The Impact of the Great War on French Regionalism 1900–1924:

A study of the Auvergne and Lorraine

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (DPhil) at the University of Oxford

July 2020

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Acknowledgements

I am grateful for the teaching and support I have received from my supervisors, Dr. David Hopkin of Hertford College and Dr. Adrian Gregory, Pembroke College. I also acknowledge the advice I received from Professor John Horne of Trinity College, Dublin, Professor Julian Wright of Northumbria University and Clotilde Druelle-Korn of the Université de Limoges, France. I thank many archivists and librarians who assisted my research in France, particularly Frédérique Galin and her colleagues at the Bibliothèque du Patrimoine, Clermont-Ferrand, Laurent Barbier and her colleagues at the Bibliothèque Stanislas, Nancy, Anais Avossa at MUCEM, Marseille, and Anne Foulon and her colleagues at the Archives de Saint Gobain, Blois. I am also grateful to Nicholas Davidson at St. Edmund Hall, who listened to my ideas and set me off on an application to the history faculty, to David Priestland and to Wes Williams, my college advisor, for always listening sympathetically to accounts of my progress.

As a mature student I also need to acknowledge some older debts of gratitude – to my tutors at Peterhouse and also to the late Patrick Bury of Corpus Christi, Cambridge, whose special subject on Napoleon III first awakened my interest in modern French history; to the late Professor Douglas Johnson of University College London who supervised me during a failed attempt to complete a PhD on French attitudes to England in the mid-nineteenth century and finally to Robin Reeve, Norman Isaacs and their colleagues at KCS Wimbledon who laid the foundations for my lifelong interest in history and in France.

This thesis is also the fruit of reflection during three years spent tramping around France and writing about my experiences in two books—*Walking the Hexagon* and *Walking the Retreat, 1914*. During this time, I met many people and made French friends who have encouraged me on the path I have taken. I would like to record particular thanks to the Bussac family for their hospitality during my research and for drawing my attention to some important books, to Jacques Prouff who was my companion on many expeditions and his wife Sylvie, and to Annette and the late Alain Desaulty, himself a writer on modern French history as well as a distinguished surgeon.

Lastly I must thank my wife for her support and having to put up with the lows as well as the highs of this project.

Terence Cudbird, Oxford, July 2020

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Short Abstract

Many Radical politicians believed that the regionalist programme, including regional assemblies, was a threat to the Third Republic. It implied a return to a traditional society, based on the provinces of the Ancien Régime and under the influence of the Catholic church. It might encourage separatism in areas with a different culture and language. This view set an interpretative framework for the historiography of French regionalism. Such a framework is open to question because it ignores a more pragmatic strand of regionalism which developed just before the Great War and which saw a shift of power to regional elites and their institutions as a way of modernising the French economy. This was a regionalism wholly compatible with Republican values.

The thesis is based on the regions of Lorraine and the Auvergne 1900–1924. It starts by examining the attachment to a regional identity and culture among regional elites in the pre-war years and during the war. It then shows how those elites used regional solidarity to mobilise their populations behind the war effort. This attachment to a region among the local elites explains their actions post-war. The thesis examines the emergence of practical economic regionalism in the work of the French school of geography, which inspired Clémentel, the Minister of Commerce, in his regional reform of 1918, creating new economic regions by grouping together chambers of commerce. The thesis examines the economic programmes adopted by chambers of commerce after the war and the motives behind infrastructure projects undertaken for the benefit of each region's economy. It demonstrates the degree of initiative they showed independent of central government. In a final chapter this new pragmatic regionalism is compared with other regional discourses—preserving the cultural identities of the past, decentralisation and particularism, and fear of a German revival, particularly economically.

Long Abstract submitted with DPhil thesis

Many Radical politicians after 1870 believed that the regionalist programme, including the devolution of power to the regions through the creation of regional assemblies, was a threat to the Third Republic. It implied a return to a traditional society, based on the old provinces of the Ancien Régime and under the influence of the Catholic church. It might encourage separatism in areas with a distinctive culture and language which were not French, like Brittany. This view may have softened a little in the years immediately before the First World War but it still influenced public debate. It also set an interpretative framework for the subsequent historiography of French regionalism. This thesis shows that such a framework is open to question because it ignores a more pragmatic strand of regionalism which developed just before the Great War and which saw a shift of power to regional elites and their institutions as a way of modernising the French economy. This was a regionalism seen as wholly compatible with Republican values.

It is clear from Julian Wright's study, *The Regionalist Movement in France 1890–1914: Jean Charles-Brun and French Political Thought* (Oxford, 2003), that regionalism was a broad church. It included those interested in rediscovering the history, culture and languages of France's regions, for example members of Frédéric Mistral's Félibrige. There were also those who believed that power within the state needed to be devolved to new regional assemblies. Sympathy for such reform tended to be strongest among those of the traditionalist and Catholic right who were attracted to the thinking of figures like Charles Maurras, Maurice Barrès and the Marquis de L'Estourbeillon, founder of the URB (Union régionaliste bretonne). Such thinking emphasised the gradual evolution of institutions and the importance of patriarchal and collective values derived from working on the land. Barrès's concept of *la terre et les morts* appealed to many of these traditionalists. It tied in well with the idea of *la petite patrie*. Both emphasised that a feeling of belonging derived from identification with the history of the land and the local community. Barrès himself felt close to his native Lorraine.

A new strand in regionalist thinking based on the work of Vidal de la Blache and his followers in the French school of geography challenged the traditionalist position early in the twentieth century. Vidal argued before the war that any concept of regional government based on the Ancien Régime provinces was out of date. Industrialisation had created some large regional centres throughout France, whose power of attraction spread far beyond departmental or even old provincial boundaries. The call for decentralisation throughout the regionalist movement, including in Lorraine, was given focus by Vidal de la Blache and his followers with their analysis of the key role played by the *grandes villes* as hubs for economic development.

During the war Clémentel, the Minister of Commerce and virtual director of the French war time economy, organised a number of regional groupings of the 149 chambers of commerce. He wanted to facilitate communication with central

government and to speed up measures to improve the competitiveness of French industry once the war was over. He wanted to raise production and increase productivity to compete again with Germany and believed the state had a role in encouraging industry to change. His measures were also influenced by his exposure to regionalist thinking, for example the ideas of the *Fédération régionaliste française* (FRF), the main regionalist pressure group.

Although Olivier Grenouilleau has recognised the importance of economic regionalism post-war in his *Nos Petites Patries, identités régionales et état central en France, des origines à nos jours* (Paris, 2019), modern historiography has neglected the manifestations of economic regionalism in the regions themselves following Clémentel's reforms, with two exceptions. Firstly, a work by Philippe Veitl, *L'Invention d'une région: les Alpes françaises* (Grenoble, 2013), describes the movement to imagine and realise an economic region of the Alps based on industries using hydro-electric power. Secondly, Clotilde Druelle-Korn has considered economic regionalism in the Limousin and Poitou-Charentes, in an article.[1]

It would be a mistake to see the new economic regionalism of the nineteen twenties purely as the result of delegation of power by central government. It was also driven forward by regional elites seizing the initiative and constructing and executing their own economic programmes, both during the war and in the years immediately following. As long ago as 1931 this was labelled by R.K. Gooch as "spontaneous regionalism', regional economic action which grew out of the regions themselves.[2] Moreover, it grew out of regional institutions, principally the chambers of commerce, which have been relatively neglected by historians.

I am considering a small educated elite of regional leaders who influenced policies for regional development. Not all were members of a regionalist organisation like the *Fédération régionaliste française*, but they thought in a regional context. This thesis will examine the practical proposals they produced, the ideas behind them, the power of regional networks and the influence of important individuals.

The thesis rests on the evidence provided by the Auvergne and Lorraine, regions selected by Clémentel to launch his reform. Lorraine was one of France's foremost industrial regions in the years before 1914 with a high rate of growth and a diverse range of industries. It had also been a centre for regionalist campaigning since the Nancy manifesto of 1865. However, it was haunted by the threat from Germany. The area was physically devastated by the war and there were complex issues involved in reconstruction. The Auvergne, on the other hand, was mainly

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[1] C. Druelle-Korn, 'La modernisation inachevée de l'aménagement du territoire, le cas de la VIIe Région (Limousin, Poitou, Charentes)', *in A.* Aglan, M. Margairaz, P. Verheyde (eds), *De la croissance à la crise (1925–1935): Le moment Tannery, une tentative avortée de modernisation conservatrice et libérale à l'heure de la mondialisation* (Paris,2014). p. 155–172.

[2] R.K. Gooch, *Regionalism in France* (New York, 1931), pp. 104–124.

agricultural with, however, a growing industrial sector in Clermont-Ferrand centred around the factories of Michelin. It suffered a higher rate of casualties among its peasant soldiers than any other region except Brittany. The challenges faced by regional leaders were very different but this is important because it gives a picture of France's inherent diversity in the era of the Great War. I have concentrated most of my research on the two departments of the Puy-de-Dôme and Meurthe-et-Moselle, because that is where the two regional hubs were located —Clermont-Ferrand (Puy-de-Dôme) and Nancy (Meurthe-et-Moselle).

The dates 1900–1924 are not totally prescriptive. I start with a picture of regional identities before the war. 1924 has been taken as the end date because by then the impact of the war on the economy and society had become apparent. 1924 marked the election of the Cartel des Gauches which changed the political climate for regionalism in a number of significant ways.

The thesis starts by examining the attachment to a regional identity and culture among regional elites in the pre-war years. Three discourses have been identified in Lorraine — defining the region, celebrating its economic achievements and a regional nationalistic discourse about standing up to Germany. There was a clear sense of a region called Lorraine, which had certain strong characteristics despite the lack of clearly defined boundaries. The people had a particular character it was claimed, although this was being eroded by immigration. There was pride in the regional capital Nancy and its cultural development, which was brought into focus by the 1909 exhibition. This event was a showcase for the Lorraine economic miracle and the special partnership between the university, industry and regional banks. However, underlying all this success was a desire to compete with Germany, to emulate her industrial and educational success but also to be wary of her military and economic prowess.

The Auvergnat sense of identity was not as well developed as that in Lorraine. There was no "other", like the Germans, to sharpen the sense of difference nor a recent history of political separation. (Most of Lorraine formed an independent dukedom in the eighteenth century.) A group of intellectuals – poets, writers and academics – started a revival of Auvergnat folklore, most vividly portrayed in song, dance and folk tales. Henri Pourrat was the creative force behind this group inventing a modern Auvergnat identity, which was most keenly celebrated in exile, among the large Auvergnat diaspora in Paris.

Chapter three analyses two different regional variations of French patriotism during the war. We find in both regions expressions of support for the war and anti-German feeling that were common throughout France. In Lorraine this patriotism was the more strongly expressed because the threat of occupation and destruction was so immediate. The *Lorrains* saw themselves as the advance guard of France, the region where the 'sacralisation' of the soil which its soldiers

defended seemed most apparent.[3] Conversely regional patriotism was less fiercely expressed in the Auvergne which was far from the front. It seems to have been strongest among the intellectual elite and even then was not universally felt.

In view of this difference in the expression of regional patriotism it is hardly surprising that it was in Lorraine that we find more evidence of regional feeling being used by local elites to mobilise support for the war effort on the home front. We notice too how in Lorraine the local elites developed Lorraine initiatives without always needing the lead of the prefect and central government. The elites could draw on a wide range of expertise and had good contacts in Paris. They could also inspire activity outside the regional capital, Nancy, in neighbouring departments like the Vosges and the Meuse. Their self-confidence was most apparent when the problems of reconstruction were first discussed. The elites felt it was imperative that Lorraine should have some control over the solutions to be adopted.

After examining Clémentel's reform, two chapters on Lorraine and the Auvergne consider the development of economic programmes by the elites in the years following the war. These chapters analyse the people involved in the two key chambers of commerce in Nancy and Clermont-Ferrand, including the Lorraine iron masters. These chapters also consider the influence which the members of the Nancy and Clermont-Ferrand chambers exercised through their membership of other regional and national economic bodies and through their publications.

There was a lively debate in both regions about the regional economic programmes which should be adopted. From this emerged key issues on which the chambers of commerce felt they could take action — development of railways and canals, power generation, technical education, regional banking, reconstruction in Lorraine and tourism development in the Auvergne. In the case of railways and canals it was mainly a question of pressing the government to act, although there were opportunities, for example in the canalisation of the Moselle, for local interests to supply finance and lead the project. The regional elites also led two major hydro-electric projects, on the Rhine and Dordogne rivers, and attempted to organise much of the financing on a regional basis. These two initiatives are significant because they are early examples of public authorities attempting to invest in and manage infrastructure projects rather than letting them out to private concessionaires as the state might formerly have done. Both chambers also created several new institutions in the fields of technical training, management education, regional banking and capital provision. In Lorraine local elites created reconstruction cooperatives which served as a model of local initiative for the rest of northern France. In the Auvergne and Lorraine local interests set up regional bodies to promote tourism.

[3] For 'sacralisation' see S. Audoin-Rouzeau, *Men at War 1914–1918* (Oxford, 1992), pp. 177–180; L.V. Smith, S. Audoin-Rouzeau, A. Becker, *France and the Great War 1914–1918* (Cambridge, 2003), p. 108.

The final chapter puts this economic regionalism in the context of other discourses about the two regions in the post-war period. The chapter considers more traditionalist visions of the regions, particularly in relation to the future of agriculture; the development of regionalism in the political arena, particularly in the Moselle newly reunited with France; the dilemmas posed by economic relations with Germany and the Saar; and the relationship between Lorraine and the Rhineland and whether the former could move from being a "frontier" region to a "bridge" to its eastern neighbour.

The new economic regionalism of 1918–1924 would not have thrived without a regional sense of identity. The attachment to Lorraine and the Auvergne among regional elites provided the inspiration for their economic programmes. Chapter six describes the promotion of the region of the Auvergne, including the many cultural articles in the economic region's publication, *Région du Centre*. The promotion of tourism by economic leaders benefited from the revival of Auvergnat culture led by writers and artists. Clémentel, the architect of regional reform, was also active in the cultural movement, as he demonstrated by his own writing. The Nancy chamber of commerce led economic projects but also sponsored the Nancy exhibition of 1909 which included many examples of cultural and artistic development. It also supported good causes during the war, using the cultural identity of Lorraine to win support. The regional sensitivity to Germany influenced many initiatives which the elite took, from encouraging natalism to canal and railway developments, exploiting the Rhine, technical education, providing capital for the reconstruction of industry and ensuring Lorraine towns and villages were rebuilt quickly. The Lorraine sense of identity determined how the region regarded Mosellan particularism and relations with the Rhineland, which in turn fed back into economic issues. Economic regionalism and a wider cultural sense of regional identity were inextricably linked.

The economic regionalism of the twenties re-emerged from the shadow of the Vichy experience as *l'aménagement du territoire* (DATAR) in 1963 and later in the creation of new regional bodies under François Mitterrand. In the development of economic regionalism in modern France we can see how change has not always been driven from Paris. We can also see how the economic modernisation of France's regions since the late nineteenth century was impacted by the two world wars but did not fundamentally change direction because of them. Some developments were interrupted by war and some became more urgent. This thesis suggests that we need to view as a whole the process of the economic modernisation of France's regions in the century following the fall of the Second Empire.

List of Abbreviations

AD M-et-M. Nancy, Archives Départementales de Meurthe-et-Moselle.
AD P-de-D. Clermont-Ferrand, Archives Départementales du Puy-de-Dôme.
AN. Paris, Archives Nationales, Pierrefitte.
BNF. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France.
MUCEM, Charles-Brun. Marseille, MUCEM, Fonds Charles-Brun.
MUCEM. Marseille, MUCEM.
Patrimoine. Clermont-Ferrand, Bibliothèque du Patrimoine.
SGA. Blois, Archives de Saint Gobain, Fonds Camille Cavallier.

Introduction

The Great War had a profound impact on the thought and action of regional elites (bankers, industrialists, commercial leaders, intellectuals including universities, engineers and scientists, regional administrators, politicians). Since the founding of the *Fédération régionaliste française* in 1900 there had been an active campaign to devolve powers to new regional assemblies and in the years before the war this was showing some signs of success, as Julian Wright has revealed in his book - *The Regionalist Movement in France 1890–1914: Jean Charles-Brun and French Political Thought* (Oxford, 2003). Aristide Briand formed a new government in 1910 and issued a programme which included a number of regionalist ideas. He was not the only prominent Republican politician to be attracted to regional reform. Clemenceau had flirted with it before the wine growers' crisis of 1907. Paul-Boncour, Deschanel and Clémentel were supportive. Even Poincaré showed interest and there was the possibility of linking administrative reform to a change in the voting system. During the 1910 elections administrative reform appeared in the election addresses of over 400 deputies. However, no concrete measures were passed before 1914.

During the war itself members of the *Fédération régionaliste française* (FRF), the main regionalist pressure group, argued that the war had exposed the weaknesses of the French state, particularly the stultifying effect of over-centralisation. To win the war and the peace the state needed to engage all the energies of the French nation. This meant a reform of government which gave more power to the regions. A close friend wrote to Charles-Brun, secretary of the FRF, on 21 May 1916 that he was due to give a lecture in Paris on 4 June on the lessons of the war:

'Je ne vous cache pas que la plus importante de ces leçons est une leçon régionaliste.' [4]

During the war Clémentel, the Minister of Commerce and virtual director of the French war time economy, organised a number of regional groupings of the 149 chambers of commerce. His motives and those of his chief adviser, the geographer Henri Hauser, have been clearly described by recent historians. He wanted to facilitate communication with central government and to speed up measures to improve the competitiveness of French industry once the war was over. It is clear he was concerned about the need to raise production and increase productivity to compete again with Germany and believed the state had a role in encouraging industry to change. His measures were also influenced by his exposure to regionalist thinking. These new groupings started to build regional cooperation but were hampered by lack of legal powers to sign contracts or

[4] MUCEM, Charles-Brun 2 AP 2, Box 2 Correspondance domaine privé courrier I 1892-1946, dossier 1911-1918.

borrow money. Nothing was done to put this right until 1938.[5] The view that Clémentel's regions failed because they lacked formal powers, which we find for example in Thiébaut Flory's book on regionalism, needs challenging, however.[6] Paradoxically, the war encouraged regional elites to come together, without the direction of the French state, to solve the problems posed by the conflict for their economies and societies. In practice there was a degree of the decentralisation advocated by some regionalists. While regionalism was frustrated in the corridors of the National Assembly, it was alive and well in the provinces in the post-war period. The political scientist R. K. Gooch underlined the reasons for this when he wrote *Regionalism in France,* first published in New York in 1931. His chapter on spontaneous regionalism suggests that regionalism could develop gradually based on existing structures. This thesis aims to build on Gooch's idea and discover how spontaneous regionalism worked in two regions in the economic sphere. Gooch also recognised the importance of the new strand of economic regionalism.[7]

Existing historiography on French regionalism under the Third Republic has described it as a diverse movement of sympathisers, a pressure group but not a political party. It is clear from Julian Wright's study that regionalism could mean different things to different people. It included those who were purely interested in rediscovering the history, culture and languages of France's regions. During the nineteenth century interest in the history of local communities grew among the educated middle class. The *sociétés savantes* became very active in this field often supported by men with a role in government. More local cultural associations were founded and practical municipal government was more highly esteemed. As an example the Félibrige, Frédéric Mistral's movement to revive the language and literature of Occitania, flourished and received support from prominent politicians. There was a regionalist school of novelists, described by Anne-Marie Thiesse,[8] regional artists and new regional styles of architecture. Teachers were encouraged to teach children about their regional heritage in

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[5] C. Druelle-Korn, 'Un Laboratoire réformateur, le Département du Commerce en France' (Thèse de doctorat, Institut d'Études politiques, Paris, 2004). C. Druelle, 'Le Ministère du Commerce et de l'Industrie pendant la Première Guerre mondiale: Étienne Clémentel ou la volonté de moderniser la France' (Mémoire pour le diplôme d'études approfondies, Institut d'Études politiques, Paris, 1993). M-C. Kessler, G. Rousseau (eds), *Étienne Clémentel: politique et action publique sous la Troisième République* (Bruxelles, 2018). F. Dubasque, *Jean Hennessy 1874-1944, argent et réseaux au service d'une nouvelle république* (Rennes, 2008). A. Aglan, M. Margairaz, P. Verheyde (eds), *De la croissance à la crise (1925-1935): Le moment Tannery, une tentative avortée de modernisation conservatrice et libérale à l'heure de la mondialisation* (Paris, 2014). C. Druelle-Korn, 'De la pensée à l'action économique: Étienne Clémentel (1864-1936) un ministre visionnaire', *Histoire@Politique, Politique, culture, société*, n° 16 (janvier-avril 2012).

[6] T. Flory, *Le Mouvement Régionaliste Français* (Paris, 1966), pp. 94-6.
[7] R.K. Gooch, *Regionalism in France* (New York, 1931), pp. 104–124.
[8] A-M. Thiesse, É*crire la France; le movement littéraire régionaliste de langue française entre la belle époque et la libération* (Paris,1991).

schools in the belief that love of the *petite patrie* of the region supported love of the *grande patrie* of France.[9]

There were also those who believed that power within the state needed to be devolved to new regional assemblies. Sympathy for such reform tended to be strongest among those of the traditionalist and Catholic right who were attracted to the thinking of figures like Charles Maurras, Maurice Barrès and the Marquis de L'Estourbeillon, founder of the URB (Union régionaliste bretonne). Such thinking emphasised the gradual evolution of institutions and the importance of patriarchal and collective values derived from working on the land. Barrès's concept of *la terre et les morts* appealed to many of these traditionalists. It tied in well with the idea of *la petite patrie*. Both emphasised that a feeling of belonging derived from identification with the history of the land and the local community. Barrès himself felt close to his native Lorraine. The Auvergnat writer Henri Pourrat developed these ideas after the war. Radicals, however, believed regional reform, such as the introduction of regional assemblies, would weaken the Republic. They suspected regionalists of hankering after the provinces of the Ancien Régime. Reform might encourage separatism in areas with a different culture and language. Radicals believed in the positive virtues of centralisation, the equality of all citizens when dealing with the state. They thought that traditionalists would use regional reform to revive the power of the Catholic church. The policy of *laicité*, particularly in education, which dated back to the laws inspired by Jules Ferry between 1880 and 1882, was of overriding importance for Radicals.[10]

Yet another strand in regionalist thinking was based on the work of Vidal de la Blache and his followers in the French school of geography. Vidal argued before the war that any concept of regional government based on the Ancien Régime provinces was out of date. Industrialisation had created some large regional centres throughout France, whose power of attraction spread far beyond departmental or even old provincial boundaries.[11] Vidal and his followers like Hauser provided the intellectual justification for Clémentel's regional groupings of chambers of commerce.

Unlike some earlier historians, Olivier Grenouilleau in his recent general history of regionalism has recognised the importance of economic regionalism during the post-war period.[12] However, the current historiography tends to neglect manifestations of economic regionalism in the regions themselves, with the exception of a work by Philippe Veitl.[13] He has described the movement to

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[9] A-M. Thiesse, *Ils apprenaient la France: l'exaltation des régions dans le discours patriotique* (Paris,1997). J-F. Chanet, *L'École républicaine et les petites patries* (Paris,1996).

[10] S. Berstein, *Histoire du Parti Radical, la recherche de l'âge d'or* (Paris,1980), pp. 323-4.

[11] P. Vidal de la Blache, 'Régions de France', *Revue de Paris*, (nov–déc 1910), pp. 821–849.

[12] O. Grenouilleau, *Nos Petites Patries, identités régionales et état central en France, des origines à nos jours* (Paris, 2019), pp. 163-175.

[13] P. Veitl, *L'Invention d'une région : les Alpes françaises* (Grenoble, 2013).

imagine and realise an economic region of the Alps based on industries using hydro-electric power, *la houille blanche*. This cheap source of power opened up exciting economic possibilities but could also be accommodated in the region without destroying an existing agricultural society. Indeed, it seemed a sense of identity based on a defined geographical space could go hand in hand with industrial development using a unique resource. This movement encompassed not only industrial and commercial interests but also intellectuals and particularly geographers. A region based on the miracle energy source of *la houille blanche* could encompass not only the area around Grenoble, but also the whole of the Alpine area as far south as the coast. The justification for this was that it shared a common economic and social structure. Veitl's analysis poses a set of questions about other economic regions in France. Did they have any natural economic unity? Was there any sense of regional economic solidarity among the industrialists and regional professionals? What were the principle characteristics of the region to these people? In the opening chapters of this thesis I shall attempt to address some of these questions.

Clotilde Druelle-Korn has published several important works on the Clémentel reforms. I shall also follow up on an article where she deals with infrastructure projects in the regions, in this case the 7th economic region (Limousin, Poitou, Charentes) in the inter-war years.[14] She describes projects to improve railway and telephone networks and to generate hydro-electricity from the fall of the Dordogne river. The Limousin and the Auvergne took a leading role in progressing the latter.

Any discussion of regional identity ought to start with a question. When we say that inhabitants of say Lorraine identified with a certain idea of their region, whom are we talking about? What evidence are we going to use to support any conclusions? We might well turn to letters, diaries, books, newspapers and proceedings of various regional bodies and societies. Who wrote them? Probably a limited number of people drawn from the educated bourgeoisie. Chanet's study of the Félibrige in the Cantal revealed that the founders of the movement there were mostly intellectuals.[15] The same might be said about the Breton cultural movement of the same period. So in this thesis I will describe the ideas of those who had thought about their region's identity and maybe acted on their reflections. They were not all members of a regionalist organisation like the *Fédération régionaliste française*, but they were regionalist in the way they thought about problems. This is a wider definition of regionalism than used hitherto.

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[14] C. Druelle-Korn, 'La modernisation inachevée de l'aménagement du territoire, le cas de la VIIe Région (Limousin, Poitou, Charentes)', *in A.* Aglan, M. Margairaz, P. Verheyde (eds), *De la croissance à la crise (1925-1935): Le moment Tannery, une tentative avortée de modernisation conservatrice et libérale à l'heure de la mondialisation* (Paris, 2014). pp. 155-172.

[15] J-F. Chanet, *Les Félibres cantaliens : aux sources du régionalisme auvergnat 1879-1914* (Clermont-Ferrand, 2000).

I am trying to establish that the elite of society believed their region provided one framework for their thought and action. I want to uncover their assumptions about how the region operated, their regional *mentalité*. The felt reality of a regional identity might reveal itself in hatred of those who are different, the 'other', of those who do not share the same group identity.[16] The concept of *solidarité* is key in defining the region, a common term in French political discourse. It had added resonance in the period of the First World War because of the writing of the Radical politician Léon Bourgeois, who developed a doctrine of solidarism as a mid-way between liberal individualism and socialist collectivism. Leaders in Lorraine, for example, often talked about collaboration, solidarity, cooperation and unity when describing their regional economy. The thesis will assess how these concepts were used and put into practice. However, this is not just a history of ideas about regional identity. The thesis will also examine the practical proposals regional elites produced, the thinking behind them, the power of regional networks and the influence and contacts of important individuals.

The sources for my intellectual history are for the most part printed — books, journals, newspapers, proceedings of regional bodies like chambers of commerce, agricultural and industrial societies, *sociétés savantes*. In chapters five and six I shall examine the chambers of commerce in detail, which have been relatively neglected by historians. Occasionally I dip into unpublished letters and diaries, as in the case of the Auvergnat writer Henri Pourrat or the Lorraine industrialist Camille Cavallier. The range is broad rather than deep and this is deliberate. I am looking for intellectual trends, the use of language and certain key ideas to argue for a reappraisal of a phenomenon, regionalism, with which historians are already familiar.

The thesis rests on the evidence provided by two very contrasting regions of France. This might be considered too narrow a basis to reappraise a national phenomenon like regionalism. However, the regions chosen are sufficiently different to establish that a fresh look at spontaneous economic regionalism after the war is worth pursuing. Lorraine was of course one of France's foremost industrial regions in the years before 1914 with a high rate of growth and a diverse range of industries. It also had the misfortune to be near the German border. The memory of past conflicts was ever present. The area was physically devastated by the war and there were many and complex issues involved in reconstruction. The Auvergne, on the other hand, was mainly agricultural with, however, a growing industrial sector in Clermont-Ferrand centred around the factories of Michelin which were crucial for war production. It avoided physical destruction but suffered a higher rate of casualties among its peasant soldiers than any other region except Brittany. The challenges faced by regional leaders were very different but this is important because it gives a picture of France's inherent diversity in the era of the Great War. I have concentrated most of my research on

[16] J-R. Ladmiral, E-M. Lipiansky, *La Communication interculturelle* (Paris, 2015), p.155. T.H. Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism : Anthropological Perspectives* (London, 2010), p. 134. P.J. Oakes, S.A. Haslam, J.C. Turner, *Stereotyping and Social Reality* (Oxford,1994), p. 30.

the two departments of the Puy-de-Dôme and Meurthe-et-Moselle, because that is where the two regional hubs were located —Clermont-Ferrand (Puy-de-Dôme) and Nancy (Meurthe-et-Moselle). As a large part of the thesis is concerned with Clémentel's economic regions based on the regional centres, this seemed the right approach. These two regions were chosen by Clémentel to launch his reform and he visited them personally at the start of the process. However, I do make reference to other parts of the wider regions.

The dates 1900–1924 provide a time frame for the research without being totally prescriptive. I start with a picture of regional identities before the war. 1924 has been taken as the end date because by then the impact of the war on the economy and society had become apparent. 1924 marked the election of the Cartel des Gauches which changed the political climate. This thesis will adopt a wider definition of regionalism than the autonomist movements in Brittany say or Alsace with which it is often associated. However, the Cartel came into conflict with those in Alsace and the Moselle who wanted to preserve their local church settlement. This marks a caesura in the regionalist story.

Chapter One: The regional sense of identity in Lorraine before 1914

1.i. Introduction

In this chapter I will analyse the ideas of those who had thought about Lorraine's identity in the pre-war years. I am trying to establish that the region and its characteristics were an important preoccupation for the elite of society whose influence was based on certain institutions.

The ideas of this institutional elite in Lorraine can be divided into a number of discourses which reveal what the region meant to them, what was distinctive about it. Our understanding of a written discourse can also be enhanced by examining the actions taken by the actors concerned. There was a discourse concerned with the definition of the region of Lorraine, its boundaries, its history and culture, the character of its people and the position of the regional capital Nancy. There was a second discourse about the economy of Lorraine, pride in rapid industrialisation and also in the close cooperation of its industrialists, bankers and academics to achieve economic growth. At the same time there was a consciousness that Lorraine faced particular challenges such as the improvement of transport in a land-locked region and the sourcing elsewhere of vital raw materials like coal. Encompassing both these discourses was a regionalism which included discussion about how much power should be devolved to Lorraine.

There was a third discourse which might be described as "regional nationalist", a particular variation of French nationalism brought about by the special circumstances of Lorraine. There were various shades of this "regional nationalist" discourse, from the more extreme views of men like Barrès to the circumspect patriotism of a politician like Poincaré. Because of the history of invasion, fear of German power was very strong in Lorraine. However, the discourse about Germany contained a number of elements which sometimes conflicted with each other. Industrialists and academics wanted to copy some German best practice as well as compete with Germany. There was hatred and fear certainly, but also admiration. There were conflicted feelings too about the German annexation of the Moselle (eastern Lorraine) — a desire to liberate the Moselle among *Lorrains français*, particularly those who had originated from occupied Alsace-Lorraine, but also an accommodation with reality among those actually living under German rule.

There were various groups of actors, born and brought up in Lorraine or with some strong connection with the region, who contributed to these discourses, groups which might be defined by profession but also by belief. These multiple

affiliations gave these actors different perspectives on Lorraine's identity, which are revealed as we discuss each of the discourses in turn. The three discourses identified should not be regarded as entirely separate one from another. Individual actors might have participated actively in one discourse but also absorbed the output of the others. No doubt they read the other discourses in journals and the daily press and heard them in the various institutions of which they were members. One of the objectives of this thesis is to show how all three discourses influenced practical action in politics, economics and social questions. In this connection the role of institutions such as the *Chambre de Commerce de Nancy*, the *Société industrielle de l'Est*, the *Université de Nancy* and the *Musée lorrain* were key.

One group of actors were historians, often though not always involved with a university. Robert Parisot, a historian of Lorraine, was a professor at Nancy University who espoused some overtly regionalist ideas on government and was at one time president of the *Union régionaliste lorraine*. Charles Berlet was also a historian, if not an academic, and like Parisot he was close to regionalist circles as secretary of the *Union régionaliste lorraine.* He was also a practising Catholic and a royalist. Louis Madelin was a professor of history in Paris and after the war a deputy in the right wing *Fédération républicaine*. Charles Aimond was a historian too but also a cleric. Charles Sadoul was an ethnographic historian, interested particularly in folklore and the decorative arts, the founder of the journal *Le Pays lorrain* in 1904 and a conservator at the *Musée lorrain*. He was also a politician as a member of the *conseil-général* of the Vosges department. There were other academics involved in these discourses too such as Lucien Brocard, Professor of Geography at Nancy University and Georges Hottenger, an urban sociologist close to the conservative Le Playsians. He was a professor in the Faculté de Droit in Nancy.

There were a number of regionalist writers, including Moselly and Theuriet, but by far the best known was Maurice Barrès, closely identified with the new French nationalism of the eighteen eighties and nineties. Journalists were important too. Not only do we have to consider the contribution of different newspapers but also the contributions of propagandists, of which Barrès was certainly one and Émile Hinzelin, who wrote about Alsace-Lorraine, another. It is also important to consider those who contributed to these discourses other than through language. The *École de Nancy* made a major contribution to creating a unique identity for Lorraine, with architects such as Émile André, and those involved in the decorative arts such Émile Gallé, Victor Prouvé and the glassmaker Antonin Daum.

Economic actors who made important contributions include iron masters such as François Villain, Camille Cavallier, Alphonse Fould and François de Wendel, who was also prominent in national politics, Louis Vilgrain a miller who was president of the Nancy chamber of commerce, Antoni Moreau, one of Lorraine's important brewers, and Charles Renauld and Jean Buffet, Nancy bankers. In this economic group we should include Louis Laffitte, the secretary of the Nancy chamber of

commerce and organiser of the 1909 Nancy exhibition, who was also a professor at Nancy University's *Institut commercial*.

The church made an important contribution, particularly Turinaz, Archbishop of Nancy. Lastly we have the politicians who represented Lorraine, although some of these had other affiliations. Jules Méline was a senator for the Vosges and former Président du Conseil, a champion of French agriculture and author of the Méline tariff. Louis Marin was the leader of a group of nationalist Lorraine politicians, deputy and later founder of the *Fédération républicaine.* However, he was also, at one time, president of the *Fédération régionaliste française* and a prominent anthropologist. The group of nationalist deputies elected in 1914 also included Émile Driant, author and later hero of Verdun, Ferri de Ludre and François de Wendel. Alongside the more strident nationalist politicians we have two more moderate conservative Republicans who held many important offices at a national level — Raymond Poincaré and Albert Lebrun, the latter starting his career as a mining engineer. Lastly we should not forget local political actors of whom successive mayors of Nancy are significant. Ludovic Beauchet was Mayor of Nancy at the time of the 1909 exhibition.

As we discuss these three discourses about Lorraine we will trace the differing perspectives which these men contributed. (I have not come across any women in regional leadership roles in either Lorraine or the Auvergne during this period, with the exception of two Auvergnat novelists.) It is important to discuss how these actors thought about Lorraine before the Great War, because we shall meet some of them during the war or later and we can then see how their thought and action evolved over time. Most of them were prominent actors in the war and throughout the nineteen twenties with a few exceptions. Barrès died in 1923, Camille Cavallier in 1926 and Jules Méline in 1925. Three died before the war — Émile Gallé in 1904, André Theuriet in 1907 and Alphonse Fould in 1913, although his son succeeded him as head of the *Aciéries de Pompey*. Laffitte and Driant were killed in the war fighting — Laffitte at Morhange in 1914 and Driant at Verdun. Others died during the war years — Ferri de Ludre in 1915, Jean Buffet in 1917 and Archbishop Turinaz in 1918.

1.ii. Defining Lorraine

Most of France's regions in 1900 did not refer to defined geographical or administrative spaces with definite boundaries. Even the boundaries of Brittany on its peninsula were a matter of dispute. The identity of the regions was largely based on history, culture and sometimes language. Most of the distinctive features of regions related to the past, although this was not the case with Lorraine as we shall see.

Lotharingia, the ancient name for Lorraine, was the land of Lothair, the grandson of Charlemagne, and referred to the northern part of the Middle Kingdom which he was awarded by the Treaty of Verdun in 843. It had a separate existence in the

Middle Ages and early modern period within the Holy Roman Empire. There were two centres of power: the three bishoprics of Metz, Toul and Verdun and the dukedom of Lorraine based in Nancy. The bishoprics were absorbed by France in the sixteenth century and the independent dukedom in the eighteenth. Lorraine as a legal entity ceased to exist after 1789, although it was widely used in speech and literature.

The leading historian of eastern France in the early twentieth century and professor at the University of Nancy, Robert Parisot, published articles on Lorraine before the war and a major book in 1924. He founded a *Fédération historique lorraine*, which grouped a number of *sociétés savantes* and also the *Société lorraine des Études locales*.[1] Addressing the *Union régionaliste lorraine,* of which he was vice-president, and the *Société des Amis de l'Université* in 1908 and later the *Congrès régionaliste* at Nancy during the exhibition of 1909, he argued that Lorraine consisted of the three departments of Meurthe-et-Moselle, Meuse and Vosges for historical, geological, geographical and economic reasons and because of the common attitudes and character of its inhabitants.[2] (The department of the Moselle had been annexed by Germany in 1871, except for the arrondissement of Briey in the west which was joined to the department of Meurthe-et-Moselle. The Moselle was returned to France in 1919). He said that Lorraine was definitely distinct from the Franche-Comté and Champagne, but agreed that the borders were difficult to determine because the geographical, economic and historical links he had identified could work there in opposite directions.

Parisot's definition of Lorraine was based essentially on the fact that it had a distinctive history. In his account he accorded special importance to the arrival of Celtic tribes in the area and the later arrival of the Francs in the West and the Alamans in the East, creating a linguistic boundary which had lasted to his day. A kingdom of Austrasia was ruled from Metz from the sixth century and he celebrated the civilisation of the Merovingian and Carolingian periods. Passing over the deplorable division of territories in the later Middle Ages he described the period of the dukedom and the three bishoprics ending with the administrative disaster of the Revolution, when Lorraine was divided again, this time into artificial departments completely subject to Paris. At this point it is fairly clear that his sympathies lay with the regionalists in their criticism of the departments:

'Impuissante à faire respecter ses droits, la province dut presque toujours se résigner à subir les volontés de la capitale ou du parti qui s'en était rendu maître.'[3]

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[1] P. Barral, *L'Esprit lorrain, cet accent singulier du patriotisme français* (Nancy,1989), p. 121.
[2] R. Parisot, *La Lorraine région française* (Nancy, 1909), pp.1-15, also published in *Le Pays Lorrain,* 5e année (1908), pp. 465-480.
[3] Parisot, *Lorraine région française*, p. 8.

He had already indicated that he accepted the principle of the division of France into regions.[4] However, he concludes that despite this history of being split up:

'le souvenir de l'ancienne unité de la Mosellane n'a pas entièrement disparu; il a persisté à travers les âges et bien qu'affaibli, il constitue une force, que sauront mettre en oeuvre les organisateurs de la future région lorraine.' [5]

Others like Charles Berlet also argued for devolution of power to the regions based on history, in his case to the boundaries of the old monarchy.[6] That the historical heritage of Lorraine was still very much a live subject for educated *Lorrains* was shown by the popularity of historical pageants at the 1909 exhibition in Nancy which attracted over two million visitors.[7] It is also evident in the publication of a series of twelve articles on Lorraine's history during the summer of 1914 in *L'Est républicain,* the leading moderate republican newspaper of Nancy with a circulation of 20,000.[8]

For an ethnographer like Charles Sadoul the answer to the question — where were the frontiers of Lorraine — was also unclear. 1904 saw the opening of the *Musée lorrain*. At the museum Sadoul built up an extensive collection of the popular arts of Lorraine which he described in a book in 1920. It covered the villages, houses, furniture, iron and copper work, tin pots, glass and china, costumes, jewellery and much else. He regretted very much the destruction of so much valuable material during the war in Lorraine villages.[9] He also made an enormous personal collection of items and documents covering local folklore — popular songs, tales, and beliefs. Sadoul was a very successful communicator of Lorraine's traditional culture through public meetings and the journal *Le Pays lorrain*. At the Nancy exhibition of 1909 the Alsatian village, which also contained a Lorraine farmhouse furnished by Charles Sadoul, proved very popular.[10] For Sadoul, Lorraine was partly defined by the common style of its furniture and houses and the common characteristics of its folk tales or its cooking. He had no doubt that its customs and the Francophone Lorraine *patois* were key to any

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[4] Ibid, p.1.
[5] Ibid, p. 8.
[6] C. Berlet, *Les Provinces au XVIII siècle et leur division en départements: essai sur la formation de l'unité française* (Paris,1913), pp. 540–3, 551–2. D. Hopkin, 'Identity in a Divided Province : The Folklorists of Lorraine, 1860–1960', *French Historical Studies*, Vol. 23, No.4 (Fall 2000), p.659.
[7] L. Laffitte, *Rapport général sur l'exposition internationale de l'Est de la France, Nancy,1909* (Paris,1912), pp. 451–480, 772–818.
[8] *L'Est Républicain* (12 avril 1914), p.1 col c–d, (7 mai 1914), p.1 col c–d, (16 mai), p.1 col c–d, (22 mai), p.1 col c–d, (10 juin 1914), p.1 col e–f, (12 juin), p.1 col c–d, (13 juin), p.1 col d–e, (19 June), p.1 col c–e, (23 June), p.1 col f, (24 June), p.1 col d–e, (10 July 1914), p.1 col c–d, (22 July), p.1 col e–f to p.2 col a.
[9] C. Sadoul, *L'Art rustique en France 1. La Lorraine,* Ph. de Las Cases (ed) (Paris,1920), p.9. C. Sadoul, *Le Mobilier lorrain (Ensembles et détails)* (Paris,1926), préface.
[10] Laffitte, *Rapport général*, pp. 451–480, 772–818.

definition. In practice he settled for the three departments, plus of course the occupied Moselle.[11]

If history and ethnography did not provide a totally clear answer to the question – where is Lorraine? — it seemed best to fall back on the traditional character of the people. Robert Parisot wrote that:

'Caractère et aptitudes sont, je n'ose dire déterminés, mais tout au moins fortement influencés par les facteurs géographiques, historiques et économiques.'[12]

The inhabitants were hard-working, tenacious and thrifty, even miserly, because they lived in a harsh climate and cultivated a soil which, left to itself, would not give them a living. They were warlike, reserved, defiant and cold in manner because of the constant attacks they had had to face. Like a lot of men who worked the soil they were attached to their traditions and beliefs and not inclined to chase after new ideas. In politics they preferred sensible and moderate opinions. Their practical approach was even seen in their religious activity. For example, in the last two centuries their religious orders had been teachers and cared for the sick rather than being contemplatives.[13]

Lucien Brocard defined the characteristics of the Lorraine population in similar terms:

'une population vigoureuse, sobre, énergique, élevée à la rude école du travail et de la guerre, sous un ciel inclément, sur une terre arrosée de temps immémorial par le sang de deux civilisations en luttes : une population où tous les contraires semblent se fonder en un ensemble harmonieux : l'esprit de calcul, de réflexion, de prévoyance de l'industriel avec les rêves et la fantaisie de l'artiste; la prudence et la sagesse avec l'esprit d'initiative et l'audace dans les conceptions; l'amour et le respect du passé, le culte de la tradition avec toutes les hardiesses de la pensée moderne; une population capable de manier avec un égal bonheur les lourdes masses du métal qui jaillissent des hauts fourneaux et les pâtes délicates des verreries de Baccarat, de Daum et de Gallé.' [14]

The regional writer E. Moselly agreed about the effect of the harsh climate and cold winters.[15] Charles Aimond from Lorraine used the word "austère" as well as referring to patriotism, endurance and practical common sense.[16] According to

[11] Hopkin, 'Identity in a Divided Province', pp.655–661.
[12] Parisot, *Lorraine région française*, p. 12.
[13] Parisot, *Lorraine région française*, pp. 12-13.
[14] L. Brocard, 'Le Développement économique de la Lorraine française', *Séance de la Société d'économie sociale* (Paris,14 avril 1913), p. 731.
[15] E Moselly, *Le Rouet d'ivoire : enfances lorraines 1907*, P. Goudot (ed) (Nancy,1990), pp.21-23.
[16] C. Aimond, *Essai sur le caractère et le génie lorrains* (Bar-Le-Duc, 1957), pp. 16, 39–40, 100.

Louis Madelin soldiers from Lorraine were traditional and conservative in outlook, warlike because defending their own land and with a strong respect for the dead, particularly those who had fallen in war.[17]

The trouble with relying on the character of the Lorraine people was that such a view took little account of how Lorraine was changing. Some writers felt that the traditional Lorraine virtues were under attack, as workers left the land and large numbers of foreign immigrants arrived to work in the iron and steel industry in the early years of the twentieth century. By 1914 there were approximately 50,000 Italians living in Briey and they accounted for 60% of all steelworkers being recruited in the *Pays Haut* in the decade before the war.[18] Commentators often painted a picture of agricultural decline with industry sucking labour away, raising wages and draining capital. One example would be Parisot who was alarmed that the balance was tipping too far to industry.[19] Hottenger, in his work on the mining district of Briey, talked about the effect of rural depopulation on the sober, patient and energetic characteristics of the Lorraine peasant. This analysis and support for reforms to encourage peasants back to the land was common in many parts of France among conservatives of the period.[20] However, not everyone shared the pessimism of Parisot and Hottenger about agriculture. The growth of cities like Nancy, and associated food processing industries, was providing new markets. Lucien Brocard drew attention to these factors and also to growth in certain agricultural sectors like market gardening, raising cattle and forestry. He pointed to the provision of fertilisers by the new industries and also the transfer of technology like electrical motors. Farm holdings were being consolidated into bigger units which was raising productivity.[21] Jules Méline in *Le Retour à la terre et la surproduction industrielle* (1905) had argued that a permanent crisis of overproduction in industry would drive workers back to the land, if the right measures were put in place to make rural life more attractive and agriculture more profitable. He therefore shared some of Brocard's optimism.[22]

Concern about morality also included industrial workers. The large numbers of foreign workers recruited brought their own social problems as they were absorbed into completely new settlements in small agricultural communities. Hottenger was close to the ideas for social reform of Ferdinand Le Play and the related doctrines of social catholicism. We can see this from his concerns about the effects of rapid industrialisation on the morality of rootless labourers brought in from Italy.[23] Hottenger wrote about crime, prostitution and disease. He believed that companies had to be more concerned about workers' welfare and public

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[17] L. Madelin, *Croquis lorrains* (Paris and Nancy, 1907), p. 338.
[18] P-D. Galloro, A. Boubeker, *Histoires et mémoires des immigrations en Lorraine* (Nancy, 2013), p. 170.
[19] Parisot, *Lorraine région française*, p.9.
[20] G-A. Hottenger, *Le Pays de Briey* (Nancy, 1911), pp. 34–35.
[21] Brocard, 'Développement économique', pp. 739–40.
[22] J. Méline, *The Return to the Land* (London, 1906), p. 90.
[23] M. François, 'Hottenger', *la France savante*, (Comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques web site https://cths.fr/an/prosopographie.php, 15.12.2008).

authorities had to play their part in dealing with this situation. The moral education offered by religion also had a part to play.[24] Parisot had something in common with conservatives when he wrote:

'l'essor prodigieux de l'industrie a provoqué une forte immigration d'étrangers prompts à jouer du couteau, dangereux pour leurs compatriotes et pour les nôtres.' [25]

If defining the land according to the character of its people was not entirely satisfactory either, perhaps relying on the appearance of the Lorraine countryside might help. Revering the countryside of Lorraine seems to have been a common part of this discourse of definition and was common to a number of groups of actors. At one level regional writers like Moselly had a strong sense of where they came from. For example, Moselly's *Le Rouet d'ivoire: enfances lorraines* contains a charming description of the festival of St. Nicholas traditionally celebrated in Lorraine.[26] However, a lot of writing was not about the actual countryside at all but about some mystical recreation of it for political purposes. Writers like Barrès projected their own ideas onto the landscape — *la terre et les morts*. The very identity and values of Lorraine lay in the soil itself and the province's glorious past. Barrès in works like *Les Déracinés* had emphasised the importance of local roots. In this novel he developed the key idea that to be a true son of eternal France you had to be rooted in the soil of somewhere like Lorraine.[27] He enshrined this attachment to the land in the hill of Sion-Vaudémont south of Nancy. Formerly a site, among many others, for Marian pilgrimage, it became for Barrès a place to celebrate what it meant to be truly a son of Lorraine but also French. His novel *La Colline inspirée* (1913) is very closely based on the historical events associated with the hill and he mentioned it in other works. The first major gathering there occurred in 1873 after German troops had left Lorraine and was a kind of expiation for past faults. This was sometimes referred to as *Po Tojo*, in Lorraine dialect '*Ce n'est pas pour toujours*.' Regular gatherings occurred up until the Great War. Barrès used to take his friends on conducted tours. He wrote in *Pages lorraines* in 1903:

'Jamais je ne rêvai là-haut sans que la Lorraine éternelle gonflât mon âme que je croyais battue.' [28]

Others latched on to this mystical streak of Barrès, like Lucien Brocard who used *La Colline inspiré*e to bolster arguments of a more down to earth nature. In his 1913 lecture on the Lorraine economy Brocard concluded with these words:

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[24] Hottenger, *Briey*, pp. 110–120, 132, 204.
[25] Parisot, *Lorraine région française*, p.9.
[26] Moselly, *Rouet d'ivoire*, p. 73.
[27] M. Barrès, *Les Déracinés*, (Paris, 1897).
[28] Quoted in P. Martin, 'la Colline inspirée : lieu d'une mémoire lorraine, nationale ou européenne', in P. Martin and F Roth (eds), *Mémoire et lieux de mémoire en Lorraine* (Sarreguemines, 2003), p. 244.

'Dans son dernier ouvrage: *La Colline inspirée,* M. Maurice Barrès fait dire à l'un de ses personnages que la Lorraine a toujours eu conscience de remplir dans le monde 'un rôle supérieur à l'importance de son territoire'. N'est-il pas vrai, Messieurs, que les quelques faits que je viens de rassembler, confirment et illustrent avec une force singulière cette constatation?' [29]

This particular feeling for the Lorraine countryside Barrès may have derived, at least in part, from Charles Sadoul. Charles Bruneau, writing in *Le Pays lorrain* after Sadoul's death, wrote how Barrès was not interested in ordinary people and once said 'tout ce félibrige m'ennuie.' Yet Bruneau felt that Sadoul had influenced, not only *La Colline inspirée* but passages like the following in *Colette Baudoche*, which seek to elevate the Lorraine countryside into a spiritual force:

'Pour moi, dans ces retraites lorraines, si bien enveloppées, pressées, protégées par leurs verdures reconnaissantes, où les blés ondulent, où les poulains caracolent, où les filles et les garçons s'interpellent en beau patois avec des regards éternels, je redresse mes vertus d'âme et de corps.' [30]

So history and culture were not a totally reliable guide to the sense of identity among inhabitants of Lorraine. Such definitions also looked to the past. They did not describe how Lorraine was at the turn of the twentieth century, a region of rapid industrial growth.

1.iii. The economy of Lorraine

If the *Lorrains* thought about the boundaries of their region from an economic point of view they might come up with different answers from a historian like Parisot. In 1913 Lucien Brocard had referred to the Meuse, the Vosges and the Meurthe-et-Moselle as 'nos trois départements lorrains.' [31] He may have been drawing on the presentations by Robert Parisot in 1908–1909. Parisot described the growth of industry in Lorraine but he did not address the wider connections of Lorraine's industries as they exploited improved communications to import raw materials and export to new markets. He noted that industrialisation was confined to the east of the region and his lectures contained a lament for the declining agriculture which covered most of the west. He recognised the dynamic effects of Alsatian emigration, for example on the cotton textile industry in the Vosges, but his definition of the region was essentially based on the past.[32]

While Brocard accepted the traditional three departments as Lorraine, as a geographer he had a much greater sense of the dynamism of modern industry and this was the subject of his lecture on Lorraine. What he noted continually were the connections between Lorraine's industries and those of other regions:

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[29] Brocard, 'Développement économique', p.745.
[30] C. Bruneau, 'Le Folklore lorrain', *Le Pays lorrain*, 23e année (1931), pp. 25–6.
[31] L. Brocard, 'Développement économique', p. 728.
[32] Parisot, *Lorraine région française*, pp.1–15.

‘Ainsi les grandes industries lorraines ont engendré autour d’elles comme des ondes d’activité qui, en se renforçant mutuellement, se sont étendues peu à peu aux trois départements lorrains, à la région de l’Est et enfin à la France tout entière.’ [33]

In his conclusion he talked about how Lorraine was in some ways self-sufficient but crucially drew resources from the rest of France and contributed much in turn to the French economy.[34]

In his review of the 1909 exhibition Louis Laffitte argued that the region of the East was a whole stretching from Flanders to the Franche-Comté with complementary industries. He believed this wider region could be based on the exchange of raw materials and manufactured goods.[35] This would consist of twelve departments — Ardennes, Aube, Côte-d’Or, Doubs, Jura, Marne, Haute-Marne, Meurthe-et-Moselle, Meuse, Territoire de Belfort, Vosges, Haute-Saône.[36] So the boundaries of Lorraine shifted depending on the author’s knowledge and experience.

The 1909 exhibition took place in Nancy. Pride in Nancy, the regional capital, exemplified all that was new and exciting in contemporary Lorraine. Before the First World War Nancy was the pre-eminent city in eastern France, the focus of Lorraine’s identity. Metz and Strasbourg were potential rivals but had been annexed by Germany in 1870. Nancy was a transport hub for the railways and canals of the region with lines which did not have to go through Paris.[37] Its growth had been spurred by the influx of skilled refugees from Alsace-Lorraine after 1870. When the president of the session of the *Société d’Économie sociale* introduced Lucien Brocard before his lecture in 1913 he said it was perhaps Nancy which, among all the provincial cities of France, most had the attraction and the qualities of a regional capital.[38]

The exhibition of 1909 gave the city the chance to show off not only its historic buildings but also new areas of urban development, new architecture and new cultural assets. The exhibition ran from March to October on a large site near the city centre. Among all the industrial exhibits it gave special prominence to the art nouveau *École de Nancy* which had made striking innovations in the decorative arts like glass making (Daum), furniture and interior design, art and sculpture (Émile Gallé and Victor Prouvé) and architecture (Emile André). André created a

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[33] Brocard, ‘Développement économique’, p. 733.
[34] Brocard, ‘Développement économique’, pp. 741-745.
[35] L. Laffitte, ‘Revue générale de l’exposition de Nancy 1909’, *Bulletin de la Société industrielle de l’Est*, 27e année, no.76 (janvier 1910), pp. 13–17.
[36] Laffitte, ‘Revue générale de l’exposition’, p. lxvii.
[37] J. Diez, *Le Régionalisme économique: Organisation de la Région économique de l’Est* (Thèse de doctorat, sciences politiques et économiques, Paris,1925), pp. 20–21.
[38] Brocard, ‘Développement économique’, p. 728.

regional style of domestic architecture which was very influential in Nancy.[39] It was unusual to have such a flourishing artistic movement as the *École de Nancy* outside Paris, the fruit of economic growth and prosperity, reconciled to the modern world and using modern materials.[40] The 1909 exhibition was also important in bringing the three discourses together. Here regional historians, academics, custodians of the region's culture like Sadoul, artists and businessmen could rub shoulders and learn about each other's achievements. No doubt this had a profound influence on their thought and action. Many of the important institutions in Lorraine like the *Chambre de Commerce de Nancy*, the *Société industrielle de l'Est*, the *Université de Nancy, the Conseil municipal de Nancy* and the *Musée lorrain* were involved in running the event.

Lorraine's pride in its recent industrial achievements was undoubtedly an important part of its sense of identity. The exhibition of 1909 beat the drum for the economic achievements of Lorraine, the fastest growing region in France in the decade before 1914, a region which evoked admiration throughout France and beyond. The opening up of the Briey iron ore mines had some of the features of a "gold rush", a real boom economy. The exhibition was a showcase for all the industries of Lorraine, both new ones like iron and steel and chemicals and old established sectors such as textiles, brewing, glass making and agriculture. More than that it aimed to spread awareness of all the improvements which were affecting people's daily lives like electrification.[41] The pride was palpable. Ludovic Beauchet is his closing speech talked about Lorraine rising again from the ashes of defeat.[42]

Economic commentators kept coming back to the unique partnership between the university and industry as a key to success. This partnership was evident in the creation of excellent technical institutes as part of the University of Nancy in cooperation with local industrialists. Together they created schools of applied chemistry (*Institut chimique*,1887–90), brewing (1893), electrical and mechanical engineering (*Institut électrotechnique et de mécanique*, 1905), zoology and microbiology, and geology (*Géologie appliquée*, 1908).[43] The university enjoyed great prestige as a result in the years before the First World War. At the Paris exhibition of 1904 the Minister of Education mentioned the university as an example for the rest of France in this respect. Parisot talked about this partnership in his lecture in 1909. He described the discovery of coal in Meurthe-et-Moselle and then wrote:

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[39] H. Doucet, *Art nouveau et régionalisme: Émile André (1871–1933), architecte et artiste* (Versailles, 2004), pp. 276–285.
[40] L. Laffitte, *Rapport général*, p. 36.
[41] Laffitte, *Rapport général*, p. cxvi.
[42] Laffitte, 'Revue générale de l'exposition', pp. 33–38. F. Descouturelle, B. Ponton, F. Roth, H. Sicard-Lenattier (eds), *Nancy 1909 : centenaire de l'exposition internationale de l'Est de la France : triomphe de l'industrie, de la science et de l'Art Nouveau* (Nancy, 2008), p. 10.
[43] Laffitte, *Rapport général*, pp. 98–104,563–4 and 578.

'Vous ne vous étonnerez pas que je rappelle ici la part qu'a prise la Faculté des Sciences de l'Université de Nancy au développement de notre industrie: nombreux sont les ingénieurs et les contre-maîtres qu'elle a fournis aux usines et aux manufactures de la région.' [44]

It was very much the intention of the 1909 Nancy exhibition to make visible the connection between science and industry.[45]

Hauser, the architect of the regional groupings of chambers of commerce in 1918, picked up this theme when he wrote for *L'Union économique de l'Est*:

'N'est-ce pas à Nancy que, d'une alliance féconde entre les hommes de science et les hommes d'action, sont nés ces instituts universitaires dont les travaux n'ont pas été inutiles à la prospérité de vos mines et de vos forges, de vos soudières, de vos brasseries, de vos tissages, de vos teintureries?' [46]

Charles Adam, the rector of the university, looked back on 25 years of progress at the university in 1922 and commented on recent benefactions from industrialists:

'Nos industriels lorrains ne sont pas restés en arrière : ces sommes furent doublées et triplées, grâce à eux. Une alliance, soigneusement entretenue par un mutuel échange de services, fut jurée pour toujours entre la Science et l'Industrie en Lorraine.' [47]

Brocard could not help but mention this cooperation in his 1913 lecture in Paris. He homed in on two aspects — the provision of engineers educated in the practices of regional industries and also the discovery of coal in Meurthe-et-Moselle.[48] The exemplar of this cooperative attitude was the long time dean of the science faculty, Ernest Bichat, who died in 1905. Villain, the President of the *Société industrielle de l'Est* and Vice-President of the *Aciéries du Nord et de l'Est*, drew attention in 1909 to Bichat's foresight twenty years ago that industry would be short of trained men. He had shown great energy in trying to remedy this situation and had met a positive response from industry.[49] Villain made these remarks on the occasion of the unveiling of a bust of Bichat in Nancy in 1909,

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[44] Parisot, *Lorraine région française*, p. 12.
[45] M-J. Choffel-Mailfert, 'La Visibilité sociale de l'alliance de la science et de l'industrie : l'exposition de l'est de la France en 1909', in F. Birck, A. Grelon (eds), *Un Siècle de formation des ingénieurs électriciens, ancrage local et dynamique européenne, l'exemple de Nancy* (Paris, 2006), pp.195–236.
[46] H. Hauser, 'La Création de la Région économique de l'Est', *L'Union économique de L'Est*, 2e année (15 mai 1918), p. 109.
[47] Université de Nancy*, Vingt-cinq années d'une université nouvelle 1897–1922* (Nancy, 1923), p.9.
[48] Brocard, 'Développement économique', p. 741.
[49] F. Villain, 'La collaboration de la science et de l'industrie en Lorraine', *Bulletin de la chambre de commerce de Nancy*, vol. 7 1909, (appendix séance 21 juillet 1909), pp. 583–6.

which was followed by a further bust in his home town of Lunéville in 1911; ceremonies attended by a host of leading regional personalities. Why was so much honour paid to Bichat? Charles Adam recalled not only what a great teacher he was, but also a man of action. He had a lot of industrial contacts and saw the University of Nancy as a partnership of professors and industrialists. He was a member of the *conseil-général* of his department and a real republican. It was fitting that the university should be awarded a special gold medal at the Nancy exhibition of 1909 by the Ministry of Commerce in recognition of his work.[50]

Of prime importance to the academic community was the desire to rival the excellence of Germany's universities in technical education. After the 1870 war the university had accepted the medical and pharmaceutical faculties from the University of Strasbourg who wanted to find a home in France. The decision of patriotic academics like Ernest Bichat and the chemist Albin Haller from Alsace to found a chemical institute followed on from this.[51] The university also gave a visible demonstration of its support for economic growth by providing commercial education. An É*cole supérieure de Commerce* had been created in 1896 by the *chambre de commerce* and the *Société industrielle de l'Est*.[52] It attracted donations from a number of industrialists and businessmen of the region.[53] A university *Institut commercial* followed in 1911 under the aegis of the *Faculté de Droit*. It received support from the *chambre de commerce*, the *Société industrielle de l'Est* and the *Office économique* of the *chambre de commerce*. They nominated half the *conseil d'administration* and the latter two bodies provided financial subsidies. Laffitte, the organiser of the 1909 exhibition, was a professor there.[54] The faculty of science was also involved in teaching at the É*cole primaire supérieure* and the É*cole professionnelle de l'Est*. The latter was a private institution. The former was created by the state as another commercial school.

So how far did industrialists demonstrate their pride in Lorraine's economy by providing funds and other forms of support for the new institutes? As far as funds are concerned it seems clear that, at least between 1898 and 1904, a significant period of growth, the vast majority of subventions for the faculty of science came from the state, with much lesser percentages from the department, the city of Nancy, from individuals, from the colonies and from the university itself.[55] No

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[50] *Inauguration du monument Bichat : 23 avril 1911* (Lunéville, 1911), pp. 19–22.
[51] F. Birck, *L'École des Mines (ENSMN) 1919–2012 entre université, grand corps d'état et industrie* (Nancy, 2013), pp. 33–9. F. Birck, 'Des Instituts annexes de facultés aux écoles nationales supérieures ingénieurs, à propos des trois écoles nancéiennes', in A. Grelon, F. Birck (eds), *Des Ingénieurs pour la Lorraine XIXe–XXe siècles* (Nancy, 2007), pp. 148–157. F. Birck, 'De l'Institut électrotechnique de Nancy à l'École nationale supérieure d'électricité et de mécanique (1900–1960)', in Birck, Grelon, *Un Siècle de formation*, pp. 23–81.
[52] Birck, L'*École des Mines*, p.59.
[53] Grelon, Birck, *Ingénieurs Lorraine*, p.101.
[54] A. Logette, *Histoire de la Faculté de Droit de Nancy 1768–1864–1914* (Nancy, 1964), pp. 149–152.
[55] E. Bolmont, J-R. Cussenot, 'La Faculté des sciences de Nancy: équipements,

major private donations were received for the chemistry institute, although the *Comité des Forges et Mines de Fer de Meurthe-et-Moselle* supported a new laboratory to do their own research. The association of former students listed twenty-two people as member donors including Solvay, Daum, four brewers including two large ones, Vilgrain, President of the *Chambre de Commerce de Nancy* and Villain.[56] In the case of the electro-technical and mechanical institute, Solvay, the wealthy Belgian industrialist and owner of a new plant at Dombasle near Nancy, gave 100,000 francs towards a new laboratory. It may be that he was keen to win favour for his new plant and his plans to exploit salt deposits in Lorraine. His proposals had previously aroused some hostility.[57] The *Société industrielle de l'Est* did what it could to encourage further donations.[58] The large breweries were not enthusiastic in supporting the brewery institute, although some money was forthcoming, particularly from a medium sized brewer Antoni Moreau, who took an active part in the project. Later in the nineteen twenties the Lorraine brewers gave some help when the institute got into deficit. The *Société industrielle de l'Est* launched a subscription for the new geological institute which provided funds, as well as the state and the faculty itself. The industrialist Camille Cavallier thought it was a priority to find an extension of the German Saar coal basin under France.[59]

Beyond organising donations of money businessmen were occasionally involved in other ways in the development of these institutes. Moreau was involved in the ongoing running of the brewery institute.[60] The *Société industrielle de l'Est* was often the conduit through which businessmen talked to academics about these plans. The society, which was founded in 1884, had 244 members after its launch. Members of the university were invited to attend later. Its main purpose was to spread knowledge useful to business and therefore the publication of its journals — the *Bulletin* and the *Revue* — was particularly important, as well as meetings. University lectures were given at the society. For example, Albin Haller spoke about German competition in 1897. In 1894 the society actively supported the campaign to give the faculties of Nancy university status, which came about in 1896.[61] The society was involved in mobilising financial support, for example for the electrical institute as we have seen.[62]

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personnels et enseignements', in L. Rollet, M-J. Choffel-Mailfert (eds), *Aux Origines d'un pôle scientifique; faculté des sciences et écoles d'ingénieurs à Nancy, du Second Empire aux années 1960* (Nancy,2007), p. 170 bar chart 1898–1904.

[56] *Association amicale des anciens élèves de l'École nationale supérieure des industries chimiques (Institut chimique)* (Nancy, 1920), pp. 134–5.

[57] Birck, 'Des instituts annexes', p.159. Birck, *L'École des Mines*, p.55.

[58] Birck, 'Des instituts annexes', p. 160.

[59] Birck, L'*École des Mines*, pp. 56–58. Bolmont, Cussenot, 'Faculté des sciences', p. 285.

[60] 'L'École de brasserie de Nancy', in Grelon, Birck, *Ingénieurs Lorraine,* pp. 205–7.

[61] Birck, 'Des Instituts annexes', p.157.

[62] F. Birck, 'La Société industrielle de l'Est et la diffusion de l'information scientifique et technique, de la fin du XIXe siècle à la veille de la Première Guerre Mondiale', S. Benoit,

Another element of this discourse on the economy was to highlight the support given to local industry by regional banks. Henri Hauser drew attention to this factor.[63] There were a number of home grown banking institutions which had developed in the nineteenth century, like the firm of Renauld. Jean Buffet, President of the *conseil d'administration* of the Société nancéienne de Crédit industriel et de Dépôts, spoke about support for industry in Nancy in September 1909 at the congress of the *Syndicat des Banques de province* (22–24 September) and praised the regional solidarity between different companies in Lorraine.[64] Charles Renauld spoke at the same congress about the advantages of using a local bank. You might pay more for credit but you received a quick decision by the bank's owner and the support could be relied on because local banks were close to their clients and knew the industries concerned.[65] Camille Cavallier had a letter read out when the Congress of provincial bankers visited his plant on 22 September 1909 in which he said local investors could place their money with confidence in bonds sold by local banks.[66] Speaking in 1913 Lucien Brocard said local banks had issued instruments to the value of 200 million francs in two years. He went on to praise Lorraine banks as the crown on the economic region of Lorraine. He said the Parisian institutions including the local Banque de France were mainly interested in short-term credit, whereas institutions like la Banque de Nancy, la Banque Lévy-Bettinger, la Banque Renauld, la Société nancéienne de Crédit industriel et de Dépôts, which together had a capital of over 180 million francs, concentrated on advances to regional industries in the longer term. Without them, Brocard claimed, the hundreds of millions accumulated in Lorraine would have passed the frontier to help competitors.[67]

Lorraine businessmen also took pride in the inter-dependence of different industrial sectors, their active co-operation and solidarity. Commentators like Laffitte and Brocard refused to see the different economic sectors in Lorraine as isolated. They all depended on each other for materials, markets and labour. The 1909 exhibition wanted to show the linkages between different industrial sectors across the wider region. For example, Brocard explained how industrial growth

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G. Emptoz, D. Woronoff (eds), *Encourager l'innovation en France et en* Europe (Paris 2006), pp. 173–198.

[63] H. Hauser, 'La Création de la Région économique de l'Est', *L'Union économique de L'Est*, 2e année (15 mai 1918), pp. 109–111. See also J. Duplantier, *Le Régionalisme économique et spécialement la Région économique de Bordeaux et du Sud-Ouest* (Thèse de doctorat, Faculté de Droit, Bordeaux, 1929), pp. 231–3.

[64] J. Buffet, 'Le Rôle des banques locales en Lorraine, les conditions du développement des banques locales', *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 7 1909, (appendix séance 21 juillet 1909), pp. 559–564.

[65] C. Renauld, 'Le Réveil de la banque locale et son assistance aux valeurs nationales', *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, (appendix séance 21 juillet 1909), pp. 564–573.

[66] C. Cavallier 'Les banques locales et l'industrie, lettre à Marcel Paul, Paris le 21 Septembre', *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 7 1909, (appendix séance 21 juillet 1909), pp. 574–583.

[67] Brocard, 'Développement économique', pp. 728, 737–8.

created development opportunities in other industries like construction.[68] So the Lorraine economy was characterised by the diversity of its enterprises, from steel to the decorative arts, and the complexity of their inter-connections.[69] Lorraine was beginning to experience the complexity of a modern industrial economy.

Cooperation between local industrialists was said to be another feature of the Lorraine economy. The *Société industrielle de l'Est* and the chambers of commerce were important forums for cooperation. The Nancy chamber was pre-eminent because it included the most important industries in the region in the department of Meurthe-et-Moselle. It set up an *Office économique* to collect and publish data about the progress of the regional economy. There were regional bodies for major industries like *Le Comité des Forges et Mines de Fer de Meurthe-et*-Moselle founded in 1906.[70] Jean Buffet believed this spirit of cooperation was a cause of Lorraine's industrial prosperity. He noted that, in the Nancy *Chambre de Commerce,* representatives of *la grande métallurgie* came together with less prominent industries and commerce, with intellectuals, engineers and jurists.[71] He talked about 'une sorte de solidarité régionale'.

So the interconnections created a feeling of regional solidarity that the Lorraine industries belonged together and could help each other. This word 'solidarité' had a wider philosophical and political significance, because of the writings of León Bourgeois. He saw men developing through their mutual inter-dependence. The state and society were simply expressions of the free association of men for their own benefit.[72] The following passage from Bourgeois's book could stand as a description of how contemporaries saw the economic development of Lorraine:

'Le libre développement des facultés, des activités, en un mot, de *l'être*, ne peut être, pour chacun d'eux, obtenu que grâce au concours des facultés et des activités des autres hommes du même temps et n'obtient son degré actuel d'intensité et de plénitude que grâce aux efforts accumulés des facultés et des activités des hommes du temps passé.' [73]

The term solidarity was used to refer to the spirit of the 1909 exhibition.[74] It was also employed by Brocard.[75] It underpinned his point that Lorraine gained much from France but also contributed much. Laffitte also used it.[76] So did some social Catholic thinkers. Brocard did not imply that the *Lorrains* were in some way

[68] Brocard, 'Développement économique', pp. 733,736,744.
[69] Brocard, 'Développement économique', pp. 730,735.
[70] J. Moine, *Les Barons du fer, les maîtres de forges en Lorraine* (Nancy, 1989), p. 179.
[71] Buffet, 'Rôle des banques locales', p. 561.
[72] L. Bourgeois, *Solidarité* (Paris, 1896), pp. 50–1, 87, 90–1.
[73] Bourgeois, *Solidarité*, p. 137.
[74] L. Laffitte, 'Discours de clôture de l'exposition', *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 7 1909, (appendix séance 21 juillet 1909), pp. 645–6.
[75] Brocard, 'Développement économique', pp. 738, 741, 744.
[76] L. Laffitte, 'L'évolution économique de la Lorraine', *Annales de Géographie*, t.21, no.20 (1912), p. 416.

separate and had to prove they were French. He simply made the point that all regions were inter-connected.

No one believed that one factor caused the miracle of Lorraine's prosperity. It was due to a number of complex causes. The university, the banks, industries working together and a skilled work force all had their part of play as Albert Lebrun expressed it.[77] All these factors were well summed by Cavallier before the congress of regional bankers in 1909:

'Ce qui caractérise ce mouvement d'expansion c'est avant tout, son extrême et croissante complexité; c'est la multiplicité, la diversité des industries qui se développent ensemble sur le sol lorrain, c'est la cohésion, l'intime collaboration, la solidarité profonde de toutes ces activités enchevêtrées et indissolublement unies. La Lorraine donne au plus haut point le spectacle d'une unité économique dont toutes les parties se développent en s'appuyant les unes sur les autres.' [78]

If Lorraine's economy was a success story, how should it be developed in the future? What would be the best administrative framework to enhance the regional dynamism? Here we come to consider regionalism in a political sense. The exhibition of 1909 was unashamedly regionalist in its aspirations as Louis Laffitte said in his long report published in 1912. Ludovic Beauchet talked about the spirit of the *petite patrie* in his opening remarks.[79] Despite being proud of Lorraine and an advocate of some decentralisation, he was also a French patriot.[80] The exhibition allowed a host of regional organisations to run congresses including the *Union régionaliste lorraine* (URL) and the *Fédération régionaliste française* (FRF) jointly. In separate sessions the URL planned to study decentralisation of the government but also the development of the region i.e. regionalist issues. The URL was a more broadly based organisation than the FRF. Its committee included Poincaré and Méline, thirteen deputies, the Rector of Nancy University, several Lorraine mayors, the President of the Nancy *Chambre de Commerce* and the *Société industrielle de l'Est*. The *URL*'s secretary, Charles Berlet, was to write about the different character of the people of different regions and enter a plea for a regional reform.[81] Three original signatories of the 1865 Nancy manifesto on decentralisation were present in 1909 to discuss this issue.[82]

The URL's work to support the development of the distinctive qualities of Lorraine predated the 1909 exhibition. It was founded by thirty academics after a visit by Jean Charles-Brun, the secretary of the FRF, in 1902. In 1907 the URL asked the FRF to send its former president, Charles Beauquier, and its current president,

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[77] A. Lebrun, *La Politique du fer au cours de la guerre, la question de Briey, conférence faite à la Société industrielle de l'Est, le 18 juin 1920* (Nancy, 1920), p. 22.
[78] F. Baudin, *Histoire économique et sociale de la Lorraine, ii L'Essor 1870–1914* (3 vols, Nancy, 1992,1993,1997), p. 236.
[79] Laffitte, *Rapport général*, introduction pp. lvi, lxxvi and cx.
[80] Laffitte, *Rapport général*, p. 826.
[81] Berlet, *Les Provinces*, pp. 551–2.
[82] 'Congrès régionaliste de Nancy', *Le Pays lorrain*, 6e année (1909), pp. 379–380; Laffitte, *Rapport général*, p.808.

Louis Marin, to talk about decentralisation in Nancy. They gave lectures on 17 April under the chairmanship of Alfred Mézières, senator for the Meurthe-et-Moselle. On this occasion Marin made some attempt to define what he meant by regionalism, which he thought was concerned with the development of local resources and the qualities and intellectual aptitudes of the people, based on local traditions. It was all about regions realising their full potential. It was different from what he called traditionalism, the conservation of local folklore, artistic styles, music, architecture, furniture — the sort of material we might find in an ethnographic museum. Neither should regionalism be confused with particularism, the determination to retain the separate character of the old provinces of France, which he associated with Maurice Barrès and Charles Maurras. We will see later that, in the case of Barrès, this statement needs qualification. For Marin fostering the development of Lorraine would contribute to the development of France as a whole. Certainly, there was no idea of autonomism or separatism here. He saw Nancy as being in the vanguard of this national development with its university and the *École de Nancy*.[83]

1.iv. Regional nationalism

There was one threat to all this success and that was Germany, and this led to a third discourse which I have labelled "regional nationalist". For many *Lorrains* loyalty to the region was indistinguishable from loyalty to France. Proximity to Germany had made Lorraine the vanguard in the defence of *la patrie* against its powerful neighbour. The need to compete with Germany economically and also to be in a constant state of vigilance dominated their thinking. The impact of the Thirty Year's War, the advance to Valmy in 1792, the Prusso-Austro-Russian invasion of 1814 and of course the Prussian invasion of 1870 were referred to frequently in contemporary writing and journalism.[84] *L'Est républicain* referred to the German occupation of 1870 in seventeen articles between April and July 1914.[85] Most important, local school children were taught this history in primary school, as a locally produced *manuel scolaire* reveals.[86] When we come to assess the impact of invasion in 1914 on Lorraine, we must remember that many older people would have remembered a childhood experience of 1870, not least the writer Maurice Barrès and Raymond Poincaré, President of France. Louis Marin blamed the loss of his mother at that time on the Germans. Their grandparents'

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[83] 'Union régionaliste lorraine', *Le Pays lorrain*, 4e année (1907), p. 299.
[84] K. Varley, *Under the Shadow of Defeat, the war of 1870-1 in French Memory* (Basingstoke, 2008), pp. 179–180.
[85] *L'Est Républicain (*6 avril 1914), p.1 col a–c; (13 avril), p.1 col a–c; (14 avril), p.1 col a–c; (20 avril), p.1 col a–b; (28 avril), p.1 col c–d; (4 mai 1914), p.1 col a–b; (12 mai), p.1 col a–c; (18 mai), p.1 col a–b; (25 mai), p.1 col a–b; (1 juin 1914), p.1 col a–b; (15 juin), p.1 col a–b; (22 juin), p.1 col a–b; (29 juin), p.1 col a–b; (6 juillet 1914), p.1 col a–b; (9 juillet), p.1 col a–b; (20 juillet), p.1 col a–b; (27 juillet), p.1 col a–b.
[86] L. Bouchot, *Vingt-cinq Leçons sur l'histoire de la Lorraine et du Barrois* (Nancy, 1919), pp. 66–70.

generation would have witnessed the arrival of Prussian troops in 1814. Another historical fact which our school master noted in his manual was the number of men from Lorraine who served as senior officers and generals in the armies of the Revolution and Empire.[87] As a frontier province Lorraine had always felt a strong identification with the army and this feeling was still alive in 1914. After 1871 the army's presence was very visible because the responsibility of the Twentieth Corps based in Nancy was to cover the border.

This nationalist discourse was very much in evidence at the 1909 exhibition. Lorraine's leaders, political, economic and intellectual, wanted to show that the France of the East was growing and successful after the setback of the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine in 1871. This message was intended not only for a domestic audience, but also for visitors from Great Britain, Belgium and also from Germany, although the latter did not have an official delegation. It was this desire to compete with Germany which explained the creation of excellent technical institutes on the German model as part of the University of Nancy.

In view of the German threat it is not surprising that the desire to compete successfully with Germany coloured much thinking in Lorraine about the economy. We find it in Brocard's lecture of 1913. He asked why Lorraine's economic growth took off after the war of 1870. Several causes came together by chance to account for this leap forward, such as the discovery of the iron ore around Briey in 1880. French metallurgists were searching desperately for new sources of iron ore because Germany had taken most French mines in the Treaty of Frankfurt. Another factor was the emigration to France of industrialists from Alsace-Lorraine after 1871.[88] Louis Laffitte in 1912 talked about the set-back suffered by France in 1870 when access to coal supplies in the Saar was interrupted, the iron ore mines of Lorraine were incorporated in Germany and the connections between the Alsatian textile industry and similar enterprises in the Vosges were cut. He then went on to explain how after forty-two years of hard work and many difficulties Lorraine had rebuilt the riches and resources wrenched from France's grasp in 1870. Emigrants from Alsace had helped the Vosges textile industry and new supplies of iron ore were discovered, some of which could be used to pay for German coal.[89]

The example of how Germany organised its industries was ever present. Lorraine might be increasing production of crude iron and steel but was not converting it into finished products like Germany, wrote Louis Laffitte in 1909.[90] When writing about the creation of the iron basin of Briey and its effect on labour relations Georges Hottenger said the French iron masters needed a proper recruitment organisation like the Germans to manage the rapid influx of labour. They also

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[87] Bouchot, *Vingt-cinq Leçons*, p. 64.
[88] Brocard, 'Développement économique', pp. 731-2.
[89] Laffitte, 'L'Évolution économique', pp. 393–417.
[90] Baudin, *Histoire économique et sociale,* ii, pp. 266,271. See also Brocard, 'Développement économique', p.734.

needed German style committees at each mine for employers and employees to meet.[91]

Of course the obsession with Germany dominated Lorraine's external economic relationships. The search for fresh coal supplies started before 1914 with the discovery of a small but unproductive field in Meurthe-et-Moselle. However, Lorraine remained dependent on outside supplies of coal — from the Nord, from Belgium but also from Germany. Alphonse Fould, the owner of *Forges et Aciéries de Pompey*, made this point in a speech in front of Louis Barthou, the Minister of Public Works, when the latter visited the metallurgy pavilion at the 1909 Nancy exhibition. He said that Lorraine imported half the coal it needed in 1907 from Belgium and Germany, 'un énorme tribut à l'étranger.' [92] Camille Cavallier, the President of *Pont-à-Mousson*, repeated this point about coal in a speech at a banquet for former pupils of the *Arts et Métiers* school in September 1909.[93]

So the *Lorrains*, like many other Frenchmen, had mixed feelings about Germany — admiration for her industrial, technical and intellectual achievements but also resentment of her occupation of Alsace and Lorraine and a fear of German economic and military power. These feelings surfaced constantly in the press. For example, *L'Est républicain* wrote about Germany's reliance on force and the arrogance of German officers as well as commercial and cultural competition.[94] Economic growth had brought Italians to Briey but also foreign businessmen, mainly from Germany. Lorraine was constantly on the *qui vive*, as one writer said, and suspicious of foreigners whose loyalty was questionable.[95] One newspaper article said that they were overrunning the country.[96] Italians might behave badly, but Germans and Alsatians, who spoke French with a Germanic accent, could be spies. Columns in the nationalist press ran several spy stories and scares in 1914 before war started, but the radical press was less interested.[97] From time to time arrests were made but in many cases the threat seemed rather modest: a love sick clergyman, a vagrant photographing fortifications, another encouraging a handful of French soldiers to desert in Nancy.[98] This was all in the context of a general wariness about German activity near the frontier — for example minor

[91] Hottenger, *Briey*, pp. 139, 215.
[92] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 7 1909, (séance 20 juin 1909), p. 344.
[93] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 7 1909, (appendix séance 21 juillet 1909), p. 553.
[94] *L'Est républicain* (7 mai 1914), p.1 col a–b; (22 mai), p.1 col a–b; (21 juin 1914), p.1 col a–b; (24 juin), p.1 col a–b; (30 juin), p.1 col a–c.
[95] *L'Éclair de l'Est* (6 mai 1914).
[96] *L'Éclair de l'Est* (30 mars 1914).
[97] *L'Éclair de l'Est* (7, 8, 12 mars 1914); (11 avril 1914); (6, 26, 28 juin 1914); (3, 24 juillet 1914). *L'Est républicain* (4 avril 1914), p.1 col d–e; (12 avril), p.1 col e; (18 juin 1914), p.1 col c–d; (27 juin), p.2 col e; (21 juillet 1914), p.2 col c. *L'Étoile de l'Est* (26 mai 1914); (27 juin 1914).
[98] *L'Éclair de l'Est* (6, 26 juin 1914); (24 juillet 1914). *L'Étoile de l'Est* (27 juin 1914).

incursions by the German military, overflights by aeroplanes and army manoeuvres.[99]

It is not surprising that such stories appeared in the local press given the "regional nationalist" line taken by most newspapers. Among the main regional newspapers published in Nancy only one, *L'Étoile de l'Est*, could be described as radical, although certainly not lacking in support for national defence. *L'Est républicain* held the centre ground and was nearest to the Poincaré line, having shifted ground from a more extreme nationalist position under the editorship of Léon Goulette who departed in 1911 to be replaced by René Mercier.[100] *L'Éclair de l'Est* was nationalist and Catholic and close to Louis Marin. *L'Impartial de l'Est* was nationalist, *La Croix de Meurthe-et-Moselle* Catholic and also nationalist and the *Journal de la Meurthe et des Vosges* was an old royalist paper which took a nationalist line.

This "regional nationalist" line was also actively encouraged by the church in Lorraine. Turinaz, the Archbishop of Nancy before and during the First World War, was known as the frontier bishop. He believed that patriotism was holy.[101] He exhorted the faithful to love France; the land, its beliefs, traditions and people, past and present. They should look up to the army and the flag and trust in the divine protection of Joan of Arc, the maiden from Lorraine who was treated as a saint.[102] For many years he presided at the commemoration of the fallen at Mars-la-Tour and his impassioned oratory there reached a wide audience.[103] His speech given at Mars-la-Tour on 16 August 1893 on the twenty-third anniversary of the battle of Gravelotte is characteristic:

'Car elle (la France) est pour nous la patrie, c'est-à-dire le trésor de tous les biens qui font battre le coeur de l'homme. Elle est la patrie, c'est-à-dire le sol qu'ont foulé nos premiers pas, le toit qui a abrité notre enfance…….la patrie, c'est-à-dire les affections pures et saintes, les croyances augustes, les traditions vénérables, le souvenir des tristesses et des joies, des épreuves et des gloires nationales, les tombes où reposent ceux que nous avons aimés, les autels du Dieu de Charlemagne, de Saint Louis et de Jeanne d'Arc.' [104]

In this he was supported for many years by Canon Faller, the priest at Mars-la-Tour who welcomed up to 25,000 people to remember the anniversary of the

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[99] *L'Étoile de l'Est* (15 mai 1914). *L'Est républicain* (6 avril 1914), p.2 col f; (9 mai 1914), p.2 col c–d; (13 mai), p.2 col c–d; (14 mai), p.2 col d; (19 mai), p.2 col. f.
[100] C. Hirtz, *L'Est républicain : naissance et développement d'un grand quotidien régional 1889-1914* (Grenoble,1973), pp. 58–159. G. Grivel, 'Les idées politiques de René Mercier', *Annales de l'Est*, 5e série, 35e année no. 2 (1984), pp. 123–138.
[101] C-F. Turinaz, *Discours patriotiques* (Nancy and Paris, 1900), pp.211, 218.
[102] Turinaz, *Discours*, pp. 93, 108, 140, 148, 166, 224.
[103] Turinaz, *Discours*, p. 161.
[104] Turinaz, *Discours*, p. 200.

battle.[105] He also founded a museum there. His patriotism was celebrated at his funeral in April 1914.[106] Turinaz's belief in Joan of Arc was a commonplace among the hierarchy and practising Catholics.

There was one other factor peculiar to Lorraine which accounted for the suspicious discourse about Germany. In the Meurthe-et-Moselle there were 72,000 people, and in the Vosges 50,764, from Alsace-Lorraine, who had either opted for French nationality and left after the treaty of Frankfurt, or who lived in France anyway, or who left subsequently, maybe to enrol in the French military. These Alsacien-Lorrains in the two Lorraine departments accounted for 23% of all those in France.[107] Emigrants from Alsace-Lorraine played a prominent role in Nancy post-1870, as described by Hélène Sicard-Lenattier in her 2002 doctoral thesis*, Les Alsaciens-Lorrains à Nancy 1870–1914, une ardente histoire*. They accounted for thirty percent of the population.[108] Naturally enough, more than the average Frenchman or woman, these exiles took a particular interest in how Germany was governing Alsace-Lorraine and they did not like what they heard. The press was full of stories of petty German oppression – military abuse of civilians, for instance in Saverne or calling *Lorrains* 'wackes' (scum) in a bar in Metz, imposing the German language, refusing to allow more autonomy in the *Reichsland* of Alsace-Lorraine on a par with other German states.[109] Even the radical *L'Étoile de l'Est* ran twenty-seven stories on this subject between April and July 1914, including news of the arrest of the writer and artist Hansi who satirised the German regime.[110] In the same period *L'Est républicain* ran thirteen stories on the same subject. Hansi was found guilty of slandering German teachers and gendarmes, condemned to prison but subsequently escaped to France. The *optants* in Lorraine would also have welcomed comments in the press and elsewhere that the populations of Alsace-Lorraine were French at heart and were longing to be reunited with *la patrie*. Visitors and observers seized on any signs of French patriotism over the border.[111]

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[105] Varley, *Shadow of Defeat*, pp. 23–4, 194–5. D. Bontemps, 'L'Anniversaire de la bataille de Mars-la-Tour avant 1914', *La Revue Lorraine populaire*, 8e année, 47 (août 1982), pp. 224–7. F. Roth, 'Un Lieu de mémoire oublié : Mars-la-Tour', in Martin, Roth, *Mémoire*, pp. 157–175.

[106] *L'Éclair de l'Est* (24 avril 1914).

[107] A. Wahl, *L'Option et l'émigration des Alsaciens-Lorrains, 1871–1872* (Paris, 1974), p. 237. R. Gildea, *Children of the Revolution* (London, 2008), p. 295 quoting Wahl, *L'Option et l'émigration*, pp. 102–34, 190–91.

[108] H. Sicard-Lenattier*, Les Alsaciens-Lorrains à Nancy 1870–1914, une ardente histoire* (Haroué,2002). P. Clemendot, 'Population de Nancy (1815–1938)', *Annales de Démographie Historique*, 1973, p. 120.

[109] *L'Étoile de l'Est* (9 juin 1914). For the Saverne affair see *Journal de la Meurthe* (8 janvier 1914), p.1 col b–c; (13 janvier), p.1 col c; (20 janvier), p.1 col c.

[110] *L'Étoile de l'Est* covered Hansi on (19 mai 1914), (26 juin 1914), (10, 13, 16 juillet 1914).

[111] L. Turetti, *Quand la France pleurait l'Alsace-Lorraine, 1870–1914, les provinces perdues aux sources du patriotisme républicain* (Strasbourg, 2008), p. 93. J. Léoutre, *Chronique cordiale d'un Mussipontain des XIXe et XXe siècles 1887–1980* (Pont-à-Mousson, 2005), pp. 39–40.

A prolific propagandist and printer who skilfully developed this idea of Alsace-Lorraine being French at heart was Émile Hinzelin. His works such as *Coeurs d'Alsace et de Lorraine* (Paris,1913) and *La Terre et la maison* (Paris,1912) were by turn lyrical about Alsace-Lorraine and ironic about the Germans. His belief that most of those in the occupied territories were loyal to France and could not wait to throw off the German yoke was shared by others. Maurice Barrès painted perhaps the most powerful picture of a French heart under German occupation in his novel *Colette Baudoche* (1909), in which the heroine turns down marriage to a German schoolteacher to remain true to France.

In fact, the picture painted by Hinzelin and Barrès was at variance with reality. The Mosellans had developed an independent identity of their own, separate from Alsace but also different from France in certain respects. This was to cause friction after 1918. The Moselle department was part of the German Empire for forty-eight years.[112] In that time the German authorities tried to foster integration by establishing the German language in public life and schools and by bringing in state officials to run the country along with the military. A Germanic dialect was spoken in the north and east. Alongside officials and teachers, businessmen also arrived. Gradually the iron and steel making industries were linked to German industry in the Saar and the Ruhr and came under German ownership. The powerful de Wendel family had to split their operation and run the German business as a separate company. Of course after 1870 a corpus of law developed on German lines quite different from France. The German political parties established themselves in the Moselle. There was a particularist party to represent the separate interests of Lorraine supported by French speaking voters, although the most influential was the German Catholic Centrist party. In practice, until the advent of war, most French speakers had accepted the reality of German rule but sought protection for their identity within the German Empire. There was support in Alsace and Lorraine for a truly separate status, similar to other German states, but *Elsass-Lothringen* remained a *Reichsland*.

However, it is true that there were elements of loyalty to France within the Moselle population. The linguistic division of the area survived and French was still spoken in the south and west. Metz, once a French speaking city, adopted German because of the presence of the government, but French was widely spoken in the countryside. French was still used in schools in the French speaking areas and taught as a second language in the German zones.[113] Westphalen the folklorist concentrated before 1918 on preserving the culture of French speakers in the Moselle.[114] *Le Souvenir français* was allowed to perpetuate the memory of those who had fallen in the war of 1870.

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[112] See F. Roth, *La Lorraine annexée: étude sur la présidence de Lorraine dans l'Empire allemand, 1870–1918* (Metz, 2011).
[113] S. L. Harp, *Learning to be Loyal. Primary Schooling as Nation Building in Alsace and Lorraine 1850–1940* (North Illinois University, 1998), pp. 87-99.
[114] Hopkin, 'Identity in a Divided Province', pp. 662–664.

The Catholic church played a key role as a bridge between French and German Catholics. The Concordat of 1801 continued in Alsace and Lorraine which meant that the Catholic church was in effect a state church and bishops for example were appointed by the government. Schools in Alsace and the Moselle were confessional schools, mostly Catholic but some Protestant. This was totally different from the *état laique* which resulted from the Ferry reforms of 1880-2 and the Combes reforms of 1903–5 in France. The Archbishop of Metz, Benzler, was appointed by the German government but he was sympathetic to the plight of French speaking Catholics and supported their right to learn their faith, for instance the catechism, in their own language.

Moselle as a department was also quite different from Alsace with a separate sense of identity. During the annexation Mosellans resented the dominance of Alsace and Strasbourg within the *Reichsland* of *Elsass-Lothringen*. French was more widely spoken in the Moselle. The German dialect here was different from Alsatian although High German was introduced by immigrants under the Imperial regime. Lorraine was also more Catholic. There were fewer Protestants than in Alsace. The Moselle was also part of a large industrial basin based on coal, iron and steel which stretched west into France and also north into Luxembourg and Belgium and north-east into the German Saarland. *Frontaliers* often worked across the border. There were also more permanent immigrants than in Alsace, which sharpened the local sense of identity.

The domestic politics of 1914 in Lorraine brought to the fore the simmering resentments against Germany.[115] Maurice Barrès, along with other members of the nationalist right, had been peddling the idea that Germany was the mortal enemy of Latin civilisation since the eighteen nineties. Barrès believed that the radical politicians, who had mostly run France since the days of Gambetta, had betrayed the country to its enemies — freemasons, Jews and of course Germans. This attack was at its most vociferous during the Dreyfus affair. However, this more extreme position had been overtaken by the moderate patriotism of Raymond Poincaré, formerly a senator for the Meuse and now President of France. Poincaré did not want to provoke Germany but was determined that, if Germany attacked, France should be prepared militarily and should not lack allies.[116] Poincaré's firm but circumspect approach was particularly well received in his native Lorraine. He said to lycée scholars at Commercy in 1896:

'Notre patriotisme, sans être plus sincère ni plus vrai que celui des autres français, est peut-être mieux renseigné, plus éveillé et plus sensible aussi. Nous

[115] For domestic politics in Lorraine see P. Barral, F-T. Charpentier, J-C. Bonnefont, 'La Capitale de la Lorraine mutilée 1870–1918', in R. Taveneaux (ed), *Histoire de Nancy* (Toulouse, 1978), pp. 375–430 ; also F. Roth, *Histoire politique de la Lorraine, de 1900 à nos jours* (Metz, 2012), pp.11–16.
[116] F. Roth, *Raymond Poincaré, un homme d'état républicain* (Paris, 2000), pp. 95–7. F. Roth, 'Poincaré et la frontière de l'Est', in A. Larcan, F. Schwindt (eds), *Les Bastions de l'Est de Boulanger à De Gaulle* (Haroué, 2010), p. 71.

n'avons, hélas, aucun effort à faire pour nous rappeler les épreuves du passé.' [117]

It was a patriotism which was not extreme but, as Poincaré described it in a speech on 8 October 1895 in Le Puy, patient and firm, energetic yet circumspect.[118] Nowhere were the *petite patrie* and the *grande patrie* of France more indissolubly linked than in Lorraine. Defending a home in Lorraine meant defending the gateway to France as a whole. There was never any suggestion that Lorraine should follow a separate path from the rest of France as a few advocated in Brittany, for example. Émile Combes thought there was separatism afoot in Lorraine. Louis Madelin commented:

'On en sourit à Nancy. La Lorraine a cimenté l'union en répandant son sang par tous les pores pour la grandeur et la défense de la France depuis 1738 jusqu'en 1871. Cette bonne sentinelle placée aux avant-postes de la patrie se ferait tuer plutôt que de laisser passer l'Allemand. Il n'y a plus pour elle qu'un ennemi, celui d'au-delà des Vosges.' [119]

In the April–May 1914 National Assembly elections four prominent Republican nationalists were successful, Émile Driant, Louis Marin and Ferri de Ludre in Nancy and François de Wendel in his iron fief of Briey. Émile Driant was a military officer and son-in-law of General Boulanger, who had made his name writing adventure novels, of which one exploited popular resentment against England after Fachoda.[120] He was to die in the opening of the Battle of Verdun. Comte Ferri de Ludre was re-elected. He identified with the Catholic *Action libérale* but was sympathetic to a policy of standing up to Germany. In their campaign they attacked the radicals and socialists, many in the Midi far from the frontier, for being lukewarm about the new three-year service law of 1913. They said that it was essential to France's defence at a time when Germany was increasing its military expenditure and manpower.[121] More generally they accused the radicals of being soft on Germany.[122] De Wendel's news sheet *L'Écho de Lorraine* supported this line.[123] The radicals riposted that an arms race with Germany was expensive and unnecessary and that at least France should consider alternative ways to ensure adequate defence.[124] There were plenty of radicals in Lorraine, as the second round of the elections showed. In between the radicals and the nationalists stood the more centrist Republicans of whom the largest group was the centre-left *Alliance républicaine majoritaire*, the heirs of Ferry and Gambetta. Poincaré was the most prominent member of this grouping. On the whole the

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[117] Barral, *L'Esprit lorrain*, p. 172.
[118] R. Poincaré, *Idées contemporaines* (Paris,1906), p. 318.
[119] Madelin, *Croquis lorrains*, p. 321.
[120] E-C. Driant alias Capitaine Danrit, *La Guerre fatale : France–Angleterre* (3 vols, Paris, 1903).
[121] *L'Éclair de l'Est* (6, 29 mai 1914). *La Croix de Meurthe-et-Moselle* (14 juin 1914). *L'Électeur Lorrain* (26 avril 1914).
[122] *L'Éclair de l'Est* (20 avril 1914), (2 mai 1914).
[123] *L'Écho de Lorraine* (24 janvier, 28 mars 1914).
[124] *L'Étoile de l'Est* (22, 30 avril 1914), (1–2 juin 1914).

nationalist case was stronger here than in other parts of France and the socialists were not represented. When Jean Jaurès visited Lorraine in 1914 he received a hostile reception from those opposed to his anti-capitalist views and his desire to avoid war by cooperation with German workers.[125]

1.v. Conclusion

We have surveyed three discourses of the Lorraine institutional elite in the years before 1914 — defining the region, celebrating its economic achievements and a regional nationalistic discourse about attitudes to Germany. They had a clear sense of a region called Lorraine, which had certain strong characteristics despite the lack of clearly defined boundaries. The people had a particular character, although this was being eroded by immigration. There was pride in the regional capital Nancy and its cultural development, which was brought into focus by the 1909 exhibition. This event was a showcase for the Lorraine economic miracle and the special partnership between the university and industry. At the same time the local bankers had a chance to underline the support they gave local enterprise. Words like partnership, cooperation and solidarity were often used to describe the way the *Lorrains* conducted their business affairs. However, underlying all this success was a desire to compete with Germany, to emulate her industrial and educational success but also to be wary of her military and economic prowess. Memories of invasion were allied to a particular feeling for the landscape and suspicion of foreign arrivals. Such emotions were encouraged by a nationalist press and the Catholic church. All these feelings were strongly coloured by the presence of inhabitants of Alsace-Lorraine on Lorraine soil and a belief that *Lorrains* under the German yoke were longing to be reunited with France, a belief not entirely in touch with reality. In the 1914 chamber elections in Lorraine there was fierce debate about how to cope with the German threat and divisions about the 3-year military service law. In a later chapter we will see how this sense of Lorraine's identity responded to invasion and four years on the front line.

We have also seen that these discourses were adopted by individuals who had differing outlooks on the region, outlooks which resulted in some cases more from their beliefs than their professional affiliations. It is also true that some had more than one window through which to view the world. We have a group who could be described as regionalists first and foremost, in that they believed that some reforms were necessary if the region was to develop to its maximum potential. This group included Parisot, Berlet, Marin and Sadoul. However, Marin and Berlet should also be included in the next group of regional nationalists or patriots – Berlet, Madelin, Barrès, Hinzelin, Marin, Driant and De Ludre for the nationalists

[125] Roth, *Histoire politique Lorraine*, pp. 11–16. P. Barral, 'L'Opinion lorraine devant Jaurès', *Actes du colloque Jaurès et la Nation organisé par la Faculté des Lettres de Toulouse et la Société d'Études jaurèsiennes (23–24 mai 1964)* (Toulouse, 1966), pp. 160 and 164–69.

and Poincaré and Lebrun for the patriots. De Ludre was close to a Catholic political grouping and therefore should also be considered along with the churchmen — Aimond and principally Turinaz. The same applies to Charles Berlet. The doctrine of the church was important, not only in its teaching on peace, war and national loyalties but also on the social question. There were a number of artists and writers, who created a regional style strongly identified with Lorraine — the writers Theuriet and Moselly, and members of the *École de Nancy* such as Gallé, André, Prouvé and Antonin Daum. Barrès should be included in this group too because of his novels celebrating the importance of roots in the Lorraine countryside. We have a group whose prime interest was in social and economic affairs and whose profession was important in determining their views — the iron masters Cavallier, Fould, Villain and de Wendel, although the latter was also a politician who shared in the regional nationalist discourse; Vilgrain the miller and head of the Nancy chamber of commerce and Moreau, the brewer; Renauld and Buffet the bankers, and Laffitte the secretary of the Nancy chamber. Laffitte also taught at the university. In this grouping we should also include Brocard, the Professor of Geography and Hottenger the sociologist and Le Playsian, whose conservative views we will see in a later chapter chimed with those of social Catholicism shared by some industrialists. Lastly we have the complex case of Jules Méline, a politician of a conservative cast of mind, a patriot certainly but whose main focus was on agriculture and the countryside. His call for a return to the land would have been supported by someone like Hottenger. As we follow the dominant discourses through the war years and after we need to bear in mind the complex pattern of affiliations of all these men. The sense of a Lorraine identity continued to frame the thinking and action of all of them.

Chapter Two: The regional sense of identity in the Auvergne before 1914

2.1. Comparison of the Auvergne with Lorraine

We have seen that among regional elites there was a very clear sense of Lorraine's identity in the years immediately before the Great War. The duchy of Lorraine as an independent political unit had only ceased to exist one hundred and fifty years before. The narrative of invasions from the east gave the *Lorrains* an "other" against which they could define themselves. Even in economic terms Lorraine's identity was strong because of the need to compete with Germany.

This chapter will examine the framework for thought and action which the regional sense of identity gave the elites in the Auvergne. The sense of identity here was not as strong as in Lorraine. This was true for a number of reasons. Firstly, there was no constant threat from a foreign "other" to create solidarity among Auvergnats, no "regional nationalist" discourse. Secondly, the Auvergne had even more uncertain borders than Lorraine. It stood at a crossroads between northern and southern France. Its language and culture in the Middle Ages were heavily influenced by the Languedoc to the south. However, it was one of the first regions outside the Île de France to be absorbed by the Capetian kingdom. The core consisted of the volcano country of the Puy-de-Dôme and the Cantal and the hills of the Forez to the east, surrounding the plain of the Limagne and the valley of the Allier, with Clermont-Ferrand as its centre. From Clermont it was much easier to travel north than south across the mountains or along the precipitate gorge of the Allier river. However, from Aurillac in the Cantal the natural lines of communication ran south and west. Under the Ancien Régime the province of the Auvergne covered the modern departments of Puy-de-Dôme and Cantal with the north-west of the Haute-Loire. The Bourbonnais to the north was a separate province, although the department of Allier in modern times was often linked to the Auvergne region. As we shall see it was included in the 17th economic region created in 1918. The Velay to the South-East (department of the Haute-Loire), with le Puy at its centre, was likewise considered as having links with the Auvergne. However, it had some different cultural traditions and Lyon and the Rhone valley were strong attractions.

Despite the huge growth in local historical studies, no crucial episode emerged which provided a regional sense of difference.[1] After its absorption into France in the Middle Ages the Auvergne was not thought to have made a noticeable impact on the national story. This was felt to be true politically but also artistically. Georges Desdevises du Dézert was a professor in the Faculty of Literature at the

[1] P. Den Boer, A. Pomerans, *History as a Profession, the Study of History in France 1818–1914* (Princeton, 2014), pp. 18–19.

University of Clermont-Ferrand. In 1914 he wrote in *La Veillée d'Auvergne* about a local art exhibition and reflected on the fact that between the end of the Middle Ages and his times the Auvergne was a complete blank. The medieval flowering of Romanesque architecture and sculpture died not to be replaced.[2] Looking back later Joseph Desaymard, a friend of the Auvergnat writer Henri Pourrat, and who had started writing about the Auvergne before the Great War, said that the region had not achieved much in the arts in the past because its people were too engaged in practical tasks like scratching a living from difficult terrain.[3] In the rest of France, the Auvergne was known as a relatively backward region, with wild and beautiful mountains, some quaint folklore and a reputation for meanness.

There was no discourse about economic success as in Lorraine. For a long time, the Auvergne had been known for its poverty. Agriculture was the dominant industry. Livestock was reared in the mountains and wheat and other crops grown on the plains. Most peasant farmers tried to feed their families from their own land but holdings were small compared with the rest of France. Most of the large estates had been broken up in the nineteenth century in the Puy-de-Dôme and the Cantal and sold to the peasant proprietors who followed traditional methods and were resistant to change. Holdings were larger in the mountains but smaller in the fertile soil of the Limagne plain.[4] The department of the Allier had larger estates and the practice of share-cropping was widespread there. There was discontent among share-croppers because of harsh conditions of work. Active agricultural unions developed there in the early twentieth century but were unknown further south in the Auvergne proper. Émile Guillaumin described his own life as a humble sharecropper in the Bourbonnais in his novel *Vie d'un simple* (1904) and it enjoyed considerable success. He engaged in union activity too.[5]

Most of the industries in the Auvergne operated on a small scale using traditional artisanal practices. These included paper-making in the Forez, ardently defended by Henri Pourrat, cutlery manufacture in Thiers, and mining. The only concentrations of more modern industries were metallurgy around Commentry in the Bourbonnais and of course Clermont-Ferrand. In the regional capital an industry based on imported rubber had developed. The best-known firm was Michelin, which had 4500 employees pre-war.[6] It sucked in labour from across the department and elsewhere. Before the war only approximately 20–26% of

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[2] G. Desdevises du Dézert, 'L'Exposition d'Arvernia à Clermont-Ferrand', *La Veillée d'Auvergne,* 6e année (15 février 1914), pp. 33–36.
[3] J. Desaymard, *L'Art et les artistes en Auvergne* (Saint-Etienne, 1935), pp. 3–5.
[4] L. Gobin, *Essai sur la géographie de l'Auvergne* (Clermont-Ferrand, 1896), pp. 213–230 and 268–94. A. Gourbeyre*, La Petite Propriété rurale dans le Puy-de-Dôme* (Thèse de doctorat, Faculté de Droit, Paris,1900), pp. 114–115.
[5] E. Guillaumin, *Vie d'un Simple*, (Paris,1904). R Mathé, *Émile Guillaumin, homme de la terre et l'homme de lettres* (Paris,1966), pp. 475–478. N-J. Chaline, *Émile Guillaumin paysan-écrivain bourbonnais, soldat de la Grande Guerre* (Paris Sorbonne, 2014), pp. 31–38.
[6] P. Charbonnier, *Histoire de l'Auvergne des origines à nos jours ; Haute et Basse-Auvergne, Bourbonnais et Velay* (Clermont-Ferrand, 1999), pp. 517–21.

employees had been born in the town.[7] However, there were other significant employers in the rubber industry, such as Raymond Bergougnan and Jean-Baptiste Torilhon, two considerable firms and rivals of Michelin. Raymond Bergougnan also took an active part in the social and political life of Clermont-Ferrand. Other industries included agricultural products such as *fruits confits*, textiles and chemical products.[8]

Another factor which inhibited regional economic development was the Auvergne's remoteness and poor communications. There was a network of railway lines by 1914. However, improvements in canal communications were desirable.[9] The Clermont-Ferrand chamber of commerce, which in most respects was not very dynamic, concentrated on transport issues.[10] A number of projects were discussed of which a lateral canal for the Allier was the most important.[11] Better transport and some modern industries had perhaps not yet made an impact on people's habits. Bréhier, Professor at the Faculty of Letters in Clermont-Ferrand, remarked that transport and industry were supposed to bring modernity but the Auvergne kept to its old customs.[12]

The economic factor most often discussed by the Auvergnat elite was rural depopulation and emigration to other parts of France and abroad. The actual population figures do not quite support the gloomy picture painted by some commentators. By 1911 the population in the Puy-de-Dôme and the Cantal had fallen between 12 and 14% from a peak in 1846. However, the population in the Allier held steady until 1911 as did that in the Haute-Loire.[13] However, the perception that numbers were declining provoked a reaction among conservative elites seen elsewhere in France. For example, Baron Lucien Reynaud addressing the *Société scientifique et agricole de la Haute-Loire* in 1911 told his audience that disaster awaited unless action was taken to halt this depopulation. He presented the town as a mirage of an easy life for the labouring poor. Who, he asked, would desert sunshine in the fields for life in a dark room? He said military service in barracks in towns corrupted young men. The town also gave their womenfolk a taste for luxury, whereas a frugal life would be much better for them. Like many other conservatives he advocated an education adapted to life in the country as a farmer, improved agricultural techniques which the peasant had

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[7] A. Moulin-Bourret, *Guerre et industrie Clermont-Ferrand 1912–1922: la victoire du pneu*, (2 vols, Faculté des Lettres et Sciences humaines de l'Université Blaise Pascal (Clermont II), publications de l'Institut d'Études du Massif Central (Centre d'Histoire des Entreprises et des Communautés), 1997), i, p. 119.
[8] Charbonnier, *Histoire de l'Auvergne*, pp. 479–531. A-G. Manry, 'Un Siècle somnolent' in A-G. Manry (ed), *Histoire de l'Auvergne* (Toulouse, 1974), pp. 398–416.
[9] Gobin, *Essai géographie*, p. 316.
[10] Moulin-Bourret, *Guerre et industrie*, p. 59.
[11] G. Bonnefoy, *Canal latéral de l'Allier* (Clermont-Ferrand, 1903). A. Jouve, *Création d'un canal latéral à l'Allier* (Chambres de Commerce de Clermont-Ferrand, Riom et Issoire, 1910).
[12] L. Bréhier, *L'Auvergne* (Paris, 1912), p. 94.
[13] Charbonnier, *Histoire de l'Auvergne*, p. 479.

resisted, more agricultural cooperatives and an end to landlord absenteeism.[14] Louis Tuffet, a shoemaker in Vichy, was an admirer of the movement inspired by Leplay's *Musée social* in Paris, which sought to improve social conditions by a scientific study of the facts. Writing in Vichy in 1895 he wanted to attract peasants away from so called extreme ideas by teaching them that their calling as farmers was a noble one.[15] In 1896 a piece appeared in the bulletin of the *Académie des Sciences, Belles-lettres et Arts de Clermont-Ferrand* suggesting that this depopulation was a threat to the defence of the country because hardy country folk made the best soldiers and emigration to the towns would lead to the degeneration of the French race.[16] Similar sentiments to those of Reynaud and Tuffet were expressed by Mgr. Lecoeur, the Bishop of Saint-Flour, in a speech recorded in *La Veillée d'Auvergne* in April 1912.[17] The bishop denounced unnecessary emigration as leading to moral decline in the towns and urged the instruction of peasants in agriculture and the heritage of their native region. We have already met some similar views in Lorraine, particularly from Hottenger and Jules Méline, but they were more prominent in the Auvergne. Large landowners in other parts of France also wanted to defeat socialism by an active programme of agricultural reform.[18]

Auvergnats left the land mainly because the small farms could not support all members of the family and opportunities for work appeared better in the towns.[19] Some went to regional centres like Clermont-Ferrand, where fifty percent of the workers came from outside the town but within the Puy-de-Dôme.[20] Others went further afield and the most common destination was Paris, where there was a large Auvergnat community described by F. Raison-Jourde.[21] A smaller group examined by Duroux went as far as Madrid.[22] At first emigrants would work for a while in a large city and return home periodically. Later they stayed longer but

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[14] Baron L. Reynaud, 'L'esprit agricole et le retour à la terre', *Bulletin historique, scientifique, littéraire, artistique et agricole de la Société scientifique et agricole du Puy-en-Velay et la Haute-Loire*, 1911, fasc.3, pp. 195–213. Gourbeyre, *Petite Propriété*, p. 115.

[15] L. Tuffet, *Le problème social* (Vichy, 1895), pp. 127–133.

[16] Dr. Dubest, 'La Dépopulation des campagnes et la défense nationale', *Bulletin historique et scientifique de l'Auvergne* (Académie des Sciences, Belles-lettres et Arts de Clermont-Ferrand, mai 1896), pp. 133–161.

[17] 'Échos et nouvelles-Mgr Lecoeur Évêque de St. Flour 'La Dépopulation dans le Cantal'', *La Veillée d'Auvergne,* 4e année (1 avril 1912), pp. 188–190.

[18] P. Barral, *Les Agrariens français de Méline à Pisani* (Paris, 1968), pp. 164–176.

[19] Manry, *Histoire de l'Auvergne*, p. 400.

[20] Moulin-Bourret, *Guerre et industrie,* p. 119.

[21] F. Raison-Jourde, *La Colonie auvergnate de Paris au XIXe siècle* (Paris, 1976). M. Boule, P. Glangeaud, G.Rouchon, A. Vernière, *Le Puy-de-Dôme et Vichy, guide du touriste, du naturaliste et de l'archéologue* (Paris, 1901), p. 130. M. Boule, L. Farges, *Le Cantal*, *Guide* (Paris, 1898), pp. 119–125.

[22] R. Duroux, *Les Auvergnats de Castille. Rennaissance et mort d'une migration au XIXe siècle* (Clermont-Ferrand, Faculté des Lettres et Sciences-humaines, Université de Blaise-Pascal, 2018).

might come back to retire. Eventually their emigration became permanent.[23] The emigrants to Paris sought help from fellow Auvergnats and tended to stick together in certain quarters. They went into particular trades such as food shops, cafés and water, coal and milk vending. They often worked hard, spending little on leisure or luxuries, saving up perhaps to invest in a property in the Auvergne.[24] Because of this way of life, they acquired a reputation for being money-grubbing ('âpre du gain'). Indeed, this stereotyping of the Auvergnat was mainly based on the Parisian experience of interacting with them.[25] Auvergnats in Madrid were thought to display many of the same characteristics, although they may have been less individualistic.[26] In both cases they acquired a love for the land of their birth, felt some nostalgia while away and gathered in social groupings to celebrate their cultural heritage.[27] Religion also played a role in tying them to their home village. The Auvergnat sense of identity was cultivated most strongly in exile from the homeland, in Paris and other centres of the very considerable Auvergnat diaspora, quite unlike Lorraine.

2.ii. The creation of an Auvergnat sense of identity

We have seen how the sense of regional identity in the Auvergne was weaker than in Lorraine, because of the region's poverty and remoteness. To counter the Auvergne's reputation for economic and cultural backwardness a group of intellectuals and the educated bourgeoisie set out to reverse perceptions. The Auvergnat sense of identity in modern times was largely their creation. They expressed their ideas in a number of journals and societies; for example, in Clermont-Ferrand, through the *Académie des Sciences, Belles-lettres et Arts*, the *Revue d'Auvergne* linked to *Société des Amis de l'Université* and the Faculty of Letters of the university itself.

Clermont-Ferrand had had a university since the law of 1896 but it was less dynamic than Nancy. Local businessmen lent some support to management and scientific education but not on the same scale as the new institutes in the capital of Lorraine. In 1900 the university had no *faculté de droit*. Its strongest departments were geology and mineralogy.[28] In 1906 the chamber of commerce financed a course in industrial chemistry within the faculty of science.[29] In 1913

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[23] Charbonnier, *Histoire de l'Auvergne*, pp. 480–1.
[24] B. Solet (ed), *15 Histoires d'Auvergne* (Paris, 1981), p. 146.
[9] D. Martin (ed), *L'Identité de l'Auvergne, mythe ou réalité historique, essai sur une histoire de l'Auvergne des origines à nos jours* (Clermont-Ferrand, Université de Blaise-Pascal, 2002), pp. 629–649.
[26] Duroux, *Auvergnats de Castille*, pp. 329–370.
[27] J. Ajalbert, *En Auvergne* (Paris, 1893), p. 168. E. Joucla, R. Cortat, *Lectures d'Auvergne* (Aurillac, 1929), pp. 113–114. A. Dauzat, 'Ma Petite Patrie', *La Veillée d'Auvergne*,1e année (1 avril 1909), pp. 192–3.
[28] *L'Université de Clermont-Ferrand* (Clermont-Ferrand, 1900), pp. 3–5.
[29] Moulin-Bourret, *Guerre et industrie*, p. 59.

the chamber of commerce also started a management course. The department of letters made a significant contribution to local intellectual life with figures such as Georges Desdevises du Dézert, Émile Bréhier and Emmanuel des Essarts. Desdevises du Dézert was a mentor to many Auvergne enthusiasts and a close friend of Henri Pourrat. His papers contain biographical sketches of all the local intellectuals he influenced during his long life including the Cantal born poet Gandilhon Gens-d'Armes, Abbé Courchinoux, poet and supporter of the Félibrige in the Cantal, Étienne Clémentel the politician, Jacques Bardoux, writer and later senator for the Puy-de-Dôme, Léon Boyer, a Cantal poet killed at Verdun, Jean Angeli, Pourrat's literary partner killed in the Great War, and Joseph Desaymard.[30] In 1903 these intellectuals founded the Musée Bargoin for art and archeology which still stands next to the university.

The first Auvergnat regional movement, extensively researched by J-F. Chanet in his *Les Félibres cantaliens,* owed most to the Félibrige of Mistral. The Auvergne's *patois* and literature were a branch of Provencal-Occitan, and not Celtic as some liked to think. Vermenouze, who was born in Aurillac, but spent many years with his father in Spain, was writing poems in the *patois* of the Cantal in the eighteen seventies. He announced the formation of a branch of the Félibrige in Aurillac in 1887 but it took another seven years for the society to be constituted as *L'Escolo oubergnato*. *L'Escolo's* journal was heavily supported by Auvergnats in Paris, which again demonstrates the cultural importance of the Auvergnat diaspora in the capital. *L'Escolo* covered the whole political spectrum from left to right but was mainly professional and bourgeois in character, people who used French in their everyday lives unlike the peasants of the Cantal countryside. From the start it was clear that the Auvergnat culture was nothing like as rich as the Occitanian of which it was a cousin. The society in Aurillac collapsed within ten years, although the important *Revue de la Haute-Auvergne* continued. It had the same exclusive bourgeois base as a list of subscribers from 1904 shows.[31]

The story of how this movement continued also underlines how the Auvergnat sense of identity was felt most strongly outside the Auvergne itself. Auvergnats in Paris and Clermont-Ferrand took up the flame of Auvergnat culture with the foundation of *La Veillée d'Auvergne* in 1908 and the journal of that name in 1909. The first meeting was held at the Musée social in Paris on 29 November 1908 with Maurice Barrès in the chair and Charles-Brun of the FRF also present. The *Veillée* was supported by the influential newspaper *L'Auvergnat de Paris*, edited by Louis Bonnet, and the *Ligue Auvergnate* which dated back to 1886.[32] From the

[30] Patrimoine, Fonds Georges Desdevises du Dézert, 'Dossiers documentaires sur les savants, les écrivains et les artistes de l'Auvergne contemporaine réunis par Georges Desdevises du Dézert (1854–1942)', MS 1740 Gandilhon, MS 1658 Clémentel, MS 1608 Boyer, MS 1538 Angeli, MS 1453 poètes d'Auvergne, MS 1720 Louis Farges, MS 1671 Courchinoux, MS 1561 Bardoux.

[31] *Revue de la Haute-Auvergne, 7e année* (1905), pp. 1–6.

[32] Le Musée Francisque Mandet, Riom, *Entre Chien et loup. La Veillée, naissance d'un mythe? Les Veillées en Auvergne en milieu rural et urbain, du XIXe siècle à nos jours* (Paris, 2003), pp. 53–54.

start *La Veillée* was the flagship of the drive for a local culture, with articles on literature and the arts as well as news of regional groupings like the *Fédération régionaliste française*. It organised regular meetings and dinners in Paris and Clermont. In his launch editorial Ribier referred back to the society in Aurillac. He said the new organisation's objectives were not just sentimental. They wanted to preserve and enhance the culture of the Auvergne and also to defend it against 'la banale et moderne uniformité.'[33] Like *L'Escolo* the supporters of *La Veillée d'Auvergne* came from the bourgeoisie or from skilled artisans and owners of small businesses with some education. They held a number of dinners which would have been beyond the pockets of the poorest. A regional festival took place in Paris on 4 March 1911 and tickets cost between 3 and 5 francs, representing perhaps several hours' toil for many workers.[34]

Linked to *La Veillée d'Auvergne* were a number of other Auvergnat cultural organisations with overlapping membership. *La Maintenance d'Auvergne* was formed in 1914, specifically as a branch of the Félibrige to protect the Auvergnat dialect and literature. Its majoral or leader was the Duc de la Salle de Rochemaure. Rochemaure (1856–1915) was an aristocratic friend of Henri d'Orléans who lived in a troubadour chateau in the Cantal. He was a poet in local dialect, a friend of the renowned dialect poet Vermenouze and a founder of *La Veillée d'Auvergne*. *La Maintenance d'Auvergne* attracted fifty members including Gandilhon Gens-d'Armes and a number of writers such as Marcenac a member of the Félibrige from the Cantal, Antonin Meyniel of *La Semaine Auvergnate,* a journal for Auvergnats in Paris, friend of Rochamaure and organiser of literary soirées, Louis Delhostal, another poet in the *langue d'oc* and member of the Félibrige, Fernand Delzangles, a writer on Auvergnat songs and history, and Henri Pourrat.[35] There was also *La Soupe aux Choux*, a literary and artistic association which met in Paris, *Jeunesse d'Auvergne*, a philanthropic organisation to help Auvergnats and lastly *La Musette, revue artistique et littéraire des émigrants du Massif Central*, published in Paris and edited by Meyniel. It staged cultural events in various convivial locations.[36]

Several of the intellectuals who wrote about the Auvergne in this period originated in the Auvergne, or had Auvergnat ancestors, but lived in Paris. Three examples are the journalist Jean Ajalbert, Gandilhon Gens-d'Armes and Pierre de Nolhac. Gandilhon was born in the Cantal but lived most of his life in Paris. He wrote for the regional journals and was close to Henri Pourrat. De Nolhac came from a bourgeois family who originated in the Velay, although he was born at Ambert in the Puy-de-Dôme. He made a career in Paris becoming Conservator of Versailles and writing many history books mostly on the Renaissance rather than the

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[33] E. de Ribier, 'À nos compatriotes', *La Veillée d'Auvergne*, 1ère année (1 janvier 1909), p.4.
[34] 'Notre dîner du 18 janvier', *La Veillée d'Auvergne*, 3ème année (1 février 1911), p. 74–5.
[35] 'La Maintenance d'Auvergne', *La Veillée d'Auvergne,* 6e année (15 février 1914), pp. 181–3.
[36] *La Musette,* (décembre 1908), page 2 col a.

Auvergne, as well as poetry. He was buried however in Riom.

These Auvergnat intellectuals were constantly looking for great men from their region who exemplified the distinctiveness of the Auvergne and its way of thinking. The Duc de La Salle de Rochemaure emphasized such men's importance in his lecture on regionalism given in Clermont-Ferrand in 1909.[37] Several writers concentrated on Pascal as a great thinker who originated in the Auvergne. Rochemaure sung the praises of one of the greatest thinkers ever.[38] Jean Ajalbert suggested that Pascal's thoughts were inspired by the mountains. Pascal's famous bet was a pure example of Auvergnat pragmatism! [39] Pierre de Nolhac wrote how Pascal never forgot Clermont where he spent his youth and drew strength from his return visits there.[40] Henri Pourrat believed that the restricted views of the valleys of the Auvergne encouraged a certain type of speculative thought in writers like Pascal.[41] Joseph Desaymard wrote about Pascal and Barrès in *La Veillée d'Auvergne*, seeking to show how one had inspired the other and how both had been influenced by the local environment. Barrès's father came from the Auvergne, although Barrès himself was not brought up there. He made several trips to the Auvergne to visit sites associated with Pascal.[42] Pierre de Nolhac tried to claim some credit for the Auvergne in the writings of Barrès.[43] Another hero from the past feted in Clermont was Desaix, who died at the Battle of Marengo in 1800, having saved the day for Napoleon. Emmanuel des Essarts wrote an ode in his honour for his centenary which appeared in the *Revue d'Auvergne*.[44]

It seems that these Auvergnat writers were desperate to put the Auvergne on the map; to get it taken seriously by intellectual circles in Paris and elsewhere. They wanted to get rid of a sense of inferiority by talking up what the Auvergne had achieved and its great men. So these intellectuals had to find a rallying point and

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[37] Duc de La Salle de Rochemaure, *Régionalisme auvergnat, conférence donnée à la Faculté des Lettres de l'Académie de Clermont-Ferrand, le 23 janvier 1909* (Aurillac,1909**),** pp. 30 and 34–9.
[38] Ibid, p. 30.
[39] J. Ajalbert, *Auvergne* (Paris, 1932), pp. 28 and 31. This book was a reworking of older books — *L'Auvergne* (1904), *les Veillées d'Auvergne* (1905) and *Au Coeur de l'Auvergne (*1922).
[40] P. de Nolhac, *Pages auvergnates* (Paris,1888), p. 120.
[41] H. Pourrat, 'Nous qui sommes Auvergnats', *Revue d'Auvergne*, xxx (1913), p.162.
[42] J. Desaymard, 'Pascal et Barrès', *La Veillée d'Auvergne, 1e année (octobre 1909),* pp. 578 and 582–3. Patrimoine, MSS Joseph Desaymard JD12, Brouillons et manuscrits 1910–1914, fol. 266–76, 'Blaise Pascal et Maurice Barrès d'après un article récent'; also MSS Joseph Desaymard JD21, fasc. 63–72; Fonds Georges Desdevises du Dézert, Louis Farges MSS 1720. Nolhac, *Pages auvergnates*, pp. 120–1. *La Veillée d'Auvergne*, 1ère année (mars 1909), pp. 149–150. U. Rouchon, 'Les Ancêtres auvergnats de Maurice Barrès', *La Veillée d'Auvergne*, 1ère annee (juillet 1909), pp. 321–324 and (1 août 1909), pp.375–383.
[43] Nolhac, *Pages auvergnates,* p. 116.
[44] E. des Essarts, 'Ode prononcée à Clermont à la fête du centenaire de Desaix', *Revue d'Auvergne*, (1 juillet 1900), pp. 237–8.

the most popular under the Third Republic was Vercingétorix, the leader of the Gallic tribe, the Arvernes, who opposed the Romans under Julius Caesar, triumphing at Gergovia before surrendering at Alésia and later being killed in Rome. It was the Arvernes who gave their name to the Auvergne. For the Auvergnat intellectuals of 1900 it was important to believe that the Arvernes of Roman times were not inferior in intelligence to other Gallic tribes in the rest of France. The *Revue de la Haute-Auvergne* made this point in a review of Professor Jullian of the Collège de France's important new book on Vercingétorix published in 1901.[45]

For Republicans Vercingétorix was a potent symbol because he rallied his people to resist an invader. He supported contemporary ideas of freedom and liberty. For regional writers he exemplified the fiercely independent mountain people which they conceived the Auvergnats of their day to be. It was felt to be important that young people in schools should be taught about this regional ancestor. E. Cathala, a professor at the École Normale in Clermont-Ferrand in the late nineteenth century, devoted a long section in his history textbook to Vercingétorix, the local Gauls and their powerful and rich society.[46]

We find this transposition of contemporary political ideas back to the era of Vercingétorix in several writers. The Duc de La Salle de Rochemaure celebrated the freedom loving Gauls in his 1909 lecture on regionalism in Clermont-Ferrand.[47] Louis Bréhier wrote about Vercingétorix's struggle for the independence of the Gauls.[48] Similarly, Pierre de Nolhac wrote about Vercingétorix's struggle for the independence of the Gallic nations in a poem penned in 1880.[49] The poetry of Arsène Vermenouze made a specific link between Vercingétorix and *revanche* post 1870. Vercingétorix's example would encourage the Auvergne's soldiers. In November 1887 his poem *À Vercingétorix* was read to an audience of over 1000 people at a meeting of the *Ligue auvergnate* in Paris and received a rapturous reception. The *Moniteur du Cantal* reported this event in patriotic terms:

'Elles (les strophes) étaient dédiées à Vercingétorix, le grand Arverne, et, récitées, avec âme, dans une réunion des descendants des anciens Arvernes, elles y avaient été accueillies par des bravos enthousiastes.' [50]

[45] *Revue de la Haute-Auvergne*, 3e année (1901), pp. 383–4.
[46] E. Cathala, *L'Auvergne*: facsimile de l'édition de Paris, Librairie F. Juven, fin du 19e siècle (Paris, 2008), pp. 13–25.
[47] Rochemaure, R*égionalisme auvergnat*, p. 23.
[48] Bréhier, *L'Auvergne*, p. 35.
[49] Nolhac, *Pages auvergnates*, pp. 30, 105.
[50] J. Mazières, *Arsène Vermenouze 1850–1910 et la Haute-Auvergne de son temps* (Paris,1965), pp. 326, 328

Vercingétorix was the subject of many pictures during the years before 1914.[51] A verse play on the subject of Vercingétorix was published in 1903 in the *Bulletin historique et scientifique de l'Auvergne* and a further poem on the subject of Celts and Romans.[52] These sentiments were not unique to the Auvergne, however, but widely shared among patriots throughout France who were looking for a sense of redemption in defeat.[53] This celebration of Vercingétorix should be seen in the context of a national interest in the Celts of Gaul going back to the Middle Ages. Under the Third Republic there was a veritable Gallomania.[54] Claims that Vercingétorix was an Auvergnat hero were relatively muted in comparison with his portrayal as a great man of French history.[55]

There were several projects to erect statues, some abortive. A monument (not a statue of Vercingétorix) was erected on the site believed to be Gergovia.[56] A large equestrian statue of Vercingétorix was erected in the Place Jaude in the centre of Clermont-Ferrand and unveiled in a ceremony on 11 October 1903 which turned into a grand Republican *fête*. The celebration was attended by *Président du Conseil* Combes and other members of the government. Emmanuel des Essarts' speech at the inauguration stands out because he linked the Gallic chieftain with the defence of Republican liberty, the forerunner of the contemporary French nation. Des Essarts was president of the monument project committee. He was a very significant figure in the Auvergne regionalist movement, an intellectual mentor of Étienne Clémentel, later Minister of Commerce and author in 1933 of an entertainment at the Paris Opera on the subject of Vercingétorix with music by Joseph Canteloube.[57] Des Essarts was also close to Henri Pourrat.[58]

Despite the celebration of Vercingétorix, it was difficult to create an Auvergnat sense of difference out of the history of its great men. These Auvergnat intellectuals hit on a more fertile theme when they suggested that rural traditions and a simple way of life were strengths, not weaknesses, and should be preserved. Hence they revived interest in local culture and customs such as song, dances, fairy tales, local religious cults, pilgrimages and story-telling, music and

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[51] Exposition Musée Roger Quillot, Clermont-Ferrand (2014).
[52] *Bulletin historique et scientifique de l'Auvergne*, Académie des Sciences, Belles-lettres et Arts de Clermont-Ferrand, IIe série no.4 (avril 1903), p. 163 and no. 12 (décembre 1903) p. 505.
[53] M. Ozouf, *L'École de France* (Paris, 1984), p. 345. C. Amalvi, *De l'Art et la manière d'accommoder les héros de l'histoire de France* (Paris, 1988), pp.51–88.
[54] K. Pomian, 'Francs et Gaulois', in P. Nora (ed), *Les Lieux de mémoire*, *T. III Les France, vol.1 conflits et partages* (Paris, 1992), pp. 40–105.
[55] A. Ehrard, 'Vercingétorix contre Gergovie? Nos ancêtres les Gaulois', (Clermont-Ferrand, June 1980), p.309, https://hal-clermont-univ.archives-ouvertes.fr/hal-01410214.
[56] Ozouf, *L'École de France*, p. 340. Also *Bulletin historique et scientifique de l'Auvergne*, IIe série no. 3 (mars 1902), pp. 86–89.
[57] M-C. Kessler, G. Rousseau, 'La trajectoire sociale d'Étienne Clémentel', in Kessler, Rousseau, *Clémentel*, p. 43
[58] 'Les Fêtes de Vercingétorix', *Le Moniteur du Puy-de-Dôme* (12 octobre 1903), p.1 col f.

sociability around the fire (*the veillées*).[59]

There was some new literature written in the local dialect, perhaps more than in Lorraine. The language was best suited to poems and also songs often accompanied by dances.[60] Interest in this dialect was quickened as it became clear that it was gradually dying out because of military service, emigration and the growth of railways.[61] Among all the writers and poets admired by this movement there was one which stood out — Arsène Vermenouze. He was a bridge between the first *félibres* in Aurillac and *La Veillée*, a *patois* poet of the first group admired by the second. He was a man of the Cantal, the true Auvergne as he saw it, and he made this *petite patrie* come to life. He evoked the pastoral life of the mountains, the cattle, stone byres and local customs like dancing the *bourrée*. He celebrated the joy of living close to one's native soil and encouraged the emigrants to return.[62]

Vermenouze was not alone among writers from the Cantal. Gandilhon Gens-d'Armes was another poet who celebrated the landscape of his native land, although not generally in dialect. Pierre Besson published in French in 1914 the simple story of a young man growing up in a traditional Cantal village; his days at school; his life on a working farm looking after cattle and making cheese; the *veillées* and dancing; learning his catechism with the priest. It was a rather idealized view of the Cantal in his youth with all the harsh conditions removed. Besson was born in 1873 so he was describing the Cantal of the late nineteenth century. He became a teacher in the Cantal and then an academic inspector in the Charente when he published *Le Pâtre*.[63] Much of this writing helped create the myth of a simple life, whereas a writer like Émile Guillaumin, describing share-cropping in the Bourbonnais, did not hide the hard life and the conflicts in a village.

These Auvergnat intellectuals also believed that their sense of difference derived from the landscape of the Auvergne. There was a particular feeling for the extraordinary bleak volcanic landscape of the Auvergne mountains, effectively evoked by Jean Ajalbert when he visited the peak of Sancy and Mont-Dore.[64] Lac Pavin was another place which inspired his awe. Doniol started his book on Basse-Auvergne with a quote from Chateaubriand about the Auvergne's reputation for strange phenomena and the dangers of travelling there.[65] Georges Desdevises du Dézert significantly drew attention to Audigier's love of the

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[59] Musée Riom, *Entre chien et loup*, pp.25–30.
[60] Boule, Glangeaud, *Puy-de-Dôme et Vichy*, *pp. 140–2.*
[61] Ajalbert, *En Auvergne*, p. 168.
[62] V-E. Ardouin-Dumazet, *Voyage en France: Auvergne, Vol. II Haute-Auvergne Cantal* (Paris, 1927). pp. 203–220. Avenin, 'Le Poète de l'Auvergne, Arsène Vermenouze', *Revue d'Auvergne*, IIe série (1911), pp. 21–42. Mijoule, 'Arsène Vermenouze et sa poésie', *Revue de la Haute-Auvergne*, 13e année (1911), pp. 71–83 and 140–152.
[63] P. Besson, *Le Pâtre du Cantal* (Paris, 1914).
[64] Ajalbert, *Auvergne*, pp. 99–100.
[65] H. Doniol, *La Basse-Auvergne* (Paris, 1900), frontispiece.

Auvergnat natural world, as something to be admired rather than feared. Audigier (1659–1744) was a canon of Clermont-Ferrand cathedral and wrote important annals of the Auvergne.[66] It was during the Romantic movement that outsiders such as Théodore Rousseau started to paint the Auvergne landscape. Rousseau visited the Auvergne and painted there in 1830. These outsiders stimulated a native school of landscape painting and this continued into the twentieth century with artists like Maurice Busset who made some striking woodcuts.[67]

The folklorists pointed to the distinctive songs and dances of the Auvergne as another point of difference, a factor in regional identity. Arrangements by which these have reached a wide audience are to be found in Joseph Canteloube's *Chants d'Auvergne* for soprano and orchestra, which has become an established piece in the modern concert repertoire. Canteloube came from the Ardèche but had deep roots in the Auvergne. He collected folksongs and wrote an opera with a libretto in Occitan. He also wrote the music for Clémentel's libretto on Vercingétorix. Emmanuel Chabrier, the composer of the famous orchestral rhapsody Espana, made a collection of folksongs from all over France. Born in Ambert, he left for Paris at the age of fifteen never to return, cutting himself off from the Auvergne. However, he did preside at regular meetings of *La Soupe aux Choux*. Joseph Desaymard wrote a short biography of Chabrier and organised the erection of a statue of him in Ambert, unveiled in 1912.[68] Desaymard's biography was written to dispel the idea that the Auvergnats had no gift for the arts.[69]

A reviewer of Mario Versepuy's large collection of folksongs said they celebrated the naïve and tender love of its sons for the Auvergne:

'Le lyrisme très pur qui déborde de leur âme en présence des féeries grandioses de leur sol, en été, dans leur dur isolement durant la mauvaise saison. Quel est l'Auvergnat qui ne se sent étreint par l'émotion quand les sons de ces refrains viennent frapper les oreilles... N'est-ce pas l'âme même de la terre natale qui s'épanche? N'est-ce pas la voix des aieux?'

In other words, he created the idea that these songs spread something called the soul of the Auvergne and he hoped significantly they would be sung in schools.[70] Desaymard had said that for Chabrier, as for other Auvergnat musicians, the essence of music was rhythm as found in a dance like the *bourrée*.[71] Léon

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[66] G. Desdevises du Dézert, 'Histoire d'Auvergne par le chanoine Pierre Audigier, nouvelle édition Clermont-Ferrand 1899', *Revue d'Auvergne*, 16e année, no.1 (janvier–février 1899), pp. 76–80.
[67] Nolhac, *Pages auvergnates*, pp. 40–2.
[68] 'L'Inauguration du monument d'Emmanuel Chabrier à Ambert', *La Veillée d'Auvergne*, 4e année (septembre 1912), pp. 321–23.
[69] J. Desaymard, *Artiste auvergnat Emmanuel Chabrier* (Revue d'Auvergne, Clermont-Ferrand, 1908), pp. 7–10.
[70] U. Rouchon, 'Le Folkore auvergnat de Marius Versepuy', *La Veillée d'Auvergne,* 1e année (novembre 1909), pp. 527 (quote), 530, 533.
[71] Desaymard, *Artiste Auvergnat*, p.9.

Pineau, Limousin folklorist and teacher at the University of Clermont-Ferrand, would have agreed. He wrote:

'C'est là vraiment que l'Auvergne a mis tout son coeur et tout son esprit.' [72]

Ajalbert explained that the sound of an Auvergnat tune, *le regret*, in the streets of Paris made him cry.[73]

The Auvergnat country dweller was thought to entertain all sorts of beliefs in the supernatural of interest to middle-class visitors.[74] Common in other areas, these beliefs took on a particular character in the Auvergne. Louis Bréhier listed some superstitions and legends, as well as histories of those gifted in making cures, saints and pilgrimages.[75] Léon Pineau recorded beliefs in supernatural beings — wild dogs, owls inhabited by devils, sorcerers, old hags and young girls dancing in long white robes all night.[76] Boule and colleagues writing a guide book to the Puy-de-Dôme in 1901 said the country folk did not believe in fairies and supernatural wolves but they were still afraid of sorcerers and believed in some people's abilities to effect cures. Belief in ghosts was also common.[77] Boule and Farges recorded similar beliefs in the Cantal, more akin to Pineau and Bréhier's observations.[78] Such stories were subsequently recorded for posterity by Henri Pourrat. Other writers recorded details of pilgrimages and places which were said to have a sacred significance. There were many Marian shrines in the Auvergne. Ajalbert, for example, discussed the black virgins such as at Varrivière, where pilgrimages were still made at the beginning of the twentieth century.[79]

These descriptions of the landscape, history, folklore and art of the Auvergne were included in guidebooks, which encouraged a nascent tourism in the years before the Great War. Some were sponsored by recently formed *syndicats d'initiative* to promote tourism locally. Louis Farges, who co-authored the guidebook on the Cantal, was born in Aurillac and helped found the *escolo oubergnato* as did his colleague Marcellin Boule, born in the Cantal but later a professor in Paris. Farges created several *syndicats d'initiative* in the Cantal, as well as pursuing a career as an archivist, diplomat and politician. In 1896 Jean Masfrand, Vice-President of the *Club alpin français*, drew attention to the growing number of tourists attracted by the thermal baths and the beautiful mountain scenery. They urgently needed a guide book containing not only historical and

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[72] L. Pineau, 'Le Folklore de l'Auvergne', in A. Van Bever (ed), *Auvergne et Limousin: histoire, tableaux pittoresques, poésies, chansons populaires, contes et légendes* (Paris, s.d.), p. 36.
[73] Ajalbert, *En Auvergne*, p. 278.
[74] Martin, *L'Identité de l'Auvergne,* p. 638.
[75] Bréhier, L'Auvergne, pp. 91–112.
[76] Pineau, 'Folklore de l'Auvergne', p. 35.
[77] Boule, Glangeaud, *Puy-de-Dôme et Vichy,* pp. 138–9.
[78] Boule, Farges, *Cantal*, pp. 132–3.
[79] Ajalbert, *Auvergne*, p. 110.

geographical information but also practical guidance on hotels and transport.[80] Major series of guides began to be published in Paris, for example the *guides Joanne*. Their volume on the Auvergne published in 1904 was very comprehensive in terms of background as well as information on trains, coaches and accommodation.[81] The growth of thermalism at resorts like Vichy, Châtel-Guyon and Mont-Dore was encouraged by doctors advocating bathing in the waters as a cure for all sorts of ailments.[82] A railway was built up the Puy-de-Dôme in 1907.[83] This development of tourism alongside the Auvergnat cultural movement suggested a symbiotic relationship between the two.

Henri Pourrat became the dominant influence among these intellectuals in the years immediately before the war. More than any other writer he invented the identity of the Auvergne in modern times, distilling the work of scholars and folklorists of previous generations. Pourrat was born in Ambert, in the hills of the Livradois east of Clermont-Ferrand, in 1887. In 1905 he had to abandon his studies at the National Agricultural Institute in Paris and return to Ambert, gravely ill with tuberculosis. For the rest of his life he was an invalid in his home in Ambert. He walked extensively in the region but rarely travelled outside it. His friend Desaymard wrote to him as 'mon vieil anachorète'.[84] Already in 1913 Desaymard was upbraiding Pourrat for being very unwilling to travel even from Ambert to Clermont.[85] Pourrat started to read very widely, including contemporary writers such as Maurice Barrès, whom he acknowledged as a master. He also collected folktales and traditions and met Arnold van Gennep, the founder of scientific ethnography and folklore studies in France. His first book was a joint production with his friend Jean Angel**i** – *la Colline ronde, films auvergnats*, scenes from the life of a local village. Jean and Henri were classmates in Ambert. They enjoyed the same writers including Barrès.

The prevailing tone of the movement in the Auvergne was Catholic and conservative, close to thinkers like Charles Maurras and especially Maurice Barrès. Evidence of this affiliation is to be found in Arsène Vermenouze, a practising Catholic, Gandilhon Gens-d'Armes, and Rochemaure. Pourrat's Catholicism was fundamental to his life. A folder of spiritual jottings from a fellow Catholic, included by Pourrat among his papers, reveals very traditional Catholic beliefs, with an emphasis on purity and a preoccupation with the sexual act. It refers to Christ born 'dans un corps de femme vierge de la souillure charnelle,' the

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[80] J. Masfrand, *Le Cantal guide du touriste, du botaniste et du géologue* (Aurillac, 1896), pp. 247–8.
[81] P. Joanne, *Itinéraire général de la France: Auvergne et Centre* (Paris, 1904).
[82] Le Professeur Landouzy, *Le Mont-Dore, station hydrominérale et station d'altitude* (Châtelles, Vosges, 1906), pp. 32–34. Charbonnier, *Histoire de l'Auvergne, pp. 524–529.*
[83] Manry, *Histoire de l'Auvergne*, p. 412.
[84] J. Desaymard to H. Pourrat 23 mai 1917, in C. Dalet (ed), *Correspondance croisée Henri Pourrat–Joseph Desaymard 1913 à 1918: la Grande Guerre* (Clermont-Ferrand, 2013), p. 240.
[85] J. Desaymard to H. Pourrat, 3 avril 1913, 25 avril 1913, in *Dalet, Correspondance croisée*, p. 24 and pp. 28–29.

cause of original sin.[86] The notes talk elsewhere about punishments being proportional to the faults committed, such as lifelong illnesses for example.[87] Pourrat was clearly interested in manifestations of popular religion, such as the belief in wells with miraculous healing powers. Manuscript extracts suggested he read the Bible regularly and meditated on it.[88] He was also very sympathetic to the right wing *Action Française* even at this stage of his life, as was his friend Joseph Desaymard.

Pourrat started his life-long attempt to define what being an Auvergnat meant in an article for the *Revue d'Auvergne* in 1913, *Nous qui sommes Auvergnats*.[89] Pourrat had no time for a Kantian universalism. Each province had its own way of feeling. These should be allowed to thrive and France would live better. Pourrat said that men and women should live according to the promptings of their blood, not abstract ideas. They should follow their fathers and here he invoked Barrès' doctrine of *la terre et les morts*.[90] He reflected a lot on the impact of climate and habitat on character. The men of the mountains lived an isolated, reserved, individualistic life. They had to be practical, stubborn and tenacious just to survive. They were not avaricious but careful with money because they feared losing control of the future.[91] Some of these qualities were similar to those ascribed to the Lorraine peasant.

This analysis of Auvergnat character was widely shared by other writers.[92] Delzangles, in his popular book on Auvergnat songs, wrote that the Auvergnats had not been mixed with other racial groups because of their remoteness and therefore retained some characteristics of the ancient Gauls — physical vigour, energy, tenacity, pride, adventurousness, love of liberty and independence.[93] Bréhier, however, introduced a more nuanced picture saying the Auvergne was not just dour, mean and violent.[94] According to Giraudet writing in *La Veillée d'Auvergne* the Auvergnat always wanted to buy an extra parcel of land,[95] not a

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[86] Patrimoine, MSS Henri Pourrat HP 125, fasc. 20
[87] Patrimoine, MSS Henri Pourrat HP 125, fasc. 22.
[88] Patrimoine, MSS Henri Pourrat HP 125.
[89] Pourrat, 'Nous qui sommes Auvergnats', pp. 73–92 and 160–187.
[90] Pourrat, 'Nous qui sommes Auvergnats', pp. 73–77.
[91] Pourrat, 'Nous qui sommes Auvergnats', pp. 81, 87, 91, 178, 181.
[92] Reynaud, 'L'Esprit agricole', p. 207. Gobin, *Essai géographie*, pp. 213–230. Solet, *15 Histoires*, p. 146. L. Pineau, 'Le Folkore de l'Auvergne', pp. 35–37. Cathala, *L'Auvergne,* p. 120. Nolhac, *Pages auvergnates*, p. 29. Chanet, *Félibres cantaliens, pp. 264–6.* Ajalbert, *Auvergne*, p. 15. Martin, *L'Identité de l'Auvergne, pp. 629, 632, 636,637, 639.* Rochemaure, *Régionalisme auvergnat*, p. 51. Joucla, Cortat, *Lectures, p. 113.* Boule, Glangeaud, *Puy-de-Dôme et Vichy*, p. 128. L. Delzon, 'La grande fête régionaliste du 4 mars, conférence de M. Louis Delzon', *La Veillée d'Auvergne*, 3e année (avril 1911), pp. 144–5; M. Giraudet, 'La Psychologie de l'Auvergnat', *La Veillée d'Auvergne, 4e année* (mars 1912), pp. 298–303. Patrimoine, MSS Joseph Desaymard JD12, brouillons on Pastourel.
[93] F. Delzangles, *Folklore cantalien, chants populaires d'Auvergne* (Aurillac, 1910), p. 60.
[94] Bréhier, *L'Auvergne,* pp. 3, 29–30, 70, 225.
[95] Giraudet, 'Psychologie de l'Auvergnat', p. 300.

uniquely Auvergnat characteristic. According to some there were differences between the men of the mountains and those who lived on the plain of the fertile Limagne around Clermont-Ferrand. The mountain peasants did not work as hard as the lowland peasant. They led a more independent life style.[96] There was also a widespread belief that they were a different racial physical type — short and stocky.[97]

2.iii. Conclusion

In conclusion, it appears that the Auvergnat sense of identity was not as well developed as that in Lorraine. There was no "other", like the Germans, to sharpen the sense of difference nor a recent history of political separation. The Auvergnat sense of identity was created by a group of intellectuals, poets, writers and academics mostly. Henri Pourrat was emerging as the creative force behind this group. If there was any Auvergnat sense of solidarity before 1914 it was most keenly cultivated in exile, among the large Auvergnat diaspora in Paris, when in a sense it had been partly lost. Here Auvergnats helped each other in everyday life and celebrated their culture to remind themselves of the mountains of their homeland. The organisations behind this revival of Auvergne culture operated mainly in Paris.

For all the emphasis on difference however, this Auvergnat regional movement stressed that regionalism supported national patriotism. The Duc de La Salle de Rochemaure was typical in this respect. In his 1909 lecture he said that the Auvergne had become an integral part of France and that writers who made us love the traditions of the Auvergne also attached us to France. He espoused the regionalist ideas of the FRF and admired the regional structure of the German Confederation.[98]

In general, the educators of the Third Republic believed that children should be taught about the culture and history of their region because it would attach them more effectively to France as a whole. This is one of the central points of Chanet's book *L'École républicaine et les petites patries* and of a study by A-M Thiesse.[99] There are concrete examples of this in the Auvergne. A reader of literary extracts on the region prepared for school children set out with this intention 'favoriser enfin l'attachement à la petite patrie, image intime de la grande.'[100] It included a piece from *La Veillée d'Auvergne* in 1909 headed *ma petite patrie*.[101] At the end

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[96] Doniol, *Basse-Auvergne,* pp. 212–13. Boule, Glangeaud, *Puy-de-Dôme et Vichy,* pp. 128–42. Cathala, *L'Auvergne,* p. 84.
[97] Martin, *L'Identité de l'Auvergne,* pp. 633, 635. Bréhier, *L'Auvergne,* p. 69.
[98] Rochemaure, R*égionalisme auvergnat*, pp. 7–8, 14–15, 43–4, 50, 52–3. 'Le Congrès et les fêtes régionalistes de Bourges; discours de M. le Duc de la Salle', *La Veillée d'Auvergne*, 3e année (novembere 1911), pp. 456–7; Martin, *L'Identité de l'Auvergne,* p. 645.
[99] Chanet, *L'École républicaine*. Thiesse*, Ils apprenaient la France*.
[100] Joucla, Cortat, *Lectures*, p. iii.
[101] A. Dauzat, 'Ma Petite Patrie', in Joucla, Cortat, *Lectures d'Auvergne,* pp. 52–3.

we find a poem by the poet Gandilhon Gens-d'Armes, set to music by Joseph Canteloube. It extols the virtues of the Auvergne which will always endure.[102]

We see this regionalism deriving from a love for local culture in the early life of Étienne Clémentel, future Minister of Commerce in the Great War and architect of the first regional reform in the economic field. We will explore Clémentel's regional reforms and their effect on regionalism in the Auvergne and Lorraine in a later chapter. However, first we must discuss how the regional sense of identity developed during the Great War.

[102] Joucla, Cortat, *Lectures*, p.314.

Chapter 3. Lorraine and the Auvergne during the Great War

3.i. Introduction

We have seen in chapters one and two that the elites in Lorraine and the Auvergne had a clearly articulated sense of regional identity. This was particularly pronounced in the case of Lorraine. In the pre-war period the regional elite here expressed this identity not only in writings but also through actions for the benefit of Lorraine taken through various institutions. Of these the most significant were the *Chambre de Commerce de Nancy*, the *Société industrielle de l'Est* and the university. A group of writers and intellectuals had also revived Auvergnat culture and a sense of Auvergnat identity in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This renewed sense of identity was most keenly cultivated among Auvergnat exiles in Paris.

In this chapter I will consider firstly what impact the war had on the sense of identity in both regions. I will start with Lorraine and then cover the Auvergne to facilitate comparisons between the two regions. Then I will analyse the actions taken by the two regional elites to address problems raised by the war and in so doing discover how far they appealed to regional solidarity. Lastly I will discuss how they thought about issues their regions would face in the post-war environment. I will also discuss the nature of the elites in each region and how they worked through their institutions.

3.ii. The impact of the war on Lorraine's sense of identity

We have seen how before 1914 many French *Lorrains* saw an indissoluble link between pride in the region and its achievements and French patriotism. Lorraine was the French advance guard forestalling German aggression in the military and industrial spheres. Once the fighting started this particular sense of identity was reinforced by events. We find in some war diaries the belief that Lorraine soldiers had the personal characteristics to take on this role. Abel Ferry, nephew of Jules Ferry, was Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs at the beginning of the war and represented the Vosges. Later he played a key role in the Army Commission of the Chamber of Deputies and was killed at the front in 1918. He described the endurance of his Lorraine soldiers on 18 November 1914:

'Les quatre cinquièmes de nos hommes sont des pays envahis, Meusiens ou gens du Nord, dociles et braves. Ils couchent dans la tranchée, sur un sol trempé. Ils reposent mal dans des granges glaciales sans paille, pleins de courants d'air; parfois ils sont apathiques par excès de fatigue. La grande leçon morale que leur

résignation donne!!' [1]

Captain Chaton from the 2nd Battalion of *Chasseurs à pied*, a Lorraine regiment, explains how being hardy men from the frontier made them good fighters:

'De plus, le bataillon dont les éléments divers avaient été formés au voisinage de la frontière, avait de profondes racines en terre lorraine. Il était entré dans l'ambiance du pays et subissait l'atavisme de sa race: persévérance dans l'effort, ténacité dans la lutte, ardeur combative innée chez un peuple habitué dès l'origine de son histoire à tenir tête à des ennemis de toute sorte. En luttant sur cette terre, il ne luttait pas seulement pour la terre de France, il luttait pour sa terse à lui.' [2]

This self-belief was reinforced by the affection for the land of Lorraine which we noted before the war. The following extract from the journal of a corporal in the 69e RI called Bellard shows how a soldier's thoughts turned to memories of his home in Lorraine during fierce fighting near Nancy in 1914:

'Pourtant voici un sachet de pruneaux, de ces étiques pruneaux lorrains de quetsches torréfiées au four, un jour d'automne qu'on avait fait du pain…J'en fourre une poignée dans ma musette, en évoquant les beaux jours passés de mes vacances à Novéant. Novéant! Ce nom me hante…' [3]

The Barresian idea of *la terre et les morts*, the association of the land with the dead who had died defending it, took on a powerful contemporary meaning.[4] We can see a remarkable evocation of this idea in a speech by Mayor Simon of Nancy in 1916:

'Une légende aussi vieille que la Lorraine dit qu'en ce jour même, dans le grand silence des champs de repos, en prenant l'oreille on entendrait des voix, faibles d'abord comme le bruit léger des couronnes qui frissonnent au vent, confuses comme les mots qu'on dit en rêve. La rumeur se fait plus forte. On entend des plaintes qui sortent de la terre, des appels, des paroles distinctes: c'est la voix des morts. Écoutons cette voix de la tombe: Demandons à nos morts comment nous pouvions reconnaître ce qu'ils ont fait pour nous. Qu'attendent-ils? Que veulent-ils

[1] A. Ferry, *Les Carnets secrets d'Abel Ferry 1914–1918 suivis de lettres et notes de guerre*, A. Loez and N. Offenstadt (eds) (Paris, 2005), p. 355.
[2] E. Chaton, *Historique du 2e bataillon de Chasseurs à pied 1914–1918* (Paris, 1922), p. 52.
[3] A. Bellard, *De Nancy à Nancy via Morhange et Vitrimont*, *feuilles de route et remembrances d'un combattant d'active de la Division de Fer* (Nancy et Metz, 1929), p. 99.
[4] J. Delmas, *Mes Hommes au feu avec la Division de Fer; à Morhange, sur l'Yser, en Artois 1914–1915* (Paris, 1931), p. 115. P Maire, *Lunéville pendant la Grande Guerre 1914–1918* (Paris, 2014), p.13. P Chevalier, *Bar-Le-Duc pendant la guerre* (Bar-Le-Duc, 1935), p.36.

de nous? La voix répondra: la Victoire!' [5]

There is no doubt that the shock of invasion crystalised this regional variant of French patriotism. There was intense fighting on the Lorraine front only fifteen kilometres to the east of Nancy in August 1914 as the French army, after initial reverses, struggled to prevent the Germans making a decisive break through. The military casualties were high, towns and small villages were destroyed by shell fire and a flood of refugees fled west and south. John Horne and Alan Kramer in their seminal work on the German "atrocities" concluded that they did occur in Belgium, northern France and in Lorraine.[6] Four areas were affected in Lorraine — the northern steel making area of Meurthe-et-Moselle between Pont-à-Mousson and Longwy, the northern area of the Meuse department, an arc of towns to the east of Nancy, and the foothills of the Vosges. Horne and Kramer show that the German army seems to have been prey to exaggerated fears of partisans, perhaps because in close fighting in village streets, firing by retreating French troops could seem like firing by residents from buildings. They deal very briefly with the impact of atrocities on Lorraine opinion.

This section which follows on the impact of the invasion on Lorraine might seem too detailed. The justification for dwelling on the atrocities is that they made a huge impact on Lorraine opinion and the sense of regional identity, not only during the conflict but also for many years afterwards. They affected decisions taken after 1918 on economic and social issues as well as on defence. Despite qualifications about propaganda written after the event and the common thread of anti-German feeling across France, there was a distinctive Lorraine experience of invasion, partly because of the memories of 1870. Unlike other areas of northern France, in Lorraine the sense of outrage found a voice in a substantial city, Nancy, and its surrounding region which were not occupied. The account which follows gives more details of the impact of the invasion on Lorraine opinion than is to be found in Horne and Kramer's book.

Perhaps the most publicised atrocities occurred in Nomény and Gerbéviller where fifty-five civilians and sixty civilians died respectively and many women were raped.[7] The Germans first arrived at Nomény on 14 August but were repulsed. The Bavarians attacked again on 20 August and the French withdrew after fierce fighting. They decimated the Bavarian ranks with enfilading fire. The village was burnt that night and civilians shot down as they fled. The next day the remaining villagers were expelled. German soldiers said that their action was revenge for the French gouging out the eyes of German wounded and cutting off their limbs. The Bavarian official history written later did not contradict the French accounts of their action, which had been ordered by the commanding officer, other than to justify it

[5] A-P. Vogt, *Nancy pendant la guerre 1914-1918 d'après les documents officiels* (Nancy, 1920), p. 242.

[6] J. Horne, A. Kramer, *German Atrocities 1914, A History of Denial* (Yale, 2001), pp. 113–139, 419–431. J. Horne, A. Kramer, 'German "Atrocities" and Franco-German Opinion, 1914: The evidence of German soldiers' diaries', *The Journal of Modern History*, vol. 66 No.1 (March 1994), pp. 1–33.

[7] Horne, Kramer, *German Atrocities*, pp.64–6, p. 199 for Nomény Gerbéviller.

because of illegal civilian resistance, for which there was no evidence. The events at Gerbéviller were almost identical. The Germans occupied the commune at 5pm on 24 August after fierce French resistance. The killings took place in the following three days. There may have been one or two cases of civilian firing but it was the French army resistance which provoked the revenge ordered again by the German commander. Sister Julie, the nun who ran a hospital throughout the fighting, said that the Germans were furious that a few French soldiers had held up two German regiments.

There is no doubt that the press fanned the flames of resentment at these events. The press accounts of German atrocities started on 5 August with news of the shooting of Albert Samain, the President of Lorraine Sportive in Metz, and also of the curé of the village of Moyenvic.[8] Many refugees came with stories of German atrocities, which were quickly picked up by the press and the authorities and spread like wildfire. René Mercier, the editor of *L'Est républicain*, portrays in his personal diary the panic in Nancy when the refugees arrived. On one occasion the prefect forbade him to publish details of their miserable condition to prevent panic.[9] *L'Est républicain* ran sixteen stories specifically on the Lorraine atrocities in August and September, *L'Étoile de l'Est* four, *L'Éclair de l'Est* six, and *L'Impartial de l'Est* twelve. *L'Est républicain* transcribed many of the French witness accounts uncritically.[10] As a comparison *La Phare de la Loire* in Nantes, a newspaper roughly analogous in position to *L'Est républicain*, ran only four stories relating to atrocities in France in the same period, although it gave considerable coverage to the Belgian atrocities. The Germans, it was thought, were following a premeditated strategy of terrorising the frontier populations into submission.[11] Some of the stories, repeated in the press in Lorraine and elsewhere, were exaggerated, like reports of women and children having their hands cut off or women having their breasts removed.[12] However, for most *Lorrains* in August 1914, the circumstantial evidence appeared overwhelming.

The contemporary literature spawned by the atrocities is extensive: published accounts, private letters and diaries and government correspondence. Accounts written by witnesses after the event show the impact these atrocities had on opinion. They contain accounts of villages being torched with cans of petrol, inhabitants smoked out of their houses and gunned down in the streets, local dignitaries like mayors and priests made prisoner and shot, hostages taken to ensure compliant behaviour, women raped, places of worship defiled, war

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[8] *L'Éclair de l'Est* (5, 6 août 1914).
[9] R. Mercier, *Journal d'un bourgeois de Nancy, Nancy sauvée* (Paris & Nancy,1917), pp. 121, 142, 171. Horne, Kramer, *German Atrocities*, p. 181.
[10] Horne, Kramer, *German Atrocities*, p.205.
[11] E. de Warren, 'Carnets de route d'un officier lorrain dans les combats en Lorraine de l'automne 1914', *Le Pays lorrain*, 59e année, no.4 (1978), p. 193. *Les instituteurs meusiens, témoins de l'occupation allemande 1914-1918* (Meuse Archives départementales,1999), p.36.
[12] *L'Impartial de l'Est* (1, 3 septembre 1914).

contributions in cash demanded at the point of a gun and possessions vandalised and looted without justification.[13]

Reactions to the atrocities were subsumed into anti-German hatred which was common in many parts of France, as the historiography of the First World War in France shows.[14] A limited vocabulary seems to have been transmitted via the press to a wider public. Phrases like 'barbares', 'hordes teutonesques', 'vandales', 'bêtes sanguinaires', 'barbarie teutonne' 'cannibales', 'bandits', 'Attila', 'joug prussien' occur frequently.[15] As they raped and burnt their way through Lorraine they were seen as the violators of the land of France, its culture and its people.[16] This polemical tone was embraced by the press, even by the radical *l'Étoile de l'Est*. Consider this piece in the paper on 12 September:

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[13] Maire, *Lunéville,* pp. 63–70, 116–123. F-X. Tollab, *Jusqu'à l'infini* (Nancy, 1931), pp. 40, 68, 102, 167. C. Berlet, *Réméréville : un village lorrain pendant les mois d'août et septembre 1914* (Paris, 1916), pp. 33, 51–6. J. Élardin, 'Souvenirs et impressions : Senones et sa contrée sous la botte allemande1914–1918', *Bulletin de la Société philomatique vosgienne,* 89e année, vol lxvii (1963), pp. 141–6, 155–7. J-C. Fombaron, Y. Prouillet (eds), *Senones, une ville vosgienne sous l'occupation allemande, journal de guerre de l'abbé André Villemin* (*S*ociété philomatique vosgienne*,* Raon-l'Étape, 2002), p. 19. AD M-et-M, 1J 1600, 'P. Suisse, Récit des premières semaines de la guerre dans le Lunévillois, à Moncel-lès-Lunéville, août–septembre 1914'; AD M-et-M, 1J 1045/10, 'J. Godot, Journal de guerre, Loisy, 31 juillet–14 septembre 1914'; AD M-et-M, 1J 1275, 'F. Sagot, Journal d'un témoin de la guerre à Pont-à-Mousson et au Bois-Le-Prêtre 7 août 1914–janvier 1915*'*. J. Bigey, T. Minarie, *Étain août 1914–novembre 1918* (Étain, 1999), pp. 37–8. *Instituteurs meusiens*, p. 113. E. Hannotin, *Le Canton de Spincourt pendant la Guerre 14/18* (Spincourt,1998), pp. 47–9. Conseil-Régional de la Lorraine, *14–18 côté civils: témoignages d'habitants du canton de Fresnes* (Verdun,1998), pp. 11, 19, 21, 27–8.

[14] M. Jeismann, *La Patrie de l'ennemi, la notion d'ennemi national et le représentation de la nation en Allemagne et en France de 1792 à 1918* (Paris CNRS, 1997), pp. 293–326. A. Becker, 'L'Étranger au temps de la guerre de 1870–71' in J-P. Jessenne (ed), *L'Image de l'autre dans l'Europe du Nord-Ouest à travers l'histoire* (Actes du colloque Villeneuve d'Ascq, Lille 1994), pp. 123–132. S. Audoin-Rouzeau, A. Becker, C. Temerson, *1914–1918 Understanding the Great War* (London, 2002), pp. 102–111, 119, 135–137, 142–150, 154–158, 161. R. Harris, 'Child of the Barbarian', *Past and Present*, 141 (Nov 1993), pp. 170–206. J-J. Becker, G. Krumreich, *La Grande Guerre, une histoire franco-allemande* (Paris, 2008), pp. 105, 169–170. J. Courmont, *L'Odeur de l'ennemi, l'imaginaire olfactif en 1914–1918* (Paris, 2010). O. Reshef, *Guerre, mythes et caricature, au berceau d'une mentalité française* (Paris, 1984).

[15] AD M-et-M, 1J 1602, 'L. René, Journal de guerre d'un village lorrain par l'instituteur, Halloville*',* pp. 1, 31, 36, 40–1, 51, 71, 77–8,123. E. Mansuy (ed), *Carnet de guerre de Georges Curien territorial vosgien* (Parçay-sur-Vienne, 2001), pp.45,69. P-M. Masson, *Lettres de guerre août 1914–avril 1916* (Paris, 1917), p.4*.* Tollab, *Jusqu'à l'infini*, pp. 102,167. AD M-et-M, 1J 1572, 'J. Hoffmann, Souvenirs de la première guerre mondiale 1914–1915 à Mailly-sur-Seille*'*, pp. 5, 8, 10, 11, 13. *Instituteurs meusiens*, p.113. L. Colin, *Les Barbares à la Trouée des Vosges, récits et témoins avec préface de Maurice Barrès* (Paris,1915), pp. 107, 137, 141, 350, 352.

[16] Tollab, *Jusqu'à l'infini*, p. 134.

'La plainte des innocents criera plus haut même que le tonnerre du canon nocturne répondant à celui du ciel: elle dénoncera au monde ce crime de lèse-humanité, de lèse-civilisation, et l'Allemagne, comme lady Macbeth, pourra longtemps frotter l'une contre l'autre ses mains ensanglantées: l'execrable tâche sera là, et toutes les glauques ondes de leur Rhin allemand ne pourraient en laver la souillure ni l'horreur.' [17]

As elsewhere this anti-German feeling was dressed up with references to the universal values of the Republic as a justification for fighting back. For example, Mme. Bernard wrote to her son Auguste, a canonier-conducteur in the *8e régiment d'artillerie de campagne* from Nancy:

'Car nous combattons non seulement pour nous, mais pour le repos du monde entier et nous voudrions voir tous les peuples à l'abri de l'influence néfaste de ces boches de malheur.' [18]

These sentiments were also uttered on grand occasions like a service of commemoration for victims in Nancy cathedral on 27 September 1914.[19] There could be no peace until the Germans were defeated and civilisation was safe again. In Lorraine this feeling started in 1914 and continued strongly until the end of the war. In 1918 Mayor Simon said that France should reject Germany's peace proposals because they should not talk to a bandit.[20] It would be a fight to the end suggested a writer in the radical *L'Étoile de l'Est* in 1914.[21]

The coverage of the atrocities clearly went beyond mere reportage and it cannot be taken at face value as an indication of shifting regional identity. In the hands of skilled writers, it became propaganda deliberately created by the press and the authorities with a number of objectives: to encourage soldiers and civilians to resist; to put France in a good light with opinion in neutral countries, particularly the United States, and to argue the case for special government help for refugees and in reconstruction. Official accounts of the atrocities were written, not only to be used by the Chamber of Deputies in its official enquiry, but also to be sold and circulated locally to raise money for refugees. For example, a publication entitled *1914. Pages de guerre écrites au jour le jour* appeared every week from 1914 to 1918 in Nancy and sold for 0.25F for *oeuvres de secours*.[22] The Prefect of Meurthe-et-Moselle, Léon Mirman, along with Simon, Mayor of Nancy, and Keller, Mayor of Lunéville, issued their own account of the atrocities, *Leurs Crimes*, also translated and published in England in 1917. Profits were donated to a League for

[17] *L'Étoile de l'Est* (12 septembre 1914).
[18] AD M-et-M 1J 1630, 'J-M. Itant, mon grand-père Auguste Bertrand durant la guerre de 1914–1918, lettre de sa mère à Auguste 23 août 1916'.
[19] *L'Éclair de l'Est* (28 septembre 1914).
[20] Vogt, *Nancy guerre*, p. 249.
[21] 'Les miettes du jour, les maîtres de l'heure,' *L'Étoile de l'Est* (20 Septembre 1914).
[22] AD M-et-M, 1J 1305, (Édité Imprimerie Lorraine Rigot et Cie, 51-53 Rue St-Georges Nancy).

Remembrance and also to relief work in Lorraine.[23] Mirman also provided a preface for *Gerbéviller la martyre, des ruines à la gloire*, which was sold to profit 'les sinistrés de Gerbéviller et les oeuvres de Soeur Julie'. Sister Julie became a heroine when she stood up to the Germans. A section in the book called the pilgrims of Gerbéviller lists all the important people who came to pay their respects — Mirman on 16 September 1914; Barrès at an open air mass on 11 October; Briand, Minister of Justice, and Sarraut, Minister of the Interior, on 23 October and finally Poincaré the President twice. The first time he was accompanied by Léon Bourgeois, a senator, and the second time he presented Soeur Julie with the Légion d'Honneur, in the presence of René Viviani, Président du Conseil, Paul Deschanel Président de la Chambre de Députés and Antonin Dubost, Président du Sénat. The impact of the events in Gerbéviller on public opinion could hardly be better emphasised.[24] Louis Marin, the nationalist deputy for Nancy, likewise wrote a preface for an account of the atrocities at Nomény, which was subsidised by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.[25] To make sure the next generation remembered what happened Bouchot, the author of a *manuel scolaire*, included the atrocities in his recent history of Lorraine.[26]

Out of all this the cult of "La Lorraine martyre" was born. Hinzelin coined the phrase in the title of another of his books *La Lorraine martyre*.[27] Mirman talked about martyrdom in a speech at Badonviller where the wife of the mayor was shot and fifteen hostages disappeared, apart from houses being burnt. He said:

'Oui, il fallait que quelque part en une commune de France marquée pour ce martyre — et cette commune devait être en Lorraine — il fallait que le Barbare imprimait la marque totale de son génie, qu'il offrit au monde un échantillon de ce qu'il sait faire, qu'il fit comprendre, par quelque exemple éclatant ce dont est capable la bête teutonne quand elle est déchainée.' [28]

Barrès used his pen and prestige to draw attention to Lorraine's fate in his work *La Lorraine dévastée*, part of a collection sponsored by the Franco-American committee. Having trumpeted France's superior civilisation and Lotharingia as a zone of transition between the Latin and the Teutonic, he wrote a devastating attack on the atrocities including on the Bavarian General Clauss with a glass of champagne in his hand as his troops destroyed Gerbéviller.[29] He also encouraged his network of friends to attack the Germans using well tried epithets and

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[23] L. Mirman, G. Simon, G. Keller, *Their Crimes* (London, 1917). Horne, Kramer, *German Atrocities,* p. 317.
[24] E. Badel, Courtin-Schmidt, J. Labatut, *Gerbéviller la martyre, des ruines à la gloire* (Nancy, 1914), pp. 49–52.
[25] A. Viriot, *Les cités martyres de Lorraine, les Allemands à Nomény Août 1914,* préface Louis Marin Député Meurthe-et-Moselle et Conseiller-Général du Canton de Nomény (Nancy,1916). Horne, Kramer, *German Atrocities,* p. 308.
[26] Bouchot, *Vingt-Cinq Leçons*, pp. 42–47.
[27] E. Hinzelin, *La Lorraine martyre* (Paris,1915).
[28] *L'Éclair de l'Est* (21 août 1914).
[29] Barrès, *Lorraine dévastée*, pp.5,122,150–1.

arguments found in his writings. For example, Père A. Collé did so in *La Bataille de la Mortagne, la Chipotte, l'occupation de Ménil et ses environs* (Lyon,1925). Père Collé experienced the full rigours of the German invasion and occupation. Barrès spoke at his village in 1917. Another example was Louis Colin.[30]

There was one area of wartime Lorraine where feelings of regional identity were very different and that was the German occupied Moselle department. Because the Moselle was very near the front and Metz was a fortress and pivot for German troop movements, the German army placed the area under martial law. Inhabitants who were suspected of French sympathies were taken into custody. Some fled to France including Henri Collin, a well-known ecclesiastic and opponent of German rule, Jean-Pierre Jean of *Le Souvenir Français* and the de Wendels.[31] The French language was banned in public places and French newspapers and journals suppressed. German papers were censored. Benzler, the Bishop of Metz, insisted on maintaining French language services in French speaking areas, However. French assets were subject to sequestration.

The case of Robert Schumann is a significant example of those in the Moselle who were neither ardent francophiles nor German nationalists. Schumann was closely linked to the Catholic church in the Moselle and to the local administration. At the beginning of the war he took an administrative post and kept a low profile. However, it was on a visit to Luxembourg to his family that he learnt about the German atrocities in that country and Belgium. Although he said nothing at the time it appears from a later document he wrote that this event turned him decisively against Germany. In general historians suggest that the harshness of German military rule made Mosellans and Alsatians much more accepting of reunification with France in 1918.[32]

3.iii. The impact of the war on the Auvergne's sense of identity

The situation of the Auvergne during the Great War was very different from Lorraine. It was a long way from the front. It was not invaded and did not suffer damage to property. The inhabitants were not deprived of their homes. Gilberte Lang, whose *mémoire de maîtrise* on opinion in the Puy-de-Dôme during the war was directed by Jean-Jacques Becker and quoted in his seminal work *The Great War and the French People*, has given us a clear picture of how the war affected the hearts and minds of different strata of local society.[33] The bulk of the population were only aware of certain privations — shortages of fuel and food,

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[30] L. Colin, *Les Barbares à la Trouée des Vosges, récits et témoins, préface de Maurice Barrès* (Paris, 1915).
[31] C. Grohmann, 'The Problems of integrating annexed Lorraine into France 1918–1925' (PhD thesis, University of Stirling,1999), p. 12.
[32] F. Roth, *Robert Schumann, Du lorrain des frontières au père de l'Europe* (Paris, 2008), pp. 79–93.
[33] G. Lang, 'L'Opinion publique dans le Puy-de-Dôme pendant la première guerre mondiale' (Mémoire de maîtrise, Université de Clermont-Ferrand, 1979).

disruption to transport, rising prices, a lack of currency, all issues much discussed by the business community in the Chambre de Commerce de Clermont-Ferrand.[34] A few were engaged in war production in big enterprises like Michelin in Clermont-Ferrand and also in the heavy industrial areas of the Allier.

Some knew about an influx of refugees from other parts of France. For example, they might have noticed the erection of a Christmas tree in the centre of Clermont-Ferrand in 1915 as an act of solidarity with those from Alsace-Lorraine in exile in the Auvergne. There was a ceremony addressed by Lange, a Professor in the Faculty of Literature and the delegate of the *Association pour l'Aide fraternelle aux Alsaciens-Lorrains réfugiés et évacués*. Raymond Bergougnan, owner of the eponymous local rubber firm and friend of Clémentel, gave some support and there were warm words of welcome.[35] Hospitality was offered to refugees but it may be that by 1917 appeals for solidarity from northern and eastern France were wearing thin. For example, in 1916 the Prefect of the Meurthe-et-Moselle, L. Mirman, wrote to his colleagues around France asking them to encourage local authorities and private persons to subscribe for copies of *Leurs Crimes*, the booklet about German atrocities published to raise money for the affected areas. A handwritten note by Mirman at the bottom of a further letter dated 20 January 1917 is very interesting. In it Mirman says to his colleague that the Puy-de-Dôme is one of the departments of the Centre who have taken the least. The town of Thiers has ordered 2000 brochures but he has received nothing from Ambert, Issoire, Riom or Clermont-Ferrand. He has made a special appeal to the mayors of *grandes villes* and Clermont-Ferrand is the only one not to have replied. He asks for the prefect's personal help.

'Donnez-nous un coup de main pour nous permettre d'envahir l'Auvergne,' [36]

The prefect of the Puy-de-Dôme did follow up this appeal by writing again to those concerned. From the dossier it appears that Michelin offered to help with the distribution of the booklet. The Chambre de Commerce de Clermont-Ferrand ordered 500 copies.[37]

Most inhabitants of the Puy-de-Dôme knew very little about the overall progress of the war, which a few read about in the press. Overall Gilberte Lang concludes that public morale was good and that the war was accepted with a kind of fatalism. It was something to be endured and was not questioned. Unlike in the industrial areas of the Allier there was no minority socialist movement against the war in the Puy-de-Dôme and no strikes in 1917 and 1918. Many of the country people thought they bore the burdens of war and the rich profited from it. Any discussion of war aims such as the return of Alsace-Lorraine was greeted with

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[34] *Compte Rendu des travaux de la chambre de commerce de Clermont-Ferrand 1914–1918* (Clermont-Ferrand,1915–1919) passim.
[35] *Le Moniteur du Puy-de-Dôme* (28 décembre 1915), p.1 col d–e.
[36] AD P-de-D, M 4628, prefect's dossier on *Leurs Crimes*, letter of 20 janvier 1917 from the *Ligue du Souvenir* and signed by Mirman and the mayors of Lunéville and Nancy.
[37] *Travaux Clermont-Ferrand*, (séance 2 janvier 1917), p.13.

incomprehension.[38] Georges Desdevises du Dézert, a professor of literature at the university and friend of Henri Pourrat, recorded the following peasant sentiments which were characteristic:

'Deux choses surtout impressionnaient ces hommes: l'étendue de nos pertes et l'argent dépensé. L'Auvergnat ne prodigue ni les enfants, ni les écus; il les associe dans toutes ces idées. Les enfants sont ses héritiers, et, pour qu'ils aient plus d'écus, il ne multiplie pas les enfants...La guerre le prend par ses deux passions dominantes; elle gaspille la vie, elle gaspille l'argent. Elle lui apparaît donc comme une véritable démence, comme sans remède, si elle dure longtemps, comme la fin du monde; que fera-t-on d'une France sans hommes et sans argent?' [39]

This was written fairly early in the war before the dark days of 1917.

Among the educated elite there was patriotic support for the war effort, similar to that found in other parts of France. On the occasion of Toussaint on 1 November 1915 and 1916 there was a large patriotic parade in Clermont-Ferrand with speeches to commemorate the war dead. The ceremonies were attended by members of the local elite and different local societies.[40] The elite organised support for the succession of national fundraising efforts for the victims of the war — *Éprouvés de Guerre, Journée 75, Journée du Poilu, Journée française, Orphelins, Soldats au Front* sponsored by the Touring Club de France*, Soldats tuberculeux*. A list in the prefect's dossier for Journées de Guerre — "Liste des Personnes à convoquer pour les journées de guerre" — contains thirty-two names, including leaders of the business and academic communities, leading officials, the military and the church, with the surprising omission of Raymond Bergougnan and Édouard Michelin. Some of them will become familiar later.[41] They held concerts and other events to raise money. They also encouraged holders of gold to exchange them for banknotes and those with savings to subscribe for national loans.[42] The *Journée française* for the inhabitants of the

[38] Lang, '*L'Opinion publique'* pp. 240–243.
[39] G. Desdevises du Dézert, Notes de guerre, Ambert 6/11/1915, quoted in Lang, 'L'Opinion publique*'*, p. 78.
[40] *Le Moniteur du Puy-de-Dôme* (1 novembre 1915), p.3. col b–d; (1 novembre 1916), p. 3 col a; (2 novembre 1916), p.3. col a–d. *L'Avenir du Puy-de-Dôme* (2 novembre 1915), p.2. col d and f; (2 novembre 1916), p.2 col b–f.
[41] AD P-de-D, M 4582 Journées 1915, Prefect's dossier: la Journée française 23,24 mai 1915.
[42] **Éprouvés de Guerre**, *Le Moniteur du Puy-de-Dôme* (23 septembre 1915), p.3 col b, (24 septembre 1915), p.3 col c, (25 septembre 1915), p.3 col b, (29 septembre 1915), p.3 col b; *L'Avenir du Puy-de-Dôme* (25 Septembre 1915), p. 2 col f, (29 septembre 1915), p.2 col d–e. **Journée du 75**, *Le Moniteur du Puy-de-Dôme (5 février 1915), p.3 col c, (10 février 1915), p. 3 col c; L'Avenir du Puy-de-Dôme* (5 février 1915), p. 2 col e, (11 février 1915), p.2 col c. **Journée du Poilu**, *Le Moniteur du Puy-de-Dôme* (22 décembre 1915), p.3 col e, (27 décembre 1915), p. 3 col b, (31 janvier 1916), p. 3 col c. **Soldat au Front (TCF)**, *Le Moniteur du Puy-de-Dôme* (23 mars 1917), p. 3 col c, (27 mars 1917), p. 3 col

invaded provinces attracted a lot of attention in 1915.[43] The maires of all the communes in the Puy-de-Dôme were very keen to support it.[44] Likewise, the appeals for widows and for orphans of soldiers *morts pour la France*.[45] Édouard Michelin topped the subscription list with a donation of 100,000 francs in 1914 and the Bishop of Clermont followed his lead. The other rubber firms, Bergougnan and Torilhon, were not lacking when it came to supporting soldiers.[46] A departmental organisation was set up to further this particular cause.[47] Georges Desdevises was active in this cause as he wrote to his friend Henri Pourrat before coming to Ambert for a meeting.[48]

The Chambre de Commerce de Clermont-Ferrand mobilised the business community to support the campaign to collect gold for the government.[49] It also supported the raising of war loans from private savers. *Le Moniteur du Puy-de-Dôme* thought its readers would be interested in the departmental results for the 1915 national loan. This showed that the Puy-de-Dôme came thirteenth in the rankings. The Meurthe-et-Moselle was fifth.[50] The exhortations of the elites bore fruit but the results were not necessarily due to superior patriotism locally. Rising income looking for opportunities for investment may also have played a part.

As we have seen there was an elite of Auvergnat intellectuals who articulated the regional sense of identity before the war. It is therefore important that we see how far their own personal perspectives changed as the war progressed. Of all the members of the elite Georges Desdevises du Dézert was one of the most active in the national cause. He identified with the intellectuals which Ernest Lavisse, the historian, and others mobilised from Paris at the beginning of the war. They created a *Ligue française* to support the values of French civilisation against German *kultur*. Desdevises visited his friend Pourrat in Ambert to promote the

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c. **Soldats Tuberculeux**, *Le Moniteur du Puy-de-Dôme* (1 février 1917), p. 3 col a, (3 février 1917), p.3 col a, (6 février 1917), p. 3, col b. **Concerts**, *Le Moniteur du Puy-de-Dôme* (24 mai 1918), p. 3 col b, (26 mai 1918), p.3 col a.

[43] *Le Moniteur du Puy-de-Dôme (*5 mai 1915), p.3 col d–e, (7 mai 1915), p.3. col a, (22 mai 1915), p. 3 col a, (23 mai 1915), p.3. col a, (25 mai 1915), p.3 col b.

[44] AD P-de-D, M 4582 Journées 1915, Prefect's dossier: la Journée française 23,24 mai 1915.

[45] *Le Moniteur du Puy-de-Dôme* (26 mai 1915), p. 3 col d, (4 juin), p. 3 col a, (17 juin), p.3 col a, (19 juin), p.3 col a, (28 octobre 1916), p. 3 col d.

[46] *Le Moniteur du Puy-de-Dôme* (30 octobre 1914), quoted in Lang, '*L'Opinion publique',* pp. 14, 16.

[47] *Le Moniteur du Puy-de-Dôme* (15 avril 1915), p.3 col a.

[48] Patrimoine, MSS Desdevises du Dézert 1911–1942, carton 19 DESD, correspondance Desdevises–Pourrat, letter from G. Desdevises du Dézert to H. Pourrat 11 avril 1915.

[49] *Travaux Clermont-Ferrand*, (séance 3 août 1915), p. 51; (séance 9 août 1916), pp. 129–130; (séance 5 septembre 1916), pp. 134–136; (séance 16 novembre 1916), p. 143; (séance 15 mai 1917), pp. 61–2.

[50] *Le Moniteur du Puy-de-Dôme* (5 janvier 1916) quoted in Lang, '*L'Opinion publique'*, p.83.

work of the league.[51] The *Ligue* had some success in Clermont in attracting a following.[52] Desdevises toured the region giving patriotic addresses to large audiences.[53] He was active in the press supporting the allied cause. For example, he wrote articles for the Spanish press to combat the influence of German ideas in the peninsula.[54]

Henri Pourrat could not fight in the war because of his health. He thought of going to the front as a war correspondent but had to give up the idea.[55] Instead he threw himself into good works to support the war effort and to care for victims. Desdevises persuaded him to support the *Ligue française*, as well as the war widows and orphans. We can see his reaction to the progress of the war in his voluminous correspondence with his close friend Joseph Desaymard who was serving at the front in a staff position. Pourrat was patriotic of course. He was proud of the bravery displayed by Auvergnat soldiers at Verdun.[56] He wanted Desaymard to send him a Boche bayonet because he had always liked 'les armes blanches'.[57] In a letter of 7 August 1917 to Desdevises he said that, despite the undoubted horror of war, France would have to fight to the end.[58] Having read Barbusse's novel *Le Feu* he noted that even the author, whose book was so full of the horror of war, believed this.[59] However, whilst defending Barrès against accusations of writing propaganda, he recognised that it was very difficult to strike a balance between the suffering of the *poilus* and safeguarding the future of the nation.[60]

Desaymard appeared to be more muted in his patriotism, no doubt because he was nearer the front. Both had been nationalist supporters of the *Action Française* before the war, as were some other regionalists from the Auvergne like the poet Gandilhon Gens-d'Armes.[61] In a letter to his friend on 12 July 1914 Pourrat joked

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[51] Patrimoine, MSS Desdevises du Dézert 1911–1942, carton 19 DESD, correspondance Desdevises-Pourrat, letters from G. Desdevises du Dézert to H. Pourrat 21 mai 1915, 29 octobre 1915, 7 janvier 1916, 3 décembre 1916.
[52] Lang, '*L'Opinion publique'*, p. 79.
[53] Lang, '*L'Opinion publique'*, pp. 70, 230.
[54] *Le Moniteur du Puy-de-Dôme* (18 janvier 1916), p.1 col e, (19 janvier 1916), p.1 col e–f.
[55] H. Pourrat, *Les Montagnards, chronique paysanne de la Grande Guerre* (repr. Paris, 2016), p 9.
[56] H. Pourrat letter to J. Desaymard 18 avril 1916, in Dalet, *Correspondance croisée*, p.209.
[57] H. Pourrat letter to J. Desaymard 9 novembre 1916, in Dalet, *Correspondance croisée*, p. 228.
[58] Patrimoine, MSS Desdevises du Dézert 1911–1942, carton 19 DESD, correspondance Desdevises–Pourrat, letter from H. Pourrat to G. Desdevises du Dézert 7 août 1917.
[59] H. Pourrat letter to J. Desaymard 23 janvier 1917, in Dalet, *Correspondance croisée*, p. 234.
[60] H. Pourrat letter to J. Desaymard 14 juin 1917, in Dalet, *Correspondance croisée*, pp. 243–6.
[61] H. Pourrat letters to J. Desaymard 17 mai 1914, 4 décembre 1914, 1 juin 1917, in Dalet, *Correspondance Croisée*, pp.110, 152, 241.

about sending Mme. Desyamard a bonnet decorated with fleur de lys![62] Desaymard's views changed more obviously than Pourrat's. On 25 August 1914 he wrote that the war had brought about certain improvements in man's behaviour — courage, discipline, sacrifice — but also disobedience to commanders and terrible cruelty. He mentioned behaviour towards prisoners.[63] He too was proud of the action of Auvergnat soldiers at Verdun.[64] Soldiers from the mountains, including the Auvergnats, were among the finest.[65] However, he and Pourrat disagreed strongly about speeches by Eugène Chassaing, a radical-socialist politician from the Auvergne, criticising the ultra-patriotic words of Maurice Barrès. On 23 May 1917 Desaymard defended Chassaing as a true patriot, and denounced Barrès as a militarist and chauvinist.[66] Later he attacked Barrès for his inaccurate reporting of the English retreat in 1918. He was "fou d'inexactitude."[67] Pourrat defended Barrès against accusations of writing propaganda or "bourrage de crâne". Pourrat admitted that in all these debates he was nearer to the *Action Française* position. Pourrat noted that Chassaing was against the three-year service law and wanted to extend a hand to the Germans, who had behaved so barbarously after the invasion of France. He wrote that twelve bullets in Chassaing's body would be a proportionate punishment. How could one say that men like him were more intelligent than Maurras and Barrès, he continued?[68] Desaymard protested that, despite this criticism of Barrès, he was an *enragé nationaliste*, in favour of a far sighted patriotism while being anti-militarist but wary of the views of Henri Barbusse, whose novel *Le Feu* caused so much controversy with its realistic depiction of the horrors of war.[69] This dispute about Barrès is interesting because he was for many of the regionalists in the Auvergne an iconic figure whom they admired, including Pourrat and Desaymard. The flyleaf of the copy of Desaymard's book on Emmanuel Chabrier in Barrès's library contains the hand written dedication 'À notre maître Maurice Barrès, humble offrande d'un dévot J. Desaymard 23-vii-08'.[70] Madame Desaymard wrote to Pourrat on 2 January 1916 saying that her husband was delighted to be staying for a month near *La Colline inspirée* with relations of a priest who was a friend of

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[62] H. Pourrat letter to J. Desaymard 12 juillet 1914, in Dalet, *Correspondance croisée*, p. 123.
[63] J. Desaymard letter to H. Pourrat 25 août 1914, in Dalet, *Correspondance croisée*, p. 133.
[64] J. Desaymard letter to H. Pourrat 5 mars 1916, in Dalet, *Correspondance croisée*, pp. 205–206.
[65] J. Desaymard letter to H. Pourrat 25 mai 1918, in Dalet, *Correspondance croisée*, p.274.
[66] J. Desaymard letter to H. Pourrat 23 mai 1917, in Dalet, *Correspondance croisée*, p. 240.
[67] J. Desaymard letter to H. Pourrat 7 avril 1918, in Dalet, *Correspondance croisée*, p. 272.
[68] H. Pourrat letter to J. Desaymard 1 juin 1917, in Dalet, *Correspondance croisée*, p.241–2.
[69] J. Desaymard letters to H. Pourrat 23 janvier 1917, 6 juin 1917,16 octobre 1917, in Dalet, *Correspondance Croisée*, pp. 234, 243, 252.
[70] Desaymard, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Fonds Z-Barrès, Z BARRES-18478.

Barrès. Joseph was going to read Barrès' book of the same name and soak up Lorraine sentiments at their source.[71] *La Colline inspirée* had, as we have seen, a special significance for Barrès.

Desaymard summed up the reasons why he thought the *poilus* held out so long in his unpublished manuscript on the war *Du Temps qu'on se battait*, which he entrusted to Pourrat.[72] This is in the form of a novel but the hero, Louis Belin, is a thinly veiled representation of Desaymard himself. To be sure men were afraid of the military gendarmes, but there were other reasons to fight:

'Sans doute, le culte de la patrie, la fidélité au drapeau, la volonté de servir, cela n'avait de sens que pour une élite peu nombreuse. Mais chez tous, ou presque, on trouvait l'entêtement à la querelle, le désir de gagner une partie où ils étaient engagés. Et puis, un certain goût pour la vie en plein air, pour l'aventure et ses loisirs, pour l'existence à la Robinson — instinct qui se révélait chez les plus casaniers, les plus douillets, les plus routinés. Surtout il fallait tenir compte, dans cette endurance, du réconfort de la compagnie, de la solidarité entre hommes, des chaudes amitiés telles que les ignorait la société cloisonnée du temps de paix. Et parmi ces bienfaits de la camaraderie, la part était grande de la gaillardise, de la « blague », suprême soutien aux heures critiques. À cela s'ajoutait, bien sûr, chez les Français, le souci de ce que peut penser le voisin, quelque coquetterie au regard de la renommée (c'est-à-dire, pour beaucoup, de la publicité que dispensent les journaux). Soin de paraître à son avantage, de se bien tenir devant la galerie — une galerie dont le public est en grande partie féminin. En imposer aux femmes, prendre sur elles un droit à se faire admirer, préférer, choyer, cela ne comptait pas de peu dans la résolution, ou l'acceptation, de se battre… Restait une sublime inconnue…..Et à ce résidu d'analyse, ou à cette synthèse, on ne pouvait trouver d'autre nom que l'honneur.' [73]

So Desaymard was all too aware that war was not a question of simple patriotism. Men's motives for fighting were many and complex.

Pourrat offered his pen in the service of his country. We can see some evolution in his views on the war in his published writings; between an article for the Catholic periodical *La Vie* in September 1915 — *Ce que l'on pense au front*, or his chansons of the same year, and *les Montagnards*, his most important work on the war itself. In *La Vie* he attacked newspapers who justified war by reference to theoretical ideas – *le droit, la civilisation, la force, la barbarie*. He wanted a more robust attitude—that force was necessary to guarantee a nation's independence. Nations had to move up or down and France must move upwards:

[71] Mme. Desaymard letter to H. Pourrat 2 janvier 1916, in Dalet, *Correspondance croisée*, p. 199.
[72] Patrimoine, MSS Henri Pourrat HP 163, pp. 81–84.
[73] Patrimoine, MSS Henri Pourrat HP 163, pp. 82–83.

‘Je suis impérialiste en dehors de toute idée politique…, je veux pour mon pays le droit à sa part de domination dans le monde, à sa part de *commandement* (imperium).’

The French press should cultivate a more warlike spirit. That is what the soldiers expected. Pourrat refers back to the foreign policy of the kings of France:

‘Notre impérialisme français est pénétré d’esprit chrétien; aussi nous paraît-il le plus noble. Puis il s’avère raisonnable, précis, solide. Non celui de Napoléon annexant la Hollande et l’Illyrie, mais plutôt celui de nos vieux rois construisant la France pièce à pièce des Pyrénées au Rhin. Je le vois traduit surtout par Barrès et les penseurs d’Action Française.’ [74]

In 1915 Pourrat published a sheet of twelve songs for the *poilus* of the Auvergne set to music, which Desdevises said were well received when he gave a talk at the Faculty of Letters on poets and the war.[75] The suitably patriotic tone can be seen from this verse in *Les Garçons de notre Auvergne*:

‘Les garçons de notre Auvergne
Poussent tout droit devant eux
De plein courage
Le cœur n’leur en bat que mieux
Quand ils font rage.’ [76]

Pourrat wrote, however, in classical French, not in Auvergnat dialect nor in the *argot* of the trenches.

We have seen how the elite in Clermont-Ferrand seemed to express their support for the war in patriotic sentiments found in other areas of France. However, how far can we talk about regional identity in war time? How far might this have influenced the regional elite to act together to combat the region’s particular problems? Gilberte Lang and Jean-Jacques Becker do not really address this point. A comprehensive search for soldiers’ diaries or letters from the Auvergne, or indeed from the neighbouring Limousin, published and unpublished, did not reveal many examples where they talked about their region. They thought about “home” quite a lot – the farm and their family for example, but rarely specifically about the region where they lived. I found only five exceptions in the Auvergne quoted below. In 1915 two employees from the Bergougnan factory, now soldiers, wrote to their colleagues in Clermont as follows:

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[74] Patrimoine, MSS Henri Pourrat, HP 221, ‘Ce que l’on pense au front’, *La Vie*, 4e année no. 8 (Sept. 1915), pp. 285 and 287.
[75] Patrimoine, MSS Desdevises du Dézert 1911–1942, carton 19 DESD, correspondance Desdevises–Pourrat, letter from G. Desdevises du Dézert to H. Pourrat 8 mai 1915. *Le Moniteur du Puy-de-Dôme* (10 mai 1915), p. 3 col b–c.
[76] Patrimoine, MSS Henri Pourrat, cote A 33098, fo 1, ‘Douze chansons pour les poilus d’Auvergne par H. P. [Henri Pourrat], sur des airs populaires notés par Émile Ossedat’, *Le Moniteur du Puy-de-Dôme,* Clermont-Ferrand, 1915.

‘Ici, au repos, nous sommes au pays de la vigne: tout nous rappelle notre chère Auvergne: Chanturgue, Mont Juset, tous ces riants coteaux vignobles, nous les retrouvons ici. Mais, Clermont et ses grandes cheminées? Manque à l’appel; gravé dans notre esprit et dans notre cœur, Clermont nous suit partout. Nous vivons pourtant dans l’espoir qu’un jour, peut-être bien proche, nous le reverrons, rapportant avec nous la paix définitive pour tous.’ [77]

Another diary mentions meeting someone from the Auvergne as something pleasurable which did not happen very often. The author writes about Auvergne soldiers talking together in their own dialect and evoking the mountains of their country. He also remarks on the very different character of the countryside of the Île de France and also the Pas-de-Calais.[78] We obtain similar impressions from reading letters recently sent into the *Archives départementales* in Clermont-Ferrand by relatives as part of the recent *Grande Collecte* exercise to commemorate the centenary of the Great War. On 7 April 1915 Léger Debost wrote that he was on the line from Épinal to Nancy with four friends and many other comrades from his region and that they cooked their soup together. On 2 January 1915 Adolphe Féneyrols wrote to his parents that the lieutenant from his company was from the Cantal and he had hardly left his company. The cook was from Clermont and all the others were from the Cantal or from the Loire or Paris. Eugène Martin wrote on 24 October 1914 about farm buildings in the Aisne which were so different from the Auvergne. On 9 August 1915 he wrote that he was leaving his family after a period of leave with sadness and regret. He was departing courageously, comforted by his visit to his ‘pays natal’, an expression rarely found and indicating attachment to a geographical space. Martin came from Aubière which nowadays is in the suburbs of Clermont-Ferrand. He wrote on 5 September that he and comrades from the region celebrated the patronal festival of Aubière in a cellar with lots of wine and champagne. They hoped to celebrate next year’s festival at home. From this and other entries we can see he clearly felt the warmth of company from home.[79] These soldiers may have had only the haziest notions of the Auvergne but they felt a strong attachment to a home space which had certain characteristics.

In his epic poem *les Montgnards*, written during the war and published just afterwards, Henri Pourrat concentrated these diffuse feelings of identity into the driving force behind the Auvergnat *poilus*’ valiant resistance at Verdun. This was a major step in creating his own particular vision of the Auvergne. It was a vision

[77] AD P-de-D, Fonds du Comité de Secours des Établissements Bergougnan, F 028, ‘Courrier et gazette des tranchées réalisés par deux employés de l’usine Bergougnan, de la 14e compagnie du 201e Régiment d’Infanterie’, 28 juillet 1915, quoted in Puy-de-Dôme Conseil-Général, *Des Armes aux larmes 1914–1918, l’engagement patriotique du Puy-de-Dôme* (Clermont-Ferrand, Cahier des Archives, 2014).
[78] C. Marcoline (ed), *Un Auvergnat dans la paix et dans la guerre, chroniques auvergnates autour des journaux de la guerre 14/18 de Jean et Jacques Lacoste* (Clermont-Ferrand, s.d.), pp. 67–69, 74, 101, 107.
[79] AD P-de-D, La Grande Collecte, ‘Lettre Léger Debost, lettres Adolphe Féneyrols, carnets Eugène Martin’.

which resonated with others in the region, who saw the peasant society of the past disappearing for good. The loss of life in the Great War was not the only cause of depopulation of the countryside but it was sudden, obvious and traumatic. Pourrat created a greater sense of awareness of the Auvergnat peasant culture on the eve of its extinction. Auvergnat identity was born of exile and then of loss of life. In Lorraine the impact of the war was immediate in that death, destruction and refugees appeared within days of the invasion. In the case of the Auvergne the impact of the war took a little longer to be felt. It took some years of mourning for those left to realise fully what had happened.

Like many others Pourrat was deeply affected by the deaths of young men known to him personally, as well as by the extent of the carnage. His great friend Jean Angeli was killed in 1915 having been injured earlier, as was Angeli's brother.[80] During the war Pourrat became very close to the Armilhon family in Ambert, and particularly to Pierre, one of the brothers serving in the army. He spent many days talking to Pierre when he was on leave after serving at Verdun in 1916. Pierre was eventually killed on 25 April 1918 near Verdun. In August 1918 Pourrat's brother was killed in an accident while on active service.[81] The letters Henri exchanged with Joseph Desaymard are also full of sad news of friends and associates in the literary world. They record the deaths of the 18-year-old son of the Auvergnat writer Jean Ajalbert in 1915 in the Argonne; and that of poet Léon Boyer in 1916, among others.[82] Pourrat's friend Desdevises lost a nephew.[83] Pourrat did not know the extent of the casualty figures until well after the armistice but he knew that something infinitely tragic was happening. He realised that the sons of Auvergnat peasants were being cut down in huge numbers. The latest research on deaths by region suggests that peasant areas like the Auvergne and Brittany suffered particularly severely, because it was the peasantry who ended up in the front line infantry in greater numbers.[84] France lost 11.3% of men aged 15 to 54 years, but 19.1% in the Cantal, Allier 14.1%, Haute-Loire 14% and 13.5% in the Puy-de-Dôme. This is on a par with the losses in Brittany — Cotes-du-Nord 20.6%, Morbihan19.5%, Ille-et-Vilaine 15.6%, Finistère 15%.[85]

The epic poem *Les Montagnards, chronique paysanne de la Grande Guerre* was based on conversations with Pierre Armilhon and a lengthy correspondence with him (200 letters survive), and with a number of soldier friends. It was written between 1916 and the war's end and received a prize from the *Académie*

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[80] H. Pourrat letter to J. Desaymard 5 juillet 1915, in Dalet, *Correspondance croisée*, p. 185.
[81] H. Pourrat letter to J. Desaymard 16 août 1918, in Dalet, *Correspondance croisée*, p. 282.
[82] H. Pourrat letter to J. Desaymard 3 janvier 1915, in Dalet, *Correspondance croisée*, p. 156.
[83] H. Pourrat letter to J. Desaymard 22 octobre 1918, in Dalet, *Correspondance croisée*, p. 289.
[84] G. Férier, 'Les Conséquences démographiques de la Grande Guerre en Auvergne', *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains*, 145 (Janvier 1987), pp. 81–94.

[85] Férier, 'Les Conséquences', p. 93.

française in 1919. It is dedicated to the mobilised of the commune of Ambert, to the soldiers of the 13th Corps, to those who were at Verdun, to the living and the dead and particularly to Pierre Armilhon. The main characters are Jean Theil and his wife Louise who have a farm in the hills, and Claude the postman who brings bad news but also helps keep the community together. Most of the action takes place during the winter and spring of the battle of Verdun 1916. The poem ends with Jean going home on leave after Verdun and looking forward to seeing his house and working in his fields.

It is the effect of the war on the people of the Auvergne which is the main focus. Of the twelve sections three deal directly with the front and the remainder mostly with the life of those left behind at home in the mountains of the Auvergne. The author is always careful to connect his two worlds; for example, when, on the march, Theil smells pine trees and thinks of home.[86] He goes to sleep with images of the Auvergne in his head — 'Ah! le pays, qui ne nous quitte pas!' [87] At the end of the poem Pourrat brings the spirit of the Auvergne to the battle front, when men on leave dance a *bourrée* at Rethondes on the Aisne and there is a new light in their eyes:

'Ô souvenir que la musique enchante!
On ne sait pas, on ne peut pas comprendre
Tout ce qu'on garde en son cœur, en son sang,' [88]

There are many striking descriptions of the Auvergne countryside and of work on the land. While Jean is away he writes instructions to his wife on how to manage the farm as many peasants did from the trenches.[89] The countryside becomes one of the main actors in the drama. The peasants did not want war, the author says in section two, and he presents a moving picture of the countryside at peace to contrast with the turbulence of their emotions:

'Et c'est son Auvergne, ah! toute l'Auvergne!
Son odeur de vent, de résine et d'herbe,
Tout ce qu'il avait, qu'il a fallu perdre,' [90]

The three sections on the front make a very simple and direct impact. They describe the attack on Le Bois des Corbeaux at Mort-Homme at Verdun where the 92nd Infantry Regiment from the Auvergne were decimated in a German counter-attack. He evokes the endurance of the peasant soldier through all of this. They got on with the job in hand:

[86] Pourrat, *Montagnards*, p.41.
[87] Ibid, p. 42
[88] Pourrat, *Montagnards*, p. 108.
[89] Ibid, pp. 49–50.
[90] Ibid, p.41.

‘C’est la besogne à faire, lourde et lente;
On monte en ligne comme on allait aux champs.
Chaque sillon du pays à reprendre,
Le pain gagné à la sueur du sang.’ [91]

They were not afraid of bullets or of work.[92] It was these peasants and their endurance which saved France.[93] He repeats this message in the last stanza of his poem.[94] Because of the sacrifice made by the peasantry, Pourrat believed that the Republic had a moral debt to the *petite patrie* of the Auvergne on whose economy and society the war had had such a destructive impact.[95]

In view of the losses suffered it was almost inevitable that someone would suggest an Auvergnat monument with all the names of the fallen sons of the Auvergne inscribed on it — ‘aux Auvergnats morts pour la liberté du monde.’ What better place to put it than the site of Vercingétorix’s battle against the Romans at Gergovia, in the heart of the Auvergne with huge views. The author of the proposal was J. Reynard, a retired conservator of *Eaux et Forêts*.[96] He hoped it would encourage national and regional pilgrimages and would unite the populations of Upper and Lower Auvergne.[97] We have seen that Vercingétorix was borrowed as a hero by those seeking to find distinguishing features in the Auvergne’s history. His role encouraging resistance against an invader was celebrated before and during the war. For example, an article appeared in June 1916 contrasting his heroic qualities with the baseness of Arminius, the German leader who defeated the Romans.[98]

3. iv. Regional solidarity in action in Lorraine

We have seen how far the regional sense of identity evolved during the war, based on Lorraine’s unique role as the advance guard in the defence of France. We will now examine how regional solidarity was expressed in action during the war and how active the elite’s institutions were in the regional cause.

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[91] Ibid, p. 39.
[92] Pourrat, *Montagnards*, p. 109.
[93] Ibid, p. 97.
[94] Ibid, p. 110.
[95] P. Cornu, ‘Auvergne dans la Grande Guerre. *Les Montagnards* d’Henri Pourrat et la rhétorique de la dette’, *Siècles* [En ligne], 39–40 (2014), http://journals.openedition.org/siecles/2799.
[96] *Le Moniteur du Puy-de-Dôme* (22, 27 mars 1918), p. 3 col a, p.3 col b, (1,10,14 juin 1918), p.3 col b, p.2 col c–d and p.3 col b. Ehrard, ‘Vercingétorix contre Gergovie?’ pp.307–317, 481–486.
[97] Ehrard, ‘Vercingétorix contre Gergovie?’, p. 312.
[98] *Le Moniteur du Puy-de-Dôme* (5 juin 1916), p. 3 col d.

As the conflict developed, the regional elite got involved in measures to support the war effort and alleviate the suffering caused by the fighting through the *Chambre de Commerce de Nancy*, the *Société industrielle de l'Est* and the *Fédération des Commerçants de Nancy*. Sometimes the prefect co-opted members of the elite onto committees to further particular projects. He also used two prominent men, Jambois and Buffet, to vet war charities in accordance with the new law of 30 May 1916 requiring government authorisation for such activities.[99] Jambois was president of the Nancy committee to assist refugees, a member of the Nancy chamber of commerce and also of the *conseil-général* for Meurthe-et-Moselle. Banker Jean Buffet was a member of the committee to retrain the war wounded. In other cases, the initiative came from non-government institutions. The institutions applied the co-operative habits they had learnt in peace time to the different problems caused by the war.

We will see later the important part played by the *Société industrielle de l'Est* in confronting problems caused by the war in Lorraine. However, there is no doubt that the *Chambre de Commerce de Nancy* was a powerful influence in mobilising leaders of commerce and industry behind the war effort. It appears to have been a force independent of the prefect and which could represent the interests of Lorraine at national as well as regional level. This was no doubt due to the quality and contacts of its membership. As most of the chamber's staff were called up for war service the leaders of the chamber were not afraid to devote a lot of time and effort personally to many urgent matters such as the moratorium on commercial debts, requisitions, food supplies, transport and communications, assisting refugees and good works.[100]

The leadership of the chamber was unchanged during the war and had the influence to take a leading role on the home front. The president, Louis Vilgrain, had served the chamber since 1898 and had been president since 1903. His company, *les Grands Moulins de Nancy*, which he directed with his son Ernest, was a very substantial milling business. Ernest was appointed the Minister responsible for food supplies in the government of Georges Clemenceau in 1917. The vice-presidents were two iron masters representing very large businesses — Alexandre Dreux from *Aciéries de Longwy* who became president after the war, and Camille Cavallier, the head of Pont-à-Mousson. Antonin Daum of the eponymous glass maker and closely linked to the *École de Nancy*, was treasurer. The iron masters had much influence in Paris through their national trade association in which the Lorraine iron masters carried a lot of weight. The other members represented a wide range of powerful commercial interests, including other iron masters like François Vilain, the President of the *Société industrielle de l'Est* and Vice-President of the *Aciéries du Nord et de l'Est*, the chief inspector of the *Chemins de Fer de L'Est*, the director of Solvay at Dombasle, Bourcart, the Professor of Commercial Law at the university, Imbeaux, the Chief Engineer of

[99] *L'Est républicain* (13 juin 1916), p.2 col a.
[100] 'Rôle de la Chambre de Commerce de Nancy du 1er août au 31 décembre 1914', *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 12 1914, pp. 5–7.

Ponts-et Chaussées in the region who contributed much to projects to improve waterways and two prominent local bankers, Charles Renauld, the chief of the eponymous bank, and Jean Buffet.[101] The two bankers died during the war. The tribute to Charles Renauld in 1916 noted his enormous contribution to the growth of regional banks in Nancy which were the envy of other regions of France, where local banks had not grown in the same way.[102] The obituary of Jean Buffet, whose work we have already noted in chapter one, dwelt on his long service as president of the *Société nancéienne* since 1900. A former member of the elite government inspectorate of finance, he too had played a major part in the growth of regional banking and in steering its efforts to invest in local industry rather than putting money abroad. Like some of his colleagues at the *chambre de commerce* he too had excellent contacts in Paris. For example, with Charles Renauld he created the *Groupement des Banques françaises* to focus on the revival of French industry after the war was over. His book on regional banking, which we have already noted, was launched with a lecture in Paris at the *Fédération des Industriels et des Commerçants de France* in January 1917.[103]

Frequently, in making their appeals for money and other forms of support, the elite appealed not only to national patriotism but also to a sense of regional solidarity. All over France citizens were urged by the elites to support fundraising efforts to alleviate the suffering of victims of the conflict. There were a series of fundraising days or *journées* for national causes such as the *Journée du Poilu, Journée des Orphelins de la Guerre* etc. In Lorraine these fundraising efforts were often presented in a way which might appeal to regional loyalties. For example, the street sellers sometimes dressed in regional costume, as in the case of the *Journée du Canon 75* in aid of the army. *L'Est républicain* recorded that the sellers put on the costumes of Alsace and Lorraine which doubled the receipts.[104] In the case of the national *Journée des Tuberculeux* in the army fifty percent of the takings in Lorraine went to Lorraine soldiers.[105]

There was fundraising for the army, specifically for the 20th Corps which was based in Lorraine, for example on 23-24 May 1915. Victor Prouvé, the eminent member of the *École de Nancy*, designed the badge to be sold.[106] Some of the young women selling the badges again wore Alsace and Lorraine costumes.[107] Émile Nicolas in *L'Éclair de l'Est* said that Lorraine had a particular affection for the 20th corps because they were mostly from Lorraine and had, like all *Lorrains*, faced the German menace for 44 years. It has always been thus, he wrote, and here he referred to the idea of Lorraine's special role as the advance guard of France. *Lorrains* might be reserved but beneath the coldness beat a warm heart.

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[101] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 13 1915, pp. vii–xiv and vol. 15 1917, pp. ix–xi.
[102] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol.14 1916, (séance 7 octobre 1916), p. 246.
[103] *Revue industrielle de l'Est*, 26e année,1179 (21 octobre 1917), p. 51 col a–b, p. 53 col a–b.
[104] *L'Est républicain* (9 février 1915), p.2 col c.
[105] *L'Est républicain* (3 mars 1917), p.2 col b.
[106] *L'Est républicain* (24 mai 1915), p.2 col b.
[107] *L'Est républicain* (25 mai 1915), p.2 col b–c.

Therefore, *Lorrains* would respond generously to this appeal.[108] The lion's share of the money was raised in Meurthe-et-Moselle and 12% in the Aube and the Haute-Marne departments. The 150,000 francs raised was used purely for Lorraine soldiers and prisoners.[109] In November 1915 there was an event called *Serviette du soldat*, when small packets of useful items were sent to the army. Most of these were destined for the 20th Corps. The exercise was repeated in June 1916.[110]

The other great national campaigns for support from citizens during the war were those in favour of exchanging gold for bank notes and those urging subscriptions for war loans. After 1915 the French government was only able to buy supplies overseas, mostly from the United States, by paying in gold. It was not uncommon for individuals and firms to hold gold. Gold bullion was collected by the army and shipped out via the UK. In 1916 a Lorraine committee was created to encourage the exchanging of gold and the sale of war bonds. Vilgrain and Camille Cavallier took this initiative. Jambois from the Nancy chamber of commerce was elected president. The Nancy chamber gave their support and were involved in providing administrative back up.[111] Local artists Victor Prouvé and Émile Friant agreed to design posters. It was clear that the committee wanted Lorraine to set an example to France.[112] Two days later *L'Est républicain* published all the names of the patrons and those on the action committee. The names included many members of the elite — local generals, senior figures from local government and the administration, Adam the Rector of the University, Turinaz the Bishop of Nancy, Cavallier, Brocard the geography professor, Daum, the eponymous maker of glass, Hinzelin the famous propagandist for Alsace-Lorraine and editor of *L'Impartial de l'Est*, René Mercier Editor of *l'Est républicain*, Renauld and Buffet the bankers. Their plans included a road show around different locations in Lorraine.[113] A letter from Charles Renauld urging support for the exchange of gold was published on 16 August.[114] By October over 2 million francs of gold had been exchanged and 45 million of war bonds bought in Meurthe-et-Moselle.[115]

The chamber of commerce supported each war loan and encouraged its members and the Lorraine public to subscribe.[116] In October 1915 they managed to channel the loan subscriptions of members through the chamber itself. They

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[108] L'Éclair de *l'Est* (23 mai 1915).
[109] *L'Est républicain* (11 octobre 1915), p.2 col d.
[110] AD M-et-M, 8 R 217, press release 20 novembre 1915, press release from cabinet of préfet 3 juin 1916.
[111] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 14 1916, (séance 7 octobre 1916), p. 250.
[112] '*L'Est républicain* (2 août 1916). AD M-et-M, 8 R 217, letter from Fayolle secretary-general of the chamber of commerce to Martin, secretary-general of the prefecture.
[113] *L'Est républicain* (4 août 1916), p.1 col f.
[114] *L'Est républicain* (16 août 1916), p.1 col. f – p.2. col. a.
[115] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 14 1916, (séance 7 octobre 1916), p. 250.
[116] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 14 1916, (séance 7 octobre 1916), pp. 249–250, (séance 4 novembre 1916), pp. 272–3; vol. 15 1917, (séance 10 novembre 1917), p.100; vol. 16 1918, (séance 12 janvier 1918), p. 111.

decided to do this for two reasons, firstly, to show a good example to the wider business community and secondly to increase the authority of the chamber when it came to discussing the economic clauses of an eventual peace treaty.[117] A Lorraine committee of leading personalities was set up each time there was a campaign to subscribe to war loans, for example for the 3rd loan in 1917.[118] The same was done to support the *Emprunt de la Libération* at the end of 1918. A poster made a direct appeal to 'Lorrains':

'Vous aurez alors le sentiment d'avoir fait, pour votre pays, pour votre Lorraine, pour la France immortelle tout ce que vous pouviez.' [119]

The committee at this stage was very much the work of the chamber of commerce. The results of the second loan in October 1916 showed that the average per head of population raised was higher in Meurthe-et-Moselle than in France as a whole (380 francs as against 325).[120] Local people might have interpreted this as evidence of greater patriotism in Lorraine. However, there may well have been other factors like rising wealth among some sectors of the population and the paucity of other opportunities for investment while the economy was on a war footing.

The Lorraine elites had supported these national appeals energetically to show that Lorraine had a distinctive role as the advance guard of French patriotism and to encourage pride in its achievements in this regard. In addition, the Lorraine elites set up special Lorraine organisations to cope with particular challenges faced by their region. First of all, they had to tackle the problems of displaced persons, those who had had to flee their homes as the German armies advanced. They created two organisations — the *Société d'Assistance aux Réfugiés, Évacués et Sinistrés de Meurthe-et-Moselle* and the *Comité d'Assistance nancéienne aux Familles réfugiées des Villages lorrains*. The former became more of a lobbying organisation to represent the interests of those who had suffered losses. In due course it was concerned with the issue of compensation and help with reconstruction. The president was Maurice de Wendel, the iron master, the vice-president a judge. The secretary-general came from the iron works in Longwy. Of the nine members of the committee four more came from iron companies, one was a judge, one, Jean Buffet, the banker from Nancy, one an industrialist unspecified, one a professor in the medical faculty and one a member of the chamber of commerce.[121] It founded the weekly news sheet, the *Bulletin de Meurthe-et-Moselle*, run from Paris.[122] On 18 April 1915 the society started a series of conferences in Nancy on the subject of reparations. The

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[117] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 13 1915, (séance 16 octobre 1915), pp. 62–3, (séance 7 décembre 1915), pp. 110–111, (séance 9 novembre 1915), p. 92; vol. 14 1916, (séance 1 février 1916), p. 123.
[118] AD M-et-M, 2 P 147, 3rd loan 1917 list of committee members.
[119] AD M-et-M, 2 P 147, posters for the Emprunt de la Libération 1918.
[120] *L'Est républicain* (16 novembre 1916), p.1 col f.
[121] AD M-et-M, 1 J 1288 'Bulletin de Meurthe-et-Moselle (1 décembre 1914)'.
[122] AD M-et-M, 1 J 1288.

chamber of commerce was the patron of these conferences and Louis Vilgrain, as president presided at the first event.[123] Many leading figures in commerce and local government also attended. Vilgrain said that any *Lorrain* would accept responsibility for dealing with the huge damage caused by the war. Louis Marin intervened in the same sense. Mirman, the Prefect, confirmed that the state would organise reconstruction.[124]

Camille Cavallier had an important role in dealing with the issue of compensation for property owners who had suffered losses. He was nominated by the Minister of the Interior to sit on the national *Commission supérieure pour l'Évaulation des Dommages de Guerre*.[125] There was to be a series of departmental commissions to adjudicate on reparations. The chamber of commerce wanted two representatives to sit on the commission for Meurthe-et-Moselle, although this was not the central government's initial plan. They asked Cavallier to lobby for this at a national level because industrial and commercial assets were so important to Lorraine.[126] Cavallier continued to lobby for the interests of Lorraine industry in this matter. For example, in 1916 he was suggesting that reconstruction of industrial buildings could start before the evaluation commissions had pronounced, in order to speed up a recovery of economic activity.[127] How much of the cost of the damage the government would underwrite was a contentious issue from 1915 onwards. The chamber of commerce naturally enough lobbied for all damage to be covered.[128]

The *Comité d'Assistance nancéienne* concerned itself with more practical help for displaced persons in the short term. For example, they set up refuges in two former barracks in Nancy, the Caserne Molitor and the Caserne Druot. Here they provided not only lodging, food and clothing, but also education, an infirmary and work placements. The first of the regular annual reports on activities in the *casernes* lists the committee members. The prefect, the archbishop, the president of the *conseil-général* and the mayor of Nancy were honorary presidents. Jambois was the active president and Jean Buffet, the treasurer. The members of the committee came from a wide range of occupations including a priest, the president and secretary of the chamber of commerce, two professors in the *Faculté de Droit*, the treasurer of the chamber of commerce, a director of the Banque de France, the President of the *Société centrale d'Agriculture de Meurthe-et-Moselle*, and various officials but no industrialists other than those already mentioned.[129] Plenary sessions of the committee were reported regularly in *L'Est républicain*. In May the two barracks were housing 2,478 refugees. The

[123] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 13 1915, (séance 20 mars 1915), p. 257.
[124] *L'Est républicain* (20 avril 1915), p.2 col a-b.
[125] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 13 1915, (séance 10 avril 1915), pp. 12–13.
[126] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 13 1915, (séance 25 février 1915), pp. 221–228, (séance 1 avril 1915), pp. 12–13 and (séance 8 mai 1915), p. 36.
[127] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 14 1916, (séance 10 juin 1916), p. 232.
[128] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 13 1915, (séance 27 mars 1915), pp. 263–267, (séance 9 novembre 1915), pp. 98–9; vol. 15 1917, (séance 7 mars 1917), pp. 50–4.
[129] AD *M-et-M,* 1 J 30, 'Rapports Caserne Molitor 12/1914–9/1915 and 9/15–12/1916'.

committee voted funds to maintain all the activities mentioned above. Georges Hottenger, the sociologist, joined them in May. The committee decided to open in addition an information office where any refugees could get advice. In July the Abbé Thouvenin, who founded the union of local reconstruction cooperatives in Meurthe-et-Moselle in 1919, published a guide on how the dispossessed should register the losses they had suffered and this was made widely available.[130]

The chamber of commerce's concern with the plight of refugees continued right through the war. In 1917 they were active in providing clothing and shelter for those going back to villages now liberated from the German occupation. They wanted some financial help from the government as correspondence between them, the prefect and the Ministry of the Interior reveals.[131]

The *Société industrielle de l'Est* was also heavily involved in programmes to alleviate the suffering caused by the war after 1914. It could of course draw on a wide range of contacts in the world of industry, commerce and academia. It concentrated in particular on the fate of Lorrrainers in the army who were prisoners in Germany. It supported the retraining of soldiers injured in the war and developed schemes for finding them work.[132] It also helped many other organisations relieving those suffering from the effects of the war in a variety of ways.[133]

On 24 February 1915 a letter appeared in the press from Turinaz, Mirman, Simon, Mayor of Nancy, and Jambois president of the Comité d'Assistance. They said that the *Société industrielle de l'Est* had set up an office to try and find missing soldiers probably taken prisoner. (The society's own publication shows that this work had started in the last quarter of 1914).[134] They were particularly concerned about prisoners from occupied areas who had no way of getting in contact with their refugee families. The *Société*'s office also sent some money and goods to these prisoners. It set about identifying the prisoners from occupied areas and where they were incarcerated in Germany with the help of the Post Office. Refugees could come to their office to find out details about their relatives and get in touch with them. Mirman and his colleagues appealed for 30,000 francs to finance the continuation of this work.[135] Soon subscription lists appeared in the press. De Wendel in Paris gave 2,000 francs.[136]

Once the money was raised the work moved on to sending as many packets to prisoners as possible. On 25 April 1915 a straightforward appeal was made to

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[130] *L'Est républicain* (25 mai 1915), p.2 col a, (20 juin 1915), p.3 col e, (6 juillet 1915), p.2 col b, (21 septembre 1915), p.2 col c–d.
[131] AD M-et-M, 8 R 217, letter from Prefect Mirman to Minister of the Interior 7 mai 1917; letter from Nancy Chambre de Commerce to Mirman 19 mai 1917.
[132] *La Société industrielle de l'Est pendant la guerre 1914–1918* (Paris, 1919), p. 4.
[133] *Société industrielle pendant la guerre*, p.30.
[134] *Bulletin de la Société industrielle de l'Est*, no. 123 (1914), p.3.
[135] *L'Est républicain* (24 février 1915), p.2 col a–c.
[136] *L'Est républicain,* (19 mars 1915), p. 2 col c.

Lorraine solidarity. The article said Lorraine was not avoiding the sacrifice needed because it knew that the money would go to its own people who had in effect no family because their kin had been forced to leave their homes. So far the *Société industrielle de l'Es*t had helped 2,000 prisoners left in this desperate situation.[137] 4,000 packets had been sent out by the end of June. Young women from the Caserne Molitor on a household management course at the *Société industrielle de l'Est* helped with this task.[138] The fundraising day for the 20th Corps contributed 10,000 francs to this work.[139] Later another 10,000 francs came from the *conseil-général*.[140] The *Société industrielle de l'Est* continued to send packets to prisoners throughout the rest of the war.[141]

As a by-product of its work tracing Lorraine prisoners in Germany it also managed to put serving Lorraine soldiers with relatives now in occupied territory, for instance around Briey in the iron field, in touch with their families.[142] By the end of the war the *Société* was sending regular parcels to 8,000 Lorraine prisoners. 90% of the cost of doing this, 1.5m francs in total, came from the state and 10% from private donations.[143] At the end of the war, when repatriated prisoners arrived home, the *Société* provided emergency aid to them before they could get re-settled.[144]

The *Société industrielle de l'Est* was not the only Lorraine organisation active in helping Lorraine's prisoners. Early in 1915 the *Fédération des Commerçants de Nancy* had already supported the *Société industrielle de l'Est's* work for prisoners with a donation of 1000 francs.[145] On 3 and 10 December 1915 and 1916 a *journée* was organised by the *Fédération* to raise money by street collections for prisoners from Meurthe-et-Moselle. In 1916 the collection was organised to coincide with the festivities of Saint Nicholas which were traditional in Lorraine, but not in the rest of France.[146] The money would be used to send the prisoners food parcels. A committee of patronage was formed with familiar names, the bishop, the prefect, senators and deputies, the Rector of the Academy, newspaper editors, Jambois and Brun, the Secretary-General of the *Société industrielle de l'Est*. They wanted to work alongside the *Oeuvre des Prisonniers de Guerre* of the *Société.* They appealed to the 'sentiment de bonne confraternité vis-à-vis de tous nos compatriotes lorrains.'[147] Over the next few weeks the committee published lists of donations before the main collection event. On 26 October 1916 they received a donation of 500 francs from the Solvay company in

[137] *L'Est républicain* (25 avril 1915), p.2 col b–c.
[138] *Bulletin de la Société industrielle de l'Est*, no. 124 (1915), pp.5–8, 16.
[139] *L'Est républicain* (19 juin 1915), p. 2 col a.
[140] *L'Est républicain* (2 décembre 1915), p. 2 col b.
[141] *L'Est républicain* (25 avril 1916), p. 2 col b–c, (25 juin), p. 2 col c.
[142] *Bulletin de la Société industrielle de l'Est*, no. 125 (1915), p.9.
[143] *Société industrielle pendant la guerre*, p.19.
[144] *Société industrielle pendant la guerre*, p. 21.
[145] *L'Est républicain* (11 février 1915), p.2 col b.
[146] *L'Est républicain* (17 septembre 1916), p. 2 col d.
[147] *L'Est républicain* (19 septembre 1916), p. 2 col a–b.

Dombasle, owned by a Belgian.[148] Other companies joined wealthy individuals in making advance donations such as the *Société nancéienne de Crédit industriel et de Dépôts* — 500 francs.[149] The poster deliberately used Lorraine themes to enhance its local appeal — a charming young woman in Lorraine dress and a Nancy thistle.[150] The results of this exercise were encouraging — 63,789 francs raised in 1916 and 133,000 for the two days in 1915 and 1916 together. Most of the money went to the work of the *Société industrielle de l'Est* with prisoners, with smaller sums to Mme. Mirman's charity for prisoners and for prisoner campaigns in Toul and Lunéville.[151] The *Société*'s end of war report paid tribute to the major contribution made by the *Fédération des Commerçants* as well as the help received from the press through free insertions.[152] Such appeals for prisoners were not unique to the Meurthe-et-Moselle within Lorraine. There was a similar fundraising effort in the department of the Vosges for example between July and December 1915. Over 10,000 francs was raised.[153]

The *Société industrielle de l'Est*'s work to retrain the *mutilés de la guerre* also started in 1915. On 23 September a letter from Brun, the secretary, appeared in *L'Est républicain* asking members to look for more posts in their organisation which could be filled by *mutilés*. The *Société* had already placed some *mutilés* as supervisors, errand boys, delivery men, watchmen, office and shop employees.[154] On 11 October a letter in *L'Est républicain* announced an association dedicated to this problem in Lorraine — *Association lorraine d'Assistance par l'Éducation professionnelle et par le Travail aux Invalides de la Guerre*. The founders were Jean Buffet, Professor Gaston Michel in the Faculty of Medicine and Houot, a notary, assisted by Jambois and Krug, another member of the chamber of commerce. It was the first of its kind in France. Founded on 30 December 1914, it transferred to a local hospital in November 1915. Its role was to foster proper medical assessment of the mens' conditions, to provide re-training and help them find work.[155] The pen of Maurice Barrès made it a national movement with a national federation of regional organisations. In June 1916 the central government stepped in to ensure there was a well-organised facility for war wounded in eleven regions. Their mission was to assess war wounded using trained medical staff, develop and supply prostheses, aid rehabilitation with physiotherapy and provide training in relevant skills.[156] The state gave subsidies to the regional organisations, whether they were founded by departments, towns, chambers of commerce, charitable organisations or through private initiative. The Lorraine

[148] *L'Est républicain* (26 octobre 1916), p.1 col f.
[149] *L'Est républicain* (16 octobre 1916), p.2 col c.
[150] *L'Est républicain* (11 novembre 1916), p.2 col a.
[151] *L'Est républicain* (3 juillet 1917), p.2 col a and (6 juillet), p.2 col a.
[152] *Société industrielle pendant la guerre*, p. 17.
[153] *Union républicaine des Vosges* (21, 29 septembre 1915), (8, 15, 17, 30 octobre 1915), (5,12, 15, 19, 22, 29, 30 novembre 1915), (7, 16, 17 décembre 1915).
[154] *L'Est républicain* (23 septembre 1915), p.2 col c.
[155] P. Labrude, B. Legras, L. Mezzarobba, C. Richard, *La Faculté de Médecine et l'École de Pharmacie de Nancy dans la Grande Guerre* (Haroué, 2016), pp. 85–86.
[156] *Le Moniteur du Puy-de-Dôme* (28 mars 1917), p. 3 col c–d.

association came under the latter category. The Lorraine organisation covered Meurthe-et-Moselle and neighbouring departments with whom there were longstanding industrial, commercial and judicial links. There was a central committee in Nancy and special departmental committees. The *École professionnelle de l'Est* in Nancy had pledged to help.[157] The *Société industrielle de l'Est* provided a secretariat and also put pressure on employers for placements.[158] The university lent premises.[159] The chamber of commerce also lent material and moral support following a brief presentation by Jean Buffet in February 1915.[160] The *Association lorraine* was not the only such organisation in Lorraine. *L'Éclair de l'Est* announced on 28 April 1915 a *Société amicale des Militaires mutilés ou réformés*. Its objective was to help those invalided out of the army to find work. Its committee had no overlap with the main association.[161]

Subscriptions started to come in immediately to the *Association lorraine*.[162] Finding jobs for the disabled was not easy. The *Société industrielle de l'Est* issued another appeal for help from employers in March 1916. Out of 185 applications from war disabled they had managed to place 52 in jobs and send 40 for re-training.[163] In October 1916 Jean Buffet made a speech on the occasion of the first award of diplomas to disabled soldiers at the school in Nancy for their re-education. He said Lorraine had set an example in this work to the rest of France and paid tribute to the various organisations and people who had contributed to this success including the *Société industrielle de l'Est*. The state, the prefect and the hospitals had played an important part as had the *École professionnelle de l'Est* and the nurses of Saint-Charles.[164] By 1917 the percentage of disabled soldiers placed in work had risen considerably to 71%, with 18% doing further training.[165] Overall, by November 1919, out of 1140 disabled who had applied to the *Société*, 623 had been placed in jobs. The report compiled at the end of the war noted with pride that this had enhanced regional productivity.[166]

The centre for all these fundraising activities was Nancy and the Meurthe-et-Moselle department. Such activities were described as being on behalf of Lorraine. However, other departments within Lorraine had suffered grievously too. Villages in the east of the Vosges had suffered. There was an appeal for the populations of regions within the Vosges devastated by the war, called *L'Armoire lorraine*.[167] Arguably the Meuse department had suffered more than the Meurthe-

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[157] *L'Est républicain* (11 octobre 1915), p. 2 col b–c. *Bulletin de la Société industrielle de l'Est*, no. 124 (1915), pp.3, 17–24.
[158] *Société industrielle pendant la guerre*, p. 26.
[159] *Bulletin de la Société industrielle de l'Est*, no. 124 (1915), p.19.
[160] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 13 1915 (séance 25 février 1915), pp. 230–1.
[161] *L'Éclair de l'Est* (28 avril 1915).
[162] *L'Est républicain* (27 septembre 1915), p. 2 col b.
[163] *L'Est républicain* (12 mars 1916), p. 2 col b.
[164] *L'Est républicain* (12 octobre 1916), p. 1 col f.
[165] *Bulletin de la Société industrielle de l'Est*, no. 128 (1917), p.6.
[166] *Société industrielle pendant la guerre*, p. 27.
[167] *Union républicaine des Vosges* (15 septembre 1915).

et-Moselle. A greater proportion of its territory had been occupied and devastated by the fighting. The *conseil-général* there decided at the end of 1916 that it had helped many national causes and was now entitled to look after its own. Accordingly, a *Journée de la Meuse* was set up in March 1917 to raise funds under the patronage of Poincaré, who came from the department. It had similar objectives to the appeals made from Nancy. An appeal was made to the whole of France to support this work because the Meuse had suffered particularly badly with the fighting around Verdun.[168]

By 1917 the attention of the Lorraine elites was turning more seriously to the reconstruction of refugees' homes. In March 1917 the urbanist and sociologist Georges Hottenger published a major article in the *Société industrielle de l'Est*'s bulletin on all the problems of reconstruction which would have to be dealt with in Lorraine.[169] The previous year François Villain, the president of the *Société* had published an article on housing for workers in the context of the major exhibition on urbanism in Paris. Naturally it touched on reconstruction issues.[170] A national appeal called *Le Devoir social pour la Reconstitution des Foyers détruits par la Guerre* was raising substantial amounts of money in Lorraine as the published subscriptions lists show.[171]

In 1917 a committee (*Comité de Reconstitution des Régions éprouvées par la Guerre Meurthe-et-Moselle, Meuse et Vosges*) to rebuild regions damaged in the war was formed under the patronage of the *Société industrielle de l'Est* and it started to publish the journal *La Reconstruction lorraine*, which became an important influence in the process.[172] The circulation started at 1200 and later dropped to just under 900.[173] The committee could draw on a wide range of expertise —engineers from *Ponts-et-Chaussées* like Aubin the president and Imbeaux, academics from Nancy university like Bourcart the lawyer and Nicklès the geologist, Hottenger, L. Thiry the director of the agricultural school at Dombasle, industrialists like François Villain, François and Maurice de Wendel, builders like Cayotte the secretary (*Président du Syndicat des Entrepreneurs du Bâtiment)*, newspapermen like René Mercier from *L'Est républicain* and Émile Nicolas the art critic and founder of the École de Nancy, bankers like Buffet, local senators and deputies from the Meuse and the Vosges, as well as the Meurthe-et-Moselle, including Louis Marin and Albert Lebrun, the mayors of Nancy, Lunéville and Toul, Jambois from the Nancy Chamber of Commerce, the Abbé Thouvenin,

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[168] *L'Est républicain* (26 novembre 1916), p.2 col a, (8 janvier 1917), p.2. col c–d.
[169] G. Hottenger, 'La Question de l'habitation et de la reconstruction des villes et villages lorrains', *Bulletin de la Société industrielle de l'Est*, no. 128 (1917), pp. 24–59.
[170] F. Villain, 'La Vie dans une cité ouvrière, conférence faite le 26 juillet à Paris à l'exposition de la Cité reconstituée', *Bulletin de la Société industrielle de l'Est,* no. 127 (1916), pp. 25–46.
[171] *L'Est républicain* (23 juin 1917), p.2 col b, (22 juillet 1917), p.2 col a, (9 septembre 1917), p. 2 col c–d.
[172] *L'Est républicain* (2 août 1917), p.2 col a.
[173] See authorisation slips from Prefecture in BNF copies of the journal for 15 septembre 1917 and 15 mars 1918.

artists like Victor Prouvé and Émile Friant the painter, Charles Sadoul from the *Musée lorrain* and Émile André, the architect. The committee's focus was on the technical and financial aspects of reconstruction and also on protecting regional interests between central government and local construction projects.[174] *La Reconstruction lorraine's* overall approach was that the government could not be expected to do everything. It could only give general direction and therefore private organisations would have to step in.[175]

As the war progressed reconstruction became the dominant issue for the Lorraine elite. The formation of appropriate local organisations was key. Hottenger had already drawn attention to the lessons to be learnt from associations set up to deal with re-apportioning agricultural land, the *remembrements*. He made the case for local cooperatives to carry out the work and also for intermediate organisations between the state and the cooperatives, like the Lorraine reconstruction committee.[176] *La Reconstruction lorraine* supported this view by re-publishing Hottenger's articles in its July, August and September 1917 issues and also by running some of its own advocating the need for independent associations in the process of rebuilding.[177] Lorraine was signalling that it wanted to be master of its own destiny and not have solutions imposed from Paris.

The *Comité de Reconstitution* was concerned not just with the Meurthe-et-Moselle but with the whole of Lorraine. The journal *La Reconstruction Lorraine* advertised the creation of a *Société pour le Relèvement du Pays Meusien et de Verdun*.[178] The journal also published articles on the reconstruction issues raised at Verdun.[179] There were two points of view on reconstruction here. Péquart, the director of the *Société pour le Relèvement*, believed the ruins of the town should be left untouched as an example of German barbarity for future generations. He wanted to build a new town nearby. Émile Nicolas felt that the ruins left unrestored would become dilapidated and that it was better to reconstruct the town where it was in a style sympathetic to the appearance of the old Verdun. This dilemma was a fundamental one for the whole reconstruction effort across northern France, in Lorraine and elsewhere.

La Reconstruction lorraine, set up to protect regional interests, put down a number of markers before the end of the war about issues which would figure prominently in post-war reconstruction debates. Firstly, it was paramount that regional styles of architecture and materials were used.[180] Secondly, Lorraine expected to be treated fairly vis-à-vis other regions. Hottenger posed the question

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[174] Bulletin de la *Société industrielle de l'Est,* no. 129 (1917), pp. 14–18. *La Reconstruction lorraine* (15 juillet 1917), pp. 4–5, (15 août 1917), pp. 1–2, (15 septembre 1917), p.1, (15 octobre 1917), p.1, (15 août 1918), p.1.
[175] *La Reconstruction lorraine* (15 juillet 1917), pp. 1–3.
[176] Hottenger, '*La* Question de l'habitation', p. 54.
[177] *La Reconstruction lorraine* (15 septembre 1917), pp. 5–9; (15 octobre 1917), pp. 9–14.
[178] *La Reconstruction lorraine* (15 août 1917), p. 9.
[179] *La Reconstruction lorraine* (15 février 1918), pp. 20–27, (15 mars 1918), pp. 9–14.
[180] *La Reconstruction lorraine* (15 septembre 1917), p.2.

— was it fair that Lorraine should pay the same level of income tax as the Centre, the West and the Midi? For many in these regions the war had been a source of scandalous profits and for the rest one enormous news story.[181] Lorraine wanted reparation in full and as speedily as possible.

3. v. Regional solidarity in action in the Auvergne

Here too the elite showed some sense of regional solidarity in the work they undertook to support the war effort. For some emergencies they set up specifically regional organisations, for example the *Association d'Auvergne pour les Prisonniers de Guerre*, an offshoot of a national organisation for prisoners. A major conference was organised in May 1915 in the Faculty of Letters of the University of Clermont-Ferrand. It was attended by the prefect, various generals, Chalus the president of the chamber of commerce, Desdevises du Dézert, the honorary dean of the Faculty of Letters, and Audollent the current dean. There was an appeal for donations. The committee of the Auvergne association was undertaking research on soldiers who had disappeared and on prisoners from the area.[182] By 1916 this local agency was helping 900 prisoners from the Puy-de-Dôme as opposed to 500 in 1915.[183] There was a steady flow of donations throughout the war.[184] Further appeals had to be made because of a shortfall in government support as prisoner numbers increased. Local authorities were asked to help and speakers like Professor Lange, from the Faculty of Letters, went on fundraising tours, speaking in halls.

There was plenty of help locally for wounded soldiers. In December 1915 a *Foyer du Soldat blessé* was set up under the patronage of the prefect and other local dignitaries. Raymond Bergoungnan was the president and Audollent and Lange were involved as well as various senior officers in the local administration. The *foyer* was a house where soldiers could go for company every afternoon. Local people were encouraged to donate. Bergougnan set an example by giving 1000 francs and Desdevises and Audollent were also in the initial subscription list. By 1918 there were fewer wounded using the *foyer* so it was opened to all

[181] G. Hottenger, 'Le retour au pays, tarifs réduits et dégrèvements', *La Reconstruction lorraine* (15 septembre 1918), p. 56.
[182] *Le Moniteur du Puy-de-Dôme* (11 mai 1915), p.3 col b–c; *L'Avenir du Puy-de-Dôme,* (11 mai 1915), p.2 col b–c.
[183] *Le Moniteur du Puy-de-Dôme* (31 mai 1916), p. 3 col e; *L'Avenir du Puy-de-Dôme* (31 mai 1916), p.2 col d.
[184] *Le Moniteur du Puy-de-Dôme* (23 décembre 1915), p. 3 col d; (27 janvier 1916), p.3 col a, (6 novembre 1916), p.4 col b–c; (11 décembre 1917), p. 3 col b.

soldiers.[185] There was yet another initiative for the wounded — *Assistance aux Mutilés.*[186]

Regarding the wounded there was a particular focus on re-training them and finding them jobs as there was in Lorraine and other parts of France. Desdevises du Dézert drew attention to their plight in a typical patriotic speech to raise funds called *Les Poètes et la Guerre.* The book of poems to be sold to raise funds for practical help for the wounded included pieces by well-known Auvergnat poets we have already encountered including Gandilhon Gens-d'Armes, 'un bon Cantalien', Henri Pourrat, Amélie Murat and Pierre de Nolhac.[187] Soon afterwards a local organisation was formed called *Gagne-Pain des Mutilés*, whose purpose was to help war wounded gain an honorable living. The committee included Audollent and several lawyers.[188] By the end of the year a school for re-training the wounded had been set up (*École professionnelle des Blessés de Guerre*), working alongside an initiative providing accommodation for wounded soldiers (A.C.M. Assistance pour les Convalescents militaires).[189] In 1916 central government action ensured there was a well-organised facility for Clermont-Ferrand.[190] The chamber of commerce in Clermont-Ferrand gave its support to the school which it believed produced excellent results. In 1917 it voted an annual donation of 1000 francs.[191]

Desdevises was active in other ways on behalf of wounded soldiers. He set up on his own initiative a home to help blind soldiers which he directed — *Maison des Soldats aveugles de la Guerre: École professionnelle de Rééducation et d'Apprentissage des Soldats aveugles de la Guerre* according to a special letterhead. He included it within the 13th region in the government action mentioned above, an annex of the hospital 88.[192] He began with six people making brushes and baskets.[193] He was still running the operation in the spring of 1918.[194] Desdevises spoke up for yet another *oeuvre* called *Enfants à la Montagne*, which arranged for children of absent soldiers to have a holiday in the

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[185] *Le Moniteur du Puy-de-Dôme* (5 décembre 1915), p. 3 col b, (9 décembre 1915), p. 3 col d, (30 décembre 1915), p. 3 col d; (23 mars 1918), p. 3 col c. *L'Avenir du Puy-de-Dôme,* (5 décembre 1915), p.2 col f; (23 mars 1918), p. 3 col a.
[186] *Le Moniteur du Puy-de-Dôme* (8 février 1917), p. 3 col c.
[187] *Le Moniteur du Puy-de-Dôme* (10 mai 1915), p. 3 col b–c.
[188] *Le Moniteur du Puy-de-Dôme* (24 juin 1915), p. 3 col b. *L'Avenir du Puy-de-Dôme* (24 juin 1915), p.2 col d–e.
[189] *Le Moniteur du Puy-de-Dôme* (8 décembre 1915), p. 3 col d.
[190] *Le Moniteur du Puy-de-Dôme* (28 mars 1917), p. 3 col c–d.
[191] *Travaux Clermont-Ferrand*, (séance 15 février 1917), p.15.
[192] Patrimoine, MSS Desdevises du Dézert 1911–1942, carton 19 DESD, correspondance Desdevises–Pourrat, G. Desdevises to H. Pourrat, letter 3 novembre 1916.
[193] Ibid, G. Desdevises to H. Pourrat, letter 8 juin 1916.
[194] Ibid, G. Desdevises to H. Pourrat, letter 22 mars1918. See also Desdevises's published account of his work, G. Desdevises du Dézert, *Pour la maison de rééducation des aveugles de la guerre à Montferrand* (Clermont-Ferrand, 1916).

mountains thus giving a break to their harassed mothers. He asked for further financial support.[195] In 1915 Michelin had given 2,000 francs, Raymond Bergougnan 2,400 and the town of Clermont 2,300 to provide the 15,000 needed to send the children away for the whole of August.[196]

The *oeuvre de guerre* with the most obviously Auvergnat appeal was the *Journée du Puy-de-Dôme* on 23 January 1916. This was a special fundraising effort for a previously established *oeuvre*, the *paquetage du soldat*, which sought donations for parcels to be sent to soldiers giving them a few home comforts. It was an opportunity for ordinary people to send gifts in kind rather than money and many donations were made in this way.[197] By the end of 1915 200,000 francs had been raised and an equivalent value of goods sent out. Approximately 40–50 packets a day were being dispatched containing 30 francs' worth of items.[198] On the occasion of the *Journée du Puy-de-Dôme* itself donors were told that 'Donner pour la Journée du Puy-de-Dôme, c'est donner pour tous les enfants d'Auvergne.'[199] Badges were sold on the streets including one depicting the arms of the Auvergne.[200] The badges sold out raising 17,000 francs on the day so there was a repeat sale on 6 February. Concerts were also held to raise more money.[201] The posters for this fundraising contained obvious references — Vercingétorix and volcano shaped mountains.[202] The second poster carried the legend 'Avec ça, il ne serait pas enrhumé papa.' Frequently such packets included warm clothing, as we see from the first poster — warm hats, socks etc. It is worth pointing out that posters for regional fundraising days, for the Auvergne and many other regions, were produced by the well-known house of Devambez in Paris who provided appropriate designs and a finished printed product. They also produced posters for many national appeals. However, this does not invalidate the point that organisers thought their regional appeal would be more successful if an appeal was made to regional solidarity.[203]

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[195] *Le Moniteur du Puy-de-Dôme* (11 juin 1916), p.3 col b; (9 juin 1918), p.2 col e.
[196] *L'Avenir du Puy-de-Dôme (*23 septembre 1915)*,* p. 3 col a.
[197] *Le Moniteur du Puy-de-Dôme* (5 février 1915), p. 3 col d, (11 février 1915), p. 3 col c, (12 février 1915), p. 3 col d. *L'Avenir du Puy-de-Dôme* (18 janvier 1916), p. 2 col d.
[198] *Le Moniteur du Puy-de-Dôme* (4 décembre 1915), p. 3 col d, (29 décembre 1915), p. 3 col c. *L'Avenir du Puy-de-Dôme (*29 décembre 1915), p. 3 col a–b.
[199] *Le Moniteur du Puy-de-Dôme* (20 janvier 1916), p. 3 col e.
[200] *Le Moniteur du Puy-de-Dôme* (22 janvier 1916), p. 3 col c.
[201] *Le Moniteur du Puy-de-Dôme* (23 janvier 1916), p.3 col d, (24 janvier 1916), p. 3 col a, (30 janvier 1916), p. 3 col b. *L'Avenir du Puy-de-Dôme (*24 janvier 1916), p. 2 col c, (30 janvier 1916), p.2 col c.
[202] Patrimoine, web site Overnia, GR 12017, Affiches, Willette, A.L., *Journée du Puy-de-Dôme, Vercingétorix soldat au front, paquetage du soldat, 23 janvier 1916,* (Imprimeur Devambez, Paris,1916). BNF, IFN-9013081, *F. Poulbot, Journée du Puy-de-Dôme, paquetage du soldat, 23 janvier 1916,* "*Avec ça, il ne serait pas enrhumé, papa*."
[203] I am indebted for this insight to Pierre Purseigle of the University of Warwick, who also drew attention to similar posters used in the Languedoc in P. Purseigle, *Mobilisation, sacrifice, citoyenneté: Angleterre-France 1900-1918* (Paris, 2013), pp. 103-109. For examples of Devambez's regional posters see R. Paillard, *Affiches 14-18* (Reims,1986), pp.64,116, 119.



Fig. 1 Willette, A.L., *Journée du Puy-de-Dôme, Vercingétorix soldat au front, paquetage du soldat, 23 janvier 1916,* (Imprimeur Devambez, Paris,1916).

Donations were still being raised for parcels in the spring of 1918.[204]

[204] *Le Moniteur du Puy-de-Dôme* (12 mars 1918), p. 3 col b–c. *L'Avenir du Puy-de-Dôme* (12 mars 1918), p. 3 col b–d.



Fig. 2 *F. Poulbot, Journée du Puy-de-Dôme, paquetage du soldat, 23 janvier 1916, "Avec ça, il ne serait pas enrhumé, papa."*

There is thus some evidence that patriotism in the Auvergne in support of the war drew its strength from an identification with the region and appealed to regional loyalties in support of the French cause; the *petite patrie* supporting the *grande patrie* again.

3. vi. Issues likely to face Lorraine industry in the post-war period

As the war progressed Lorraine commercial and industrial interests gave thought to how they might recover once peace came. There a lively debate and many of the ideas put forward were adopted after the war. The chamber of commerce was already considering a recovery plan in 1915. They decided on a comprehensive inquiry into Lorraine's industry to highlight the problems of such a recovery and to see how the chamber could facilitate it.[205]

[205] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 13 1915, (séance 8 mai 1915), pp. 22–26.

As the end of the war approached the *Société industrielle de l'Est* also turned its attention to the major social and economic issues the region would face in peacetime. The *Bulletin* published a series of articles on the challenges the major industries of Lorraine would face including sectors like tourism and forestry.[206] The *Revue industrielle de l'Es*t, the society's other publication, started a series of articles on major industries in Lorraine with an overview by Robert Parisot, the historian.[207] He set out in great detail the major industrial growth which happened in Lorraine in the years before the war and the wide range of types of industry situated there. It was as if he was setting out Lorraine's stall when it came to arguments about reparations and relaunching the economy after the war. In his conclusion he lamented the brutal interruption to growth in 1914, the key industrial personnel killed in the war and the skills lost, and the occupation of Briey which he said was due to a lack of military preparation, a theme taken up later by Albert Lebrun.[208] In any peace settlement all the industry taken from France in 1871 should be returned plus the Saarland taken in 1815. France should have free access to Saar coal essential for Lorraine's industries.[209]

The *Revue* followed up this overview with separate articles on brewing, paper making, the hotel industry and agriculture.[210] Albert Tourtel, well-known Lorraine brewer and member of the chamber of commerce, drew attention to the problem of dearer raw materials after the war, higher wages, shortage of labour and the difficulty of obtaining coal. Lorraine beers would also face competition from those from Alsace-Lorrraine. He called for protection from German competition by tariffs.[211] The coal question would come to dominate the short term horizon of Lorraine industry. As the *Union économique de l'Est* pointed out, France in 1917 was using 40 million tons of coal a year and only 29m could be provided from French mines. Of this 11.5m came from mines in the Pas-de-Calais where production was too near the front. After the war the demand for coal would rocket with the revival of industry.[212] The *Revue industrielle de l'Es*t reflected this concern by publishing two articles on the subject 'comment économiser la charbon dans l'industrie'.[213]

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[206] Bulletin de la *Société industrielle de l'Est,* nos. 130–132 (1917); no. 143 (1918).
[207] *Revue industrielle de l'Est* (5 janvier 1918), pp. 189, 191, 193; (20 janvier 1918), pp. 215, 217; (10 février 1918), pp. 255, 257; (3 mars 1918), pp. 297, 299; (10 mars 1918), pp. 313, 215, 317; (17 mars 1918), pp. 327, 329.
[208] A. Lebrun, *La Politique du fer au cours de la guerre, la question de Briey*, *conférence faite à la Société industrielle de l'Est, le 18 juin 1920* (Nancy, 1920).
[209] *R*evue industrielle de l'Est (17 mars 1918), p. 329.
[210] *Revue industrielle de l'Est* (7 avril 1918), pp. 373, 375; (14 avril 1918), pp. 387,389; (21 avril 1918), pp. 405, 407; (2 juin 1918), pp. 401, 403; (9 juin 1918), pp. 505, 507.
[211] Ibid, 7 et 14 avril 1918.
[212] *Union économique de l'Est,* 2e année (1 mai 1918), pp. 105–106.
[213] *Revue industrielle de l'Est*, 1e année (17 novembre 1918), pp. 861,863; (29 décembre 1918), p. 649.

The *Union économique de l'Est*, a journal set up to push an agenda of regional reconstruction under the patronage of the chambers of commerce of the region, joined in this debate about post-war industry.[214] A series of articles appeared in 1917 on the future of the metallurgical industries inspired by Camille Cavallier, vice-president of the chamber of commerce and president of the iron works at Pont-à-Mousson. The French iron industry had a number of weaknesses. It lacked coal, there was a shortage of skills and the home market was under-developed.[215] France needed to increase the birth rate to provide more workers and a larger home market. Improvements in efficiency were needed to economise on the use of labour by using the latest methods (Taylorism) and also by investing in better machines. Women could not be kept in their wartime jobs in factories because they were needed at home to raise families. Recruitment abroad was not the whole solution. There was also a need for capital to be provided quickly after the war to pay for re-equipment, particularly of the Briey iron field, when it was returned to France.[216] Cavallier believed that the leaders of French metallurgy in Lorraine and elsewhere had to get more involved in politics to ensure a favourable climate for industry. They should be pushing for measures to promote larger families, a measure of tariff protection, training facilities for factory supervisors, measures to combat tuberculosis, alcoholism and syphilis and to provide better housing for workers. There should be more investment in hydro-electric power. In general, governments should place more emphasis on economic policy, a marked departure from the *laisser-faire* approach before the war. He also foresaw individual iron companies grouping into federations.[217] Cavallier was also behind the lecture given by Victor Cambon at the invitation of the chamber of commerce in 1917. Cambon was a Professor at the *École centrale des Arts et Manufactures* and an expert on industrial efficiency and Taylorism, the ideas on scientific management developed by Frederick Taylor in the United States before the war. Cavallier introduced the professor by riding his own hobby horses — the birth rate, and clean and healthy living. This emphasis on improving the fitness of the French race was, he said, supported by Marshal Lyautey. In his lecture Cambon advocated a more rounded business education for tomorrow's leaders of industry.[218]

This programme outlined by Cavallier was picked up and expanded by other writers in *L'Union économique de l'Est*. Lorraine industry and consumers had to become less dependent on German products after the war.[219] Lorraine industries

[214] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 15 1917, (séance10 février 1917), p. 19.
[215] *Union économique de l'Est*, 1e année (1 août 1917), pp. 8–10, (15 octobre 1917), pp. 10–13.
[216] *Union économique de l'Est*, 1e année (1 novembre 1917), pp. 6–9.
[217] *Union économique de l'Est*, 1e année (15 novembre 1917), pp. 6–9.
[218] 'L'Organisation industrielle et la conférence de Victor Cambon', *Union économique de l'Est*, 1e année (1 mars 1917), pp. 1–4.
[219] 'L'Office des industries nouvelles, contribution à la préparation de l'après-guerre', *Union économique de l'Est*, 1e année (1 juin 1917), pp. 7–8.

had to export more.[220] They should look to colonial markets.[221] Lucien Brocard, the geographer from the University, who played an important part in debates before the war, wrote in *L'Union économique de l'Est* about the need to re-start the project for a stock exchange in Nancy, which fell foul of a legal problem in 1908. Lorraine could float more shares than some of the existing regional exchanges in France. Lorraine could not depend on its excellent regional banks to trade in shares as in the past. The size and speed of capital markets, particularly after the war when reconstruction started, made this impractical. An exchange would be essential in peace time if Lorraine was to rebuild.[222]

Transport issues were also a major concern for the future among the industrial leaders of Lorraine. In 1917 the chamber of commerce took the initiative in setting up an *Office des Transports* to bring the combined weight of 21 chambers in the eastern region to bear on operational issues for roads, canals and railways and on future development. They modelled their project on a similar office in the South-East.[223] As Lorraine industry faced renewed competition with Germany after the war, the deficiencies of the water transport network in France, compared with Germany, were a pressing concern. Lorraine needed access to raw materials, markets and energy more than ever. Accordingly, the *Revue industrielle de l'Es*t published two articles entitled U*n péril national, l'encerclement par l'eau*, referring to the German network based on navigable rivers like the Rhine linked to the North Sea.[224] The chamber of commerce felt that the only solution to the transport needs of heavy industry in the Meurthe-et-Moselle was the canalisation of the Moselle, which would have to wait until the end of the war.[225] Another grand plan for canal improvement appeared at the same time in the *Union économique de l'Est*. This included the canalisation of the Moselle to Coblenz as well as a canal across northern France to Dunkerque.[226] Clearly the Nancy chamber was flying a kite in its own publication.

We have analysed the special partnership between the faculty of sciences and industry before the war and the opening of a number of technical institutes. Charles Adam, the Rector of the University, was at pains to point out during the war the contribution which university scientists were making to the war effort. Chemists and others trained at the university were making a vital contribution to

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[220] E. Nicolas, 'L'Avenir de l'art décoratif lorrain', *Union économique de l'Est*, 1e année (1 juillet 1917), pp.1–2.
[221] M. Juillard-Hartmann, Président du Syndicat cotonnier de l'Est à Épinal, 'L'Industrie du coton dans l'Est', *Union économique de l'Est*, 2e année (15 février 1918), pp. 37–9.
[222] L. Brocard, 'La bourse des valeurs de Nancy', *Union économique de l'Est*, 2e année (15 mars 1918), pp. 61–3.
[223] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 15 1917, (séance 5 mai 1917), p. 61; (séance 7 juillet 1917), p. 72.
[224] *Revue industrielle de l'Est* (24 mars 1918), pp. 343, 345; (31 mars 1918), pp. 359, 361.
[225] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 16 1918, (séance 13 août 1918), p. 120.
[226] *Union économique de l'Est*, 2e année (1 mai 1918), pp. 102–104; (15 mai 1918), pp. 114–116; (15 juin 1918), pp. 138–141.

armaments production. The professors were supporting this contribution without thought of personal gain. After the war their work would make French industry less dependent on foreign skills and more competitive.[227] 1917 saw the first mention of another project for a technical institute — this time a school of mining. It appeared in the *Union économique de l'Est*. The article by L. Bailly, related by marriage to Camille Cavallier, referred to the importance of mining to the Lorraine economy, not only for iron ore but also coal, salt and potash, and this fully justified a separate institute. There was room to start in the geological institute. After the war the new institute could be combined with the *École des Maîtres-miniers at Thionville*. The writer thought this would be a splendid 'oeuvre de décentralisation', given the deficiencies of the state mining institutions.[228]

L. Thiry, the Director of the Agricultural School at Dombasle, set out a post-war agenda for local agriculture, which could apply elsewhere in France. Writing in the *Revue industrielle de l'Est* he drew attention to the loss of labour as a result of the war, the wholesale requisition of cattle and horses and the physical impact of the invasion on farming. He called for improved production methods and raising the birth rate to make good the labour deficit. He also suggested encouraging returning soldiers not to emigrate to the towns. Greater mechanisation was necessary but the small size of Lorraine farms and the difficulty of local soils worked against this. He advocated grouping parcels of land through *remembrement*, Lastly, there was a need for financial help for farmers to adapt to post-war conditions. Lorraine had traditionally concentrated on cereals but this crop would face intense competition from grains from the US and Australia. Farmers might turn to rearing cattle to provide for growing meat consumption in the towns.[229]

From 1915 the chamber of commerce was concerned about the labour shortage which was going to exist after the war. In July 1915 Vilgrain said he had commissioned the sociologist Georges Hottenger to write a report on what measures were being taken outside France to cope with this problem. He looked to state assistance for *familles nombreuses* as well as a determined attack on insanitary living conditions for working families. After a discussion the chamber proposed publishing a fuller report consisting of a preface by Vilgrain, a chapter by François Villain and also reports by Imbeaux the engineer and Hottenger. This report would end with a section entitled 'the task for tomorrow' by Bertrand-Oser the secretary, Daum the treasurer and Henri Berveiller, a chamber member involved in caustic soda production.[230] In 1916 the chamber looked to spread their ideas outside Lorraine. Villain was asked to speak to the next assembly of

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[227] C. Adam, 'Instituts techniques de la Faculté des Sciences de Nancy' in *Union économique de l'Est,* 1e année (15 mai 1917), pp 1–4. H. Vogt, 'Ingénieurs de l'Institut électrotechnique de Nancy', *Union économique de l'Est,* 2e année (5 janvier 1918), p. 21.
[228] L. Bailly, 'Institut minier' in *Union économique de l'Est*, 1e année (1 août 1917), p. 6; 2e année (1 décembre 1918), p. 32. F Birck, *L'École des Mines,* pp. 87–91.
[229] *Revue industrielle de l'Est* (2 juin 1918), pp. 401, 403; (9 juin 1918), pp. 505,507.
[230] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 13 1915, (séance 3 juillet 1915), pp. 51–2.

presidents of chambers of commerce in Paris.[231] The Nancy chamber's report attracted attention in the Paris press, in *Le Matin* and *Le Temps* for example. The Paris chamber passed a supportive motion as did other chambers.[232] In June Vilgrain proposed the idea of a national congress on *natalité* to be held in Nancy after the war.[233] As we have seen Cavallier picked out these natalist themes in 1917.

By mid-1917 the chamber realised it would have to wait some time for a post-war congress on *natalité*. However, Vilgrain proposed an immediate practical step. An annual *concours* would be organised in which families with four children would compete for financial support for a fifth child.[234] The chamber made an initial financial commitment and appointed a committee to run the scheme consisting of Vilgrain, Bertrand-Oser, Daum, Krug (President of the *Office éco*nomique section of the chamber) who had produced his own report on the issue in December 1916, and Jambois.[235] Camille Cavallier lent his enthusiastic support and said a major fundraising programme would be needed. The Mayor of Nancy, Gustave Simon, was likewise favourable.[236] By November 60,000 francs had already been raised.[237] Members continued to advocate financial support for larger families. Villain advocated *caisses syndicales de natalité* on the lines of similar *caisses* for insurance and retirement.[238] This natalist programme shows that the Nancy chamber was not afraid to take the initiative and to spread its ideas throughout France. The Nancy chamber consisted of powerful and self-confident men who knew how to act on the wider stage. Like other members of the Lorraine elite they saw the interests of their region and France as being joined together.

3. vii. Issues likely to face the Auvergnat economy in the post-war period

The Auvergnat elite also considered the economic challenges of the post-war period. The principle vehicle for this activity was the *Chambre de commerce de Clermont-Ferrand*. The chamber's committee and membership mainly represented smaller enterprises, with the notable exception of Raymond Bergougnan, and also included a number of officials and representatives of the local *Banque de France*.[239] The *compte-rendus* for the war years do not show any

[231] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 14 1916, (séance 1 février 1916), p. 139.
[232] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 14 1916, (séance 11 mars 1916), p. 174.
[233] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 14 1916, (séance 10 juin 1916), p. 232.
[234] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 15 1917, (séance 7 juillet 1917), pp. 74–5.
[235] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 14 1916, (séance 2 décembre 1916), pp. 276–7.
[236] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 15 1917, (séance 13 octobre 1917), pp. 92–3. See also Bulletin de la *Société industrielle de l'Est*, no. 132 (1917), p.3.
[237] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 15 1917, (séance 10 novembre 1917), p. 100.
[238] F. Villain, 'La Prévoyance sociale dans les mines et la métallurgie', *Revue industrielle de l'Est* (10 novembre 1918), p. 827.
[239] *Travaux Clermont-Ferrand*, 1914, pp. 5–8.

significant change in this respect. In the opening years of the war the chamber was mainly preoccupied with immediate needs such as the adequate provision of local currency. It was reluctant to take an active role in managing crises of supply. For example, it did not want to centralise demands for coal and request a consolidated requirement from the authorities. It thought this was the prefect's job. It was content to protest against measures it did not like, while at the same time thinking about the future. It spent much time considering the future of technical education, transport improvements, such as the old project to create an Allier canal, and the future of tourism.[240] This was against the background of buoyancy in a number of local industrial sectors, despite the problems of supply of coal and raw materials, and transport difficulties caused by military use of the railway network. An article in *Le Moniteur du Puy-de-D*ome drew attention to considerable levels of activity in food production, sugar, rubber, paper making, textiles, shoes and use of wood. Some sectors were producing for the war. Others benefited from the lack of competition from outside France due to interruptions to foreign trade.[241]

As in Lorraine the future development of transport links was a major issue. Again as in Lorraine the chamber of commerce in Clermont-Ferrand was part of a regional *Office des Transports* set up in this case by chambers of commerce for the South-East and based in Lyon.[242] In 1918 this office enlarged its remit to take in the post, telephones and telegraph.[243] The chamber in Clermont-Ferrand revived a proposal, which dated back to before the war, for a canal alongside the Allier river which flowed through the region, a project also being taken up by the *Conseil-Général du Puy-de-Dôme*. It was becoming more urgent because the 'crise des transports' on the rail system, caused by the war, showed that the region was too dependent on this mode of transport. The chamber was willing to pay a share of the cost of preliminary studies.[244] An inter-departmental commission was set up in which the chamber participated.[245] Later the chamber raised its financial contribution to 10,000 francs, a considerable sum considering its resources.[246] *Le Moniteur* could see a bright future for Clermont as the industrial hub of the centre of France, if the transport links were improved. Bearing in mind the possibility of renewed international conflict in the future, production was more secure far from the north of the country. The writer of several articles on *L'Avenir de Clermont* in 1918 wanted to see a greater development of port facilities in Bordeaux and on the Gironde estuary and rail links from there to Clermont, thus improving the latter's links to overseas sources of supply and markets, principally the United States.[247]

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[240] Moulin-Bourret, *Guerre et industrie,* pp. 331–2.
[241] *Le Moniteur du Puy-de-Dôme* (22 juin 1917), p.3 col c–d.
[242] *Travaux Clermont-Ferrand*, 1914, (séance 7 juillet 1914), pp. 123–137.
[243] *Travaux Clermont-Ferrand*,1918, (séance 12 février 1918), p. 12.
[244] *Travaux Clermont-Ferrand*,1916, (séance 23 mars 1916), pp. 17–19, 22–23; (séance 7 juin 1916), p. 62.
[245] *Travaux Clermont-Ferrand*,1916, (séance 5 septembre 1916), p. 134.
[246] *Travaux Clermont-Ferrand*, 1918, (séance 25 avril 1918), p.26.
[247] *Le Moniteur du Puy-de-Dôme* (2 juin 1918), p. 3 col a–b; (7 juin 1918), p. 3, col a–b; (21 juin 1918), p. 3 col a–b.

Improved rail links were also essential for the tourist industry. The difficulty of operating during the war brought home to the region how essential to the future this sector could become. In March 1915 the chamber of commerce noted the shortage of personnel in the hotel industry caused by conscription, but approved of the efforts made by the large thermal establishments to keep open. It expressed the hope that these establishments would have adequate supplies of coal and other materials and sufficient transport services.[248] The chamber repeated this request in the case of Mont-Dore in 1917. Supplying coal, flour and sugar caused particular problems.[249] In the same year an article appeared in *Le Moniteur* entitled *L'Auvergne, pays de tourisme, doit s'organiser pour l'après-guerre*. It appealed for all the various interests in the region to get together to effect changes.[250] In 1918 a *Fédération régionale de Tourisme de l'Auvergne* et du plateau central was set up after a large meeting in Clermont-Ferrand. It grouped together all the local *syndicat d'initiatives* of the region including the most important for the Auvergne and Clermont-Ferrand and also the *Fédération thermale de l'Auvergne* and other organisations. Its main focus would be on hotels, transport and publicity. It sought to exploit economies of scale in producing brochures. It also wanted to focus on coordinating local bus operations. Such federations were linked to the *Office national du Tourism*e in Paris. However, delegates to the Clermont meeting were assured that:

'L'Office nationale du Tourisme est un organisme d'état: il est cependant l'ennemi de la centralisation. Ceux qui sont à sa tête sont des régionalistes.' [251]

The chamber of commerce was also concerned about the future provision of technical education. It was involved with the operation of the *Institut industriel et commercial du Centre* in Clermont-Ferrand. A proposal was made to attach this institute to the University there. The institute provided some training in industrial chemistry but the university wanted to start a similar course itself. The future of the institute was a complicated matter involving the Ministry of Commerce which had an interest in such education, the Ministry of Public Instruction and the council of the university. The chamber got involved in lobbying in Paris to resolve the institute's future.[252] The chamber noted the national interest in improving technical education and cited the growth of such education in the University of Nancy. [253] By 1918 the matter had still not been resolved and the military had taken over

[248] *Travaux Clermont-Ferrand*, 1915, (séance 31 mars 1915), pp. 18–21.
[249] *Travaux Clermont-Ferrand*, 1917, (séance 25 mai 1917), pp. 48–9.
[250] *Le Moniteur du Puy-de-Dôme* (27 mars 1917), p. 3 col d.
[251] *Le Moniteur du Puy-de-Dôme* (24 juin 1918), p. 3 col b; (26 juin 1918), p. 2 col f; (27 juin 1918), p. 2 col b–d; quotation (27 mai 1918), p. 2 col d. *L'Avenir du Puy-de-Dôme* (25 mai 1918), p. 3 col c.
[252] *Travaux Clermont-Ferrand*,1914, (séance 2 février 1914), pp. 38–40; 1915, (séance 31 mars 1915), pp. 25–31; (séance 26 octobre 1915), pp. 55–6; 1916, (séance 9 août 1916), pp. 74–129.
[253] *Travaux Clermont-Ferrand*, 1916, (séance 5 septembre 1916), pp. 136–8.

occupation of the Institute's premises.[254] Soon afterwards an inspector-general from technical education in the Ministry of Commerce made a visit to consider a site for a new *École supérieure de Commerce*.[255] We will consider the subsequent history of this school in the chapter on the post-war period. The chamber's support for technical and commercial education was not confined to these major ventures. For example, they also gave financial help to a hotel school in Vichy.[256]

The chamber also supported action to develop hydro-electric power (*la houille blanche*) for which the Massif Central was suitable, unsurprisingly in view of the coal shortages in the war.[257] It also echoed the concern of Nancy and other chambers on the subject of population and favoured Nancy's proposals in this regard.[258]

Naturally the chamber of commerce did not discuss agriculture a great deal because it lay outside its remit. However, it did support the views of Vilgrain and the Nancy chamber of commerce to accelerate *remembrement* and consolidate agricultural holdings in order to give a much needed boost to agricultural production after the war.[259] This was particularly significant as the division of land into small parcels was common in fertile areas like the Limagne near Clermont-Ferrand. We have already noted that there was support in the Auvergne before the war for encouraging a return to the land. This continued during the war years as evidenced by the article in *Le Moniteur* under the signature of H. Gomot, senator for the Puy-de-Dôme. He referred to the creation of a national *Ligue pour le retour à la terre* under the patronage of Jules Méline and Victor Boret, the Minister of Agriculture, as well as Émile Loubet, a former President of the Republic. Apart from propaganda, such as Méline's book *Le Retour à la Terre*, the league supported placement of people in agricultural work and training. Gomot noted the opportunity to persuade school-children who were helping on farms during the war to remain in agricultural work.[260]

3. viii. Conclusion

In this chapter we have examined two different regional variations of French patriotism during the war, two ways in which attachment to the *petites patries* of Lorraine and the Auvergne supported the *grande patrie* of France. We find in both regions conventional expressions of support for the war and anti-German feeling that were common throughout France. We also find the same resentment at the privations of war, the same acute sense of loss of so many young men and the

[254] *Travaux Clermont-Ferrand*, 1918, (séance 12 février 1918), p. 10.
[255] *Travaux Clermont-Ferrand*,1918, (séance 2 juillet 1918), p. 37; (séance 12 juillet 1918), pp. 43–45; (séance 26 juillet 1918), p. 49.
[256] *Travaux Clermont-Ferrand*,1918, (séance 12 novembre 1918), pp. 54–55.
[257] *Travaux Clermont-Ferrand*, 1917, (séance 25 mai 1917), pp. 51–2.
[258] *Travaux Clermont-Ferrand*, 1916, (séance 9 août 1916), pp. 70–71.
[259] *Travaux Clermont-Ferrand*,1918, (séance 12 novembre 1918), pp. 58–61.
[260] Le Moniteur du Puy-de-Dôme (15 juin 1918), p. 3 col a.

same weariness and resignation as the war progressed. Neither region experienced the frequent strikes in 1917 and 1918 common elsewhere.

The contrast between patriotism in Lorraine and the Auvergne is fairly clear. In Lorraine patriotism seemed fairly near the surface. *Lorrains* saw themselves as the advance guard of France, inhabitants of a region where the sacralisation of the soil which its soldiers defended seemed most apparent. In this context the "sacralisation" which Audoin-Rouzeau has described could well be extended to the region from which the soldiers came, the soil of their homeland.[261] In Lorraine we have seen how this patriotism was the more strongly expressed because the threat of occupation and destruction was so immediate and was channelled through a major city and a strong regional culture. Conversely regional patriotism was less fiercely expressed in the Auvergne which was far from the front. It seems to have been strongest there among the intellectual elite and even then was not universally felt, witness the differences of opinion of Henri Pourrat and his friend Joseph Desaymard. Its brightest and fullest expression was to be found in a literary work, Henri Pourrat's epic poem *Les Montagnards*. Here we find a dramatic expression of the unity between the sacred soil of France defended by soldiers on the front and the soil of the *petite patrie* of their homeland.

In view of this difference in the expression of regional patriotism it is hardly surprising that it was in Lorraine that we find more evidence of regional feeling being used by local elites to mobilise support for the war effort on the home front, primarily through fundraising for victims of the war. We notice too how in Lorraine the local elites acted self-confidently to develop Lorraine initiatives without always needing the lead of the prefect and central government. The elites could draw on a wide range of industrial, commercial, political, banking and academic expertise and had good contacts in Paris. They could also inspire activity outside the regional capital, Nancy, in neighbouring departments like the Vosges and the Meuse. Their self-confidence was most apparent when the problems of reconstruction were first discussed. The elites felt it was imperative that Lorraine should have some control over the solutions to be adopted. We shall find this approach becomes even more evident in the post-war period.

While regional elites focused on mobilising the population for war they also started to consider, from 1917 onwards, the challenges their regions would face once peace was achieved. There is some overlap between the issues identified in Lorraine and the Auvergne. Both were concerned about the economic implications of a reduced population and the Auvergne supported Lorraine's lead in this policy area. Both were concerned about training a new generation in the skills needed for industry and commerce to make good the losses of the war. Both were conscious, but the Auvergne more so, of the impact of war losses on the future of their region's small farms. Both saw the need to ramp up the development of transport infrastructure. To be sure in Lorraine there was greater concern for

[261] S. Audoin-Rouzeau, *Men at War 1914–1918* (Oxford, 1992), pp. 177–180; L.V. Smith, S. Audoin-Rouzeau, A. Becker, *France and the Great War 1914–1918* (Cambridge, 2003), p. 108.

reconstruction and the needs of heavy industry and in the Auvergne for the future development of tourism. However, certain concerns cut across these disparate needs. For example, shortage of coal would equally hamper the future growth of the iron and steel industry in Lorraine but also the tourist industry in the Auvergne.

In the pre-war period the revival of regionalism had found its most powerful expression in the re-discovery of regional cultures and the search for a way to allow the regions more self-government without weakening the unity of the Republic. The war reinforced a regional sense of identity among local elites as a framework for action. They were concerned for the welfare of inhabitants of their regions during the war and they made appeals to regional solidarity to support their initiatives. As the war ended their focus shifted to how to rebuild the economies and societies of their regions once the conflict was over. The inter-war years of 1918-1939 were to see the interweaving of economic, cultural and governmental strands of regionalism. In the remainder of this thesis I will examine how the elites tackled the economic challenges for their regions after 1918 as well as the cultural issues. But first I will examine the impact of the regional reform instituted in 1918 by Clémentel, Minister of Commerce, the grouping of chambers of commerce into regions.

Ch. 4 Clémentel and the Creation of Economic Regions in France, 1918.

As the regional elites in Lorraine and the Auvergne struggled with problems posed by the war a measure was passed in Paris which would have a major influence on their future action. In August 1917 Étienne Clémentel, Minister of Commerce, announced a project to divide France into economic regions. This is often seen as the first attempt to create a regional structure for government in modern French history. It was not a radical reform but a cautious measure and built on the existing chambers of commerce of which there were 149 throughout France. Clémentel did not start with a clean sheet of paper and determine a brand new structure. Rather he used a provision in the 1898 law on chambers of commerce which allowed individual chambers to cooperate with each other in the pursuit of some agreed common objective. Clémentel proposed a scheme for chambers to work together in regional groupings which his ministry defined. It was clear, however, that a chamber could refuse or perhaps suggest an alternative grouping. After the scheme was published Clémentel personally visited the groupings in Lorraine, the Auvergne and Bordeaux to seek their agreement and to discuss any proposed changes. His officials visited all the other regions. There were 17 in all. The scheme was discussed by the National Assembly in the autumn of 1918 and the decree was promulgated in April 1919. Clémentel did not need to propose primary legislation; he could rely on his existing powers.[1] In 1918 the *Comités consultatifs d'Action économique*, originally set up in 1915 in each military region, were incorporated into the structure of regional groupings of chambers of commerce.

The fact that he chose to use a decree is significant. He knew there was likely to be opposition within the governing Radical party to a measure of regional reform involving primary legislation, for reasons we have already discussed in the Introduction to this thesis (pp. 21-22). However, Clémentel also knew he would face opposition from regionalists who wanted a comprehensive regional reform. They were likely to be disappointed with a measure they might see as half-hearted. Since the founding of the Fédération régionaliste française (FRF) in 1900 there had been an active campaign to devolve powers to new regional assemblies and in the years before the war this was showing some signs of success. Aristide Briand formed a new government in 1910 and issued a programme which included a number of regionalist ideas. He was not the only prominent republican politician to be attracted to regional reform. Clemenceau had flirted with it before the wine growers' crisis of 1907. Paul-Boncour, Deschanel and Clémentel were supportive. Even Poincaré showed interest and there was the possibility of linking

[1] Ministère du Commerce et de L'Industrie, Direction des affaires commerciales et industrielles, *Organisation des Régions économiques* (Paris, 5 avril 1919).

administrative reform to a change in the voting system. During the 1910 elections administrative reform appeared in the election addresses of over 400 deputies.[2]

With the outbreak of war there seemed little hope of reform. No FRF congress was held in 1914 and its paper *L'Action régionaliste* ceased publication until 1920. However, regionalist agitation did not slacken once war was declared; rather it intensified. This was largely due to a deputy for the Charente, Jean Hennessy, scion of the famous Cognac family. A conservative anti-Dreyfusard at the start of his political career, close to Deroulède and the *Ligue des Patriotes*, he moved towards a progressive Republican position as his thinking developed. He formed a *Ligue de représentation professionnelle et d'action régionaliste* to agitate for his objective of creating assemblies which would represent the professional interests in each region, as well as having members elected by direct suffrage. These corporatist ideas were heavily influenced by contemporary social Catholic thought. Alfred de Mun, the prominent social Catholic thinker, was his father-in-law.[3] He worked alongside the FRF and its secretary Charles-Brun but in reality he was the driving force.

Supporters of the FRF claimed that the war showed the need for urgent reform of the way France was governed. They said that the excessive centralisation of France's bureaucracy stifled local initiative. Too much had to be referred to Paris for a decision. France had to make the best use of all its resources to win the war and rebuild the country after victory. To do this the central government had to engage the energies of the leaders of industry, commerce, the administration and the universities in the various regions. The best way of achieving this goal was to create regional bodies representing local interests which had access to finance and some power to initiate projects to meet local needs, such as transport infrastructure.

A friend wrote to Charles-Brun on 21 may 1916 that he was due to give a lecture in Paris on 4 June on the lessons of the war:

'Je donne une conférence le Dimanche 4 Juin à la salle Châteaubriand dite l'Étoile sur les leçons de la guerre. Je ne vous cache pas que la plus importante de ces leçons est une leçon régionaliste, et le projet Hennessy; le nô*tre.'* [4]

The *Courrier parlementaire* on 8 June 1918 drew attention to the regionalist argument that the war had destroyed the narrow bounds of France's old

[2] J. Wright, *The Regionalist Movement in France 1890–1914: Jean Charles-Brun and French Political Thought* (Oxford, 2003), pp. 164–198.
[3] Dubasque, *Hennessy*, pp. 80–1 for the influence of social Catholicism on Hennessy and pp. 79–140 for Hennessy's political action during the war.
[4] MUCEM, Charles-Brun 2 AP 2, Correspondance domaine privé Courrier I 1892–1946, dossier 1911–1918, letter to J. Charles-Brun from unknown correspondent, 21 mai 1916.

administrative organisation - *départements*, *arrondissements* and *cantons*.[5] In September of that year the editor of *La Nouvelle Revue* wrote:

'L'effroyable tempête qui depuis quatre années souffle sur le monde et le sort terrible fait à la France avant l'heure de la victoire commandent instamment de ne rien négliger de ce qui est capable de faire revivre la prospérité de la patrie, d'organiser la vie sociale la plus propice au relèvement des ruines, à la réparation du désastre, au développement de tous les moyens de production restés intacts, à la meilleure mise en valeur des richesses de toutes sortes. L'hérésie de formes administratives vieillies, surannées doit cesser pour faire place à une conception rationnelle, adéquate aux exigences modernes. La vie est un perpétuel renouveau, qui ne se fixe à aucun moment. Pourquoi vouloir imposer au corps social un régime immuable quand tout ce qui l'entoure et dépend de lui passe et se transforme incessamment?' [6]

The congresses, meetings and other activities of the FRF continued unchecked up until 1918. During the war Charles-Brun tried to keep a high profile. Like other intellectuals, he gave lectures in Paris and the provinces intended to raise morale. For example, in September 1917 he was in the Puy-de-Dôme; on 6 September in Clermont, on the 8th in Issoire and on the 10th in Riom. The subject of his lecture, which lasted one and a half hours in Riom, was billed as "La Guerre et la paix" or "L'Effort de la France et de ses alliés". He set out the reasons why France had entered the war and why the country could be confident of victory. He castigated those who advocated peace at any price. These speeches were patriotic morale boosters. No suggestion here that the devoted regionalist was anything other than a patriotic Frenchman.[7]

In 1916 the Association of Hygienists and Municipal Technicians organised a major exhibition in the Tuileries' gardens in Paris called *La Cité reconstituée*. The purpose of this was to show how France could rebuild and enhance its villages and towns after the war, particularly those in areas devastated by occupation or the actual fighting. It is worth noting here that Charles-Brun and the FRF were heavily involved in organising part of this event — the *Journées régionales*, which consisted of a series of lectures on regional subjects. The correspondence shows that Charles-Brun was in touch with Auguste and Georges Risler who organised the exhibition and was invited to a meeting of the conference commission. He also corresponded with Louis Marin, prominent Lorraine deputy and president of the

[5] MUCEM, Charles-Brun 2 AP 26, folder of press cuttings gathered by J. Charles-Brun, 'le Régionalisme, sa doctrine et ses partisans, ce qu'en pense M. André Berthelot et M. Jean Hennessy'.
[6] MUCEM, Charles-Brun 2 AP 36, folder of press cuttings gathered by J. Charles-Brun, *La Nouvelle Revue,* t xxvii (Sept 1918), pp.101–2.
[7] MUCEM, Charles-Brun 2 AP 35, *Le Moniteur du Puy-de-Dôme* (7 septembre 1917), p. 2 col a–c; (12 septembre 1917), p. 3 col c; *L'Avenir du Puy-de-Dôme* (12 septembre 1917), p. 2 col e.

FRF, Émile Hinzelin the publicist from Lorraine who gave a lecture and *Le Breton de Paris*.[8]

After the initial shock of the war the FRF had re-started its regular meetings in Paris in February 1915 on the third Thursday of each month.[9] In the first half of 1917 a series of meetings was organised in Paris on sentimental regionalism; decentralisation; economic regionalism and regionalism among intellectuals and the universities.[10] The full annual congresses re-commenced in Paris from 29 May to 2 June 1917 with consideration of the definition of regions and regional assemblies. The FRF decided to examine regionalism in all its many facets and what lessons the war had brought to light.[11] The congress passed resolutions in favour of the creation of morally and administratively independent regions based on the *pays* of France; on a more active national publicity campaign; to invite members of the Chamber to start work on new laws; to support electrification of the country; to revise the law of 1912 in order to make ports even more autonomous; to transfer *instituteurs* from the authority of the prefect to the local rector of the academy; and lastly that these teachers educate their pupils in all the features of their region. Some sixty organisations took part including Hennessy's *Ligue de représentation professionnelle et d'action régionaliste*.[12]

In 1918 *Journées régionales* were held in Paris instead of a full congress.[13] Louis Marin helped organise these sessions and invited Daniel Vincent (Deputy in the Nord, later a Minister) to speak with him at an opening session on the progress of regionalism in France. There were then sessions on the regions transformed by the war, on the delimitation of regions, on the economic traditions of France and on projects for regional reform coming from the Chamber or government, led by Jean Hennessy. The congress closed with a public session led by Édouard Herriot, a senator and Mayor of Lyon. The Marquis de L'Estourbeillon was also consulted.[14] From all these war time discussions it is clear that a tension was developing between those who saw regional structures responding to the needs

[8] MUCEM, Charles-Brun 2 AP 2, Correspondance domaine privé Courrier I 1892–1946, dossier 1911–1918, letter from Auguste Risler 29 mai 1916; letter from Lepire of *Le Breton de Paris* 30 mai 1916; letter from secretary of Hygienists on organisation of regional days 30 mai 1916; letter from the secretary of the Société Erckmann-Chatrian 15 juin 1916.

[9] MUCEM, Charles-Brun 2 AP 35, *La Semaine auvergnate* 8 avril 1915.

[10] MUCEM, Charles-Brun 2 AP 35, *Le Limousin de Paris* 24 décembre 1916, 25 février 1917, 11 mars 1917.

[11] MUCEM, Charles-Brun 2 AP 2, letter from Jean Hennessy to Charles-Brun 30 avril 1917; 2 AP 35, press cutting Le Journal 29 mai 1917.

[12] MUCEM, Charles-Brun 2 AP 32, *Le Monde latin* (juillet–août 1917), p. 8.

[13] MUCEM, Fonds FRF 6 AP 8, Organisation of congresses 1918.

[14] MUCEM, Fonds FRF 6 AP 8, printed programmes for meetings; letters L. Marin to J. Charles-Brun 27 mars 1918, 3 avril 1918; Daniel Vincent to L. Marin 8 avril 1918; E. Herriot to J. Charles-Brun 9 avril 1918, 8 mai 1918; L'Estourbeillon to J. Charles-Brun 3 mai 1918. MUCEM, Charles-Brun, 2 AP 26 *La Rennaissance* 11 mai 1918

of the modern economy and those who believed they should be based on historic traditional communities.

Jean Hennessy, had submitted a *projet de loi* in 1913 which called for the election of regional assemblies with a mixed suffrage. There would be elected representatives of different professional groups — farmers and farm workers, merchants and their employees, industrialists and workers, the liberal professions and civil servants — but also some members chosen by those who did not have such an affiliation. It was referred to the National Assembly's commission for general administration and no further action was taken.[15] However, Hennessy did not give up. He became secretary of the Commission of General Administration in 1914. He presented his 1913 *projet* for a second time in 1915 and again without success. So in July of that year he brought forward a fresh proposal for consultative economic committees in each military district. He believed the purpose of these committees should be to inform the state about local resources in order to facilitate the supply of food and other essential commodities. In October the Chamber of Deputies accepted this idea and so the government was forced to bring in its own proposal. The new committees would examine transport, imports and exports, and the productive capacity of industries in the respective regions. However, these committees were subordinate to the Minister of War and had few funds to carry out their work. Hennessy continued to battle for his ideas. He produced another abortive scheme in 1916. In 1917 he was defeated in elections to be President of the Commission on General Administration. The Minister of the Interior started his own enquiry on the subject of regional reform, but, unlike Hennessy, he was not disposed to abolish the *département* as being too small to encompass the economic life of a region. Another proposal for regional assemblies elected by the *conseils-généraux* of the *départements* was defeated in 1918.

This was the background to Clémentel's proposal to group together the chambers of commerce in different regions. He faced opposition from two main directions, both inside the Assembly and also from the chamber of commerce of Paris.[16] In the Assembly he faced a number of objections of which the most important was from Victor Peytral, a radical deputy for the Hautes-Alpes. On 18 October 1918 he suggested that Clémentel's reform concerned the responsibilities of the Minister of the Interior who ought to be involved. Departments were being moved between regions without being consulted and the role of the *conseils-généraux* was being ignored. Clémentel replied that he was not addressing the question of administrative reform but merely dealing with problems created by the large number of chambers of commerce. If they were grouped in regions it would be easier for his department to consult with them on matters of national importance

[15] Dubasque, *Hennessy*, pp. 79–140.
[16] A. Chatriot, 'Les Régions Clémentel: débats et expériences', in Kessler, Rousseau, *Clémentel*, pp. 327–341.

like increasing productivity.[17] The Paris chamber of commerce also opposed the changes on the grounds that they could only be put into effect by primary legislation and a wider regional reform. They may have been concerned about the threat to their traditional pre-eminence among all the chambers in France. Clémentel successfully argued that his measure was watertight from a legal point of view.[18]

It might be thought that Clémentel was being a little disingenuous in the reasons he gave for his reform on 18 October 1918. A number of historical studies in recent years have uncovered several reasons why Clémentel brought forward his "regional" proposal.[19] The historical context and the pressures of the war on the French economy are very important. Clémentel took hitherto unprecedented powers over the shipping and consumption of vital raw materials in cooperation with his British allies. These included the formation of purchasing consortiums for different goods which had the power to direct where imports would be used and to set prices.[20] For these consortia to work effectively Clémentel's ministry needed a clear idea of the productive potential of industries in different parts of France. It quickly became apparent that French industry had to raise its game, both to win the war but also to compete effectively in the post-war world. The combined chambers of commerce had set up an Association nationale d'expansion économique (ANEE) to plan for future economic growth. Camille Cavallier was the delegate from Lorraine.[21] Clémentel asked this body to carry out a survey of the whole of French industry and it was with this task that he asked Henri Hauser, Professor of Geography at Dijon, to assist.

Hauser had already observed the ruthless focus of the German government before the war on supporting national industry at home and abroad. A dossier compiled by the Ministry of Commerce contains two reports on the grouping of chambers of commerce in Germany. The second report with Hauser's name at the bottom has a covering note dated 20 November 1917 saying the report shows

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[17] *Journal officiel de la République française*, débats parlementaires, Assemblée Nationale, 18 octobre 1918, pp. 2735–2740.
[18] A. Chatriot, 'Régions Clémentel', p. 333.
[19] Kessler, Rousseau, *Clémentel*. Druelle, *Le Ministère du Commerce et de l'Industrie*. Druelle-Korn, *Laboratoire réformateur,* particularly pp. 126–150. S-A. Marin, G-H. Soutou (eds), *Henri Hauser 1866–1946 humaniste-historien-républicain* (Paris, Sorbonne, 2006), pp. 147-183. Druelle-Korn, 'De la pensée à l'action économique'. H. Hauser, *Le Problème du régionalisme* (Paris, 1924). G. Rousseau, *Étienne Clémentel 1864–1936* (Conseil-Général du Puy-de-Dôme, Archives départementales, Clermont-Ferrand, 1998). Veitl, *Invention d'une région*, pp. 55–92, 179–208.
[20] For Clémentel's industrial policy in the war see J.F. Godfrey, *Capitalism at War, Industrial Policy and Bureaucracy in France 1914–1918* (Leamington Spa, 1987), pp. 82–105; R.F. Kuisel, *Capitalism and the State in Modern France: Renovation and Economic Management in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, 1981), pp. 44–48.
[21] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol.14 1916, (séance 1 février 1916), p. 138, (15 avril 1916), p. 194.

how urgent it is now to create economic regions in France.[22] Hauser foresaw a continued retreat from free trade principles after the war and believed that France must be ready to compete with Germany once victory was achieved. Clémentel shared Hauser's concerns. He wanted to turn his Ministry of Commerce into a virtual Ministry of National Economy which would make plans for French industry to improve productivity and have a governing role in encouraging appropriate measures by firms in different sectors. He could not achieve his objectives without a more effective mechanism for consulting the professionals in different industrial sectors, hence the reform which he introduced. The groupings of the chambers of commerce was not his only step in this direction. He also encouraged the formation of national associations for different professional groups such as the first national association of employers.

Some modern historians have suggested that Clémentel was a regionalist from the beginning of his political career.[23] Like other Third Republic Radical politicians he had deep roots in his native department, the Puy-de-Dôme, where he was brought up and educated. He became a notary in Riom before being elected to represent his home region in the National Assembly in 1900. During his formative years he came under the influence of Emmanuel des Essarts, Professor of Literature at the University of Clermont-Ferrand. Together they wrote a drama about Desaix, the general from the Auvergne who grasped victory from defeat for Napoleon at Marengo and died as a result. At the end of his life Clémentel wrote another work about an Auvergnat hero, Vercingétorix. Clémentel knew other Auvergnat writers such as Henri Pourrat. He maintained his connection with the Auvergne throughout his career as a local deputy and later senator, as well as President of the Conseil-Général of the Puy-de-Dôme and Mayor of Riom, where he had a property in a nearby village.

In 1903 Clémentel was appointed *rapporteur* of the budget of the Ministry of the Interior and he made a speech supporting the idea of decentralising the French government.[24] In 1905 he contributed a piece on the same theme to a work edited by Paul-Boncour and Charles Maurras.[25] In the same year he was appointed Minister of Colonies and he encouraged the transfer of some power to native and colonial populations. For example, in Madagascar, he followed a policy, started by the military governor Galliéni, of transferring responsibility to the native officials

[22] AN F 12 8037, dossier groupement des chambres de commerce en Allemagne.
[23] G. Rousseau, 'Les Racines d'une pensée idéaliste', in Kessler, Rousseau, *Clémentel*, p.50; G. Rousseau, 'Étienne Clémentel et l'Auvergne', in Kessler, Rousseau, *Clémentel*, pp. 109-127; A. Chatriot, 'Régions Clémentel', p. 330. Druelle, '*Ministère Commerce Industrie',* p. 5.
[24] C. Bellon, 'Étienne Clémentel et l'organisation administrative de la France (1903). Rapport parlementaire sur le budget du Ministère de l'Intérieur', *Parlement[s], revue d'histoire politique*, no. 20 (2013/2), pp. 127–131.
[25] E. Clémentel, 'Organisons la démocratie', in J. Paul-Boncour, C. Maurras (eds), *Un Débat nouveau sur la République et la décentralisation*, opinions de E. Buré, G. Clemenceau, E. Clémentel, J. Dessaint, E. Fournière, J. Reinach, L.-Xavier de Ricard, P. Strauss, le "Temps", A. Varenne (Toulouse, 1905), pp. 148–161.

and giving them a provincial budget.[26] The native populations would be associates of the French in the development of their country.[27] *L'Action régionaliste* noted this with approval. Clémentel told a delegation from the FRF "je vais faire de la décentralisation aux colonies".[28] Research in the archives of the FRF and in *L'Action régionaliste* has not revealed any other references to Clémentel until 1922 when, as a senator, he spoke at an FRF congress. However, we do know that Hauser, his spokesman, attended a number of FRF meetings during the war. Given the lengthy exposition of the benefits of economic regionalism in the official documents on the reform, as well as in the works of Henri Hauser who masterminded it, it is reasonable to say it has a "regionalist" inspiration. However, it was regionalism of a different kind from the strand espoused by Charles Maurras, by the Marquis de L'Estourbeillon in Brittany or even by Henri Pourrat. It was a regionalism which preserved the regional identities of the past but also embraced the developments of the modern world.

The archives of Charles-Brun contain a number of unpublished speeches which describe the growth of large towns in France and how they had made the narrow boundaries of a department irrelevant from an economic point of view.[29] Such towns were important centres for commercial transactions covering industry, commerce and agriculture over a wide region. They were also hubs for communication by road, rail and water (either canals or maritime transport in the case of ports like Marseille or Bordeaux). They were centres for the development of technical expertise, particularly after the setting up of regional universities in 1896. The power of attraction of a city like Lyon spread way beyond the confines of the department of the Rhône. However, this concept did not originate with the FRF. It was developed by the French school of geography and in particular by its leader Paul Vidal de la Blache. His seminal work *Tableau géographique de la France* (1903) contains very few references to this phenomenon. It deals with older divisions between geographic areas based on geology and physical features. However, by 1914 he had started to emphasise the role of *grandes villes* in the contemporary economy.[30] His last work before he died was *La France de l'Est* (1917), written in part to justify France's claim to Alsace-Lorraine, but describing the links between eastern France and the lost provinces.[31] We have also seen how the Professor of Geography at Nancy University, Lucien Brocard, had described the influence of the great Lorraine industries spreading far outside Lorraine itself.[32] These ideas were taken up by Henri Hauser when he set out his

[26] G. Ferragu, 'Le Ministère des Colonies', in Kessler, Rousseau, *Clémentel, pp. 282–4.*
[27] Y. Paillard, 'Domination coloniale et récupération des traditions autochtones: le cas de Madagascar de 1896 à 1914', *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, tome 38 no.1 (janvier–mars 1991), pp. 73-104; see particularly pp. 92–93.
[28] *L'Action régionaliste* (janvier 1906), p. 351.
[29] MUCEM, Charles-Brun 2 AP 13, speech in Montpellier 1915, pp. 89, 91–2; speech to Congrès de la Propriété bâtie 1915, p. 390.
[30] P. Vidal de la Blache, 'Régions de France', *Revue de Paris* (nov–déc. 1910), pp. 821–849.
[31] P. Vidal de la Blache, *La France de l'Est* (Paris, 1917).
[32] L. Brocard, 'Développement économique', p. 733.

ideas in 1918 to advise Clémentel on the setting up of the groupings of chambers of commerce.[33]

There is one last influence on Clémentel's regional reform which it is worth mentioning. Philosophically Clémentel was not an economic liberal who believed the state should have no role in the national economy. Nor was he a socialist in the Marxist sense, who argued for state ownership of the means of production. He was heavily influenced by the thinking of Léon Bourgeois, which is sometimes described as solidarist. Bourgeois emphasised the virtues of social solidarity, of the need for individuals to associate together to achieve social goals, and of an organised liberalism with oversight by the French state. We have already explored the influence of this thinking in the introductory chapter on Lorraine. We can find numerous references to the need for organisation in Clémentel's writings.[34]

The first region in which Clémentel sought support for his reform was Lorraine. He met with representatives of the regional chambers of commerce in Paris on 19 March 1918.[35] The ministerial document setting out the Minister's plans proposed that the region based on Nancy should cover the departments of Ardennes, Marne, Aube, Meuse, Haute-Marne, Meurthe-et-Moselle, Vosges, the Territoire de Belfort and Haute-Saône (partie) and the chambers in Charleville, Sedan, Châlons-sur-Marne, Reims, Troyes, Bar-Le-Duc, Saint-Dizier, Nancy, Épinal, Saint-Dié, Belfort and Lure. The document noted that Nancy was very conscious of its regional role. The Nancy chamber of commerce envisaged the region spreading over a wide area. The pre-war secretary Laffitte had conceived a plan for this region, spreading as far as Burgundy and the Franche-Comté, and it had been taken up in the formation of the *Office des Transports de l'Est*. The ministerial document noted that the *Union économique de* l'Est had a similar view. The document and Hauser's subsequent article in *L'Union économique de l'Est* highlighted the role of regional banks based in Nancy and also the cooperation of academics and industrialists in creating the technical institutes. It noted the regional spread of the metallurgical and other industries.[36] The document proposed a smaller region than some *Lorrains* desired.[37] In his address to the assembled chambers of commerce of the East, Clémentel referred to Nancy's valiant struggle to keep life going in the face of the enemy as a reason for selecting it as the first region. He emphasised that cooperation between different firms and industries, working with the authorities, was the key to victory and to economic prosperity after the war. France really had to raise the pace of its

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[33] H. Hauser, *Les Régions économiques*; préface de M. Clémentel, (Paris, 1918).
[34] C. Druelle-Korn, 'La Construction d'une action économique', in Kessler, Rousseau, *Clémentel,* pp. 60, 66.
[35] *Union économique de l'Est,* 2e année (1 avril 1918) p. 79. Hauser, *Problème du régionalisme*, p. 85.
[36] Hauser, *Problème du régionalisme*, p. 84. *Union économique de l'Est*, 2e année (1 août 1918), pp. 187–190.
[37] Ministère du Commerce, de l'Industrie, des Postes et des Télégraphes, *Projet de division de la France en régions économiques* (Paris, 1917), pp. 19–20.

economic development significantly.[38] Hauser, in his comments, explained that this measure of devolution would make coordination between the different government and private agencies quicker as constant referring to Paris would be avoided.[39] Vilgrain, the President of the Nancy chamber, accepted the reform on behalf of all the chambers present.

In the article in *L'Union économique de l'Est* Henri Hauser elaborated on the reasons for the Minister's proposals. He had approached Lorraine first because it was here that the idea of an economic region had been born. We have described the birth of this modern region in the pre-war period in chapter one on Lorraine. Hauser referred to Nancy's role as a regional hub, exactly as conceived by Vidal de la Blache. To define the region, it was necessary to run along the lines of influence spreading out from Nancy. He conceded that the attachment of Belfort, while based on the metallurgical interests there and in the Meurthe-et-Moselle, might change in future. Indeed, Belfort had disappeared from the Lorraine region when the official ministerial decree was promulgated in 1919.[40] Of course Nancy seemed to be the natural capital for Lorraine in 1918 as the war ended. Ever since 1870 when Metz and its hinterland were annexed by Germany Nancy was the economic and cultural centre of French Lorraine. Yet once Metz was re-integrated into France it had a claim to be an economic centre on a par with Nancy because of its proximity to the iron industry. It also had a cultural heritage as a French city dating back to 1552.This conflict would continue in the post-war years.

L'Union économique de l'Est, in its special number, set out a programme for the new regional organisation. It was a very long list – social questions such as increasing the birth rate, professional and technical education, agriculture, reconstruction of industry, commercial development with an emphasis on new markets and export, finance including a Nancy stock exchange and credits for reconstruction, railways, roads and canals, laying telephone lines; the list was endless. Certainly the Eastern Region did not lack ambition.[41]

The second region which Clémentel visited was his native Auvergne on 29 April 1918. He chaired a meeting of the Clermont-Ferrand chamber of commerce to which representatives of the other chambers in the proposed region had been invited. It was important to Clémentel that the Auvergne region was the second founded in France.[42] The other chambers involved were Moulins-Lapalisse, Montluçon-Gannat, Aurillac, Mende, Le Puy, Thiers, Ambert and Riom. Clémentel's senior advisers from the Ministry of Commerce also attended along with the prefects of Puy-de-Dôme, Allier, Haute-Loire, Cantal and Lozère. Clémentel said that the government had made every effort to foster the industries

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[38] 'La France économique et la Région économique de l'Est', *Union économique de l'Est*, 2e année, numéro special, (1 août 1918), pp. 185–187.
[39] *Union économique de l'Est,* 2e année (1 août 1918), pp. 187–190.
[40] Ministère du Commerce et de L'Industrie, Direction des affaires commerciales et industrielles, *Organisation des Régions économiques* (Paris, 5 avril 1919), pp. 15–16, 59.
[41] *Union économique de l'Est,* 2e année (1 août 1918), pp. 219–221.
[42] *La Région du Centre,* no. 1(mars–avril 1921), pp. 3-4 quoted in Rousseau, 'Étienne Clémentel et l'Auvergne', p. 117.

needed to support the war and it needed to continue this action to win the peace as well. He talked of cooperation between the government and industrialists to make better use of raw materials and to buy less of these from abroad. He said that after the war more cooperation was needed between the different factors of production. The new regions would not alter existing administrative structures but would facilitate projects on a regional basis like regional entrepôts, electricity generating plants and regional banks for export. The regions could commission new communication channels such as canals, roads and railways by sharing the expense; also telephone and telegraph networks. All the chambers represented agreed to join the new region with two exceptions. Mende in the Lozère preferred to join with Montpellier and Le Puy, while saying it would not join, suggested the creation of a new chamber in the west of the Haute-Loire at Brioude. This would join the Clermont-Ferrand region.[43] The ministerial plan of 1917 had envisaged this solution for the Haute-Loire with the arrondissements of Le Puy and Yssingeaux being attached to Lyon. The plan also agreed that Mende oscillated between Clermont and Montpellier. It had also said that the attachment of Moulins and Montluçon to Clermont was questionable but its preference was to maintain this because of the need to proceed with the canalisation of the Allier river which ran between the two areas.[44] It is clear from these and other regions that Clémentel took a fairly pragmatic attitude in these discussions on regional boundaries. In the case of the division of the Haute-Loire, the ancient identity of the Velay centred on Le Puy and dating back to the Ancien Régime had reasserted itself. Brioude had always been anti-clerical and Republican whereas the Velay was Catholic, with the pilgrimage centre at Le Puy, and aligned to the right in politics. The definition of the regions was not an easy matter. It had bedevilled the various proposals for regional reform from before the war. These new regions soon entered the public debate on economic development. An article in *Le Moniteur du Puy-de-Dôme* on 21 June 1918 on the future of Clermont, referred to the new region when justifying the growth of Clermont-Ferrand as a transport hub for the whole region.[45]

Clémentel's regional reform grew directly out of the wartime conditions which he faced. However, it would be a mistake to portray the war as marking a radical departure in French regionalism. As we have seen the reform was a cautious measure. The new economic regionalism based on the powers of attraction of major cities pre-dated the war. We have also seen in the previous chapters how local elites were starting to take initiatives to change their regions without new government structures. In the ensuing chapters we will see how far the reforms shifted regionalism down the path of economic reform. We will look at how regional elites tacked a number of issues in the nineteen twenties and what part the regional groupings of chamber of commerce played in this process.

[43] *Travaux Clermont-Ferrand*,1918, (séance 29 avril 1918), pp. 29–33.
[44] *Projet Régions économiques*, pp. 21–22.
[45] *Le Moniteur du Puy-de-Dôme* (21 juin 1918), p. 3 col a–b.

Chapter Five: Economic Regionalism in Lorraine 1919–1924

5. i. Introduction

We have already seen how a sense of regional identity and solidarity developed in Lorraine in the years before the Great War. We have also discovered how that identity and sense of solidarity was reinforced during the war years. As the war drew to a close members of the regional elite started to consider the programme which would be necessary to rebuild Lorraine's economy in the post-war years. Apart from the physical process of reconstruction, their deliberations focused on issues like the labour shortage and re-population, transport links, technical education and energy supply, particularly making good the shortage of coal, improving agricultural productivity and new ways of channelling capital to industry. We saw how Camille Cavallier, Vice-President of the Nancy chamber of commerce and head of the iron foundry at Pont-à-Mousson, set out a reconstruction programme incorporating some of these themes.

The programme of economic reconstruction was given direction by the creation of the new regional groupings of chambers of commerce brought about by Clémentel, the Minister of Commerce, and covered in the previous chapter. In this chapter we will focus on how the regional elite developed their programme for regional development through the agency of the Nancy chamber of commerce which, as we shall see, was in practice the driving force in Lorraine in the new regional structure, rather than the regional grouping. We shall examine the character of this post-war elite and how they acted together to try and bring about change.

5. ii. The Nancy Chamber of Commerce and other regional institutions

The chambers of commerce in France were partly a public service and partly independent corporations to further their members' interests. The French sometimes refer to them as *corps intermédiaires*.[1] They operated according to laws passed by the National Assembly, the most recent of which for our purposes dated from 1898 and 1908. Their role was mainly consultative and they had three main purposes. Firstly, they were asked by government for their views on economic matters and they could of their own initiative send opinions to relevant ministries or authorities. Secondly, they represented their area in official councils and other organisations. Thirdly, they could run services like providing information

[1] C. Druelle-Korn, Introduction, in C. Druelle-Korn (ed), *Les Corps intermédiaires entre l'état et le marché* (Limoges, 2011), pp. 7–27.

for business, journals, instruction in relevant subjects and operating trading enterprises like *bourses de commerce* (commodity trading) and *magasins généraux*. They could become concessionaires for public works like ports or navigable waterways, and with the Minister of Commerce's agreement take out loans.[2] They were legally constituted bodies who could sign contracts and own property, unlike the new economic regions. The officers of each chamber (president, vice-presidents, secretary, treasurer) and the members were chosen in organised elections by designated businesses who paid the *patente*, or business tax. The number of businesses so designated was 8,000 in Meurthe-et-Moselle out of a total of 27,000 *patentés*.[3] Local committees decided the split of members to be chosen between manufacturing industry and commerce. The number of businesses voting in the biennial elections for a third of all members was normally 10% or less, although it could reach 20% among industrialists as it did in Nancy in the first round elections in December 1919.[4] They drew revenue from an addition to the *patente* tax, a regular amount which could be increased after consultation with the Minister of Commerce.[5] The elected members could also co-opt a number of additional members, *membres correspondants*, who had relevant expertise in industry, commerce, banking or the academic world. The maximum number was fixed by law. At the beginning of 1919 there were 17 *membres titulaires* in the Nancy chamber and 23 *membres correspondants*.

In the case of the Nancy chamber the members were drawn exclusively from the wealthy industrial, commercial and professional bourgeoisie. They represented a limited number of mainly larger firms. Their influence rests on the quality of their membership and the way they used their powers to represent the economic interests of their region and to effect change. It is clear that the members of the Nancy chamber realised this from a discussion in January 1919. Vilgrain, the president, said that it was now up to businessmen to win the peace by rebuilding France. Chambers of commerce had limited powers so their greatest service was to make themselves heard because they represented important interests. Cavallier called for more representatives of economic interests to get involved in politics and Dreux, the future president, said they could represent their legitimate interests through the press.[6] Dreux also stressed that the members must attend regularly and produce high quality work in the various commissions if their opinions were to be given consideration.[7]

We will start by examining the membership of the Nancy chamber in the post-war period and how far they were committed to the chamber by looking at their

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[2] C. Thouvenel, '*Étude sur la Chambre de Commerce de Nancy d'après les procès-verbaux des séances de 1871 à 1914'* (Thèse D.E.S., Université de Nancy, Juin 1967), p. 16. Druelle-Korn, 'Modernisation inachevée', p. 157.
[3] M. Paul-Cavallier et B. Fayolle, *Trente ans d'action économique 1905–1935, la Chambre de Commerce de Nancy* (Nancy, 1936), p. 11.
[4] SGA 7247, dossier janvier 1920, election results déc 1919–jan 1920; the printed record gives turnout and the number of registered electors and firms.
[5] Thouvenel, '*Chambre de Commerce',* pp. 11–19.
[6] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 17 1919, (séance 25 janvier 1919), pp. 122–3.
[7] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 17 1919, (séance 6 mai 1919), p. 159.

attendance. We will also consider the commissions of the chamber where much of the important work was done. These commissions were subcommittees on various topics and were chosen by the full chamber. We will cover certain permanent organisations set up by the chamber to promote its aims. Lastly we will consider the membership of an important organisation with overlapping membership and aims, the *Société industrielle de l'Est,* which operated out of the same building as the chamber of commerce.

The main officers of the chamber were a tightly knit group who provided continuity of leadership over a considerable period. In 1919 there was a change in this group of officers known as the *bureau*. Louis Vilgrain, long time president and a member since 1895, became a *président d'honneur* and was replaced by *maître de forges* Alexandre Dreux, who remained president throughout the post-war years under consideration here. As head of the *Aciéries de Longwy* he had stayed behind enemy lines throughout the war near his works. Camille Cavallier, another *maître de forges* and head of *Pont-à-Mousson,* was first vice-president. Bertrand-Oser was secrétaire-membre. He was an industrialist who had held interests in brewing (Grands Brasseries de Maxéville) and chemical products (Meyer, Bertrand-Oser et fils). Antonin Daum was treasurer.

At the end of 1921 Cavallier retired because of ill health, although he was still influential as a *président honoraire* and took an active interest in the chamber's affairs. Alfred Krug became a vice-president. At that time, he was also a member of the *conseil d'administration* of the *École nationale des Eaux et Forêts* in Nancy. Albert Tourtel, owner of a well-known brewery in Nancy, joined the *bureau* as treasurer, replacing Daum who became secrétaire-membre. Bertrand-Oser also became a vice-president. All of these officers had been members for at least ten years, some longer. At the end of 1923 there was yet another re-shuffle of roles in the *bureau*. Krug left and Marcel Paul became treasurer. Daum became a vice-president and Tourtel secrétaire-membre. Paul had been co-opted at the end of 1920 and elected as a *membre titulaire* the following year. He was the son-in-law of Camille Cavallier and a director of Pont-à-Mousson. He served the chamber until 1944, becoming president in 1936 in succession to Alexandre Dreux.[8] During all these changes Benjamin Fayolle provided continuity as the paid secretary of the chamber. He had been an employee of Pont-à-Mousson and was a constant point of contact between Cavallier and the chamber after Cavallier resigned, as their voluminous correspondence in the Cavallier archives at Saint Gobain reveals.[9]

In any consideration of the Nancy chamber, one question which immediately arises is how important were the *maîtres de forges*? There were more representatives of this industrial sector than any other but their number was not preponderant. In 1919 there were three other elected *maîtres de forges* apart from

[8] Details of membership and attendance at meetings have been extracted from the *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, 17e année 1919 to 22e année,1924.
[9] SGA 7248, dossier correspondance 1917–1924, Cavallier letter to Vilgrain 10 février 1919.

those on the *bureau:* Fernand de Saintignon from *Longwy Bas*, Ernest Nahan from *Micheville* (in which Pont-à-Mousson had a shareholding) and Paul Labbé from *Gorcy*. In 1919 engineer François Villain was a *membre correspondant*. They were joined at the beginning of 1920 by Théodore Laurent from *Homécourt* and François de Wendel, from the family who were the most powerful of iron masters. He was also a deputy in the National Assembly. At the same time Paul Nicou from *Micheville* (replacing Nahan) and Charles Fould from *Aciéries Pompey j*oined as *membres correspondants,* followed *at the start of 1922* by Auguste Dondelinger of *Société métallurgique Senelle-Aubeuge, Longwy and* Édouard Dreux, son of Alexandre, also from *Aciéries de Longwy. (*Édouard Dreux died suddenly in 1923*).* Jean Raty, another iron master from *Saulnes*, joined as a co-opted member in 1924. It is also significant that when the Moselle chamber of commerce was relaunched in 1922 Humbert de Wendel became president.[10] Correspondence in the Cavallier archive suggests strongly that the *maîtres de forges* wanted at least to maintain their position among the chamber's membership. A letter from Dreux to Cavallier on 14 January 1921 says that if he persists in his plan to resign then they are minded to replace him with his son-in-law Marcel Paul.[11] However, he does agree that it would be excessive for one firm to have two representatives.[12] Another note dated 2 December 1921 from Nicou of *Micheville* to Cavallier makes it clear that, now Nahan of the same business has resigned, he is putting his name forward to take over.[13] Cavallier wrote to Fayolle on 27 September 1923 saying that were Dreux ever to resign, then he must be replaced by another metallurgist.[14] Moine concludes in his chapter on the chambers of commerce in *Les Barons de fer* that the Nancy chamber did present a convenient way for the *maîtres de forges* to defend their interests while putting their demands forward along with other industrialists. We will see later how they pressed issues of particular concern to them.[15]

The number of iron masters may have been growing but other sectors were represented. Among industrialists there were representatives from *Cristalleries Baccarat*, the Belgian chemical firm *Solvay* based near Nancy and the *Société des Filatures de l'Est*, the textile industry being an important employer in the region. The regional banks were represented by the *Société nancéienne de Crédit industriel et de Dépôts* and the *Banque Renauld.* The energy generating sector had members and also the *Chemins de Fer de l'Est*. The university was consistently represented by its Professors of Commercial Law and for a time by Brocard, the Professor of Geography. Imbeaux of *Ponts-et-Chaussées* was a constant presence. Agriculture was not within the remit of the chamber, although it was discussed from time to time. Louis Michel, one of Lorraine's leading agriculturalists and a senator, became a *membre correspondant* in 1920. In view

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[10] *Communications de la Chambre de commerce de Metz*, 1e année, No. 2 mars 1922, (séance 4 février 1922), p. 2.
[11] SGA 7248, dossier correspondance 1917–1924, Dreux letter to Cavallier 14 janvier 1921.
[12] Ibid, letter Cavallier to Fayolle 20 janvier 1919.
[13] Ibid, letter Nicou to Cavallier 2 décembre 1921.
[14] SGA 7247, dossier 1923, Cavallier letter to Fayolle 27 septembre 1923.
[15] J. Moine, *Les Barons du fer; les maîtres de forges en Lorraine* (Nancy,1989), p. 211.

of the massive programme of reconstruction the building trade was important. Gustave Simon, formerly Mayor of Nancy during the war and a leading builder and industrialist, joined the chamber as a co-opted member and was later elected directly.

The practical level of support from members by attending chamber meetings was quite high. *Bureau* members were present for almost all meetings, except when called away by other duties, as Dreux and Cavallier were from time to time. Turnout among elected members was usually well over 50%. The same applied among co-opted members although it dropped below this more frequently. Some co-opted members hardly showed up at all and were eventually replaced. The time commitment for fully engaged businessmen was considerable. We can see this when examining the correspondence of Cavallier and his associates. Cavallier frequently had to ask someone else to step in and Dreux as president appealed in the same way to Cavallier. Being a member not only involved attending between nine and eleven meetings a year. There were nine commissions in 1919 but this figure almost doubled as more subjects became of concern to members during the phase of reconstruction of the economy. In 1920 these commissions covered *législation, voies de communications, transports et tarifs, finances, L'Office économique, douanes et relations économiques internationaux, enseignement et apprentissage, agriculture, organisation générale économique* and *repopulation et pupilles*. In addition, there were temporary commissions on *traité de paix, reconstitution, bourse des valeurs, Région économique de l'Est, Office des Transports de l'Est and Énergie électrique de l'Est.*[16] We will cover some of these subjects in depth later.

The bulletins of the chamber also list around twelve national consultative bodies each year in which various leading members of the chamber were involved and through which they could exercise their influence. They covered areas such as railways, interior navigation nationally and for the north-east, postal and telephone services, war damage, the *Chemin de Fer de l'Est*, the *Mines de la Sarre*, natalism, international chambers of commerce, colonies, public assistance and arts and manufactures. Most of the burden of attending these was shared between the president and the vice-presidents. Dreux, for example, was nominated to the *conseil d'administration* of the *Mines de la Sarre*, now under French control.[17] He also sat on the *Conseil supérieur des Chemins de Fer* in Paris, which made important recommendations on policy to the minister.[18] There was also a *Conseil supérieur du Commerce et de l'Industrie* with representatives from chambers of commerce.[19] Dreux was also expected to attend regular meetings of the presidents of all the chambers of commerce in France in Paris. This was a very important forum through which an individual chamber like Nancy

[16] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 18 1920, pp. xi–xiv.
[17] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 17 1919, (séance 9 décembre 1919), p. 254.
[18] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 21 1923, (séance 9 mars 1923), p. 54.
[19] *Union économique de l'Est*, 8e année (1er juillet 1924), p. 254.

could gain support for its initiatives. The secretary Fayolle attended similar meetings for secretaries-general.[20]

To add to its network of influence the chamber had set up two additional organisations — the *Office économique de l'Est* to provide timely information to businessmen and the *Office des Transports* which drew together all the chambers of the wider region of eastern France and discussed with the railway companies (and canal operators) everything from rolling stock, tariffs and timetables to new lines. (The various *Offices des Transports* had a national committee on which Dreux also sat.)[21]

The Nancy chamber also spread its ideas through publications. During the war it had set up the *Union économique de l'Est*. In 1920 Krug was asked to review the future of this publication and change the remuneration of its director, Fayolle, also the secretary of the Nancy chamber. In a note attached to a letter to Dreux on 19 February 1920 Krug said that the journal had been set up in the war to defend the economic interests of the region and to prepare for the return to normal working, by well documented and objective studies.[22] At the same time Fayolle also set up l*e Petit Officiel du commerce français*, a weekly designed to inform businessmen about all relevant administrative acts. [23] Propaganda through such publications continued to be a pre-occupation of the chamber, and particularly of Camille Cavallier. Pont-à-Mousson already had a shareholding in the main Nancy paper *L'Est républicain*.[24] Cavallier was involved in several projects for new journals covering economic affairs after the war. They either failed to get off the ground or lasted a limited period. In 1918 he subscribed to a new publication called *la Démocratie nouvelle* to which the Michelin brothers also gave money. It lasted until 1925. As we shall see Cavallier was very concerned about two issues in particular - the repopulation of France after the war and the provision of reliable supplies of coal. He thought that the press could play a role in espousing these causes.[25] In 1924 he discussed with Fayolle a project for a journal to support the causes important to all the chambers of commerce in France. Fayolle cautioned him that there were major divisions between the chambers north and south on various economic issues.[26] Two months later Fayolle was trying to steer him towards a slightly different concept for a publication called *Union économique française*.[27]

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[20] SGA 7249, dossier renseignements divers, note dated octobre 1922.
[21] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 21 1923, (séance 9 mars 1923), p. 54.
[22] SGA 7247, dossier 1920/février-mars, letter from A. Krug to A. Dreux 19 février 1920 and 'projet de règlement concernant les publications crées pendant la guerre, rapport de M. A. Krug, secrétaire-membre, Président de la Commission de l'Office économique'.
[23] Ibid, 'Note de service 1 juillet 1920'.
[24] SGA 7289, papiers divers, dossier *L'Est républicain*, 'Notes de service du service des participations (M. Fremiot) à Monsieur Cavallier, 21 mars 1925, 27 mars 1926'.
[25] Moine, *Barons du fer*, pp. 271-275.
[26] SGA 7247, dossier 1923, letter from Fayolle to Cavallier 5 janvier 1924.
[27] SGA 7249, dossier renseignements divers, letter Fayolle to Cavallier 19 mars 1924.

The regional elite used another influential industrial institution in Nancy, the *Société industrielle de l'Est,* to spread its influence. Here we find a similar type of membership to the chamber of commerce, perhaps with a greater emphasis on relevant professions such as engineers, chemists, lawyers and professors, than on firms. After all the function of this society was to spread relevant knowledge to industry rather than to represent its interests. Of 19 members of the *bureau* between 1883 and 1920 six were members of the *chambre de commerce* including Louis Vilgrain and François Villain. The membership of the society's various councils also included a number of members of the *chambre de commerce* including Antonin Daum, Krug, Hammer of the *Compagnie générale électrique* and Imbeaux, Cavallier, Édouard Dreux and Fould.[28]

The *Région économique*, the grouping of twelve chambers of commerce of the East set up on Clémentel's initiative, was run from the Nancy chamber's offices under Dreux's chairmanship. The question arises as to how much importance the Eastern Region's discussions had as opposed to those within individual chambers. Unfortunately, no official record of the region's deliberations seems to have survived.[29] There are brief summaries in the journal *Union économique de l'Est* published by the Nancy chamber. The region did not appear to be the driving force of change in the region. Rather it was a forum where action between different chambers could be coordinated when this was advantageous. It was responsible for setting up the *Société régionale des Études du Rhin* to see how the river could be better used for transport and power generation. A series of articles by Benjamin Fayolle, secretary of the Nancy chamber, written in 1926 described some of the activities of the region — the *Office des Transports*, the *Office économique de l'Est*, which we have already noted, and the setting up of a regional exhibit at a major industrial fair in Paris.[30] It seems that the general assembly of the region only met annually and that action between meetings was initiated by the *bureau* of two representatives from each adhering chamber.[31] Marcel Paul, writing some years later, claimed that the real initiatives came from the Nancy chamber.[32]

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[28] L. Rollet, *Liste des membres des conseils de la Société industrielle de l'Est (1883–1920)* (Laboratoire d'Histoire des Sciences et de Philosophie, Archives Henri Poincaré, Histoire des Institutions scientifiques et éducatives de Nancy (HISE), Université de Lorraine, http://hise-nancy.ahp-numerique.fr/items/show/13).

[29] Any archives in the Nancy chamber of commerce building were transferred to the *Archives départementale*s some years ago. Before the pandemic the *Archives départementales* were closed for over a year because of a move so I was unable to consult them in person on this subject. However, the electronic catalogue sent to me very recently does not suggest they possess any records likely to change the account of the eastern region given here.

[30] *Union économique de l'Est*, 10e année (15 avril 1926), p. 95.

[31] *Union économique de l'Est*, 5e année (15 octobre 1921), p. 54. SGA 7247, 'Note de service pour Cavallier 24 juin 1920'.

[32] Paul-Cavallier, Fayolle, *Trente Ans*, p. 22.

Why, one might ask, did these no doubt very busy men running important firms and organisations give themselves so much work. Attending the meetings of all these bodies put a heavy load on the chamber of commerce's officers, principally on Alexandre Dreux. Apart from the national committees noted above he chaired the meetings of the *Région économique, the Office des Transports,* and the *Société des Études du Rhin,* which we will discuss later. On 9 and 10 March 1923 Dreux spent two days in Nancy chairing all his meetings.[33] It seems reasonable to assume that these businessmen felt the effort essential, because they could implement some beneficial changes regionally and also influence central government on other matters. They ran a powerful lobbying organisation with connections regionally and into central government and various quangos. It also had a publicity machine.

5. iii. The regional economic programme

Next we shall examine their regional economic programme but before doing this it is essential to set the context for this discussion. We need to identify those parts of their programme which had a specifically regional context. It is these which can be legitimately described as manifestations of economic regionalism. The Nancy chamber was asked to review a wide range of laws and administrative actions but many of these had no specific regional context. Economic regionalism did not consist in discussing issues affecting the whole of France but which might have more resonance in one region for specific reasons. It involved identifying specifically regional issues, like transport networks, where regional action or lobbying (as opposed to local or national) might produce results and which could be channelled through regional organisations with relevant powers or at least the influence to get their views carried out by others.

It is important to show how a specifically regional economic programme arose from consideration of the very difficult economic circumstances which Lorraine and indeed France faced after the war. We will see what issues the chamber of commerce thought were of greatest importance and whether the actions they thought they could initiate in the region were significant in tackling their post-war problems.

Lorraine's industries faced a huge task of reconstruction after the armistice. Most iron ore mines and iron and steel plants were either occupied by German forces or severely damaged by shelling. Many of those in occupied territories were deliberately damaged. Other industries like the textile plants in the Vosges were also affected. The department of the Meuse was particularly badly hit. A lot of agricultural land was laid waste and farms needed rebuilding. However, the disruption meant that many materials needed for reconstruction were in short supply. Particularly important was the shortage of coking coal needed for the iron and steel industry and power generation. Lorraine had traditionally depended on

[33] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 21 1923, (séance 10 avril 1923), p. 62.

supplies from the adjacent Saar coalfield, now administered by France, from Belgium/Luxembourg and from the Ruhr. These were disrupted in the war and its aftermath. Destruction of the railway network, or interruptions due to military use, made transporting heavy materials difficult. Railway companies needed to raise freight rates to compensate for rising costs and lack of traffic, but this only made the situation more difficult for industrial customers. Lorraine, in common with other areas of France, was short of labour, and particularly skilled workers, because of loss of life and injuries caused by the conflict. The Lorraine metallurgical industries were particularly badly hit, because before 1914 they had become dependent on foreign labour, particularly from Italy. These workers went home in 1914 and it took some time to recruit them again after the war.

By the beginning of 1920 France was facing a full blown balance of payments crisis and a consequent collapse in the value of the franc which made necessary imports more expensive. Exports could not grow to cover the cost of much needed imports until productive potential was fully restored. The situation was alleviated for a time by a collapse in international raw material prices but then aggravated by Germany's failure to adhere to the clauses of the treaty of Versailles which required the prompt payment of reparations and the timely delivery of coking coal. In 1923 France sent troops into the Ruhr, beyond the area it was already occupying in the Rhineland.[34]

In February 1920 Isaac, the Minister of Commerce, wrote to all chambers of commerce, asking for their views on how to tackle the trade gap, particularly on how exports could be increased.[35] Alexandre Dreux, as President of the Nancy chamber, fired off a reply straight away, as soon as he had a limited number of answers to inquiries made of various firms. He said it was very difficult to increase exports significantly until something like normal productive capacity could be restored. At the time of writing factories in operation were only using a third of their potential. In his opinion the government had been wrong to allow free importation after the war and now non-essential imports should be restricted.[36] The chamber discussed the situation at length, a report was requested from the commission on customs and international trade and this was presented by Marcel Paul and Charles Fould in June.[37] The conclusions of the Paul and Fould report were that coal supplies must be restored. As de Wendel had pointed out on 9 March the metal industries needed 600,000 tons a month and were only receiving 240,000 in a good month.[38] The supply of labour had to increase and the transport situation improve. The law of 1919 which created the eight hour working day should be repealed. Concessions on freight rates were needed for the metal

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[34] J-C. Asselain, *Histoire économique du XXe siècle, vol. 1 la montée de l'état 1914–1939* (2 vols, Paris 1995), pp. 95–113.
[35] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 18 1920, (séance 10 février 1920), pp. 51–53.
[36] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 18 1920, (séance 15 février 1920), pp. 54–60.
[37] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 18 1920, (séance 9 mars 1920), pp.43–48; (séance 13 avril 1920), pp. 80–83; (séance 11 mai 1920), p. 99; (séance 8 juin 1920), pp.115–118; rapport de MM. Ch. Fould et M. Paul, (séance 8 juin 1920), pp.159–198.
[38] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 18 1920, (séance 9 mars 1920), p. 44.

industries.[39] Addressing energy, labour and transport shortages — these were the three pillars of the economic programme of the regional elite in Nancy, as their continued discussion in the Nancy chamber, in documents in the Cavallier papers at Saint Gobain and in the pages of the publications sponsored by the chamber and the *Société industrielle de l'Est* shows.[40]

This programme was driven forward by the leaders of the chamber, in particular by Alexandre Dreux. He was in the habit of giving a summary of the chamber's programme of work at the beginning of each year. These summaries pick out many of the points which were important for the regionalist programme. For example, in 1923 he identified seven questions — abolition of the eight hour working law, fiscal reform, reducing transport tariffs, improving transport infrastructure, modernisation of the telecommunications network, improving workers' housing and reforming the training of apprentices.[41] In 1924 he looked back at those issues on which a clear stance had been adopted through chamber resolutions — a new canal for the North-East, new railway connecting lines, new telephone lines, pressure for further reductions in transport tariffs, support for founding a *chambre de métiers* in the region, the launch of the new *bourse* for shares in Nancy and the creation of the company to study the canalisation of the Rhine and associated hydro-electric power stations. Looking forward he could see more work to do on housing improvements, transport tariffs and infrastructure and of course the Rhine studies.[42] We can see in these summaries the emergence of the regional themes: transport improvement, technical training, power generation, capital provision.

Dreux received powerful support from Camille Cavallier. He believed the government must be made to take more notice of what he called 'the productive class'.[43] He had a very clear view of the important role industrial leaders could play in rebuilding France at a critical time and he saw a strong partnership with

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[39] Ibid, (séance 12 octobre 1920), p. 231.

[40] R. Hartmann, 'Contribution à l'étude des combustibles solides', *Bulletin de la Société industrielle de l'Est*, no. 144 (janvier 1919), p.7**;** R. Hartmann, 'L'Utilisation des combustibles dans les foyers industriels', *Bulletin de la Société industrielle de l'Est*, no. 145 (février 1919), p. 3; L. Bailly, 'Le Problème français du charbon, conférence à la Société industrielle de l'Est 20 septembre 1920', *Bulletin de la Société industrielle de l'Est*, no. 159 (oct–déc 1920), pp. 12–46 ; M. Travers, 'La Crise des carburants et les remèdes proposés, la situation particulière de la France', *Bulletin de la Société industrielle de l'Est*, no. 173 (avril–juin 1924), pp.31–68. SGA 7247, dossier février–mars, note by Daum, president of commission on Electric Energy, on meeting of 10 février 1920; note by Marcel Paul 2 mars 1920 on a recent meeting of commission des transports concerning new railway lines.

[41] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 21 1923, (séance 9 janvier 1923), pp. 2–4.
[42] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 22 1924, (séance 8 janvier 1924), pp. 12–17.
[43] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 20 1922, (séance 10 janvier 1922), p. 12.

Dreux in fulfilling this mission.[44] A year later he set out in a note the key themes for their work. Some of these are national issues but some mirror the regional issues we have already identified; wrapping up the war and settling Franco-German differences, dealing with France's financial problems including a reduction in government expenditure, installing an energetic government which dealt with disruptive elements like communists, repealing the eight hour working law, reducing railway tariffs, tackling issues relating to natalism, for example setting up schools for household management and cracking down on crime and drunkenness, and lastly restricting unnecessary imports.[45] Improving the railways was a key regional theme. Natalism, which addressed both supply of labour and demand for goods, was a programme which, as we shall see, the Nancy chamber made all its own.

We have seen in chapter three how Cavallier developed some of his ideas during the war. After his retirement from the chamber he published a number of pamphlets. In *L'Avenir de la France* he set out many of the elements of the regionalist programme — further development of technical education, development of hydro-electric power to match Germany, restoring the race (natalism) and making up France's deficit of coal and other combustibles.[46] In *Notes économiques* he returned to the challenge faced by his industry of rising input prices which made selling prices too high. Labour rates had multiplied by four times since the beginning of the war and coal prices three and a half times.[47] On the question of coal at least the temporary acquisition of the Saar might help as he wrote in *La Sarre par un Franco-Sarrois*. However, the Saar would need investment, particularly in transport links to France.[48] In *La Crise économique* he also focused on the ballooning national debt caused by reconstruction and the need for economies. He then went on to attack the railway companies for their rising tariffs and suggested they economise even more.[49] In *La France de demain* he set out the big challenges facing the country, including of course the lack of coal and the need to raise the population.[50] In this paper he set out Pont-à-Mousson's future mission, to improve the health of the nation by making the pipes which would carry fresh water to the towns of France. Repopulation became something of an obsession for Cavallier in his final years. We see this in the collection of his writings, *La Sagesse du chef* and also in another pamphlet, *La France victorieuse.*[51]

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[44] SGA 7248, dossier correspondance 1917–1924, letter from Cavallier to Dreux 27 janvier 1922.
[45] SGA 7247, dossier 1923, note by Cavallier dated 12 février 1923.
[46] SGA, DOC PAM 22.13, C. Cavallier, 'L'Avenir de la France, réformes nécessaires, avant propos de Maurice Herbette', pp. 8,19,31.
[47] SGA, DOC PAM 21.50, 'Notes économiques d'un métallurgiste'.
[48] SGA, DOC PAM 22.21, 'La Sarre par un Franco-Sarrois', June 1923.
[49] SGA DOC PAM 21.52, 'La Crise économique: transports par chemins de fer', 1 février 1924'. SGA DOC PAM 21.65, 'Séance du 24 février 1922 Office des Transports'.
[50] SGA, DOC PAM 21.51, 'C. Cavallier, La France de demain: paix et prospérité par le travail, la natalité, l'hygiène*',* août 1923.
[51] *Sagesse du chef*, *lettres et notes inédites de Camille Cavallier* (Paris,1937). C. Cavallier, *La France victorieuse* (Nancy, 7 septembre 1923).

So the regional issues which emerged from the economic debate outlined above were transport, power supply, technical education to combat the shortage of skilled labour, and financial institutions affecting the supply of capital. We will now examine each of these in turn, followed by consideration of the development of regional organisations to speed up reconstruction.

5. iv. Transport—Railways and Canals

Transport matters — roads, canals and railways — were often top of mind for prominent members of the chamber, including Camille Cavallier. An internal company memo dated 28 March 1919 from Cavallier to his assistant Dubois reminded him to forward a list of matters to raise with the Minister for the Liberated Regions, Albert Lebrun, the next day. The hand written list at the bottom includes roads, doubling of railway lines, canalisation of the Moselle, north-east canal, suburban and industrial tramways, improvement of railway traffic and modification of tariffs.[52]

The policy of the Nancy chamber, and indeed of its neighbouring organisation in Metz, was to lobby hard for extensions to the railway and canal networks to facilitate the transport of goods, particularly heavy materials like iron, steel and coal. New railway lines were usually financed with state support and operated by the regional railway companies. The government agreed a new convention with the railway companies in 1921.[53] For the railway network the big regional issues were the integration of Alsace-Lorraine's railways into the French structure and improving links across the old frontier, and secondly improving communications from Nancy to the iron and steel manufacturing areas to the north, to the Moselle department and the Saar beyond it. The Lorraine elite were also aware of the benefits of electrification of the network.[54]

Canals played a major part in the transport of heavy goods in France. Major developments in the network continued into the twentieth century. New canals were also financed by the state, although municipalities, *conseils-généraux* and the new regional groupings of chambers of commerce could become shareholders, and even individual industrial firms sometimes participated in projects. The priorities here were to improve links from Lorraine to the Rhine, and also via Luxembourg into Belgium. Lorraine was quite close to the Rhine. If the Moselle could be canalised for heavier barges, then the route out to the Low Countries and their ports and also to the Ruhr's coalfield was fairly

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[52] SGA 7319, dossier correspondance avec Albert Lebrun, 'Note de service 28 mars 1919'.
[53] SGA 7247, dossier octobre 1920, 'Commission des Transports, séance 12 octobre 1920, le régime des chemins de fer'. F. Caron (ed), *Les Grandes Compagnies de chemin de fer en France 1823–1937, Archives économiques du Crédit Lyonnais* (Geneva, 2005), pp. 327–335, 342–352, 376–7.
[54] SGA 7247, dossier juin 1920, 'Analyse de la brochure de M. R. Paul, Directeur des Chemins de Fer du Midi, L'Électrification des chemins de fer français'.

straightforward. Such plans would improve supplies of coal from Germany and Belgium and also help exports via Antwerp and Rotterdam. The temporary acquisition of the Saar coal mines also raised the issue of canal links there. At the same time, the Nancy chamber wanted to see the construction of a Nord-Est canal — in effect, a series of new canals, linking with existing canals, to join the Lorraine iron basin to the Pas-de-Calais coalfield and the port of Dunkerque.

There was a strategic choice to be made here for the landlocked Lorraine industries on the German frontier. Which projects were more urgent — those facilitating links to the north and east or those linking with the rest of France? And of course there was an issue of cost. The links to the East were generally less costly to improve, for example the canalisation of the Moselle river for heavy barges. Linking existing canals to make a continuous Nord-Est canal was complicated. There were also political considerations here in the context of France's fraught relations with Germany: post-war disputes on issues like reparations and the supply of German coal from the Ruhr, both governed by the treaty of Versailles. Should France develop canal links to the Saar when eventually its inhabitants might choose to rejoin Germany in the plebiscite agreed for 1935? Should France be financing canals which would make it easier for competitive German industries to penetrate the French market? Given the general suspicion of Germany after the war it is not surprising that such questions were asked. We have seen how Clémentel and his advisers thought German competition would become formidable again once the conflict was over.

5. v. Railways

The first debate on railways concerned the future of the network in the former Alsace-Lorraine. These had been managed as part of the German system until November 1918. Now the question arose of what their long term future in France should be. How should they be integrated into the French network? Should they be given to the *Compagnie des Chemins de Fer de l'Est* to manage or possibly be put into a separate company owned by the state?[55] There were technical issues to be resolved in operating the two networks. Timetables and tariffs needed to be coordinated. The two networks were designed to run with stops at the frontier and sometimes connections across the old frontier were not logical. German railways ran on a different side of multiple tracks. Signalling was different. Personnel with German nationality would have to be replaced in line with government policy on the recovered territories.

From the start the Nancy chamber felt the right course was to pass the Alsace-Lorraine network over to the *Compagnie de l'Est* at once. They passed a resolution to this effect in January 1919 as indeed did the council of the *Office des Transports de l'Est*. At the same time Imbeaux, the chief engineer of *Ponts-et-*

[55] *Union économique de l'Est*, 3e année (1 février 1919), pp. 33–5.

Chaussées, presented two new routes to run through the Vosges mountains which were being actively considered.[56] The chamber preferred the most direct route through Saint-Maurice-Wesserling.[57] The chamber naturally enough favoured one unified tariff for goods transported on railways throughout France.[58] The matter took a long time to resolve. In 1921 the Nancy chamber passed a new resolution which laid out in some detail the economic, defence and political reasons to have one national network. From a regional point of view the network in the east would run much more smoothly and this would be economically beneficial.[59] The Metz chamber also wanted better co-ordination of trains between the east of France and the former Alsace-Lorraine, with fewer stops at the frontier.[60] In November 1922 the Nancy chamber noted with satisfaction that a *projet de loi* had been submitted to the Chamber of Deputies covering the attachment of the Alsace-Lorraine network to the *Compagnie de l'Est*. Unsurprisingly the chamber in Strasbourg was opposed to this loss of independence.[61] So it appears that constant lobbying by the Nancy chamber supported by Metz had helped push the government into action beneficial to the functioning of the Eastern economic region.

The need for the further development of railways in the regions was highlighted in the *Union économique de l'Est* in an article emphasising the importance of different regions being able to connect with each other directly without going through Paris. Otherwise, the article asked, what was the point of talking about regionalism and of setting up regional economic groupings?[62]

Starting in 1919 the Nancy chamber wanted to shorten the railway journey to the Saar, to facilitate trade with a territory where France was administering the mines.[63] In March 1920 Marcel Paul, Cavallier's son-in-law, attended the *Commission des Transports* of the Nancy chamber and recorded a discussion on various ways to improve the railway links between Sarrebruck and Nancy–Pont-à-Mousson. Naturally his company would have a particular interest in this.[64]

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[56] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 17 1919, (séance 25 janvier 1919), p. 124. SGA 7248, 'Avant projet de voeu de l'Office des Transports de l'Est 8 janvier 1919'. *Union économique de l'Est*, 3e année (1 février 1919), pp. 33–5; (15 février 1919), pp. 50–1.
[57] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 19 1921, (séance 8 novembre 1921), p. 240. *Union économique de l'Est*, 5e année (15 octobre 1921), pp. 217–8.
[58] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 18 1920 (séance 9 novembre 1920), p. 262.
[59] SGA 7248, memo attached to note of 4 juillet 1921 from Dubois, Pont-à-Mousson to Cavallier. *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 19 1921, (séance 8 juillet 1921), pp. 184–6.
[60] *Communications Metz*, 1e année, no. 2 mars 1922, (séance 25 février 1922), p.6.
[61] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 20 1922, (séance 7 novembre 1922), p. 230; (séance 6 décembre 1922), pp. 263–4.
[62] 'Lignes transversales horaires nouveaux', *Union économique de l'Est*, 3e année (15 avril 1919), p. 103.
[63] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 17 1919, (séance 9 décembre 1919), pp. 256–8.
[64] SGA 7247, dossier février–mars 1920, 'Note de Marcel Paul pour Cavallier 2 mars 1920'.

However, the Nancy chamber ran into a number of obstacles. Firstly, the whole matter was referred to an inter-departmental commission of the Moselle and the Meurthe-et-Moselle.[65] Secondly the military wanted to develop a new route further to the east passing through Château Salins. The chamber preferred a more westerly routing because it could serve the new coal mining concessions in the Moselle more effectively. It would also go straight past Pont-à-Mousson. They fired off letters to the Minister of War, the Minister of Public Works and the Minister of Commerce.[66] No doubt they were disappointed to learn in June that year that their wish for a more westerly route could not be implemented first, because the military wanted to do work on the eastern route straight away.[67] However, by May the following year the military had changed its mind and was backing the route preferred by the chamber.[68] Cavallier's papers contain a letter from General Ragueneau of the General Staff, and a member of the *Conseil supérieur des Chemins de Fer*, to the Nancy chamber and dated 20 March 1923, saying that the westerly route via Dieulouard and Remilly was preferable from a strategic point of view.[69] Cavallier made some very caustic remarks about the military attitude to building railways:

'Voilà un autre exemple de la stupidité des militaires et du génie militaire en particulier, sur la question de savoir quels sont les chemins de fer qu'on doit faire, et quels sont ceux qu'on doit interdire. Ce n'est pas un premier exemple que je vois de lignes qu'on doit interdire et qui un peu plus tard sont exigées; ça depend simplement du point de vue. Ce qu'on gaspille d'argent en France c'est extraordinaire et le peuple français passe pour être le plus intelligent; seulement son intelligence se dépense surtout en paroles.' [70]

In 1923 the route supported by the Nancy chamber was opposed by their colleagues in Metz who wanted a different route.[71] However, Imbeaux reported to the Nancy chamber in June 1923 that the Dieulouard–Remilly line had now been definitively selected.[72]

This line was one of several projects on which the Nancy chamber was asked to comment. This particular story shows that the economic leaders of the region in the Nancy chamber fought their corner vigorously for what was in the economic

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[65] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 19 1921, (séance 8 mars 1921), p. 80.
[66] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 19 1921, (séance 12 avril 1921), pp. 107–110.
[67] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 19 1921, (séance 7 juin 1921), p. 173.
[68] SGA 7248, dossier correspondance 1917–1924, 'Compte-rendu de la Commission des Communications de 31 mai 1922 par Marcel Paul'.
[69] SGA 7249, dossier renseignements divers, letter from Ragueneau to Nancy chamber of commerce 20 mars 1923.
[70] SGA 7248, dossier correspondance 1917–1924, 'Note de service de Cavallier pour Marcel Paul 5 juin 1922'.
[71] *Communications Metz*, 2e année, no.3 mars 1923, (séance 24 mars 1923), p.3; nos. 4–5 avril–mai 1923, (séance 27 avril 1923), pp. 2–4.
[72] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 21 1923, (séance 8 juin 1923), p. 100.

interests of Lorraine as they conceived them. In their considerations the interests of the iron masters played a major part. The new line went near to their plants.

5. vi. Canals

The strategic choices to be made on canals sparked a lively debate among members of the regional elite with an economic interest in the outcome. These issues were discussed in two articles in the *Union économique de l'Est*, the first by Imbeaux on 1 January 1919 and the second in an editorial, probably written by secretary Fayolle, in June.[73] Imbeaux alerted Camille Cavallier to the opportunities for his company from canal development in northern Lorraine in a letter of April 1919. He said that the Committee of Navigable Waterways for the North and East reporting to the *Conseil supérieur des Travaux publics* had adopted a report he had prepared calling for the canalisation of the French Moselle and also to create two new canals in the North East serving some of the iron and steel basin. These should be financed by the industrial interests they would serve, including Cavallier's company.[74] Meanwhile Fayolle warned the representatives of the *Ligue maritime française* meeting in Nancy in May 1919 that canalisation of the entire Moselle might meet with German opposition.[75]

Alexandre Dreux set out many of these issues in a speech to the Congrès de Navigation intérieure at Strasbourg on 2 September 1919.[76] Chief Engineer Imbeaux had already set out plans to link the basins of the Moselle and the Saar with the French canal network and eventually with the Rhine. However, Dreux pointed out that the only effective route was through the *Canal de la Marne au Rhin* which would not be able to cope with increased traffic. Dreux said that Imbeaux's plans did not include an extended Canal du Nord-Est which would provide the links between all the Lorraine industrial basins, the Ardennes and the *Nord* and Dunkerque, and also Luxembourg. This Nord-Est canal project, linking together existing canals with some new sections, was part of Freycinet's plan for the canal network drawn up in 1881 and had been ranked as a top priority by the government since, but the funds to complete it were never available. Current plans also did nothing to help the industrial basin of Longwy, where Dreux's own plants were situated, and also the Briey iron field occupied by Germany in the war and severely damaged. Dreux went on to say that that German factories in the Moselle had not yet been brought back under French control and the firms in the Saar were of course German owned. The Saar firms already had special

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[73] *Union économique de l'Est*, 3e année (15 janvier 1919), pp. 26–29 and (15 juin 1919), pp. 148–151.
[74] SGA 7393, dossier voies navigables, letter from Imbeaux to Cavallier 2 avril 1919.
[75] SGA 7248, dossier correspondance 1917-1924, 'Réception des représentants de la Ligue maritime française, Chambre de Commerce de Nancy, 19 mai 1919; exposé fait par M. Fayolle sur la question des transports, notamment métallurgiques, dans l'Est et la canalisation de la Moselle'.
[76] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 17 1919, (séance 4 novembre 1919), pp. 201–216 with a full text of the speech at Annex I pp. 217–232.

privileges of access to the French market. In fifteen years the Saar might choose to stay German. The congress passed a series of resolutions to develop the locks on the *Canal de la Marne au Rhin* and the *Canal des Houillères de la Sarre* and to instal electric traction, to canalise the Moselle between Metz and Thionville so the Moselle could receive Rhine barges and to make a start on the Nord-Est canal with canal works in the Lorraine basin.

All these projects were to be the subject of extensive lobbying by the Nancy chamber over the next few years. Cavallier was a little cynical about whether anything would come of all this activity. He wrote to Fayolle on 8 September 1919 that he doubted whether anything much would be done:

'Aussitôt qu'en France on veut faire un bout de canal tous les départements mettent leurs députés en movement pour avoir aussi chacun son canal, de telle sorte que la totalisation des canaux demandés forme une dépense telle qu'on ne fait rien du tout.' [77]

It seems that by May 1920 the government had decided on a programme but the representatives of the metallurgical industries felt that it put too much emphasis on linking the Saar to Paris. Dreux and Cavallier believed the priorities should be firstly, joining the Lorraine metallurgical basin to the French canal network, with a possible link to Luxembourg, and only secondly the canalisation of the Saar which would link with the Moselle and the Rhine.[78] By March 1921 hostility to the central government scheme had increased in Lorraine, because Its whole thrust seemed to be to direct traffic to Paris and Rouen and not to Dunkerque. The Lorraine iron masters wanted to make a start on joining Lorraine to the Pas-de-Calais coalfield.[79]

In 1922 the Metz chamber of commerce got behind the project to canalise the Moselle. The chamber wanted to form a consortium consisting of the *département* of the Moselle, towns and interested industrialists. They proposed to borrow money and advance 77 million francs to the state administration to carry out the works. Bankers were said to be supportive. The Minister of Public Works met with a delegation including Humbert de Wendel the president on 22 July. The Minister indicated he was willing to put the necessary legislation in place to allow the consortium to go ahead. By October the *conseil-général* of the Moselle, the cities of Metz and Thionville and the *Association minière d'Alsace et de Lorraine* had

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[77] SGA 7420, dossier divers, Cavallier letter to Fayolle, 8 septembre 1919.
[78] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 18 1920, (séance 11 mai 1920), pp. 100–1 and Annexe II pp. 107–110; *Union économique de l'Est*, 4e année (15 juin 1920), pp. 145–6.
[79] SGA 7247, dossier 1921, papers on canal of Moselle 11 mars 1921. SGA 7249, dossier Transports, 'Analyse de Dubois, Chambre de Commerce, Canal du Nord-Est 14 mars 1921'. *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 19 1921, (séance 8 juillet 1921), pp. 194–5. SGA 7249, dossier transports, 'Rapport de M. Alexandre Dreux au Congrès national de la Navigation intérieure à Rouen, 4–8 juillet, Canal du Nord-Est', copy dated 30 septembre 1921'.

given their formal backing to the project.[80] In October Dreux believed the government would go ahead but leave out the links to Briey and Longwy (Dreux's home territory). He fired off a letter of protest and in November received an assurance that the two areas would be catered for.[81]

Dreux had not given up on the *Nord-Est* canal. In his review in January 1924 he said that this canal 'complèterait heureusement l'outillage économique de notre région.' [82] The next national congress on internal navigation considered the matter yet again. Dreux could not obtain backing there for the whole concept,[83] but in October he got Lebrun to help him obtain the support of the *Conseil-général* of Meurthe-et-Moselle for the *Nord-Est* canal as he had originally conceived it.[84] The Metz chamber also supported it but said that the canalisation of the Moselle was the top priority.[85]

Although the history of lobbying for the *Nord-Est* canal over the six years after the war was inconclusive, the debate in the Nancy and Metz chambers of commerce had achieved much. The government now supported in principle extensive improvements to the canal network into France and potentially outwards to the Rhine. Furthermore, to expedite the canalisation of the Moselle, various parties in the Moselle had come together to provide financial backing. The chambers had a clear view of where their regional interests lay and took what steps they could to turn their vision into reality. This was exactly the kind of activity being carried out by chambers of commerce which Clémentel had envisaged, albeit the main impetus came from individual chambers rather than the grouping as such.

5. vii. Energy

The leaders of the chamber of commerce in Nancy discussed not only water transport but also the provision of new sources of energy. These two concerns came together in consideration of a project to exploit the resources of the Rhine. The *Union économique de l'Est* outlined the importance of the Rhine to commerce in a long article in July 1922.[86] The regional grouping of chambers of commerce

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[80] *Communications Metz*, 1e année, no. 3 avril 1922, (séance 1 avril 1922), p.2; nos. 5–6 juin–juillet 1922, (séance 27 mai 1922), pp. 2–3; no. 9 octobre 1922, (séance 2 septembre 1922), p.2, (séance 7 octobre 1922), p.3.
[81] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 20 1922, (séance 10 octobre 1922), pp. 205–210; (7 novembre 1922), pp. 238–9.
[82] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 22 1924, (séance 8 janvier 1924), p. 13.
[83] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 22 1924, (séance 8 juillet 1924), p. 169.
[84] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 22 1924, (séance 7 octobre 1924), pp. 190–3. SGA 7249, dossier questions diverses, *L'Est républicain* reported the conseil-général's resolution in detail on 2 octobre 1924, cutting passed by Dubois to Cavallier.
[85] *Communications Metz*, 3e année, nos. 11 and 12 novembre–décembre 1924, (séance 29 novembre 1924), pp.2–4.
[86] *Union économique de l'Est,* 6e année (1 juillet 1922), pp. 151–8.

formed a *Société des Études pour la Navigation du Rhin* which focused on navigation improvements and also the possibility of hydro-electric power generation from the fall in Rhine when a lateral canal was constructed. This project needs to be considered in detail because it represents just the sort of initiative which Clémentel envisaged when he created the regional groupings of chambers of commerce.

The context of the Rhine project was grave concern about France's acute shortage of coal after the war and high prices. This was the subject of many articles in the press controlled by the Nancy chamber and the *Société industrielle de l'Est* and also of discussions within the chamber itself. The *Union économique de l'Est* covered the subject in articles on 1 April, 1 July and 1 August 1920. Camille Cavallier rated the writer L. Bailly as highly expert even if he did not agree with all of his views.[87] Bailly called for more intensive exploitation of what reserves France had and legal reforms to make it easier for prospectors to search for new coal mines.[88] He gave a lecture entitled *Le Problème français du charbon* at the *Société industrielle de l'Est* on 20 September 1920, subsequently published in the society's bulletin, which also carried other articles on the issue.[89] Cavallier, like other industrial leaders, was well aware of the problem. His papers contain a note dated 3 November 1920 which said that France only received 75% of the fuel which it needed and over half of this came from abroad. There is also in the Cavallier papers the draft of a pamphlet, *La Question des combustibles en France*, which talked about the necessity of increasing French coal production, economising on the use of energy in the manufacturing process, and finding new sources of coal and new fuels altogether.[90] Industrialists like Cavallier were investing in new production in the Saar. Marcel Paul made these points in his report to the Nancy chamber on 7 December 1920 adding that of course Germany must deliver the quantities of coal which it had undertaken to do.[91] In 1921 the Nancy chamber organised a series of five lectures on the use of fuel and also an exhibition run by the *Office économique de l'Est* which it had set up.[92]

This obsession continued over the next few years. In an account written four years later Dreux said that more recent events had shown up France's continued dependence on foreign coal, for example during the French occupation of the

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[87] SGA 7247, dossier août–septembre 1920, letter Cavallier to Fayolle 23 août 1920.
[88] *Union économique de l'Est,* 4e année (1 avril 1920), p. 89; (1 juillet 1920), pp. 157–8 and (1 août 1920), pp. 198—9.
[89] *Bulletin de la Société industrielle de l'Est,* no. 159 (octobre–décembre1920), pp. 12–46.
[90] SGA 7247, dossier novembre 1920, 'Note pour M. Cavallier, Approvisionnement de la France en charbon, résumé d'un extrait du Bulletin de la Société d'Études et d'Informations 3 novembre 1920' and 'La Question des combustibles en France'.
[91] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 18 1920, (séance 7 décembre 1920), pp. 290–300.
[92] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 19 1921, (séance 12 avril 1921), p. 112; (séance 10 mai 1921), pp. 132–3; (séance 7 juin 1921), p. 168; (séance 8 juillet 1921), p. 180. SGA 7248, dossier correspondance 1917–1924, letters from Fayolle to Cavallier 3 mai 1921 and 2 août 1921'. See also SGA 7249 dossier exposition des combustibles.

Ruhr in 1923.[93] In January 1924 the *Union économique de l'Est* published an article directed, it said, at the regional elite, which argued that much of the power of countries depended on access to coal, and in the future oil. France was poorly provided. It produced only 40 million tons of coal a year, as against consumption of 60 million. Germany and the UK each produced 300 million and the USA 600 million.[94]

Expanding hydro-electric capacity was widely seen as the answer to over-dependence on foreign coal. Such capacity doubled during the war encouraged by the state because power was important for national defence.[95] Philippe Veitl explained the reason for the development of hydro-electricity in his work on the creation of the Alpine economic region.[96] We shall also come across this belief in hydro-electricity in the chapter on the Auvergne. Dreux, in the introduction to Libault's book on the Rhine project, referred to the Dordogne hydro-electricity project being undertaken by the regions of the Centre, as similar in scope.[97]

The key legislation which governed the grant of concessions for hydro-electric plants was the law of 16 October 1919. Under this law the state could take over the rights of holders of land alongside rivers which were not navigable (the state already had such rights for navigable rivers) and grant concessions for their exploitation for hydro-electricity. New concessionaires would have to make 25% of the energy generated available at an advantageous rate to the department where the plant was situated. As a result, concessionaires could obtain financial assistance from the state for construction costs and the state could even take up shares in the venture. The concessionaire had to pay 5c per KW to the state for ten years and the concessions would last for 75 years. From this and subsequent legislation on rural electrification and the provision of high tension lines followed a general acceptance that the state should have a role in the electrification of France in the general interest.[98] This tendency was reinforced by the arguments of influential radical socialists and socialists in government.[99]

In the nineteen twenties the position of hydro-electric plants relative to thermal power stations worsened because of inflation in the construction costs of the former. Hydro-electric plants were relatively much costlier to build and dependence on loans from banks made them financially riskier. On the other hand, they absorbed less labour and avoided dependence on uncertain and costly

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[93] A. Libault, *Le Rhin et le Grand Canal d'Alsace*, préfaces d'A. Dreux, Président de la Région économique de l'Est et D. Mieg, Président de la Société industrielle de Mulhouse (Paris, 1924), pp. ix—x. Libault was secretary of the technical and information committees of the *Société des Études pour la Navigation du Rhin*.

[94] *Union économique de l'Est,* 8e année (1 janvier 1924), pp. 2–3.

[95] M. Lévy-Leboyer, H. Morsel (eds), *Histoire générale de L'Électricité en France, T.II 1919–1946 L'Interconnexion et le Marché* (Paris, 1994), p. 632.

[96] Philippe Veitl, *L'Invention d'une région: les Alpes françaises* (Grenoble, 2013)

[97] Libault, *Le Rhin*, p. ix.

[98] *Histoire générale de L'Électricité,* pp. 43–46, 54–56

[99] Ibid*, p. 356.*

coal supplies.[100] Hydro-electricity accounted for 45% of French power generation capacity in 1923.[101]

In 1919 Dreux proposed a scheme to share current generated by hydro-electric plants on the Rhine which was conceived as a way to help areas far from sources of coal supply. Such a sharing scheme was seen as an excellent way of demonstrating the usefulness of the new economic region of the East.[102] The *Union électrique du Nord-Est* would include not only the power generation companies but also chambers of commerce and consumer representatives. The initial report to the Nancy chamber was made by Desforges, a banker from the S*ociété nancéienne de Crédit industriel et de Dépôts*.[103] The new vehicle could draw eventually on hydro-electricity generated by the Rhine but meanwhile it could look at new sources of energy, for example gas generated by blast furnaces. This sharing arrangement could cover a wide area including the Ardennes, the Meuse, the Vosges and the Marne. Imbeaux pointed out that wide participation was needed to get government backing.[104] It was from regional networks developed in the nineteen twenties and thirties that the French national grid was eventually created.[105]

The *Région économique de l'Est* started the Rhine exploitation project with a study visit in July 1920. The group of representatives of chambers of commerce looked at hydro-electric power plants on the Swiss Rhine and then met with a group of Alsatians considering a bid for a concession on the French Rhine at Kembs. The meeting took place at the industrial centre of Mulhouse and included Daniel Mieg, President of the newly formed *Société des Forces motrices du Haut-Rhin*. It was agreed that any new French consortium would cooperate with the *Forces motrices* and consider taking further concessions downstream from Kembs. Imbeaux, the waterways engineer and member of the Nancy chamber of commerce, conducted the visit and was retained as a consultant.[106] The economic region envisaged taking a majority holding in any new venture but this was later to cause some dispute.[107]

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[100] *Histoire générale de L'Électricité,* pp. 56, 59, 61,
[101] Ibid*,* p. 733.
[102] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 17 1919, (séance 4 novembre 1919), pp. 211–212.
[103] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 19 1921, (séance 10 février 1921), pp. 21–3, 28–34; (séance 9 décembre 1921), p. 256. 'L'Énergie électrique dans l'Est', *Union économique de l'Est,* 3e année (15 décembre 1919), pp. 278–9.
[104] SGA 7247, dossier janvier 1920, 'Énergie électrique de l'Est, réunion de la commission spéciale 31 janvier 1920'.
[105] C. Bouneau, 'La Contribution de l'électrification à la genèse de l'aménagement du territoire en France durant la première moitié du XXe siècle', in P. Caro, O. Dard, J-C. Daumas (eds), *La Politique d'aménagement du territoire: racines, logiques et résultats* (Rennes, 2002), pp. 31–52.
[106] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 18 1920, (séance 8 juin 1920), p. 137, (séance 6 juillet 1920), p. 201.
[107] *Union économique de l'Est,* 4e année (15 avril 1920), p. 101.

From the start Alexandre Dreux, the President of the Nancy chamber, spearheaded this project. He thought that energy producers could not always look to the state for help, particularly in view of the pressures on the public purse after the war. Users of energy had to take the lead and work with the state to get suitable projects off the ground.[108] This was exactly what Clémentel had envisaged his new economic regions doing. To get the backing of interested parties including politicians, the region took steps to make sure their ideas were well publicised. The Nancy chamber's journal *Union économique de l'Est* published two articles setting out the scope of the project and the expected benefits from a canal parallel to the Rhine on the French side which would improve navigation, control flooding and irrigation, and most important offer the opportunity to install turbines at each dam to profit from the fall of the water.[109] The Nancy chamber noted that the treaty of Versailles specifically gave France the exclusive right to exploit the Rhine which now ran along its frontier. However, they knew that the Germans and some Swiss interests would be opposed to the scheme.[110]

A key meeting took place with the Minister of Public Works on 18 May 1921. All the chambers of commerce in the Eastern Region were represented plus the chambers of Bas-Rhin, Haut-Rhin, Belfort, Dijon and Gray-Vesoul and also the *Forces motrices*. The principle of setting up the *Société des Études du Rhin* was agreed subject to the approval of the Minister of Commerce. A key obstacle was overcome when legal experts in Paris ruled that chambers of commerce could take shares in such an enterprise by virtue of the law of 16 octobre 1919 concerning hydraulic energy. Other public bodies could also lend financial support.[111] Of course not all regional interests agreed on how the project should be executed. There was opposition to the proposed structure of the company from the Alsatian chambers and particularly Strasbourg. Strasbourg wanted to increase the proposed shareholding of the Bas-Rhin and Haut-Rhin and to include not only the *Forces motrices* but also the Port of Strasbourg as shareholders. Some concessions were eventually agreed to Strasbourg's point of view.[112]

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[108] Libault, *Le Rhin*, pp. ix–x.

[109] *Union économique de l'Est,* 4e année (15 juillet and 1 août 1920), pp. 181–3 and 193–5. This account was published later the same year as a separate brochure *Rhin français, projets d'aménagement du fleuve, force motrice, navigation* (*Union économique de l'Est*, Nancy).

[110] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 18 1920, (séance 15 octobre 1920), pp. 236–7.

[111] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 19 1921, (séance 12 avril 1921), p. 115; (séance 10 mai 1921), p. 146; (séance 7 juin 1921), pp. 169–171; (séance 8 juillet 1921), pp. 188–191.

[112] SGA 7249, dossier Société régionale des Études du Rhin, 'Société des Études du Rhin: Réunion 29 novembre 1921 Procès-Verbal; projets de statuts de la société, analyse et critique, 5 décembre 1921'. SGA 7359, dossier Le Rhône et Le Rhin, letter from Président de la Chambre de Commerce de Strasbourg to Alexandre Dreux 7 octobre 1921, analyse 10 octobre 1921, note de service Pont-à-Mousson 11 octobre 1921'.

Twenty-four bodies were involved as shareholders when the first assembly of the new company took place in Nancy in May 1922. All the major players had positions of influence. Dreux was the president and the vice-presidents were Herrenschmidt from Strasbourg, Mieg from *Forces motrices* and Perrigot, the President of the Épinal chamber. Humbert de Wendel from Metz was a member of the *conseil d'administration*. It was agreed with the Minister of Public Works that the company would eventually spawn a separate vehicle to build and manage the canal and hydro-electric plants.[113] Later that year an offshoot company to manage French navigation on the Rhine was created. Again a number of industrial interests took shares (members of the C*omité des forges*, including Pont-à-Mousson, the railway companies and the *Comité des armateurs*) as well as the city, chamber of commerce and port of Strasbourg.[114]

The crucial next steps were to obtain the concessions for the new hydro-electric plants. Most important the company had to build the case for investment by estimating demand and talking about the price of the electricity generated to potential consumers. Dreux ensured he was in control of this crucial process by creating an economic committee of the *Société d'Études* and basing it in Nancy.[115] In March 1924 the draft project for the Grand Canal d'Alsace in all its ramifications was agreed.[116] In a discussion at the Nancy chamber in November Paul Hellé, *Compagnie lorraine d'Électricité*, argued that this energy project was not so good for Lorraine because the price per Kwh at 20 centimes (of which transmission accounted for 5-6c) was not competitive with coal unless the price of the latter increased substantially. When the project started its backers were motivated by the thought that the force of the Rhine was equivalent to half the annual coal production of the Saar basin.[117] However, it now seemed that the goal of reducing dependence on foreign coal might be more difficult to achieve. Also two billion francs were needed to complete the project. There were limits to the guarantees the state could give.[118]

The project was delayed by German and Swiss opposition but in December 1927 Énergie électrique du Rhin was incorporated to construct the station at Kembs.[119] Work on the *Grand Canal d'Alsace* or *canal latéral* eventually started in 1928.

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[113] *Union économique de l'Est,* 6e année (15 avril 1922), p 92; (15 mai), pp. 121–2; (1 juin), p. 134.
[114] SGA 7331, dossier navigation sur le Rhin, 'Note de service du service des participations de Pont-à-Mousson pour M. Cavallier 5 novembre 1922'. SGA 7359, dossier Le Rhône et Le Rhin, letter from Tannery, Société des Minerais lorrains to Cavallier, 30 novembre 1923. SGA 7331, dossier navigation sur Le Rhin, letter from Tannery to Cavallier listing the shareholdings, 3 juin 1924.
[115] SGA 7359, dossier Le Rhône et le Rhin, 'Réunion du conseil, société d'études, 20 avril 1923'.
[116] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 22 1924, (séance 11 mars 1924), p. 73.
[117] *Rhin français,* projets d'aménagement du fleuve, force motrice, navigation (Union économique de l'Est, Nancy, 1920), p.1.
[118] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 22 1924, (séance 11 novembre 1924), pp. 237–9.
[119] *Histoire générale de L'Électricité,* p.642.

The first hydro-electric generating station at Kembs opened in 1932. The other three such stations on the canal had to wait until after 1945. This story shows that a large number of public and private interests over the Eastern Region and beyond could come together with the state's support to get a major infrastructure project off the ground. It demonstrates that private and public interests in the region were willing to back such a project financially. It also shows that adjustments had to be made between different regional perspectives. Although Strasbourg played a significant role, the project was driven by an iron master from Nancy, the core of the Lorraine economic region. Lastly it was a complex project which demonstrated the ambition of the regional elite in economic affairs. It was seen as a way of helping the East of the country, which had suffered so grievously in the recent conflict.[120] It is one of the best demonstrations of economic regionalism in the inter-war period.

5. viii. Technical Education

During its discussions on how to combat the shortage of coal the Nancy chamber suggested that the newly formed *Institut minier* could play a significant role by fostering research into new energy sources.[121] The Nancy chamber and prominent members like Cavallier believed that one of the greatest challenges facing Lorraine's industries after the war was the shortage of skilled manpower. This was an issue on which they knew they could take effective action. Before 1914 they had been instrumental in setting up a number of technical institutes attached to the University of Nancy. 1919 was to see the founding of yet another, the mining institute, and also the development of more general management education.

The university made the decision to set up the Metallurgical and Mining Institute on 28 May 1919 and it opened in the autumn of that year.[122] Students would be able to graduate as engineers from the University of Nancy. French metallurgical firms had taken over sequestered German assets in Lorraine and France was involved in exploiting the mines of the Saar. As a result of these developments the industry was four hundred engineers short. This was a gap which the Faculty of Science was keen to fill with a practical training which would put Nancy above Strasbourg or Metz. The *École des Mines* in Paris and the similar school in St.-Étienne had said they could not meet this skills gap.[123] The desire to compete effectively with Germany after the war was a motivating force. The new institute would be a hybrid institution - partly a university faculty and partly a *grande école* over which the *Corps des Mines*, a state institution, would have influence. Later it would change its name from I*nstitut métallurgique et minier* to *École supérieure de Métallurgie et des Mines*.

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[120] *Rhin français,* p. 12.
[121] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 19 1921, (séance 8 février 1921), pp. 26–27.
[122] This account is drawn from Birck, L*'École des Mines*, pp. 85–113.
[123] Grelon, Birck, *Ingénieurs Lorraine*, p. 173.

From the start the institution depended on financial support from the relevant industries which were heavily involved in running it. Dreux took the lead in obtaining industry backing. Four bodies — the *Comité des Forges de France*, the *Comité central des Houillères de France,* the *Comité des Forges et Mines de fer de Meurthe-et-Moselle* and the *Société industrielle de l'Est* provided start-up funding of 300,000 francs. The Nancy chamber provided 10,000 francs over five years and the *Office économique* 45,000. In total the institute needed 300,000 francs to open and 258,000 francs per annum to cover running costs. The *Comité des Forges de France* said it would cover any annual costs not met by agreed subsidies.[124] In time annual subsidies amounted to 100,000 francs which just about covered staff costs. Paul Petit, the Dean of the Faculty of Science, was appointed as director. He had seen the difficulties of running an institution inadequately supported by industry, the *École de Brasserie*, and was anxious to tie industry into this new venture. The industry would have a say in the running of the school, the course content and the appointment of staff. A majority of the *conseil d'administration* would be nominated by trade associations, the Nancy *chambre de commerce*, the *Office économique de l'Est* and the S*ociété industrielle de l'Est*. Dreux was on the *conseil* as were Cavallier, Antonin Daum and François de Wendel, the President of the *Comité des Forges*.[125]

It was clear from their correspondence that both Cavallier and Dreux wanted to be in the driving seat.[126] The committee of patronage included leading industrialists and members of chambers of commerce from throughout eastern France and not just the Eastern Region as such.[127] Cavallier tried to suggest other industrialists who had been left out.[128] He also was in constant correspondence with the school about the course content.[129] He wanted the school to open a service to look at common technical problems experienced by the metallurgical and mining industries.[130] By 1922 there were 282 candidates applying for places of which only 65 came from the Eastern Region.

The Nancy chamber took a considerable interest in two other technical education projects after the war. The first was the *Institut commercial* set up by the *Faculté de Droit* in 1916 with help from the chamber of commerce and the *Société industrielle de l'Est*. It had originally been financially self-sufficient but needed help after the war. Bourcart, the Professor of Commercial Law in the *Faculté de Droit*

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[124] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 17 1919, (séance 4 novembre 1919), p.215.
[125] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 17 1919, (séance 6 mai 1919), pp. 164–5.
[126] SGA 7248, dossier correspondance 1917–1924, letters from Dreux to Cavallier 3 octobre 1919 and Cavallier to Dreux 11 octobre 1919.
[127] SGA 7313, dossier Institut métallurgique et minier de Nancy 1920–26, 'Comité d'actions chargé de préparer l'organisation et le fonctionnement de l'Institut métallurgique et minier 6 mai 1919'
[128] Ibid, Cavallier letter to Fayolle 25 mai 1919.
[129] Ibid, Cavallier letters to Petit, director of the institute, 10 février 1922, 20 février 1922.
[130] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 17 1919, (séance 6 mai 1919), pp. 164–5.

and a *membre correspondant* of the Nancy chamber, was the director.[131] The purpose of the institute was to provide an advanced commercial education either to graduates of the *École supérieure de Commerce* or to graduates in other fields. To reduce costs, the *institut* decided to reduce its course to one year. The *chambre de commerce* committed 15,000 francs over three years to be paid via the *Office économique de l'Est,* and the city of Nancy, and the *Sociétés industrielles de l'Est et de Mulhouse,* smaller amounts.[132] By 1922 the situation of the *institut* seemed to have stabilised; the academic results and finances were reported as excellent.[133]

The other more complex project was the establishment of a *chambre de métiers* in Nancy to organise apprenticeship training in a more systematic way. While large firms already had training programmes, many small and medium sized firms did not. The chamber started to consider apprenticeships for a number of reasons. There was government legislation on the subject but this did not deal with the problem in a comprehensive fashion. In 1920 the government initiated a survey to find out about current practice. There was a *Comité départemental d'Enseignement technique* which wanted action. There were national congresses to discuss the issue and Nancy was aware that a number of towns had taken matters into their own hands and founded a *chambre de métiers* without waiting for a framework of government legislation. An article appeared in a local paper pointing out that chambers had been formed already in Strasbourg, Limoges, Angers and other towns.[134]

The chamber's commission on teaching and apprenticeships reported in July 1920 in favour of setting up a *chambre de métiers* in Nancy. Only four training schools currently existed in Nancy — the *École d'Apprentissage du Bâtiment*, the *École professionnelle de l'Est*, the *École primaire supérieure* and the *École des Beaux-arts*. A wider coverage of all trades was essential.[135] There was a division of views in the Nancy chamber between those who wanted centrally organised instruction in a school in Nancy and those, like Dreux, who wanted training to be carried out on the job, supplemented occasionally by a local course.[136] It was considered that the *chambre de métiers* should be independent of the *chambres de commerce* but the latter should appoint some members of the *conseil d'administration*. The *chambre de métiers* should clearly organise apprenticeships

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[131] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 17 1919, (séance 25 janvier 1919), p. 131. *Union économique de l'Est,* 3e année (1 avril 1919), p. 89.
[132] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 17 1919, (séance 15 mars 1919), pp. 152–4; (séance 6 mai 1919), pp. 164–5; vol. 18 1920, (séance 6 juillet 1920), Annexe IV Institut commercial, pp. 222–225.
[133] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 20 1922, (séance 11 juillet 1922), p. 178.
[134] SGA 7247, dossier mai 1920, 'Note sur l'apprentissage, 6 mai 1920'.
[135] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 18 1920, (séance 11 mai 1920), pp. 101–2; (séance 6 juillet 1920), pp. 202–4 and Annexe III pp. 215–219.
[136] SGA 7247, dossier mai 1920, 'Note sur l'apprentissage, 6 mai 1920'.

in firms, govern conditions of work and examinations.[137] The Nancy chamber got involved in discussions with other chambers in Paris and also with the Nancy city council.[138] By November 1922 a number of industrialists and professionals had lost patience with the legislative delays and so the chamber voted to instruct its commission to produce a report on how a *chambre de métiers* should be set up. Nancy did not like to be behind in a new social or economic development. The commission's report contains this telling remark 'notre région, qui a toujours été à l'avant-garde des grands problèmes sociaux.' [139]

In March 1923 it was a committee set up by the department of Meurthe-et-Moselle which produced a report on how the new *chambre de métiers* would be set up.[140] The plans included courses in most towns, advanced courses, competitions and exhibitions, exams, prizes, bursaries, regulations and an office to manage the process and to facilitate placements. The *conseil d'administration* would consist of one third each elected representatives of the *patronat* and the workers and one third from bodies like the *chambre de commerce* and the *Société industrielle de l'Est*. The whole philosophy would be to spread best practice from the bigger firms to the smaller. A conference of all interested parties in Nancy was held on 12 May when the statutes were agreed.[141] The story of the *chambre de métier*s' foundation is a good example of local initiative, involving a variety of local interests, producing a result in the economic field when central government had failed to act.

So we have found evidence of an authentic economic regionalism among the industrial and commercial leaders of Lorraine in the *Chambre de Commerce de Nancy*. They tackled problems of transport infrastructure, power generation and technical education on a regional basis. We noted in the introductory chapter on Lorraine before 1914 that the regional elite took pride in the role of local banks in financing industry, providing support not forthcoming from Parisian banks. Representatives of the *Société nancéienne de Crédit industriel et de Dépôts* and the *Banque Renauld* were members of the chamber. We now turn to examine the support the chamber gave to improving the provision of capital to local firms, by encouraging the founding of *banques populaires* but most directly by organising the opening of a *bourse des valeurs* in Nancy, a project which had been discussed before the war.

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[137] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 19 1921, (séance 8 novembre 1921), pp. 244–6, Annexe II chambre de métiers pp. 259–263.
[138] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 20 1922, (séance 6 mars 1922), p. 45; (séance 11 avril 1922), pp. 95–6.
[139] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 20 1922, (séance 7 novembre 1922), pp. 237, 240–3.
[140] For the role of the *comité départemental* see SGA 7249, dossier chambre de métiers février–mars 1923.
[141] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 21 1923, (séance 9 mars 1923), pp. 50–4; (séance 12 juin 1923), pp. 119–20.

5. ix. Regional stock exchange

Almost as soon as the war was over members of the *chambre de commerce* in Nancy were thinking about reviving the project to create a *bourse des valeurs* for the city. A note in Cavallier's papers dated 25 January 1919 reflects on the enormous task of raising capital to re-equip after the war and also the developing regional role of Nancy's banks:

'La guerre a en effet, reculé très loin sur tout son pourtour, et notamment vers l'Est, l'horizon de Nancy, capitale régionale. Elle a précipité l'évolution du régionalisme, tout au moins économique et, en agrandissant le champ d'action de nos banques locales, auxquelles la situation offre désormais de nouvelles tâches, elle nous oblige à recourir à des moyens nouveaux, plus nombreux, à de nouvelles collaborations, à un outillage bancaire plus étendu, plus puissant, sans lequel les besoins régionaux ne pourraient être satisfaite.' [142]

The *chambre de commerce* took up the issue formally on the same day and set up a commission to look into it. The discussion highlighted the likely doubling of the market capitalisation of firms in the east resulting from the return of Alsace-Lorraine. Cooperation between the chamber, the municipality and local businessmen was urgent. A *bourse des valeurs* would be:

'un organisme appelé à rendre de grands services à la region, aux très nombreuses sociétés qui y possèdent un siège social ou des établissements et, en definitive, à Nancy.'

The commission appointed, apart from the *bureau*, included six other members including Gustave Simon, Matray from the local branch of the *Banque de France*, Krug and Bourcart, the Professor of Commercial Law.[143] Cavallier wrote to Fayolle from Paris, having seen some personal contacts in the Ministry of Finance, to urge going for a full scale bourse with six *agents de change* and a tribunal, even though this meant a lengthier approvals process. It was vital to persuade local banks to back the scheme as some had opposed it before the war.[144] Gustave Simon, the Mayor of Nancy, said that the municipality would support anything which increased the prestige of the city. He remarked that

'Mais il apparaît bien qu'il y a, en matière de Bourse des Valeurs, une place à prendre dans la Région de l'Est, que cette Bourse peut rendre de très grands services en stimulant l'activité régionale. La Chambre de Commerce de Nancy, qui a déjà pris maintes initiatives favorables à la Région doit encore assumer celle-ci.' [145]

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[142] SGA 7234, dossier bourse des valeurs, note on bourse des valeurs 25 janvier 1919.
[143] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 17 1919, (séance 25 janvier 1919), pp. 127–8.
[144] SGA 7234, dossier bourse des valeurs, Cavallier letter to Fayolle 11 février 1919, Cavallier letter to Bertrand-Oser 16 novembre 1919.
[145] SGA 7247, dossier 1918–1919, 'Compte-rendu de la commission 25 février 1919,

Reconstruction would create a big demand for financial credit which might persuade some firms to raise new capital, although share valuations were low which could deter some owners. The Paris shares market did not favour shares in smaller Lorraine companies which suffered alongside major groups.[146] Nancy could feel Strasbourg breathing down its neck. Dreux wrote to Fayolle that the chamber of commerce there was moving forward which removed some of the objections in Nancy. [147]

At the beginning of 1920 the municipality of Nancy got actively involved in the project and set up a commission to push the matter to a conclusion, working with the chamber and leading personalities such as François de Wendel and also the directors of banks in Nancy including national banks such as the *Société Générale* and *Crédit Lyonnais*. The municipal group favoured a smaller bourse — only four agents de change without a tribunal.[148] The chamber of commerce was prepared to provide premises on conditions to be discussed.[149] In November the chamber supported the plan for four agents only, while noting that the *bourses* in Lyon, Marseille, Bordeaux, Toulouse, Nantes and Lille were larger (six agents and a tribunal).[150] The note presented by Fayolle to the *Bourse des Valeurs* commission and included in the *procès-verbal* as an annex draws attention to activity of Nancy's banks as an example of financial decentralisation and urges that it be encouraged further by the creation of a *bourse*:

'À notre époque, où le principe de décentralisation est en faveur, Nancy passe à juste titre pour l'un des centres provinciaux qui ont témoigné de l'activité la plus heureuse et la plus ordonnée.
Les banques locales et régionales y ont des premières donné l'exemple de la décentralisation financière. Leur succès a été très grand. Il apparaît à quelques maisons de crédit de la place et de la région qu'il se développerait encore si l'on disposait à Nancy d'une bourse des valeurs.
La choix de Nancy comme siège de cette Bourse sera des plus heureux, en raison de l'activité considérable de ses organisations bancaires et de sa situation

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bourse des valeurs'.
[146] SGA 7234, dossier bourse des valeurs, report by commission on bourse des valeurs 14 mars 1919, Pont-à-Mousson note de service to Cavallier 1 avril 1919.
[147] Ibid, Dreux letter to Fayolle 15 novembre 1919.
[148] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 18 1920, (séance 9 mars 1920), p. 50 and Annexe VII p. 75. SGA 7234, dossier bourse des valeurs, 'Création d'une bourse des valeurs à Nancy, personnalités pressenties en vue de la constitution d'une commission extra-municipale', (attachment to letter from the Maire de Nancy to Cavallier as member of the commission of the Chambre de commerce on the bourse des valeurs, 9 avril 1920).
[149] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 18 1920, (séance 8 juin 1920), p. 134.
[150] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 18 1920, (séance 9 novembre 1920), pp. 257–8 and Annexe I pp. 267–72.

géographique à 353 kilomètres de Paris, 418 de Lyon, 358 de Lille, villes possédant chacune une bourse des valeurs.' [151]

At this stage the major obstacles had been overcome. In 1921 the procedure to give official approval to the new *agents de change* was completed and the *bourse* could start business.[152] We can see here how the Nancy chamber's involvement in the creation of a *bourse des valeurs* was tied to a positive view of how financial institutions in Nancy could transform the region's prospects. In doing so they specifically referred to regionalism as an economic phenomenon.

It was entirely consistent with this approach that the chamber should give its support to a *banque populaire* when asked by the prefecture and the Ministry of Commerce. These mutual institutions were designed to provide credit for small and medium-sized commercial and industrial firms. A new law which gave them a much clearer legal status was passed by the Chamber of Deputies in 1917. *Banques populaires* could get help in raising capital in the form of a government loan.[153] The *Banque populaire de l'Est* opened in Nancy in December 1919. The Nancy chamber was asked by the government whether it would recommend that the bank be given approval for a government loan. The chamber signified that it was favourable in 1920.[154] The new bank in Nancy was not the only one to open soon after the law was passed. There were also *banques populaires* in Épinal and Bar-Le-Duc.[155]

5. x. Reconstruction

To demonstrate the success of economic regionalism in Lorraine we will now turn to consider post-war reconstruction, a massive task which absorbed the energies of Lorraine's leaders for several years. We can see its impact on Camille Cavallier as he sought to rebuild his business. His main plant had been damaged, installations in the Briey basin had been occupied and damaged also, supply lines of raw materials had been disrupted, and access to markets at home and abroad had to be restored. Equally, rebuilding towns and villages and making farms productive again was a huge task. The chamber of commerce was not in the driving seat on most of the issues, but they were of great concern to members. So here we will explore how reconstruction was organised in a regional context. In particular we will examine the creation and operation of reconstruction

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[151] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. vol. 18 1920, (séance 9 novembre 1920), p. 272. SGA 7247, dossier octobre 1920, 'Note sur la bourse des valeurs de Nancy, 26 octobre 1920, réunion de la commission de la bourse des valeurs le 30 octobre 1920', (attachment to letter from Vilgrain to Cavallier announcing meeting, 27 octobre 1920).
[152] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 19 1921, (séance 8 mars 1921), pp. 80–1 and (séance 12 avril 1921), pp. 104–5.
[153] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 17 1919, (séance 10 juin 1919), p. 181.
[154] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 18 1920, (séance 11 mai 1920), p. 163.
[155] R. Bour, *Histoire de la banque populaire de Lorraine* (Metz, 1989), pp. 29, 47, 81, 117.

cooperatives, a movement in which Lorraine took the lead among the former front line regions.

At the end of the war the French government passed a law on *dommages de guerre* (17 avril 1919). In it they accepted responsibility for the costs of reconstruction, on the basis of course that they would recuperate the cost from Germany. A process was set up whereby those who had suffered damage could make a claim for reimbursement. It was of great concern to the Nancy chamber that these claims were settled as quickly as possible. Already on 25 January 1919 the chamber was complaining about the delay in passing the law on d*ommages de guerre*. Cavallier proposed a resolution saying it was a matter of utmost urgency.[156] The chamber itself had suffered in the war because some of its subscribing businesses were in occupied territories or the war zone.[157] Naturally the chamber wanted the government to make sure Germany paid the reparations.[158] Cavallier believed that private firms in Germany, who had profited from the deliberate destruction of French industry, which he himself had witnessed when he visited his installation in Briey in December 1918, should pay for the damage through a tax.[159]

Soon the industrialists whose businesses had been damaged experienced the problem which affected all the *sinistrés* (i.e. those who had suffered damage). The French government could not keep up the flow of payments because of Germany's failure to adhere to the reparations schedule and its own financial problems. In July 1921 the Nancy chamber noted that the Office for Industrial Reconstruction had suspended payments. Firms in different industries were combining to seek loans guaranteed by their "titres de dommages ou leurs certificats provisoires" so they could undertake the work needed. These loans would be guaranteed by the state. An example quoted was the sugar industry. Cities such as Verdun and Reims also looked for loans. Accordingly, the Nancy chamber passed a resolution asking the government to authorise a loan of 800 million francs to the metallurgical industries, which no doubt pleased the many iron masters who were members.[160]

As reconstruction progressed the chamber saw itself as the defender of the rights of *sinistrés* against any government attempt to whittle them down.[161] In this they were supported by Lorraine politicians like Louis Marin. For example, in 1924 the chamber along with others in the North and East protested against government attempts to claw back certain supplementary payments made to industrialists to

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[156] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 17 1919, (séance 25 janvier 1919), pp. 125–7.
[157] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 17 1919, (séance 10 juin 1919), p. 185.
[158] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 18 1920, (séance 8 juin 1920), pp. 134–5.
[159] SGA 7385, visit note by Cavallier on Briey-Longwy 11 décembre 1918. SGA 7248, dossier correspondance 1917–1924, 'Note de service de Cavallier 6 février 1919'.
[160] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 19 1921, (séance 8 juillet 1921), pp. 182–4.
[161] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 21 1923, (séance 12 juin 1923), pp. 117–8.

cover the replacement costs of damaged stocks.[162] The chamber also complained constantly about the administration of the *Ministère des Régions Libérées* and particularly the high salaries of contractors paid directly by them, which were depriving firms and farms of labour.[163]

The Nancy chamber did not in fact spend a lot of time debating reconstruction, compared with other subjects. Businesses organised their own works, either individually or through their trade associations. They protested through various channels including the chamber when difficulties occurred. Reconstruction was not just an issue for Lorraine but affected much of the North and East and indeed the economy of France as a whole. It also caused controversy in relations with Germany and France's former allies. Firms like Pont-à-Mousson were no doubt big enough to fend for themselves. Pont-à-Mousson re-lit the first of its furnaces in April 1919 and had the others operational by June 1920.[164] Cavallier had a direct relationship with Albert Lebrun, Lorraine politician and *Minstre des Régions Libérées* until November 1919. For small enterprises and particularly for farmers and rural communities it was a different matter. On their own they would struggle with the organisation of reconstruction and the government paperwork. Here we should examine the emergence in 1919 of reconstruction cooperatives, a remarkable example of regional initiative and solidarity, which took root first in Lorraine and then spread to other devastated areas. As Desforges, from the *Société nancéienne* and the *chambre de commerce,* said in a speech in 1922:

'C'est en Meurthe-et-Moselle que l'initiative privée a donné la plus vive impulsion au développement des coopératives de reconstruction, sans lesquelles les petits propriétaires eussent été impuissants.' [165]

They were very effective in helping Lorraine's economy and society recover after the war.

Le Bon Grain, the organ of the Union of Lorraine farmers' unions, also acted as publicist for the work of the cooperative movement. As early as May 1919 it was making the case for cooperatives, as it would be much easier for farmers to re-build using centralised expertise, for example building entrepreneurs, architects

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[162] SGA 7247, 'Réunion des représentants autorisés des chambres de commerce des dix départements dévastés par la guerre et d'Alsace-Lorraine à Lille 3 décembre 1924'; 'Réunion avec Édouard Herriot et 36 chambres de commerce 8 décembre 1924 au Ministère des Affaires Étrangères'.

[163] SGA 7247, dossier février–mars 1920, 'Chambre de commerce réunion 9 mars 1920'; Dreux letter to Isaac, Minister of Commerce, 15 février 1920, p. 4; Cavallier letter to Dreux, 27 février 1920; Dreux inquiry to members to obtain evidence of complaints, 25 février 1920.

[164] SGA Série A fasc. 31 A, DOC PAM 21.24, 'Fête de la reconstitution aux usines de Pont-à-Mousson 18 juillet 1920', p.6.

[165] Speech to the Association des Anciens Élèves de l'École libre des Sciences politiques, *Union économique de L'Est,* 6e année (1 mai 1922), pp. 108–110.

and accountants.[166] How did their extraordinarily rapid growth in Meurthe-et-Moselle come about? By April 1919 there were forty such organisations, by May sixty and at the start of 1920 one hundred and eighty. A lot was due to one man, the Abbé Thouvenin, who visited his home village of St. Généviève in January 1919 and was convinced that cooperatives were the way forward. Georges Hottenger had also come to the same conclusion in an article in the magazine *La Reconstruction lorraine* in March 1917 (see p. 91). Thouvenin had had some experience with schemes for housing workers in the north of the department before the war. The cooperatives which were eventually adopted in Meurthe-et-Moselle were similar to those that allowed the reconstruction of flooded areas on the Marne in 1911.[167] Early in 1918 Thouvenin joined forces with the Abbé Fiel, eventual secretary of the union of cooperatives, Dupan of the *Génie rural* and Mirman the prefect and, encouraged by Albert Lebrun, founded the first cooperative at Norroy-lès-Pont-à-Mousson in February 1919.[168] Louis Marin also supported the movement and addressed meetings. With the backing of the bishop of Nancy, the prefect and the relevant officials, Thouvenin went on a tour of the department to encourage support for his ideas.

His second innovation was to realise that individual cooperatives, which were quite small and often represented just one village, needed support. They needed help with choosing suitable architects and builders, and also advice on how to cope with the mass of government legislation and regulations. They had to learn how to work closely with the public authorities.[169] Thouvenin and De Warren, the local deputy, told them they needed to understand the difficulties they would have operating on their own and the benefits of having access to advice.[170] Thouvenin set up a union of cooperatives in June 1919, of which there were initially 54 members, again with the active encouragement of his bishop. He was the first president. One hundred and fifty people came to the first meeting including representatives of the prefecture, four priests from the diocese, architects and builders, and of course the administrators of the cooperatives.[171] The meeting discussed in great detail what cooperatives needed to do. The church offered to pay the cooperatives' registration costs and help came in from other well-wishers like deputy de Warren. The union guided the cooperatives in creating their dossiers and 11,000 copies of Thouvenin's *Guide des Sinistrés* were distributed.[172] The church subsidised courses on creating dossiers.[173] In addition,

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166 *Le Bon Grain,* 13e année nos. 3 and 4 (15 mai and 1 juin 1919).
167 P. Fiel, 'La Reconstruction des régions dévastées en Lorraine,' *Le Pays lorrain*, 27e année, nouvelle série quatrième volume (1935), p. 6.
168 R. Préaud, P. Fiel, *Les Coopératives de reconstruction du département de Meurthe-et-Moselle* (Nancy, 1922), p.5. Préaud was chef de service du contrôle des coopératives de Meurthe-et-Moselle.
169 Préaud, Fiel, '*Les Coopératives*', p. 7.
170 *Le Bon Grain,* 13e année no.2 (avril 1919), pp. 32–35.
171 'Union lorraine des Coopératives de Reconstruction assemblée générale, 9 juin 1919', *Le Bon Grain,* 13e année no.8 (15 juillet 1919), pp. 127–140.
172 Préaud, Fiel, '*Les Coopératives*', pp. 9–10.
173 Ibid, p. 11.

cooperatives could turn to a journal, *La Reconstruction lorraine*, for authoritative advice.[174]

In its July 1919 issue *La Reconstruction* announced the opening by the *Société industrielle de l'Est* of an *Office de Dommages de Guerre* to offer help to *sinistrés*. It was supported in this by the *Société d'Assistance aux Réfugiés et Sinistrés de Meurthe-et-Moselle* (*president Maurice de Wendel*), the *Société centrale d'Agriculture* and the *Comité lorrain de Reconstitution des Régions éprouvées*.[175] In fact, the minutes of the *Société d'Assistance* show that this body had been discussing this project since December 1918. They envisaged the office not only giving out information but also actively contacting mayors of affected communes to help them. The March 1919 minutes suggest the mayors should nominate people to come to the office for training in how to gather the information on damage needed to make claims and they would then go back to work in their communes.[176]

By the end of 1919 encouraging progress was being made in a number of communes such as Ancerviller, discussed at length by Abbé Fiel at a further meeting of the union on 15 November.[177] However, considerable problems still remained. For example, there were not enough skilled volunteer administrators and architects, and some materials were difficult to obtain. Also the statutes of the cooperatives were legally defective in certain respects.[178] Groups of two to three cooperatives were advised to combine to hire an accountant.[179] A law of 15 August 1920 set standards for cooperatives and required them to register. Architects and builders had to be approved by the prefecture and financial accounts audited. Co-operatives already set up in Meurthe-et-Moselle had to apply for registration and they were duly approved.[180] Thouvenin and the union of cooperatives guided individual cooperatives through the new legislation. The union itself had to change its legal status.[181] We have already seen that industrial sectors were considering loans secured by entitlement to compensation and

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[174] This account draws on two articles by H.D. Clout, 'War and recovery in the countryside of north-eastern France: the example of Meurthe-et-Moselle,' *Journal of Historical Geography*, 23, 2 (1997), pp. 164–186 and 'The Revival of Rural Lorraine after the Great War,' *Geografiska Annaler*, series B, Human Geography, vol. 75, no. 2 (1993), pp. 73–91.
[175] *La Reconstruction lorraine* (15 juillet 1919), p. 294.
[176] SGA 7448, dossier Société d'Assistance aux Réfugiés, Évacués, Sinistrés de Meurthe-et-Moselle: compte-rendu de réunions, divers (1918–1920), minutes of the meetings of the committee of the *Société d'Assistance aux Réfugiés et Sinistrés de Meurthe-et-Moselle*, décembre 1918, mars 1919, avril 1919. See also SGA 7229, dossier Assistance aux réfugiés, évacués (1920).
[177] 'Assemblée générale de l'union des coopératives 19 novembre 1919', *Le Bon Grain*, 13e année nos.17 and 18 (1 et 15 décembre 1919), pp. 284–7. Ancerviller finished reconstruction quickly by Autumn 1921, see Clout, 'Rural Lorraine', p. 82.
[178] *Le Bon Grain,13e année nos. 17 and 18* (1 et 15 décembre 1919), pp. 282–3.
[179] Préaud, Fiel, '*Les Coopératives*', p. 10.
[180] Ibid, p. 12.
[181] *Le Bon Grain,*15e année no.3 (1 février 1921), pp. 38–9.

backed by the state to ease cash flow. In 1921 the *Société nancéienne* and the *Banque Renauld* offered to lend the union of cooperatives two and a half times its deposits if the state suspended payments.[182]

Delegations came from elsewhere in northern France to study how the cooperatives in Meurthe-et-Moselle worked. The Minister of Liberated Regions recommended the prefect of the Nord to follow the methods adopted in Meurthe-et-Moselle.[183] By early 1922 there were 205 cooperatives in 228 communes. These now included specially formed cooperatives to deal with the reconstruction of churches, *mairies* and schools. In 1921 the church launched a fifteen million franc loan to pay for the reconstruction of the Nancy diocese's 107 damaged churches and it was successful.[184] Abbé Thouvenin received recognition from central government when he was asked to join the *Comité supérieur de la Reconstruction* and made a Chevalier of the Légion d'Honneur.[185] The church's example of taking out a loan was followed by others fairly quickly. The *Conseil-général de Meurthe-et-Moselle* raised two loans for 190 million francs. Isolated *sinistrés* were grouped together by Brun of the *Société industrielle de l'Est* and 11 million was raised. Similar loans were floated in the Meuse and the Vosges.[186]

The reconstruction cooperatives are yet another example of regional leaders in Lorraine coming together to solve important problems affecting the region's future. So we have widespread evidence of a strong current of economic regionalism in Meurthe-et-Moselle and in Lorraine more widely. The regional elite was willing to act on its own initiative to try and achieve defined economic objectives, whether it could legally undertake projects directly or had to lobby the public authorities to do so. There is no doubt that regional institutions like the *chambres de commerce* and others thought they were acting in the interests of their region, which they occasionally referred to as Lorraine. The question we will have to consider in a subsequent chapter is how far they were motivated by an allegiance to Lorraine as an entity, its history and culture. How does this strand of economic regionalism link to other aspects of the regionalist movement?

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[182] Préaud, Fiel, '*Les Coopératives*', p. 25.
[183] Fiel, *'La Reconstruction'*, p. 8.
[184] Ibid, pp. 12–13.
[185] Préaud, Fiel, '*Les Coopératives*', p. 13.
[186] Fiel, 'La Reconstruction', p. 13.

Chapter Six: Economic Regionalism in the Auvergne 1919–1924

6.i. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to see whether the regional elite in the Auvergne had a similar debate on economic modernisation to Lorraine and pursued similar policies. As in Lorraine we will focus on chambers of commerce, because these were the focus of Clémentel's reforms, and on industrial and commercial affairs. The arguments in this chapter are mainly drawn from the records of the regional grouping of chambers of commerce and also of the *Chambre de Commerce de Clermont-Ferrand*, because it was the centre of the economic region. For the Auvergne we have a set of the published proceedings of the regional committee in the periodical *Région du Centre*, unlike for Lorraine.

6.ii. The Clermont-Ferrand Chamber of Commerce

The Clermont-Ferrand chamber was totally different in character from the chamber in Nancy. It was smaller with circa 25 members, as opposed to 40 in Nancy, mainly due to the latter's larger number of *membres correspondants*.[1] Average attendance was also lower, somewhere between ten and twenty. Clermont-Ferrand did not think it had much voting weight in the assembly of presidents of chambers of commerce which was organised regularly by the Paris chamber.[2]

The occupations of the Clermont members were different from those in Nancy. There were proportionately more traders as opposed to manufacturers. There were also relatively few professionals like engineers or university professors. There was a coal mining engineer and also a representative of the hydro-electric company of the Auvergne. The president throughout the period in question was Maurice Chalus, the owner of a private bank in the Auvergne. Like Dreux in Lorraine, he was president of the regional grouping of chambers of commerce. He was also a member of the *Conseil supérieur du Commerce*, which met regularly in Paris.[3] He was obviously a man of means. In 1923 he made a loan to the university's chemistry institute for repairs.[4] His vice-presidents were Raymond Bergougnan of the eponymous rubber company in Clermont-Ferrand and a merchant A-A. Jouve. The secretary was A-A. Lagaye, a manufacturer of *fruits confits*. The treasurer was a distiller of liqueurs. Édouard Michelin was also a

[1] See *Compte-Rendu des travaux de la Chambre de Commerce de Clermont-Ferrand 1919–1920 and 1923–24* (Clermont-Ferrand published 1920–1921 and 1924–25).
[2] *Travaux Clermont-Ferrand, 1924* (séance 8 janvier 1924), p. 14
[3] *Travaux Clermont-Ferrand, 1924* (séance 26 juin 1924), p. 136
[4] *Travaux Clermont-Ferrand, 1923* (séance 14 novembre 1923), p. 93.

member although not on the *bureau*. Another difference from Nancy is that the prefect of the Puy-de-Dôme was an honorary president and did attend from time to time, more frequently than his opposite number in Meurthe-et-Moselle. Occasionally he sent the secretary-general of the prefecture in his place. Prefects did not have direct control over either the chambers of commerce or the new regions. Their role in the new regions was only consultative.[5]

The comparison between Bergougnan and Michelin is an interesting one. Édouard Michelin resigned in November 1923 having not attended a single meeting in the previous four years. His excuse was that he had agreed to serve during the war but had always made it clear he could not do so afterwards.[6] Generally, he held himself apart from local affairs. Raymond Bergougnan, however, was a member of the *conseil-municipal* of Clermont-Ferrand, as well as being a vice-president of the chamber. He was also assiduous in actual attendance at meetings. His absences were very rare. More than this he was also Vice-President of the Union of the *Syndicats patronaux of the Puy-de-Dôme* of which Lagaye was president.[7] (The union was more directly concerned than the chamber in defending the interests of business owners.[8]) Bergougnan was very close to Étienne Clémentel, who was on his board and was his commercial representative in Paris, at one point obtaining for Bergougnan a contract to supply tyres to the Paris bus company. Maurice Chalus's brother Joseph was also on the Bergougnan board.[9] Michelin's marketing policy was much more aggressive than say Bergougnan's.[10] Michelin had patented the pneumatic tyre, suitable for the private car which the company foresaw would eventually be produced in huge numbers. Bergougnan stayed with solid rubber tyres, more suitable for buses and trucks. In the thirties Michelin bought out the Bergougnan company.

6. iii. The Economic Region

The work of the Clermont-Ferrand chamber and its relationship to the economic region is chiefly of interest because it took place under the watchful eye of Étienne Clémentel, the most powerful Auvergnat politician of his generation. Clémentel naturally came down to his fief to initiate the proceedings of the 17th region, which he did on 27 April 1918. Representatives of the Clermont and other chambers of commerce in the region were present plus the prefects and some of Clémentel's

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[5] Druelle-Korn, 'Modernisation inachevée', p.163.
[6] *Travaux Clermont-Ferrand, 1923* (séance 14 novembre 1923), pp. 88–9.
[7] 'Assemblée générale des syndicats patronaux 26 décembre 1922,' *Le Commerce*, bulletin de l'Association du commerce et de l'industrie du Puy-de-Dôme, des Syndicats patronaux et de la Fédération des groups commerciaux et industriels du Centre, no. 74 (jan-février 1923), p.5.
[8] A. Lagaye, 'Devoir Syndical,' *Le Commerce*, no. 73 (décembre 1922), pp. 5–6.
[9] Moulin-Bourret, *Guerre et industrie*, pp.61, 110, 114.
[10] S. Harp, *Marketing Michelin: advertising and cultural identity in twentieth century France* (John Hopkins, 2001).

aides from the Ministry of Commerce.[11] After the election in November 1919 he had more time to take an interest because he lost his seat as a deputy and therefore his position as a minister in the government. Subsequently he became President of the *Conseil-général* of the Puy-de-Dôme and a senator.

The new region was not formally constituted until 22 February 1919, two months before the ministerial *arrêté* which authorised the new groupings.[12] At this meeting the regional chambers of commerce and prefects were represented plus Allegret, an official from the Ministry of Commerce. This time Clémentel could not attend because he was heavily engaged negotiating the treaty of Versailles. A new regional committee was chosen. Clermont-Ferrand had two votes and the other chambers one, because Clermont had far more registered businesses (*patentés*) than the other towns, which were Ambert, Riom, Montluçon, Moulins, Aurillac and Thiers. Chalus became president of the new region, the presidents of Moulins and Thiers became vice-presidents and the president of Riom treasurer. The budget for expenditure was set at 60–80,000 francs and would be met by a supplementary levy on qualifying firms.[13] A year later Clermont's contribution was set at 32,168 francs.[14]

Defining the region was not exactly straightforward. After all there was no commonly accepted definition of the region often referred to as the Auvergne. The original policy documents from the centre included the old province of the Bourbonnais, or in other words the department of the Allier, in the new 17th region. The main justification for this seemed to be that it was vital to improve communications between the Allier and Clermont along the line of the river basin. The chamber of commerce at Moulins accepted this and then later raised objections. It also felt an attachment to the departments of the centre and to Bourges. At the first normal meeting of the region on 19 August 1919, at which Clémentel was present, it was announced that Moulins had decided on 13 June to hold off joining for the moment. Mathiot, the secretary-general of the region, thought this was a totally inadmissible attitude. He said there were many common concerns which united Moulins and Clermont-Ferrand. Clermont had always been accepted as the regional capital, however. Clermont was the military, postal and ministry of justice chief town and had a well-established university. Moulins seemed to be playing off the Minister of the Interior against the Minister of Commerce, as Clémentel's opponents had in Paris, but Mathiot said his loyalties lay with the latter. In the end Moulins towed the line.[15] The adherence of the Allier continued to be a matter of concern to some in Clermont. The *Région du Centre* published an article in its June–July issue 1921 entitled *L'Allier doit-il être*

[11] *XVIIe région économique, groupement régional de Clermont-Ferrand, Compte-rendu des travaux du comité régional et du comité consultatif régional économique, séances des 29 avril 1918, 17 juin et 19 août 1919* (Clermont-Ferrand, s.d.), p.7.
[12] An account of this important meeting is to be found in *Travaux Clermont-Ferrand*, 1919 (séance 22 février 1919), pp. 33–57.
[13] *Travaux Clermont-Ferrand,* 1919 (séance 22 février 1919), p. 55.
[14] *Travaux Clermont-Ferrand,* 1920 (séance 14 avril 1920), p. 46.
[15] *Travaux Clermont-Ferrand,* 1919 (séance 30 septembre 1919), pp. 99–128.

rattaché? The conclusion was that the economic and transport links between the Allier and the Puy-de-Dôme were enough to justify the move.[16]

The question of Brioude had already been settled. Its closer links with Clermont were recognised by the chamber of commerce in Le Puy. The solution was to create a brand new chamber of commerce for Brioude and then attach it to the seventeenth region.[17]

Lastly there were discussions about Tulle and the department of the Corrèze. Tulle had links with three regions; with Bordeaux, Limoges and Clermont-Ferrand. At the meeting of the regional committee attended by Clémentel on 19 August 1919 Mathiot, the secretary-general, argued for the attachment of the *arrondissement* of Ussel, which was part of the Tulle chamber, to the 17th region. He suggested this would facilitate plans for the exploitation of hydro-electricity on the Dordogne river and also improvements to railway lines from Tulle to Clermont. Maybe it would be better if Tulle itself joined the 17th region, he added.[18] Clémentel's flexibility, allowing chambers to be attached to more than one region, overcame this problem and by 12 April 1921 Rambaud, the President of the chamber at Tulle had joined the deliberations of the 17th region's committee. He was to play a prominent part in the development of the Dordogne hydro-electric project.[19]

6. iv. The Region's economic programme

Before examining individual regional economic projects, we need to understand how the elite developed an overall programme after the war. Chapter three referred to discussions on elements of that programme as the war came to an end. The meeting on 22 February 1919 constituting the region was the first opportunity after the armistice to identify key regional projects. Allegret gave a detailed review of the economic opportunities. He highlighted the importance of thermalism, mining, hydro-electricity, the mechanisation of canals, good technical education, improved agricultural techniques, support for export activities and import substitution. He urged the case for a number of clearly regional projects like a regional *Office de l'Énergie électrique* and a *Musée d'Échantillons* to act as a showcase for regional manufactures. His key message was that regional economic actors must come together to get things done. In the modern economy 'l'union fait la force'. The same applied to cooperation between firms in buying and selling. This was a big change from the laisser-faire economic policy of pre-war years. The new climate was to encourage corporate cooperation under the watchful eye of the state. He wanted to see the regional agent, the secretary-

[16] *Région du Centre*, no.2 (juin–juillet 1921), pp. 5–9.
[17] *Travaux Clermont-Ferrand,* 1919 (séance 24 juillet 1919), p. 91.
[18] 'Réunion de la Région du 19 août 1919', *XVIIe région économique*, pp. 46–7.
[19] 'Réunion du Comité régional 12 avril 1921', in *Region du Centre,* no.2 (juin–juillet 1921), p. 18.

general of the regional committee Mathiot, spend a lot of his time knocking on doors to make progress.[20]

It is significant that Allegret gave the regional representatives a copy of the economic programme drawn up by the Eastern Region.[21] While we cannot trace exactly the authorship and transmission of this programme it is clear that the main lines of activity in the Auvergne were similar to those followed in Lorraine. This similarity is apparent in two theses written in Paris 1924–25.[22] Chadefaux's early assessment of the benefits of economic regionalism in the Auvergne is fairly positive. We can also see from Clotilde Druelle-Korn's article on the 7th region based in Limoges that there were similarities between the programme adopted there and the thinking in Clermont-Ferrand. The 7th region was interested in telephone and railway networks, the encouragement of foreign commerce and electricity generation using the fall of the Dordogne river.[23]

Evidence for an overall regional economic programme also comes from the *Union des Syndicats patronaux des Industriels et Commerçants du Puy-de-Dôme*, of which the president was A. Lagaye, also of the Clermont chamber of commerce. In *Le Commerce* for November 1922 he outlined his ideas in an article called *Devoir Syndical*. His programme was a mixture of regional economic dirigisme and complete freedom for industry. He wanted the execution of large regional projects to exploit regional resources, but at the same time freedom for industry and a war on public waste in order to re-establish French credit. He favoured the organisation of comprehensive technical education and the development of apprenticeships. He also wanted workers and owners to cooperate to reduce social conflict and combat communism. He favoured the natalist programme. Above all France had to put work first. It sounded like a speech by Cavallier.[24]

Over and above the individual programmes the regional elite clearly felt the need to justify the existence of their region and to beat the drum for regional progress, to inculcate a sense of regional pride. The regional committee decided to publish a regional journal to make their work more widely known, *La Région du Centre*. This was not a dry bulletin of laws and measures taken. It had an attractive coloured cover with a striking symbol of regional progress. For example, in 1924 they chose a hydro-electric dam. The articles covered not only meetings of the region and project reports but also contained descriptions of the regional industries and general regional economic news. More than this the journal developed a literary section to which writers, already well-known to us from before the war, were contributors, for example Henri Pourrat, Amélie Murat and

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[20] *Travaux Clermont-Ferrand,* 1919 *(*séance 22 février 1919), pp. 42–50.
[21] *Travaux Clermont-Ferrand,* 1919 (séance 22 février 1919), p. 49.
[22] J. Diez, *Le Régionalisme économique, organisation de la Région économique de l'Est (Nancy)* (Thèse pour le doctorat, sciences politiques et économiques, Paris, 1925).
R. Chadefaux, *La Région économique de Clermont-Ferrand* (Thèse pour le doctorat, Faculté de Droit de Paris, Aurillac, 1924).
[23] Druelle-Korn, 'Modernisation inachevée', pp. 164–168.
[24] *Le Commerce*, no. 72 (novembre 1922), p. 6.

Gandilhon Gens-d'Armes, Desdevises du Dézert from the university and Pourrat's friend Gachon. There was a special section on tourism issues and regular reports on the Aero Club of the Auvergne. (Clermont had seen the development of the manufacture of military planes during the war).

In the second issue of *Région du Centre* Dr. Marcombes, the mayor of Clermont-Ferrand, wrote an editorial saying that his town was unarguably the regional capital. It was a centre for trade in the region and it had a number of cultural assets including the university.[25] The following year the journal went on to describe the historic links which bound the Auvergne together. Although mainly an agricultural region, it had significant sources of hydro-electric power and was the centre for a major rubber industry in Clermont. Moreover, the Auvergnats had a reputation for hard work.[26]

On 1 October 1922 the Minister of Commerce, Dior, made an official visit and met at length with the regional committee for discussions on current projects.[27] Clémentel and the prefects were also present. This extensive review served not only to check on progress on individual items but also to prove that the regionalist experiment was working well. Clémentel expressed the hope that his successor would ensure that the secretaries-general of the various regions met regularly together in Paris and he also urged the minister to give the regions themselves the legal status they lacked in law which would enable them to make legal commitments on their own behalf.[28] The president of the Bourges region reminded the audience that they were working for the 1.5 million Frenchmen killed in the war and also for the million whose ability to work was affected by their wounds.[29] Dior referred to the overriding importance of unity, of which the Auvergne had given a good example.[30]

Advertising the achievements of the region was the objective of the major regional festival and exhibition which was staged in Clermont-Ferrand 1–8 July 1923 and which ended with the formal reception of Alexandre Millerand, President of the Republic, to celebrate the three hundredth anniversary of the birth of Pascal, the most esteemed local son.[31] Chalus wanted to bolster the regionalist cause. He

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[25] 'Clermont capitale du Centre de la France', *Région du Centre*, no.2 (juin–juillet 1921), pp. 3–4.
[26] F. Chambon, professeur de l'École supérieure de Commerce à Clermont-Ferrand, 'D'où est né la xviie région économique: province et région?', *Région du Centre*, no.5 (janvier 1922), pp.5–8.
[27] *Région du Centre*, no. 14 (octobre 1922), pp. 3–23.
[28] *Région du Centre*, no. 14 (octobre 1922), p.7.
[29] Ibid, p.9.
[30] Ibid, p. 10.
[31] 'Semaine auvergnate, rapport de M. Jouve sur l'organisation d'une foire-exposition régionale'. *Région du Centre*, no. 20 (avril 1923), pp. 9–10; 'La réception de M. Alexandre Millerand, Président de la République Française à la XVIIe Région économique', 'La Foire-Exposition régionale de Clermont-Ferrand', *Région du Centre*, no. 24 (Août 1923), pp. 3–8, pp. 9–11.

greeted the President as a:

'régionaliste convaincu qui souhaite de voir demain la Nation régénérée par une organisation dont nous aurons été les précurseurs.'

Chalus went on to salute 'le premier régionaliste de France'. In his reply Millerand referred to the need to rebuild the economy to compete with Germany. Later in the day the President saluted Clémentel, who was present, as the father of economic regionalism and referred to his role in launching the region locally. Millerand made it clear that he personally was a regionalist who believed in the benefits of an economic regionalism, of business people getting together to defend their interests.[32]

In the following pages we will examine major projects, several already identified in outline at the February 1919 meeting with Allegret - to create a new source of hydro-electric power on the Dordogne river; to build a lateral canal alongside the River Allier and to improve other canals, for instance the Canal du Berri in the Bourbonnais; to create new railway links, principally East-West "Suisse-Océan" running through Lyon and Clermont to Bordeaux; to open new technical training facilities in Clermont and create a *chambre de métiers*; and lastly to open a *Banque populaire de la 17e Région économique*. There were some respects in which the Auvergne's economy differed from Lorraine's. Therefore, we will conclude by examining tourism and agriculture. The development of tourism was pursued on a regional basis through the *Féderation régionale du Tourisme du Massif Central*. The Clermont chamber and the region referred to the problems of tourism from time to time. The impetus for the development of local *syndicats d'initiatives* and regional federations came from the localities themselves in the years before and after the Great War.

6.v. Railways

Transport was a key issue for an area as geographically isolated as the Auvergne. Unlike the *chambre de commerce* in Nancy, Clermont-Ferrand was represented in not one but two *offices des transports*, one for the Sud-Est based in Lyons and another for the Centre-Ouest based in Limoges. Representatives of the chamber attended the meetings of both. At a meeting in Lyon on 18 October 1920 the Clermont representative set out his chamber's key objectives for railways. He said that Clermont-Ferrand, as the capital of rubber, should be linked directly to Bordeaux, Lyon and hence to Marseille as soon as possible. Secondly the express from Clermont to Paris should be as fast as that from Lyon to the capital. Thirdly the project for a Grand Central railway must pass through Clermont. These objectives were forwarded to the Minister for Public Works as well as to the PLM

[32] *Région du Centre,* no. 24 (août 1923), pp. 5 and 8.

and P-O railway companies.[33] The Clermont chamber mobilised its parliamentary representatives behind the plan for a Grand Central via the city, which would require some new track construction in the Puy-de-Dôme.[34]

As the *Région du Centre* explained at the beginning of 1921 re-establishing the direct service from Bordeaux to Clermont via Périgueux, which had run before the war, was vital because the alternative via Limoges took far too long. The Clermont chamber was hoping for more electrification of lines to make the services more reliable. A *Grande Transversale*, passing south of Clermont but linked to it and crossing the mountains of the Forez was a matter on which the *Comité régional* felt strongly. Mathiot told the committee that Clémentel was behind them on this matter.[35]

In January 1921 the regional committee also considered a cause dear to the Moulins chamber, a direct line between Riom and Vichy linking eventually to the Saône-et-Loire through Paray-le-Monial. This would also improve links between Clermont and Lyon.[36] The *syndicat d'initiative* of Vichy were concerned about this because it would improve communications to their facilities. They wanted a double track for the new link, which they thought had been agreed but now seemed to have been replaced by a single track. The Vichy tourist trade approached the 17th region to strengthen their protest.[37] The Minister of Public Works indicated that they would get what they wanted.[38] As we have seen in Lorraine, the central government's approval for all new railway lines was vital but lobbying by regional bodies could achieve progress.

Lastly, the Clermont chamber and the region were very concerned about the poor condition of the roads in the Auvergne and were constantly lobbying the Ponts-et-Chaussées state engineers for improvements and the government for more credits. Such improvements were particularly vital for the new tourist trade which was developing in the post-war years.[39]

As in Lorraine, development of good railway connections to the rest of France was vital if the region was to grow economically. In the Auvergne the concern was exacerbated by a feeling of geographical remoteness. As in Lorraine the economic elite in the Clermont chamber and the region had to mobilise local political leaders if they were to get the necessary approvals from the Minister of Public Works, the *Conseil supérieur des Chemins de Fer* and the local *conseils-généraux*. Their task was complicated because not everyone wanted the same

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[33] *Travaux Clermont-Ferrand,* 1920 (séance 17 novembre 1920), p. 92.
[34] *Travaux Clermont-Ferrand,* 1920 (séance 20 décembre 1920), p. 109–110.
[35] 'Comité régional 7 janvier 1921', *Région du Centre*, no. 1 (mars–avril 1921), pp. 11–13., also 'Comité régional 15 mars 1923', *Région du Centre*, no. 20 (avril 1923), p.6. *Travaux Clermont-Ferrand,* 1923 (séance 26 janvier 1923), pp. 20–1.
[36] 'Comité régional 7 janvier 1921', *Région du Centre*, no. 1 (mars–avril 1921), p. 13.
[37] *Région du Centre*, no. 21 (mai 1923), pp. 19–22.
[38] *Travaux Clermont-Ferrand,* 1923 (séance 21 avril 1923), p. 56.
[39] *Travaux Clermont-Ferrand,* 1923 (séance 14 novembre 1923), p. 88; 1924 (séance 25 juillet 1924), pp. 143–4. *Région du Centre*, no. 39 (novembre 1924), pp. 363–5.

improvements. Towns wanted a railway which served them, rather than the region as a whole.

6. vi. Canals

As in Lorraine improving canals was an important strategic issue. Tapping into regional sources of finance was very much part of the debate. The advice of experts from Clermont-Ferrand university is also noteworthy. Studies had been ongoing for some time to improve navigation on the Allier, the main river linking the core of the Auvergne. Studies for a *canal latéral* continued soon after the war.[40] The Clermont-Ferrand chamber of commerce contributed 6000 francs to the cost of studies in 1920.[41] Work on the Allier basin was not only to improve navigation. It was envisaged that the construction of reservoirs could regularise the flow, control flooding and allow the construction of hydro-electric plants. In his report to the *Comité régional* in March 1923 Mathiot advised that various academic experts associated with the University of Clermont-Ferrand were involved, including Pourrat's friend Gachon and Arbos, Professor of Geography, who was also involved with the Dordogne hydro-electric project (see p.162 below). The region planned for a congress in Clermont-Ferrand the following year bringing together all the experts and other interested parties.[42]

So the Allier became another major focus of attention for the new economic region. In this connection the region also adopted a project to build a new canal between Moulins and Sancoins which would feed the important Canal du Berri, a canal which served an industrial area. This could be seen as a first step in linking the Loire and the Garonne, and was consistent with railway projects to give Clermont good east-west links as well as north-south. The President of the Moulins chamber of commerce envisaged a project financed jointly by the state, the department, the town of Moulins and the chamber of commerce.[43] The 17th region was asked by the Moulins chamber to persuade the Clermont-Ferrand chamber of commerce and city council, the Riom chamber and the department of Puy-de-Dôme to make financial contributions.[44] The scope of canal improvements being considered by the region immediately after the war did not stop at the Allier. Professor Glangeaud at the University of Clermont-Ferrand also put forward the concept of a canal linking the Allier to the Dordogne, to be known as the Canal du Cantal, a fairly ambitious project through mountainous terrain.[45]

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[40] *Travaux Clermont-Ferrand,* 1919 (séance 4 février 1919), p. 31.
[41] *Travaux Clermont-Ferrand,* 1920 (séance 20 décembre 1920), p. 112.
[42] 'Comité régional 15 mars 1923 et rapport par Mathiot sur le Congrès de l'aménagement du basin d'Allier', *Région du Centre*, no. 20 (avril 1923), pp. 5–8.
[43] *Région du Centre*, no. 14 (octobre 1922), p. 21; Darfour, Président de la Chambre de Commerce de Moulins-Lapalisse, 'Élargissement du Canal du Berry, alimentation', *Région du Centre*, no. 16 (décembre 1922), pp. 3–8.
[44] *Travaux Clermont-Ferrand,* 1923 (séance 26 janvier 1923), p.10.
[45] C. Mathiot, 'Étude sommaire d'un canal de la Dordogne à l'Allier', *Région du Centre*, no.1 (mars-avril 1921), pp. 39–41.

To conclude, the 17th region had been effective in mobilising several interested parties behind its plans for new railways and canals. This ability was to become even more important when it tackled hydro-electricity.

6. vii. Energy

From the outset the most important project for the 17th region was the exploitation of the hydro-electric potential of the Dordogne. Here we can trace the development of a regional economic project exactly as Clémentel envisaged. In April 1919 the prefect of the Puy-de-Dôme opened a public enquiry about it covering the whole of the river. At this stage it was envisaged that the railway *Compagnie d'Orléans* would erect seven dams to power forty percent of its network. Members of the Clermont chamber were concerned that such a large project would affect the hydrography of the entire region and might be prejudicial to other interests. For example, the *Société Hydro-Électrique d'Auvergne* was planning a plant on the river Rhue, an affluent of the Dordogne. The chamber decided to write to the Minister of Public Works about their concerns.[46] The project was first discussed by the 17th region on 19 August 1919.[47]

However, it would not be right to see the Dordogne project as the sole focus of the region's interest in hydro-electricity. Clémentel in a preface to the first edition of the new journal, *Région du Centre*, talked about the mechanical force which could be gained from the region's rivers generally, reducing dependence on foreign coal.[48] Raoul Blanchard, the geographer who according to Philippe Veitl came to Grenoble and defined the Alpine region in terms of its hydro-electric potential, also drew attention to what could be achieved in the Massif Central. In an article written in 1922 he remarked that the Massif did not have either the height, steepness of slope, volume or regular flow of rivers in the Alps. It was therefore necessary to develop a new technique, the reservoir enclosed by a dam which would release enough power.[49] Philippe Arbos picked up the development of dams in an article for *Région du Centre* in March 1924.The war had revealed France's critical shortage of coal and so had encouraged a host of hydro-electric projects including in the Massif Central.[50] Of the total hydro-electric potential of the Massif measured in kilowatts, the Dordogne project accounted for one third.[51]

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[46] *Travaux Clermont-Ferrand,* 1919 (séance 14 mai 1919), pp. 68–9, (séance 28 mai 1919), pp. 72–76.
[47] Réunion de la Région du 19 août 1919', *XVIIe region économique*, p. 45.
[48] Région du Centre, no.1 (mars–avril 1921), pp. 3–4.
[49] R. Blanchard, 'La Houille blanche dans le Massif Central français', *Revue de géographie alpine*, tome 10, n°3 (1922), pp.353–396. Veitl, *Invention d'une région*, pp. 221–251.
[50] Blanchard, 'La Houille blanche', pp. 380,394. *Région du Centre*, no. 31 (mars 1924), pp. 83–85.
[51] Blanchard, 'La Houille blanche', p. 394.

On 7 January 1921 Mathiot outlined to the regional committee a vision of how hydro-electricity could transform not only industry and commerce in the Auvergne but also in many surrounding areas of France. The region wanted to set up an *Office régionale d'Énergie électrique* and it had the backing of the *Conseil-général du Puy-de-Dôme* for this. (Clémentel was of course the president of the latter.)[52] A number of these regional offices were set up in the inter-war years.[53] On 11 April Rambaud, the President of the Tulle chamber and the driving force behind regional hydro-electricity projects, presented a report on the hydro-electric potential of the Massif Central in general and the need for a company to exploit it. Clément Rambaud was an industrialist who in 1906 became the concessionaire for distribution of electricity in Égletons in the Corrèze. He built power stations to supply electricity to the surrounding area. In 1919 he became a *conseiller municipal* at Meymac in the same area and mayor in 1925. He was elected a member of the *chambre de commerce* in Tulle in 1919 and president in 1920, continuing in office for many years. After the war his electricity business expanded in the region.[54] He was President of an electricity supply firm Énergie industrielle (EI), which operated in the Cantal as well as the Corrèze.[55]

In his report Rambaud suggested an inter-departmental commission on the subject, covering the regions based in Bordeaux, Limoges and Clermont-Ferrand, with qualified commercial and industrial representatives.[56] Rambaud argued that public participation in projects would ensure the necessary cooperation between operators of different dams which would maximise the flow on rivers and hence the power generated. Rambaud was firmly of the view that such projects were too important to be left to the politicians. The chambers of commerce representing commercial interests had a vital role to play rather than politicians, trained in the liberal professions and often lacking the necessary technical and commercial expertise. Sixty percent of any inter-departmental commissions appointed should consist of industrialists, and workers should be represented too. Shareholdings should be widely spread. Some of the private concessions granted by the state before the law of 1919 had not operated too well, whereas the chambers of commerce had demonstrated they could run public facilities like ports successfully. However, the state's participation along with departments would ensure the general interest was protected. Projects would have access to the corps of state engineers with the necessary expertise. The state also had to be involved because power generation was so important for France's recovery after the war. It would be a just recompense for the sacrifice of France's war heroes.[57]

At a meeting on 14 July 1921 the *Office régionale d'Énergie électrique* was

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[52] 'Réunion du Comité régional 7 janvier 1921', *Région du Centre*, no. 1 (mars–avril 1921), pp. 13–16.
[53] Bouneau, 'Contribution de l'électrification', p. 47.
[54] 'Clément Rambaud ou la vie d'un grand Corrézien', *La Montagne* (19 juillet 2019); www.lamontagne.fr
[55] *Histoire générale de L'Électricité,* p. 655, 961.
[56] 'Comité régional 11 avril 1921', *Région du Centre*, no. 2 (juin–juillet 1921), pp. 17–20.
[57] Ibid, pp. 21–30.

formally set up. Rambaud submitted a report which envisaged this office facilitating the expansion of hydro-electricity by finding the right expertise, organising technical studies and helping the regional committee negotiate its way through the laws and bodies with an interest, in order to obtain concessions for exploitation. An appeal had to be made to the relevant *conseils-généraux* for funds for studies.[58]

The Dordogne project was complex, both technically and in terms of the number of interests which had to be brought on board and the financing. The prefects and the *conseils-généraux* of five departments, professional bodies, the chambers of commerce, three regions, local politicians, three ministers in Paris (Commerce, Finance and Public Works) and finally the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate, all had to be won over. There were differing views about how far the state and the departments should be involved in guaranteeing loans for construction, as they had done before to finance new railways, for example. There was a conflict between private interests, like the *Compagnie d'Orléans*, and the 17th region representing the various institutions of the centre of France, as to whether it was right for a quasi-public body to be managing power generation. Lastly, there was the question of distribution of electricity and the most fundamental question of all - would there be a market for the Kilowatts generated. From a fairly early stage the project was driven by the newly created regions. It became a test case for Clémentel's reform.

At the start of discussions on the project the *Compagnie d'Orléans* wanted to take all the potential concessions on the upper Dordogne. The 17th region intervened and aimed to apply for a concession for the so called 2nd section. Later it was envisaged that the 7th region based in Limoges would take the third and fourth sections. The *Compagnie d'Orléans* would remain as concessionaire for the first section above Vernejoux. Public companies would be formed financed by a mixture of loans, with interest guaranteed by the state, and share capital. Departments and chambers of commerce as well as private interests would be involved in the financing and the project would be managed by a *conseil d'administration* representing chambers of commerce and other local interests. Although there was some precedent for such a public-private vehicle, for example on the Rhone, the project presented a number of political and administrative challenges for the French state and ultimately required a special law to be passed by the Chamber of Deputies.

To negotiate the thicket of conflicting bodies the three regions interested in the Dordogne project set up an inter-regional commission, separate from the inter-departmental committees who had looked at it. Apart from Clermont-Ferrand, Limoges and Bordeaux, Nantes and the sub-region of Orléans were also included.[59] The Clermont-Ferrand region decided that it would bid for the second

[58] *Region du Centre*, no. 3 (septembre–octobre 1921), pp. 21–24.
[59] 'Réunion interrégionale de Paris 23 novembre 1921', *Région du Centre*, no. 5 (janvier 1922), pp. 9–10.

section from Vernejoux to Argentat and Rambaud was authorised to approach the Minister of Public Works with their concession request.[60] Rambaud reported that the three main regions involved (Limoges, Bordeaux, Clermont-Ferrand) were broadly in agreement on this.[61] In April Mathiot could report that the 17th region's proposal had the Minister of Public Works and the region's parliamentary representatives on board. The region's proposal envisaged the construction of three dams at Chambon and Argentat I and II.[62] By June it appeared that the Ministers of Finance and Commerce were also behind the project. A *projet de loi* was prepared by the Minister of Public Works.[63]

A summary of the key documents published after the event emphasised the contribution which the scheme would make to the national post-war policy for industry, to increase French production and to make it more competitive on price. It would also help electrify the countryside and support the mechanisation of agriculture. The region had considered not only the technical problems of construction but also potential sales and lines for distribution. Electricity consumption per household was still way behind the USA. The new plants could use the *Compagnie d'Orléans*' lines for distribution and also new networks being constructed with the direct encouragement of the government.[64]

However, it was at this stage that difficulties appeared. These centred around two issues. Firstly, opposition from private interests who wanted concessions and secondly problems over financing. Vociferous opposition from private interests that wanted concessions arose at the congress of the *Ligue fluviale* in Bordeaux in May 1922, attended by many interested in the Dordogne. At the congress Rambaud pointed out that hydro-electric energy would help France save some of the twenty million tons of coal currently imported, mainly from the UK. The reduction in value of the franc made these imports expensive. Rambaud said the region's scheme for the second section would lead to low prices for all, rather than increasing the profits of private companies. It would also help stem rural depopulation by making rural areas more attractive to live in. Indeed, the scheme was the basis of all plans to develop the regions of the centre. The scheme assumed the state would guarantee the payment of bank interest, an advantage not available to private firms.[65] Despite the opposition, the Minister of Public Works and other supporters such as Clémentel, Alexander Varenne, the SFIO socialist deputy from the Puy-de-Dôme and Joseph Favre, senator for the Corrèze and a supporter of agricultural interests, held firm in their opposition to private concessions. Varenne, who at a crucial stage was the *rapporteur* for the Public Works budget in the Chamber of Deputies, contributed a piece to the *Région du*

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[60] *Région du Centre,* no. 6 (février 1922), pp. 19–20.
[61] 'Comité régional 26 janvier 1922', *Région du Centre,* no. 8 (avril 1922), pp. 13–17.
[62] *Région du Centre*, no. 8 (avril 1922), pp. 3–4.
[63] *Région du Centre*, no. 10 (juin 1922), p. 7.
[64] XVIIe Région économique, groupement régional des chambres de commerce. *Aménagement Hydro-électrique de la 2ème section du bassin de la Dordogne, notice technique et financière* (Clermont-Ferrand, mai 1924), pp.3–6 and 15–21.
[65] *Région du Centre*, no. 11 (juillet 1922), pp. 7–8 and 9–15.

Centre in August 1922 in which he said the whole justification for the project was cheaper electricity for all customers. It should definitely not be run for private profit. It was not the only commercial activity in which the state took an active interest. He also thought it right that all interested parties should be involved in the project.[66]

However, when the Minster of Public Works's *projet de loi* was available for discussion at the regional committee on 4 December 1922 it appeared to be different in important respects from what the region thought had been agreed. It seemed to be based on a much more direct central government participation in hydro-electricity from the Auvergne to the Atlantic Ocean. However, the real sticking point was over financing. The 17th region scheme proposed that 90% of the cost should be covered by a loan from the Crédit Foncier guaranteed by state organisations. The state was unwilling to underwrite the Crédit Foncier loan and in the end departments and communes assumed responsibility for 90% of the capital obligations with the balance covered by chambers of commerce through shares. Regional representatives would also hold a majority of seats on the *conseil d'administration*. The project could now be considered by the Chamber of Deputies itself. Mathiot believed the ministers were still supportive of the region's plan, which defended the interests of consumers against private interests.[67] He said this was important if:

'nos industriels et nos commerçants veulent ne plus être rançonnés par des producteurs aux dents longues.'[68]

In October 1923 the project went onto the floor of the Chamber in Paris. Unusually the commission of the chamber examining the project asked for the departmental guarantees to be binding before the project went any further. The Corrèze tried to extract a special tariff for electricity as the price for its agreement.[69] The horse trading on financial guarantees went on for another year. Eventually the concession of the second section to the 17th Region was approved by the Chamber on 30 December 1924.[70]

This was not, however, the end of the matter. The project did not go ahead in the form envisaged during the period under discussion. After further consideration a law of 6 March 1928 permitted another mixed public-private company to be formed called *Énergie électrique de la Moyenne Dordogne*, which was incorporated on 15 December 1928. Half of its capital came from eleven chambers of commerce, six chambers of agriculture, large towns such as Clermont-Ferrand, Saint-Étienne and Montluçon and six departments —Cantal, Puy-de-Dôme, Haute-Loire, Loire, Corrèze and Allier. (The 7th economic region

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[66] *Région du Centre*, no. 12 (août 1922), pp. 3–7.
[67] 'Comité régional 4 décembre 1922', *Région du Centre,* no. 16 (décembre 1922), pp. 9–12; no. 20 (avril 1923), pp. 3–4.
[68] *Région du Centre,* no. 20 (avril 1923), p.4.
[69] *Région du Centre,* no. 26 (octobre 1923), pp. 3–6.
[70] *Région du Centre*, no. 41 (janvier 1925), p.7. *Journal Officiel*, (30 décembre 1924), pp. 4941–4943.

around Limoges had dropped out.) The other half of the capital came from sixteen electricity distribution companies. This company opted for a new site for a power station at L'Aigle, below Marèges, where the Compagnie d'Orléans (CO) had now been granted a separate concession for a dam. The new mixed company was granted the concession eventually in 1934. The state provided guarantees for 60 million of the total capital obligations of 160m francs, in return for a 35% reduction in the normal tariff. (The local bodies only got a 20% reduction.) The Aigle dam was only finished after 1945. The CO dam was finished in 1937.[71] Given the risks inherent in large and costly hydro-electric projects the delay is not surprising.

The first project to install hydro-electric dams on the Dordogne may have failed. However, the debate it unleashed is a significant demonstration of the spirit of practical economic regionalism which prevailed in the region in the years after the war. The prevailing climate in economic policy before the war had been to allow private industry considerable freedom and for the state only to get involved in economic activity in exceptional circumstances. Clémentel had wanted to continue some of the wartime controls he exercised over industry after the war, in the interests of improving French competitiveness, but was unsuccessful. In the case of the Dordogne project, however, we find a regional group of businessmen and officials trying to run an economic activity on behalf of the consumer. They also sought to bypass the local politicians in the interests of technical efficiency. It was a challenge during a period when the resources of the central government were stretched by a financial crisis. Private concessions were not as risky for the state as projects funded by a public interest guarantee.[72] That the regionalists were successful in advancing their project says something for regional solidarity and determination to bring all the interested parties on board.

The Dordogne project was not the only example of local interests coming together to bring electrification to the Auvergne. It could happen on a more modest scale. That is why the *Région du Centre* drew attention to a syndicate of 43 communes who combined to ensure electricity supply to the Gannat in the Allier, thus helping, it was claimed, to stem rural depopulation.[73] The journal also published an article by Pourrat's friend Lucien Gachon about electrification of another rural area, the Livradois, using hydro-electricity on a much smaller scale.[74] During the nineteen twenties there was political support for rural electrification. It was not always profitable for private interests and therefore there was encouragement for rural communes to combine to arrange distribution. The state could lend money through the Crédit agricole.[75]

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[71] *Histoire générale de L'Électricité,* pp. 771, 773–4.
[72] *Région du Centre*, no. 39 (novembre 1924), pp. 367–8.
[73] *Région du Centre*, no. 37 (août-septembre 1924), pp. 285–294.
[74] *Région du Centre*, no. 32 (avril 1924), pp.123–126.
[75] *Histoire générale de L'Électricité, pp. 55–6, 371, 373,*

6. viii. Technical Education

The main educational initiatives of the 17th region along with the *Chambre de Commerce de Clermont-Ferrand* were to found an *École supérieure de Commerce* and also a *chambre de métiers*. The *Directeur de l'Enseignement technique* at the Ministry of Commerce made a visit to Clermont-Ferrand in July 1918 to start the commercial school project. The problem at this stage was that there was no building in Clermont in which to house it. The Clermont chamber of commerce was looking for the town or the state to step in and then the chamber might be able to help with running expenses.[76] The problem was solved when the Ministry of War released the Caserne d'Estaing in July 1919 to the town to be used for the school.[77] The chamber of commerce appointed three members to the *conseil d'administration* of the new school including Raymond Bergougnan. Members were also appointed from the *Comité régional* and the *Conseil municipal* of Clermont. The fitting out of the building for an estimated sum of 600,000 francs was financed by the state (250,000 francs), the city and the 17th region (80,000 francs) and the balance came from a loan from the Crédit Foncier. The town also offered to help with bursaries. When the region financed a project it meant that individual chambers of commerce had to make a commitment and the sums involved in this case caused some to hesitate. Clémentel urged them to come forward so that he could get the state contribution through the Chamber of Deputies.[78]

The school was up and running in its new home in October 1920. Michelin endowed a chair of Taylorism or what might be called industrial efficiency and standardisation. Bergougnan, Chalus and other firms, including trade associations, made contributions. In the first year there were 109 pupils including 47 who had been demobilised from the army. An *anciens élèves* organisation was founded to help with placement of graduates and raising funds.[79] The school was an integral part of what the region was trying to achieve. As Mathiot said at the opening ceremony:

'vous consacrez officiellement la première organisation ici du régionalisme officiel qui puisse réellement compter dans le domaine économique.'

Marcombes, the mayor of Clermont, went on to say that the school was an important result of the policy of decentralisation started by Clémentel, who was of course present too. The school, Marcombes said, should be considered alongside

[76] *Travaux Clermont-Ferrand,* 1919 (séance 4 février 1919), p. 21.
[77] *Travaux Clermont-Ferrand,* 1919 (séance 24 juillet 1919), p. 91.
[78] 'Réunion régionale 19 août 1919', *Travaux Clermont-Ferrand,* 1919 (séance 30 septembre 1919), pp. 99–105.
[79] *Région du Centre*, no. 37 (août–septembre 1924), pp. 303–4.

other achievements of the region like the *Office régional d'Agriculture*, the *Banque populaire* and the Musée régional d'Échantillons.[80] The Clermont chamber continued to support the school every year. In 1924 it planned to donate 15,000 francs, about half the amount it gave to the region.[81]

Given the importance of tourism to the Auvergne it is not surprising that the region wanted to set up an *École supérieure hôtelière* on the model of the *École supérieure de Commerce*. Offers of financial help had been received for such a project.[82] By May 1924 the school was an institution in its own right on the same site as the commercial school. 57 students had already been through the course. As Mathiot wrote, a large number of foreign hotel workers went home before the war and not all had come back. They had to be replaced. There was also a need to develop capable managers and thus promote the growth of the industry.[83] The region and the Clermont chamber also supported other types of technical training such as professional courses run by the municipality of Clermont, the project for a cutlery school in Thiers which was a big centre for this industry, and the courses in industrial chemistry at the university which were re-started after the war.[84]

While the university did not see the rapid development of new schools of applied science as in Nancy, the institution was not asleep. Geological studies were a strong point, partly because of the mineral riches in the area. Professor Glangeaud, Professor of Geology and Mineralogy, had recently received public recognition when admitted to the Institut de France. The *Région du Centre* made the case for a new *Centre d'Études géologiques* and for the endowment of a new chair. Apart from the *Institut de Chimie*, Clermont now boasted the commercial school and a full *faculté de droit*. The university was small in relation to Nancy (in 1924 452 students as opposed to 1908) but growing. The *Région du Centre* believed that it deserved local financial support.[85]

Just after the war members of the regional elite in Clermont-Ferrand reflected the view shared in Lorraine and indeed throughout France that there was a critical shortage of skilled labour. France needed to train more young people for skilled trades, like the Germans. Early in 1921 the region wanted to take advantage of the impetus created by national legislation and start its own *chambre de métiers*. It encouraged local leaders and the central government to support such a proposal, with the help of the Inspector of the local Academy and the Inspecteur du Travail. A commission was set up to study the matter.[86]

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[80] Région du Centre, no. 3 (septembre–octobre 1921), pp. 13–15, quote p. 14.
[81] *Travaux Clermont-Ferrand,* 1923 (séance 14 novembre 1923), p. 96.
[82] 'Comité régional 7 janvier 1921', *Région du Centre*, no. 1 (mars–avril 1921), p. 19–20; 'Comité régional 16 juillet 1921', *Région du Centre*, no. 3 (septembre–octobre 1921), p. 19.
[83] Région du Centre, no. 33 (mai 1924), pp. 163–5.
[84] *Travaux Clermont-Ferrand,* 1919 (séance 19 mars 1919), p. 59; 1924 (séance 8 janvier 1924), p. 18; (séance 5 décembre 1924), p. 172.
[85] *Région du Centre*, no. 31 (mars 1924), pp. 87–89.
[86] *Région du Centre*, no. 1 (mars–avril 1921), p. 20; no. 2 (juin–juillet 1921), p. 12; no. 5 (janvier 1922), pp. 12–16.

Tourette, *Professeur d'Enseignement technique* and *Inspecteur du Travail*, visited a number of towns where *chambres de métiers* had already been set up. In his report he said that patrons, workers and the departments should all be equally represented on the *conseil d'administration* of the new regional *chambre de métiers* proposed. They should be nominated by the *Région économique*, *chambres de commerce, bourses du travail*, and *syndicats ouvriers et patronaux*. The new chamber should concentrate on guiding young people into suitable careers, regularising apprenticeships, setting up courses where needed and delivering certificates of capacity. Tourette's report was agreed by the region early in 1922.[87] Mathiot set about talking to businesses about financial support for the scheme, which ideally would start at the end of the school year in July.[88]

At the first formal meeting of the *conseil d'administration* on 24 June 1922 with Chalus in the chair, Mathiot was elected President of the *Chambre de Métiers*. According to Tourette it was a matter of urgency to get young people into trades where there was a particular skills deficit and also to create courses where none existed.[89] The report by Leclerc, the new director, in March 1923 was encouraging. The war had accelerated the decline in skills with a further 20% reduction in trained manpower, because of death, injury or labour going abroad. The new chamber had made a good start in raising awareness of its activities and it had started making placements in a number of trades. The chambers of commerce were helping with subsidies but more were needed. In the future the placement service need to be improved, local offices created throughout the region and special help was needed for candidates from *familles nombreuses* who could not afford to educate their children. 80% of the 1924 budget of 20,000 francs was provided by the department and the communes. The chamber of commerce's contributions were relatively small.[90] Apart from Vidal, the Minister for Technical Education, Clémentel was lending his support. If no longer the Minister of Commerce, his influence as senator for the Puy-de-Dôme and president of the conseil-général was still considerable. In 1924 a major exhibition of craft skills was held in Clermont-Ferrand.[91]

In conclusion it is clear that regional initiatives and funding were fundamental to the success of technical education. These initiatives are a clear demonstration of the importance of economic regionalism after the war.

[87] *Région du Centre*, no. 5 (janvier 1922), pp. 12–16; no. 6 (février 1922), p. 20.
[88] 'Comité régional 26 janvier 1922', *Région du Centre*, no. 8 (avril 1922), p. 13.
[89] *Région du Centre*, no. 13 (septembre 1922), p. 10.
[90] 'Rapport sur l'exercice 1923', *Région du Centre*, no. 36 (juillet 1924), pp. 243–254.
[91] *Région du Centre*, no. 39 (novembre 1924), pp. 369–371.

6. ix. Banque Populaire

A new *banque populaire* of the 17th region was also set up in Clermont-Ferrand after the war. Lagaye produced a report for the *chambre de commerce*. The Minister of Commerce had asked how chambers could support the setting up of such banks in the light of the enabling law of 13 March 1917. Lagaye's report said that markets were more demanding than they had been before the war. Constant innovation in products was necessary and hence the need for credit for small and medium sized businesses who could not have recourse to the large commercial banks. The need to rebuild the French economy after the war had also increased the demand for capital. At this stage the chamber of commerce indicated that it could offer some financial support and awaited the outcome of a study organised by the prefecture.[92] The bank finally opened its doors on 1 February 1921.[93] The director outlined its commercial policy in an article in *Région du Centre* in November 1922. Their function, he said, was purely to help commerce and industry, and not to get involved in other speculative banking operations. There was a *caisse centrale* in Paris which received state help but the local operations were autonomous with local directors who knew the needs of local firms. There were already *banques populaires* in the region at Tulle, Montluçon and Le Puy but the Clermont bank wanted to see branches open in other regional towns.[94]

We have traced the similarities in economic projects pursued under the banner of regionalism in Lorraine and the Auvergne in the years immediately after the war. There were, however, some respects in which this regionalism manifested itself in a different way in the two regions. In Lorraine physical reconstruction was a major issue which did not affect the Auvergne. On the other hand, tourism came to play a major role in economic thinking in the Auvergne to a much greater extent than in Lorraine. So we turn now to tourism in the Auvergne.

6. x. Tourism

What we can observe in the Auvergne, and elsewhere, is the spontaneous growth of activities to promote tourism from the regions themselves. The initiatives were truly local and regional. Effective organisations were created and they identified the key issues. What is particularly significant is that local organisations federated on a regional basis. Other regional bodies, such as departmental *conseils-généraux* and the *Région économique*, provided support. Such promotion of

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[92] *Travaux Clermont-Ferrand,* 1919 (séance 14 juin 1919), pp. 81–5; (séance 24 juillet 1919), pp. 89–90.
[93] 'Comité régional 7 janvier 1921', *Région du Centre*, no. 1 (mars–avril 1921), pp. 41–2. See also *Travaux Clermont-Ferrand,* 1920 (séance 26 mars 1920), p. 43.
[94] *Région du Centre*, no. 15 (novembre 1922), pp. 3–6.

tourism linked practical economic regionalism to the cultural movement which celebrated each region's character.

The growing importance of tourism to the regional economy of the Auvergne can be gauged by the amount of space that Mathiot chose to devote to it in *Région du Centr*e. *Syndicats d'initiative* to encourage tourism developed in a number of towns and regions of France before the First World War. One of the first was Clermont in 1898, followed by the Cantal in 1900. The Velay followed in 1901, Vosges et Nancy in 1903 and Vichy in 1906.[95] These were founded on local initiative. A good example is the role played by Henri Gutton, a Nancy municipal councillor and architect who was the first director of the syndicat in Nancy. He saw the opportunity to open up the Vosges to tourism by improving transport.[96] *Syndicats d'initiative* gradually got involved in a number of activities — creating publicity, publishing guides and lists of hotels, and providing information on transport.[97] Congresses of *syndicats* were held before the war including one in Clermont-Ferrand in 1905 and Nancy in 1908.[98]

However, it was difficult for many *syndicats* to operate effectively on their own. Publicity and printing were expensive. Lobbying railway companies or government was given added weight if a whole region was involved. More important it gradually became apparent that it was the character of the region which attracted tourists, certainly not the department. It was the region which pulled visitors in. Stephen Harp has explained how Michelin re-packaged the cultural features of each region, principally its gastronomy but also sites of historical interest, for the prosperous middle classes to encourage them to explore France, using their cars and Michelin tyres. In so doing Michelin re-defined what it meant to be French, to enjoy the country's richness and diversity. The green guides and the red guides to hotels and restaurants revived the *petites patries* as a tourist experience and as quintessentially French.[99] As a result, local *syndicats* federated into regions.[100] The Vosges federation was created before the war and included Meurthe-et-Moselle, the Moselle (after the war), Bas-Rhin and Haut-Rhin but not the Meuse. At the end of the war a federation was created for the Massif Central which covered the Allier, Puy-de-Dôme, Haute-Loire and Cantal.[101]

The driving force behind the Massif Central federation was a Dr. Cany. He

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[95] B. Larique, 'L'Économie du tourisme en France des années 1890 à la veille de la seconde guerre mondiale, organisation et développement d'un secteur socio-économique' (Thèse de doctorat d'histoire, Univ. Bordeaux III—Michel de Montaigne, U.F.R. d'histoire, 2006), p. 128.
[96] J. Manfredini, *Les Syndicats d'initiative: naissance de l'identité touristique de la France* (Tours, 2017), p. 71.
[97] Ibid, p. 124.
[98] Larique, 'L'Économie du tourisme', pp. 201–2.
[99] S. Harp, Marketing Michelin : advertising and cultural identity in twentieth-century France (Johns Hopkins, 2001), pp. 226, 235–45, 256–67.
[100] Larique, 'L'Économie du tourisme', p. 129, pp. 234–5.
[101] Ibid, p. 421.

practised in the mountain resort of La Bourboule. Generally, assemblies of the *syndicats d'initiatives* in the region took place once a year but committee meetings every three months. At the committee meeting on 20 November 1921 Dr. Cany acted as secretary-general and Mathiot the secretary-general of the *Région économique* was present along with representatives of 22 *syndicats*. The federation channelled 19,000 francs of subsidies from central government and *conseils-généraux* and other sources, passing on 11,000 francs to local *syndicats* in 1921 and retaining the rest for its own expenses. Guénot, the secretary-general of the Franche-Comté and Jura federation came to talk about the benefits of union to local *syndicats*. For example, federations found it easier to get support from public authorities like *conseils-généraux*. Mathiot offered the federation space every month in the journal *Région du Centre* in the section headed *Région touristique*.[102] By the beginning of 1922 the federation was operating out of offices in the main Place Jaude in Clermont-Ferrand.[103] Fairly soon it had 40 members.

The federation tried to work closely with other organisations with an interest in tourism, soliciting financial help where appropriate. For example, there was clearly a common interest with the new *Fédération thermale d'Auvergne* (stations of La Bourboule, Royat, Le Mont-Dore, Chatel-Guyon and Saint-Nectaire), which became the genesis of a national federation for this tourist sector. A French association was discussed in January 1922 at the Mont-Dore resort.[104] Dr. Cany wrote about the importance of thermalism throughout the centre of France in the *Région du Centre*.[105] The federation of *syndicats d'initiatives* clearly had to cooperate with the railway companies on services and also on investments in tourist infrastructure. Likewise, it approached the *conseils-généraux* for further financial support.[106] The Office national de Tourisme was also a financial partner.[107]

The federation identified a major block to the develop of tourism in the shortage of reasonably priced hotels, particularly in the mountain areas. At one stage they contemplated opening their own mountain hotels in conjunction with the railway companies, the Office national de Tourisme, chambers of commerce or the Touring Club de France, the latter bodies providing interest guarantees on loans.[108] They calculated that 2,000 more rooms were needed. 80% of sites of interest had no hotel nearby. The matter was urgent for the reputation of the whole industry.

By the beginning of 1923 the federation had realised that they urgently needed a

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[102] *Région du Centre*, no. 6 (février 1922), pp. 17–18.
[103] *Ibid*, p. 15.
[104] Dr. Moncorgé, 'Fédération thermale française', *L'Auvergne thermale,* (26 janvier 1922).
[105] *Région du Centre*, no. 6 (février 1922), pp. 7–13; no. 35 (juin 1924), pp. 203–208.
[106] *Région du Centre*, no. 14 (octobre 1922), pp. 25–7.
[107] *Région du Centre*, no. 26 (octobre 1923), pp. 15–19.
[108] *Région du Centre*, no. 13 (septembre 1922), p. 21; no. 14 (octobre 1922), pp. 25–7, no. 17 (janvier 1923), pp. 17–19.

bank which would make loans to small and medium-sized hotels on a long term basis, to improve existing rooms and provide new ones. In 1923 the Crédit national hôtelier was born as a *banque* populaire based in Paris.[109] It enjoyed access to public funds but private companies and individuals could subscribe for shares. Although the bank was based in Paris it operated through a series of regional committees consisting of representatives of *syndicats d'initiative*, federations, hotel groups and chambers of commerce. They examined plans submitted for consideration and sent a report to the bank.[110] The first regional committee meeting in the Auvergne took place in May 1924. Cany was present. The *Banque populaire* of the 17th region provided a banking organisation on the ground for the *Crédit hôtelier* and generated publicity. There was also a national consultative committee. André Michelin was on the *conseil d'administration* of the central bank in Paris. Casenave, the President of the *Syndicat des Hôteliers* in Royat and an administrator of the *Banque populaire* in Clermont, urged local businessmen to show their love for their *petite patrie* by supporting the bank, thus demonstrating:

'que nous sommes surtout de bons citoyens, d'excellents Auvergnats aimant leur petite patrie, résolus à faire l'impossible pour la rendre plus belle, plus prospère et pour cela plus hospitalière.' [111]

The federation also sought to address the hotels issue by providing practical guides of accommodation available, in which local hotels committed to a fixed price for the season, in return for a listing. The guides also covered sites of interest and related material on the region. In 1922 the federation published in Clermont 5,000 copies of *Le Massif Central, l'Auvergne, Bourbonnais, Vélay, guide pratique de renseignements de tourisme*.[112] In 1924 they had to increase the print run of this practical guide to 10,000.[113] As well as publishing information about places of interest in the Auvergne they also helped tourists find sites by better signposting and also to enjoy them once there with information boards. In so doing they worked alongside national organisations like the Touring Club de France.[114]

The federation and the Clermont chamber also lobbied railway companies for improvements to the rail services and the local authorities for road improvements. For example, in October 1923 the federation was asking for service improvements from Clermont to Paris and the *chambre de commerce* supported their request, at

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[109] *Région du Centre*, no. 29 (janvier 1924), p. 11.
[110] *Région du Centre*, no. 32 (avril 1924), p. 177; no. 33 (mai 1924), p. 169.
[111] *Région du Centre*, no. 34 (juin 1924), p. 227; no.40 (décembre 1924), pp. 403–9, quote p. 410.
[112] *Région du Centre*, no. 9 (mai 1922), p. 15; no. 11 (juillet 1922), p. 23; no. 14 (octobre 1922), pp. 25–7.
[113] 'Assemblée générale de la fédération Saint-Flour 6–7 septembre 1924', *Région du Centre*, no. 38 (octobre 1924), pp. 335–9.
[114] *Ibid*.

the same time supporting Vichy's demand for improvements to the roads.[115] The chamber complained again about railway services at the beginning of 1924.[116] At their annual general assembly, the federation returned to agitate yet again about railway services and improvements to the roads for their clients.[117] This was a constant refrain throughout these post-war years.

6. xi. Agriculture

Another respect in which the Auvergne was different from Lorraine was the dominance of agriculture as an economic activity. In the previous chapter on Lorraine we saw that agriculture did not lie within the remit of the chambers of commerce although it was discussed occasionally. Nationally there were representative regional bodies for agriculture, like the agricultural unions and the *Chambres d'Agriculture* introduced in 1924, but they were not covered by Clémentel's creation of economic regions which related only to the chambers of commerce. The Clermont chamber rarely discussed agriculture specifically. The solutions proposed to the industry's problems in the Auvergne did not derive from a regional economic programme, other than the technical improvement initiatives pursued by the departmental offices for agriculture, which were clearly adapted to local conditions. Following a law passed on 6 January 1919 an *Office régional agricole du Massif Central* was created as well as departmental offices. They focused on research on the improvement of crop types including vines and fruit, which were important in the Limagne around Clermont; the spreading of best practice; the use of fertilisers and the control of pests.[118]

If we examine some of the periodicals which covered the activities of agricultural unions, we fail to find a specifically regional context. The *Revue du Syndicat départemental agricole du Puy-de-Dôme* represented the views of a *syndicat* which had over 10,000 members in 1920, having grown from 7,000 at the end of the war. The review published 12 –15,000 copies every month, although in 1922 it converted into a bi-monthly publication called *La Terre d'Auvergne*. It contained a lot of predictable complaints against the government over taxes and against industrialists for charging too much for materials like fertilisers.

A constant theme in agricultural journalism was the depopulation of the countryside, as it had been before the war. A writer in the October 1920 issue of the *Revue du Syndicat départemental agricole du Puy-de-Dôme* pointed to the decline in population in his village from 800 before the war to 600 in 1920, including 30 killed during the war. Like many others he believed positive measures were needed to keep people on the land, such as financial help for the

[115] *Travaux Clermont-Ferrand,* 1923 (séance 30 octobre 1923), p. 81–2.
[116] *Travaux Clermont-Ferrand,* 1924 (séance 8 janvier 1924), pp. 19–24.
[117] *Région du Centre*, no. 38 (octobre 1924), pp. 335–9.
[118] *Région du Centre*, no. 4 (novembre–décembre 1921), p.2.

renovation of old villages and more instruction on agriculture in schools.[119] The president of the union of *syndicats* wanted a research station to develop new scientific methods for agriculture, a mechanism for spreading these new methods, and measures to improve the living conditions of agricultural workers, to make it possible for young farmers to buy their own farm and encouragement for cooperatives.[120] The lack of labour on farms was a constant theme. An article of 17 September 1922 analysed the latest figures.[121] The authorities were not inactive. The *Office régional agricole du Massif Central* continued its programme of trying to effect agricultural improvements and better agricultural instruction. This is apparent from reading the report on the Puy-de-Dôme *for 1919 –1920*.[122] This theme of back to the land was repeated throughout predominantly agricultural areas of France like the Auvergne, including in Lorraine.[123] It was in 1919 that Jules Méline from the Vosges, the creator of pre-war tariffs to protect agriculture, returned to his programme to promote a return to the land in his book *Le Salut par la Terre et le programme économique de l'avenir*. In conclusion, although agriculture was clearly important to the Auvergne, we do not find regional leaders independent of government adopting a specifically regional programme to benefit the industry. The evidence of economic regionalism this thesis has investigated is drawn from the work of the chambers of commerce and the new regions. Agriculture is a separate subject.

6. xii. Conclusion

We have demonstrated in this chapter and chapter five that regional leaders in industry and commerce in the Auvergne and Lorraine, working though the *chambres de commerce* and the new economic regions, but also with other organisations, promoted important changes in infrastructure, technical training and finance in the years following the Great War. In the case of railways and canals it was mainly a question of pressing the government to act, although there were opportunities, as in the case of the canalisation of the Moselle, for local interests to supply finance and to lead the project. In the case of the two major hydro-electric projects, on the Rhine and Dordogne rivers, the regional elites led the projects and attempted to organise much of the financing on a regional basis. These two initiatives are significant because they are early examples of public authorities attempting to invest in and manage infrastructure projects rather than letting them out to private concessionaires as the state might formerly have done. In the fields of technical training, management education, banking, capital provision, reconstruction and tourism, the regional elites had more scope to lead

[119] *Revue du Syndicat départemental agricole du Puy-de-Dôme*, 33e année, no.10 (octobre 1920), pp. 280–1.
[120] *Revue du Syndicat départemental agricole du Puy-de-Dôme,* 34e année, no. 2 (février 1921), pp. 32–3; no. 3 (mars 1921), pp. 12–13.
[121] M. Blatin in *La Terre d'Auvergne*, 1e année, no. 1 (3 septembre 1922).
[122] *Bulletin de l'Office régional agricole du Massif Central*, années 1919 et 1920, (Clermont-Ferrand, 1922), pp. 64–70.
[123] Barral, *Agrariens français*, pp. 180–202.

and finance projects.

This is not to say there was no local initiative in these matters before the war. However, there is no doubt there was a renewed impetus for economic development in the regions after the war, to rejuvenate an economy devastated by the conflict and to make it competitive in world markets. Industrialists and businessmen in the regions sought to show central government that it did not have the economic expertise on its own to make the necessary changes. Economic necessity forced central government to allow these regional leaders to have some freedom to pursue their goals. They took full advantage while the government was dealing with pressing international problems. The economic initiatives outlined above were not a random collection of actions but part of a self-conscious and well-thought out programme.

Among regionalists before the war there was great interest in decentralisation, in freeing the regions from tight central control, in allowing responsible people in the regions to take decisions for themselves. This would lead to quicker decisions, greater efficiency and would increase support for government actions. The practical programmes of the post-war economic regionalists were fully in accordance with an important strand of regionalist thinking which stretched back before the war. Regionalism had sometimes been described as a reactionary mindset, a hankering after a lost past. It had many manifestations. It could be backward-looking but also forward-looking, a programme for modernisation and practical government. In the final chapter we will examine the tensions between different discourses on the regions in the post-war years in the Auvergne and Lorraine.

Chapter Seven: Regional discourses in the Auvergne and Lorraine in the post-war period

7.i. Introduction

The previous two chapters have described how the regional elites of Lorraine and the Auvergne came together through regional institutions to pursue a modernising agenda for their regional economies in the years after the Great War. It would be a mistake, however, to characterise the regionalism of the post-war years, even in the Auvergne and Lorraine, as focused on purely economic issues. Regional elites who had a clear sense of their region's identities were also concerned about other aspects of regional life — political and administrative, but also cultural.

The revival of interest in regional cultures in the pre-war years was interrupted during the war, mainly because of the impossibility of publishing regional materials in magazines as a result of the rationing of raw materials and also because of censorship. It took a year or two in some cases for these restraints to be lifted after the war, for regular publication of regional publications to re-commence and for learned regional societies to re-start their meetings. For example, *L'Auvergne littéraire, artistique et félibréenne* was founded to follow the pre-war *Veillée d'Auvergne* and commenced publication in 1924. It is hardly surprising that when these activities re-started there was a general re-examination of what regional identities meant in the light of the wartime experience.

I aim to illuminate in this chapter the tensions which began to emerge after the war between different discourses on the role of France's regions. We have already looked at the discourse concerned with the modernisation of the economy. However, there were other discourses. For example, one discourse looked back to the past and the pre-war world which had been lost for its inspiration. It sought to reinforce the pre-war rural society and the cultural identity which accompanied it. Except for a few exceptions like Jean Giono, it was often associated with a political conservatism which emphasised the structures and traditions of the past and was encouraged by the church. Many of those who advocated a return to the land talked about encouraging mechanisation but also about the moral virtues of a society close to the soil. When the post-war generation sought regional symbols to reinforce the *devoir de mémoire* in war memorials they tended to look to figures from the past, peasants dressed in traditional costume or Vercingétorix, the Gallic leader of the Arvernes against Caesar. In the Auvergne we find a combination of attachment to the mainly peasant cultures of the past and social conservatism exemplified by Henri Pourrat and his circle. Similar features can be found in some circles in Lorraine.

However, there was never a clear division between those looking to the past and those preoccupied with the future. For example, many local cooperatives

reconstructing villages in the north and east of France wanted to use traditional building styles rooted in the past but at the same time provide modern sanitation and other contemporary features. Even a figure like Vercingétorix was reconstructed as a modern Republican hero fighting for freedom as we saw in chapter two. While there was a growing interest in folklore, this was not necessarily backward looking. After the war the *Fédération régionaliste française* (FRF) turned its attention more to folklore and the promotion of the cultures of different regions. This was apparent from the discussions at its national congress in 1926.[1] However, this interest in folklore, which led to the foundation of the *Musée des Arts et Traditions populaires* in the nineteen thirties, was not the sole preserve of social conservatives. It fuelled a wider interest in the culture and history of France's regions which was manifest in the regional guides published by Michelin and the growth of tourism.

Another discourse, particularly prominent in Lorraine, was concerned with relations with Germany, and here there was a conflict between suspicion and embracing a new relationship with the East, between the regional nationalistic and defensive discourse we encountered before 1914 and reaching out to Germany. A third discourse focused on the political position of the regions and the need for new regional structures. In some manifestations it advocated some form of autonomy, for example in Alsace, Brittany, the Flemish North, Corsica or even the Occitan south. There were, however, many areas where separatist or autonomist sentiment was very weak if it existed at all. Phillipe Veitl's study of the Alpine region does not reveal separatism or autonomism as a significant factor.[2] While we see some debate on regional powers in Lorraine and the Auvergne, there was little evidence of autonomism in Lorraine and none in the Auvergne. In the post-war period separatism in Lorraine would have been treated as a complete nonsense, a logical impossibility as it was before the war. It was true that a small autonomist party appeared in the late nineteen twenties in the Moselle now re-united with France. There were particular reasons for this which need to be examined. Catholic Mosellans, both French and German speaking, who were certainly not autonomists, had a different perspective on church-state relations within France and also on relations with Germany.

This chapter will examine these discourses and others which show the regional elites in Lorraine and the Auvergne grappling with the issues they felt confronted them in the post-war world. None of these discourses was the sole preserve of one social or economic group or even one individual. Individuals and groups adopted different discourses at different times. For example, it was possible to support the development of the Lorraine economy and yet be suspicious of German motives, like Camille Cavallier, the head of the iron foundry at Pont-à-Mousson.

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[1] Grenouilleau, *Petites Patries,* p. 190. MUCEM, Fonds FRF 6 AP 8 for the agendas of FRF Congresses in the nineteen twenties.
[2] Veitl, *Invention d'une région*.

7.ii. The Auvergne

The regional literary movement in the Auvergne continued after the war, with novels and poems drawing inspiration from the natural wonders of the Auvergne and rural life. We find some of these works in *L'Auvergne littéraire et artistique* from 1924 and also in the economic journal *Région du Centre*. It is striking that Charles Mathiot, the editor of the latter, wanted to promote a sense of Auvergnat regional identity in this way, particularly because of the benefits for tourism. However, Henri Pourrat developed a critique of contemporary society from his roots in regional literature. In doing so he looked back to the peasant society of pre-war years.

Jardins Sauvages was written after the war to celebrate the life and work of his friend Jean Angeli killed during the conflict. It was a form of literary mourning, an attempt to make sense of his loss.[3] Jean, according to Pourrat, had the best sort of education, a rustic childhood in the fields.[4] He says that he and Jean shared a poetic vision of what it was to be an Auvergnat, not based on dried up scholarship:

'Avant la guerre nous sommes au temps d'une nouvelle mais sotte scolastique. Les fiches, les documents s'entassent, les citations, les allégations des autorités.'[5]

He presented a vision of the world in which he and Jean grew up and which was fast disappearing:

'Les aspects des campagnes, des maisons, voire les visages, tout cela, les mœurs et conditions de vie, faisait encore sentir aux environs de 1892 ce qu'avait été la vieille France. La France des vieilles paroisses, celle des paysans et des gens de métier, alors qu'on chantait et dansait à tout bout de champ et qu'il y avait plus d'amitié dans l'air. Oui, quelque chose de bon venant qui pour nous sera toujours du passé…' [6]

Pourrat clearly feared that, even with the coming of peace, humanity was heading for disaster:

'Qui sait quelles maladies attendent l'humanité, qu'on sent monter du gouffre, comme on sentit monter cette guerre avant 1914?' [7]

For Pourrat the Great War brought to the surface the fear he had experienced for some time that the rural world of the Auvergne was disappearing. He was not just

[3] H. Pourrat, *Les Jardins sauvages, la vie et oeuvre de Jean-François Angeli, soldat au 140e de Ligne tué à l'ennemi le 11 juin 1915* (Paris, 1923).
[4] Ibid, pp. 24–5.
[5] Ibid, p. 100.
[6] Pourrat, *Jardins sauvages*, pp. 22–3.
[7] Ibid, p. 192.

mourning his lost friend but the world of the pre-war years. The loss of so many Auvergnat peasants accelerated the process of change.

Inevitably perhaps, in some war memorials in the Auvergne there were also references to the past life of the region. Local sculptors occasionally had the opportunity, when funds permitted, to convey a more specifically Auvergnat sense of mourning. They portrayed peasants in traditional local costumes, more often in the countryside than in the towns. Examples include Mabru at Royat and Rochefort-Montagne and Camus at Tauves and St. Sauves. At Thiers the monument included the figure of a Gallic warrior, which echoed the contemporary admiration for Vercingétorix who in his day struggled against the invader.[8] After the Great War Vercingétorix or other Gallic imagery was used in commemorative monuments elsewhere in France. The University of Lille database of war memorials lists eighty-two which contain a representation of Vercingétorix.[9] There was more than a hint of nostalgia for the recent or distant past in this mourning. In commemorative speeches, for example on 11 November, the bravery of local soldiers was sometimes characterised by reference to the local landscape, as in the case of local notable, Henri Lecoq, in 1920:

'Les poilus d'Auvergne, ces héroïques soldats qui, dans des circonstances graves, parfois presque désespérées, ont opposé à l'ennemi leurs rangs solides comme le basalte de leurs montagnes, et se sont acquis dans toute l'armée une enviable renommée de bravoure.' [10]

There were echoes here of Vermenouze's poem about Vercingétorix mentioned in chapter two, which contained these lines:

'Et chacun, en passant près du socle géant,
Se sentira le coeur d'un soldat et d'un brave,
Ce coeur de feu, ce coeur ardent comme la lave
Qui sort du cratère géant.' [11]

Pourrat dwelt further on the disappearance of the pre-war world in two more works on Angeli. Firstly, in 1926 Pourrat had a number of *L'Auvergne littéraire* dedicated to his departed friend. In his own short piece Pourrat celebrated Angeli capturing the spirit of the old Auvergnat countryside because he had the

[8] G. Chalchat, 'Les Monuments aux morts des deux Guerres mondiales dans le département du Puy-de-Dôme*'* **(**Thèse de troisième cycle, Histoire de L'Art, Clermont-Ferrand Université II, Octobre-Novembre 1986), pp. 117–9, 121–2, 183–193, 218–9.
[9] www.monumentsmorts.univ-lille.fr , result of research using key words "Vercingétorix" and "1914–1918".
[10] A. Fryszman, 'La Victoire triste? Espérances, déceptions et commémorations de la victoire dans le département du Puy-de-Dôme en sortie de guerre (1918–1924)' (Thèse, EHESS Paris, 2009), p. 500.
[11] Mazières, *Arsène Vermenouze,* p. 328. 'Le socle' refers to an imagined statue of Vercingétorix.

peasantry in his being.[12] This collection also contains memories of Angeli from a number of prominent Auvergnat writers including Gandilhon Gens-d'Armes, Desdevises du Dézert, Joseph Desaymard, Charles Silvestre (a writer on the peasantry from the Limousin), Alexandre Vialatte, Amélie Murat a well-known Auvergnat poet, Lucien Gachon and Dom Pastourel, priest and friend of both Pourrat and Barrès, who celebrated Angeli's work as a regionalist writer in an older humanist and classical tradition.[13] This was a roll call of the Auvergnat literary movement at this time.

Secondly, Pourrat produced a new edition of *La Colline ronde* in 1927. This was the work which he and Angeli had written before the war. In a new introduction he talked about the gradual changes in the life of peasants since the mid-nineteenth century with new techniques being introduced. He wrote 'c'est le crépuscule de l'antique monde terrien.' [14] *La Colline ronde* contained a section on depopulation.[15] Clearly this had accelerated in the intervening years since the original edition before the war. As Pourrat wrote in the introduction to this new edition:

'Lucien Gachon, estime que de 1850 à 1910, en douze lustres, ces campagnes ont autant changé qu'en douze siècles. Mais que de 1910 à 1923, en douze ans, un second bond a eu même ampleur.' [16]

So Pourrat was grieving both for his friend and for the peasant world of his region which was disappearing. Other works written by Pourrat in the twenties show how he found social developments since the war unwelcome. *Liberté* was a long poem published in 1921. Here he introduced a number of new changes which had accelerated since the war. One was the unwelcome growth in tourism, which was encouraged by the "skin deep" regionalism he despised:

'Vous, Auvergnats, qui voulez du bien à l'Auvergne,
À la vieille Auvergne, au chez nous
Sans tout ce plat de soupe aux choux,
De mascarades, de binious
Et de guirlandes sous les vergnes,
Dites-moi, s'en va-t-il pas temps
De décourager le tourisme?
Je crois que ce serait instant,
Voyant mener malgré mes dents,
Sous ombre de régionalisme,
Un déshonorant carnaval

[12] Patrimoine, MSS Henri Pourrat, HP 128 1, 'Les Baumes aux prairies, pages sur J-F Angéli'. Manuscript draft subsequently included in *L'Auvergne littéraire, artistique et félibréenne*, 3e année (1926), p.22.
[13] *L'Auvergne littéraire, artistique et félibréenne*, 3e année (1926), pp. 56–7.
[14] H. Pourrat and J. L'Olagne, *La Colline ronde, films auvergnats* (Paris, 1927), p.7.
[15] Ibid, pp. 30–1.
[16] Pourrat, *Colline Ronde*, p.8.

De bourrées et de festivals.' [17]

Modern Auvergnats had to get back to real life in the fields.[18] He also wanted to turn his back on many of the fripperies of modern life which he associated with the war:

'Or ce tas de plaisirs et ce flot d'assignats,
Clinquants, chichis, atours, tabacs et petits verres,'

and

'Films, alcools, petits plaisirs, petits poisons…' [19]

Before the war the peasant kept gold, which had enduring value.[20]

Pourrat's views on the decline of the peasantry were shared by some of his friends like the teacher Lucien Gachon. This is apparent in their correspondence during the nineteen twenties. On 10 December 1922 Gachon wrote that depopulation dried up life in the country and increased the sense of isolation.[21] He had no illusions about how difficult it would be to reverse this trend because the peasants were too jealous and narrow minded. They did not read and would not try new things:

'La lutte contre la terre les a tellement rendus prudents et avares que leur rêve c'est l'immobilité.' [22]

But the problem was urgent because, as he explained in a letter of 9 September 1925, France would become like the United States where the density of farms was very low.[23] There would be prairies for cattle and forests replacing heath land, managed by foreign workers, fragmentation of villages, electricity and machines. After the war Gachon had expected high agricultural prices to slow down the exodus but this had not been the case.[24] Gachon had to accept that the modernisation of agriculture was coming, even if he lamented some of its impact on rural society. The fear of the effects of depopulation caused by the war was a

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[17] H. Pourrat, *Liberté* (Paris, 1921), p. 55.
[18] Ibid, p.62.
[19] Pourrat, *Liberté*, p. 151.
[20] Ibid, p.153.
[21] Gachon letter to Pourrat 10 décembre 1922, C. Dalet (ed), *H. Pourrat and L. Gachon, Correspondance 31 janvier 1921-25 decembre 1927* (Cahiers Henri Pourrat 9, Clermont-Ferrand,1991), p.108.
[22] Gachon letter to Pourrat 6 septembre 1922, *Pourrat-Gachon, Correspondance 1921–1927,* p.98.
[23] Gachon letter to Pourrat 9 septembre 1925, *Pourrat-Gachon, Correspondance 1921–1927,* p.213.
[24] Gachon letter to Pourrat 28 janvier 1924, *Pourrat-Gachon, Correspondance 1921–1927,* p.154.

common concern in the Auvergne in the immediate post-war period, in the press and among politicians on the conseil-général of the Puy-de-Dôme.[25]

A productive comparison is between Pourrat and Émile Guillaumin and his circle. Pourrat corresponded with Guillaumin whose *Vie d'un simple* describing peasant life in the Bourbonnais dated back to 1904. Like Pourrat he became very concerned about the depopulation issue, but there was a division of opinion among his friends about the remedy. Guillaumin's friend Périé wanted big families. He wrote to Guillaumin that society would not evolve as they wanted if only the very poor and certain Catholics had more children. Also France would not have enough soldiers.[26] Post-war peasants were having fewer children, which led to labour shortages, higher wages, and inflation and hence other reasons to raise fewer offspring. Guillaumin thought it was reasonable to have fewer children so one could live better. He did not approve of the idea of big families grouped around the patriarch and he took issue with the novelist Lucie Achalme who in *Maître du Pain* wrote an apologia of the family community.[27] He enumerated the reasons why peasants restricted the size of their families — equality of legacies and a desire not to split up family holdings; weakening of Christian beliefs; peasants wanting to have an easier life; women working and wanting the society found in towns; peasants beginning to despise their status and also wanting their children to have a better life in the towns; mechanisation of agriculture. He favoured families of three to four children as being sensible. He wrote to this effect in a number of local journals and summed up his views in a collection of his articles entitled *Notes paysannes et villageoises*.[28] So Guillaumin welcomed the modernisation of agriculture and supported improved living standards for the peasantry, brought about in part by union action.

Guillaumin sent Pourrat a copy of his *Notes paysannes* and they provoked an enthusiastic reaction as Pourrat's reply on 6 August 1925 shows. In this Pourrat did not ignore the evils of the past but he described the level of depopulation as frightening. He told Guillaumin that Gachon's new novel called *Maria*, which was due out in October, would have a lot to say on this subject. Pourrat said France was seeing a big change in peasant habits, more important than a revolution, indeed one which might lead to the end of a world and of western civilisation.[29]

In 1928 Pourrat published *Ceux d'Auvergne*, the first of many books in which he tried to get to the essence of this region, of what made it different and distinctive:

'Mais elle reste la terre de l'Auvergnat, celle où l'homme solidement construit entretient des relations plus intimes qu'ailleurs avec une nature plus agreste.' [30]

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[25] Fryszman, 'Victoire triste', p. 190, pp.332–41.
[26] Chaline, *Guillaumin*, p.37.
[27] Mathé, *Guillaumin,* p. 552.
[28] Mathé, *Guillaumin,* pp. 553–8, 717.
[29] Patrimoine, MSS Correspondance Pourrat–Guillaumin, Pourrat letter to Guillaumin, 6 août 1925.
[30] H. Pourrat, *Ceux d'Auvergne, types et coutumes* (Paris, 1928), p.11.

He wanted to get to that real contact between man and the soil.[31] Yet as he worked his way through the lives of different types of country dwellers, signs of change kept interrupting. Since the war, he wrote, old customs, like celebrating the month of May, were dying out.[32] Tourism had developed and Pourrat did not like it. It went against what was best in the nation, the peasantry.[33] It seemed to accentuate the depopulation of the countryside. In the conclusion he summed up his concerns about the future of his rural world in the aftermath of the Great War. Would there always be an Auvergne? Didn't we all dress the same and eat the same now? He wrote:

'Sans doute c'est la fin du monde paysan.' [34]

A hamlet with many farms would become one enterprise — clean new buildings, a tractor, electricity, a small lorry, a telephone, machines, fertilisers. The small country towns were being drained of life. The motor car and the train made it easier to leave. Since the war lots of young men had found good positions in the towns. However, in answer to the question would the motor car kill the countryside, he answered that rapid transport and electricity could rejuvenate activity there.[35]

So Pourrat's Auvergne was predominantly something which lay in the past, even if he could see a benefit in modern inventions like electricity and the motor car. Chapter six referred to Gachon's advocacy of electrification in the countryside. Pourrat justified his backward-looking philosophy by arguing that France's reserves of strength lay in the countryside:

'Dans les villes, l'humanité se brûle, à la lettre. L'oxyde de carbone détruit les cellules nerveuses, réduit la mémoire. Tant que l'homme sera conditionné comme il l'est, il se trouvera bien de rester en contact avec la nature, ami de la vache laitière, du fayard et de la prairie.' 'Puisse-t-il pour l'avenir de la planète, y avoir toujours de vrais hommes de la campagne. Là sont les réserves. L'Auvergne, au centre de la France, demeure le Royaume du Vert, le pays de la verdeur, de l'immense avenir sous les quatre-vingts puys.' [36]

Pourrat's mentor Desdevises du Dézert offers a very interesting perspective on this book and on Pourrat's views on the peasantry, in a letter to Pourrat dated 18 December 1928. He suggests that Pourrat was more comfortable in the past:

'Vous êtes, au fond, un grand idéaliste chrétien, il est bien évident que les belles mœurs d'autrefois vous semblent très supérieures au lâchage d'aujourd'hui, que

[31] Pourrat, *Ceux d'Auvergne,* p.25.
[32] Ibid*,* p.90.
[33] Ibid*,* p.103.
[34] Ibid*,* p.128.
[35] Pourrat, *Ceux d'Auvergne,* pp.131-132.
[36] Ibid, p. 135.

vous préférez l'Auvergne d'il y a 30 ans à celle que nous ont faite la guerre, l'ineptie de nos politiciens, l'industrialisme et la finance modernes.'

He then says that you might be thought a reactionary and you only cite the most scandalous or affecting facts about the Auvergne. Desdevises finds this a bit excessive. He thinks that Pourrat is too much under the influence of pessimists like Gachon, Angeli and Vialatte, who are not worth what he is. He is sure his heart does not feel like this. He then goes on to say that he knows Pourrat prefers these people in a literary way to Vermenouze's poems in *patois* and to Gandilhon's poems. He finds these two poets' moral sense and national spirit superior to that of Pourrat's friends.[37]

Pourrat was a devout Catholic and he certainly did not have any faith in politicians. He wrote on 18 May 1924, after the elections which brought the Cartel des Gauches to power, that he only saw parties trying to score points off each other. They did this instead of dealing with issues which mattered for the nation: alcoholism, tuberculosis, depopulation above all.

'Six ans après la guerre et en une heure si grave, quelle énorme sottise. Non, c'est trop bête…O démocratie.' [38]

Pourrat and some of his friends like Desaymard were also close to the *Action Française*. The same could be said of the conservative nationalist Desdevises du Dézert who corresponded with Léon Daudet, a leading figure in the *Action Française*, after the victory of the Cartel des Gauches in 1924 whose policies he hated.[39]

Personal experiences of men who identified with the right could lead to different nuances in their attitudes, for example in their attitudes to Germany. Desdevises visited the Rhineland in 1921 but in 1922 he refused all ideas of a rapprochement with Germany, even between German and French Catholic students. In 1921 he penned an ultra-patriotic history of France for French students.[40] Desdevises's views on Germany were in marked contrast with those of Henri Pourrat's younger correspondent, the conservative and Catholic Alexandre Vialatte, who was more open to contact with Germans during his sojourn as a journalist in the occupied Rhineland from 1922.[41] Desdevises' views on Germany were at odds with the sentiment behind the *monuments aux morts* in the Auvergne. When it came to remembering the dead, celebrating victory over Germany did not necessarily come to the fore. Hatred of war itself was more prominent. The example of

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[37] Patrimoine, MSS Correspondance Desdevises–Pourrat, carton DESD 19, letters from Desdevises to Pourrat 1911 to 1942, Desdevises letter to Pourrat 18 décembre 1928.
[38] Pourrat letter to Gachon 18 mai 1924, *Pourrat–Gachon, Correspondance 1921–1927,* p.165.
[39] Fryszman, 'Victoire triste', pp. 23, 406–7.
[40] Fryszman, 'Victoire triste', pp. 282, 284–5, 347.
[41] Fryszman, 'Victoire triste', pp. 286–8.

sentiments uttered by the mayor of Vernet-la-Varenne is more typical.[42] He talked about:

'un monument destiné à perpétuer leur souvenir et à inspirer aux générations futures l'horreur de la guerre et de ses tueries.'

The portrayal in the Auvergne of *poilus* and their sacrifice followed a narrative found in many areas of France.

The views of Pourrat and his friends were by no means typical among those with a strong commitment to the unique identity of the Auvergne. Some Auvergnats supported modernisation, wanted to exploit the heritage of the Auvergne to develop tourism and were not hostile to improving relations with Germany. Clémentel himself, the leading Auvergnat politician of his generation, had a strong cultural interest in the Auvergne but a much more neutral attitude to Germany than Desdevises, despite having had to negotiate the economic clauses of the treaty of Versailles.[43] He was also of course active in the cause of regional economic development. We have also noted in the previous chapter the strong growth of tourism in the Auvergne after the war which was linked to the celebration of the region's unique identity in published guides and particularly in the activities of the Michelin company.

The loss of life in the war was as serious in the Auvergne as in Lorraine, even if there was no physical destruction of homes and businesses or enemy occupation. In the Auvergne the sense of loss led to some looking back to the old world of the countryside which was disappearing. Pourrat knew that loss of life in the war was not the sole cause of depopulation, but added to all the other factors it seemed to him to drive France faster down the path to an industrial society. However, this reluctance to face the modern word was far from universal even within the writings of Henri Pourrat. As the world changed individuals and groups experienced tensions and conflicts between differing perspectives. Chanet concluded his study of the pre-war regionalist movement in the Auvergne by saying that while the *union sacré* had dealt a blow to pre-war separatism, the *petite patrie* came out of the conflict stronger among populations who knew the price of victory. This spirit then grew from the disillusion, the nostalgia and the disquiet which resulted from the progress of industrial civilisation.[44] The words 'disillusion, nostalgia and disquiet' overstate, I believe, the degree of anxiety about modernisation in the Auvergne of the immediate post-war period. Support for the *petite patrie* could also be expressed through modernising economic projects as the the *Région du Centre* journal argued.

[42] Fryszman, 'Victoire triste', pp. 423–4.
[43] Fryszman, 'Victoire triste', p. 292.
[44] Chanet, *Félibres cantaliens,* p. 274.

7.iii. Lorraine

In Lorraine there was a discourse which was concerned with preserving the culture of the past and the identity of Lorraine, although not with the same radical rejection of modernism as Henri Pourrat. Charles Sadoul, a conservator in the *Musée lorrain*, continued his work forming a collection of Lorraine's folklore and decorative art and defining a Lorraine style, similar to but yet different from other French regions.[45] The reconstruction of Lorraine towns and villages involved re-defining the local style in which they were built and following that with the use of more modern materials or hygienic improvements where appropriate. A good example is the style adopted by Émile André, the architect of the *École de Nancy*, at Flirey and Limey.[46]

In *Le Pays lorrain*, Sadoul's monthly magazine which started before the war and resumed in 1920, he published articles on Lorraine's history and literary pieces, some in *patois* for example by George Chepfer, the Lorraine humorist and chansonnier, and also poetry. One writer who received attention was Moselly, the author of a number of works on life in the Lorraine countryside who died in 1918. A reviewer in 1920 wrote that Moselly was the foremost writer on the Lorraine landscape and had a real feeling for its distinct personality.[47] Later the same reviewer drew attention to his descriptions of Lorraine's unique characters.[48] In 1921 further comment on Moselly included these remarks which suggest sympathy for some decentralisation of power in France:

'La vie moderne et notre régime centralisateur ont peu à peu étouffé les tendances autochtones'

and referred to:

'Ces vieilles traditions qui se transmettaient pieusement de génération en génération et dont quelques-unes remontent aux époques les plus lointaines de notre histoire.' [49]

However, there is no strong evidence that the industrial leaders of Lorraine examined in chapter five had a strong interest in Sadoul's work or indeed in the history and culture of Lorraine. The account of the opening of the *Musée lorrain* makes no mention of prominent businessmen among the supporters, other than

[45] Sadoul, *Mobilier lorrain*; Sadoul, *Art rustique*.
[46] H. Doucet, *Art nouveau et régionalisme: Emile André (1871–1933), architecte et artiste*, (Versailles-St Quentin en Yvelines, 2004), pp. 249–267.
[47] *Le Pays lorrain*, 12e année (1920), pp. 145–154, 399–401.
[48] Ibid, pp. 399–401; pp. 523–5.
[49] *Le Pays lorrain*, 13e année (1921), p. 165.

the *Société industrielle de l'Est*.[50] Camille Cavallier was born and died in Lorraine but he does not seem to have shown much interest in the region as a cultural entity. He had some interest in painting and enjoyed the work of a local painter called Émile Friant. However, he remarked in one letter:

'Je connais les musées de Florence, de Rome et de Naples et je n'ai jamais vu le Musée lorrain.' [51]

The voluminous Cavallier papers in the archives of Saint Gobain give us a unique insight into Camille Cavallier's sense of identity. What were the factors which motivated him in his actions? No doubt the development of his company was of prime importance. We can see from his correspondence and his personal writings that he believed wholeheartedly in the value of work and there was very little time for anything else in his life, even his family. He felt under particular strain because of the extraordinary demands imposed by the need to rebuild his business and conflicts with other obligations, for example to the chamber of commerce. His health suffered, he had a number of strokes and died in harness in 1926. Outside his business he was also a *maître de forges*, a group with almost legendary influence in France at this time. When he discussed wider economic and political problems, for example in *L'Avenir de la France, La France de Demain* and *La Démocratie nouvelle*, he mainly looked at the national framework and talked about what France had to do to improve its position.[52] He seems to have believed some decisions were best taken locally and he certainly got frustrated by the slow pace at which policies were decided and implemented in Paris, and the frequent failure to act at all. In this sense he was close to the regionalists' critique of centralisation in government. There is evidence that he was attracted to Mussolini and he particularly despised politicians of the left like Herriot.[53] However, he did not get involved with those who openly backed the regionalist cause. The career of Cavallier reminds us that members of the elite might well have had multiple identities and that a Lorraine regional identity was not necessarily the strongest.[54]

Sadoul also included in *Le Pays lorrain* regular newsletters from other parts of Lorraine like the Moselle and the Vosges, his own department. For example, the regular newsletter from Metz, which appeared under the name of Pierre Braun,

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[50] *Inauguration solennelle du Musée historique lorrain 28 juillet 1912* (Palais Ducal, Grande Rue (Ville-Vieille) Nancy, 1912), p. 10.
[51] C.H. Kent, 'Camille Cavallier and Pont-à-Mousson: An Industrialist of the Third Republic' (DPhil Thesis, University of Oxford, 1972), p. 335. SGA 7313, dossier Institut métallurgique et minier de Nancy 1920–1926, Cavallier letter to Paul Petit 7 janvier 1922.
[52] SGA, DOC PAM 21.51, C. Cavallier, '*La France de Demain: Paix et Prospérité par le Travail, la Natalité, l'Hygiène',* août 1923; SGA, DOC PAM 22.13, '*L'Avenir de la France, Réformes Nécessaires'*, Avant Propos de Maurice Herbette; SGA, DOC PAM 22.12, *'Vers La Démocratie nouvelle, pages choisies*' (*Union économique de l'Est*,1917).
[53] SGA 7247, dossier 1923, Cavallier letter to Fayolle 13 décembre 1924. For Mussolini see Kent, 'Cavallier', p. 326.
[54] For a discussion of Cavallier's personal views see Kent, 'Cavallier', chapter XI p. 333. There is no mention here of regionalism.

showed the journal's sympathies for some of the frustrations felt by Mosellans and Messins at the difficulties of re-integration into France. It is fairly clear that Sadoul's own sympathies were with regionalists who demanded a degree of decentralisation and regional initiative. This can be gauged from the prominence given to regionalist opinions in the magazine. French provinces should be able to express their own personalities and still be French, wrote Louis Madelin.[55] This was the familiar *grande patrie, petite patrie* theme which Poincaré took up in a speech on 6 April 1921 at a banquet of the *Société des Lorrains* in Paris, an important venue for Lorraine opinions.[56] Sadoul did not want to abolish the structure of departments and arrondissements but believed in the importance of creating regions based on strong regional centres. Like many others he was also against the pretensions of Strasbourg to extend its influence beyond Alsace to the Vosges. Alsace-Lorraine was now a meaningless concept.[57] Albert Lebrun was viewed as being of the same opinion on the Alsace-Lorraine issue.[58] Alexandre Millerand, the President of the Republic was quoted as believing regions were no threat to France, based on the case of Alsace and Lorraine.[59] So was Poincaré, who talked to the *Société des Lorrains* of the unity of Lorraine.[60] This philosophy led the journal to publish a variety of practical regionalist proposals from the further development of regional universities, to the creation of regional federations of *sociétés savantes* and the use of local styles in reconstruction.[61]

It is impossible to assess regionalist sentiment in Lorraine without referring to the situation in the Moselle post-1918. Before 1871 the Moselle would have been regarded as a Lorraine department and Metz was largely a French speaking city. After 1871 the Moselle was annexed by Germany, except for the arrondissement of Briey in the west which was joined to the department of Meurthe-et-Moselle. French troops entered the Moselle after the armistice and the re-integration into France was confirmed by the treaty of Versailles in the middle of the following year. Briey was left within Meurthe-et-Moselle.

In 1915 the government had set up a *Conseil de l'Alsace et de Lorraine* to plan for re-integration in the event of victory. This council included a number of Alsace-Lorraine exiles living in France. On the whole it came down in favour of applying French laws in Alsace and Lorraine after a transitional period. The most sensitive issues were the continuance of the Concordat of 1801 and of confessional schools. Another significant issue was the existence of the Bismarckian social security code which was more generous than parallel provisions in France.

Much of the historical writing on this area until recently has given more coverage

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[55] *Le Pays lorrain*, 13e année (1921), p. 96 quoting article in Écho de Paris 21 janvier 1920.
[56] *Le Pays lorrain*, 13e année (1921), pp. 291–3.
[57] *Le Pays lorrain*, 13e année (1921), pp. 588–90.
[58] *Ibid*, pp. 90–1.
[59] *Ibid*, p. 208.
[60] *Ibid*, pp. 396–7.
[61] *Le Pays lorrain*, 12e année (1920), pp. 143–4; 13e année (1921), p. 352; 14e année (1922), pp. 433–44.

to Alsace. The Moselle as a department was quite different from Alsace. Like Alsace it had a substantial German speaking population in the north and east of the department, but French was more widely spoken in the south and west and in Metz, despite the gradual Germanisation of the area after 1871. The *Union Républicain Lorrain*, which was supported by French speaking voters, carried all the Chamber of Deputies' seats representing the Moselle in 1919 and 1924. It was close to the Catholic church, which was also influential in the management of a number of local newspapers, some of which were written in German.

After 1918 most native Mosellans wanted the term 'Alsace-Lorraine' to be forgotten. To them it only referred to a past arrangement. Most Mosellans saw themselves as a French department, albeit one with certain local differences. They resented the interference of Strasbourg, as did some sympathetic French *Lorrains* like Charles Sadoul. For example, he supported the Society of Friends of the University of Nancy in trying to encourage young students from Metz to study in Nancy, but Strasbourg wanted to poach them:

'Il faut en finir avec cette stupidité: Alsace-Lorraine …… Nous réclamons notre Lorraine irrédente.' [62]

After 1918 the French government set up special structures to manage the transition to French rule, structures which lasted several years. Alexandre Millerand was appointed High Commissioner for Alsace-Lorraine based in Strasbourg and three commissioners ran the local administration from Metz, Strasbourg and Colmar. The *Conseil supérieur de l'Alsace et de Lorraine* continued as a consultative body consisting of French officials and local figures chosen by the government. The Chamber of Deputies set up a commission to examine legislation required.

After 1918 the French government sorted inhabitants of the Moselle (and Alsace) into four categories and 90,000 post-1871 immigrants of German nationality left in the years following 1919.[63] The painstaking work commenced of revising Alsace-Lorraine's laws to fit into the French system. One of the new deputies for the Moselle was Robert Schumann who made a major contribution to this legislative work. He also became a spokesperson for those parties in the Moselle who wanted to defend the Concordat religious regime. Unlike some Mosellans he was prepared to work with Alsatians on this issue as he thought they would be more effective if they acted together.[64]

At first the French government based on the conservative Bloc National elected in 1919 did not interfere with the religious settlement in the East. However, the phenomenon known as the *malaise lorrain* became apparent.[65] The rapid

[62] AN 355 AP 7, Louis Madelin papers, Sadoul letter to Louis Madelin 15 janvier 1920.
[63] Grohmann, 'Problems of integrating Lorraine', p. 178.
[64] Roth, *Schumann*, pp. 111–203.
[65] Grohmann, 'Problems of integrating Lorraine', pp. 106–153.

expulsion of Germans was resented by some. Some questioned whether those expelled were really German. After all, French citizenship was supposed to depend on citizenship not blood descent.[66] There was some nervousness about French attitudes to the continuance of the Concordat in the Moselle. The arrival of large numbers of French teachers and administrators for the schools caused resentment.[67] They were called disparagingly *français de l'intérieur*. This was the situation in the immediate post-war period up until 1924 when the election of the Cartel des Gauches under Herriot exacerbated relations between the former Alsace-Lorraine and the government. Edmond Herriot announced that he would enforce laicisation in Alsace-Lorraine. The Alsatians and Mosellans started a protest movement in which Robert Schumann played a prominent part. The threat to the Concordat receded when Herriot fell in 1925 but conflict on these issues continued. In the same year the commissariat was abolished and Alsace-Lorraine matters were entrusted to an administrative directorate based in Paris. As a result of these controversies an autonomist movement grew in strength in Alsace. Schumann was sympathetic to the idea of some decentralisation of government and the protection of the Moselle's and Alsace's existing rights, including the Concordat, but he was not an autonomist. Nor were most Mosellans, with the exception of a small group led by Victor Antoni who broke away from the URL and set up their own party, *Le Parti social-chrétien populaire lorrain*, and newspaper, *Der Lothringer Journal*, in 1928. The Mosellan communists also favoured auto-determination.[68]

Pierre Braun, who was in favour of re-creating the territorial divisions of the old monarchy,[69] used *Le Pays lorrain* to highlight the *malaise lorrain* in a sympathetic manner. We have already noted the resentment at the pretensions of Strasbourg during the period of transition to French rule. The new regional consultative council which covered the whole of the former Alsace-Lorraine did not truly represent local interests in Lorraine, Braun wrote.[70] There was support in Metz for

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[66] Grohmann, 'Problems of integrating Lorraine, pp. 154–206. L. Boswell, 'From Liberation to Purge Trials in the "Mythic Provinces": Recasting French Identities in Alsace and Lorraine 1918–1920', *French Historical Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (winter 2000), pp. 129–162, particularly pp. 158 and 160.

[67] Harp, *Learning to be Loyal,* pp. 183–201.

[68] This account of the Moselle after the war is based on the following sources: Roth, *Histoire politique Lorraine*, *La Vie politique en Lorraine au XXe siècle* (Nancy, 1986); *Alsace-Lorraine, Histoire d'un pays perdu de 1870 à nos jours* (Nancy, 2010); *Le Temps des Journaux; presse et cultures nationales en Lorraine mosellane 1860–1940* (Nancy, 1983); *La Lorraine annexée (2011)*; C. Grohmann, 'From Lothringen to Lorraine: Expulsion and Voluntary Repatriation', in C. Fischer and A. Sharp (eds), *After the Versailles Treaty; Enforcement, Compliance, Contested Identities* (Oxford, 2008), pp. 153–169; Grohmann, 'Problems of integrating Lorraine'; C.Metzger, 'L'Alsace entre la France et l'Allemagne: la défense des intérêts alsaciens*'* (PhD thesis, Université de Lorraine-Metz, 1980); C.Metzger, 'Autonomistes alsaciens et lorrains 1918–1940: alliance ou dépendance?' in F. Roth (ed), '*Lorraine et Alsace, mille ans d'histoire', Annales de L'Est*, no. special (2006). pp. 247–259.

[69] Hopkin, 'Identity in a Divided Province', p. 659.

[70] *Le Pays lorrain*, 14e année (1922), pp. 87–8.

the projet Reibel in the Chamber of Deputies which allowed for a measure of regional reform.[71] At least Nancy would always support Metz in the struggle with Strasbourg.[72] But this raised the question of what Metz's future role would be in the Lorraine region post-war. Nancy would continue as the administrative and regional capital. It had a university. Metz could not be the industrial capital, cut off as it was from the Briey now in the Meurthe-et-Moselle department. Metz could however be a transport hub between Luxembourg, Germany and the Saar on one hand and Nancy on the other.[73] Braun supported the main grievances of the *Messins* in the post-war period. He mentioned the division of the railway system at the old frontier,[74] the worries about the continuance of church schools and German social security provisions,[75] the lack of recognition for Mosellan liberal professionals in France,[76] difficulties over language and the fact that most Mosellans spoke German not French,[77] the different *statuts* of local and French government employees,[78] and the simultaneous payment of new French taxes as well as local taxes left over from the German era.[79] *Le Pays lorrain* believed that the French government would have to accept some German association with Metz and the continued presence of German interests in the city.[80]

However sympathetic *Le Pays lorrain* might be to the difficulties Mosellans faced after the war, Sadoul and other Nancy based regionalists believed that the whole of Lorraine was basically French. There were Mosellans who disagreed. Folklore and songs were used after the war by figures like Westphalen and Pinck to justify a separate Mosellan identity. Westphalen switched from seeing Lorraine as purely French to talking about *Le Pays messin*. Pinck wanted to preserve the culture of German speaking Lorraine and to defend the rights of the Moselle's German Catholic population.[81] Jean de Pange was supportive of Pinck's activity.[82] Even Sadoul conceded that the furniture of German speaking Lorraine had certain differences.[83] Before the war *Lorrains* had had disagreements about exactly where the boundaries of Lorraine lay and what were its essential characteristics. This continued after 1918 as the Moselle was absorbed back into France.

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[71] *Le Pays lorrain*, 13e année (1921), pp. 86–8.
[72] *Le Pays lorrain*, 12e année (1920), pp. 376–9.
[73] Ibid, pp. 183–4.
[74] Ibid, pp. 277–80; 13e année (1921), 38–9, 343.
[75] *Le Pays lorrain*, 12e année (1920), pp. 277–280.
[76] *Ibid*, pp. 324–5, 13e année (1921), pp. 443–4.
[77] *Le Pays lorrain*, 12e année (1920), pp. 471–3; 13e année (1921), pp. 490–1; 17e année (1925), pp. 424–5.
[78] *Le Pays lorrain*, 12e année (1920), pp.519, 567–8; 13e année (1921), pp.248–9, 391–2, 581.
[79] *Le Pays lorrain*, 13e année (1921), p. 136.
[80] *Le Pays lorrain*, 15e année (1923), pp. 279–80.
[81] Hopkin, 'Identity in a Divided Province', Sadoul pp. 655–61, Westphalen pp. 661–66, Pinck pp. 666–673.
[82] J-F. Thull, *Jean de Pange, un Lorrain en quête d'Europe* (Metz, 2008), p. 134.
[83] Sadoul, *Mobilier lorrain*, préface.

The difficulty of determining the sense of identity within different groups in the Moselle is well illustrated by the early life of Robert Schumann.[84] He was a Luxembourger by upbringing and schooling, but by his own choice he trained as a lawyer in the German higher educational system, rather than studying in France, which quite a few Luxembourgers did. As a result, he spoke French and German with equal facility. He also felt he had a Lorraine identity. His family originated in Evrange, a village in the northern Moselle near the Luxembourg border. He had to pass his *Abitur* in a German school to enter German universities and he chose Metz to do this. He also completed his practical legal training in this city once he had finished his formal studies. It is not surprising therefore that he settled in Metz as a lawyer when he started his career before the war. He had relatives in Belgium and also in Alsace with which he felt an affinity, unlike many Mosellans. He completed some of his legal studies in Strasbourg.

As important as his regional and national identity was his Catholicism. He was devout, played an active part in his parish and in local Catholic organisations and as a student in Catholic student clubs. Lorraine was on the whole known for firm adherence to the Catholic faith. He was close to Benzler, the Bishop of Metz (1901-1919) appointed by Wilhelm II and who tried to reconcile French speaking Catholics to their new situation.

Schumann was pragmatic and adapted to circumstances as he found them. He worked within the German Empire before the war and took a local authority administrative job near Metz in 1914–1915 as well as doing a spell as an auxiliary in a hospital (he was not fit for military service in the German army). Then he found out about German atrocities and, as a result, easily accepted the change of regime in November 1918 and French nationality. His war record was not considered a problem by the French authorities. Despite some misgivings about him, his contacts with the church ensured he was accepted on the *Union Républicain Lorrain* electoral list in 1919 and he was successful in Thionville. The following declaration he made at the time sums up his views on the status of his region:

‘Il ne saurait être question ni d’autonomie ni de fédéralisme. Nous ne voulons pas faire de l’Alsace et de la Lorraine un État dans l’État. Ce que nous désirons, c’est que les lois et l’administration que l’on nous donnera tiennent compte, dans la mesure du possible, de notre particularisme, qui, d’après la parole de M. Millerand, nous a permis de nous conserver à la France. La République est une et indivisible, elle ne doit pas être uniforme. La démocratie bien comprise a des formes souples, non seulement elle respecte les libertés individuelles mais elle favorise les libertés régionales. Nous demandons pour nous comme pour la France entière l’organisation d’un régime où nos provinces, j’emprunte l’expression de M. Clemenceau, renaîtraient à la vie d’une expansion indépendante.’ [85]

[84] Roth, *Schumann*, pp. 13–110.
[85] Roth, *Schumann*, pp. 105–6.

Mosellan particularism was a test for French *Lorrains* of how far they could reach out to the East after the war. There was a growing rivalry between Nancy and Metz after 1918 over which was truly the capital of Lorraine.[86] The future role of the city of Nancy had been a growing concern at the end of the war, given the likely re-unification of Metz and Strasbourg with France.[87] Opinion in Nancy was not altogether supportive of the revival of political life in Metz. Nancy had grown used to its position as capital of the East and was not willing to give privileges up to Metz. As early as 11 January 1919 the city council of Nancy was already worried about administrative changes which might alter its pre-eminent position in Lorraine. It addressed a petition to the government in Paris and sought support from a number of prominent citizens including Cavallier. While welcoming Metz and Strasbourg back into the French fold, it wanted to protect its *droits acquis*. It did not want elements of the university to be hived off, as some in the government were suggesting, for example by moving the *École de Pharmacie* to Strasbourg. It also opposed other government services being relocated to Metz. It argued strongly against returning the arrondissement of Briey, where many of the iron mines were, to the department of the Moselle. The city reminded the government that it was capital and skills from Nancy and its department which had developed this iron field. It also opposed the idea of creating a new *Cour d'Appel* in Metz covering Briey. Nancy deserved fair treatment because of all it had suffered in the war in the front line of the defence of eastern France.[88]

When considering the future of their region after the war *Lorrains* had to confront not only the continued potential threat from Germany economically and militarily, but also the re-integration of Moselle businesses into Lorraine. They were compelled to find answers to some searching questions posed by the near east. The iron and steel making region of Lorraine stretched across international borders to the Saar in Germany, Luxembourg and Belgium. Raw materials and finished goods, particularly iron ore and coal, needed to move freely across borders if the area was to prosper. The same applied to labour and capital. Economic actors as much as politicians were caught in the dilemma of how far to treat the lands to the east and north as a threat or an opportunity. Iron masters like Camille Cavallier of Pont-à-Mousson could see the advantages of doing business with immediate neighbours, but he also continued to distrust Germany. He proceeded to diversify Pont-à-Mousson's operations away from Lorraine by developing factories built during the war elsewhere in France.[89] Chapter five described the difficulty for Lorraine businessmen of deciding whether to develop transport links to the east or west, for example to canalise the Moselle or build a canal linking to the Nord. Alexandre Dreux had pointed out the danger of

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[86] Grohmann, 'Problems of integrating Lorraine', pp. 49–54.
[87] *La Reconstruction lorraine* (15 ao*ût* 1917), pp. 12–19.
[88] SGA 7420, dossier divers, letter from Maire de Nancy to Cavallier 17 janvier 1919. P. Lawrence, T. Baycroft, C. Grohmann. '"Degrees of Foreignness" and the construction of identity in French Border Regions during the Interwar period', *Contemporary European History*, 10, 1 (2001), p. 67.
[89] Kent, 'Cavallier', pp. 285, 299.

spending money to make it easier for German factories in the Saar to penetrate the French market.[90] Janus like post-war *Lorrains* faced backwards into France but also outward to Germany and her neighbours. Would Lorraine continue to be the frontier region, the outpost in the defence of France or the bridge to its neighbours?

7.iv. The Saar

A test case for *Lorrains* was the Saar. During the Versailles treaty negotiations France obtained the coal mines of the Saar in compensation for the coal mines of the Nord which had been destroyed by the Germans. In order to protect France's investment, the government of the Saar was taken away from Germany and given to a commission appointed by the League of Nations. The inhabitants would retain their existing legal rights.[91] In 1935 there would be a plebiscite to determine the Saar's long term future, either as an independent territory, or as part of France or Germany. The French had the right to introduce the use of the franc alongside the mark for transactions involving the mines, which were now run by a French state holding company. Alexandre Dreux, the President of the Nancy Chamber of Commerce, was appointed to the provisional council for the Saar mines in 1919.[92] The latter was also entitled to set up French schools. The Saar was in a customs union with France. After 1925 the territory would no longer enjoy tariff free access to the German market.

The future of the Saar presented France with a dilemma and this was particularly acute for the regional elite in Lorraine. The majority hope was that in 1935 the Saar's population would vote for union with France. Much was made of historic and economic links between the Saar and Lorraine. Clearly the state had to exploit the coal mines efficiently so that Lorraine's metallurgical industries could obtain all the coal they needed. A common belief seemed to be that if France improved the lot of workers in this heavy industrial area, then they would eventually vote with their pockets and join France.[93] It was important that France maintained public order. In 1921 France introduced the franc to pay workers and suppliers and this in fact gave workers more money in their pockets because of the falling level of the mark.[94] However, the move was attacked within the Saar. Houses were built for mine workers and the supply of provisions reorganised.[95] It was claimed in Lorraine that, as a result, there was less industrial unrest in the

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[90] 'Speech to national navigation congress in Strasbourg 2 septembre 1919', *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 17 1919, (séance 4 novembre 1919), pp. 219–221.
[91] P. Simon, 'Et d'abord. Qu'est-ce que la Sarre?', *L'Est républicain* (29 août 1921), p.1 col a–b.
[92] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 17 1919, (9 décembre 1919), p. 254.
[93] 'La Sarre par un franco-sarrois', *Union économique de l'Est*, 7e année (15 juillet 1923), pp. 214–6, in fact written by Camille Cavallier; also 3e année (15 novembre 1919), pp. 258–9.
[94] *L'Est républicain* (15 octobre 1921), p.1 col a–b.
[95] *L'Est républicain* (15 août 1921), p.1 col a–b.

Saar in the early nineteen twenties than in the rest of Germany.[96] It was also argued that the Saar was an integral part of the industrial basin of eastern France and should be developed as such.[97] This involved, as we have already seen, improving transport links. For example, the line from Nancy to the Saar needed upgrading and a canal link was needed between the Saar and the Moselle.[98] Likewise plans to provide improved telephone links between Paris, Nancy and Strasbourg would, it was believed, benefit the whole of this area including the Saar.[99]

However, it was recognised that there were a number of problems with this policy. It seemed to ignore the strength of German national feeling. The *Lorrains* were conscious of German propaganda against French policy. There was much talk in Lorraine of the strength of Prussian influence in the Saar.[100] Historically much of this area, including the Saar, had been part of Prussia and there had been local feeling against the Prussian state. Most Lorraine commentators made a distinction between Prussians and Germans and saw the former as more hostile to France. We will see later that several influential writers believed that the populations of Rhenish Germany were more open to French influence, principally because of their Catholicism. However, the strength of German feeling was on display in the Saar in 1921 when there were protests at the introduction of the franc. The League of Nations refused to see a Sarrois delegation.[101]

This strength of German feeling in the Saar presented Lorraine's leaders with a dilemma. Why develop transport links for example, and incorporate the Saar's industries in the French customs area, if eventually it would improve access to the French market for a formidable competitor. Perhaps it would be better simply to exploit the coal mines efficiently in the short term.[102] The Saar not only had coal mines but also a substantial metallurgical industry. It was true that this industry depended on Lorraine's iron ore, as Lorraine's blast furnaces depended on the Saar's coal. Nevertheless, the Saar's industries were seen somewhat as a Trojan horse.[103] Camille Cavallier was worried about the Saar's production flooding the French market after 1925. He suggested cooperation in sales with French firms by

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[96] *Union économique de l'Est,* 5e année (15 juillet 1921), pp. 161–3.
[97] Union économique de l'Est, 8e année (1 mai 1924), pp. 186–7,
[98] *L'Est Républicain* (24 mai 1921), p. 1 col e–f, (8 juin 1921), p.1 col. f. *Union économique de l'Est,* 7e année (1 février 1923), pp. 28–30, 33–34. *L'Est républicain* (2 novembre 1922), p.1 col a. C. Cavallier, 'La France a-t-elle une politique de la Sarre?', *Union économique de l'Est*, 7e année (1 février 1923), pp. 33–34. See also *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol. 18 1920, (séance 9 novembre 1920), p. 262; vol. 19 1921, (séance 12 avril 1921), pp. 120–3.
[99] *L'Est républicain* (28 octobre 1922), p.1 col a.
[100] *L'Est républicain* (29 août 1921), p.1 col a–b. *Union économique de l'Est,* 3e année (15 novembre 1919), pp. 258–9.
[101] *L'Est républicain* (12 octobre 1921), p.1 col a–b.
[102] *Union économique de l'Est*, 8e année (1 juin 1924), pp. 208–9.
[103] 'La Question sarroise en 1922', *Union économique de l'Est*, 7e année (1 janvier 1923), pp. 1–3; (15 janvier 1923), pp. 18–19.

setting up a joint *comptoir*.[104]

7.v. The Rhineland

If relations with the Saar presented a challenge to Lorraine, so did the Rhineland occupied by French troops. After the war the arch French patriot Maurice Barrès turned his attention further east to this German Rhineland. In a series of writings and speeches he described the separate character of the Rhineland from Prussia and the influence which French culture had had there, particularly in the eighteenth century and also under the rule of Napoleon. He saw an opportunity for France, not to detach the Rhineland from Germany, but to spread French influence there once again so that it became more sympathetic to France and a source of added security, particularly once the occupation ended. He made much of the links between Catholic France and the Catholic majority in the Rhineland and the need to convert Germany from Prussian authoritarianism as he saw it.[105] He made a speech at the inauguration of a statue of Déroulède in Metz on 16 October 1921 urging that the Prussian spirit should be banished from the left bank of the Rhine.[106] What role did Lorraine have in this policy? Barrès wrote about the spirit of the Rhine and the old Lotharingia.[107] He continued:

'L'Alsace et la Lorraine persuaderont au génie du Rhin de sortir de la Walhalla qui ne parle ni à son cœur ni à son cerveau.' [108]

How could Lorraine do this? He wrote:

'Le génie rhénan est à la fois germanique et latin, il y a des manières de travailler et des manières de sentir qui sont propres aux pays de Lorraine, d'Alsace et de Luxembourg, au Palatinat et à toute la terre celto-rhénane.' [109]

The *Lorrains* had always felt very close to the Rhenish population.[110]

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[104] 'La Sarre par un franco-sarrois pt. II', *Union économique de l'Est*, 7e année **(**1 août 1923), pp. 232–5.
[105] M. Barrès, *L'Appel au Rhin, la minute sacrée* (Paris, 1919); *Le Génie du Rhin: les bastions de l'Est* (Paris, 1921); *La Politique rhénane: discours parlementaires* (Paris, 1922).
[106] Barrès, *Politique rhénane*, p. 12. The statue of Déroulède in the Place Raymond-Mondon, Metz was destroyed in 1940. It had replaced a statue of Frederick III of Germany on horseback erected by William II and destroyed in 1918.
[107] Barrès, *Génie du Rhin*, p. xi.
[108] Ibid, p. 231.
[109] M. Barrès, *Romans et voyages*, préface d'Eric Roussel (Paris, 1994), p. xcii, quoted in R. Grossmann, 'Deux Académiciens de Metz face à l'Europe: Maurice Barrès et Jean de Pange*', Académie nationale de Metz*, (2004), p. 196.
[110] J. de Pange, 'Barrès et le génie du Rhin', *Le Pays lorrain*, 16e année (1924), p. 126.

This hope of a Rhineland independent of Prussian influence continued through the political events of the post-war years. *L'Est républicain's* correspondent Henri Beziès in an article entitled *Notre Effort en Rhénanie* on 17 April 1923 said that the left bank of the Rhine occupied by France was almost entirely 'déprussiannisée' and only French officials remained. This Rhineland was becoming a source of revenues for France, for example from export licences granted to German firms, from forests, vineyards and other assets seized and from stocks of raw materials. French language courses had commenced in the territory. Generally French soldiers had good relations with the inhabitants. They would not need much encouragement to cut links with Berlin:

'Si la France pouvait affirmer que les Prussiens ne reviendraient jamais, c'est par milliers que les Rhénans collaboreraient avec nous, par la mise en valeur d'un pays riche habité par une population paisible.' [111]

L'Est républicain published a pro-autonomist report on German elections from Coblenz on 1 May 1924, which was anti-Prussian in tone.[112] Alexandre Vialatte, Pourrat's friend, worked as a correspondent for la *Revue rhénane* from 1922. This bi-lingual journal, covering literature, economics and the arts, was a quasi-official instrument of French cultural policy in the Rhineland, using France's soft power to spread French influence. Vialatte did not express any views about local politics but he found the local Germans sympathetic and formed relationships with them.[113]

Barrès had celebrated French Lorraine as a frontier outpost of Latin civilisation which had to be defended at all costs. He acknowledged this when making the hill of Sion-Vaudémont a place of regional pilgrimage in 1913 and returning there in 1920.[114] After the war he started to make the journey across the frontier and saw Lorraine as a bridge to the east. In this sense he was departing from the thinking of some of his erstwhile nationalist colleagues in Lorraine and from his own writings during the war. This shift was reflected in a piece published in *Le Pays lorrain* in March 1924 as part of a whole issue to mark Barrès's death the previous year. The writer referred to:

'La Lorraine n'ont point renfrognée dans une citadelle sorte de bastion avancé d'un système défensif,"

and he continued:

'Voyez la Lorraine, voyez sa mission d'avant-garde, d'avant-garde civilisatrice, car elle n'est pas le fort qui hérisse sont pont-levis levé, mais le lieu accueillant d'où

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[111] *L'Est républicain* (17 avril 1923), p. 1 col a–b.
[112] *L'Est républicain* (15 mai 1924), p.1 col c.
[113] Fryszman, 'Victoire triste', pp. 286–8.
[114] J-F. Thull, 'La Colline de Sion-Vaudémont dans l'imaginaire lorrain,' in P. Martin (ed), 'Sion colline d'histoire,' *Annales de l'Est*, No.2 (2006), pp. 167–186.

sans effort partent les idées et les sentiments Français pour apporter un peu d'ordre, de conscience, de bon sens et de paix dans ces régions germaniques orientées vers la clarté et la liberté françaises.' [115]

What Barrès had in mind, and what this tribute reflects, is a desire to convert Germany to a better way rather than to meet her as an equal.

Jean de Pange also thought about Lorraine providing a connection between France and Germany. He was the scion of an aristocratic family in the region of Metz. After the war he took up the cause not only of the Moselle's and Alsace's religious and educational settlement but also of rapprochement with Germany. He supported regional devolution for Alsace and the Moselle separately and indeed for other areas of France.[116] In his work *Les Meules de Dieu* he saw Alsace as having a mission to export regional liberties to the rest of France. He also wanted a permanent regional council for Alsace and for it to be a forum for developing a better relationship with Germany. In December 1927 Jean de Pange participated in the Paris congress of the FRF and expressed his views.[117]

His attitude was diametrically opposed to that of an ultra-French patriot like Jean-Pierre Jean who also came from Metz. Like Barrès Jean de Pange saw the Rhineland and Lorraine as territories which linked Germanic and Latin culture.[118] He had a strong feeling for the *Pays messin* where he grew up. He spoke German and was said to carry a copy of Goethe in his pocket during the war.[119] He had lived some years in Vienna in his youth and wrote about the links between the Austrian Habsburgs and Lorraine. He thought of Lorraine as an 'in between place' open to France and Germany, inheriting the traditions of the old Lotharingia.[120] He wrote in an article in 1924, reflecting on the thinking of Barrès:

'Les Lorrains ont été si intimement mêlés, pendant des siècles, à la vie des populations rhénanes, qu'ils se considèrent comme les intermédiaires naturels entre ces populations et la France.'

He added that:

'Ces contacts multipliés donnaient aux Lorrains une sorte de privilège pour l'étude de la pensée germanique.' [121]

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[115] J. Malye, 'L'Hommage du déraciné', *Le Pays lorrain,* 16e année (1924), p. 149.
[116] J. de Pange, *Les Libertés rhénanes: pays rhénanes, Sarre, Alsace* (Paris, 1922), pp. xliii, 347, 353, 369.
[117] J-F. Thull, 'Jean de Pange, un Lorrain face au malaise alsacien 1918–1928,' in Roth, *Lorraine et Alsace*, pp. 261–281.
[118] Thull, *Jean de Pange,* p. 57.
[119] J. de Pange, *Journal vol. 1 1927–1930* (Paris, 4 vols,1964–1975), préface de Pauline de Pange.
[120] J.P. Bled, E. Faucher, R. Tavenaux (eds), *Les Habsbourg et la Lorraine* (Nancy, 1988), pp. 248–253.
[121] Pange, 'Barrès et le génie du Rhin', p. 128. See also Thull, *Jean de Pange*, pp. 126–136.

What was Lorraine he asked once:

'Est-ce simplement le petit duché dont Nancy devint la capitale, ou n'est-ce pas plutôt cet antique et très illustre 'pais de Loherraine' qui avait à Metz sa véritable métropole?'

Here Jean de Pange asked the key question raised by many of these writers - what exactly was Lorraine? Was it a region with defined borders and characteristics or rather a state of mind, an attitude? Was it an 'in between place' linking France and Germany or a frontier? Pange's answer to these ambiguities was to bring French Lorraine, the Moselle and Alsace together in one large economic region.[122] So Pange shared some of Barrès's interest in the Rhineland's civilisation but his attitude to German culture differed markedly from the traditional ultra-French patriotism thought to be more typical of Lorraine.

Unlike Pange there were several French Lorraine thinkers and politicians whose views seemed in the post-war years to have moved very little from the 'frontier' mentality pre-1914. Examples include Louis Marin, Louis Madelin, Pierre Gaxotte, Raymond Poincaré and André Maginot (whose family home was in the Meuse like Poincaré). Madelin visited Alsace and Lorraine as French troops took over both regions at the end of the war. His account of this experience, *Heures merveilleuses d'Alsace et de Lorraine*, is full of ecstatic moments from a nationalist perspective. He says he knew from his visits before the war that Alsace-Lorraine had always remained loyal to France, even during the terrible years of the war.[123] Charles Sadoul wrote to him, having accompanied him on his journey, saying:

'Votre livre est de ceux que je relirai souvent. Dans les heures de cafard quand les évènements me déprimeront il viendra me donner du courage.'[124]

The impact on Madelin of these events is evident from the pages of his daily journal with its descriptions of the crowds, speeches and reviews.[125] Pierre Gaxotte (1895–1982) was another historian from Lorraine, for a time the secretary of Charles Maurras and a contributor to the journal *Action Française*. He was an admirer of the Lorraine character which he described as austere, tough, sober, practical and resilient.[126] When writing about his childhood in his old age he never forgot the Prussian threat:

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[122] Pange, *Libertés rhénanes*, p. 347.
[123] L. Madelin, *Heures merveilleuses d'Alsace et de Lorraine* (Paris, 1919), pp. 238–242.
[124] AN 355 AP 7, Louis Madelin papers, Sadoul letter to Madelin 4 juillet 1919.
[125] AN 355 AP 16, Louis Madelin papers, Louis Madelin personal journal 1909–1934.
[126] P. Gaxotte, *Mon Village et moi* (Paris,1968), p.7; *Les Autres et moi* (Paris, 1975), p. 24.

‘L’usage voulait même qu’après un repas de fête, le maître de maison en levant son verre prononçât une formule rituelle: “Encore un que les Prussiens n’auront pas!” Nous disions: les Prussiens. Jamais: les Allemands.’ [127]

Another *Lorrain* who seemed close to those mentioned above was Marshal Lyautey, the much feted conqueror of Morocco. He was born in Nancy and after 1918 made Lorraine his adopted home. In one of his publications he expressed sentiments very similar to the men of the frontier:

‘Nulle région n’est devenue plus française que la Lorraine, nulle n’a payé plus cher, plus héroïquement, par le sacrifice spontané et continu de ses enfants à la patrie française,’

and

‘Oui, elle s’est donnée à la France, corps, cœur et âme, elle s’en est fait le rempart, envahie et ravagée cinq fois depuis cent cinquante ans, donnant ses enfants sans compter.’ [128]

Yet a recent biography by Mercier offers the opinion that his feeling for Lorraine was quite different from Poincaré’s and Barrès’s, although this view ignores the evolution of the latter’s thought post-1918. Lyautey was much more open to the outside world, Mercier believes, and he saw Lorraine as a bridge between France and Germany.[129]

Louis Marin continued his nationalist stance from before the war, maintaining a firmly anti-German attitude and, like Poincaré, calling for the strictest enforcement of the reparations conditions of the treaty of Versailles. His nationalism ran alongside a very traditional view of social relations. He believed every region like Lorraine had its own character and that upbringing in a village had a profound effect on individuals. His interest in Lorraine was in the countryside, not the new Lorraine of industry and large towns.[130] He was greatly influenced by Catholic family values and supported the movement led by Jules Méline for a return to the land.[131] This emphasis on the values of the land is evident in his collection of Lorraine folk tales.[132] These views went back to his time as president of the *Federation régionaliste française* before 1914. He was very involved in the

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[127] Gaxotte, *Mon Village*, p. 278.
[128] H. Lyautey, *La Réunion de la Lorraine à la France* (Paris, 1926), pp. 42 and 43.
[129] G. Mercier, *Lyautey Prince lorrain* (Nancy, 1994), pp. 18–24.
[130] L. Marin, *Regards sur la Lorraine: réflexions sur des notions fondamentales, particularités du caractère lorrain* (Paris, 1966), pp. 15–18, 25–26, 54–57, 121–131.
[131] Méline’s post war statement of this programme was published in 1919, J. Méline, *Le Salut par la terre et le programme économique de l’avenir* (Paris, 1919).
[132] L. Marin, *Contes traditionnels en Lorraine. Institutions de transfert des valeurs morales et spirituelles* (Paris, 1944).

development of anthropology in France between the wars but his thinking was narrow and old fashioned.[133]

The scars left by the war ran deep for Charles Sadoul and no doubt for many of his readers. There was fear of a German *revanche*. The pages of *Le Pays lorrain* in the years after the war were full of war stories, memoirs or accounts of the fighting and its consequences in different places. These accounts contained details of the German atrocities in 1914. Charles Sadoul lived in Raon L'Étape in the Vosges. So a series of articles appeared in 1920 under the name of Louis Sadoul on the war of 1914 as it affected Raon, including details of the 150 houses burnt by the Germans. The first of these articles looked back to the war of 1870 in the area.[134] Another example of this genre with full details of the horrors of war for civilians was entitled *La Vague sanglante en Luxembourg et dans le Nord de la Lorraine* by Arthur Diderich.[135] A separate series of articles by Louis Sadoul described the harshness of the judicial system in German occupied territory and the atrocities. They contained details of lawyers who had died for France there.[136] Louis Sadoul penned another series of articles on the war in the Vosges.[137] Attention was also given to the area of Belgium close to the French frontier, *La Lorraine belge*.[138] There are many other examples. There were poems and pieces by the well-known writer in *patois* Georges Chepfer.[139] In all 152 pages were devoted to war literature in 1920, 25% of the total pagination in that year, and 103 pages in 1921, or 16%. Between 1922 and 1925 the number of war articles reduced to a trickle.

The memory of these past sacrifices and the creation of appropriate memorials was nowhere more apparent than in Lorraine. However, memories were conflicted. Perhaps the most powerful symbol of Lorraine's memory of past conflicts was the hill of Sion-Vaudémont, south of Nancy, adopted by Barrès in his novel *La Colline inspirée*. A pilgrimage was organised in 1920 as a *Fête de la Victoire* and in 1928 the signal de Vaudémont was erected in the form of a *Lanterne des Morts*. It was dedicated to the memory of Barrès in a ceremony at

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[133] H. Lebovics, 'Le Conservatisme en anthropologie et la fin de le Troisième République', *Gradhiva, Revue d'Histoire et d'Archives de l'Anthropologie,* no.4 (été 1988), pp. 3–17, particularly pp. 13–14. H. Lebovics**,** *True France, the Wars over Cultural Identity 1900–1945* (Cornell and London, 1992), pp. 16–50.

[134] *Le Pays lorrain*, 12e année (1920), p. 172; see also (1920) pp. 97, 107, 165–175, 210–221,254–265, 298–307, 355–365.

[135] Ibid, pp. 228–232, 319–323; 13e année (1921), pp. 10–16, 220–227, 433–437.

[136] *Le Pays lorrain*, 12e année (1920), pp. 481–490, 548–559; 13e année (1921), pp. 24–34, 62–69, 116–125.

[137] *Le Pays lorrain*, 13e année (1921), pp. 469–478, 511–521, 551–561; 14e année (1922), pp. 20–29, 58–67, 119–126.

[138] *Le Pays lorrain*, 12e année (1920), pp. 129–131, 269–271, 464–7.

[139] Georges Chepfer, 'La Marraine du Poilu de Saizerais, Nancy juin 1917'; 'La Bonne Hôtesse où le cantonment de tout repos, Nancy, 17 août 1917', *Le Pays lorrain*, 12e année (1920), pp. 266–268, pp. 529–532.

which both Lyautey and Poincaré were present.[140] The idea of a tower in memory of the dead was used in western France in the Middle Ages but adopted in Lorraine after the war for example at Pierrepont, Vauquois and at Verdun in the ossuary of Donaumont, as well as at Sion.[141]

Jean-Pierre Jean was an ultra-patriot who led *Le Souvenir français* in Lorraine before the war. His raison d'être was memory of past sacrifices. After serving in the army he went back to his native Metz and was elected a deputy for the Moselle. In 1920 he was also elected to the committee of the *Ligue des Patriotes* presided by Barrès. He followed the URL line on the educational and religious rights of Mosellans but lost his seat in the 1924 election because his patriotic views were too extreme.[142] Jean's personal history underlines the point that the memory of the war was very different on the two sides of the dividing line between French Lorraine and the formerly German Moselle. French patriots returning to Metz, like Jean, often had a different perspective from Mosellans who had stayed put during the conflict. Commemorating the war in the Moselle was a problem because many had fought in the German army. Dead soldiers were often referred to as 'soldats lorrains,' 'nos fils' or 'nos morts'. Religious symbolism was more common and French patriotic or Republican symbols rare.[143]

7.vi. Natalism

The economic and potential military challenge presented by Germany after the war was also the basis of the natalist movement. This covered the whole of France but the issues central to its platform chimed in well with the central concerns of the Lorraine elite after the war. *Lorrains* played a very prominent role within the movement. There were further tensions here between different discourses on the role of the region after the war. Traditional Catholic teaching on the family and the role of women ran alongside social Catholic ideas on improving the living conditions of workers, suspicion of Germany and economic modernisation.

The starting point for this movement was France's much inferior population growth compared with Germany and other European countries. This phenomenon was thought to be partly due to high infant mortality,[144] but mainly the result of a lower birth rate. The issue was of concern to Lorraine's leaders for a number of reasons – fewer children meant fewer sons to defend France and Lorraine. However, lower population growth also had economic effects — fewer trained workers in

[140] Thull, 'Sion-Vaudémont', pp. 167–186.
[141] A-J. Surdel, 'De Pierrepont à Sion: le thème de la lanterne des morts dans la commémoration lorraine après 1918,' in Martin, *Sion colline d'histoire*, pp. 187–208.
[142] P. Barral, L*'Esprit lorrain*, p. 125. J-P Jean, *Livre d'Or du Souvenir français* (Metz, 1929), préface and pp. 1–6.
[143] W. Kidd, *Les Monuments aux morts mosellans* (Metz,1999), pp. 29–53. J.-N. Grandhomme, 'L'Iconographie chrétienne des monuments aux morts en terre concordataire (Alsace et Moselle)', in Roth, *Lorraine et Alsace*, pp. 283–299.
[144] *Union économique de l'Est*, 4e année (1 avril 1920), pp. 87–8.

factories and a smaller home market of consumers. The effect of slower growth was particularly keenly felt in agriculture, because even before the war the countryside was being drained of labour seeking higher wages in the towns. This meant some farms became impossible to manage and drove a series of dramatic changes in agricultural practice. These changes were also of great concern to the Auvergne and support for natalism was not lacking there either. Lorraine held the first of a series of annual national congresses on natalism in Nancy in September 1919. Clermont-Ferrand followed in 1925.

One of the driving forces behind the Lorraine natalist movement was Krug, whose report on the mechanisation of agriculture we have already considered. Krug had published a report on *La Natalité française* in 1916 proposing a congress. He believed that the middle classes were setting a bad example because they simply wanted to avoid having children. They had to be educated out of this attitude in Krug's opinion. He also focused on abortion which should be legislated out of existence. He discussed better child care in the home and the need for crèches in the workplace for working mothers. He also believed alcoholism, venereal disease and tuberculosis were weakening the race and procreation. Venereal disease was a common pre-occupation among the regional elite — witness articles which appeared in the *Bulletin of the Société industrielle de l'Est* after the war.[145] This pre-occupation was also shared by Camille Cavallier.[146] Another major issue was the housing crisis — not enough affordable homes for workers. Charles Guyot of the Académie Stanislas tackled this issue by drawing attention to the existence of poor housing even in a fine town like Nancy. The city council was taking action but there was a lot more to do.[147] Working incomes were often insufficient to bring up families and firms should be encouraged to give financial help to *familles nombreuses*.[148]

Krug published a further report on population in 1918. Here he expanded on the type of re-education he felt was necessary. Young women had to be taught to take pride in motherhood. Young people had to be instilled with the discipline to be good patriotic fathers and mothers. All European nations suffered from the diseases he had highlighted in his previous report. The crucial difference in France was the lack of desire for children. This was a moral issue. The bourgeoisie had set a bad example, being too concerned about splitting their inheritance at death.[149]

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[145] Dr. Macé, Professeur d'Hygiène à la Faculté de Médicine de Nancy, 'La Lutte contre la syphilis dans le basin de Briey', *Bulletin de la Société industrielle de l'Est*, no. 157 (avril 1920), pp. 46–54; 'La Lutte contre le péril vénérien', no. 169 (avril–juin 1923), pp. 19–30.
[146] SGA 7248, dossier correspondance 1917–1924, Cavallier letter to Fayolle 22 décembre 1921.
[147] C. Guyot, 'Un Problème urbain, logements insalubres et habitations à bon marché', *Mémoires de l'Académie Stanislas*, CLXXIe année, 6e série, t. xviii 1920–1921 (Nancy, 1921), pp. 1–4.
[148] A. Krug, *La Natalité française* (Nancy, 1916, supplement to the Bulletin de la Société industrielle de l'Est), p. 5.
[149] A. Krug, *Pour La Repopulation (Nancy, 1918), pp. 3–6. 12–13.*

Many of these ideas were discussed and adopted at the first national natalist congress organised by the Nancy chamber in Nancy, 25 – 28 September 1919. This attracted 350 attendees from all professions and from all over France. A further 500 registered as supporters. Support for natalism spread far wider than the traditional Catholic faithful. Clémentel was invited but unfortunately could not attend. The president was Auguste Isaac from Lyon, who later became Minister of Commerce himself. The congress was closed by a keynote speech by Paul Deschanel, President of the Chamber of Deputies. The opening speech was made by Alexandre Dreux who posed the question — will our race decline? Germany, he said, was not resigned to her defeat. We must, he said, combat the egotism of families restraining births and make sure that all the sacrifices of the war years had not been in vain.[150]

Six commissions were set up covering teaching, religion, health and childcare, legislation, action by business owners and propaganda. It fell to Marcel Paul, Cavallier's son-in-law, to report back to the plenary session on the commissions' work. An important recommendation was that business owners should join with the state to support employees with a supplementary income if they had families. There were some more radical suggestions for state intervention including creating a family vote, with fathers exercising the suffrage on behalf of children. The Chamber of Deputies voted for this in principle in 1924. A member of the *Conseil supérieur de la Natalité* claimed that there had been a change of tone in Paris on population and family issues since the war. Poincaré was behind a policy which sought to increase population and made family interests a priority.[151] However, like Krug, the commissions recognised that legislative interventions would not solve the problem. It was a matter of religious and moral education and the congress called for the state to work with the church on this.[152] The language of the recommendations suggested a moral crusade:

'Nous voulons que le pouvoir public accomplisse sa tâche de contrôle et de poursuite. Nous demandons que les entreprises de luxure et de pourriture, de pornographie, d'avortement et de propagande néo-malthusienne soient sévèrement châtiées.' [153]

Paul said that they needed:

'De vigoureux efforts pour purifier les cœurs, pour fortifier les volontés contre les tentations mauvaises, pour éclairer les intelligences et assainir les consciences.'[154]

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[150] *Congrès national de la Natalité 1919, premier congrès de la natalité tenu à Nancy du 25 au 28 septembre 1919, compte-rendu part I* (Nancy,1919), pp. 7–13. See also SGA 7420, dossier Congrès de la Natalité.
[151] F. Hoverat, 'Allons-nous avoir une politique familiale?' *Union économique de l'Est*, 8e année (15 janvier 1924), p. 24.
[152] *Congrès Natalité*, pp. 35, 37–39.
[153] *Congrès Natalité*, p. 33.
[154] Ibid, p. 38.

and also to combat:

'ce terrible fléau de l'indiscipline des mœurs et de la dépopulation.' [155]

These views were widely shared among the elite of Lorraine connected to the Nancy chamber, who were also well networked into natalist circles in Paris. Foremost among the Lorraine natalists was Camille Cavallier. He wrote to Krug in 1918 saying that he supported the latter's work on natalism and the high cost of living.[156] Later he was to publish his own brochures dealing with *natalité*, like *La France victorieuse*, which he sent to Krug with the comment:

'Où je traite cette question angoissante qui nous préoccupe tous de la natalité.' [157]

and also *La France de Demain,* also written in 1923. Here he made a direct connection between health, personal hygiene, clean water and the need for pipes for new water mains in most towns. This became Pont-à-Mousson's key business in the years ahead. This was a case of a correct moral attitude reaping financial rewards. Like Krug he saw the problem as moral and psychological, dealing with the effects of the war, as much as economic, combatting the pressure on living standards after 1918, which the state could attack directly through measures on taxes and healthcare.[158] He believed towns had a role to play in providing better housing for working families, for example by reserving plots for building for *familles nombreuses*.[159] He was heavily involved in discussions on *allocations familiales* being made by employers in Lorraine and he favoured setting up a regional *caisse* for all employers.[160] He also pressed his fellow iron masters to support the Nancy chamber's own *Pupilles* scheme, which gave grants from the chamber to selected families with five or more children. Solvay agreed to give 20,000 francs in October 1918.[161] The *Pupilles* scheme was helping over 150 families by the early twenties.[162] It drew support from a wide circle of subscribers, not just a few big firms.[163]

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[155] Ibid, p. 39.
[156] SGA 7342, dossier Pupilles, Cavallier letter to Krug 29 avril 1918.
[157] SGA 7247, dossier 1923, Cavallier letter to Krug on natalité and *La France victorieuse*, 5 octobre 1923.
[158] SGA 7331, dossier Natalité, 'Note de service, études sur les moyens de combattre la dépopulation (7pp.), pour Cavallier fin avril 1923'.
[159] SGA 7247, dossier 1923, notes for *Union économique de l'Est* on answers to their questionnaire on future of France 17 janvier 1923.
[160] SGA 6754, Congrès Natalité, Nancy, 'Cavallier note de service 4 avril 1919'.
[161] SGA 7342, dossier Pupilles, Cavallier letter to E. Ferry at Rupt 10 février 1918. For the pupilles scheme see also *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol.17 1919, (séance 30 août 1919), pp. 198–204, 207–8, 210–216; vol. 22 1924, (séance 11 mars 1924), p. 74.
[162] SGA 7342, dossier Pupilles, 'Note de service, Dubois à Cavallier 1 décembre 1920'.
[163] SGA 7420, dossier Pupilles, 'Pupilles de la Chambre de Commerce de Nancy, souscriptions 1917'; pp. 2–6; 'Pupilles, souscriptions uniques et annuelles 1918', 7pp.; 'Oeuvre des Pupilles de la Chambre de Commerce de Nancy 4 février 1918', p.2.

There was more than a hint in all this of bourgeois men striking moral and patriotic attitudes at the expense of the working poor and also women. Cavallier wrote to Fayolle, the permanent secretary of the Nancy Chamber in 1918 saying he was against women having the vote or having any say in important meetings. He wrote:

'La femme est un être essentiellement impulsif de sentiment et la logique n'habite pas dans son cerveau.' [164]

Cavallier also advocated at one point that a partner in a marriage which had not produced four children within ten years should be entitled to an automatic divorce.[165] Such a suggestion would have been abhorrent to faithful Catholics. Divorce was more usually blamed for the low birth rate, a connection made by Michon, a contributor to the deliberations of the Académie Stanislas. In supporting the sanctity of marriage he referred to:

'la crise de la natalité, qui met aujourd'hui en péril l'existence de la France.' [166]

Cavallier's views were shared by others in his circle of industrial contacts such as Henri Cavallier at the Foug foundry which belonged to Pont-à-Mousson. In a letter in 1919 Henri echoed the argument that the *haute bourgeoisie* did not set a good example. They did not want to divide inheritances and wives wanted to appear alongside their husbands and enjoy themselves. For those lower down the middle class social scale, like *fonctionnaires*, life was tough and the cost of living had gone up considerably since 1918. Like Camille Cavallier and Krug, he expected the state and *patrons* to step in and help families in need.[167] Earlier Henri Cavallier had pledged 25,000 francs for a *caisse* for *familles nombreuses* and Morin replied approvingly, noting:

'En bon élève de M. Cavallier (Camille), je considère que la question de natalité prime toutes les autres choses.' [168]

Members of the Lorraine elite had good contacts with the four key national bodies which had an influence on policy on natalism, apart from the Chamber of Deputies itself. Firstly, the *Association nationale d'Expansion économique* set up a special commission on *natalit*é. Cavallier claimed to have initiated this.[169] François Villain

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[164] SGA 7342, dossier Pupilles, Cavallier letter to Fayolle 16 février 1918.
[165] SGA 6754, Congrès Natalité, Nancy, Cavallier letter to Morin 17 avril 1917.
[166] M.L. Michon, 'La Natalité et le divorce', *Mémoires de l'Académie Stanislas*, 1920–1921, p. 13.
[167] SGA 7398, dossier ANEE commission Natalité, H. Cavallier letter to Morin 26 avril 1919.
[168] Ibid, H. Cavallier letter to Morin 19 avril 1919; Morin to H. Cavallier 24 avril 1919.
[169] SGA 7331, dossier Natalité, internal Pont-à-Mousson note by Camille Cavallier 4 avril 1919.

was a member.[170] Cavallier was in regular touch on the issue with Paul Bureau, the secretary of the commission.[171] Secondly, there was the national campaigning group for natalism (*Alliance nationale pour l'Accroissement de la Population française*) run by Dr. Bertillon. André Michelin was on the council and Cavallier was in contact with him on the issue. Michelin invited Cavallier to attend a lecture in Paris by Dr. Bertillon.[172] Thirdly, the Minister of Health set up a *Conseil supérieur de la Natalité* and nominated Louis Vilgrain, President of the Nancy chamber until 1919, as a member.[173] Lastly there was an organisation called *Pour la Vie* in which the leading light was Paul Bureau. Cavallier was in regular contact with him.

In the natalist movement in Lorraine there were overlapping concerns about future economic development, competition with Germany and moral and social regeneration. The demands of economic development and the need to maintain social cohesion also existed in the rural world. The campaign against the depopulation of the countryside and the shortage of farmers, common to both Lorraine and the Auvergne, also took on the character of a moral crusade. An editorial in *Le Bon Grain* described the young deserting the land for a terrible life in the towns. This criticism of urban life and its attractions was certainly echoed in the Auvergne by writers like Pourrat.[174] H. Cote, the President of the *Syndicat départemental d'Agriculture et Viticulture*, railed against the deceptive attractions of the large towns. Being a peasant farmer should be seen as a noble calling.[175] From the Vosges Jules Méline hoped that, after the war, people would turn their back on the luxuries of the towns.[176] Charles Guyot wrote about the industrialisation of agriculture and the decline of the rural population. He said it would mean fewer good recruits for the army as peasants made better soldiers. There was a collapse of morale among rural populations, particularly as most of their natural leaders among the bourgeoisie were absentee land owners. The answer lay in better schooling for country dwellers, reductions in taxes, changes to the inheritance laws to avoid splitting up farms and *remembrement* (schemes to join up scattered plots of land in a single holding).[177]

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[170] SGA 6754, Congrès Natalité, Nancy, F. Villain letter to Cavallier 4 février 1918.
[171] Ibid, internal note of Pont-à-Mousson on a visit by Paul Bureau to Roubaix to study *allocations familiales* there 11 avril 1919; minutes of commission de la natalité, ANEE, 17 mars 1918, 13 janvier 1919.
[172] SGA 6754, Congrès Natalité, Nancy, A. Michelin letter to Cavallier 3 septembre 1918.
[173] *Chambre de Commerce Nancy*, vol.18 1920, (séance 10 février 1920), p. 18. SGA 7331, dossier Natalité, Note de service for Cavallier and Marcel Paul 30 janvier 1920.
[174] 'Les Déserteurs de la terre', *Le Bon Grain,*13e année, no.12 (15 septembre 1919), pp. 191–2.
[175] *Revue du Syndicat départemental agricole du Puy-de-Dôme*, 34e année, no.3 (mars 1921), pp. 12–13.
[176] Méline, *Salut par la terre*, p. 83.
[177] C. Guyot, 'À propos d'un livre récent, le passé et l'avenir de la Lorraine, agriculture et industrie', *Extrait des Mémoires de l'Académie Stanislas 1918–1919* (Nancy, 1919), pp. 27–46. Guyot was Secrétaire perpétuel de l'Académie Stanislas.

7. vii. Conclusion

The previous two chapters showed that the economic elite of the two regions promoted a modernising agenda, which sought to transform regional economies through regional action. In particular they concentrated their attention on developing transport links, power generation, technical education, regional banks and tourism in the case of the Auvergne, as well as rebuilding the regions' shattered economies, particularly in Lorraine. They also sought to modernise agricultural production. Such a modernising agenda was not the only face of regionalism. As these two regional societies moved away from war they struggled with new challenges and this resulted in conflicting discourses.

There was naturally a sense of loss which resulted in different critiques of contemporary society. These showed a common concern for social cohesion and moral regeneration. The challenge of modernisation and social development encouraged some to argue for further decentralisation of power to the regions. This took on a particular character in the Moselle. There was also a debate about the exact nature of the region itself. Was it a defined territory within clear boundaries or a social or cultural construct? This question challenged both Henri Pourrat in his thinking about the Auvergne and Maurice Barrès and Jean de Pange as they focused on Lotharingia and its role as a bridge between France and Germany. For all these regional elites the challenge of German recovery was a critical factor.

Conclusions

The historiography of regionalism in France since the late nineteenth century has given much emphasis to its conservative character, to the movement demanding a return to a traditional rural society based on the old provinces of the *Ancien Régime* and a revival of the influence of the Catholic church. In some provinces this led to a call among a minority for some form of cultural exceptionalism, and even political autonomism among an even smaller section of the population. Use of a local language and a strong attachment to Catholicism became rallying cries in Flanders, Alsace and the Moselle, and Brittany in the first half of the twentieth century. The reputation of regionalism under the Third Republic has been further coloured by the support some regionalists gave in varying degrees to the Vichy regime. It seemed for a time that the strand of regionalism which looked to the past had got the upper hand. Rallying to Marshal Pétain was not unique to regionalists but happened across the political spectrum. However, it is clear that those regionalists who supported Pétain did so because his policies seemed to fit with the beliefs they had developed since 1918. Henri Pourrat in the Auvergne sympathised with the slogan Work, Family and Fatherland.[1] He opposed communism and supported the more prominent role for the Catholic church. He welcomed the Vichy emphasis on a return to the land to increase food production.[2] He wrote at some length on the crucial role of the peasantry in the flourishing of society.[3] He received some recognition from the Vichy regime. Some of his friends shared his beliefs. Later he sought to distance himself from the regime. However, it was as if in 1940 a nascent conservatism in regionalist circles came to the surface, when in the inter-war years it had been relatively quiescent. This phenomenon was not confined to the Auvergne.

What I have shown in this thesis is that this portrayal of regionalism in twentieth century France is inappropriate. It ignores the more pragmatic strand of regionalism which developed just before the Great War and which saw the devolution of some power and influence to regional elites and their institutions as a way of modernising the French economy and making it more competitive. The call for decentralisation was a key feature of pre-Great War regionalist programmes. It was given focus by Vidal de la Blache and Hauser with their analysis of the key role played by certain *grandes villes* as hubs for the development of the surrounding region. Clémentel gave these ideas an institutional focus with his creation of economic regions through the agency of chambers of commerce. Crucially he believed, unlike some of his critics, that his

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[1] H. Pourrat, *Le Chef français* (Marseille, 1942), pp. 83–106.
[2] C. Faure, *Littérature et société, la mystique vichyssoise "Du Retour à la Terre" selon l'oeuvre d'Henri Pourrat* (Hors-série 11 des Chroniques historiques d'Ambert et de son arrondissement, Édition régionale du Livradois-Forez Revue Archéologique,1988), pp. 14–18.
[3] H. Pourrat, *L'Homme à La Bêche, histoire du paysan* (Paris,1941), pp. 13–26; *Vent de Mars* (Paris, 1941), p. 157; *Le Paysan français* (Clermont and Paris, 1940), pp.10, 11, 20.

reform was entirely compatible with Republican values. He wanted to establish a degree of decentralisation as a logical development of the Republican state and to prevent it from being exploited by those hostile to the Republic.[4] Rather than weaken the Republic his reforms would strengthen it to withstand the economic challenges which lay ahead. The war exposed the weaknesses of France's economy, particularly vis-à-vis a renascent Germany, and drove this modernisation agenda.

After the war, the regional elites, encouraged by Clémentel's reform, led a series of economic developments for the benefit of their regions. We have seen how they were developing their own plans during the war, but it was his reform in 1918 which unleashed their dynamism to launch a series of infrastructure projects — new railways and canals, hydro-electric power plants, new institutes for technical education and banking institutions — pressing the central government to give its approval where appropriate. The dynamism of regional elites was also evident in the encouragement of tourism in the Auvergne and the organisation of reconstruction in Lorraine. In the way these projects were presented there was a very clear articulation of the benefits to the region.

It is important to underline that the new economic regionalism of 1918–1924 would not have thrived without a regional sense of identity. It was the attachment to Lorraine and the Auvergne among regional elites, however ill-defined those concepts sometimes were, which provided the inspiration for their economic programmes. We see this clearly in the activities to promote the region of the Auvergne, described in chapter six, and the inclusion of many cultural articles in the economic region's chief publication, *Région du Centre*. The promotion of tourism by economic leaders benefited from the revival of Auvergnat culture led by writers and artists. Clémentel, who brought the new economic regions into being, was also interested in the cultural movement, as he demonstrated by his own writing. In Lorraine the Nancy chamber of commerce led economic projects but also sponsored the Nancy exhibition of 1909 which included many examples of cultural and artistic development. It also supported good causes during the war, using the cultural identity of Lorraine to win support. The regional sensitivity to Germany influenced so many initiatives which the elite undertook, from encouraging natalism to canal and railway developments, exploiting the Rhine, technical education, providing capital for reconstruction of industry and ensuring Lorraine towns and villages were rebuilt quickly. The Lorraine sense of identity determined how the region regarded Mosellan particularism and relations with the Rhineland, which in turn fed back into economic issues, like whether to construct a new canal to the east. In both cases economic regionalism and a wider cultural sense of regional identity were inextricably linked.

Clémentel's was not the only attempt by the centre under the Third Republic to change the structure of government. There was continued discussion of administrative reform during the nineteen twenties and thirties, focusing on the

[4] Grenouilleau, *Petites Patries,* pp. 173–174.

powers of local organs of administration.[5] This culminated in the decree law of 14 juin 1938 which granted the economic regions the legal powers they had lacked earlier. Discovering how far the regional elites were involved in this process would require further research. However, Clémentel's reform was the most significant change, contributing to the reconstruction of France after 1918. The lessons from his reform were not forgotten when France recovered from the Second World War. After 1945 the backward looking regionalism of Maurras was no longer a threat to the Republic. The economic technocratic regionalism of the twenties re-emerged as *l'aménagement du territoire* (DATAR) and later in the creation of new regional bodies under François Mitterrand.

In the development of economic regionalism in modern France we can see how change has not always been driven from Paris. We can also see how the economic modernisation of France's regions since the late nineteenth century was impacted by the two world wars but did not fundamentally change direction because of them. Some developments were interrupted by war and some became more urgent. Hydro-electricity became more important during the Great War because of the shortage of coal. Largely because of the cost and financial risk profile of hydro-electric power stations, construction of some of the dams envisaged just after 1918 was only finished after 1945. Regional canal and railway development, electrification and the growth of technical education, important during the period of my thesis, continued through the twentieth century to the *trente glorieuses*. The modernisation of France's regions, based on the development of *grandes villes* like Clermont-Ferrand and Nancy, needs to be viewed as a whole in the century which followed the seeds sown under the Second Empire. In describing this process more work is needed on the role of the regional elites working through institutions like the chambers of commerce and the regional universities, both of which have been relatively neglected. This thesis has, I believe, laid the groundwork for a significant field of research to be exploited further.

[5] M. Brun, *Départements et régions*, preface Charles-Brun (Paris, 1939).

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