477] The wilful leader of the trend to trace the roots of the far right was Zeev Sternhell, who studied the radical right—and in particular Barrès—in order to identify 'proto-fascism'. In his early work, Sternhell limited himself to arguing that French nationalism's main elements are contained within Barrès' œuvre.[478] But throughout his following two books on the revolutionary right, this morphed into a hunt to locate the roots of European fascism in early twentieth-century France.[479] The quest was fully realised in *Les anti-Lumières*, which described a dichotomy between those who opposed the Enlightenment vision and those who supported it; those who opposed it were situated squarely in a lineage which had lead ineluctably to fascism.[480] David Carroll took these arguments into the domain of literature, seeking to illustrate how Maurras, Barrès, and Péguy were constantly referenced by later fascist authors and therefore formed the intellectual origins of the movement. His main concern throughout was tracing the influence of these authors, and how

---

476 Colette Capitan-Peter, *Charles Maurras et l'idéologie d'Action française: étude sociologique d'une pensée de droite* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1972), pp. 20, 44, 43.

477 Paul Mazgaj also cited the bias towards finding proto-fascism in this literature: see 'The origins of the French radical right', p. 288.

478 Sternhell, *Maurice Barrès et le nationalisme français* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1972), p. 372.

479 See Sternhell, *La droite révolutionnaire* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1978); and *Ni droite ni gauche: idéologie fasciste en France* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1983).

480 See Sternhell, *Les anti-Lumières: du XVIII^e siècle à la Guerre froide* (Paris: Fayard, 2006), especially p. 7.

they might be categorised according to that influence (hence insistences such as 'Barrès can ultimately be considered proto-fascist').[481] Even Laurent Joly's recent, richly textured, and extremely detailed monograph on AF's early years aimed to illustrate how the group provided a link between nineteenth and twentieth century nationalism, explicitly referencing Jean-Marie Le Pen to demonstrate the relevance of the link.[482] A similar problem is present, though to a lesser extent, in Eugen Weber's study, which saw AF's inchoate early years as mere 'preparation' for the movement's more dynamic interwar iteration.[483] Apart from the more serious problem of teleology, all these studies also tend to downplay the importance of studying the period of the 1890s and early 1900s in its own right.

Partly in reaction to the fascination with identifying sweeping ideological continuities, a separate body of literature has grown up which 'takes issue with the prevalent historiographical assumption that day-to-day politics were secondary to more fixed underlying dispositions'.[484] Kevin Passmore, Bertrand Joly, and Robert Lynn Fuller all insisted on the specific contexts in which nationalists were operating; Joly, for example, focuses on 'parties', their operation and their structure, in order to retain something of the diversity and the sense of different possibilities for the French right.[485] Their work was a refreshing departure from the model established by Sternhell, but it presented problems of its own. Passmore in particular was hobbled by his desire to impose the bare minimum of interpretation on his rich archival and print findings, opting for a schematic layout which presents variety but little cohesion.[486]

---

481 David Carroll, *French Literary Fascism: nationalism, anti-Semitism, and the ideology of culture* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), pp. 9, 21.

482 Laurent Joly, *Naissance de l'Action Française*, p. 12.

483 Weber, *Action française: royalism and reaction in twentieth-century France* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1962), pp. 3–43.

484 Kevin Passmore, *The Right in France from the Third Republic to Vichy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 5. Passmore was also taking issue with Rémond's still-dominant interpretation of the right as being composed of three principal strands, ibid. 7–11.

485 See ibid.; Bertrand Joly, *Nationalistes et conservateurs*, especially pp. 7–11; and Robert Lynn Fuller, *The Origins of the French Nationalist Movement, 1886–1914* (Jefferson, NC: Macfarland & Co., 2012).

486 Passmore was praised for this by Phillip Nord, who emphasised that '[t]he Right was not a family heirloom […] but rather a kaleidoscopic phenomenon', see review of Kevin Passmore's *The Right in France from the Third Republic to Vichy*, *The Journal of Modern History* 87 (2015), p. 456.

When the only argument presented is that specific contexts are everything, it is much harder to impose a measure of order on that argument, much harder to bring meaning to the material. Passmore's book was invaluable for its details but it was also suffocated by them, and a similar point could be made about Fuller's and Joly's work. Joly ended his *Nationalistes et conservateurs* with exasperated remarks about how nationalism was simply a reaction against everything—no wonder the rest of the right had rejected Déroulède's 1901 proposal for a right-wing programme, he fumed; the movement was totally incoherent.[487] While the right was certainly a heterogeneous phenomenon in the early years of the twentieth century, it would not be correct to reduce it to an incomprehensible muddle.

[487] Bertrand Joly, *Nationalistes et conservateurs*, p. 342.

Chapter 6

La nuit et le vide

The defeat: time and memory

The Franco-Prussian War was 'a defeat not only of the regime but of the nation as well'.[488] The chaotic bloodiness of the Commune that followed it compounded the nationalists' sense of nationwide devastation, but even that episode could not overshadow defeat in the war.[489] Barrès would declare that the events of 1870–1 'advis[ed] on the present'.[490] Contemporary France, he suggested, could only be understood when viewed in relation to the recent past of the defeat. For many nationalists, the distorting prism of the defeat came to shape the very experience of living in the present and the way in which it was understood as a temporal category. This section explores the relationship between the defeat and nationalists' memories and commemorations of it to demonstrate the profound impact it had on their understandings of time, tracing the broad shift in their conceptualisation of the present that occurred through the 1880s, 1890s, and 1900s.

---

[488] Karine Varley, *Under the Shadow: the war of 1870–1 in French memory* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p. 4. Varley made the point that because the Government of National Defence had continued to fight after emperor Napoleon III was captured at Sedan on 1 Sept. 1870, the defeat became much more thorough that it might otherwise have been. The Franco-Prussian war has sometimes been overlooked in histories of France—indeed, it elicited only one fleeting mention in Patricia M. E. Lorcin and Daniel Brewer (eds), *France and its Spaces of War: experience, memory, image* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009). Varley's excellent book explored the memory of the war, while Ouriel Reshef examined the war and visual culture, see *Guerres, mythes et caricatures: au berceau d'une mentalité française* (Paris: Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1984). For more on the events of the war, see Geoffrey Wawro's highly detailed *The Franco-Prussian War: the German conquest of France, 1870–1* (Cambridge, 2003).

[489] The Commune was rarely mentioned in the material studied for this part of the thesis, while the defeat was discussed incessantly.

[490] *[C]onseille sur le présent.* Barrès, *Scènes et doctrines*, p. 24.

Throughout the 1880s, 1890s, and into the early years of the twentieth century, the LDP, the LPF and AF campaigned to keep the war at the forefront of the nation's minds. The *Drapeau* (the LDP's newspaper, begun in 1881, a year before the league was officially founded) had been established with the explicit aim of preparing France for the *revanche*. In order to achieve this, its contributors embarked on a campaign of constant repetition of the events of the war and of the need to be ready for another military clash, creating a heightened sense of a dire present which needed to be transformed into a glorious future of recovered pride. The LDP's newspaper was filled with, for example, exhaustively detailed accounts of the German bombardment of Strasbourg or drawings to commemorate the anniversaries of key battles.[491] Not one issue was printed which did not contain numerous references to the war, relentlessly reinforcing the losses sustained because of it and the need to recover the annexed territories and French national pride. Sections containing information on shooting, fencing, and horse riding societies were extensive—an imitation of the threateningly successful German gymnastic society movement and an attempt to prepare the French populace for battle.[492] The German annexation of France's eastern provinces already brought the war constantly into the present. This was a matter of on-going occupation—the country was 'still mutilated'—and every schoolchild could see the map on their classroom wall on which the lost territories had been blotted out, a black elbow jutting into Germany.[493] But for LDP members and activists, this

---

[491] See, for example, L. Autié, 'Les bons serviteurs de la France', *Le Drapeau* (29 Sept. 1883), pp. 452–3. See also the drawing for the Buzenal anniversary on the front page of the paper on 29 Jan. 1888; and Henri Galli, 'Impressions d'Alsace: un anniversaire', *Le Drapeau* (2 Sept. 1909), pp. 1–3. Significantly, this trend wasn't confined to the 1880s and it continued throughout the life of the paper.

[492] Seager cited the LDP's 'obvious imitation of German methods', see *The Boulanger Affair*, p. 47.

[493] A. Gauthier de Clagny, 'Buzenval', *Le Drapeau* (16 Jan. 1898), p. 2. There are many other references to the sense that the loss of Alsace-Lorraine was disfiguring or constituted dismemberment. Two prominent examples come from a letter from Barrès to Maurras (Nov. 1902), *La république ou le roi: correspondance*, p. 331; and from an article by Henri Galli ('La question d'Alsace', *Le Drapeau* [13 Feb. 1904]) in which Galli insisted that France couldn't 'accept as definitive her dismemberment' (*démembrement*), p. 4. As Bertrand Taithe pointed out, 'defeat of the flesh became the central metaphor of French representations of the war after 1870' (*Defeated Flesh: welfare, warfare and the making of modern France* [Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999], p. 180). Alexandre Zévaès recollected the blackened map on classroom walls, see *Une génération*, p. 9.

sense of an ever-present defeat was compounded by a process of unceasing repetition which began soon after the defeat and which was spearheaded by the *Drapeau*.

This repetition was spurred on by a fear of forgetting the war; this was a vital and a vivid aspect of the discourse surrounding the war, and the way in which nationalists conceived of memories of the defeat shaped their understanding of time. As soon as it was launched in 1881, the *Drapeau* began to fight against what it saw as a tendency to forget the Franco-Prussian War and the shame it had brought:

> [w]e forget everything, but nothing is erased faster than the memory of our humiliations. […] Alsace-Lorraine is no longer constantly present in our memories.[494]

The author of this sorrowful article was Raoul Frary, one of the original founders of the LDP and a *lycée* professor and journalist who wrote for various right wing newspapers, including the *Écho de Paris* and the *National*.[495] The piece was taken from a book he published that year under the same title; in this book, Frary mourned the loss of Alsace-Lorraine before going on to detail the ever-present German military threat.[496] In the section reprinted in the *Drapeau*'s first number, Frary related an anecdote about meeting an elderly man who told him that the younger generation was separated from that of the combatants as though by 'an abyss'.[497] Frary fretted that these younger generations would be left as cold by 1870 as his own was by the thought of Napoleon's defeat in 1815. His text, as well as demonstrating a strikingly similar unease about potentially unbridgeable differences between generations to that explored in Chapter 2, indicated something of the understanding of the present that the defeat would come to create. Frary underscored the necessity of forging an unbroken tie with the events of 1870–1 so that, painful as they were, they would remain 'constantly present'.[498] From the beginning there was

---

494 Raoul Frary, 'Le péril national', *Le Drapeau* (29 Dec. 1881), p. 2.

495 Joly fleetingly mentioned Frary as a founding LDP member in *Déroulède*, p. 87.

496 See Frary, *Le péril national* (Paris: Didier, 1881).

497 Frary, 'Le péril national', p. 2.

498 Ibid. 2. It seems sensible to suggest that Frary was bemoaning broad national indifference and that he was not referring to younger members of the LDP.

a need to bind the defeat and its memory inextricably to the present—and this was done with the aim of avoiding a generational gulf. Unity of a community, then, was dependent on the unity of its perception of time.

Lurking behind articles such as these was the idea that time itself was a menace, a destructive and inexorable force totally indifferent to France's plight. Pierre Giffard articulated this threat in an article in the *Figaro* in 1887.[499] Writing in a similar tone to Frary, he lamented that the country was already forgetting the situation in Alsace-Lorraine: 'time, which erases everything—more quickly in France than elsewhere—was already beginning its work'.[500] Giffard's article, like Frary's, demonstrated an acute worry that France was neglecting the defeat and abandoning her lost provinces to Germany, and Giffard was especially concerned that forgetting seemed to be a peculiarly French phenomenon. His article was cited many years later in the *Drapeau*: in 1904, an author going by the name of Claude Lorrain reiterated the points made in 'La situation en Alsace-Lorraine', quoting directly from Giffard's earlier piece to restate fears that the defeat was being forgotten and underscore the need to keep it alive.[501] That Lorrain was able to redeploy the points made in Giffard's 1887 article over fifteen years later neatly demonstrates the stability of certain aspects of the discourse surrounding 1870, underscoring the extent to which some nationalist writers became stuck, discussing the same events in the very same ways. But their writings also give a clue as to the deeper metaphysics of the far right during this period: the call to remember, exhibited by so many authors, revealed an intense awareness of memory's frailties, its vulnerability to the irresistible power of time.

---

499 Pierre Giffard, 'La situation en Alsace', *Le Figaro*, no. 73 (14 March 1887), p. 1. Giffard was a fascinating character, a prolific and well-travelled journalist whose support of Dreyfus caused turmoil within the sporting newspaper *Le Vélo*; the paper split and one of the two vying factions founded the Tour de France in 1903. Giffard's preoccupation with the Franco-Prussian War (he wrote a book on *Les erreurs de la guerre* [1886]) might have suggested that he was more likely to become an anti-Dreyfsuard but the divisions between the two camps were hard to predict. For more on Giffard's life and journalism, see Jacques Seray, *Pierre Giffard, précurseur du journalisme moderne: du Paris-Brest à l'affaire Dreyfus* (Toulouse: Éditions pas d'oiseau, 2008).

500 Giffard, 'La situation en Alsace', p. 1. Giffard was referring to recent elections in which very few (15) *députés* who protested against the German occupation were elected; he saw this as the beginning of a worrying trend.

501 Claude Lorrain, 'France et Alsace-Lorraine', *Le Drapeau* (13 Feb. 1904), pp. 4–5. This was doubtless a pseudonym, but the real identity of the author is unknown.

Time presented a profound challenge, and many on the far right felt the need to fend off its ravages.

Constant repetition and continual reinforcement of key events seemed like the best way to keep the passage of time at bay, protecting memory and privileging its status as an integral part of the nationalist mission. An emphasis on the importance of memory was to be expected in a movement which sought the recreation of purer and nobler French roots, and the need to remember Alsace-Lorraine provided a compelling focus for this proclivity. In an early article in the *Cocarde*, Maurras (at this point a bohemian youth trying to make his name as a writer in a variety of right wing or monarchist reviews) argued that memory was a fundamental part of the country, the precious juice of the grape (*le suc de la vigne*) without which France would be a mere word, an artificial construct.[502] This remained a concern for Maurras as he rose to prominence within AF, and it was taken up by the rest of the movement. In an anonymous note introducing a reprinted section of his book *Kiel et Tanger*, one of the review's writers asserted that the AF movement 'exist[ed] to save true citizens from the sin of forgetting'.[503] Maurras' close friend and collaborator Léon Daudet displayed similar concerns, arguing that any loss of patriotic sentiment or diminishing of the importance of nationality stemmed from 'an obliteration of memory' or 'an amnesiac phenomenon'.[504] The notion that memory was at once vitally important and highly vulnerable to time lent urgency as well as ideological foregrounding to the nationalists' constant reinforcement of the defeat. The passage of time, which carried the country away from its glorious past and further into the bleak and formless terrain of the

---

[502] Charles Maurras, 'Quelle France?', *La Cocarde*, no. 2434 (4 Jan. 1895), p. 1.

[503] Anonymous, 'Kiel et Tanger', *L'AF: revue*, no. 187 (1 April 1907), p. 13. For more on Maurras' increasingly important role in AF's early years, see Laurent Joly, *Naissance de l'Action française*, pp. 159–292.

[504] Léon Daudet, *Une campagne d'Action française* (Paris: Nouvelle librairie nationale, 1910), p. 21. This is a collection of Daudet's early articles in the AF review and daily newspaper. See also Daudet's speech at the 'Contre l'oubli' meeting, *L'AF*, no. 46 (5 May 1908), p. 2. Daudet was the son of Julia and Alphonse Daudet; Alphonse was a novelist and the couple held an important literary salon (see section on 'les jeudis littéraires de Monsieur et Madame Daudet' in Antoine Glinoer and Vincent Laisney, *L'âge des cenacles. Confraternités littéraires et artistques au XIX^e siècle* [Paris: Fayard, 2013], pp. 188–91).

present, was experienced as pain. In the nationalist imagination, memory offered a way of coping with the agonising flow of time, since it both responded to a duty that these activists felt to be profound and pointed to the potential for redemption—if people recalled how bad France's current state was then there might be a possibility to change the situation.

It follows, then, the far-right groups studied here (and especially the LDP) were movements which prized commemorative events, and activists' most powerful and affecting interaction with the defeat and its memory came through form of marches converging on statues or memorials, often at battlefields.[505] For the faithful who returned year on year, it seemed that France had to repeat the torment of 1870–1, emblematised by the Battle of Sedan on 1 September 1870 or by the (second) Battle of Buzenval in January 1871.[506] A writer in the *Drapeau* declared that it was 'good to make and to remake these painful pilgrimages every year, to awaken in our hearts these thorough and holy hatreds'.[507] Jules Claretie would put this more poignantly and more dolefully in his memoir in 1910. Describing the commemorations of battles such as the Sedan, he wrote: 'we are those obstinate ones who feel the painful need to reopen the wounds and to remember'.[508] There was, then, a very practical and visceral sense in which the defeat was continually brought painfully into the present—and commemoration was, after all, a process of 'bringing the past into the present'.[509]

---

505 The key sites of commemoration were the Strasbourg statue at Place de la Concorde in Paris, and the battlefields of Champigny and Buzenval. Attendance at these marches varied and was related to outside events: hovering around a baseline of some 5,000 people, the twenty-fifth anniversary of the war and the Dreyfus Affair saw an enormous upswing which brought numbers as high as 30,000: see Varley, *Under the Shadow*, pp. 23–4.

506 This second battle at Buzenval constituted the final attempt by the French army to break out of besieged Paris, see Wawro, *The Franco-Prussian War*, pp. 211–98.

507 De Clagny, 'Buzenval', p. 2.

508 Jules Claretie, *Quarante ans après: impressions d'Alsace et de Lorraine* (Paris: Bibliothèque Charpentier, 1910), p. 115. Claretie was a novelist, chronicler, and well-known literary figure who had been deeply marked by the war, producing an 800-page history of the events of 1870–1, see *Histoire de la révolution de 1870–1* (Paris: Librairie illustrée, 1877). See http://data.bnf.fr/11896929/jules_claretie/ for basic information on Claretie (accessed 20 July 2017).

509 Ludmilla Jordanova, 'Marking time' in Holger Hoock (ed.), *History, Commemoration and National Preoccupation: Trafalgar 1805–2005* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 8.

In the 1880s and 1890s, these events were situated on the indistinct ground between memory and commemoration: while many could still give their own accounts of 1870–1, there was a whole generation emerging whose understanding and experience of the defeat was second-hand.[510] Letters from *liguers* to their chief Déroulède reveal the potency of these events in terms of bringing these constituencies together. A series of fervent letters from a M. Braumüller described how the young man, so moved by the LDP's marches and feeling himself to be a part of the battles fought nearly thirty years ago, was 'ready to sacrifice [his] life for the cause of the Ligue'.[511] Similarly, twenty-year-old Jean Normand wrote to Déroulède to tell him that, upon hearing Marcel Habert's speech at the Buzenval march the previous Sunday, he had felt the desire for the *revanche* stir deep inside of him. Normand stated that his father had also been a member of the Ligue, and that he wanted to follow in his footsteps.[512] Commemorative events brought activists together in a compelling shared experience that provided a way of living and then reliving the war's pain and its significance—and, importantly, this offered a way out of the impasse described by Frary and by Giffard. These commemorative events, with their make-up of war veterans mingling with younger people, further cemented the defeat in the present, bolstering a conception of the present and the future which figured the redemptive intervention of the *revanche* as the only way of moving on from contemporary ills. Ultimately, they fostered a powerful collective experience of time which, for a while, consisted in an equilibrium between present horror and future hope.

This balance could not, however, be sustained indefinitely. A tiny detail found at the head of every issue of the *Drapeau* begins to suggest the trajectory of far-right experiences of

---

[510] Bertrand Taithe's article alerted me to the importance of this distinction, see 'Remembering victory—commemorating defeat? The Franco–British Trafalgar centenary in 1905' in ibid. 50.

[511] AN, 401AP, box 24 B2, letter from Braumüller to Déroulède (28 Feb. 1900). It is also interesting to note that, in these letters, Braumüller had absorbed Déroulède's bellicose and theatrical rhetoric and was reflecting it back to him.

[512] AN, 401AP, box 25 N, letter from Normand to Déroulède (24 Jan. 1905). Habert was the other major figure in the LDP though, in contrast to its leader, he came from a political and a law background rather than a military one. See BNF's information at http://data.bnf.fr/13015001/marcel_habert/ (accessed 20 July 2017).

time: emblazoned at the top of the newspaper was the legend '[w]ho lives? France! Even so! 1870–188…'[513] A great deal was encapsulated in the expectant ellipsis: it suggested that France would take back its lost territories soon—but when, exactly? The LDP sought to keep dismay at the defeat close by through its endless rehashing of the events of 1870–1, and it simultaneously tried to keep alive the possibility of Alsace-Lorraine's imminent recovery, suggesting that a redemptive future was close at hand. However, the electrified sense of a present about to change for the better eventually gave way to an experience of time coloured more by inertia than by potential. As the 1880s elapsed and the 1890s began, a digit had to be erased from the header and it was altered to '1870–18…'; later, the dates were dropped altogether. The arc traced by the *Drapeau*, from a delicately held balance of horror and hope to the fading of the latter, was illustrative of the nationalist right more broadly. This community's experience of time was, at first, marked by the feeling of existing in a present which was dire but which nonetheless held potential for a glorious future and, later, by the sensation of simply being trapped in that terrible present with no possibility of escape.

Paul Déroulède's annual speeches at the December anniversary at Champigny offer a way of tracking how the understanding of time produced by the war changed subtly across the years. These speeches, collected and published by the LDP, began in 1882 by hailing a 'movement of regeneration', and they retained their buoyant and muscular quality throughout the Boulanger Affair in 1888–9 ('the French have arrived today at their most virile hour').[514] But by the late 1890s, Déroulède had begun to focus on how far the dolorous passage of time had carried France: a quarter of a century had passed, he remarked in 1898, without 'vengeance or deliverance', and in 1905 he spoke of the humiliation of the '35 mortal years' that had passed—a humiliation exacerbated by the First Moroccan Crisis earlier that year, when French

[513] *Quand même!* ('Even so!') was the LDP's often-heard call of defiance to the occupiers in the east.
[514] Déroulède, *À Champigny-la-bataille: propagandes 1882–1912* (Paris: Bureaux de la Ligue des patriotes, 1913), pp. 7, 17.

power in Morocco was threatened by an assertive Kaiser Wilhelm.[515] Although Déroulède still made frequent references to French rejuvenation and 'national faith' in these later years, from the page his speeches begin to ring hollow.[516] Doubtless the charismatic former soldier was able to breathe some life into them—but the content of the addresses nonetheless became more about repetition than about any concrete hope for change. The redemptive future was receding while the ghastly present began to appear endless.

The worry about the passage of time in relation to the defeat had intensified and was being taken up by other writers and activists by the late 1890s. In one of his frequently cited columns in the *Figaro* in early 1898, Jules Lemaître mourned younger generations' lack of understanding when it came to the shame of the Franco-Prussian War.[517] These generations, the LPF leader asserted, were the 'sons of the defeat' and had therefore 'never known France to be powerful, victorious, respected in the world'.[518] The broader point of this article was to highlight and to explain what Lemaître took to be the youth's lack of patriotism.[519] For him, the absence of pride in being French was the result of a generational rift between those in whom the memory of the defeat lived on and those who had never been touched by the events of the war (although, unlike the former Dreyfusards who would express their sense of isolation from young people in explicitly temporal terms, Lemaître did not focus on the experience of time). Lemaître's comments were nonetheless revealing, alerting us to the fact that the defeat was not remembered solely for its negative aspects, but also because it represented a crucial

---

[515] Ibid. 21, 30. France was protected from serious ramifications by her alliances with Britain and Italy, but the crisis nonetheless constituted a temporary embarrassment acutely felt by those such as Déroulède.
[516] Ibid. 38.
[517] For example, Lemaître's column was cited in very favourable terms in Paul Lenglé's article 'L'espérence', *La Cocarde*, no. 3891 (4 May 1898), p. 1, as well as in other places. His columns were collected as a volume under their original umbrella title, *Opinions à rependre* (Paris: Société française d'imprimerie et de librairie, 1901).
[518] Jules Lemaître, 'Le patriotisme', *Le Figaro*, no. 104 (14 April 1898), p. 1.
[519] Nationalists oscillated between suggesting that a patriotic awakening was underway (in the midst of the Boulanger Affair or once the Dreyfus Affair had taken hold more thoroughly) and bemoaning the disappearance of national sentiment. For the former, in contrast to Lemaître, see Fonrouge, 'Hors frontière: évolution ou révolution', *La Cocarde*, no. 1 (13 March 1888), p. 2, who referenced a 'powerful feeling' of 'awakening in the national spirit'; and Henri Vaugeois who spoke of the 'wounded' 'patriotic spirit' stirring in AF's very first meeting, see 'Conférence du 20 juin 1899', *L'AF: revue*, no. 1 (10 July 1899), p. 9

and agonising turning point before which France had been great. Evoking the defeat also meant evoking French distinction and importance on the international stage, now lost. At its most basic, the juxtaposition of the two states—that of greatness and that of downfall—served to accentuate the misery of the present and to associate it even more strongly with the defeat. The turning point of 1870–1 came to define what it meant to live in the present, which seemed ever more desolate as the glorious past receded from view and all hope of recovering it faded along with the youth's patriotic spirit. As the creeping threat of generational rifts identified by Frary in 1881 became the saddening reality alluded to by Lemaître in 1898, the defeat went from being an important aspect of the present to something that largely defined it.

A similar shift can be seen in meetings organised by other right-wing groups. In May 1908, AF held a heavily publicised meeting 'against forgetting '71'.[520] Many other fears had been added to the perennial hurt of the defeat over the years: the need for young people to resist the 'Germanistic' teaching at the Sorbonne, and the need to be aware of the 'permanent menace' presented by the rapid expansion of the German empire.[521] The diversity of issues that the war was seen to touch upon reinforced the extent to which it was a fundamental part of the present. The effects of the war were now perceived as more diffuse, seeping into other areas of French life and culture, which now seemed overshadowed by an omnipresent threat whose root was in danger of being forgotten. Léon de Montesquiou, with characteristic eloquence, suggested that 'the Republic didn't crudely tell us to forget—but it did everything it could to make us forget'.[522] Bullish hope and an emancipatory future which had seemed close at hand had given way to a reinforcement of the continuing and pervasive horror of the present and a deep

---

[520] A roundup of the meeting and its speeches was given in 'Contre l'oubli de '71', *L'Action française*, no. 46 (5 May 1908), pp. 1–2. A police agent suggested that this meeting, part of a wave of increased action by the group, was merely a way to promote their six-week old daily newspaper; while this is doubtless part of the reason, it does not explain why 1871 was the focus, see AN, F 7 12862, police report of 5 May 1908.

[521] The first theme is tackled in Vaugeois' speech and the second in an address by Pierre Lasserre (a royalist who read Sorel with interest and was active in AF up to 1914): see 'Contre l'oubli', p. 2. The worry centred on German philosophy taught by figures such as Charles Andler.

[522] Ibid. 2. De Montesquiou was a monarchist and one of AF's leading writers and orators during the group's early years.

reluctance to leave the defeat behind (hence de Montesquiou's anger at the Third Republic for its attempts to put the war in the past). So indelibly had the Franco-Prussian War marked nationalist discourse and political culture that writers and activists became frozen in a nightmarish and static present, intent on remembering past horrors and unable to move forward. They sustained the vivid and acutely painful memory of the war and the loss of Alsace-Lorraine, first with the aim of galvanising the country to retake its lost provinces but then simply because they remained stiflingly fixated on these events. Time could not be halted and, as the years went on, memory could act only as something of an anaesthetic to dull its most excruciating aspects. Ultimately, the emphasis on remembering the war and its losses only heightened the extent to which it defined the present, and nationalists became trapped—partly by their very way of coping—in a horrifying present.

Trauma theory offers us a powerful way of deepening our understanding the far-right's relationship to 1870–1 and the experience of time that it fostered. Considering the bluntly traumatic aspects of the defeat alerts us to the way in which nationalists were compelled to act in certain ways, ways which in turn influenced how they perceived time. As sociologist Kai Erikson argued, trauma is not an exclusively individual experience, but one which entire 'regions, even whole countries' can undergo and which can come to 'dominate [a community's] imagery and its sense of self'.[523] The writers and activists who remained fixated on the defeat constituted just such a community—a traumatised group who saw themselves as battling against outside indifference, their collective identity 'intensively engaged' in their shared experience of pain.[524] To a significant extent, this sense of community was defined by a

---

[523] Kai Erikson, 'Notes on trauma and community' in Cathy Caruth (ed.), *Trauma: explorations in memory* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1995), p. 190. See Erikson, *A New Species of Trouble: explorations in disaster, trauma, and community* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1994) for fuller analysis of the topic.

[524] Barbara A. Misztal, *Theories of Social Remembering* (Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2003), p. 139: traumas 'are the occasions on which collective identities are most intensively engaged'. See Varley, *Under the Shadow*, p. 12 and Bertrand Joly, 'La France et la Revanche (1871–1914)', *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine* 46 (1999), pp. 325–47, both of whom emphasised the fact that the defeat was not a popular concern. James J. Cooke pointed out that the mainstream political response to 1870–1 had been to seek colonial expansion rather than to direct

particular experience of time. In their exploration of the psychological effects of trauma Bessel A. van der Kolk and Onno van der Hart note how overwhelming experiences return suddenly and unexpectedly, encroaching on the present and eventually producing a state in which people live neither entirely in the 'traumatic past' nor really in what van der Kolk and van der Hart term 'the bleached present'.[525] A traumatic event, in other words, obliterates the divide between past and present.[526] Such an obliteration is evidenced in the texts and speeches cited above, as writers felt the 'intrusive past' weighing on them, pushing them to repeat ritualistically the events of 1870–1.[527] At times, repetition of the war and its losses became a semi-controlled compulsion, underlining the extent to which the defeat imprisoned nationalists in their own strange, intermediate timeframe which lay somewhere between past and present.

We could also apply this analysis to the Dreyfus Affair, which came when nationalists were already at a low ebb, their hope in the *revanche* receding and their horror of the present advancing. For AF and the LPF in particular, the Affair was never really over, and their publications and meetings continued to be littered with references to it.[528] For instance, at a meeting to commemorate 'the twelfth anniversary of the traitor Dreyfus' trial', Vaugeois cried, 'the Affair is not finished!'; and when AF founded its daily newspaper a year or so later, it included a section called the 'Dreyfus calendar', which listed what had happened on a given day

---

feelings of revenge towards Germany, see *New French Imperialism, 1880–1910: the Third Republic and colonial expansion* (Newton Abbott: David & Charles, 1973), p. 10.

[525] Bessel A. van der Kolk and Onno van der Hart, 'The intrusive past: the flexibility of memory and the engraving of trauma' in Caruth (ed.), *Trauma*, pp. 176–7.

[526] See also Caruth's discussion of a traumatic flashback as neither belonging in the past nor in the present in her 'Introduction: recapturing the past', ibid. 153. This idea of trauma bringing past into present has also been used by Berber Bevernage in his article on Truth Commissions in Africa, see 'Writing the past out of the present'. It is also a theme which runs throughout the essays in Richard Bessel and Dirk Schumann (eds), *Life After Death: approaches to a cultural and social history of Europe during the 1940s and 1950s* (Washington DC: German Historical Institute, 2003).

[527] See the very illustrative title of van der Kolk and van der Hart's essay, 'The intrusive past' in Caruth (ed.), *Trauma.*

[528] This remained true of the LDP, though their focus on the defeat always remained at the forefront of their writing and campaigning.

in the height of the Affair in 1898–9.[529] These brief examples demonstrate that the compulsion to repeat, the traumatic breach between past and present, could occur in response to other situations. Far more than the far-left thinkers and activists studied in Part II, members of the LPD, the LPF, and the remained fixated by the Affair, and this too contributed powerfully to their conception of time.

Through their interactions with the defeat, nationalists created a powerful and a particular experience of time. This experience was at first dominated by a combination of disgust at the present situation on the one hand, and the expectation that a vengeful future could be brought into being to deliver France on the other. The latter retreated, however, while the former became all-consuming, especially as new outrages were piled upon the initial abomination. Nationalists were left stranded in a bleak present, wanting to recover French glory but scared, ultimately, to be transported too far away from the defeat by time's currents. They privileged and defended memory in the hope of fending off time, but it was a brittle and an inadequate weapon. This approach to the defeat, characterised by compulsive repetition, was influenced by the trauma this community of activists and writers was undergoing: for them, the gap between past and present was being rudely and continually breached, resulting in a desolate landscape of time which was devoid of meaning.

The present: content and concept

In the autumn of 1899, in the midst of the prolonged paroxysm of the Dreyfus Affair, Henri Vaugeois was more convinced than ever that he inhabited a present which was becoming ever darker and more full of horrors. He wrote vehemently of the 'emptiness' and the 'night' that

[529] See 'Le Tridium (19–21 décembre 1906)', *L'AF: revue*, no. 181, p. 12. Speeches from this meeting occupied this whole issue of the review and the next.

constituted 'present time'.[530] The present was perceived to be the lowest point in a long process of decline, and the disdain for and horror of contemporary society formed a cornerstone of the far-right conception of time.[531] The defeat and the disappointments and the scandals of the Third Republic produced a deep antipathy, and the very concept of the present, equated with selfish short-sightedness and national failure, came to be maligned. This section demonstrates how the present itself was perceived to be a time of inescapable and endemic horror. This hatred provided a bass note for nationalist discourse, and though it intensified with events such as the Dreyfus Affair and the Thalamas Affair of 1904, it remained constant in tone (until, that is, a younger generation of AF activists reconciled themselves to the present; this will be explored in the final chapter of the thesis).

For many on the far right, the present was a dire culmination of disastrous events, a terrible fall from grace. Marcel Habert aptly summarised nationalist ideas about the present when he wrote of the nineteenth century:

> [b]orn in glory and blood, it finishes in shame and mud […] it rolls like a rapid and turbulent current, tumbling […] from summit to abyss.

France, Habert pointed out, had gone from Napoleon to Dreyfus, from Austerlitz to Panama.[532] Similarly, in his poetry collection *Chants du soldat*, Déroulède characterised the present as a time of decay: '[t]he century is rotten, the hour is troubled'.[533] He wrote in even stronger terms a few years later in a second collection, *Chants du paysan*, avowing that 'our century is returning in fury

---

530 *[C]e vide et cette nuit du temps présent*. Vaugeois, 'Naissance du "dreyfusisme" comme religion', *L'AF: revue*, no. 8 (1 Nov. 1899), p. 395. This statement has provided the title for this chapter.

531 This has been pointed out previously by, for example, Winock, who underscored the enduring nature of nationalist scorn for the present and situated it among the foremost intellectual tenets of the movement in France during the 1890s. Winock was correct in this assertion, but he stripped hatred of the present from its context within a broader understanding of time. See Winock, *Nationalism*, Chapter 5 on 'Eternal decadence', pp. 75–80.

532 Marcel Habert, 'Le siècle des Révolutions', *Le Drapeau* (20 March 1899), p. 2.

533 Déroulède, 'Sur Corneille', *Chants du soldat* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1885), p. 120.

to the Middle Ages'.[534] For both Habert and Déroulède, the present marked a nadir. Habert posited the nineteenth century as beginning gloriously but sliding downwards into defeat and shame, while Déroulède situated the whole century in a much longer term narrative of decline. Both, however, depicted the present day as the ultimate point of arrival in an epic process of deterioration stretching back across many years. This was common among nationalists: Jules Soury's *Campagne nationaliste*, with its insistence on a sacrificial eternal war against France's ills, was also suffused with the same rhetoric of unremitting decline leading to present disaster.[535] Perhaps surprisingly, this view of France's history was not always an adumbration of further waning in the future—rather, Déroulède, Habert, and Soury all focused on how dire the present had become in order to portray it as a kind of historical rock bottom with no future whatsoever.

The overarching narrative of long-term weakening and atrophy exemplified by the LDP leaders was transposed onto a more immediate timescale, as the Third Republic was described as a regime consisting of accelerating scandals that heaped disgrace upon disgrace. Writing in the *Annales de la PF* in the summer of 1904, activist and writer Jean Forcade unleashed this venomous tirade:

> We will never escape. Wilson Affair, Panama Affair, Southern Railway Affair, Humbert Affair, and now the Affair of the Chartreux Million! This uninterrupted flourishing of scandals is the most obvious benefit of the regime that the Jacobins created for us.[536]

Forcade, by insinuating that there was a downward slide initiated by the Jacobins, was both echoing the narrative of decline described by Habert and Déroulède and identifying himself with the censure of the French Revolution spearheaded by AF luminaries Maurras and de

---

[534] Déroulède, 'Crédo', *Chants du paysan* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1894), p. 107. It should be noted that, though at times the return to the past was cited as a positive thing, a return to the Middle Ages was certainly not the kind of resurrection of a glorious past that some on the right imagined.

[535] Jules Soury, *Campagne nationaliste*; see especially the section on *la porcherie contemporaine*, pp. 149–80.

[536] Jean Forcade, 'Régime de scandales', *Annales de la PF*, no. 101 (1 July 1904), p. 97. These events were financial scandals which took place from the late 1880s to the early 1900s, all involving underhand behaviour from politicians and powerful individuals. It may at first seem surprising that Forcade omitted the most divisive scandal of all, the Dreyfus Affair, but this is explained by the fact that this particular article focused on financial scandals.

Montesquiou. What is most interesting about Forcade's invective, however, is his insistence on the acceleration that he detected in Third Republic financial scandals. For him, these affairs were gathering momentum diabolically, creating a present from which he felt the country would 'never escape'—the longer-term deterioration described by others had sped up and worsened to the point that it was irretrievable.

The same year, in a venomous tract published by the *librairie antisémite*, author Émile Cazanove also alluded to this phenomenon, describing how the Panama Affair of 1892 had seen the 'weakening' of France, while the Dreyfus Affair represented its 'obliteration'.[537] Again, there is the idea of scandals accumulating, and there is the acute sense that their combined impact and their chronological proximity to one another compounded the damage wreaked by each of them individually. Under the caustic pens of writers like Forcade and Cazanove, the present became a time of increasingly frenzied horror. These authors encapsulated the collective right-wing experience of time in the late 1890s and early 1900s, and the sense that scandals were accelerating emboldened nationalist authors, rendering urgent their mission to regenerate France.

This mission became all the more pressing in late 1904, when the Thalamas Affair stoked ferocious nationalist anger and elicited some of the strongest condemnations of the present. The Affair erupted when a teacher at the Lycée Condorcet, François Amédée Thalamas, was accused of insulting the memory of Joan of Arc during a History lesson, his positivist approach allegedly leading him to question both Joan's divine mission and her virginity. Although the Thalamas Affair came to be overshadowed by other Third Republic upheavals and is often frustratingly overlooked by historians, it was nonetheless a vitally important rallying moment for nationalists: at a practical level it operated as a catalyst for the founding of the Ligue d'AF early in 1905, while conceptually it provided vital impetus for

---

[537] Émile Cazanove, *La révolution antijuive de demain (inévitable et à brève échéance)* (Paris: Librairie antisémite, 1904), p. 17.

nationalist hatred of the present.[538] The scandal would live on, and in 1908–9, Thalamas' appointment to give a series of lectures at the Sorbonne prompted ten weeks of unrest and altercations by students mobilised by the AF-associated Camelots du Roi (this second, noisier affair has almost always eclipsed the first in historians' accounts).

Thalamas' comments in the autumn of 1904 provoked the ire of the far right and incited nearly a month of protest: AF swiftly called a meeting 'against the insulters of Joan of Arc', and the mid-December issue of *L'AF: revue* was dedicated to this meeting.[539] François Coppée, the aging and famed nationalist poet and orator, made an impassioned speech beseeching the French to defend their 'most beautiful, purest, most touching' heroine. Disgusted that Thalamas' insulting comments had ever been uttered, Coppée concluded, '[s]uch is the present. These are the pages of contemporary history that all good Frenchmen wish to tear out'.[540] Coppée's striking metaphor was an immediate response to a specific event, but it nonetheless spoke for a broader nationalist desire to excise the present, so painful and so heinous were its misdemeanours. With the Thalamas Affair, this feeling had reached its apex. Hatred of the present had been intensifying throughout the 1890s and early 1900s, and the Thalamas incident was the most recent and most repulsive occurrence in a long string of events regarded by the far right as odious. With it, nationalist rage at contemporary society reached a fever pitch that would not be surpassed even by the separation of Church and State the following year. This event elicited disgust but not at the same level—it was 'absurd' rather than being a reason to

---

[538] Sarah H. Gustafson also remarked on the relative neglect of the first Thalamas Affair in her thesis on the significance of youth in the scandal, 'Representing Joan of Arc: youth, school, and citizenship in the Thalamas Affair of 1904', Ph.D. thesis, Davidson College, North Carolina, 2014, p. 5. This neglect no doubt has something to do with the fact that the Affair of 1904 is not mentioned in the police reports relating to AF, while the 1908–9 Affair has an entire folder of reports devoted to it (see AN, F 7 12862).

[539] 'Contre les insulteurs de Jeanne d'Arc: meeting du 4 décembre 1904', *L'AF: revue*, no. 132 (15 Dec. 1904).

[540] 'Contre les insulteurs de Jeanne d'Arc: discours de François Coppée' in ibid. 409, 412. Coppée had emerged from the 'Parnassian constellation' of literary salons in the 1860s, see Glinoer and Laisney, *L'âge des cénacles*, pp. 128–48. He was heavily involved in the LPF and was its President of Honour until 1902, when he resigned in opposition to the Ligue's stance on religion, which saw it distancing itself from Catholicism in order to help its parliamentary ambitions. See unsigned article, 'La Patrie française en perdition', *Le Rappel* (25 May 1902), clipping preserved in AN, F 7 12722.

annihilate contemporary history.[541] The Church had become just another piece of rubble, one of the 'ruins piling up on the French land'.[542]

The Thalamas Affair owed much of its potency to the fact that it constituted a milestone in what has been termed 'the battle of Joan of Arc', which raged between 1880 and 1914. During this time, the struggle over Joan's memory became fiercer and the stakes began to seem higher.[543] Jaurès' socialist newspaper *L'Humanité* recounted how at the Thalamas demonstrations in 1904 the nationalists cried *Vive Jeanne d'Arc!* while a socialist counter-demonstration responded with shouts of *Vive Jeanne, victime des prêtres!*[544] But the battle over Joan was not fought simply along the lines of Catholicism and republicanism. There is another vital element that needs to be added to our understanding of the struggle: that of time. For nationalists, reclaiming and privileging a certain version of Joan was a powerful symbol of their rejection of a rotten present in favour of embracing a heroic past. Coppée's speech made this rejection explicit, and when juxtaposed with comments made by Georges Thiébaut in 1894, its full significance becomes clear.[545] In a key article on the 'nationalist reaction' in the *Figaro*, Thiébaut had cited Joan of Arc and Napoleon I as the figures to whom 'the instinctively revivified cult of national energy' was attached. He went on to explain that even those whose 'practical patriotism' led them to seek solutions in the present would need to turn to these figures and reignite their 'extinguished energy' and their 'extinct perspicacity'.[546] Claiming Joan meant claiming a past which stood for French rejuvenation and which had to be brought forth

---

[541] Vaugeois, 'La "séparation" est impossible', *L'AF: revue*, no. 136 (15 Feb. 1905), p. 269.

[542] See Louis Dimier, 'Rapport sur le semestre février–juillet 1906 de l'Institut d'AF', *L'AF: revue*, no. 169 (1 July 1906), p. 24. Dimier was general secretary of the Ligue d'AF.

[543] See Gerd Krumeich, 'Joan of Arc between left and right' in Tombs (ed.), *Nationhood and Nationalism*, pp. 63–73; or Michel Winock, 'Jeanne d'Arc' in Pierre Nora (ed.), *Les lieux de mémoire*, vol. 3: *les France (iii) De l'archive à l'emblème* (Paris: Gallimard, 1992), pp. 674–733. See also the section on Joan of Arc in Gildea, *The Past in French History*, pp. 154–65.

[544] Maurice Lauzel, 'La bataille des Pyramides', *L'Humanité*, no. 225 (28 Nov. 1904), p. 3.

[545] Thiébaut had worked closely with Boulanger and helped orchestrate his press campaigns in the late 1880s; he remained active throughout the 1890s and continued to promulgate nationalist doctrine.

[546] Thiébaut, 'Réaction nationaliste', *Le Figaro*, no. 364 (30 Dec. 1894), p. 1. Barrès was also very fond of the phrase 'national energy'—his well-known trilogy was entitled *Roman de l'énergie nationale*.

in order to ameliorate the present; in other words, Joan was 'more present than ever'.[547] When the Thalamas Affair arose ten years after Thiébaut had written this article, the desire to nurture a heroic past—in the form of Joan as a virgin with a divine mission—came into direct conflict with a more hard-headed, positivist version of the Maid's story. This modern approach constituted an epistemology distrusted by many nationalists, who (as we have seen) tended to scorn positivist and scientific methods as 'myopic', faddish and overly concerned with the transient present.[548] In his speech at the 5 December meeting, de Montesquiou castigated 'the great enemies of France' and their desire to 'snuff out […] all the life of the past'.[549] The Thalamas Affair ultimately allowed Joan of Arc to become a broader battleground between conceptions of time, and nationalists consciously depicted the scandal as such, rejecting what they took to be a withered present and championing a superior past which they hoped would live on into the present and the future.

The present was depicted as the culmination of a long downward trajectory, and many on the right experienced the Third Republic as an acceleration of this trajectory. However, this scorn extended to the very concept of the present and not restricted merely to its content. Writing about the building of the Eiffel Tower in 1889, LDP writer and activist Henri Gallian had mourned how monuments previously erected had been about ideas, about 'memory or hope, paying homage to a glorious past or testifying to confidence in the future'; the Eiffel Tower, by contrast, was merely a celebration of the talent of the engineer.[550] Though Gallian did not explicitly mention the present, his focus on past and future made the implication clear: in his analysis, the Eiffel Tower was a construction which looked neither to the past nor to the future but spoke only for the narrow idea of the present—and only for a single individual within

---

547 Philippe Contamine, 'Jeanne d'Arc dans la mémoire des droites' in Jean-François Sirinelli (ed.), *Histoire des droites en France*, vol. 2: *Cultures* (Paris: Gallimard, 1992), p. 418.
548 Georges Valerie, *Notes sur le nationalisme français* (Paris, 1901), p. 3.
549 'Contre les insulteurs de Jeanne d'Arc: discours de Léon de Montesquiou', *L'AF: revue*, no. 132 (15 Dec. 1904), p. 437.
550 Henri Gallian, '1889?', *Almanach de la Ligue des Patriotes* (1889), p. 42.

it. His article demonstrates the conceptual depth of nationalist scorn for the present, and begins to hint at the connection made between the present and the individual in the nationalist imagination. Gallian's comments were made well before the Dreyfus or the Thalamas Affairs, but the idea that he had communicated in 1889 would become increasingly prominent.

The virulent nationalist hatred for individualism is well known, but our understanding of it is enriched if we see it as a rejection of the very concept of the present. The relationship between the present and the individual, as well as the detrimental impact of focusing on both of these things, was subtly elaborated by prominent right-wing thinker Ferdinand Brunetière, who had unleashed a 'tempest' by publicly and fervently converting to Catholicism in 1895.[551] Brunetière was not a natural ally of the nationalist groups who form the core of this analysis, but on key issues he aligned himself with them and articulated something vital about the right more broadly.[552] '[W]e are suffering', Brunetière insisted in a speech on 'the enemies of the French soul', from an 'illness', 'from an excess of individualism'.[553] Earlier in the speech, he had given some idea of how to guard against the pernicious effect of this phenomenon, proposing that firm attachment to the *patrie* was the 'only' means by which to 'prolong our personal activities beyond the boundaries of our existence', and pointing out that tradition was valuable as something which went beyond 'the present hour'.[554] As with Gallian's comments on the Eiffel Tower, Brunetière's search for a way of extending and giving meaning to one's own lifetime demonstrates a deep unease with the notion of a present which was disconnected from past and future, and this free-floating time was seen as individualism's temporal dimension.

The same conflation of individualism and the concept of the present can be found in Barrès' *Les déracinés*, the first instalment in his trilogy, *Roman de l'énergie nationale*. Barrès illustrated

---

551 Nye, 'Two paths to a psychology of action', p. 420.
552 Rioux described how Brunetière did not accept all nationalist doctrines but worked with nationalists nonetheless, see *Nationalisme et conservatisme*, p. 13.
553 Brunetière, *Les ennemis de l'âme française, conférence prononcée à Lille le 15 mars 1899* (Paris: J. Hetzel, 1899), p. 77.
554 Ibid. 25, 16.

the connection with an intricate metaphor. He described the seven students who formed the main characters of his novel as 'leaves detached' from the 'great Lorraine oak', floating aimlessly and meaninglessly to the ground.[555] Only their connection to the tree, a symbol of the past and a vital connection to the present and to the future, could save these young people from the process of *décérébration* and *déracinement* which was their fate—and indeed the broader fate of France. These disconnected individuals had fallen into a disjointed present, which was depicted as an extremely harmful state. The connection made between individualism and the notion of the present is significant for two reasons. First, the worry about the separation between past and present and between present and future was ultimately much more vivid than the anxiety about a society in which people were disconnected from one another (which is what individualism is usually taken to signify). Second, the relationship between individualism and the present also allows us to understand that nationalist scorn for the present was deeply conceptual rather than simply being based on hostility to the events of recent history.

Antipathy toward the present was not the exclusive preserve of the far right, however. As we saw in Chapter 3, writers such as Péguy, Sangnier, Colomb, and Berth all perceived the present as being in a state of disintegration. This affinity in terms of how time was conceptualised indicates, perhaps, that Barrès' assertion that hatred of the present united nationalists could be applicable more broadly across the political spectrum. Furthermore, Péguy and Sangnier in particular had other interests which overlapped with those of Maurras and others on the right: they were all animated by their determination to reinvigorate Catholicism and place it at the heart of social change, and this suggests that they shared not only disdain for the present, but a desire to adopt a longer-term, religious timeframe which could overcome its frailties.[556] Nevertheless, the evocations of a dire present described in Chapter 3 differ from

---

555 Barrès, *Roman de l'énergie nationale: les déracinés* (Paris: Eugène Fasquelle, 1897), p. 88.

556 It should be noted that Maurras was agnostic and did not practise—but he was nonetheless very concerned with the importance of Catholicism in society and politics. As Weber noted, AF was about political Catholicism and, 'metaphysically' speaking, one could be whatever one liked, see *Action française*, p. 35. Maurras published a

those of the nationalists in three key ways. Nationalists tended, as we have seen, to weld the deplorable state of France to a long-term narrative of decline; they largely disregarded the power of the present as a time of action (an idea espoused by Péguy, Sangnier, Colomb, and Berth); and, finally, nationalist abhorrence of the Third Republic went right to the core of the present as a concept. This final element also marked the far right out from other writers who espoused the ubiquitous late nineteenth-century concepts of decadence and degeneration, which were intimately related to a negative view of the present—writers such as Joris-Karl Huysmans or Max Nordau tended to be troubled by the time in which they were living rather than the temporal category of the present itself.[557]

Nationalists, deeply marked by the defeat and dismayed at the accumulation of scandals in France, detested the present not merely in terms of its content but also in terms of what it represented. It was associated with individualism and with the stifling of national heroes like Joan of Arc. The present came to be defined not chronologically but qualitatively; in other words, it would stretch as far as the humiliation of the defeat and the many Third Republic scandals, and could only be changed by the decisive intervention of the future. At all levels of nationalist discourse, the conviction that the present was a futile time of despair tended, on the

---

series of articles in *L'AF: revue* about Sangnier, which prompted the latter to begin corresponding with Maurras. Maurras cited, for example, their common desire for an ordered society that was 'rooted in tradition': see 'Nouvelle lettre de Marc Sangnier, *L'AF: revue*, no. 124 (15 Aug. 1904), p. 252. Later, however, Maurras and others in AF expressed concern with the Sillon's increasingly 'Protestant' tendencies and this became the focus of the articles about Sangnier: see for example, Abbé E. Barbier, 'Le Sillon et ses tendances protestantes', *L'AF: revue*, no. 187 (1 Aug. 1907), pp. 41–57.

[557] The notions of decadence and degeneration were perhaps best exemplified by Huysmans' novel *À rebours* (1888) and Nordau's study *Degeneration* (1892). Decadence has been described as a 'pessimistic philosophy of history' (Koenraad W. Swart, *The Sense of Decadence in Nineteenth-Century France* [The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1964], p. 145), and thus there is a link between this notion and the ideas of the nationalist writers I study here. However, decadence and degeneration were most often associated with 'aesthetic posturing' (ibid. 249), and much of the scholarship investigates their artistic and literary angles. I have chosen to avoid the terms decadence and degeneration in order to maintain a tight focus on the conceptualisation of the present. For a recent collection of essays on decadence and degeneration in art and literature, see Marja Härmänmaa and Christopher Nissen (eds), *Decadence, Degeneration, and the End: studies in the European fin-de-siècle* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014). For a historical study, see Daniel Pick's brilliant *Faces of Degeneration: a European disorder, c. 1848–1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), which provided a kaleidoscopic perspective on representations of degeneration.

one hand, to displace the hope for change onto an almost unattainable future and, on the other, to engender an emphasis on recovering the lost glories of the past.

Chapter 7

Un avenir plus éloigné

Conceptualising time: the eternal nation

It should come as no surprise that when AF and its review were founded in the heat of the Dreyfus Affair, considerable emphasis was placed on conceptualising time. As we saw in Chapter 6, a particular set of concerns about time had already been set in motion by the defeat and the subsequent rejection of the present. In the movement's early years, AF's founders attempted to formalise these concerns and to develop an understanding of time which provided a way of eliding the present. This crystallised as an attempt to create an eternal France which could be insulated from the horror and the precariousness of contemporary events.

In the very first issue of AF's review, Vaugeois insisted that AF 'was not turned to the past, but towards the future'.[558] He altered this position quite quickly, however, and in the second issue he made a preliminary attempt to define the movement's aims in terms of a different understanding of time.

> Is Action française not, before all else, a return to the past, a reaction? We believe so, in effect, and we wouldn't hesitate to admit this, because this backwards movement contains nothing which should alarm people, if its character is properly understood: it is passing, quick, and natural, like the gesture of a gymnast recovering his momentum.[559]

---

[558] Vaugeois, 'Conférence du 20 juin 1899', p. 9. For a detailed account of the issues surrounding Vaugeois' opening speech, see Laurent Joly, *Naissance de l'Action française*, pp. 95–117.

[559] *L'Action française, n'est-elle point, avant tout, un retour en arrière, une réaction? Nous le pensons en effet, et nous n'hésitons pas à l'avouer, car ce mouvement en arrière n'aurait rien qui doive effrayer, si on le comprenait bien, tel qu'il se produit: passager, rapide et naturel, comme le geste d'un gymnaste qui reprend son élan.* Vaugeois, 'Réaction d'abord…', *L'AF: revue*, no. 2 (1 Aug. 1899), p. 3.

At first glance, it seems that Vaugeois was articulating an understanding of time that was based around seeking refuge in the past. Certainly, this idea is substantiated by comments made by other nationalists, as well as by the disputes between them and the Dreyfusards or the left which we encountered in Chapter 1. Soury asked, in his infamous *Campagne nationaliste*, 'how can we go back up the current?' [*remonter le courant*], while Émile de Marcère similarly expressed a yearning to 'continue our history and to take up its thread'.[560] On closer inspection, though, Vaugeois' comments reveal a subtler approach. The reference to 'the gesture of a gymnast recovering his momentum' alerts us to the idea that he was really looking to take up the past with a view to ameliorating the future; it was not simply a shelter.

This was substantiated by a speech he gave two years later, clarifying his earlier remarks. At AF's anniversary celebrations in 1901, he stated:

> this poor choice of words caused me to be classed among those backward spirits whose entire lives in this world consist in retreating before the future because it is new and unexpected, and in fearfully taking refuge in the contemplations or the regrets of the past.

What he had really meant, he explained, was that France needed to go back a little in order to then make a greater leap into the future—like someone who tries to jump over a pit and, realising that the leap is greater than he had perhaps anticipated, retreats further back to get a longer run up.[561] This illustrates quite clearly that any return to a past was desired primarily because of its impact on the future.

What, then, actually was the past, and what was its relationship to the future? Vaugeois, in his 1899 article, described the past as 'everything acquired'. It provided the force and the power to which France needed to return if it was to base its future in something more solid

---

[560] Soury, *Campagne nationaliste*, p. 12; Émile de Marcère, 'Le nationalisme', *L'AF: revue*, no. 2 (15 May 1900), p. 39. De Marcère was an aging senator (b. 1828) and politician who took an interest in AF. He was involved in Action libérale populaire, a right-wing but much less radical group with greater parliamentary success than the nationalist organisations studied here. His involvement was mentioned in police reports in AN, F 7 12719, see for example report of 23 Jan. 1904. ALP leader Jacques Piou insisted on his group's separation from other nationalist movements, (see AN, F 12719, police report of 23 Feb. 1904) but there was still some interaction between these individuals and those in more radical groups.

[561] Vaugeois, 'L'anniversaire d'AF: conférence', *L'AF: revue*, no. 46 (15 June 1901), p. 956.

than the 'Kantian maxims of the Republic'.[562] The novelist Paul Bourget, speaking at a dinner the theme of which was *L'appel au soldat*, the second book in Barrès' *énergie nationale* trilogy, elaborated a poetic metaphor which elucidates this notion of the past. '[T]he turmoil of 1789 has separated us from our dead', Bourget lamented, and for a hundred years

> France ha[d] been ignorant of the great law of continuity which dictates that each generation considers itself as the usufruct of a treasure inherited from their […] ancestors.

This treasure, once accrued, had to be transmitted whole down to descendants.[563] Most obviously, this recalls some of the themes discussed in Chapter 1—notably, the idea that the past was conceptualised as a bloc, a monolith: it had to be taken whole or not at all. But comments such as those of Bourget allow us to understand this idea in greater depth. He was articulating the notion that the past belonged to all future generations as much as it did to those currently alive; the latter were merely guardians who might add to that past but would not fundamentally change it. Barrès himself would describe this as a flame which was bequeathed by the past and which was passed down to the future: '[w]e must be the men through whom France persists, and who pass to the future the flame of the past'.[564] Again, we see that a more nuanced version of the past, one which was based around its dynamic progress through the present and into the future, was at the heart of AF's mission.

Bourget's comments, like those of Villebois-Mareuil which we saw in Chapter 1, signalled something of the right's antipathy toward the Revolution. For many nationalists, it was this event which had torn past and future asunder. De Montesquiou expressed this very directly in a speech in 1905, describing how 1789 had destroyed the acquisitions and the wisdom

---

562 *Tout l'acquis*. Vaugeois, 'Réaction d'abord…', p. 3. The anti-Kantian sentiment was partly due to Kant's nationality, but it was also an indication of a broader anti-positivist sentiment on the right which can be traced through Barrès' *Roman de l'énergie nationale* trilogy.

563 *[L]'égarement de 1789 qui nous sépare de nos morts […] la France méconnaît cette grande loi de continuité qui veut que chaque génération se considère comme l'usufructière d'un trésor acquis par les […] ancêtres et qu'elle doit transmettre accru aux descendants.* Bourget, 'Premier dîner de *L'appel au soldat*: discours de Paul Bourget', *L'AF: revue*, no. 28 (15 Aug. 1900), p. 184. In the reference to the dead, Bourget was picking up on a well-known Barresian theme.

564 Barrès, *Scènes et doctrines*, p. 89.

of the past.[565] In an article several months later he expanded on this. He argued that the Declaration of the Rights of Man—one of the Revolution's chief achievements and legacies—was a concept which encouraged fixation on the present: '[a] right only features the present, it focuses solely our meagre individuality'. AF's aim, he claimed, was much worthier and more noble as it 'stretched out infinitely into past and future' and was centred on an appreciation of 'what moving beauty there [was] in conceiving of oneself as the necessary link between the past and the future'.[566] Most significantly, de Montesquiou's points highlight again that the present was merely an articulation which joined the much more important categories of the past and the future to one another. His arguments also begin to suggest that AF was aiming for a distant future in which the rifts of the Revolution had been healed and past and future were no longer radically separated. Attitudes toward the Revolution on the right were as diverse as the right itself—the LDP claimed the heritage of the soldiers of 1792 who fought on the eastern front and Barrès had called it the 'heroic moment of our race'—but, for those who deplored its effects, time was a notable feature of their critiques.[567] The Revolution had been destructive partly because of the concept of time that it created—one which was based on rupture with the past and privileging the present.

Barrès developed this notion of a connected past and future into an idea of an 'eternal France'. Nationalism, he reasoned, was not simply a 'political expression': it was 'a discipline, a judicious method which attaches us to all that really is eternal and that must be cultivated continuously in our country'.[568] The concept of an eternal nation thereafter came to be used

---

565 De Montesquiou, 'Régime métaphysique et régime positif', *L'AF: revue*, no. 138 (15 March 1905), p. 412.
566 De Montesquiou, 'De l'anarchie à la monarchie', *L'AF: revue*, no. 153 (1 Nov. 1905), p. 200.
567 See unsigned article, 'Les ligues patriotiques', *Almanach des patriotes et du Drapeau* (1899), p. 40; Barrès, *Assainissement et fédéralisme*, p. 47. On different responses to the Revolution on the right, see Christian Amalvi, 'Nationalist responses to the Revolution' in Tombs (ed.), *Nationhood and Nationalism*, pp. 39–49.
568 Barrès, 'Allocution de M. Maurice Barrès', *L'AF: revue*, no. 40 (15 Feb. 1901), p. 268. It is interesting to note that, though Barrès cited Ernest Renan repeatedly and adopted his idea about a 'cult of ancestors', the nationalist's notion of an eternal nation marked an important departure from Renan who, in his renowned speech on nations, had insisted that they were not eternal: see *Qu'est-ce qu'une nation? Conférence faite en Sorbonne le 11 mars 1882* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1882), pp. 26, 28. Barrès would continue pressing the theme of the eternal

insistently and, though it could at times be nebulous as an idea, it was always cogent and powerful when viewed as a concept. For Barrès, the eternal France was most likely to be held within ancestors: he described a grandfather character in *Les déracinés* as holding the 'sediment of generations', while elsewhere the nation itself was called an 'antique cemetery'.[569] For him, the key to the *patrie* was the land and the dead; the living must root themselves in this.[570] People, both living and dead, became a concrete embodiment of what was eternal about France. One of the most meaningful uses of the eternal nation came in 1904—tellingly during the AF's condemnations of Thalamas. In his speech at the December meeting, de Montesquiou described how the German occupiers in the east were 'masters, it is true, of a fleeting France—but they [were] great enemies of the eternal France'.[571] De Montesquiou seemed to be looking forward to a time when eastern France was no longer subjected to German influence but was strong enough to be counted as its enemy once more. This illustrates how the very idea of an eternal nation could be used to elide the painful time of the present and could point toward future hope.

It is interesting to note that the notion of 'eternity' was also used with pointed insistence by the anti-Semites on the fringes of the nationalist movement. If France was eternal, it had eternal enemies—the Jews, of course, being foremost among them. The frequent and almost obsessive insistence on the eternal nature of the Jews was a striking feature of anti-Semitic discourse.[572] Soury described the Jews' nature as unchanging: they would forever be attached to their race by their heredity, and they were characterised by their adherence to ancient rites

---

nation during the First World War, see his speech *Les traits éternels de la France, discours prononcé à Londres le 12 juillet 1916* (Paris: Émile-Paul frères, 1916).

569 Barrès, *Les déracinés*, p. 40; Barrès, *Scènes et doctrines*, p. 81.

570 Ibid. 50, 70. Varley correctly pointed out that Barrès' obsession with death was part of a much wider cult of death in nineteenth-century Europe, see *Under the Shadow of Defeat*, p. 57.

571 'Contre les insulteurs de Jeanne d'Arc: discours de M. Léon de Montesquiou', p. 437.

572 Mary Louise Roberts similarly pointed out that Gyp (the pseudonym of the Comtesse de Mirabeau, a notable right-wing figure and anti-Semite) often wrote about Jews failing to be French as their Jewishness shows through, see *Disruptive Acts: the New Woman in fin-de-siècle France* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), p. 155.

and customs.[573] France's most famous anti-Semite, Édouard Drumont, similarly evoked the Jews as being 'held to' their race 'by a fibre which will never break' and described their influence as 'eternal'.[574] In his hefty four-hundred page tome, Jacques de Biez (an associate of Drumont) similarly wrote that 'the Jewish spirit is immutable, eternal'.[575] Anti-Jewish rhetoric was comparable in many ways with anti-Protestant or anti-Masonic rhetoric, but it was marked out by its insistence on the Jews' eternal nature.[576] This demonstrates that the idea of eternity did not always denote positive characteristics, and that it could sometimes be used to emphasise negative ones. The use of the word eternity was mirrored, fascinatingly, by some Jewish thinkers—notably Bernard-Lazare, who became more interested in Zionism as the 1890s wore on.[577] For him, the Jews were an 'eternal people' who relied on their past to bind them together.[578] There is a sense in which the past became even more important because the Jewish people had no land of their own, and Bernard-Lazare found himself having to reconcile with a past which continually intruded on the present.[579] Curiously, then, we see how the notion of an eternal nation could be repurposed by ostensibly quite different sorts of nationalist movement. Exploration of anti-Semitism and Zionism falls outside of the remit of this thesis, but the diversity with which the notion of an eternal nation was used serves nonetheless to highlight both its importance and its multifaceted and slippery nature.

---

573 Soury, *Campagne nationaliste*, pp. 93–5.

574 Drumont, *Les juifs contre la France: une nouvelle Pologne* (Paris: Librairie antisémite, 1899), p. 20.

575 Jacques de Biez, *La question juive: la France ne peut pas être leur terre promise* (Paris: C. Marpon & E. Flammarion, 1886), p. 48.

576 Steven C. Hause emphasised the similarities between anti-Semitic and anti-Protestant rhetoric, see 'Anti-Protestant rhetoric in the early Third Republic', *French Historical Studies* 16 (1989), pp. 183–201.

577 For Bernard-Lazare, anti-Semitism and Jewishness were in a corollary as he and Drumont often debated across reviews as well as face-to-face; the two were shaping one another's ideas: see Bernard-Lazare, *Contre l'antisémitisme: histoire d'une polémique*, intr. Pierre Guillaume (Paris: Éditions de la différence, 1983, 1st edn 1896).

578 Bernard-Lazare, *Le Fumier de Job*, ed. Philippe Oriol (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1998, 1st edn 1928); Bernard-Lazare, *Le nationalisme juif* (Paris: Pierre-Victor Stock, 1898), p. 3. The word eternity echoed eerily throughout *Le Fumier de Job*, a text published posthumously and originally written haphazardly on small, square scraps of paper no bigger than post-it notes; see Alliance Israélite Universelle, Ms 522, boxes 7, 10 for these originals.

579 See Bernard-Lazare, *La porte d'ivoire* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1897), p. 230, and chapter 'le passé dans le présent', pp. 289–319.

We have seen, then, that it is not enough to accuse the far right of desiring a straightforward return to the past. Rather, the notion of time they elaborated in the early twentieth century was based on a desire to connect past and future to one another once more. The present had significance only as a link between these two categories, though there was an ambiguity in the sense that nationalists sometimes wished to elide the present all together and at other time desired to elevate its status. Insistence on joining past and future resulted in the use of the protean and kaleidoscopic notion of an eternal nation which could provide some reassurance of a better future during a turbulent present. The following sections of this chapter delve deeper into the attempts to bring forth what was eternal about France.

Instinct and popular belief: overcoming the present?

A common feature of the flood of articles which emerged at the turn of the century and attempted to define the nationalist movement was their insistence on nationalism as a 'reflex', an 'instinctive movement of the French temperament'.[580] Nationalists emphasised the need for the French people to have an innate and immediate identification with their *patrie*. This may at first seem to undercut or even directly contradict the almost overwhelming rejection of the present, which I have thus far insisted on as a defining feature of nationalist conceptions of time. After all, privileging an instant connection to the nation necessarily involved an acceptance of the power of the here-and-now and of the possibility of imminent rejuvenation—indeed, in such an analysis the present is accorded a special status. However, nationalism's desire for people to experience an instinctive connection to France would be more accurately understood as an attempt to tap into the nation's atavistic resources: it was a way of making the strongest elements of the past live on in the present and of guaranteeing their survival into the

[580] Such articles were especially prevalent in *Annales de la PF* and *L'AF: revue*. Valerie, *Notes*, p. 3; Maurice Pujo, 'Un essai de nationalisme intellectuel', *Annales de la PF*, no. 4 (15 June 1900), p. 113.

future. Furthermore, it provided a way of avoiding conscious consideration of the ills of the present, thereby presenting a potential solution to the problems evoked in the previous chapter.

In the first instance, the immediacy of patriotic reaction was invoked as a way of rescuing a seemingly doomed present. For many—including the first editor of *L'AF: revue*, Jules Caplain-Cortambert (who remained largely unseen, interceding only occasionally to publish articles)—the patriotic reaction amounted to a physical immediacy which circumvented reason and deliberation. For him, the 'physiological sensation' of patriotism was paramount.[581] Writing in the review six weeks later, Maurice Spronck concurred, elaborating on the biological metaphor to describe how local patriotism 'attach[ed] itself to the material fibres of our being' and was therefore the most direct route to a broader, national patriotism.[582] It may at first seem that the physical aspect of their comments was the most important, but there was also a vital temporal dimension to them: the desire for a visceral attachment to the nation demanded an instantaneous connection to it, immediate access to all that it represented. This was an attempt to recreate the present as a time of hope and potential rejuvenation without recourse to what was actually going on in the present.

It is significant that Caplain-Cortambert and Spronck made their comments in the summer of 1899. Dreyfus' retrial in Rennes was underway and the Affair continued; as AF authors were assailed by the sheer weight of the Dreyfusard movement it became more important than ever to demonstrate their instantaneous and unwavering connection to the nation and its interests, which the anti-Dreyfusards staunchly believed themselves to be defending. In this time of crisis, they sought to emphasise the possibility that the present was not entirely devoid of hope for change. The connection to the nation, moreover, was perceived

---

581 Jules Caplain-Cortambert, 'Pourquoi je suis nationaliste', *L'AF: revue*, no. 2 (1 Aug. 1899), pp. 32, 31. Caplain-Cortambert, along with Vaugeois and Maurice Pujo, was part of the group which set up *L'AF: revue*, but he broke with his former comrades as a result of AF becoming more openly monarchist.

582 Maurice Spronck, 'Le fondement moral de l'idée de patrie', *L'AF: revue*, no. 5 (15 Sept. 1899), p. 184. Spronck and Caplain-Cortambert's ideas demonstrate that nationalist activists were aware that their doctrine would either be 'grasped […] immediately or missed […] completely', see Sorlin, 'Words and images', p. 77.

to be constant and solid, ceaselessly renewed by the wellspring of what was often called 'national energy'.[583] This energy—like the nation itself—was both ever-present (in the literal sense of being physically close) and eternal (in that it was timeless). It was also, crucially, a collective resource, fostering an experience of time which could be entered into communally, meaning that the dangerous plane of time occupied by the free-floating individual was avoided.[584]

The emphasis on an instant and intimate physical connection to France can be contrasted directly with a widespread and vehement rejection of 'incomplete' science and short-sighted reason.[585] The former, vigorous and urgent, represented a powerful way of bypassing the latter, which was viewed as cumbersome and even disingenuous. The Boulangist agitator André de Magué put it flatly: 'I negate the superiorities of science'.[586] Science's polar opposite, the 'popular soul' and its 'enduring energy', were coupled with the ability to instantly connect with the *patrie*.[587] Nationalists' reasons for privileging the common French soul and its vitality had a marked temporal dimension which was articulated by Georges Valerie. He drew on the ideas of Jules Michelet to assert that popular belief was 'imbued with immemorial experience, and it has stood the test of the passing centuries'. Science, by contrast, was a mere 'mode' of knowing, much more flimsy and flighty than the epistemology he espoused.[588] Here we see the juxtaposition of two concepts, each seen as attached to the past (popular belief) or to the present and the future (science), and valued accordingly. More significantly, however, the

---

583 The most famous proponent of this phrase was Barrès; we need only recall the title of his aforementioned trilogy.

584 In this sense, it recalls Sorel's notion of myth, discussed in Chapter 5.

585 Valerie, *Notes*, p. 3: *[n]otre science est nécessairement incomplète et notre raison constitutionellement myope*. Caplain-Cortambert also cited negative aspects of reliance on reason in the aforementioned article ('Pourquoi', p. 31).

586 André de Magué, *L'idée moderne agonisante* (Paris: C. Schenck, 1894), p. 3

587 Déroulède, speech on 7 Dec. 1898, *À Champigny-la-bataille*, p. 22. Déroulède was at the forefront of the movement to privilege popular belief. Not all those on the far right were uniformly anti-science, but this strand of thought was more marked and prevalent. For an example of ambivalence, see J. Cérébre's column 'Causerie scientifique' in the *Précurseur*. The first edition of the column expressed excitement at the wireless telegraph, see no. 1 (20 Oct. 1898), p. 4.

588 Valerie, *Notes*, pp. 14, 13.

popular imagination—or rather, the idea of it, for it remained rather ill-defined in nationalist literature—presented a way of instantaneously accessing France's vast past and the most powerful resources to be found therein. Immediacy and boundlessness were twinned, and they formed the core of this particular nationalist understanding of time.

The dual conception of time contained in the ever-present and everlasting national energy so frequently cited on the right represented an apex, an ideal, and during moments of crisis it was deployed as a mode of assurance. It is important to recognise that the present, when it was figured as an instantaneous connection with the nation, was carefully distinguished from the present that was associated with the defeat and the scandals of the Third Republic. The vast stores of national energy did not engage with the heinous events of the Third Republic—there was a deliberately semi-conscious aspect to this version of the present which meant that thoughts of contemporary France could be evaded.[589] In this way, appeals to national energy constituted all at once a way of escaping the present in its most deplorable iteration, a way of preserving the potential for change that it represented at its best, and an evocation of the most powerful resources of the past. While we saw above the problems created by the sometimes traumatic obliteration of the divide between past and present, here we see nationalists creating a very similar sort of obliteration and repurposing it, deploying it to their advantage in order to create a more durable sense of continuity and a more surefooted approach to the possibilities of the future.

Embodying time: women and the eternal nation

In their quest to bring to the fore an eternal nation which would be immune to the vicissitudes of individual political regimes, far right activists picked out certain French characteristics or

[589] The espousal of unconscious or semi-conscious epistemologies was becoming increasingly important during this time and was a much broader feature of the cultural landscape, see Burrow, *The Crisis of Reason*, pp. 164–9.

groups and assigned them particular roles. Perhaps the most obvious example of this is the figure of the peasant, prominent in late nineteenth-century Europe as the symbol of a dying world. Coppée, Déroulède, and other nationalists cited the peasant as 'the real Frenchman of France', the bearer of the country's 'eternal soul'.[590] But while the peasant was often deployed as a rather static symbol of resistance to change, there was another figure who had the crucial advantage of guaranteeing continuity into the future: the woman, and more particularly the mother, who was seen to ceaselessly renew the French nation. Viewed in this light, it is natural that nationalist activists should have seized on women as especially potent representations of what they were trying to convey when they spoke of an eternal nation. We can see already that the role of women contained a marked and inherently temporal aspect, but what is surprising is the extent to which this was made explicit, as well as the extent to which women themselves played an active role in nationalism on the basis of their supposedly eternal qualities.

As Mary Louise Roberts put it, 'central' to the vision of eternal France 'was the image of the domestic mother'.[591] Such an image had, of course, been crucial for 'bourgeois democratic society' since the beginning of the nineteenth century, and in this sense nationalists were merely repurposing a familiar idea that was attractive to them for its connotations of stability and continuity.[592] The notion of motherhood had, furthermore, become more important as the worry about France's declining birth rate (particularly relative to that of Germany) became more intense.[593] Lemaître's call for women to have children rather than

---

590 François Coppée cited in Barrès, 'Le nationalisme et l'agriculture' in Ligue de la Patrie française, *Manuel du bon citoyen* (Paris: Bureaux de la Patrie française, 1901), p. 8; Pierre Courtois, 'François Coppée: à propos d'un livre récent', *Annales de la Patrie française*, no. 47 (1 April 1902), p. 779; and one need only see the title of Déroulède's *Chants du paysan* in order to grasp the point.

591 Roberts, *Disruptive Acts*, p. 117.

592 Ibid. 4. See also Lynn Abrams, *The Making of Modern Woman* (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2002), chapter on 'learning to be a woman', pp. 43–65 and section on 'the national family', pp. 232–6.

593 Examples of this worry from across the political spectrum are easy to find: see for example Edmond Théry, 'La paix armée (VI)', *Le Figaro*, no. 280 (7 Oct. 1903), p. 3; and Fournière, 'La dépopulation', *L'Humanité*, no. 98 (24 July 1904), pp. 1–2. These articles have different inflections (the former was worried about the military implications and the latter focused on comparing the birth rate with the death rate) but their central concern was the same. See also Margaret Cook Andersen, *Regeneration through Empire: French pronatalists and colonial settlement in the Third Republic* (Lincoln, Nebr.: University of Nebraska Press, 2015), pp. 1–22. Anderson cited the intensity of

seeking out frivolous diversions—not to procreate was scandalous, he exclaimed—was just one example of the pronatalist trend.[594] Significantly, as Thiébaut stated in the mid-1890s, it was women's unique ability to conserve France (through motherhood, it is implied) which gave her a privileged place in the nationalist programme.[595] Nationalists tended to appeal to this overarching notion of conservation rather than being concerned about specific numbers of Frenchmen, substantiating the idea that motherhood was as much of an ideological concern as it was a practical one. Mothers were consistently cited as symbols of an eternal nation: in Déroulède's poem 'Le bon gîte', for instance, an old lady gives food and shelter to a young soldier who reminds her, as she tells him, of her own son.[596] The maternal figure appears and reappears as an eternal guardian, protecting not just her own progeny but all the sons of France. The mother's position, clearly, was based her ability to assure the future of the country.

The vital corollary to the assurance of the future was a link with the past: it is this combination which gave mothers their true power. This is demonstrated amply across Barrès' œuvre. In a meandering article on Alsace-Lorraine, he described in ethereal prose how the women of Metz represented continuity in the midst of turbulent change, exuding 'a perfume and a manner of old provincial France'.[597] Imagery involving women and mothers was prominent in discussion of the lost provinces. For example, in an article recounting the bombardment of Strasbourg in the *Drapeau*, this 'holy' and 'martyred' city was described as 'a good mother', while the article was accompanied by a drawing of a classically-inspired female figure labelled Strasbourg.[598] France was embodied in this woman, who was being subjected to

---

this worry and provides figures to go with it, though she takes pronatalism as the starting point for a rather different argument, emphasising the importance of colonial resettlement as a route to rejuvenation.

[594] Lemaître, *Opinions à rependre* (Paris: Société française d'imprimerie et de librairie, 1901), p. 26.

[595] Thiébaut, 'Réaction nationaliste', *Le Figaro*, no. 364 (30 Dec. 1894), p. 1.

[596] Déroulède, 'Le bon gîte', *Almanach des Patriotes et du Drapeau* (1899), p. 36.

[597] *[U]n perfum, une manière de vieille province*. Barrès, 'L'Alsace et la Lorraine', *Annales de la Patrie française*, no. 1 (1 May 1900), p. 7. Barrès expanded reflections such as these into a novel, see *Colette Baudoche: histoire d'une jeune fille de Metz* (Paris: Plon-Nourrit, 1934, 1st edn 1908), about a young Lorraine girl who refused to marry a German.

[598] L. Autié, 'Les bons serviteurs de la France', *Le Drapeau* (29 Sept. 1883), p. 452.

German attack—but she was steadfast, assuring continuity.[599] The mother could be a guide through troubled times, ensuring a bridge between the past and the future. This is clearest in a striking metaphor from the *Déracinés*, in which Barrès described one of the protagonists as linked to his native soil by an 'umbilical cord'.[600] There is a profound temporal aspect to this metaphor in terms of its insistence on a living link between past and present.

The mission to bring mothers to the fore was highly personal for these writers. Barrès had a particularly close relationship with his mother, and he wrote that she was 'associated with the formation of all [his] ideas'; through her he '[felt] Metz', where he had lived with her as a boy before the Franco-Prussian War.[601] The article cited above was a more or less direct reference to his own mother, one of the women of Metz he was describing. Deeply affected by the death of both his parents—but especially his mother, whose role in raising him he acknowledged—Barrès for a time renounced active politics.[602] Jules Soury, the political father figure who Barrès looked up to immensely, wrote from bitter experience in *Campagne nationaliste* that losing a mother was the worst thing that could happen to a man.[603] Déroulède's poetry frequently referenced a maternal figure who represented constancy, and his own mother often appeared in articles in the *Drapeau* or its associated publications, hailed for her heroism in sending both her sons to fight in the Franco-Prussian War.[604] It is notable that these three nationalists wrote publicly, unabashedly, about their mothers in their newspapers and in their

---

599 This is more positive and defiant than the frequent images suggesting the rape of France by Germany: see Reshef, *Guerres, mythes et caricatures*. Embodying the nation in the image of a woman was not particular to France: for example, see Alberto Mario Banti on Francesco Hayez' Sicilian Vespers, which feature images of women, embodying Sicily, being assaulted by French soldiers ('Deep images in nineteenth-century nationalist narrative', *Historein* 8 [2008], pp. 58–61).

600 Barrès, *Les déracinés*, p. 48.

601 Letter from Barrès to Maurras (2 Aug. 1901), *La république ou le roi: correspondance*, p. 333

602 Letter from Barrès to Maurras (12 Sept. 1901), ibid. 334. See also the unsigned article, 'Retraite de Maurice Barrès', *Le Drapeau* (11 Sept. 1901), p. 1.

603 Jules Soury, *Campagne nationaliste*, p. 66.

604 Unsigned, 'Paul Déroulède en 1870–1', *Almanach des Patriotes et du Drapeau* (1899), pp. 32–4. Déroulède's brother André was shot in the stomach at the Sedan but survived: see Joly, *Déroulède*, p. 23—although, disappointingly, this book has nothing to say about their mother. For an example of a poem about motherhood, see Déroulède, 'À ma mère', *Le Drapeau* (14 Nov. 1883), p. 3.

books: they felt that these women were highly relevant to their political endeavours and discussions of them are by no means confined to epistolary confessions. Leading nationalists were bringing a very personal sense of time to their writing and to their activism, drawing on the experiences of constancy and the link with the past that their own mothers had provided them.

It would be a mistake, however, to think that this was simply a process of women being held up as images by male writers; women themselves played an active part in nationalism and they often cited reasons related to time for doing so. There is abundant evidence for women's role as activists: articles in the *Drapeau* cite their vital importance in collecting funds for the Ligue, and police reports reference their presence at meetings and their role in, for example, preparing the LPF for the ill-fated 1902 elections.[605] Letters to Déroulède from the wives of his *liguers* speak of a collective 'we' being part of the LDP, indicating that these women could be as involved as their husbands.[606] They were compelled to act or write in favour of nationalism by their notions of time, which tended to revolve around a desire to hold back the modern world or embody an older world. Julia Allard Daudet, wife of the prominent novelist and mother of AF activist Léon, wrote in the *Annales de la Patrie française* that she had an 'anterior soul' and was better able to sense and be in touch with the past, with 'bygone people, bygone streets, bygone Paris'.[607] She did not directly link her special ability to sense and evoke the past to the fact that she was a woman, but nor did she need to: the sign off 'Madame', highly unusual in the *Annales*, was enough. Madame Daudet's willingness to write of her affinity with the past endeared her

---

[605] Joseph Montet, 'Les femmes de France', *Le Drapeau* (22 Jan. 1888), p. 2; AN, F 7 12719, police report of 13 Feb. 1902. Montet was then director of the newspaper. Passmore also mentioned how important women were for the LPF, see *The Right in France*, p. 111.

[606] See for AN, 401AP, box 24 B2, letter from Mme Braumüller to Déroulède, 7 Aug. 1904. This was the wife of the fervent *ligueur* mentioned above in the section on the defeat. Unbeknownst to her husband, she was writing to ask the LDP leader for financial help; her husband's rheumatism had kept him from being able to work, and the family were struggling badly to support themselves and an elderly relative. Mme Braumüller's letters and openness about appealing to Déroulède demonstrate that she felt that the LDP was a significant part of her and her family's lives. Unfortunately, we do not know what Déroulède's response was.

[607] Madame Alphonse Daudet, 'Au bout de la plume', *Annales de la Patrie française*, no. 4 (15 June 1900), p. 107. Julia was of course well embedded in the literary world through her Salons.

to nationalists, who published her piece as it was commensurate with their views about why women were important. But it would be too cynical to assume that there was no genuine feeling in what she wrote, and evidence from other quarters substantiates her suggestions.

In an anonymous pamphlet entitled *Appel à toutes les françaises par l'une d'elles*, preserved in the slim folder in the Archives nationales relating to the 'Comité des dames de la France', one writer outlined her reasons for her support of nationalism.[608] Many of these reasons related to the need to wrest control of France from the Freemasons to restore it to the Catholics, but her conclusion went wider than that as she asserted:

> [w]e cannot continue to live in the dizziness of modern life that overwhelms us, uses us, and makes us seem so much more frivolous than many of us are.[609]

This activist very explicitly took issue with the modern world, wishing to resist giddy flippancy and tie herself instead to a more enduring and a more reassuring timeframe that allowed women a more dignified role.

It is clear, then, that the nationalist obsession with women and motherhood went far beyond more generalised concerns about birth rates and women's domestic role. Nationalists of different stripes used the image of women and mothers as a vital constituent of their notions of eternal France. Mothers represented a link between past and future that not many other groups could represent in so personal or so concrete a way. Women themselves could be motivated by this image, too, claiming their special link to the past and demanding something beyond the inconstancy of contemporary life.

---

608 See AN, F 7 13329. Joly briefly mentioned the Comité des dames (see *Nationalistes et conservateurs*, p. 317), but not much work has been done on the women's branches of nationalist associations. One exception is Magali Della Sudda' detailed comparison of the French and Italian cases, see 'Une activité politique feminine conservatrice avant le droit de suffrage en France et en Italie. Socio-histoire de la politisation des femmes catholiques au sein de la Ligue patriotique des françaises (1902–1933) et de l'Unione fra le donne cattoliche d'Italia (1909–1919)', Ph.D. thesis, École des Hautes études en Sciences sociales, 2007.

609 Comité des dames de la France, *Appel à toutes les françaises par l'une d'elles* (Paris: Bureaux de la Patrie française, 1901), p. 21.

Monarchy and time

1902 marked an important shift for some nationalists, in part because of the electoral failure they sustained. This failure was felt especially acutely by the LPF but it had a significant impact on the broader nationalist movement, and particularly on its conception of time.[610] Socialists were also crestfallen in the wake of that year's elections, but their disappointment was mild compared to that of the nationalists.[611] This was 'a near annihilation', and the LPF fell into 'stagnation'.[612] As a result of the events of 1902, pre-existing shifts accelerated and crystallised, and some thinkers turned more decisively towards the monarchy and away from the republic. It would be easy to assume that the debate about whether France should pursue its republican system of government or revert to a monarchy had always been the deepest division among right-wing thinkers during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (the editors of Maurras' correspondence with Barrès seemed to suggest this when they gave their tome the title *La république ou le roi*). But just as Barrès and Maurras often elided this potential gulf—they spoke about the issue infrequently in the period up to 1914—other nationalists sought some semblance of unity over the issue of which type of government was best for France. The language of time was initially deployed to emphasise the idea that a republic, like a monarchy, could be a source of stability and constancy. This tactic, however, was intellectually flimsy, and without solid grounding it crumbled easily under the strain of the differences between particular strands of nationalism and then under the even greater pressure exerted by the electoral failure of 1902. Thereafter, time was used more emphatically and more specifically by AF authors such

610 For more on the importance of 1902 to the LPF, see Rioux, *Nationalisme et conservatisme*, pp. 88–99. Various groups were invested in the 1902 result: for example, the Comité national antijuif declared that it was at this ballot that France would 'really decide its destiny' (see their 1902 flyer in AN, F 7 12720).

611 See André Morizet, 'Le résultat des éléctions', *LMS*, no. 92 (17 May 1902), pp. 913–24. Morizet was disappointed about the mediocre socialist performance but he rejoiced in the disastrous showing of the nationalists.

612 See AN, F 7 12722, police report of 30 May 1902, which described the LPF group after its defeat.

as Vaugeois and de Montesquiou, who sought to justify their belief that France should return to a monarchy.

Up until late 1901, time had seemed to provide a way of bridging an underlying divide as republicans emphasised the eternal nature of the form of government that they espoused. In his opening speech for *L'AF: revue* in 1899, reprinted in its first issue, Vaugeois had set out his political position by avowing that the republic was 'the necessary, natural, and almost visible face of modern France'.[613] It was the most appropriate regime for the time, Vaugeois argued, but it was not a passing phase: republic would now be France's enduring form of government. Vaugeois, like others, was fond of referencing the idea of an 'eternal republic', and he stated that the everlasting loyalty that people had formerly felt towards the monarchy would now be transferred to the republic to bolster it.[614] This eternal republic was also a concern of Déroulède's, and in his vociferous arguments for a 'plebiscitary' republic he continually emphasised the element of permanence that his political vision offered. In an article entitled 'Questions et réponses sur la République plébiscitaire', he argued that the people's sovereign power did not simply belong to the Frenchmen currently alive but to all those who had ever existed and who were yet to be born, underscoring the eternal nature of that power.[615] No single generation could cede that power, for it belonged equally to all past, present, and future generations.[616] While Déroulède vehemently rejected suggestions that he was a backwards-looking monarchist and insisted that monarchy and hereditary power were over, he nonetheless

---

613 Vaugeois, 'Conférence du 20 juin 1899', pp. 11–2.

614 Vaugeois, '"Puissances de sentiment"', *L'AF: revue*, no. 29 (1 Sept. 1900), p. 348. In this article Vaugeois developed the arguments made in an article of the same title written by Barrès' and published on 28 Aug., three days earlier, in the *Gazette de France*.

615 Déroulède, 'Questions et réponses sur la République plébiscitaire', *Le Drapeau* (4 Jan. 1902), p. 2. There is a curious echo here with Lamartine, who stated that 'electoral laws are the dynasties of national sovereignty', although here the emphasis is institutional rather than on the people, as was the case in Déroulède's formulation (Lamartine cited in A. S. Kahan, *Liberalism in Nineteenth Century Europe: the political culture of limited suffrage* [Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003], p. 9).

616 Déroulède, 'Questions et réponses', p. 2.

maintained a crucial link to the more enduring timeframe typically associated with monarchism.[617]

Vaugeois and Déroulède, so different otherwise, were both aiming to make their republican ideas acceptable to nationalists of all persuasions, and in order to achieve this they invoked the powerfully but slippery word 'eternity'. The comforting timeframe of an eternal France was becoming a cornerstone of nationalist discourse, and it was therefore vital that any political regime espoused by these thinkers and activists was situated in that timeframe. It was especially important that any republican timeframe could extend far beyond the horrors of the current regime in order that this entire system of government would not be contaminated by present woes—for this reason, republicans who castigated the current system tended to be careful to blame *parlementarisme* rather than the fact of a republic. For a while, the latent conflict between monarchists and republicans remained incidental rather than becoming internecine, and the notion of eternity operated as a thin veil to conceal often profound differences between the two groups. The veil was thin because, like the broader concept of eternal France, there was not always a lot of substance to the notion of eternity—indeed, the eternal republic seemed to consist simply of an insistence that it was a long-lasting one. The word eternal functioned for a while like a spell or a symbol of peace, but ultimately its meaning was too nebulous to provide the sort of unity that nationalists had hoped for.

The uneasy balance broke down quite quickly. Those who turned to the monarchy, most notably Vaugeois himself, were explicit that their reasons were related to time. In the early days of AF, Vaugeois had appeared concerned to establish the movement as forward-looking in some measure, but a lot changed in the short period between the summer of 1899 and Vaugeois' conversion to monarchism in late 1901. As the UP activists were also discovering,

---

[617] For such a refutation, see the unsigned article 'Le republicanisme de Paul Déroulède', *Le Drapeau* (supplement, 8 Oct. 1899), p. 1; for Déroulède's argument that hereditary power was over, see 'Discours de Paul Déroulède', *Le Drapeau* (30 July 1899), p. 4.

the vital window of opportunity opened by the Dreyfus Affair was narrow indeed. For his part, Vaugeois was realising that the vast awakening the nationalists had insisted they were responding to was perhaps not as significant or as widespread as had been hoped.[618] In January 1902, shortly before the disastrous springtime elections, he wrote:

> [w]e expect nothing of 1902. Yet it's still the future that we look towards, we royalists—a future that's much further away.[619]

Managing to sound both gloomy and defiant, Vaugeois maintained his forward-looking focus but shifted it so that the weight of expectation was borne by the distant future rather than the near future. In other words, converting to monarchism allowed him to take refuge more easily in this distant future, and his statement here was at once an admission of defeat (regarding the present and near future) and a call to arms (regarding far off success)—a type of rhetoric that was characteristic of nationalists. It is clear that monarchism was, in effect, a way of buying time. The idea of far-off future redemption through a 'political messiah' in the form of a monarch was partly a way to disguise the political impotence of nationalism, and more particularly of monarchism, but it was also a conviction that some held on to doggedly and desperately, even in the face of considerable evidence that monarchy was in no sense a viable system of government for France.[620]

Jules Lemaître did not convert to monarchism until a few years later, but after the electoral defeat that so shocked and disappointed the LPF in 1902 his conception of time

---

618 Vaugeois had referenced this awakening in this opening speech: 'the wounded patriotic spirit has awoken', 'Conférence du 20 juin 1899', p. 9.

619 Vaugeois, 'L'histoire de la France est-elle finit?', *L'AF: revue*, no. 61 (1 Jan. 1902), p. 4. Vaugeois' reference to *un avenir plus éloigné* has provided the title for this chapter.

620 The term 'political messiah' was used of the monarchy by André de Magué in the final lines of his *La France bourgeoise actuelle* (Paris: André de Magué, 1891), p. 279. Magué had worked closely with Boulanger on his press campaign but he faded from the political scene from the mid 1890s. As Joly noted, the diversity of the monarchist press (particularly in Paris, with papers such as *Le Gaulois*, *Le Soleil* and *Le Moniteur universelle*) masked the deeper problems of the monarchist movement, see *Nationalistes et conservateurs*, especially Chapter 3, 'Les royalistes', pp. 155–216. For more on the death of monarchism as a political force, see Philippe Levain, 'Les droites en république, 1871–98' and Gilles Le Béguec and Jacques Prévotat, 'L'éveil à la modernité politique, 1898–1919', both in Jean-François Sirinelli (ed.), *Histoire des droites en France*, vol. 1: *Politique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1992), pp. 147–212 and 213–89 respectively.

shifted in a direction that was commensurate with his later royalist sympathies. From 1908, Lemaître would speak openly of having been won over by Maurras' assertions that monarchy was the most appropriate form of government for France, a journey that had begun, he claimed, after the Dreyfus Affair.[621] But even in 1902, he had begun to state that the LPF need to make 'long and methodical' preparations that went beyond anything a parliamentary timeframe could offer.[622] The increasingly prominent AF orator de Montesquiou similarly believed that there was a desperate need to look beyond parliamentary time, which was seen to be restrictive and short-sighted, composed of little more than 'petty […] fights'.[623] De Montesquiou expanded on this with characteristic eloquence, claiming that those living in the present were profiting from the labours of ancestors, and that present labours would only truly benefit those yet to be born. In order to illustrate this, he used the image of a man walking in a forest, protected by the shade of trees planted long ago; equally, the trees this man planted would only shade his great grandchildren. The implication was that France needed to find a way of looking beyond the meagre demands of the present to a grander timeframe which brought together distant past and distant future. The restoration, de Montesquiou concluded, was 'what the France of the past impose[d] on us, and what the France of the future demand[ed] of us'.[624] Monarchy, then, represented not only a possibility for buying time in the future but a way of healing the rift wrought between past and future by the regicidal Revolution. Ultimately, the attachment to certain ideas about time goes a long way to explaining why writers like Vaugeois and de

---

621 See the interview with Lemaître in the first issue of *L'Action française*: signed 'un ligueur', 'De la Patrie française à l'Action française: l'évolution de Jules Lemaître', *L'AF*, no. 1 (21 March 1908), p. 1. For his monarchist speeches see Lemaître's *Discours royalistes, 1908–11* (Paris: Nouvelle librairie nationale, 1911). Lemaître was also quoted in a police report as saying in a speech to AF members that he wished he'd been a royalist aged 20, as students were today (AN F 7 12863, 24 April 1912).

622 'Programme d'action', *Annales de la Patrie française*, no. 59 (1 Oct. 1902), p. 442.

623 De Montesquiou, 'Maurice Barrès et la doctrine nationaliste', *L'AF: revue*, no. 73 (1 July 1902), pp. 5–6.

624 De Montesquiou, 'La liberté et la tradition', *L'AF: revue*, no. 122 (15 July 1904), p. 117. The use of tree imagery was probably a deliberate reference to Barrès, who also deployed such imagery. De Montesquiou was dedicated to spreading Barrès' message, and the fact that the latter was a republican did not seem to have deterred him.

Montesquiou were so passionately insistent on monarchism as a solution at a moment when it was dying as a political force.

The retreat into monarchism's apparently more stable and more enduring timeframe became increasingly explicit and more entrenched after the separation of Church and State in 1905. This is perhaps why the event did not occasion especially heightened antipathy towards the present—some nationalists were already seeking refuge from the present in an alternative timeframe.[625] By this time, too, nationalists had become irrevocably split between the republican and monarchist camps.[626] Vaugeois, at his speech at the inauguration of the Ligue d'AF in 1905, anthropomorphised time in a way that revealed the extent of the monarchists' retreat into the notion of an eternal France:

> It [the monarchy] will need time to repair these disasters [i.e. the Separation]. But time is an old and a skilled workman, and he is accustomed to working willingly for the kings of France. Time loves these kings, and he helps them.[627]

It is not entirely clear whether monarchy was the answer or whether time itself was what was needed. The two were becoming more and more deeply intertwined—indeed, here they were seen to be almost interchangeable. As France, with the Separation, went further and further down a path which nationalists of all stripes believed to be deeply flawed and even disastrous, writers like Vaugeois became more and more convinced that only time—and a great deal of it—could save their country. By invoking the monarchy, royalists felt that they had found a concrete demonstration of the meaning of 'eternity', which functioned as a panacea. Their particular vision of eternity posited that the monarchy was uniquely capable of straddling

---

[625] The reaction to the Separation was, on the whole, more muted that might be expected; another reason for this was that it was double-edged. While it clearly limited the Church's power, in some senses it also liberated the institution (it was, for example, now free to choose its own bishops). This aspect of the Separation has been commented on by a wide array of historians: see, for example, Baudérot, *Laïcité, quel héritage? De 1789 à nos jours* (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1990), pp. 75–6; Jean-Marie Mayeur, *La séparation des églises et de l'état* (Paris: Les éditions ouvrières, 1991, 1st edn 1966), pp. 154–6; and Maurice Larkin, *Church and State after the Dreyfus Affair* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1974), pp. 166–9.

[626] See AN, F 7 12719, police report of 6 Feb. 1905.

[627] Vaugeois, 'Séance d'inauguration, discours d'Henri Vaugeois', *L'AF: revue*, no. 138 (15 March 1905), p. 408.

eternal time and earthly time, bringing the two together meaningfully and powerfully. This is made clear by comments Vaugeois made shortly before the Separation: only under the monarchy, he opined, would Church and State truly be reconciled, since the monarchy was the natural meeting place of spiritual power and temporal power.[628] In this sense, monarchy was synonymous with a longer-term Catholic timeframe which nationalists did not always speak about explicitly but which nonetheless informed their worldview.[629]

We have witnessed a curious phenomenon whereby the concept of 'eternity' was first used as a way of masking divisions within the nationalist movement—but the same concept was then used to justify a rupture in the movement produced by a shift towards monarchism by some individuals. This demonstrates that it wasn't enough simply to employ the language of time as an adhesive for a broader and highly nuanced political culture. A culture of time does not simply consist of certain ways of talking about time; superficial tricks of language quickly disintegrate if they are not accompanied by a deeper unity in the way in which time is experienced and understood. This provides more evidence for how certain ideas about time could structure—or even create—political beliefs. The electoral failure of 1902 collided with a deeply ingrained pre-existing nationalist tendency (to seek what seemed to be 'eternal') to produce a shift towards monarchism. Eternity, of course, provided an infinite amount of time to repair the damage wrought by the nineteenth century.

---

628 Vaugeois, 'La "séparation" est impossible', *L'AF: revue*, no. 136 (15 Feb. 1905), p. 269.

629 The nationalist attitude to religion was, in general, deeply ambivalent—while most of those studied in this part of the thesis were shaped to some extent by their Catholic worldviews, this was often prevented from coming to the fore by a fear that openly supporting religion might be detrimental to gaining popular support. Lemaître stated this explicitly, see the unsigned article, 'La Patrie française en perdition', *Le Rappel* (25 May 1902), clipping in AN, F 7 12722.

Chapter 8

La politique du tumulte

Reconciling with the present

While appeals to eternity were powerful and earnest when it came to explaining and justifying a turn toward monarchism, they did not remain in the foreground for very long. Part of the reason for this was that, after 1905, there was a further—and quite dramatic—shift in the way that some sections of the right, and especially AF, conceived of time. As the LDP and the LPF faded from significance, AF seemed increasingly like the only viable nationalist group, picking up members from defunct leagues and increasing in relative strength and significance.[630] The group embarked on a mission to embrace direct action, and its changed attitude required reconciliation with the idea of the present. This section argues that the significant alterations to AF's programme and methods depended on a different conceptualisation of time from that which had been elaborated at the movement's inception.

The launch of AF's daily newspaper heralded the arrival of a more dynamic and boisterous approach that had been gaining momentum since the first Thalamas demonstrations in 1904. The desire for immediate change and direct action had been incipient in the movement since its inception during the Dreyfus Affair but, bolstered by the appearance of a younger generation of right-wing activists such as Maurice Pujo and Léon Daudet, it now became much more marked. In December 1908, citing violent incidents in Paris at Père Lachaise, the Odéon,

[630] See AN, F 7 12862, police reports dated 18 Dec. 1907 and 18 Dec. 1908. See also Weber, *Action française*, pp. 31–2.

and the Sorbonne, a police correspondent wrote that AF was undertaking a 'vast programme […] based on the politics of uproar' (*la politique du tumulte*).[631] While the correspondent doubtless exaggerated the scale of the programme, it was nonetheless true that hastily organised demonstrations had increasingly become the dominant feature of AF tactics.[632] Activists more readily took to the streets, and the rowdy Camelots du Roi (a student offshoot directed by Pujo and closely associated with AF) were eager to make their voices heard and to let their fists fly.[633] Their mission was not, however, all about violence and invective: during catastrophic floods in Paris in 1910, these students came out to offer help to those affected.[634] This was part of a much broader nationalist revival—the sense that the youth were rising up which had so excited Henri de Massis and Alfred de Tarde as they conducted their inquiry into *Les jeunes gens d'aujourd'hui*.[635] The feeling of being part of a larger movement doubtless contributed to AF's ebullience during this period and injected a greater sense of possibility into their endeavours. This marked change did not necessarily come about as a result of an altered understanding of time, but it certainly required a different way of viewing the present in relation to the past and the future.[636]

The appearance of AF's daily newspaper alongside the fortnightly review in 1908 already suggests a concern for immediacy and even a sense of urgency: articles were naturally much shorter and tended to focus on current events and updates from various sections of the League, eschewing nuanced philosophical musings. In stark contrast to the early years of the

---

631 AN, F 7 12862, police report titled 'Agitation réactionnaire' (12 Dec. 1908). This phrase has provided the title for this section.

632 A police report (AN, F 7 12862) on 12 Feb. 1909 stated that, in spite of all the noise made by Vaugeois and Daudet, AF was declining—and given the league's restricted membership this seems like a more sensible supposition than the suggestion of a 'vast programme'.

633 Pujo was also president of the Étudiants d'Action française, see AN, F 7 12863, police report of 16 Feb. 1912.

634 See Vesna Rodic, 'An affair to be remembered: integral nationalism among fin-de-siècle France's men of letters' in Rosenthal and Rodic (eds), *New Nationalism*, p. 129.

635 Weber, *The Nationalist Revival*, pp. 3, 7.

636 This revival was attributable to at least two factors: the appearance of young and enthusiastic AF members, and the renewed concern about international events after the First Morocco Crisis.

review, time was now rarely discussed explicitly. Instead, the tenor of the new daily was one of hurried condemnations bursting in multiple directions. Léon Daudet edited *L'AF* and wrote most of its lead articles, which tended to centre on scandals or incite campaigns against particular individuals. Daudet would rail against a particular minister or take issue with, for example, recent appointments to the Académie française (notably the election of Eugène Brieux).[637] Condemnations were often taken to the streets and (perhaps more commonly) to Paris' lecture theatres and classrooms—Thalamas was not the only teacher to face censure during this period. In January 1912, the Camelots ruthlessly pursued a primary school teacher named Beucke for alleged 'low moral conduct' (the details of the charge remain obscure), and Pujo was in favour of invading the school in which the man taught in order to forcibly remove him.[638] AF, in short, had rolled up its sleeves. In so doing, Daudet, Pujo, and their followers were finally leaving behind the determined but anxious theorising that had so strongly shaped the early AF movement in the summer of 1899.[639]

This spirit was not merely represented by the format and the content of the daily newspaper—it suffused everything AF activists wrote or did, including their justifications for restoring the monarchy. The opening article of *L'AF* on 21 March was a buoyant and energetic declaration intent upon setting a changed tone for the movement and put forth a clear set of reasons for a restoration. Leaders including Vaugeois, Daudet, Maurras, de Montesquiou, and Pujo used the piece to proclaim that following AF was not about politics but was instead a demonstration of 'French good sense'. There was a practical need for a king in order to resolve

---

637 Playwright Eugène Brieux was elected to the Academy in 1909. He wrote for right-wing and royalist papers, such as the *Gaulois* and the *Figaro*, but Daudet criticized him for taking himself too seriously and for supposedly relying too heavily on 'science' as a foundation for morality: see Léon Daudet, 'Le primaire Brieux', *L'AF*, no. 133 (13 May 1910), p. 1.

638 There was a long string of articles on the subject of Beucke, beginning with the unsigned, 'La cote 399 bis, *L'AF*, no. 364 (30 Dec. 1911), p. 1 and continuing throughout Jan. 1912; see AN, F 7 12863, police report of 11 Jan. 1912.

639 This shift was also described by Richard Griffiths, see 'From nostalgia to pragmatism' in Nicolas Atkin and Frank Tallett (eds), *The Right in France, 1789–1999* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1997), pp. 115–28.

France's problems, and this was 'a fact', purely and simply.[640] The monarchy had gone from being a route to the mythical eternal France and a way of gaining time to being presented as a blindingly obvious and immediate solution which defied petty politics. While Vaugeois and de Montesquiou had previously sought refuge from the present, eliminating it in their drive to bring together past and future, they and others now recognised its potential as a time of action and change. The monarchy continued to represent stability and strength as it had done before, and the new arguments put forward did not directly contradict the previous view of the importance of eternity—but monarchy now became a way of rescuing the present instead of bringing about its annihilation, a way of more rapidly accessing the longed-for eternal timeframe.

Their altered approach required a different conceptualisation of the present from that which had previously animated the movement. Daudet encapsulated the new approach to the horrors of the present in an article that appeared in the second issue of the paper: 'Anniversaire' lamented various events throughout the nineteenth century—1808 (when Napoleon gave Jews citizenship rights), the Franco-Prussian War, the Commune, and most recently the Dreyfus Affair—all of which represented 'the defeat of France'. Crucially, however, Daudet shifted the focus to reconstructing the country rather than simply extirpating what he took to be its undesirable elements. He asserted that the republic 'had to disappear', but he argued yet more vociferously that:

> [i]t is up to us to rebuild. I mean to say that the generation that has read Taine and today reads Drumont and Maurras is now perfectly fixed on revolution […].[641]

Whereas previous denunciations of the nineteenth century or of contemporary events had led to the very concept of the present being dismissed, Daudet took a different approach. While

---

[640] 'Le nationalisme intégral', *L'AF*, no. 1 (21 March 1908), p. 1. The full list of signatures read: Vaugeois, Daudet, Maurras, de Montesquiou, Lucien Moreau, Jacques Bainville, Louis Dimier, Bernard de Vesins, Robert de Boisfleury, Paul Robain, Frédéric Delebecque, Pujo.

[641] Daudet, 'Anniversaire', *L'AF*, no. 2 (22 March 1908), p. 1.

he condemned the events of recent and contemporary history, and while he continued to appeal to the vital importance of memory, he did not unleash the same fury on the idea of the present, marking a clear rupture with previous nationalist rhetoric.[642] The present was no longer perceived as a dead category, and the activists of AF were determined to seize it.

AF's increased focus on revolution, mentioned in Daudet's article, further substantiates this point. The *coup de force*, which Maurras had mused about much earlier in a private letter to Barrès, was becoming more prominent as a stated aim.[643] In 1910, Maurras and Henri Dutrait-Crozon published their pamphlet *Si le coup de force est possible*, which rebuffed claims made in Pataud and Pouget's syndicalist tract *Comment nous ferons la révolution*; the nationalists outlined the conditions for and emphasised the possibility of a royalist coup, stating that it was not collectivism that would carry the day but monarchism.[644] By 1912, revolution was a central concern for Pujo and Daudet. At a banquet held by the Camelots, Pujo pugnaciously demanded to know how many militants he could count on in the event of a coup; representatives from sections in the provinces were present, and they all dutifully came forward to put their members at Pujo's disposal.[645] Two days later, at AF's conference, Daudet announced that this coup would take place 'very soon, at a moment of our choosing'.[646] One police correspondent wrote that Daudet 'didn't give his speech: he howled it', and 'his exaltations made the room vibrate'.[647] This clamour was partly intended to disguise AF's numerical weakness, as well as to whip into

---

642 See, for example, Daudet, *Une campagne d'Action française*, p. 21, which I cited at the beginning of Chapter 6. Daudet would later produce a much more thorough excoriation of the recent past, see *Le stupide XIX^e^* (Paris: Bernard Grasset, 1929, 1st edn 1922). Again, though, the focus here was on time's content and not its concept, and the text was energetic in its attempts to recover what took to be a better France.

643 Letter Maurras to Barrès (Aug. 1900), *La république ou le roi: correspondence*, p. 299.

644 Maurras and Dutrait-Crozon, *Si le coup de force est possible* (Paris: Nouvelle librairie nationale, 1910). It is well known that Henri Dutrait-Crozon was a pseudonym used by Frédéric Delebecque and George Larpent, both AF militants. They had made their name with the publication in 1909 of *Précis de l'affaire Dreyfus avec un repertoire analytique* (Paris: Nouvelle librairie nationale, 1909), a hefty tome detailing the events, personalities, and minutiae of the Affair with what appeared to be a clinical sense of neutrality—but really the book was not far shy of being an anti-Dreyfusard rant.

645 AN, F 7 12863, police report of 28 Nov. 1912, 'Banquet des Camelots du roi'.

646 Daudet cited in AN, F 7 12863, police report of 30 Nov. 1912.

647 *Il hurle son discours plutôt qu'il ne le prononce et cette attitude d'exaltation fait vibrer la salle.* Ibid.

fever pitch the AF's *rive gauche* student supporters.[648] The coup was never a serious possibility, but the key point here is that it presented the sharp end of AF's changed attitude.[649] Revivified by the simplicity of its royalist ideology and confident in its core constituency of hot-headed students, AF's calls for revolution were loud and persistent even though they were not a threat to the republic.

These calls injected a heightened sense of anticipation into the near future, reinforcing the conviction that radical change needed to take place imminently. Above all, the emphasis on revolution demonstrates the development of a fundamentally different apprehension of time from that which AF had initially been built on. Henceforth, the present was to be seized and its potential for change prized. This was not by any means the first time that revolution had been spoken of on the right, and in fact talk of a *coup de force* in the 1910s reanimated an idea that had been widespread during the Boulanger Affair (as an unsigned article in the *Cocarde* in 1888 had proclaimed, 'this is no longer about restoring the past. We have to make a new France, with new ideas').[650] AF's desire to rebuild France was not, therefore, totally original; rather, it recovered a pre-existing strand of thought. Attempts had been made previously to recover this attitude of hope and action: Thiébaut tried to recreate a Boulangist party in 1898, and Gabriel Syveton had expressed concern with the right-wing urge to destroy, arguing that there was a need to turn away from this and rebuild.[651] But such calls had been made in relative isolation. What is significant is that the return to forward-looking militancy was only really made possible

---

[648] Samuel M. Osgood also noted that Maurras' fulminations masked the movement's limitations: see *French Royalism since 1870* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1970, 1st edn 1960), p. 89.

[649] Osgood emphasised the impossibility of a coup, see ibid. 89–90.

[650] Unsigned, 'Parti nouveau', *La Cocarde*, no. 2 (14 March 1888), p. 1. There were many similar examples of Boulanger giving the French hope for the future, see Lucien Millevoye, 'Le chef du Parti national', *Almanach de le Ligue des patriotes* (1889), p. 16: Millevoye claimed that Boulanger had 'returned to the French a word that had become German: hope'.

[651] On Thiébaut's calls for a new 'Parti national', see AN, F 7 12719, police report of 19 Jan. 1898. Gabriel Syveton, 'Du sentiment et du raisonnement', *L'Écho de Paris*, no. 5755 (27 Feb. 1900), p. 1. Syveton had been important in the LPF but he committed suicide abruptly in 1905 after a scandal he had provoked backfired, see Weber, *Action française*, pp. 30–2. Of course, Déroulède's LDP had often prized action and he had attempted a coup in 1899—but by and large this group's dismissals of the present marked them out from post-1908 AF.

with a changed attitude toward the present: it was only by turning away from the constant dismissal of the content and even the very concept of the present that the idea of a creative nationalist revolution could make a return.

Their emphasis on revolution distanced AF from other conservative factions, and this distance came to be described in terms relating to time. Maurras, who had identified, articulated, and in part directed the trend toward action and away from theory, wrote in 1909 that conservatives were timid, hesitant in the face of AF's new approach and too lazy to bother to understand whether the nationalists' violence was condemnable or constructive.[652] He claimed that they had confused violence with anarchy because they were so fixated by the nineteenth century (and especially the key dates of 1848, '51, '70). These conservatives belonged to a 'discouraged generation' that was 'obsessed' with or even 'hypnotised' by the disappointments of the last hundred or so years, convinced of the definitive failure of monarchism. He concluded:

> [t]he great novelty of our times can be boiled down to two simple facts: enterprising Frenchmen with a taste for adventure say to themselves, on the one hand, that after a century of destruction it is essential to rebuild—and that that, in short, is their only concern. On the other hand, those with a true spirit of conservation, seeing that conservative methods are losing everything, ask themselves whether force can be employed in the service of what is right, and they perceive that it is in fact the only thing that works. Our movement sprang from a meeting of these two states of mind.[653]

Several interrelated points emerge from this article. First, it is significant that Maurras drew a distinction between AF and older conservatives. He argued that older generations and traditional conservatives were fruitlessly fixated on past failures, while younger people were now invigorated by an urgent determination to create France anew and to do so using force. Daudet's 'Anniversaire' article, cited above, also focused on younger generations and embodied this same spirit; AF was very self-consciously youthful, and it used this to portray itself as

---

652 Bertrand Joly also pointed to the way in which Maurras produced a break with the monarchists' past, see *Nationalistes et conservateurs*, p. 155.

653 Maurras, 'Timidités conservatrices', *L'AF*, no. 44 (13 Feb. 1909), p. 1.

dynamic and virile. Second, AF had begun to emphasise its status as a movement of the present and the future, dismissing its rivals (older generations and mainstream conservatives) as unhelpful relics: again, time became a way of underscoring ideological differences.[654] This brings us to a third point: AF's forceful and vigorous approach did not, however, entail a complete rupture with conservatism—in fact, violence was a way of resuscitating the 'true spirit of conservation'. Action in the present thereby became a way of saving those parts of the past that needed to be preserved.

To this we can add a fourth and final point. Throughout this article, there is a sense that this changed conception of the present and an appreciation of its possibilities also required an altered view of the past. Maurras, in condemning those obsessed with the nineteenth century, implied that the right either needed to find a different approach to the disastrous century—one that did not trap it in negative fixations—or else focus on parts of France's history that lay much further back. This may explain some of the fixation with historian Fustel de Coulanges, who had written about religion in the ancient world; Maurras in particular read his work avidly.[655] The campaign to claim de Coulanges' works for the right resulted in the opening of the Institut d'AF in 1906, a small institution which offered evening lectures and seminars on topics such as monarchism, nationalism, and history (de Coulanges appeared as a topic, of course).[656] De Coulanges was claimed, in the most basic analysis, because he was patriotic, but his case also suggests that AF was seeking alternative ways of approaching the recent past—this historian, with his emphasis on religion and on the dignified classical past, provided an

---

654 It is not entirely clear whether Maurras was aiming these comments at specific mainstream conservatives or whether this was a sweeping denunciation. It is entirely possible that his comments were directed at Action libérale populaire; police reports suggested that the ALP had a fierce rivalry with other nationalist groups (see AN, F 7 12719), but this was rarely mentioned in the publications of the latter.

655 On Maurras and de Coulanges, see Hartog, *Le XIX siècle et l'histoire: le cas de Fustel de Coulanges* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1988), pp. 169–94.

656 Some of the Institut's programmes can be found in the Bibliothèque historique de la Ville de Paris, fonds Dreyfus, 4–D–00368, 24–26 (programmes for 1907–12). Weber noted that this claim did not pass without controversy, and some de Coulanges' former students were furious, see *Action française*, p. 37.

alternative route through the nineteenth century which would not elicit such disgust.[657] This was not, then, purely a matter of reconceptualising the present and the future while erasing the recent past; it was more subtle than that, and evocations of the recent past were now oriented toward producing change rather than restating and reliving of France's most dire moments.

Younger emerging members of AF, notably Pujo and Daudet, embraced the power of the present as a unique moment in which to act. They continued to venerate aspects of the past, but this was now combined with a renewed desire to seize the present in order to bring about concrete change in the near future. This new attitude towards the recent past, the present, and the near future marked a clear shift from their previous approach, and this change in the understanding of time that the movement espoused facilitated its new outlook and eventually became a central part of it.

The Cercle Proudhon

Calls to overthrow the republic in the near future, emphasis on redemptive violence, desire to seize the possibilities of the present: the parallels with sections of the syndicalist movement are clear enough. Maurras and certain among his followers had had a longstanding interest in enticing the working classes, and in particular in the independent *syndicats* that fell outside of the purview of the CGT; these *syndicats* were led by Pierre Biétry and were commonly known as the Jaunes.[658] AF was aware that any *coup de force* would require greater numbers than the movement alone could muster: it needed to join forces, and this practical need combined with a pre-existing fascination with 'the people' as the soul of France. The interest in the Jaunes did

[657] Weber pointed out that his patriotism made him attractive to AF, ibid. 36. On de Coulanges' pamphlet *L'Alsace est-elle française out allemande* (1870), see Jennings, *Revolution and the Republic*, pp. 223–4.
[658] The Jaunes were described as 'class traiters' by mainstream unions, see IFHS, 2A 36, *XVIII^e congrès national corporatif (XII^e de la Confédération)* (22–4 June 1911), p. 10. For more on the Jaunes, see Zeev Sternhell, *La droite révolutionnaire*, pp. 245–83; and George L. Mosse, 'The French right and the working classes: les Jaunes', *The Journal of Contemporary History* 7 (1972), pp. 185–208.

not bear fruit, however, and by 1908 it had fizzled out. These unaffiliated *syndicats* were too small to really be of use to AF, and Biétry was in any case reluctant to take orders from anyone.[659] What remained, though, was a mutual and growing concern to bring a sense of dynamism to the mission to conserve France.[660] The fruition of this desire is best illustrated by the CP and its *Cahiers*.[661] The CP was not properly integrated into either AF or any syndicalist movement (its chief claim to syndicalism was its interest in Proudhon). It was certainly more organically of the right, however, most of its founders being monarchists—though it emphasised its plurality in its opening article, citing the participation of 'federalist republicans, integral nationalists and syndicalists'.[662] It is in the CP that we witness the clearest example of an attempt to marry a notion of eternal France with action in the present.

In 1906, Georges Valois—the driving force behind the CP who would later become the creator of the Faisceau, France's first fascist party—had published curious text entitled *L'homme qui vient: philosophie de l'authorité*. Valois, whose real name was Gressent, had been active in anarchist circles during the Dreyfus Affair, collaborating in Jean Grave's *Les Temps nouveaux*, but he later shifted rightward.[663] In *L'homme qui vient* he purported to extinguish the false dichotomy between progress and conservation, using the work of biologist René Quinton to suggest that because maintaining temperature equilibrium in cells allowed the cells to preserve higher functions, civilisation had two essential elements: maintenance and moving forward.[664]

---

659 See AN, F 7 12863, undated police report (1912), 'L'AF et les syndicats'.

660 Mazgaj produced an immensely detailed study of the interactions between AF and syndicalists, see *The Action française and Revolutionary Syndicalism* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1979).

661 The CP has not often been written about in great detail. For the literature that there is, see Mark Antliff, *Avant-Garde Fascism: the mobilization of myth, art, and culture in France, 1909–1939* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007), chapter on 'the legacy of violence', pp. 203–46; Georges Navet, 'Le Cercle Proudhon, 1911–1914 (entre le syndicalisme révolutionnaire et l'Action française)', *Les travaux de l'atelier Proudhon* 6 (Paris: École des Hautes études en sciences sociales, 1987); and Pierre de Brague, *Le Cercle Proudhon ou l'existence d'une révolution conservatrice française* (Saint-Denis: Kontre Kulture, 2014).

662 See AN, F 7 12863, 'L'AF et le milieu ouvrier', police report of 16 March 1912; 'Déclaration', *Cahiers du CP*, vol. I (1912–3), pp. 1. This was signed by: Jean Darville [Édouard Berth], Henri Lagrange, Gibert Maire, René de Marans, André Pascalon, Marius Riquier, Georges Valois, and Albert Vincent.

663 AN, F 7 12863, 'L'AF et les syndicats'.

664 Georges Valois, *L'homme qui vient: philosophie de l'authorité* (Paris: Librarie nationale, 1908), pp. xiv–v. This allows us to see that there was abuse of science on the right as well as the left. A little under two years later,

This was an extraordinary extrapolation, but one which highlights nonetheless an important element in the conception of time that would come to the fore in the *Cahiers du CP*. Conservatism did not have to look back to the past after all—in fact, conservatism was essential for moving forward into the future. This was a sentiment which a thinker such as de Montesquiou had failed to communicate with adequate power, since his emphasis had often been too far skewed towards the past.

Accordingly, then, the CP assumed its mantle as a movement which was both revolutionary and counter-revolutionary, stating explicitly that it sought both to destroy *and* to reconstruct.[665] Proudhon himself had been 'a master of counter-revolution', insisted Louis Dimier.[666] Much in the same way that AF's appropriation of Fustel de Coulanges had signalled a reconciliation of sorts with the recent past, the CP's obsession with Proudhon highlighted a willingness to find an alternative route through a century which had often been seen as disastrous by the right. In the CP, Édouard Berth—under the pseudonym Jean Darville—carried forward his attachment to Proudhon, an attachment which based at once on the longing for a more stable social order which was somehow fundamentally French and a desire for action.[667] The CP managed to thoroughly disdain the present without seriously detracting from its power as a window of opportunity in which to change things.

Maurras sent Sorel a copy of Valois' *Avenir de l'intelligence*, and the latter commented approvingly on it, see AN, 576AP, letter from Sorel to Maurras (1 Jan. 1908). Sorel was not, however, enamoured of the CP, though it considered him a 'liberator of the human spirit' along with Maurras, Barrès, and Bergson (see Gibert Maire, 'La philosophie de Georges Sorel', *Cahiers du CP*, vol. I [1912–3], p. 80). Sorel spoke irritably of the CP's appropriation of Proudhon to Berth, see letter of 22 Dec. 1911 in Sorel, 'Lettres de Georges Sorel à Édouard Berth. Troisième partie: 1911–1917', ed. Pierre Andreu, Marie-Laurence Netter, and Michel Prat, *Cahiers Georges Sorel* 5 (1987), p. 166.

665 For a wide-ranging discussion of the theme of counter-revolution, see Weber, 'Revolution? Counter-revolution? What revolution?', *Journal of Contemporary History* 9 (1974), pp. 3–47.

666 Dimier cited in Maurras, 'À Besançon', *Cahiers du CP*, vol. I (1912–3), p. 4. This was a reprinting of Maurras' speech at the opening of the CP. He would later distance himself from the Cercle, but there was some common ground between the two.

667 The adoption of Proudhon was largely down to what was now taken to be his inherent and absolute Frenchness, see Jean Darville [Édouard Berth], 'Proudhon', *Cahiers du CP*, vol. I (1912–3), pp. 10–1.

In the first issue of the *Cahiers du CP*, Valois fleshed out this interest in Proudhon and the rationale that lay behind it. 'Very exactly', he explained, 'we are seeking to understand the economy's current form to discover the conditions of the French order and the operation of classes within French society'. Crucially, though, this would be done without 'breaking national bonds, and without losing sight of the fact that all these conditions are attached to an eternal order'.[668] This might at first seem to be simply a reference to an eternal celestial order, but its juxtaposition with 'national bonds' alerts us to the idea that Valois was appealing to France's eternal elements. A couple of pages later, he declared: *Proudhon, c'est la France éternelle*.[669] Valois' article encapsulated the marriage between present action and the appeal to an eternal national timeframe that the CP came to embody: he had latched on to Proudhon as a representative of the longed-for but elusive eternal France, and yet he simultaneously pushed for an understanding of the current situation of society.

But the CP was, intellectually speaking, a meagre endeavour. Its articles tended to state and restate the reasons for its interest in Proudhon, and it never really managed to move beyond this except to elaborate rather specious arguments for why restoration of the monarchy would aid the French working classes.[670] 1913 was the final year of what had existed of its productivity and its original output and by 1914, it had collapsed under the weight of its own paranoia. Its writers were much more focused on responding to perceived slights by other groups, deploying their 'strident, frenzied and rhetorical style' in so doing.[671] In the end, the CP was probably more notable for its existence rather than for anything concrete its members wrote or did. Nevertheless, it provides a noteworthy example of the new culture of time which now

668 Valois, 'Pourquoi nous rattachons nos travaux à l'esprit proudhonien', *Cahiers du CP*, vol. I (1912–3), p. 37.
669 Ibid. 39.
670 See for example Jean Darville [Édouard Berth], 'La monarchie et la classe ouvrière', *Cahiers du CP*, vol. II (1914), pp. 7–34.
671 Jennings, *Syndicalism in France*, p. 102. See for example, de Marans, 'Réponse à quelque critiques des *Études*, *Cahiers du CP*, vol. II (1914), pp. 61–71; Valois, 'De quelques tentatives d'agression contre le CP', *Cahiers du CP*, vol. II (1914), pp. 72–94.

dominated the far right. This was based in the idea that conservatism could produce dynamic change in the present, and the notion that the present could be reconciled with an eternal French nation.

Conclusion

The conceptions of time we encounter in studying the LDP, the LPF, AF, and the CP are multifaceted and shifting, but they tended—until around 1905, at least—to be governed by the desire to heal a perceived rift between deep past and distant future. This mission was crucial for eliding a present that had come to represent all that was negative about modern France.

The events of 1870–1 didn't so much touch a nerve about France's place in the world—and particularly her position in relation to the newly unified Germany—as repeatedly jangle it for the next forty years, and the country's dismembering loss of Alsace-Lorraine served as an indelible reminder of this. For many nationalists, especially the activists and writers associated with the LDP, it became an almost all-consuming obsession which deeply marked how the present was conceptualised. The trauma of the defeat continually disrupted the fabric between the present and the recent past, resulting in a bleached timeframe which was devoid of meaning. In terms of both its content and the very concepts it represented, the present was seen only to be a moment of derision at best and horror at worst. This was the key starting point for nationalist conceptions of time.

In response to the notion of time fostered first by the defeat and then by events such as the Dreyfus Affair, members of AF were especially keen to stress their mission as one which reunited past and future to bring greater significance to life in the present. This was a much more sophisticated approach than the idea of a simple return to the past might suggest; it was based on a notion of dynamic interaction between temporal categories. These efforts developed into an appeal to an eternal French nation. Nationalists identified particular people or elements in the French nation which they took to be eternal, and the extent to which this emphasis appealed to women in particular was striking. The monarchy, for some, was the epitome of the

eternal nation, and certain writers justified their changes of political allegiance by using ideas rooted in time.

Ultimately, though, efforts to place France outside of time were beset by various challenges. As we can see from the continual references to the ongoing horror of contemporary history, the concept of an eternal nation provided inconstant shelter from the ravages of time, sometimes serving only to highlight the inescapability of a present which represented turmoil and a future which represented change.

After 1905, a younger generation of activists emerged whose conceptions of the present were not so overwhelmingly negative. This signalled a reconciliation with the temporal category that had so exercised nationalists in previous years. Their propensity to be governed by and to be operating in perpetual response to their revulsion at the present was over. The desire to recover an eternal France now combined with a push for action in the here-and-now, a characteristic which can be clearly seen in the short-lived CP.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has argued that understandings of time were a central element of the radical political landscape in France, 1899–1913. How people thought about and experienced time had a powerful effect on activism during the Dreyfus Affair and its aftermath, as well as being at the heart of the creation and the evolution of far-left and far-right political movements. We have seen that understandings of past, present, and future could both unite and divide writers and activists, and that these understandings had the potential to motivate and empower or to hamper and forestall their ambitions. The diversity of the effects of notions of time on radical groups attests to time's profound and comprehensive impact on these circles. The cultures of time that were created at both extremes of the political spectrum were multifaceted and changeable but, whatever shape they took, they tended to guide the development of socialist, syndicalist, and nationalist ideologies and programmes during this period.

Part I demonstrated how experiences of time shaped engagement in and the interpretation of the Dreyfus Affair. It also showed how differing ideas about past and future structured the reshaping of the political landscape that came after the Affair, as well as providing the language used to describe this phenomenon. Above all, the creation and subsequent failure of the UPs—along with the broader disappointment with Dreyfusism—illustrate how an inability to unite disparate planes of time, be they emotional, political, or historical, could be fatal for attempts at change.

The contribution of Part II has been to demonstrate how the left was animated by the sense that there was a gulf between present and future which needed to be bridged. While the left has often been described as hopelessly fragmented at this time, studying understandings of

time allows us to point to a broad commonality, if not a point of cohesion. Exploring ideas about time allows us to reorient our understanding of disputes which have previously been taken to be based on debates about reform as opposed to revolution, or the problems presented by Marxism and religion. Such debates are more fruitfully understood as an expression of anxieties about time on the far left, a milieu in which the alarming separation between present and future was one of the most pressing issues at the beginning of the twentieth century. These anxieties can be traced through responses to and uses of scientific theories, as well as the vogue for writing futurist fiction. The syndicalist movement provided its own unique interpretation of the problem, developing the idea that the proletariat occupied its own distinct timeframe and deploying the notion of the general strike as a way of bringing the future into the present.

Part III has similarly shown how the far right was governed by particular experiences and understandings of time. More, even, than the other groups studied in this thesis, time was a fundamental part of what Winock called 'the imaginary order' that AF, the LPF, and the LDP 'constructed' for themselves.[672] Their understandings of time were characterised at first by a rejection of the concept of the present and by the traumatic and constant intrusion of the recent past of the defeat. In response to this, writers and activists showed a desire to unite deep past and distant future, identifying the aspects of the French nation—the popular voice, mothers, the monarchy—which they felt to be most enduring. While its content and precise meaning might not always have been clear, the notion of the 'eternal nation' functioned as a concept which encapsulated the far right's vision of France and which proved to be a clarion call for activists. This conception of time changed, giving way to a reconciliation with the present which allowed nationalists to adopt the more militant posture which would define AF through the interwar years. They did not renege their commitment to their idea of an eternal nation, but rather combined it with their new-found enthusiasm for the present.

---

672 Winock, *Nationalism*, p. 1.

It is not so surprising, in the end, that a set of movements predicated upon radical change should have used the language of time to differentiate themselves from one another. What is more exciting is the extent to which ideas about time suffused their ideologies and their missions and, ultimately, what these ideas actually did to people pursuing particular projects. The UP initiative, syndicalist doctrines, and the turn to monarchism by some on the right are all developments which evince the profound and concrete impact that conceptualisations of time had on political movements.

The movements studied across the course of this thesis were highly diverse, but they all shared a mission to understand how individuals and how broader groupings (classes or nations, for instance) could be inserted into and operate within modern timeframes. Though they only infrequently made direct appeals to the notion of modernity, the characters of this study were nonetheless tackling a quintessentially modern set of problems. How could they make sense of the changes happening around them? Was the plane of time on which the nation or the proletariat operated the same as that of the rest of society? On both right and left, there were concerted attempts to bridge the temporal rifts of modernity: on the left, this was most likely to be presented as the need to bridge the gulf between present and future, while the right sought to heal the wrenching apart of past and future. Their attempts to resolve these issues were just as likely to end in failure as they were to approach success, but that only makes them all the more interesting—it is in recognising their impotence that many of these writers and activists got closest to articulating fruitful ideas about the position of individuals and political movements within the flow of time.

Broader vistas: the future of time

My argument has been about methodology as well as about the networks I study and, at its broadest, the aim of this thesis has been to highlight the potential of using time as an analytical

tool for understanding political movements and ideologies. Although the radical thinkers and activists in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century France have provided a germane testing ground for the hypothesis that understandings of time can provide a valuable insight into political culture, time's analytical potential is much more widely applicable. There are numerous different directions that such research might take, but two in particular are worthy of mention.

Part I of the thesis, which was to a large extent based around the ways in which people experienced time, offers especially interesting opportunities in this regard. We saw that Dreyfusard activists, in the aftermath of the Affair, came to conceive of their disillusionment as a sense of temporal isolation—but this feeling was by no means unique to them. In the opening of her book *Between Past and Future*, Hannah Arendt quoted *résistant* and poet René Char, who wrote that the French Resistance was like a precious treasure or a testament which ultimately had to be rejected in order for normal life to resume. The history of most revolutions could be told analogously, Arendt argued, as they tended to feature the sudden appearance of a kind of treasure, followed by its disappearance or even its conscious rejection. When the treasure or the testament, which 'wills past possessions for a future', vanishes, 'there seems to be no willed continuity in time and hence [...] neither past nor future'.[673] Arendt's and Char's comments on the Resistance alert us to how the idea of a possibility for change which emerges and later evaporates to leave behind the sense of being adrift in time—the ineffable treasure and its subsequent loss—might form the basis of a comparative study of political activism and experiences of time.[674] Such a study could encompass the 1848 revolutions or the events of 1968 as well as the Resistance. The notion of being adrift in time also applied to the period immediately following this study—namely, the First World War and the sense of dislocation it

673 Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future: eight exercises in political thought* (New York: Penguin Classics, 2006, 1st edn 1961), pp. 3–4. Char stated that 'our heritage was left to us by no testament', cited in ibid. 3. Char wrote an ethereal collection of prose poems during the Occupation: see *Feuillets d'Hypnos*, ed. Marie-Françoise Delecroix (Paris: Gallimard, 2012, 1st edn 1961).

674 Duclert very fleetingly hinted at a potential comparison between Dreyfusard activism and the Resistance (*L'Affaire*, p. 111), and this deserves to be developed.

generated. To say that the War destroyed conventional understandings of historical time would be an exaggeration, but much of the political radicalism of the interwar years was clearly rooted in a deeply-felt sense of the need to recover or re-establish a coherent sense of time. Study of the transnational nature of such upheavals would provide a richer perspective on the nature of political activism and on what happens after the initial burst of action is over.

While the French dimension of this study has provided insights about revolutionary heritage and about French radicals' self-consciousness in terms of what this meant for their ideas about past, present, and future, work on time is by no means restricted to this starting point. In 2015, Vanessa Ogle produced an overview of global changes to time in the period 1870–1950. She argued that Europe and America had pursued time reform in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in order to 'measure and establish difference'.[675] Ogle's contribution indicates the potential for combining time studies with the burgeoning field of global history.[676] What role did time play in interactions between states, groups, or individuals from different parts of the world, or between colonised and coloniser, for example?[677] Ogle provides some insight into these questions, but her monograph was a sweeping overview and, as such, did not delve deeply into these questions. What is clear, though, is the potential for ideas about time to structure clashes of identities at a wider scale.

A contemporary concern?

In his preface to the 2012 edition of *Régimes d'historicité*, Hartog remarked with surprise and a little glee at his own prescience that he hadn't meant his work to be quite so prophetic. Writing

675 Ogle, *The Global Transformation of Time*, p. 7.
676 On global history, see for example James Belich, John Darwin, Margaret Frenz, and Chris Wickham (eds), *The Prospect of Global History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), especially the introduction, pp. 3–22.
677 For instance, Ogle cited how Indians clung to Bombay time as a way of resisting colonial rule, *The Global Transformation of Time*, p. 119.

nearly ten years after the book was first published, he found inescapable the conclusion that societies everywhere had moved further into a state of *présentisme*, spurred on largely by the financial crash of 2008.[678] Five years on from that and new events have again substantiated, at least in part, Hartog's claims. While there is much room for nuance in the *présentiste* reading of the contemporary political and intellectual landscape, it is difficult to resist viewing phenomena such as the Brexit vote and the election of Donald Trump in 2016 as facets of a broader crisis in the way in which time is perceived.

In the wake of the Brexit vote last year, political economist Will Davies published blog post reflecting on the causes and the significance of the events of 23 June. Davies underscored the way in which no vision of the future fuelled the movement to leave the European Union. Instead, it was 'an offer of a collective real-time hallucination' to 'be indulged in like a video game'—in other words, it presented an alternative, disconnected temporality.[679] Another reading might suggest that it was an attempt to recover a lost and partly imagined national past based in empire or the 'Dunkirk spirit'. Similar points could be made of the American election, which saw both Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton appealing to notions of the past rather than developing ideas about the future. Trump invoked a return a mythical 'great' America, while Clinton appealed to a more strictly delineated past found in the prosperity of the late twentieth century.[680] To be sure, both candidates paid lip-service to improvements in the future—but these improvements were always based on recalling the past.

Time and our understanding of it is a pressing concern in the society in which we live: even these two brief examples serve to demonstrate the relevance of ideas about past, present,

---

678 Hartog, *Régimes d'historicité*, pp. 11–8.

679 Will Davies, 'Thoughts on the sociology of Brexit' (24 June 2016) http://www.perc.org.uk/project_posts/thoughts-on-the-sociology-of-brexit (accessed 24 June 2016); see point three, 'Brexit was not fuelled by a vision of the future'. The PERC blog is affiliated with Goldsmiths University, where Davies is an academic.

680 I have previously published reflections on the election, see 'Donald Trump's slogan betrays a renewed political fixation on the past', *The Conversation* (24 October 2016) http://theconversation.com/donald-trumps-slogan-betrays-a-renewed-political-fixation-on-the-past-66470 (last accessed 7 July 2017).

and future. Towards the end of the twentieth century, the loss of the route map provided by the legacies of the Second World War and the constraining but often comforting framework of the Cold War produced the sense of being cast adrift in a new temporality. This new temporality continues to radically reshape our world and, as work by scholars such as Hartog and Traverso have shown us, historians have a particular place in identifying and interpreting this landscape of time.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary sources

Manuscript and archival sources

Alliance Israélite Universelle, Paris

Fonds Bernard-Lazare

Ms 522, Boxes 7, 10 Drafts of *Le Fumier de Job*

Ms 522, Boxes 12–14 Final writings, notes, and manuscripts

Archives Nationales, Pierrefitte

Police générale

F 7 12451 Ligue des Patriotes, 1898–1907

F 7 12459 Anti-Semitism

F 7 12463 General nationalist propaganda

F 7 12719 Nationalists 1898–1910; Action libérale populaire

F 7 12720 Nationalist associations

F 7 12721 1902 elections; Ligue de la Patrie française

F 7 12722 Ligue de la Patrie française

F 7 12862 Action française, 1899–1911

F 7 12863 Action française, 1911–22

F 7 13229 Ligue de la Patrie française

Archives privées

401AP Boxes 24–25 Correspondence received by Paul Déroulède

576AP Boxes 74, 78, 155 Correspondence received by Charles Maurras

Archives de la Préfecture de Police, Le Pré-Saint-Gervais

Cabinet du Préfet de Police (1869–1970): affaires générales

BA 1216 Fernand Pelloutier, 1894–1901

BA 1540 Le Sillon, 1898–1908

BA 1601–1605 Confédération générale du Travail, 1906–1915

BA 1686 Confédération générale du Travail, 1906–1907

Bibliothèque historique de la Ville de Paris

Fonds Dreyfus (also known as Fonds Alphonse Ochs)

4–D–00368, 24–26 Programmes for events at the Institut d'Action française, 1907–1908, 1910–1911, 1911–1912

Bibliothèque littéraire Jacques Doucet, Paris

Fonds Henri Bergson

BGN 768–773 Letters from Daniel Halévy to Bergson

Section des manuscrits, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris

Papiers Daniel Halévy

NAF 28147, boxes 81, 112 Halévy's diaries and notebooks

NAF 28147, boxes 42–49, 125–132 Halévy's received correspondence

Centre Charles Péguy, Orléans

CORCQ-IV 8–9, 27–29, 39, 76, 82 Correspondence received by Péguy; correspondence received by *Cahiers de la Quinzaine*

Inv. 31, MP 132–133 Péguy's 'Notre jeunesse' manuscript

Centre d'Histoire de Sciences Politiques, Paris

Fonds Daniel Halévy

DH1 Dr 1–4 Programmes and pamphlets relating to the Universités populaires

DH2 Dr 3 Programmes for the Universités populaires

Fonds Léon Blum (also known as Archives de Moscou)

Inv. 2, Dr 23, 57, 666 Correspondence sent and received by Blum

Institut français d'Histoire sociale, Montreuil

Fonds de la Confédération générale de Travail avant 1940

Série 2A, Boxes 1–3	Archives of the Fédération des Bourses du Travail: correspondence and miscellaneous documents, 1893–1902
Série 2A, 17–40	Reports on congresses of the Confédération générale du Travail and the Fédération des Bourses du Travail, 1897–1912

Musée social, Paris

Fonds des Universités populaires

B2 239 1–2, 4, 6–8, 13, 23	Advertisements and programmes relating to the Universités populaires

Printed sources

Newspapers and reviews

L'Accord social

L'Action française

Almanach de la Ligue des Patriotes

Almanach de la Patrie française

Almanach du Sillon

Annales de la Patrie française

L'Aurore

Bulletin du Comité des dames de la Patrie française

Cahiers de la Quinzaine

Cahiers du Cercle Proudhon

La Cocarde

La Coopération des idées

Le Devenir social

Le Drapeau

Le Figaro

L'Humanité

Le Jaune

La Libre parole

Le Mouvement socialiste

Pages libres

Le Père Peinard

La Petite République

Le Précurseur

Revue de l'Action française

La Revue blanche

Le Sillon

Les Temps nouveaux

Terre libre

La Vie ouvrière

La Voix du peuple

L'Université populaire

Books

Agathon [Henri Massis and Alfred de Tarde], *Les jeunes gens d'aujourd'hui* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1995, 1st edn 1913).

Barrès, Maurice, *Roman de l'énergie nationale: les déracinés* (Paris: Eugène Fasquelle, 1897).

————————, *Roman de l'énergie nationale: l'appel au soldat* (Paris: Félix Juven, 1902).

————————, *Roman de l'énergie nationale: leurs figures* (Paris: Eugène Fasquelle, 1902).

————————, *Mes cahiers*, vol. II (Paris: La Palatine, 1930).

————————, *Scènes et doctrines du nationalisme* (Paris: Éditions du Trident, 1987, 1st edn 1902).

Bergson, Henri, *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1991, 1st edn 1889).

————————, *Matière et mémoire: essai sur la relation du corps à l'esprit* (Paris: Félix Alcan, 1908, 1st edn 1896).

————————, *L'évolution créatrice* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1948, 1st edn 1907).

Bernard-Lazare, *La porte d'ivoire* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1897).

————————, *L'Antisémitisme, son histoire et ses causes* (Paris: Les éditions 1900, 1990, 1st edn 1894).

————————, *Le Fumier de Job*, ed. Philippe Oriol (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1998, 1st edn 1928).

————————, *Contre l'antisémitisme: histoire d'une polémique*, intr. Pierre Guillaume (Paris: Éditions de la différence, 1983, 1st edn 1896).

Berth, Édouard, *Les nouveaux aspects du socialisme* (Paris: Marcel Rivière, 1908).

Biez, Jacques de, *La question juive: la France ne peut pas être leur terre promise* (Paris: C. Marpon & E. Flammarion, 1886).

Blum, Léon, *Souvenirs sur l'affaire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1935).

Cazanove, Émile, *La révolution antijuive de demain (inévitable et à brève échéance)* (Paris: Librairie antisémite, 1904).

Char, René, *Feuillet d'Hypnos*, ed. Marie-Françoise Delecroix (Paris: Gallimard, 2012, 1st edn 1961).

Claretie, Jules, *Quarante ans après: impressions d'Alsace-Lorraine* (Paris: Eugène Fasquelle, 1910).

Daudet, Léon, *Une campagne d'Action française* (Paris: Nouvelle librairie nationale, 1910).

———————, *Le stupide XIX^e^* (Paris: Bernard Grasset, 1929, 1st edn 1922).

Deherme, Georges, *La crise sociale* (Paris: Bloud, 1910).

Déroulède, Paul, *Chants du soldat* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1885).

———————, *Chants du paysan* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1894).

———————, *À Champigny-la-Bataille: propagandes 1882–1912* (Paris: Bureaux de la Ligue de patriotes, 1913).

Drumont, Édouard, *Mon vieux Paris: hommes et choses* (Paris: Georges Charpentier, 1878).

———————, *La France juive: édition populaire* (Paris: Librairie Victor Palme, 1888).

———————, *Les juifs contre la France: une nouvelle Pologne* (Paris: Librairie antisémite, 1899).

Dutrait-Crozon, Henri [Frédéric Delebecque and George Larpent], *Précis de l'affaire Dreyfus avec un répertoire analytique* (Paris: Nouvelle librairie nationale, 1909).

Fournière, Eugène, *Chez nos petits fils* (Paris: Bibliothèque Charpentier, 1900).

France, Anatole, *Sur la pierre blanche* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1905).

Frary, Raoul, *Le péril national* (Paris: Didier, 1881).

Gregh, Fernand, *L'âge d'or: souvenirs d'enfance et de jeunesse* (Paris: Bernard Grasset, 1947).

Griffuelhes, Victor, *L'action syndicaliste* (Paris: Marcel Rivière, 1908).

Guesde, Jules, *Le socialisme au jour le jour* (Paris: V. Giard & E. Brière, 1899).

Guy-Grand, Georges, *La philosophie syndicaliste* (Paris: Bernard Grasset, 1911).

Halévy, Daniel, *Péguy and* Les Cahiers de la Quinzaine, tr. Ruth Bethell (London: Dennis Dobson, 1946).

———————, *Degas parle…* (Paris: La palatine, 1960).

———————, *Regards sur l'affaire Dreyfus*, ed. Jean-Pierre Halévy (Paris: Éditions de Fallois, 1994).

———————, *Histoire de quatre ans, 1997–2001*, intr. Frédéric Rouvillois (Paris: Kimé, 1997, 1st edn 1903).

Hartmann, Eduard von, *Philosophie de l'inconscient*, tr. Désiré Nolen (Paris: Germer Baillière, 1877).

Herzl, Theodore, *L'état juif* (Paris: Éditions de l'Herne, 2007, 1st edn 1897).

Jaurès, Jean, *Action socialiste* (Paris: Société nouvelle de librairie et d'édition, 1899).

——————— and Paul Lafargue, *Idéalisme et matérialisme dans le conception de l'histoire* (Lille: Imprimerie ouvrière P. Lagrange, 1901).

———————, *Études socialistes* (Geneva: Slatkine, 1979, 1st edn 1902).

———————, *Jaurès*, ed. Émile Vandervelde (Paris: Félix Alcan, 1929).

———————, *La question religieuse et le socialisme* (Paris: Éditions de minuit, 1959).

———————, *Œuvres de Jean Jaurès*, vol. 6: *les temps de l'affaire Dreyfus, 1897–1899*, ed. Éric Cahm and Madeleine Rebérioux (Paris: Fayard, 2001).

Lagardelle, Hubert (ed.), *Syndicalisme et socialisme* (Paris: Marcel Rivière, 1908).

Le Bon, Gustave, *Psychologie des foules* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1963, 1st edn 1895).

Lemaître, Jules, *Opinions à rependre* (Paris: Société française d'imprimerie et de librairie, 1901).

———————, *Discours royalistes, 1908–1911* (Paris: Nouvelle librairie nationale, 1911).

Luxemburg, Rosa, *Socialism or Barbarism: the selected writings of Rosa Luxemburg*, ed. Paul Le Blanc and Helen C. Scott (London: Pluto Press, 2010).

Magué, André de, *La France bourgeoise actuelle* (Paris: André de Magué, 1891).

———————, *L'idée moderne agonisante* (Paris: C. Schenck, 1894).

Maurras, Charles and Henri Dutrait-Crozon, *Si le coup de force est possible* (Paris: Nouvelle librairie nationale, 1910).

Maurras, Charles, *Enquête sur la monarchie, 1900–1909* (Paris: Nouvelle librairie nationale, 1911).

———————, *Kiel et Tanger: 1895–1905. La République française devant l'Europe* (Paris: Nouvelle librairie nationale, 1913).

———————, *Maîtres et témoins de ma vie d'esprit: Barrès, Mistral, France, Verlaine, Moréas* (Paris: Flammarion, 1954).

Mirbeau, Octave, *L'affaire Dreyfus*, ed. Pierre Michel and Jean-François Nivet (Paris: Librairie Séguier, 1991).

Pataud, Émile, and Émile Pouget, *Comment nous ferons la révolution* (Paris: Jules Tallandier, 1909).

Péguy, Charles, *Note sur M. Bergson et la philosophie bergsonienne; Note conjointe sur M. Descartes et la philosophie cartésienne* (Paris: Gallimard, 1935).

————————, *Notes politiques et sociales* (Paris: L'amitié Charles Péguy, 1957).

Pelloutier, Fernand, *Histoire des Bourses du Travail*, ed. Victor Dave (Paris: Alfred Costes, 1921).

Pouget, Émile, *La Confédération générale du Travail* (Paris: Marcel Rivière, 1908).

Reclus, Élisée, *L'évolution, la révolution et l'idéal anarchique* (Loveral: Éditions labor, 2006, 1st edn 1902).

Reinach, Joseph, *Histoire de l'affaire Dreyfus*, 2 vols (Paris: Robert Laffont, 2006, 1st edn 1901–1911).

Sangnier, Marc, *L'éducation sociale du peuple* (Paris: X. Rondelet, 1899).

————————, *La vie profonde: éveils et visions* (Paris: Perrin, 1906).

Schefer, Christian, *La crise actuelle: essai de psychologie contemporaine* (Paris: Plon-Nourrit, 1901).

Sorel, Georges, *L'avenir socialiste des syndicats* (Paris: G. Jacques, 1901).

————————, *La révolution dreyfusienne* (Paris: Marcel Rivière, 1909).

————————, *Matériaux d'une théorie du proletariat* (Paris: Marcel Rivière, 1919).

————————, *Les illusions du progrès* (Paris: Slatkine, 1981, 1st edn 1908).

————————, *Reflections on Violence*, ed. Jeremy Jennings (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

Soury, Jules, *Campagne nationaliste, 1899–1901* (Paris: Plon-Nourrit, 1902).

Spencer, Herbert, *Principles of Biology*, vol. 1 (London: Williams & Norgate, 1864).

Spronck, Maurice, *L'an 330 de la République (XXII^e siècle de l'ère chrétienne)* (Paris: L. Chailley, 1894).

Valerie, Georges, *Notes sur le nationalisme* (Paris: X. Rondelet, 1901).

Valois, Georges, *L'homme qui vient: philosophie de l'authorité* (Paris: Nouvelle librairie nationale, 1906).

Zévaès, Alexandre, *Une génération* (Paris: Marcel Rivière, 1922).

Pamphlets

Bernard-Lazare, *Une erreur judiciaire: la verité sur l'affaire Dreyfus* (Paris: Pierre-Victor Stock, 1896).

————————, *Antisémitisme et révolution* (Paris: Pierre-Victor Stock, 1898).

————————, *Le nationalisme juif* (Paris: Pierre-Victor Stock, 1898).

Buisson, Ferdinand, *Pourquoi nous sommes patriotes et ne sommes pas nationalistes* (Paris: Ligue française pour la défense des droits de l'homme et du citoyen, 1902).

Commission des grèves et de la grève générale, *Grève générale réformiste et grève générale révolutionnaire* (Paris: Confédération générale du Travail, 1903).

Comité des dames de la France, *Appel à toutes les françaises par l'une d'elle* (Paris: Bureaux de la Patrie française, 1901).

Confédération générale du Travail, *Le prolétariat contre la guerre et les trois ans* (Paris: Maison des Fédérations, 1913).

Delesalle, Paul, *Les deux méthodes du syndicalisme* (Puteaux: Société ouvrière d'imprimerie, 1903).

Duclaux, Émile, *Avant le procès* (Paris: Pierre-Victor Stock, 1898).

Fédération des Bourses du Travail, *Nouveau manuel du soldat* (Paris: Fédération des Bourses du Travail, 1902).

Fournière, Eugène, *L'artifice nationaliste* (Paris: Eugène Fasquelle, 1903).

Hauser, Henri (ed.), *Congrès international de l'enseignement des sciences sociales, tenu à Paris du 30 juillet au 3 août 1900* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1900).

Kahn, Émile, *La question des Universités populaires* (Paris: Éditions de la Revue socialiste, 1902).

Ligue de la Patrie française, *Manuel du bon citoyen* (Paris: Bureaux de la Patrie française, 1901).

May, Dick, *L'enseignement social à Paris (suivi des programmes détaillés du Collège libre des Sciences sociales pour l'année 1896–1897)* (Paris: Arthur Rousseau, 1896).

Pelloutier, Fernand, *Qu'est-ce que la grève générale?* (Paris: Imprimerie Jean Allemane, 1895).

———————, *Les syndicats en France* (Paris: Librairie ouvrière, 1897).

———————, *Congrès général du Parti Socialiste français, 3–8 décembre 1899* (Paris: Pierre-Victor Stock, 1900).

Petit, Édouard, *Rapport sur l'éduction populaire en 1898–1899 adressé à M. Georges Leygues, Ministre de l'Instruction publique et des Beaux-Arts* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1899).

Pujo, Maurice, *Après l'affaire: lettre ouverte publiée par* L'Éclair *le 19 décembre 1898* (Paris: Bureaux de l'Action française, 1898).

Speeches

Barrès, Maurice, *Assainissement et fédéralisme, discours prononcé à Bordeaux le 29 juin 1895* (Paris: Librairie de la Revue socialiste, 1895).

———————, *La terre et les morts: sur quelles réalités fonder la conscience française, troisième conférence* (Paris: Bureaux de la Patrie française, 1899).

———————, *Les traits éternels de la France, discours prononcé à Londres le 12 juillet 1916* (Paris: Émile-Paul frères, 1916).

Bernard-Lazare, *Histoire des doctrines révolutionnaires, leçon d'ouverture faite le 16 décembre 1895 au Collège libre des Sciences sociales* (Paris: V. Giard & E. Brière, 1896).

Brunetière, Ferdinand, *Les ennemis de l'âme française, conférence prononcée à Lille le 15 mars 1899* (Paris: J. Hetzel, 1899).

Dubois, Marcel, *L'avenir de 'la Patrie française': deuxième conférence, prononcée le 15 février 1899* (Paris: Bureaux de la Patrie française, 1899).

Jaurès, Jean, *L'organisation socialiste de l'avenir, discours à la Chambre française* (Ghent: Société coopérative "Volksdrukkerij", 1906).

Lemaître, Jules, *La Patrie française: première conférence, prononcée le 19 janvier 1899* (Paris: Bureaux de la Patrie française, 1899).

————————, *L'œuvre de la Patrie française, discours prononcé à la Salle des Agriculteurs de France le 13 novembre 1899* (Paris: Bureaux de la Patrie française, 1899).

————————, *Aux femmes de la Patrie française, allocution prononcée à Paris le 26 décembre 1901* (Paris: Bureaux de la Patrie française, 1901).

Pressensé, Francis de, *L'idée de patrie, conférence faite à Paris le 9 février 1899* (Paris: Ligue française pour la défense des droits de l'homme et du citoyen, 1902).

Renan, Ernest, *Qu'est-ce qu'une nation? Conférence faite en Sorbonne le 11 mars 1882* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1882).

Sangnier, Marc, *L'avenir de la démocratie, discours prononcé le 1 février 1903 à l'inauguration de l'Institut populaire du X^e^ arrondissement* (Paris: Éditions du Sillon, 1903).

Séailles, Gabriel, *Éducation et Révolution, conférence faite à l'inauguration de l'Université populaire le 8 octobre 1899* (Paris: La Coopération des idées et la Société des Universités populaires, 1899).

Articles

Bernard-Lazare, 'L'esprit révolutionnaire dans le judaïsme', *La Revue politique et littéraire* [*Revue bleue*], no. 20 (20 May 1893), pp. 622–628.

————————, 'Le proletariat juif devant l'antisémitisme', *Le Flambeau*, no. 2 (Feb. 1899), pp. 3–14.

Halévy, Daniel, 'Charles Maurras et la tradition', *La Grande France*, no. 23 (Jan. 1902), pp. 42–47.

Lavisse, Ernest, 'La réconciliation nationale', *La Revue de Paris*, vol. V (Sept.–Oct. 1899), pp. 648–668.

Les uns, 'Des faits', *La Revue anarchiste*, no. 7 (30 Nov. 1893), pp. 86–87.

Maurras, Charles, 'Le nationalisme intégral', *Le Soleil*, no. 61 (2 March 1900), p. 1.

May, Dick, 'Quelques réflexions sur les Universités populaires', *La Revue socialiste*, no. 193 (Jan. 1901), pp. 32–49.

Méric, Victor, 'Du Paty de Clam', *Les Hommes du jour*, no. 261 (18 Jan. 1913), pp. 1–2.

Rokéach, Abraham, 'La Pâque', *L'Écho sioniste* (20 March–5 April 1901), pp. 129–31.

Séailles, Gabriel, 'La Coopération des idées et les Universités populaires', *La Revue politique et littéraire* [*Revue bleue*], vol. XXII (July–Dec. 1899), pp. 193–201.

Syveton, Gabriel, 'Du sentiment au raisonnement', *L'Écho de Paris*, no. 5755 (27 Feb. 1900), p. 1.

Published correspondence

Barrès, Maurice, and Charles Maurras, *La république ou le roi: correspondance inédite (1888–1923)*, ed. Hélène and Nicole Maurras (Paris: Plon, 1970).

Péguy, Charles, and Henri Bergson, *Correspondance Henri Bergson–Péguy*, ed. Auguste Martin (Paris: L'amitié Charles Péguy, 1970).

Sorel, Georges, 'Lettres de Georges Sorel à Édouard Berth. Première partie: 1904–1908', ed. Pierre Andreu, *Cahiers Georges Sorel* 3 (1985), pp. 77–152.

————————, 'Lettres de Georges Sorel à Édouard Berth. Deuxième partie: 1909–1910', ed. Pierre Andreu and Michel Prat, *Cahiers Georges Sorel* 4 (1986), pp. 79–139

————————, 'Lettres de Georges Sorel à Édouard Berth. Troisième partie: 1911–1917', ed. Pierre Andreu, Marie-Laurence Netter, and Michel Prat, *Cahiers Georges Sorel* 5 (1987), pp. 143–204.

Secondary sources

Books

Abitbol, Michel, *Les deux terres promesses: les juifs de France et le sionisme* (Paris: Perrin, 2010).

Abrams, Lynn, *The Making of Modern Woman* (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2002).

Aglan, Alya, *Le temps de la Résistance* (Arles: Actes Sud, 2008).

Agulhon, Maurice, *Marianne au combat: l'imagerie et la symbolique républicaines de 1789 à 1880* (Paris: Flammarion, 1979).

Alkon, Paul K., *Origins of Futuristic Fiction* (Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 1987).

Anderson, Benedict, *Imagined Communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991, 1st edn 1983).

Andrieu, Claire, Marie-Claire Lavabre, and Danielle Tartakowsky (eds), *Politiques du passé. Usages politiques du passé dans la France contemporaine* (Marseille: Publications de l'Université de Provence, 2006).

Angenot, Marc, *L'utopie collectiviste: le grand récit socialiste sous la Deuxième Internationale* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1993).

Ansell, Christopher K., *Schism and Solidarity in Social Movements: the politics of labour in the French Third Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

Antliff, Mark, *Avant-Garde Fascism: the mobilization of myth, art, and culture in France, 1909–1939* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007).

Arendt, Hannah, *Between Past and Future: eight exercises in political thought* (New York: Penguin Classics, 2006, 1st edn 1961).

Aronowicz, Annette, *Jews and Christians on Time and Eternity: Charles Péguy's portrait of Bernard-Lazare* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1998).

Barthélemy-Madaule, Madeleine, *Marc Sangnier, 1873–1950* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1973).

Baubérot, Jean, *La laïcité, quel héritage? De 1789 à nos jours* (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1990).

Becker, Jean-Jacques and Gilles Candar (eds), *Histoire des gauches en France*, 2 vols (Paris: La découverte, 2004).

Belich, James, John Darwin, Margaret Frenz, and Chris Wickham (eds), *The Prospect of Global History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

Bernardini, Jean-Marc, *Le darwinisme social en France (1859–1918). Fascination et rejet d'une idéologie* (Paris: CNRS éditions, 1997).

Berstein, Serge, *Léon Blum* (Paris: Fayard, 2006).

Bessel, Richard and Dirk Schumann (eds), *Life After Death: approaches to a cultural and social history of Europe during the 1940s and 1950s* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

Bourrelier, Paul-Henri, *La Revue blanche: une génération dans l'engagement, 1890–1905* (Paris: Fayard, 2007).

Brague, Pierre de, *Le Cercle Proudhon ou l'existence d'une révolution conservatrice française* (Saint-Denis: Kontre Kulture, 2014).

Bredin, Jean-Denis, *The Affair: the case of Alfred Dreyfus*, tr. Jeffrey Mehlman (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1987).

———————, *Bernard-Lazare: de l'anarchiste au prophète* (Paris: Éditions de Fallois, 1992).

Breuilly, John, *Nationalism and the State* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003, 1st edn 1982).

Brown, Frederick, *For the Soul of France: culture wars in the age of Dreyfus* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2010).

Burns, Michael, *Rural Society and French Politics: Boulangism and the Dreyfus Affair, 1886–1900* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984).

————————, *France and the Dreyfus Affair: a documentary history* (Boston, Mass.: St Martin's Press, 1999).

Cahm, Éric, *Péguy et le nationalisme français: de l'affaire Dreyfus à la Grande guerre* (Paris: Cahiers de l'amitié Charles Péguy, 1972).

————————, *L'affaire Dreyfus: histoire, politique et société* (Paris: Librairie générale française, 1994, 1st edn 1966).

Callu, Florence, and Marie-Odile Germain, *Correspondance de Maurice Barrès: inventaire des lettres reçues, 1874–1923* (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale, 1992).

Canales, Jimena, *The Physicist and the Philosopher: Einstein, Bergson, and the debate that changed our understanding of time* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015).

Capitan-Peter, Colette, *Charles Maurras et l'idéologie d'Action française: étude sociologique d'une pensée de droite* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1972).

Carroll, David, *French Literary Fascism: nationalism, anti-Semitism, and the ideology of culture* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995).

Caruth, Cathy (ed.), *Trauma: explorations in memory* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995).

Carvalho, Susana, and François Gemenne (eds), *Nations and their Histories: constructions and representations* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

Charle, Christophe, *Paris fin-de-siècle: culture et politique* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1998).

————————, *Discordance des temps: une brève histoire de la modernité* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2011).

Claeys, Gregory (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

————————, *Dystopia: a natural history* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

Cohn, Norman, *The Pursuit of the Millennium: revolutionary millenarians and mystical anarchists of the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970, 1st edn 1957).

Comaroff, Jean and John L. Comaroff, *Modernity and its Malcontents: ritual and power in postcolonial Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).

Confino, Alon, *A World Without Jews: the Nazi imagination from persecution to genocide* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2014).

Cook Andersen, Margaret, *Regeneration through Empire: French pronatalists and colonial settlement in the Third Republic* (Lincoln, Nebr.: University of Nebraska Press, 2015).

Cooke, James J., *New French Imperialism, 1880–1910: the Third Republic and colonial expansion* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1973).

Corfield, Penelope, *Time and the Shape of History* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2007).

Crapez, Marc, *Naissance de la gauche* (Paris: Éditions Michalon, 1998).

Crivello, Maryline, Patrick Garcia, and Nicholas Offenstadt (eds), *Concurrences des passés. Usages politiques du passé dans la France contemporaine* (Marseilles: Publications de l'Université de Provence, 2006).

Derfler, Leslie, *Paul Lafargue and the Flowering of French Socialism, 1882–1911* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998).

Drouin, Michel (ed.), *L'affaire Dreyfus de A à Z* (Paris: Flammarion, 1994).

Duclert, Vincent, *L'affaire Dreyfus* (Paris: La découverte, 2006, 1st edn 1994).

Duveau, Georges, *Sociologie de l'utopie et autres "essais"* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1961).

Eliav-Feldon, Miriam, *Realistic Utopias: the ideal imaginary societies of the Renaissance, 1516–1630* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982).

Erikson, Kai, *A New Species of Trouble: explorations in disaster, trauma, and community* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1994).

Forsström, Riikka, *Possible Worlds: the idea of happiness in the utopian vision of the Louis-Sébastien Mercier* (Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 2002).

Fraisse, Simone (ed.), *Les Cahiers de la Quinzaine* (Paris: Lettres modernes, Minard, 1983).

Fritzsche, Peter, *Stranded in the Present: modern time and the melancholy of history* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004).

Fuller, Robert Lynn, *The Origins of the French Nationalist Movement, 1886–1914* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2012).

Furet, François, *Interpreting the French Revolution*, tr. Elborg Forster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

Ferguson, James, *Expectations of Modernity: myths and meanings of urban life on the Zambian Copperbelt* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1999).

Gellner, Ernest, *Nationalism* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1997).

———————, *Nations and Nationalism* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2006, 1st edn 1983).

Gervereau, Laurent, and Christophe Prochasson, *L'affaire Dreyfus et le tournant du siècle, 1895–1910* (Nanterre: Bibliothèque de documentation internationale contemporaine, 1994).

Gildea, Robert, *The Past in French History* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1994).

———————, *Barricades and Borders: Europe 1800–1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003, 1st edn 1987).

———————, *Children of the Revolution: the French, 1799–1914* (London: Allen Lane, 2008).

Girardet, Raoul, *Le nationalisme français, 1871–1914* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1966).

Glenn Brown, Roger, *Fashoda Reconsidered* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1969).

Glinoer, Anthony, and Vincent Laisney, *L'âge des cénacles* (Paris: Fayard, 2013).

Goldhammer, Jesse, *The Headless Republic: sacrificial violence in modern French thought* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005).

Goltz, Anna von der (ed.), *'Talkin' 'bout my generation': conflicts of generation building and Europe's '1968'* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2011).

Gould, Evlyn, *Dreyfus and the Literature of the Third Republic: secularism and tolerance in Zola, Barrès, Lazare and Proust* (Jefferson, NC: Macfarlane & Co., 2012).

Goyet, Bruno, *Charles Maurras* (Paris: Presses de Sciences Politiques, 2000).

Greenhouse, Carol J., *A Moment's Notice: time politics across cultures* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996).

Griffiths, Richard, *The Use of Abuse: the polemics of the Dreyfus Affair and its aftermath* (Oxford: Berg, 1991).

Guerlac, Suzanne, *Thinking in Time: an introduction to Henri Bergson* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006).

Guldi, Jo, and David Armitage, *The History Manifesto* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

Gurvitch, Georges, *The Spectrum of Social Time*, tr. Myrtle Korenbaum (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1964).

Härmänmaa, Marja, and Christopher Nissen (eds), *Decadence, Degeneration, and the End: studies in the European fin-de-siècle* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

Harris, Ruth, *The Man on Devil's Island: Alfred Dreyfus and the Affair that divided France* (London: Penguin, 2011, 1st edn 2010).

Hartog, François, *Le XIX^e siècle et l'histoire: le cas de Fustel de Coulanges* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1988).

———————, *Régimes d'historité. Présentisme et expériences du temps* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2012, 1st edn 2003).

Hirsch, Thomas, *Le temps des sociétés: d'Émile Durkheim à Marc Bloch* (Paris: Éditions de l'École des hautes études en sciences sociales, 2016).

Hobsbawm, Eric, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: programme, myth, reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

Hoock, Holger (ed.), *History, Commemoration and National Preoccupation, 1805–2005* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

Horowitz, Irving, *Radicalism and the Revolt Against Reason* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961).

Hunt, Lynn, *Measuring Time, Making History* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2008).

Irvine, William D., *The Boulanger Affair Reconsidered: royalism, Boulangism, and the origins of the radical right in France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

Jameson, Frederic, *Archaeologies of the Future: the desire called utopia and other science fictions* (London: Verso, 2005).

Jennings, Jeremy, *Georges Sorel: the character and development of his thought* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1985).

————————, *Syndicalism in France: a study of ideas* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1990).

———————— and Anthony Kemp-Welch (eds), *Intellectuals in Politics from the Dreyfus Affair to Salman Rushdie* (London: Routledge, 1997).

————————, *Revolution and the Republic: a history of political thought in France since the eighteenth century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

Johnson, Martin P., *The Dreyfus Affair* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999).

Joll, James, *The Second International, 1889–1914* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974, 1st edn 1955).

Joly, Bertrand, *Déroulède: l'inventeur du nationalisme français* (Paris: Perrin, 1998).

————————, *Nationalistes et conservateurs en France, 1885–1902* (Paris: Les Indes savantes, 2008).

Joly, Laurent, *Naissance de l'Action française: Maurice Barrès, Charles Maurras et l'extrême droite nationaliste au tournant du XX^e siècle* (Paris: Bernard Grasset, 2015).

Judt, Tony, *Marxism and the French Left* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986).

Julliard, Jacques, *Fernand Pelloutier et les origines du syndicalisme d'action directe* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1971).

————————, *Autonomie ouvrière: études sur le syndicalisme d'action directe* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1988).

———————, *Les gauches françaises, 1762–2012: histoire, politique et imaginaire* (Paris: Flammarion, 2012).

Kahan, A. S., *Liberalism in Nineteenth-Century Europe: the political culture of limited suffrage* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

Kalman, Samuel, and Sean Kennedy (eds), *The French Right between the Wars: political and intellectual movements from conservatism to fascism* (New York: Berghahn, 2014).

Katznelson, Ira, and Gareth Stedman Jones (eds), *Religion and the Political Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

Kelly, Alfred, *The Descent of Darwin: the popularization of Darwinism in Germany* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1981).

Kern, Stephen, *The Culture of Time and Space, 1880–1918* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003, 1st edn 1983).

Koselleck, Reinhart, *The Practice of Conceptual History: timing history, spacing concepts*, tr. Todd Samuel Presner (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2002).

———————, *Futures Past: on the semantics of historical time*, tr. Keith Tribe (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004, 1st edn 1985).

Landes, David S., *Revolution in Time: clocks and the making of the modern world* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983).

Larkin, Maurice, *Church and State after the Dreyfus Affair: the separation issue in France* (London: Macmillan, 1974).

Laurent, Sébastien, *Daniel Halévy: du libéralisme au traditionalisme* (Paris: Bernard Grasset, 2001).

Leroy, Géraldi, *Péguy entre ordre et révolution* (Paris: Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1981).

Lindemann, Albert S., *A History of European Socialism* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1983).

Lipschutz, Léon, *Essai de bibliographie thématique et analytique de l'affaire Dreyfus: une bibliothèque dreyfusienne* (Paris: Éditions Fasquelle, 1970).

Lorcin, Patricia M. E., and Daniel Brewer (eds), *France and its Spaces of War: experience, memory, image* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

Lorenz, Chris, and Berber Bevernage (eds), *Breaking Up Time: negotiating the borders between present, past and future* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013).

Löwy, Michael, *Fire Alarm: reading Walter Benjamin's* On the Concept of History (London: Verso, 2005).

Luhmann, Niklas, *The Differentiation of Society*, tr. Stephen Holmes and Charles Larmore (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982).

Maitron, Jean, *Histoire du mouvement anarchiste en France (1880–1914)* (Paris: Société universitaire et de librairie, 1955, 1st edn 1951).

Marrus, Michael R., *The Politics of Assimilation: a study of the Jewish community at the time of the Dreyfus Affair* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971).

Martin, Ged, *Past Futures: the impossible necessity of history* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004).

Maugendre, L.-A., *La renaissance catholique au début du XXe siècle*, vols 1–2 (Paris: Beauchesne, 1963–4).

Mayeur, Jean-Marie, *La Séparation des églises et de l'état* (Paris: Les éditions ouvrières, 1991, 1st edn 1966).

Mazgaj, Paul, *The Action française and Revolutionary Syndicalism* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1979).

Meisel, James H., *The Genesis of Georges Sorel: an account of his formative period followed by a study of his influence* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: George Wahr, 1951).

Mercier, Lucien, *Les Universitaires populaires: 1899–1914. Éducation populaire et mouvement ouvrier au début du siècle* (Paris: Éditions ouvrières, 1986, 1st edn 1979).

Milbank Farrar, Marjorie, *Principled Pragmatist: the political career of Alexandre Millerand* (New York: Berg, 1991).

Misztal, Babara A., *Theories of Social Remembering* (Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2003).

Mitchell, Barbara, *The Practical Revolutionaries: a new interpretation of the French anarchosyndicalists* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987).

Nord, Phillip, *The Republican Moment: struggles for democracy in nineteenth-century France* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995).

Ogle, Vanessa, *The Global Transformation of Time, 1870–1950* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2015).

Olson, Richard, *Science and Scientism in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 2007).

Ory, Pascal, and Jean-François Sirinelli, *Les intellectuels en France de l'affaire Dreyfus à nos jours* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1992).

Osborne, Peter, *The Politics of Time: modernity and avant-garde* (London: Verso, 1995).

Osgood, Samuel M., *French Royalism since 1870* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1970, 1st edn 1960).

Passmore, Kevin, *The Right in France from the Third Republic to Vichy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

Pick, Daniel, *Faces of Degeneration: a European disorder, c. 1848–1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

Pickstone, John V., *Ways of Knowing: a new history of science, technology and medicine* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000).

Pilkington, A. E., *Bergson and his Influence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976).

Pomian, Krzysztof, *L'ordre du temps* (Paris: Gallimard, 1984).

Portis, Larry, *Georges Sorel* (London: Pluto Press, 1980).

Prochasson, Christophe, *Les années électriques, 1880–1910* (Paris: La découverte, 1991).

———————, *Les intellectuels, le socialisme et la guerre: 1900–1938* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1993).

Ranger, Terence, and Eric Hobsbawm (eds), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012, 1st edn 1983).

Reddy, William M., *The Navigation of Feeling: a framework for the history of emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

Reeves, Marjorie, *The Influence of Prophesy in the Later Middle Ages: a study in Joachimism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969).

Rémond, René, *Les droites en France* (Paris: Aubier Montaigne, 1982, 1st edn 1954).

———————, *L'anticléricalisme en France de 1815 à nos jours* (Paris: Fayard, 1999, 1st edn 1976).

Reshef, Ouriel, *Guerres, mythes et caricatures: au berceau d'une mentalité française* (Paris: Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1984).

Ridley, F. F., *Revolutionary Syndicalism in France: the direct action of its time* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970).

Rioux, Jean-Pierre, *Nationalisme et conservatisme: la Ligue de la Patrie française, 1899–1904* (Paris: Éditions Beauchesne, 1977).

Roberts, Mary Louise, *Disruptive Acts: the New Woman in fin-de-siècle France* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

Robinet, André, *Péguy entre Jaurès, Bergson et l'église* (Paris: Seghers, 1968).

Rosa, Hartmut, and William E. Scheuerman (eds), *High-Speed Society: social acceleration, power and modernity* (University Park, Penn.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009).

Rosenthal, Lawrence, and Vesna Rodic (eds), *The New Nationalism and the First World War* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

Roshwald, Aviel, *The Endurance of Nationalism: ancient roots and modern dilemmas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

Roth, Jack J., *The Cult of Violence: Sorel and the Sorelians* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1980).

Sand, Shlomo, *L'illusion du politique: Georges Sorel et le débat intellectuel 1900* (Paris: La découverte, 1985).

————————, *Comment la terre d'Israël fut inventé: de la terre sainte à la mère patrie*, tr. Michel Blinis (Paris: Flammarion, 2012).

Schivelbusch, Wolfgang, *The Railway Journey: the industrialization of time and space in the nineteenth century* (Berkley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1986, 1st edn 1977).

Schmitt, Hans A., *Charles Péguy: the decline of an idealist* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1967).

Schöttler, Peter, *Naissance des Bourses du travail*, tr. Peter Schöttler and Jean-Pierre Lefebvre (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1985).

Seager, Frederick H., *The Boulanger Affair: political crossroad of France, 1886–1889* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1969).

Sebastián, Javier Fernández (ed.), *Political Concepts and Time* (Santander: Cantabria University Press, 2011).

Sirinelli, Jean-François (ed.), *Histoire des droites en France*, vols 1 & 2 (Paris: Gallimard, 1992).

————————, *Génération intellectuelle: khâgneux et normaliens dans l'entre-deux-geurres* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1994, 1st edn 1988).

Smith, Anthony D., *Theories of Nationalism* (London: Duckworth, 1983, 1st edn 1971).

————————, *Nationalism and Modernism: a critical survey of recent theories of nations and nationalism* (London: Routledge, 1998).

————————, *Myths and Memories of the Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

————————, *Chosen Peoples: sacred sources of national identity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

Sonn, Richard D., *Anarchism and Cultural Politics in Fin-de-Siècle France* (Lincoln, Nebr.: University of Nebraska Press, 1989).

Stanley, John, *The Sociology of Virtue: the political and social theories of Georges Sorel* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1981).

Stearns, Peter, *Revolutionary Syndicalism and French Labor: a cause without rebels* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1971).

———————, *Lives of Labour: work in a maturing industrial society* (London: Croom Helm, 1975).

Steger, Manfred B., *The Quest for Evolutionary Socialism: Eduard Bernstein and social democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

Sternhell, Zeev, *Maurice Barrès et le nationalisme français* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1972).

———————, *La droite révolutionnaire* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1978).

———————, *Ni droite ni gauche: l'idéologie fasciste en France* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1983).

———————, *Les anti-Lumières: du XVIII^e^ à la guerre froide* (Paris: Fayard, 2006).

Stuart, Robert, *Marxism and National Identity: socialism, nationalism, and national socialism during the French fin-de-siècle* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2006).

Swart, Koenraad W., *The Sense of Decadence in Nineteenth-Century France* (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1964).

Taithe, Bertrand, *Defeated Flesh: welfare, warfare and the making of modern France* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999).

Terdiman, Richard, *Present Past: modernity and the memory crisis* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993).

Tombs, Robert (ed.), *Nationhood and Nationalism in France* (London: Harper Collins, 1991).

Topalov, Christian (ed.), *Laboratoires du nouveau siècle: la nébuleuse réformatrice et ses réseaux en France, 1880–1914* (Paris: Éditions de l'École des hautes études en sciences sociales, 1999).

Touchard, Jean, *La gauche en France depuis 1900* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1977).

Traverso, Enzo, *Mélancholie de la gauche: la force d'une tradition cachée (XIX^e^–XXI^e^ siècle)* (Paris: La découverte, 2016).

Trousson, Raymond, *Voyages aux pays de nulle part: histoire littéraire de la pensée utopique* (Brussels: Éditions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 1975).

Vandervort, Bruce, *Victor Griffuelhes and French Syndicalism* (Baton Rouge: Louisana State University Press, 1996).

Varley, Karine, *Under the Shadow of Defeat: the war of 1870–1871 in French memory* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

Vidler, Alexander Roper, *A Variety of Catholic Modernists* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1970).

Vincent, K. Stephen, *Between Marxism and Anarchism: Benoît Malon and French reformist socialism* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1992).

Walls, Jerry L. (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Eschatology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

Wawro, Geoffrey, *The Franco-Prussian War: the German conquest of France in 1870–1871* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

Weber, Eugen, *Action française: royalism and reaction in twentieth-century France* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1962).

———————, *The Nationalist Revival in France, 1905–1914* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1968, 1st edn 1959).

Whyte, George R., *The Dreyfus Affair: a chronological history* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, 1st edn 2005).

Willard, Claude, *Le mouvement socialiste en France (1893–1905): les guesdistes* (Paris: Éditions sociales, 1965).

Wilson, Nelly, *Bernard-Lazare: antisemitism and the problem of Jewish identity in late nineteenth-century France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978).

Winock, Michel (ed.), *Histoire de l'extême droite en France* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1993).

———————, *Le siècle des intellectuels* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1997).

———————, *Nationalism, Anti-Semitism, and Fascism in France*, tr. Jane Marie Todd (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1998).

———————, *La gauche en France* (Paris: Perrin, 2006).

Wright, Julian, *Socialism and the Experience of Time: idealism and the present in modern France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

Wyon Burrow, John, *The Crisis of Reason: European thought, 1848–1914* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2000).

Zimmer, Oliver, *Nationalism in Europe, 1890–1940* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

Articles and essays

Adler-Gillies, Mira, 'Cooperation or collectivism: the contest for meaning in the French syndicalist movement, 1870–90', *French History* 28 (2014), pp. 385–405.

Appadurai, Arjun, 'The past as scarce resource', *Man* 16 (1981), pp. 201–219.

Banti, Mario Alberto, 'Deep images in nineteenth-century nationalist narrative', *Historein* 8 (2008), pp. 54–62.

Bantman, Constance, 'The militant go-between: Émile Pouget's transnational propaganda (1880–1914)', *Labour History Review* 74 (2009), pp. 274–287.

Baubérot, Jean, 'La Séparation des églises et de l'état' in Jean Baubérot, Paul d'Hollander, Mireille Estivalèzes (eds), *Laïcité et séparation des églises et de l'état* (Limoges: Presses universitaires de Limoges, 2006), pp. 85–97.

Beiner, Ronald, 'Walter Benjamin's philosophy of history', *Political Theory* 12 (1984), 423–434.

Bentley, Michael, 'Past and "presence": revisiting historical ontology', *History and Theory* 45 (2006), pp. 349–361.

Bergman, Jay, 'The Paris Commune in Bolshevik mythology', *The English Historical Review* 129 (2014), pp. 1412–1441.

Bevernage, Berber, 'Writing the past out of the present: history and the politics of time in transitional justice', *History Workshop Journal* 69 (2010), pp. 111–131.

Bloch, Maurice, 'The past and the present in the present', *Man* 12 (1977), pp. 278–292.

Bruley, Pauline, and Alexandre de Vitry (eds), 'Péguy et l'idée de "chrétienté"' [Special issue], *Bulletin de l'Amitié Charles Péguy* 143–144 (2013).

Chabal, Émile, review of Jacques Julliard's *Les gauches françaises, 1762–2012: histoire, politique et imaginaire*, *French History* 28 (2014), pp. 267–268.

Corsi, Pietro, and Paul J. Weindling, 'Darwinism in Germany, France and Italy' in David Kohn (ed.), *The Darwinian Heritage* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985), pp. 683–729.

Datta, Venita, 'Passing fancy: the generation of 1890 and anarchism', *Modern and Contemporary France* 44 (1991), pp. 3–11.

Duclert, Vincent, 'Élie et Daniel dans l'affaire Dreyfus' in Henri Loyrette (ed.), *Entre le théâtre et l'histoire: la famille Halévy* (Paris: Fayard, 1996), pp. 220–234.

Elwitt, Sanford, 'Education and the social questions: the Universités populaires in late nineteenth century France', *History of Education Quarterly* 22 (1982), pp. 55–72.

Fitch, Nancy M., 'Mass culture, mass parliamentary politics, and modern anti-Semitism: the Dreyfus Affair in rural France', *American Historical Review* 97 (1992), pp. 52–95.

Fulton, Bruce, 'The Boulanger Affair revisited: the preservation of the Third Republic', *French Historical Studies* 17 (1991), pp. 310–329.

Gauchet, Marcel, 'La droite et la gauche' in Nora (ed.), *Les lieux de mémoire,* vol 2: *la nation (i) Conflits et partages* (Paris: Gallimard, 1992), pp. 394–467.

Gaulthier-Voituriez, Odile, 'Marc Sangnier et les débuts du Sillon', *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d'histoire* 47 (1995), pp. 205–207.

Geary, Dick, 'The revolutionary tradition in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries' in David Parker (ed.), *Revolutions and the Revolutionary Tradition in the West, 1560–1991* (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 132–150.

Girardet, Raoul, 'La Ligue des patriotes dans l'histoire du nationalisme français, 1882–1888', *Bulletin de la Société d'Histoire moderne* 6 (1958), pp. 3–6.

Goswami, Manu, 'Imaginary futures and colonial internationalisms', *American Historical Review* 117 (2012), pp. 1421–1460.

Goulet, Vincent, '"Transformer la société par l'enseignement social." La trajectoire de Dick May entre littérature, sociologie et journalisme', *Revue d'Histoire des Sciences humaines* 19 (2008), pp. 117–142.

Griffiths, Richard, 'From nostalgia to pragmatism: French royalism and the Dreyfus watershed' in Nicolas Atkin and Frank Tallett (eds), *The Right in France, 1789–1999* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1997), pp. 115–128.

Hall, John R., 'The time of history and the history of times', *History and Theory* 19 (1980), pp. 113–131.

Hannoum, Abdelmajid, review of François Hartog's *Régimes d'historicité*, *History and Theory* 47 (2008), pp. 458–471.

Harison, Casey, 'The Paris Commune of 1871, the Russian Revolution of 1905, and the shifting of the revolutionary tradition', *History and Memory* 19 (2007), pp. 5–42.

Harootunian, Harry, 'Remembering the historical present', *Critical Inquiry* 33 (2007), pp. 471–494.

Hartog, François, 'De l'histoire universelle à l'histoire globale? Expériences du temps', *Le Débat* 154 (2009), pp. 53–66.

Hause, Steven C., 'Anti-Protestant rhetoric in the early Third Republic', *French Historical Studies* 16 (1989), pp. 183–201.

Hazareesingh, Sudhir, 'Conflicts of memory: republicanism and the commemoration of the past in modern France', *French History* 23 (2009), pp. 193–215.

Hudde, Hinrich, 'L'influence de Mercier sur l'évolution du roman d'anticipation' in Hinrich Hudde and Peter Kuon (eds), *De l'utopie à l'uchronie: formes, significations, fonctions* (Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag, 1988), pp. 109–121.

Jennings, Jeremy, 'Syndicalism and the French Revolution', *Journal of Contemporary History* 26 (1991), pp. 71–96.

Joly, Bertrand, 'La France et la Revanche (1871–1914)', *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine* 46 (1999), pp. 325–347.

Julliard, Jacques (ed.), 'Les revues dans la vie intellectuelle, 1885–1914' [Special issue], *Cahiers Georges Sorel* 5 (1987).

——————— (ed.), 'Comment sont-ils devenus Dreyfusards?' [Special issue], *Mil neuf cent* 11 (1993).

Jussem-Wilson, Nelly, 'L'affaire Jean d'Arc et l'affaire Dreyfus: Péguy et "Notre jeunesse"', *Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France* 3 (1962), pp. 400–415.

Kittsteiner, Heinz D. and Bill Templer, 'Reflections on the construction of historical time in Karl Marx', *History and Memory* 3 (1991), pp. 45–86.

Kritzman, Lawrence D., 'A certain idea of de Gaulle', *Yale French Studies* 111 (2007), pp. 157–168.

Mannheim, Karl, 'The problem of generations' in Mannheim, *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge*, ed. Paul Kecskemeti, vol. 5 (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1952), pp. 276–320.

Mayr, Ernst, 'Darwin's five theories of evolution' in David Kohn (ed.), *The Darwinian Heritage* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985), pp. 755–772.

Mazgaj, Paul, 'The origins of the French radical right: a historiographical essay', *French Historical Studies* 15 (1987), pp. 287–315.

McTaggart, J. E., 'The unreality of time', *Mind* 17 (1908), pp. 457–474.

Mitchell, Linda E. (ed.), 'Beyond left and right: new perspectives on the politics of the Third Republic' [Special issue], *Historical Reflections* 34 (2008).

Mosse, George L., 'The French right and the working classes: les Jaunes', *The Journal of Contemporary History* 7 (1972), pp. 185–208.

Munn, Nancy D., 'The cultural anthropology of time: a critical essay', *Annual Review of Anthropology* 21 (1992), pp. 93–123.

Naquet, Emmanuel, 'L'historiographie recente de l'affaire Dreyfus (2005–2006)', *Revue historiographique* 642 (2007), pp. 369–378.

Navet, Georges, 'Le Cercle Proudhon, 1911–1914 (entre le syndicalisme révolutionnaire et l'Action française)', *Les travaux de l'atelier Proudhon* 6 (Paris: École des Hautes études en sciences sociales, 1987).

Nora, Pierre, 'Entre mémoire et histoire: la problématique des lieux' in Nora (ed.), *Les lieux de mémoire*, vol. 1: *République* (Paris: Gallimard, 1984), pp. xv–xliii.

———————, 'Comment écrire l'histoire de la France?' in Nora (ed.), *Les lieux de mémoire*, vol. 2: *la nation (i) Conflits et partages* (Paris: Gallimard, 1992), pp. 9–32.

————————, 'L'ère de la commémoration' in Nora (ed.), *Les lieux de mémoire*, vol. 3: *les Frances (iii) De l'archive à l'emblème* (Paris: Gallimard, 1992), pp. 975–1012.

Nord, Philip, review of Kevin Passmore's *The Right in France from the Third Republic to Vichy*, *The Journal of Modern History* 87 (2015), pp. 445–458.

Nye, Robert, 'Two paths to a psychology of action: Gustave le Bon and Georges Sorel', *Journal of Modern History* 45 (1973), pp. 411–438.

Nyamnjoh, F. and Ben Page, 'Whiteman kontri and the enduring allure of modernity among Cameroonian youth', *African Affairs* 101 (2002), pp. 607–634.

Olick, Jeffrey K., '"Collective memory": a memoir and prospect', *Memory Studies* 1 (2008), pp. 23–29.

Ory, Pascale, 'Le centenaire de la Révolution française: le prevue par '89' in Nora (ed.), *Les lieux de mémoire*, vol. 1: *République* (Paris: Gallimard, 1984), pp. 523–560.

Pigenet, Michel, and Robert Jean-Louis, 'Travailleurs, syndiqués et syndicats dans les dessins de *La Voix du Peuple* (1900–1914)', *Sociétés & Représentations* 10 (2000), pp. 309–322.

Prochasson, Christophe, 'Sur l'environnement intellectuel de Georges Sorel: l'École des Hautes études sociales (1899–1911)', *Mil neuf cent* 3 (1985), pp. 16–38.

Rainbow Hale, Matthew, 'On their tiptoes: political time and newspapers during the advent of the radicalised French Revolution, c. 1792–1793', *Journal of the Early Republic* 2 (2009), pp. 191–218.

Rebérioux, Madeleine, 'Socialisme et religion: un inédit de Jaurès, 1891', *Annales. Économies, sociétés, civilisations* 16 (1961), pp. 1096–1120.

Rodic, Vesna, 'Lyricism, aesthetic tradition, and the debates on nationalism in *La Nouvelle Revue française*, 1909–1914', *Modern Language Notes* 127 (2012), pp. 806–825.

Roemer, Nils, 'Between hope and despair: conceptions of time and the German-Jewish experience in the nineteenth century', *Jewish History* 14 (2000), pp. 345–363.

Rutkoff, Peter M., 'The Ligue des Patriotes: the nature of the radical right and the Dreyfus Affair', *French Historical Studies* 4 (1974), pp. 585–603.

Schedler, Andreas, and Javier Santiso, 'Democracy and time: an invitation', *International Political Science Review* 19 (1998), pp. 5–18.

Silverman, William D., 'Anti-Semitism and occultism in fin-de-siècle France' in Barbara T. Cooper and Mary Donaldson Evans (eds), *Modernity and Revolution in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Newark, NJ: University of Delaware Press, 1992), pp. 156–163.

Smith, S. A., 'China, revolution and presentism', *Past & Present* 234 (2017), pp. 274–289.

Stuart, Robert S., "'A 'de profondis' for Christian socialism": French Marxists and the critique of political Catholicism, 1882–1905', *French Historical Studies* 22 (1999), pp. 241–261.

Thomas, Keith, 'History and anthropology', *Past & Present* 24 (1963), pp. 3–24.

Thomas, Lynn M., 'Modernity's failings, political claims and intermediate concepts', *American Historical Review* 116 (2011), pp. 727–740.

Thompson, E. P., 'Time, work-discipline, and industrial capitalism', *Past & Present* 38 (1967), pp. 56–97.

————————, 'History and anthropology' in his *Making History* (New York: the New Press, 1994), pp. 200–225.

Walsham, 'Introduction: past and…presentism', *Past & Present* 234 (2017), pp. 213–217.

Weber, Eugen, 'Nationalism, socialism, and national–socialism in France', *French Historical Studies* 2 (1964), pp. 273–307.

————————, 'Revolution? Counter-revolution? What revolution?', *Journal of Contemporary History* 9 (1974), pp. 3–47.

Wilson, Stephen, 'The Action française in French intellectual life', *The Historical Journal* 12 (1969), pp. 328–350.

————————, 'Catholic populism in France at the time of the Dreyfus Affair: the Union nationale', *Journal of Contemporary History* 40 (1975), pp. 667–705.

Winock, Michel, 'Les affaires Dreyfus', *Vingtième siècle. Revue d'histoire* 5 (1985), pp. 19–38.

————————, 'Les générations intellectuelles', *Vingtième siècle. Revue d'histoire* 22 (1989), pp. 17–38.

————————, 'Jeanne d'Arc' in Pierre Nora (ed.), *Les lieux de mémoire*, vol. 3: *les France (iii) De l'archive à l'emblème* (Paris: Gallimard, 1992), pp. 674–733.

Wright, Julian, 'Réformisme et historiographie révolutionnaire: Georges Renard et Eugène Fournière, historiens du XIX^{e} siècle', *Mil Neuf Cent* 30 (2012), pp. 21–38.

Ph.D. theses

Bedouret, Philippe, 'Barrès, Maurras et Péguy face au germanisme (1870–1914)', 2 vols, Ph.D. thesis, École pratique des Hautes études, Paris, 2005.

Della Sudda, Magali, 'Une activité politique feminine conservatrice avant le droit de suffrage en France et en Italie. Socio-histoire de la politisation des femmes catholiques au sein de la Ligue patriotique des françaises (1902–1933) et de l'Unione fra le donne cattoliche d'Italia (1909–1919)', Ph.D. thesis, École des Hautes études en Sciences sociales, Paris, 2007.

Fordham, Elizabeth, 'The Adventure Years: French intellectuals, 1905–1914', Ph.D. thesis, European University Institute, Florence, 2006.

Gustafson, Sarah H., 'Representing Joan of Arc: youth, school, and citizenship in the Thalamas Affair of 1904', Ph.D. thesis, Davidson College, North Carolina, 2014.

Leroy, Géraldi, 'Les idées politiques et sociales de Charles Péguy', 2 vols, Ph.D. thesis, Université de Paris III, 1977.

Nicholls, Julia Catherine, 'French Revolutionary Thought after the Paris Commune, 1871–1885', Ph.D. thesis, Queen Mary University of London, 2015.

Prochasson, Christophe, 'Place et rôle des intellectuels dans le mouvement socialiste français (1900–1920)', Ph.D. thesis, Panthéon–Sorbonne, Université de Paris I, 1989.

Internet sources

Benjamin, Walter, *On the Concept of History*, tr. Dennis Redmond (1940) https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/benjamin/1940/history.htm (last accessed 7 June 2017).

Bibliothèque nationale de France, http://data.bnf.fr (accessed May–Aug. 2017 for information on some of the characters of this study).

Davies, Will, 'Thoughts on the sociology of Brexit' (24 June 2016) http://www.perc.org.uk/project_posts/thoughts-on-the-sociology-of-brexit (accessed 24 June 2016).

Escudier, Alexandre, and Ingrid Holtey (eds), 'Vitesse et existence. La multiplicité des temps historiques' [Special issue], *Trivium* 9 (2011) https://trivium.revues.org/4027 (accessed 25 February 2013).

Fukuyama, Francis, 'The end of history?', *The National Interest* (1989) https://www.embl.de/aboutus/science_society/discussion/discussion_2006/ref1-22june06.pdf (accessed 1 February 2017).

Smith, Anthony D. and Ernest Gellner, 'The Warwick debates' (1995) http://gellnerpage.tripod.com/Warwick.html (last accessed 4 March 2015).