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The British Left Intelligentsia and France

Perceptions and Interactions 1930-1944

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Declaration of Authorship

I, Alison Appleby, confirm that this is my own work and the use of all material from other sources has been properly and fully acknowledged.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is concerned with the ways in which the non-communist British left interacted with their French counterparts during the 1930s and the Second World War and described France in their writings and broadcasts. It challenges existing accounts that have described British attitudes to France as characterised by suspicion, ill-feeling or even contempt. It draws on a range of sources, including reportage, private papers, records of left-wing societies and other publications from the period, as well as relevant articles and books. The thesis explores the attitudes of British left-wing intellectuals, trade unionists and politicians and investigates their attempts to find common ground and formulate shared aspirations.

The thesis takes a broadly chronological approach, looking first at the pre-1939 period, then at three phases of war and finally at British accounts of the Liberation of France. In the 1930s, British left-wing commentators sought to explain events in France and to work with French socialists and trade unionists in international forums in their search for an appropriate response to both fascism and Soviet communism. Following the defeat of France, networks that included figures from the British left and French socialists living in London in exile developed. In addition to print media, broadcasting provided a space in which the left intelligentsia could promote a version of current events that emphasized solidarity between a determined Britain and defiant French resistance, united in a common endeavour. Contributors showed continued interests in French affairs, discussing issues such as communism, social and economic reform, colonialism, the future of Europe and how France might best be governed.

The analysis of the primary sources presented in this thesis provides a counter narrative to a more orthodox position which has emphasised enmity and hostility between the Britain and France during this period and makes a contribution to a more complete understanding of cross Channel relations before and during the Second World War.

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List of Abbreviations

AFL	American Federation of Labour
CAS	Comité d'action socialiste (clandestine revival of French Socialist Party, January 1941)
CFLN/FCNL	Comité française de libération nationale/ French Committee of National Liberation (body formed by de Gaulle and Giraud in June 1943)
CGT	Confédération générale de travail (Umbrella organisation for French trade unions)
CGTU	Confédération générale de travail unitaire (Umbrella organisation for Communist French trade unions)
CNF/FNC	Comité national français/French National Committee (Gaullist organisation, with claims to be the French wartime government in exile, formed September 1941)
CNR	Conseil national de la résistance (organisation bringing together resistance movements in France, set up mid 1943)
Comintern	Communist International
CPGB	Communist Party of Great Britain
FFC/FF	Forces françaises combattantes/ Fighting French (name adopted in July 1942 to encompass all Free French forces)
FFF/FFL	Free French Forces/Forces françaises libres (name given to those rallying to De Gaulle in 1940)
FFI	Force françaises de l'intérieur (name for French resistance units from February 1944)
FIB	Fabian International Bureau (established 1941)
IFTU	International Federation of Trade Unions
ILO	International Labour Organisation
ILP	Independent Labour Party (affiliated to the Labour Party 1906-1932)
LBC	Left Book Club (established 1936)
LdH	Ligue des droits de l'homme (set up 1898)

LIN	London International Assembly (body set up to represent British and exiled socialists 1941-1945)
LRC	Labour Representation Committee (forerunner of Labour Party)
LRD	Labour Research Department
LSE	London School of Economics and Political Science
LSI	Labour & Socialist International (body representing non-communist Labour and socialist parties 1923-1940)
MOI	Ministry of Information
MEW	Ministry of Economic Warfare
NEC	National Executive Committee of the Labour Party
NFRB	New Fabian Research Bureau (set up 1930)
PCF	Parti communiste français
PWE	Political Warfare Executive (British government organisation, set up August 1941, intended to co-ordinate British propaganda)
RUP	Rassemblement universel pour la paix (or International Peace Campaign – IPC) set up 1936
SFIO	Section française de l'internationale ouvrière (French Socialist Party)
SSIP	Society for Socialist Inquiry and Propaganda (set up 1931)
TUC	Trades Union Congress (umbrella organisation for British trade unions)
UDC	Union of Democratic Control (set up 1914)

Chapter One – Introduction

This thesis examines how, between 1930 and 1944, the British left-wing intelligentsia perceived and described France and sought to interact with their French counterparts. It looks at how their writings discussed the similarities and differences between the development of democratic socialism in Britain and France. It also investigates how the British left envisaged the relationship between the two countries and discussed how a closer union might meet the challenges presented by inequality, poverty, fascism and war.

Most historians writing on relations between Britain and France have been largely concerned with the reasons behind the diplomatic failures that preceded the outbreak of the Second World War. Many have seen the attitudes towards France on the part of British politicians and public as contributing to such failures. The 1930s have been widely characterised as a decade of mistrust and mutual suspicion between Britain and France, leading to a short-lived period of superficial co-operation between the two powers in 1939, before military failures in 1940 led to recriminations. Accounts of the attempt to rally resistance against the new regime in France have been mainly preoccupied with the difficulties this provoked and consequent discord between the leadership of the Free French and the British government as well as that of its American allies.

Those who have examined the period before the fall of France have often been drawn to concentrate on what went wrong with Anglo-French relations leading up to the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939. A famous example is John Cairns' 1974 essay in which he surveyed the opinions of British diplomats, politicians and other public figures, and described a general tendency to find France puzzling and frustrating and often infuriating.¹ While he alludes to Labour politicians such as Snowden, who expressed strong antipathy to France, and makes brief mention of those with a different view, such as Dalton, his main purpose is to provide a background to the diplomatic tensions and failures resulting from divergent national interests. A book by Wolfers, first published in 1940, made much of the effects of party political differences on foreign policy, but this is an exception.² Most historians have preferred to concentrate on the activities of key decision-makers. Historians such as Michael Dockrill³ and Anthony Adamthwaite⁴ have examined the contributions of diplomats and senior civil

¹ Cairns, J. C. (1974). "A Nation of Shopkeepers in Search of a Suitable France: 1919-40" *The American Historical Review* **79**(3): 710-743 See also Cairns, J. C. (1955). "Great Britain and the Fall of France: A Study in Allied Disunity." *The Journal of Modern History* **27**(4): 365-409. which emphasises the breakdown in the relationship.

² Wolfers, A. (1940). *Britain & France between Two World Wars*. New York, Harcourt, Brace & Co.

³ Dockrill, M. (1999). *British Establishment Perspectives on France*. London, Macmillan.

⁴ Adamthwaite, A. (1980). *The Lost Peace: International Relations in Europe, 1918-1939*. London, Edward Arnold. Also Adamthwaite, A. (1995). *Grandeur and Misery: France's Bid for Power in Europe, 1914-1940*. London, Arnold.

servants, as well as politicians, to the failure to develop a common and effective Anglo-French strategy in the 1930s. The relevant chapter for the period 1930-39 in a more recent survey of Anglo-French relations by Robert and Isabelle Tombs, 'Towards the Dark Gulf' – also emphasises the shortcomings of diplomacy (the previous two chapters are entitled 'Losing the Peace' and 'Estrangement')⁵. The word *Estrangement* also forms part of the title of Philip Bell's survey of 1900-1940.⁶ In a collection of essays published to celebrate the one hundredth anniversary of the *Entente Cordiale*, Robert Boyce has written of the ubiquity of racist attitudes among such groups,⁷ arguing that Gallophobia was fomented by a belief in Britain that the French belonged to an intrinsically inferior 'Latin' race. This theme has been further explored in his recent book on the failures of the interwar period, where the emphasis is rather more on the inability of British bankers and financiers to reach the rapprochement with their French counterparts which might have helped rescue the world economy in the interwar period.⁸

This thesis seeks to challenge this analysis by exploring whether hostility to her continental neighbour was universal among contemporary British commentators. If there were a section of society which had positive perceptions of France, how were such perceptions formed and in what way were they expressed? What kinds of interactions with colleagues and associates in France informed the thinking of such a group? What part did such a group play in public life, especially after the fall of France in June 1940?

To answer such questions, this study makes use of a number of publications as well as reportage, diaries and other primary sources in order to assess the views and actions of members of the British left intelligentsia and associates in the British Labour party and broader labour movement. Left-wing journalism and publishing proliferated during this period; for example, the *New Statesman's* circulation rose from 15,000 in 1933 to 70,000 in 1945⁹. While appealing principally to an educated and politically engaged readership, it also sought to foster education and engagement amongst the general public. It was, according to Benny Morris, 'the most widely read and the most widely quoted' weekly paper in the 1930s,¹⁰ and its popularity is testament to the range and quality of its contributors and the movement of opinion during that decade.

The study of ways in which respect and esteem for France were expressed by this section of society can contribute to a more complete view of British attitudes to France during the period 1930-1944. It

⁵ Tombs, R. and I. Tombs (2006). *That Sweet Enemy - Britain and France : The History of a Love-Hate Relationship*. London, Heinemann.

⁶ Bell, P. M. H. (1996). *France and Britain : 1900-1940 Entente & Estrangement*. London, Longmans.

⁷ Capet, A., Ed. (2006). *Britain, France and the Entente Cordiale since 1904*. London, Palgrave Macmillan.

⁸ Boyce, R. (2009). *The Great Interwar Crisis and the Collapse of Globalization*. Hampshire, Palgrave Macmillan.

⁹ Hyams, E. (1963). *The New Statesman 1913-1963*. London, Longmans.p227

¹⁰ Morris, B. (1991). *The Roots of Appeasement: The British Weekly Press and Nazi Germany During the 1930s*. London, Frank Cass.p24

also enhances our understanding of how such commentators saw relations with France and how they reached out to those on the left in France to develop their thinking on matters of concern to social democrats at that time, such as the role of the state, how to translate theory into practice and how best to respond to communism and fascism in the interests of peace.

Thus this thesis aims to assemble an alternative narrative to that which emphasises British antagonism towards France during this period. It does not claim that distrust of French politicians, if not France in general, was not to be found amongst some on the left in Britain, but argues that this was not the whole story. It acknowledges, as Richard Carswell has pointed out, that in the pre-war period 'the popular press was largely uninterested in France as a culture and society'¹¹ and that many British commentators across the political spectrum were highly critical of French foreign policy in the aftermath of the Treaty of Versailles. Here the focus however, is on how the left-wing British intelligentsia reached out to their counterparts in France despite the misunderstandings of the past, how they perceived their joint histories and discussed their mutual interests while seeking the means to make common cause in tackling the political challenges of the time.

Sources and terms used in this thesis

The extensive use of the serious left-wing British press in this thesis needs some justification.

Newspapers, as Francis Williams has suggested, 'indicate more plainly than anything else the climate of the societies to which they belong.'¹² Here we are looking at a sub-section of British society, but one which became increasingly influential as British public opinion became more interested in politics, especially left-wing politics. Benny Morris claims that seven people read each issue of a serious weekly journal or paper, 'in homes, libraries and common rooms', a point worth bearing in mind when noting circulation figures.¹³ The publications examined here included contributions from politicians, academics, activists and journalists, many with extensive international experience, who wished to participate in and stimulate public debate. It is the purpose of this thesis to capture and describe this debate and explore the position of France within in. Where circulation figures for such publications are available, these show a steady rise during this period, reflecting the move to the left in public opinion from the mid-1930s onwards. At a time when the British Labour Party passed from near collapse in 1931 to recovery in the later 1930s, participation in war-time government and electoral triumph in 1945, it is instructive to note how France featured in serious left-wing journalism. To read these articles, editorials and features is to be vividly reminded of the importance of France to such commentators during this period. While the principal papers used here are the *New Statesman*, the

¹¹ Carswell, R. (2008). "Britain could not ask for a better ally": France in the British Press 1939-40. PhD, Reading.

¹² Williams, F. (1969). *The Right to Know: the Rise of the World Press*. London, Longmans. p1

¹³ Morris, B. (1991). *The Roots of Appeasement: The British Weekly Press and Nazi Germany During the 1930s*. London, Frank Cass. p183

Political Quarterly, *Tribune* and the publications of the Fabian Society, there is also reference to *Labour* in the period before the Second World War and to the journals of the centre left, including the *Economist* and the *Spectator*, whose position on the political spectrum was often less defined than in more recent times. The *Manchester Guardian* is used extensively in the last part of this thesis; in the latter stages of the war this newspaper became especially interested in France thanks to the influence of the deputy editor A. P. Wadsworth, who became editor in 1944, and who often commissioned leader articles from historian, civil servants and writer Denis Brogan. Although the *Manchester Guardian* remained principally a provincial paper, with a circulation in 1947 of 126,000, under Wadsworth its coverage of national and international news was greatly extended. The *Observer*, which had been largely supportive of Conservative foreign policy in the 1930s,¹⁴ became more concerned with left-wing ideas when David Astor became its editor in 1942 and so its contents are of interest when surveying the debates on attitudes to the Free French and post-war France. Under Astor it also became more popular and circulation figures rose from 210,000 in 1935 to 384,000 in 1947¹⁵. All such publications provide insights into the ways in which France was visualised and discussed at different points during the period 1930-1944.

For the purposes of this thesis, the “left” is taken to include those in the main parties on the left of the political spectrum (principally the Labour Party in Britain and the *Section française de l'internationale ouvrière*:(SFIO) in France), as well as associated organisations – including trade unions, the Workers Educational Association (WEA) and the Fabians – and some splinter groups. As such it might be categorised as the 'democratic left', thus excluding the Communist party and allied organisations in Britain and France. Such a category might appear too nebulous and protean to be of use, especially as, in both countries, members of more centrist parties - particularly Liberals in Britain and Radical Socialists in France - often became involved in the associations that promoted causes dear to the left, particularly those that fostered international co-operation and Anglo-French understanding. Indeed, some members of the British Labour Party appeared to share communist ambitions for the rapid transformation of the state, although simultaneously maintaining their commitment to social democracy and to change through peaceful means. However, most of those actively involved in Labour party politics or in those of like-minded groupings, remained highly suspicious of communists, their links to the Soviet Union and their advocacy of violent revolution. While this study touches on the activities of communist sympathisers, it is principally concerned with how the non-communist left in Britain viewed France, made links with their French counterparts and described the relationship they envisaged between the two countries. The term “left”, then, indicates a tendency, rather than any well-defined set of convictions or groups

¹⁴ Ibid.p183

¹⁵ Ibid. p183

espousing them. One might suggest that the tendency is towards greater social and economic equality, and includes a willingness to question existing structures of ownership and institutions of the state. It often included a commitment to some kind of internationalism.

An alternative term might be “progressive”. In Britain “progressive” has sometimes been used to allude to those with a general concern for social reform, redistribution of wealth and fewer divisions on class lines and seemed especially prevalent in the early years of the last century. Peter Clarke has shown how this term could be a useful umbrella term for both Labour Party adherents and those such as J.M. Keynes, who stated in 1926 that he stayed in the Liberal Party so as not to have to ‘do service to trade unionist tyrannies, to the beauties of the class war, or to doctrinaire socialism’, though keen to be no ‘less progressive than Labour...in promoting the three political goals of economic efficiency, social justice and individual liberty’.¹⁶ Chapter Two shows how the blurring of boundaries between Labour and Liberal Party supporters went back to the early years of the labour movement. As Sylvest has shown, ‘The New Liberalism, which was promulgated by writers like Hobson and Hobhouse before the Great War, attempted to embrace socialist ideas, just like socialists claimed to represent continuity with the valuable aspects of liberalism’.¹⁷ However, whilst the word progressive may have been helpful in attempts to underline similarities between these parties, it has also been used more recently to refer to rather more specific groups. David Cauter, for instance, has termed progressives as ‘fellow travellers’ – naïve sympathisers with the Soviet Union.¹⁸ There were certainly examples of such amongst the British left, but also those who took a much more critical approach to Soviet communism. David Blaazer’s excavation of the notion of a ‘progressive tradition’ in the first half of the twentieth century gives the impression that it has meant so many things to so many people – including a generally optimistic approach to social concerns - that it begins to lose any definition.¹⁹ For Paul Addison, progressives were ‘people who were not Marxists but optimists for mankind’,²⁰ but the term’s overall positive connotations have made it attractive to many groups, including communists, who have attempted on occasion to assume the mantle of the progressive left. As Raymond Williams points out, ‘[progressive] is more frequently now a persuasive than a descriptive term, as in its most general and improving sense it is an adjective applied, by themselves, to virtually all proposals of all parties.’²¹ (This is certainly the case in contemporary political discourse.) This study will refer, then, to specific parties and other organisations where appropriate, broadly grouping them where necessary as

¹⁶ Clarke, P. (1974). "The Progressive Movement in England." *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 24: 159-182. p160

¹⁷ Sylvest, C. (2004). "Interwar Internationalism, the British Labour Party, and the Historiography of International Relations." *International Studies Quarterly* 48(2): 414-415.

¹⁸ Cauter, D. (1988). *Fellow-Travellers: intellectual friends of communism*. London, New Haven, Yale University Press.

¹⁹ Blaazer, D. (1992). *The Popular Front and the Progressive Tradition 1884-1939: Socialist, Liberals and the Quest for Unity*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. pp13-14

²⁰ Addison, P. (1975). *The Road to 1945*. London, Jonathan Cape Ltd. p137

²¹ Williams, R. (1976). *Keywords*. Harmondsworth, Penguin. pp206-7

“the left”, using “progressive” only when alluding to those not in the Labour Party, but broadly sympathetic to some of their aims and policies, especially those with an international dimension.

The use of the term “intelligentsia” is intended to indicate that we are concerned here with those who entered into serious policy debates about democratic socialism. As Lucien Ashworth has shown, the creation of the Advisory Committee on International Questions in 1918 by the Labour Party brought together a number of intellectuals and experts, some connected with universities (such as Hugh Dalton and Philip Noel-Baker) and others mainly involved in journalism and literary circles (including Leonard Woolf) and their endeavours contributed to the development of international relations as a discipline.²² This thesis is concerned with the writings of such people. Organisations such as the Union of Democratic Control and the Fabian Society played an important role in facilitating discussions and dissemination of ideas, as did the journals and other publications that have been used in this thesis. This was also a time when Britain was developing as a pluralist democracy and one characteristic of the “left intelligentsia” referred to here is their interest in addressing the wider public through, for example, adult education schemes or societies designed to attract a broad membership and mobilise public opinion.

Chapters 2-4: Relevant literature, sources and issues

The first part of this thesis is primarily concerned with the British left’s perceptions of France and interactions with French socialists before the onset of the Second World War. Chapter Two deals with the way in which the parties of the left in the two countries developed in the twentieth century, pointing out the main similarities and differences and suggesting how these affected the ways in which British left-wing commentators understood and explained France. The chapter analyses the differing origins and progress of British and French socialist parties, arguing that these reflected differences in their historical circumstances particularly those arising from industrial and economic development. It also suggests that cultural, particularly religious, differences affected the way socialism in the two societies developed. Thus nonconformity, in response to the Church of England, played a very different part in the development of British socialism from that of anticlericalism in reaction to the Catholic Church in France. The contrast between the part played by organised labour in the evolution of socialist parties in both countries is also covered here. This chapter points to where and when such differences were subsumed in common endeavours and when and how they placed limits on mutual trust. It is thus intended to provide an additional perspective to studies of British and French political development at the time, outlined in the following short review of relevant literature.

²² Ashworth, L. M. (2009). "Rethinking a Socialist Foreign Policy: The British Labour Party and International Relations Experts, 1918 to 1931." *International Labor and Working Class History* 75(1): 30-48.

Histories of party politics and specifically those concerned with foreign and international policy have generally been written from a national perspective. Such studies tend to spend little time explaining the specific contexts in which socialist movements evolved and how these might facilitate or confound the exchange of ideas across national barriers or co-operation in common endeavours. Thus John Naylor's *Labour's International Policy*, published in 1969, illuminates Labour Party splits over disarmament and responses to the growth of fascism in a way that contributes to our understanding of the difficulties experienced in trying to develop a distinctively *socialist* foreign policy.²³ However, while mentioning some of the meetings that took place with representatives of the SFIO (*Section française de l'Internationale ouvrière*- the French socialist party), Naylor is not concerned with exploring the ways in which French socialists were engaging in similar arguments, nor does he highlight how such arguments were resolved by a party that was in office in the mid-1930s, unlike the British Labour Party, the mainstream of which remained in opposition from 1931 until 1940. A more broadly based analysis of the Labour Party in this era, Ben Pimlott's *Labour and the Left in the 1930s* (1977), whilst bringing out the importance of international concerns to the problem of achieving party unity and coherent policies, also keeps the focus firmly on Britain.²⁴ Michael Gordon's attempt to tease out the principles of a 'socialist foreign policy' also only mentions France in terms of inter-governmental relations.²⁵

More recently Rhiannon Vickers has provided a further examination of the contradictions within Labour foreign policy,²⁶ which, as she points out, remains an under-researched area. She justifiably observes that the lack of recent studies on the subject has led to the misguided notion that Labour politicians and activists were not especially interested in foreign affairs, and were even insular in outlook, when in fact internationalism was a core article of the party's faith, even if there were disputes about how this could best be pursued and disagreements about how to bring an end to colonialism. She explains some of these with reference to Labour's federal origins and shows how these played out during the 1930s. However, whilst Vickers makes some passing contrasts with the origins of the SFIO, these are incidental to her main concerns. Similarly, John Callaghan, whose book on *The Labour Party and Foreign Policy* was published in 2007, pays little heed to relations with French socialists, although his discussion of Labour Party attitudes to colonies and Commonwealth in the interwar period has proved useful to this thesis.²⁷

Historians of the SFIO have also often been exercised by the nature of the divisions within that party and by the attempts to reconcile these. It is possible to detect similar preoccupations to those of their

²³ Naylor, J. (1969). *Labour's International Policy: The Labour Party in the 1930s*. London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson.

²⁴ Pimlott, B. (1977). *Labour and the Left in the 1930s*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

²⁵ Gordon, M. (1969). *Conflict and Consensus in Labour's Foreign Policy*. Stanford, Stanford University Press.

²⁶ Vickers, R. (2004). *The Labour Party and the World, Volume 1 : The Evolution of Labour's Foreign Policy, 1900-51*. Manchester, Manchester University Press.

²⁷ Callaghan, J. (2007). *The Labour Party & Foreign Policy : a History*. London, Routledge.

British colleagues, as well as striking differences, although such comparisons are rarely made in their texts. One example is Richard Gombin's book published in 1970, which discusses how the rise of fascism exacerbated differences between those *pacifistes* and *bellicistes* in the 1930s.²⁸ John T. Marcus's detailed examination of the French Socialist Party during three critical years makes good use of the socialist press of the time – especially *Le Populaire* – to explore the acting out of such differences, but only looks at reactions to British government policy over Abyssinia, ignoring conversations on this crisis with British socialists.²⁹ Later studies of the French left have been influenced by the revival of French socialism during the Mitterrand era in the 1980 (as recent work on the British Labour Party has often been preoccupied with explaining the rise of New Labour). Such works include Tony Judt's *Marxism and the French Left: Studies on Labour and Politics in France, 1830-1981*.³⁰ Judt brings out some of the special features of the development of the French left within a republican setting, but his study does not attempt to deal with the period 1936-1945, which limits its usefulness to this thesis. In their recent work Alain Bergounioux and Gérard Grunberg also provide insights into the problem of translating doctrine into practice, especially in terms of economic and social policy.³¹

On the other hand, Bell and Criddle in *The French Socialist Party: The Emergence of a Party of Government* (1988)³² do attempt to explain aspects of its composition and varying fortunes through direct comparison with its English counterpart. While their chief concern is to explain the electoral success of 1981, they point to similar dilemmas faced by both British and French parties of the left, going on to show how both the Labour Party and the SFIO found ways to accommodate more doctrinaire elements. They also draw attention to significant contrasts between the two parties, including those arising from relations with organised labour and the church. The relevant essays in Becker and Candar's comprehensive collection also provide useful points for comparison.³³

There are a few more overtly comparative studies. Carl Cavanagh Hodge's *The Trammels of Tradition: Social Democracy in Britain, France and Germany*³⁴ includes some thoughtful insights into the successes and failures of social democracy. Hodge's approach is notably partisan and he sharply

²⁸ Gombin, R. (1970). Les socialistes et la guerre – SFIO et la politique étrangère entre les deux guerres mondiales. Paris, Mouton.

²⁹ Marcus, J. T. (1958). French Socialism in the Crisis Years 1933-1936. Westport, Greenwood Press.

³⁰ Judt, T. (1986). Marxism and the French Left: Studies on Labour and Politics in France 1830-1981. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

³¹ Bergounioux, A. and G. Grunberg (2005). Les socialistes français et le pouvoir : l'ambition et le remords. Paris, Fayard.

³² Bell, D. S. and B. Criddle (1988). The French Socialist Party: The Emergence of a Party of Government. Oxford, Clarendon Press.

³³ Becker, J. J. and G.Candar, Eds. (2004). Histoire des gauches en France: tome II : A l'épreuve de l'histoire. Paris, La Découverte. See especially Noëlline Castagnez : *La gauche de Munich à l'armistice* (p375-385)

³⁴ Hodge, C. C. (1994). The Trammels of Tradition : Social Democracy in Britain, France and Germany. Westport, Greenwood Press.

contrasts tangible achievements of the SFIO-led Popular Front government with the impotence of a Labour Party unable even to offer coherent opposition to government foreign policy, at least until 1938. In the 1980s, Duncan Gallie produced a sociological perspective, thoroughly informed by relevant historical sources. Entitled *Social Inequality and Class Radicalism in France and Britain*, it endeavours to account for the different ways in which labour has organised, acted and been treated by governments. Gallie thereby helps explain some key differences in levels of political militancy.³⁵ Some of his points about government-labour relations have since been developed by Talbot Imlay.³⁶ Such studies help to draw attention to the traditions in both countries from which such movements sprang and the inevitable misunderstandings, as well as highlighting the common experiences which promoted feelings of solidarity and comradeship. Unfortunately Gerd-Rainer Horn's comparative study of European socialism, despite its usefulness to an understanding of relationships between Labour Socialist International, Comintern and SFIO, does not include any mention of British political activists or the Labour Party,³⁷ whilst Kissim's look at the reaction to events before (and during) the Second World War, though taking an international perspective, tends to deal with the parties and other involved organisations in parallel episodes, rather than comparatively.³⁸

Whereas Chapter Two brings out the ways in which the left developed in both countries, Chapter Three aims to look more deeply at how the British left intelligentsia perceived France and their French counterparts during the 1930s. To achieve this, it makes use of a number of new and revived British left-wing journals and publications, in particular the *New Statesman*, *Tribune*, the *Political Quarterly* and *Labour*. Where available the circulation figures of these publications are noted in order to bring out their growing importance to the intellectual climate of the time. This chapter also examines other developments intended to widen the audience for the arguments in such publications, such as the establishment of the Left Book Club, the revival of the Fabian Society and the growth of the Workers Educational Association. Many of the British left intelligentsia were involved in several of these endeavours as well as contributing to the left-wing press. While some of these publications have been used by historians in their discussions of public opinion during this era,³⁹ here the intention is to elicit how the British left spoke about France and French socialism and envisaged the Anglo-French relationship. This chapter seeks to establish how far the revival and growth of left-wing organisations

³⁵ Gallie, D. (1983). *Social Inequality and Class Radicalism in France and Britain*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

³⁶ Imlay, T. (2003). *Facing the Second World War: Strategy, Politics and Economics in Britain and France 1938-1940*. New York, Oxford University Press.

³⁷ Horn, G.-R. (1996). *European Socialists Respond to Fascism: ideology, activism and contingency*. New York, Oxford University Press.

³⁸ Kissim, S. F. (1989). *War & the Marxists: Socialist Theory & Practice: Volume II 1918-1945*. London, André Deutsch.

³⁹ Including Gannon, F. R. (1971). *The British Press and Germany 1936 - 1939*. Oxford, Clarendon Press, Bell, P. M. H. (1974). *A Certain Eventuality : Britain and the Fall of France*. London, Saxon House, Morris, B. (1991). *The Roots of Appeasement: The British Weekly Press and Nazi Germany During the 1930s*. London, Frank Cass.

during this period brought about a growing interest in the finer points of French politics. For example, it explores the implications for the British Labour Party of the formation of the Popular Front government in France in 1936 through the many articles and commentaries this generated. It examines how the perceptions of those on the British left who had been hostile to French governments, despite maintaining a positive attitude to the French socialist party and associated organisations changed at this time. Such perceptions were in turn affected by the failures of the recent Labour government and an awareness of the need for the British left to regroup in the face of the growth of the far right in Europe.

Chapter Three also looks at attempts to foster the idea of *internationalism* in British left-wing journals at this time. The spread of fascist and authoritarian governments in Europe in the 1930s brought British and French anti-fascists together in both international and bilateral forums, and a focus on these efforts to secure peace enables us to chart interactions between British socialists and their French counterparts at a time which is more noted for failures at the diplomatic level. A commitment to internationalism, a concept which played down the differences between nation states and urged co-operation between peoples in the interests of peace, was much more common on the left of the British spectrum than the right, and informed discussions of public affairs, even if national and party political concerns were never completely abandoned. Akira Iriye has defined internationalism as ‘an idea, a movement, or an institution that seeks to reformulate the nature of relations among nations through cross-national cooperation and interchange’⁴⁰ and here the emphasis is on how such ideas, movements and institutions were developed at this time and what ‘shared objectives across national boundaries’⁴¹ can be detected amongst the British left and their counterparts in Europe, especially France.

If there has been a general tendency to look separately at the histories of the two countries and their left-wing parties, the histories of some international organisations offer evidence of interaction, co-operation and cordial disagreement. Chapter Four of this thesis looks specifically at the activities of organised labour and socialist groupings at the international level and focuses on the attempts they made to respond to the threats posed by the successes of fascism. It surveys the attempts to build international organisations representing the non-communist left both by trade unionists and political activists. It notes the interplay of national and international concerns, and discusses the attempts to resolve these amicably and the consequences for British Labour Party politics.

⁴⁰ Iriye, A. (2004). "Transnational History." *Contemporary European History* 13(2): 211-222.

⁴¹ Ibid.

The International Federation of Trade Unions provided one such meeting place. Although most of the IFTU archives disappeared during the Second World War, Geert von Goethem's 2006 study provides a full account of what *internationalism* meant in practice, showing the part played by leaders of organised labour in countering the predations of fascism.⁴² Another forum was the Labour and Socialist International, the focus of Christine Collette's illuminating commentary on encounters between individuals whose enthusiasm to promote class interests was tempered by national and party political considerations.⁴³ The 1930s were also a decade when many on the left attempted to promote peace with renewed enthusiasm, and Martin Ceadel's *Semi-detached Idealists: The British Peace Movement and International Relations, 1854-1945*⁴⁴ touches on the vicissitudes of the International Peace Campaign, highlighting some of the problems resulting from differing attitudes in France and Britain to the establishment of popular fronts after 1934. However, the emphasis here tends to be on the earlier part of his chosen period and Sylvest and others might query the use of *idealists* in the title.⁴⁵ There is also some mention of international organisations in Norman Ingram's work and although this book is primarily concerned with manifestations of pacifism within France, some of which played a rather marginal role, his discussion of pacifist traditions in France is very useful in showing where they diverged from those in Britain and, indeed, where they converged.⁴⁶

The personalities of Hugh Dalton and Stafford Cripps loom large in many accounts of Labour policy at this time (Pimlott's work mentioned above is a good example), and there is as a consequence some tendency to see matters in terms of realism (conceived as pragmatic and effective) versus idealism (arguably, by contrast, naïve and dangerous). This dichotomy, which has long featured in scholarship on international relations, has been challenged by Casper Sylvest, whose article on internationalism⁴⁷ deals with the work of Labour's Advisory Committee on International Questions (ACIQ), an important forum for attempts to conceive an effective Labour foreign policy after its creation in 1918. Sylvest sees the eventual triumph of *pragmatic internationalism* as a result of the work of the intellectuals of the ACIQ and their links with trade unionists and politicians such as Dalton. Chapter Four, then, draws on the records of the London Socialist International and the William Gillies papers in the Labour History Archive in Manchester in order to assess how far Dalton was able to promote the Anglo-French relationship in his efforts to build up an anti-fascist front among democratic socialists. When war

⁴² Goethem, G. v. (2006). *The Amsterdam International: The World of the International Federation of Trade Unions*. Aldershot, Ashgate.

⁴³ Collette, C. (1998). *The International Faith : Labour's Attitudes to European Socialists*. Aldershot, Ashgate.

⁴⁴ Ceadel, M. (2000). *Semi-detached idealists the British peace movement and international relations, 1854-1945*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

⁴⁵ Sylvest, C. (2004). "Interwar Internationalism, the British Labour Party, and the Historiography of International Relations." *International Studies Quarterly* 48(2): 414-415.

⁴⁶ Ingram, N. (1991). *The Politics of Dissent – Pacifism in France 1919-1939*. Oxford, Clarendon Press.

⁴⁷ Sylvest, C. (2004). "Interwar Internationalism, the British Labour Party, and the Historiography of International Relations." *International Studies Quarterly* 48(2): 414-415.

broke out in 1939 an Anglo-French Trade Union committee was set up to bring about a joint approach to labour problems and Chapter Four also makes use of the papers of the Labour Research Department (at the London School of Economics) to gauge the ways in which communist sympathisers reacted to such initiatives. These provide a basis on which to comment on how the issue of communism affected the efforts of British socialists to develop unity between the British and French left.

Chapters 5-7: British left-wing commentators and the French Left 1939-1944

The second half of this thesis examines the attitudes of British left-wing commentators and activists in Britain towards France and French socialists following the outbreak of war in September 1939. It seeks to show how France remained a matter of intense concern for many British socialists. In order to establish trends in the ways in which the British left perceived France and to chart the changing relationships with their French counterparts as London became the centre for French resistance, this section of the thesis takes a chronological approach, with Chapter Five covering the period from the onset of the conflict until the end of 1940, Chapter Six that from early 1941 to late 1942, and Chapter Seven that from late 1942 until May 1944.

The period covered by Chapter Five includes the events of May 1940 and the fall of France in June that year and ends in late 1940. The British Labour Party had achieved a significant degree of unity by late 1939 and was able to respond to Chamberlain's government in a coherent and organised manner in the first months of the war, as the left in Britain were able to dissociate themselves from government policies that had demonstrably failed to deal successfully with the threats posed by a resurgent, expansionist Germany under Nazi domination from 1933. Even if the Labour Party had experienced difficulties in forming a coherent alternative policy at the time of the Munich crisis, it was the members of the National Government who were castigated as *Guilty Men* in the Victor Gollancz publication of 1940.⁴⁸ By contrast, the continuation of a strong pacifist element in the SFIO, and divisions between *munichois* and *anti-munichois* socialists, meant the French socialist party began to disintegrate even before the fall of France. The disaster of June 1940 threatened to destroy socialism in France. Attempts to rally the party against Pétain were a dismal failure and only 35 socialist deputies voted against giving him full powers to destroy the republic on July 10 1940. By the time party leader Léon Blum was arrested in September 1940, he was already being vilified by many erstwhile members of his own party as well as supporters of the new Vichy regime.

By contrast, the Labour Party's close association with organised labour in Britain subsequently helped its leaders secure key positions in Churchill's coalition government, organised shortly before the fall of

⁴⁸ Cato (1944). *Guilty Men*. London, Victor Gollancz.

France on May 13th 1940. Such participation had many advantages and Andrew Thorpe has recently shown how the war brought considerable long-term benefits for the Labour Party.⁴⁹

De Gaulle's Free French movement in London did not seem at first likely to welcome Blum's supporters into its organisation; indeed its dislike of the Third Republic was only too apparent. However, those French socialists who were in Britain during this early phase were able to make some use of existing British contacts and Chapter Five examines how they interacted and developed a narrative to explain the defeat, envisage a revival of France and develop war aims based on socialist principles. Labour participation in government meant that representatives of the beleaguered French left in London had every reason to make the most of existing connections. Some of those now holding government office at Westminster had already met and worked with French socialists before the war at international gatherings and during reciprocal visits across the Channel, the number of which had increased between the Munich Conference in 1938 and the Battle of France in May and June 1940. Indeed many of those now involved in affairs of state and the national war effort remained connected to organisations close to the Labour Party, including the trade unions, the Fabian Society, the Workers Educational Association and Labour Socialist International. As a forum, the *Groupe Parlementaire Franco-Britannique* (which continued in some form until at least 1941) provided a place for Francophile MPs of right and left to meet French arrivals in London, including, but not exclusively, French deputies.

The Fabian Society played an important role in reporting on the recovery of socialist activity in France. The SFIO had been very nearly destroyed by the decision of so many of their deputies in France to vote full powers to Pétain in July 1940. The efforts to reconstitute the party were watched and welcomed by the British left, especially those keen to see a renewed internationalism. The *Comité d'Action Socialiste* (CAS) was formed in early 1941 and held its first clandestine congress at Toulouse in June that year. Simultaneously the Nazis attacked the Soviet Union, so those working for a revival of the SFIO also needed to address the issue of how to relate to communists, who now entered fully into resistance and whose willingness to resort to violence, and the consequent reprisals, brought them much publicity. In Britain, to the alarm of some, several British Labour politicians joined Communist Party members in a 'Second Front' campaign and Anglo-Soviet public relations and trades unions committees were set up.

Commentary on the Free French movement – then and now- has often referred to a right-wing bias amongst its early adherents and de Gaulle's initial reluctance to show any support for traditional republican values. Yet there were some French socialists in de Gaulle's entourage from the start, and they made use of British contacts to increase their salience. De Gaulle's eventual willingness to adopt

⁴⁹ Thorpe, A. (2009). Parties at War: Political Organization in Second World War Britain. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

the principles of *Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité* and assert his support for democracy may now be seen as a result of his essential pragmatism, but this was not so obvious in 1940. At that time, men such as Georges Boris and Henry Hauck used any means available to them to promote their values and insist on their place in the movement. Their activities were not confined to broadcasts on the BBC, but included speaking tours, attendance at public events, journalism and participation at meetings and conferences.

Chapter Six covers the period from early 1941 to late 1942 when the Labour Party gave generally unqualified support to the coalition government but some on the left both within the party and elsewhere began to show their discontent with the electoral truce by campaigning on social and economic issues. This chapter looks at the main themes that emerged in discussion between English socialists and their French counterparts, including the need to build resistance amongst the working classes and peasantry in France, the desire for the British government to show consistent antipathy to the Vichy regime and support for the Free French in London and a vision of post-war France and Britain transformed by democratic socialism. By placing the emphasis on fighting fascism as an ideology they were able to come together in supporting the prosecution of the war by all means available, even if this meant accepting the existence of colonial empires for the time being.

During this phase, left-wing French exiles who supported de Gaulle were able to make increased use of their British contacts to build their influence within the Free French movement. By 1942 de Gaulle's pretensions to leading the internal French resistance were partly dependent on proving his republican credentials and his openness to social and economic reform and this thesis will argue that co-operation between socialists in the Free French and their British colleagues played a part in securing this. This sixth chapter, then, looks at the leftward trajectory of the Free French and how this was received by French exiles and their British supporters.

Most of the British left were keen to justify their participation in the war effort (and the coalition government) by insisting on socialist war aims which many of them shared with French exiles and Chapter Six also shows how the Fabian Society facilitated further discussions between British socialists and French exiles, both Gaullists and non-Gaullists. The establishment of the Fabian International Research Bureau in London in June 1941 brought plentiful opportunities for socialists from Britain and occupied Europe to meet not only each other but also the wider British public through public meetings, weekend conferences and summer schools. Thus the expanded role for the British Labour Party in public life contributed to the growth of networks on the left, many open to the participation of French exiles. Such networks facilitated debates on war aims, the implementation of socialist ideals and the future governance of France, Britain and post-war Europe. An examination of these enables us to move

away from looking at such discourse in national terms, and to adopt instead a more transnational perspective. Fabian and Gollancz publications also offered further platforms to socialists amongst the Free French: Henry Hauck, Georges Boris and André Philip, as well as noted British Francophiles, Philip Noel-Baker, Dorothy and William Pickles, John Parker and Harold Laski.

Not least of the problems facing French socialists was their position vis à vis the communists, whose approach to resistance was resolute and ruthless after the outbreak of hostilities between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union in June 1941. The spectacular failure of the Vichy government's trial of Léon Blum (which began in early 1942 and dragged on till the following year) was a cause for celebration for both British and French socialists, whilst Blum's support for de Gaulle caused consternation for some. The visit of Jean Moulin to London in October 1941, following the setting up of the Free French *Bureau Centrale de Renseignements et d'Action* (BCRA), opened the way to linking the resistance headed by de Gaulle and the movements within France. This phase ended with de Gaulle widening the appeal of his movement with his speech in November 1941 committing the Free French to the republic and democracy.

Chapter Seven explores the ways the British left reacted to events from late 1942 until the liberation of France. Both British and French socialists wanted to pre-empt any efforts to return to the status quo ante bellum by generating plans for a post-war future that would achieve their ambitions of social and economic reform and a renewed commitment to internationalism. During this phase, British socialists became increasingly vexed by the wartime coalition's seeming subordination to the United States as it became more active in the European theatre of operations in autumn 1942. American cold shouldering of the Free French, exemplified by its preference for Darlan, then Giraud, over de Gaulle, its efforts to exclude his *Forces françaises combattantes* (FFC) from the D-Day landings and its refusal to recognise the potential of the French resistance in the replacement of Vichy and Nazi officials following liberation attracted much adverse comment both in the clandestine press in France and amongst Francophiles in Britain. This did not mean that the British left accepted de Gaulle's pretensions unreservedly; indeed criticism of the General became more outspoken and prevalent in some of the publications under review at this time. Any seeming contradiction can be explained by the anxiety on the part of British progressives to see a strong but democratic and republican France acting in close association with Britain to bring about economic and social reforms that would transform Europe. The continued interest and concern for France was also manifested in reporting of the Consultative Assembly in Algiers from September 1943 and in the celebration of the role of the FFC in the liberation of Paris in September 1944.

This chapter also reviews the revival of party political activity in both Britain and France and how this sparked interaction and debate amongst British left-wingers and their French counterparts. In Britain, the Common Wealth Party, formed to provide active opposition during the electoral truce, had started winning by-elections from 1942. The notion that the Common Wealth was above petty party politics found some echoes in the debates among French resisters. In August that year, Blum – still influential while in captivity in France – called for ‘*un rassemblement populaire*’ to bring together all democratic resisters, and in September Pierre Brossolette advocated the putting aside of party differences in the greater cause of Gaullist resistance. This led to furious debates amongst British and French socialists. Subsequently, the need to strengthen de Gaulle’s position vis à vis the Allies led Jean Moulin, in his efforts to unify the resistance, to take the pragmatic decision to include party representatives on the *Conseil Nationale de Résistance* (CNR) which met for the first time in Paris in May 1943. The same month de Gaulle was installed in Algiers, going on to gain some international recognition for the *Comité français de la libération nationale* (CFLN) in August. Party political jostling intensified as victory and liberation came nearer. De Gaulle was able to keep some limited control of the communists by co-opting them into the new emerging organisation. His relationship with the Allies remained turbulent, especially following the Lebanese crisis of November 1943, and the arguments in left-leaning publications in Britain on this subject became rancorous at times.

Meanwhile, in Algiers, London and all over France, the nature of the forthcoming post-war settlement were studied by numerous groups. Committees and commissions developed within the Gaullist organisation, sometimes mirroring the work of the *Comités d’Études* of the internal resistance, while the Labour Party and associated groups also deliberated along similar lines. There were opportunities for cross-fertilisation of ideas and the fruits of their discussions are further testament to Anglo-French collaboration. While the prospect of a united Europe was particularly beguiling for many who hoped to plan for a better future, it is also noticeable that the question of overseas colonies was one where a meeting of minds remained a distant prospect. While some sections of the British press became more inward looking and preoccupied with the way ahead for a post-war Britain, others followed the emergence of post-war France more carefully. While many of the Free French moved to Algiers, enough remained in Britain to continue to debate issues not only of social and economic reform, but also the treatment of a defeated Germany, the means to re-establish an international body that would not repeat the mistakes of the United Nations, the place of the Soviet Union in a reconstituted – and possibly united – Europe, and the way forward for the colonies of Britain and France. The original network of left-leaning British activists, journalists, politicians and their like-minded French exiles remained largely intact, and continued to interact and envisage a shared future. However, by the end

of this phase many of their members became more preoccupied with matters of a purely national nature.

The press, the radio and other sources

In order to gauge the ways in which the British left intelligentsia perceived France during the different phases of the war, these chapters explore further the journalism and publications of those on the left who were frequently linked through organisations such as the Fabian Society, the Left Book Club, the Labour Party or the Workers Educational Association. As well as the journals mentioned in previous chapters, the second half of this thesis makes use of various Fabian Society publications. The *New Fabian Research Bureau Quarterly*, started in 1934, became the *Fabian Quarterly* in 1939, and continued throughout the war, giving a useful guide to the Society's main preoccupations, along with the weekly *Fabian News*, which also gives more details on some joint Anglo-French endeavours, as does the journal of the Workers' Educational Association (WEA), *Highway*. Of particular interest here is the Fabian publication, *France and Britain*, whose significance lies in the way in which it brought together both members of the British left intelligentsia and exiled French socialists, the latter including Louis Lévy, Félix Gouin, Brossolette and Albert Guigui. *France and Britain* was frequently the first to print news of what was actually happening in occupied France. This paper's readership may have been small, but it was influential and included many who were active in Labour Party politics. *France and Britain* was dispatched to all members of the Fabian International Bureau, many of whom wrote for other left-leaning journals and gave lectures on France for the general public. It was also circulated among the Free French. The *New Statesman and Highway* promoted this publication which started out costing 2d, and interested members of the public could pay by subscription.

Historians of the Fabian Society, including Margaret Cole and, more recently, Patricia Pugh, have devoted much space to the origins and early years of the Fabians, but they also allude to the setting up of the Fabian International Bureau (FIB) in May 1941, whose work is key to the discussion here,⁵⁰ and Pugh provides a helpful overview of some of its main activities. John Parker was a mainstay of the Bureau and his memoir also helps explain the great increase in activity from 1939 onwards.⁵¹ In 1941 the FIB took over the work of the Anglo-French Committee, set up at the time of the fall of France, which had consisted mainly of Fabians, together with certain socialist French exiles. The early formation of this committee itself testifies to the interest taken in France by British intellectuals and led to the production of *France and Britain*.

⁵⁰ Cole, M. (1961). *The Story of Fabian Socialism*. London, Heinemann, Pugh, P. (1984). *Educate, agitate, organize: 100 years of Fabian Socialism*. London, Methuen.

⁵¹ Parker, J. (1982). *Father of the House*. London, Routledge Kegan Paul.

The Fabians notably fostered the exchange of ideas and establishment of shared objectives and the British left intelligentsia contributed to many publications which were open to French exiles, not all of whom were socialists, but whose commitment to republican values was unquestioned. Thus Paul Vaucher, professor of history at London University, wrote for Leonard Woolf's *Political Quarterly* as well as the *New Statesman* where we can also find the writing of the British historian of France, Denis Brogan. Brogan was also a noted contributor of leading articles for the *Manchester Guardian*, the provincial daily paper of liberal origin that was not owned by any individual and could therefore pride itself on its independence. Its circulation reached 126,000 in 1947. This paper's commitment to social reform did not prevent it from occasional severe criticism of Labour figures. Its leading articles during wartime show a faith in a restored France and envision the Anglo-French relationship at the centre of a post-war liberated Europe and so have proved very useful in the second half of the thesis.

The Fabian Society gave access to members of the wartime coalition; not only was Noel-Baker in time a minister there, but so were Dalton, Bevin and Attlee and others of note. Their papers provide further insights into the ways in which loose and often overlapping networks of left-leaning British and French activists and intellectuals pursued their goals. The Fabian Society also helped the formation of the *Comité de liaison des socialistes Français en Grande Bretagne* – usually known as the *Groupe Jean-Jaurès* in August 1940, an early attempt to re-launch French socialism by a group of French exiles. Several of the issues that bedevilled the revival of left-wing politics during the war would be thrashed out at the meetings of the group, including the place of de Gaulle, and relationships between parties (especially any reconstituted socialist party) and the internal resistance, between socialists and communists, and between France and Germany in the future. As will be shown in this thesis, such meetings could become especially heated when joined by members of the internal resistance who were in London for a short time. The minutes of many such occasions have often been used in the memoirs of resisters who provide accounts of the arguments that took place – as well as in the works of their biographers.⁵² We can see how the British left responded to such debates in their journalism. Another organisation, created as a focus for revived trade union activity, was the *Centre syndical français en Grande Bretagne*, set up by Henry Hauck, which was intended to strengthen links with British trade unionists and provide another arena for developing areas of common interest and action.

The archives of the Fabian Society (chiefly in the London School of Economics) are rich in examples of meetings and other events attended by British leftist intellectuals and French resisters in London which testify to the fruits of the collaborative network of left-leaning activists and intellectuals. They provide evidence of the ardent desire of British Francophiles, some of whom were members of the government

⁵² For example, Mayer, D. (1968). *Les Socialistes dans la Résistance*. Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, Piketty, G. (1998). *Pierre Brossolette – Un Héros de la Résistance*. Paris, Éditions Odile Jacob, Cordier, D. (2009). *Alias Caracalla*. Paris, Gallimard.

whilst others were simply representatives of an increasingly well-informed public (as manifested by journal readership and participation in adult education activities) to promote Anglo-French relations. Reports of meetings, conferences and committees over the next few years reveal an enthusiasm for developing war aims that embodied socialist principles and would bring about social democracy. There is a clear determination to counter any anti-French attitudes in Britain and to see a revival of French socialism and support for the internal French resistance. We find lists of speakers – both French and British – being sent to different parts of Britain to present the case for a France that had not succumbed to Vichy and the Germans. The number of local Fabian societies grew rapidly during the war and it is possible to see which topics concerning France were most often discussed. The archives of the Workers' Educational Association (most of which are in the Trades Union Congress archive of London Metropolitan University) give some further details of speaking engagements.

The papers of the Ministry of Information are also helpful in bringing to light the ways in which the British left and their French colleagues in exile worked together to develop a narrative about resistant France. The involvement of French exiles in broadcasting during the war has been the subject of considerable research, much of which is invaluable as a guide to the ways in which Free French exiles collaborated with members of the Labour Party and others. The Ministry of Information, created at the beginning of the war, co-opted many historians and other academics as well as Labour politicians, and even when headed by Conservative ministers often had a leftist tone as well as a bias towards the Free French, which brought it into conflict with a Foreign Office which was attempting to keep lines open to the Vichy government for as long as possible. In addition, there was continuing friction between the Ministry and key figures at the BBC. Michael Stenton's detailed study of the BBC's contribution to resistance describes many of the clashes that ensued, as well as drawing attention to the ways in which Free French broadcasters, such as Henry Hauck, worked with Fabians such as William Pickles and made the most of their contacts with politicians in leadership positions, including Bevin⁵³. There is more on such matters in Audrey Bonnery's 2005 thesis,⁵⁴ whilst Ellic Howe's earlier work on 'black' propaganda⁵⁵ and David Garnett's writings on the Political Warfare Executive - kept under wraps for 50 years for their supposedly libellous content - contribute additional background information.⁵⁶ More recently, Aurélie Luneau's book on *Radio Londres* has provided a very useful study of the development of the French Service and the battles over the content of many of its programmes that ensued.⁵⁷

⁵³ Stenton, M. (2000). *Radio London & Resistance in Occupied Europe 1939-1943*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

⁵⁴ Bonnery, A. (2005). *La France de la BBC, 1938-1944*. PhD, Bourgogne.

⁵⁵ Howe, E. (1982). *The Black Game*. London, Michael Joseph.

⁵⁶ Garnett, D. (2002). *The Secret History of PWE: The Political Warfare Executive 1939-45*. London, St Ermin's Press.

⁵⁷ Luneau, A. (2005). *Radio Londres 1940-1944*. Paris, Perrin.

This part of the thesis also makes extensive use of the scripts of the BBC French Service (held at Caversham) to investigate the ways in which France and Britain were portrayed on the radio and to discuss the contributions made by the British left to such portrayals. Many such contributors were also active in the publications and organisations mentioned above and the scripts provide further examples of the ways in which British and French socialists in exile collaborated and developed a common narrative, while BBC audience surveys of the time illuminate the concerns of the Corporation concerning France and help put the broadcasts in context. Crémieux-Brilhac has examined many of these scripts in *Les Voix de la Liberté* but he is not so concerned with teasing out the narrative of Anglo-French socialist renewal as is the case here.⁵⁸

The collection of papers of Philip Noel-Baker in the Churchill Archives Centre in Cambridge adds further insights into the interactions between the British and French left during the Second World War. Here we find many notes on meetings with Henry Hauck and other French socialist exiles, which give an idea of how a socialist, Fabian and internationalist British government minister experienced events. Also at the Churchill Archives Centre are some of the papers of Ernest Bevin. Although the London Socialist International collapsed soon after war broke out, the records of the International Allied Group, which attempted to keep it going (stored at the Labour History Archive), provide further evidence of the activities of French exiles, two of whom were founder members of this group. The collections of the papers of Leonard Woolf and Kingsley Martin (held at Sussex University) have some use in highlighting the concerns of these two key figures. Woolf had long been on both Labour's Advisory Committee on International Relations and the Advisory Committee on Imperial Relations, and the minutes of these bodies (also in Sussex) contribute to an understanding of where national and international concerns came into collision. Colonial considerations were indeed often a stumbling block to better Anglo-French relations, and this thesis also discusses how these might have threatened good relationships when the left came to power in both countries after the conflict was over.

Some publications, though less overtly left-wing, are also relevant here as they provide insights into the expression of left and left of centre opinion. This thesis has also been informed by articles in the journal the *Spectator*, which, though not avowedly socialist, employed journalists with a Francophile and left of centre outlook, including D. W. Brogan and Harold Nicolson (both of whom also had spells at the Ministry of Information). The circulation of the *Spectator* reached 25,000 in 1939, by which time it had been overtaken by the *New Statesman*⁵⁹ and equalled by *Tribune*.⁶⁰ Although anonymous, many articles in the less widely read but prestigious weekly, the *Economist*, where the Fabian, Barbara Ward,

⁵⁸ Crémieux-Brilhac, J.-L. (1975). _____ - _____ .

⁵⁹ Gilbert, M. (1990). *Foreign Policy & Propaganda in the Progressive Press 1936-1945*. PhD, Swansea.

⁶⁰ Morris, B. (1991). *The Roots of Appeasement: The British Weekly Press and Nazi Germany During the 1930s*. London, Frank Cass.p183

was a leading writer, show an equally passionate interest in the cause of France, and Anglo-French relations. The *Economist's* circulation was 12,000 in 1938, rising to 17,744 by 1945.⁶¹ Its advertisements page indicates that it was popular amongst the business community and the fact that in 1939 half its copies were sold abroad gives an indication of its standing in international circles.⁶² The *Economist* is notable for remaining sceptical about de Gaulle, when journalists in the other weeklies mentioned had generally decided to give him qualified support, but the *Observer* was even more strongly opposed to his leadership of the CFLN, let alone a future France, and provided something of a platform for - anti-Gaullist exiles, including some socialists, thereby contributing towards a rounded picture of debates amongst French exiles. Many British journalists continued to write for the publications produced by French exiles themselves, most notably *La France Libre*. This paper sold well from its inception in November 1940, and at its peak in 1944 had an estimated 76,000 subscribers.⁶³ These journals and newspapers can give insights into how ideas, opinions and information were disseminated, war aims analysed, the nature of resistance discussed, and the future of France and Anglo-French relations debated.

As well as the sources mentioned above, this thesis has also made use of a number of other secondary sources. It has been influenced by some discussions of the press of the period. Philip Bell's *A Certain Eventuality* (1974) provides a very helpful example of how the press can be used to get a sense of the concerns of those who wished to influence public opinion, though he rightly points to the difficulties of using these to make generalisations about the opinions of the public at large, and this thesis has endeavoured to avoid making such assumptions.⁶⁴ However, both he, Benny Morris⁶⁵, Franklin Gannon⁶⁶ and Richard Carswell⁶⁷ have not gone beyond 1940 in their discussion of press reaction to events or the place of France in their accounts while 1939-1944 is the focus of the second half of this thesis.

When investigating the relationships that were formed by British socialists and their French colleagues in exile in London, it has generally only been possible to make limited use of biographical accounts of some of those involved. Biographies and memoirs of adherents of the British left very often focus on their activities within the national context, and even the biography of so ardent a Francophile and internationalist as the British MP Philip Noel-Baker spends little time examining his contacts with

⁶¹ Ibid. p183

⁶² Edwards, R. D. (1993). *The Pursuit of Reason : The Economist 1843 - 1993*. London, Hamish Hamilton.p667

⁶³ Flood, C. (1993). "André Labarthe & Raymond Aron : Political Myth and Ideology in *La France Libre*." *Journal of European Studies* 23(1): 139-158.

⁶⁴ Bell, P. M. H. (1974). *A Certain Eventuality : Britain and the Fall of France*. London, Saxon House.p125

⁶⁵ Morris, B. (1991). *The Roots of Appeasement: The British Weekly Press and Nazi Germany During the 1930s*. London, Frank Cass.

⁶⁶ Gannon, F. R. (1971). *The British Press and Germany 1936 - 1939*. Oxford, Clarendon Press.

⁶⁷ Carswell, R. (2008). "Britain could not ask for a better ally": *France in the British Press 1939-40*. PhD, Reading.

France.⁶⁸ The autobiography of John Parker, another key figure in many Anglo-French groups, is also more concerned with parliamentary and Fabian Society activities and politics, although it is helpful in providing some detail about relationships between sections of the British left.⁶⁹ Talbot Imlay's 2003 article on the Labour Party's attitude to France during the 'Phoney War'⁷⁰ focuses on the leadership and its changing attitude to the French government in the early stages of the war, and the most significant consequences of this. However, Imlay does not investigate the more long-standing connections between the British Labour Party and the SFIO, which surely contributed towards the efforts to achieve a better relationship at this time.

One leading Labour figure has left a quantity of information about both pre-war and wartime links, and Ben Pimlott has used the Dalton archive to great effect in his biography, as well as producing editions of Dalton's diary;⁷¹ and there is also Dalton's own account of these years, published not long after the end of the war,⁷² although much of this is taken up with his manoeuvrings within the Party as well as his achievements in government. Harold Laski, another leading light of the Labour Party and committed Francophile, has been of more interest to his biographers as political theorist as a result of the complexities of his status within the Labour movement, than for his close friendship with the French leader, Léon Blum.⁷³ However, Laski's own writings, both before and during the war, can give us insights into the topics most energetically discussed by the left intelligentsia. Other biographies that contribute to an understanding of the intellectual climate of opinion in socialist circles in Britain during this period include those of Leonard Woolf⁷⁴ and Victor Gollancz⁷⁵ though again scant attention is given to their European concerns. There are similar shortcomings with the two volumes of autobiography by Walter Citrine, though he does recount some of his meetings with French trade unionists.⁷⁶ Bevin's biographer includes several references to his subject's Francophilia and famous post-war remark in that connection, that 'Left understands Left, which the Right does not',⁷⁷ but does not explore his relations with members of the Free French in any depth. He does mention Bevin's support for de

⁶⁸ Whitaker, D. (1989). *Fighter for Peace – Philip Noel-Baker 1889-1982*. New York, William Sessions Ltd.

⁶⁹ Parker, J. (1982). *Father of the House*. London, Routledge Kegan Paul.

⁷⁰ Imlay, T. (2003). "From Villain to Partner: British Labour Party Leaders, France and International Policy during the Phoney War, 1939-40." *Journal of Contemporary History* 38(4): 579-596.

⁷¹ Pimlott, B., Ed. (1986). *The Second World War: Diary of Hugh Dalton 1940 - 1945*. London, Jonathan Cape, Pimlott, B. (1995). *Hugh Dalton*. London, Harper Collins. Dalton, H. (1956). *The Fateful Years 1931-1945*. London, Frederick Muller Ltd.

⁷² Dalton, H. (1956). *The Fateful Years 1931-1945*. London, Frederick Muller Ltd.

⁷³ Martin, B. K. (1953). *Harold Laski : 1893-1950 A Biographical Memoir*. London, Victor Gollancz Ltd, Kramnick, I. and B. Sheerman (1993). *Harold Laski – A Life on the Left*. London, Hamish Hamilton.

⁷⁴ Glendinning, V. (2006). *Leonard Woolf : A Life*. London, Simon & Schuster.

⁷⁵ Edwards, R. D. (1987). *Victor Gollancz*. London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson.

⁷⁶ Citrine, W. (1964). *Men and Work: an Autobiography*. London, Hutchinson, Citrine, W. (1967). *Two Careers*. London, Hutchinson.

⁷⁷ Bullock, A. (1985). *The Life and Times of Ernest Bevin: Volume 2: Minister of Labour 1940-1945*. Oxford Oxford University Press.p384

Gaulle against Churchill, as do most of Attlee's biographers.⁷⁸ Bevin's papers give some indication of the contacts he has with French socialists, while Attlee's high regard for Blum is evident in a pamphlet written during the war.⁷⁹ Attlee's mentions Blum in his post-war memoir,⁸⁰ but the relationship is not explored further there, nor in the full-length biography by Harris.⁸¹ It would seem that such writers had a specifically national audience in mind; many were published at a time when the end of empire coincided with the explosion of interest in social sciences and Anglo-French camaraderie attracted little attention.

Similarly, biographies of leading French figures make relatively little mention of their interactions with their opposite numbers in Britain. Thus Blum's biographers do little more than mention his relationships with British socialists, although Colton does provide an illuminating discussion of the development of the French left throughout the period of his dominance⁸² and his enthusiasm for a close partnership with Britain and pre-war friendship with British politicians across the spectrum are alluded to in a number of other memoirs.⁸³ Although Blum was imprisoned and remained in France during the war, his influence on French left-wing exiles in London was often decisive in determining their fortunes and, moreover, those of the Free French. His letters during the war and reflections immediately afterwards are therefore useful sources for this study.⁸⁴

The activities of French exiles in Britain during the Second World War have received considerable attention. Two weighty volumes play a central part in establishing the activities and proclivities of left-wing French exiles in London. Crémieux-Brilhac's *La France Libre* is a comprehensive study that alludes to all those involved in the enterprise, including those who opposed de Gaulle as leader,⁸⁵ and a valuable source for anyone interested in the socialists in the General's entourage. Daniel Cordier, like Crémieux-Brilhac, also had firsthand experience of resistance, and his work on Jean Moulin includes and discusses numerous documents of the time which help build a picture of the activities of Free France.⁸⁶ The first section of Cordier's recently published memoir also contributes to our understanding of the political complexion of Free French in their early days and the kinds of problems

⁷⁸ Harris, K. (1982). *Attlee*. London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, Burrage, T. (1985). *Clement Attlee: a political biography*. London, Cape, Pearce, R. (1997). *Attlee*. London, Longmans.

⁷⁹ Gouin, F. (1942). *Léon Blum before his Judges – at the Supreme Court of Riom foreword by C.Attlee*. London, TUC pamphlets.

⁸⁰ Williams, F. (1961). *A Prime Minister Remembers*. London, Heinemann.

⁸¹ Harris, K. (1982). *Attlee*. London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson.

⁸² Colton, J. (1987). *Léon Blum: A Humanist in Politics*. Durham N.C., Duke University Press. see also Lacouture, J. (1982). *Léon Blum trans. G. Holoch*. London, Holmes & Meier.

⁸³ For example, Eden, A. (1962). *The Eden Memoirs: Facing the Dictators*. London, Cassell.p381

⁸⁴ Blum, L. (1946). *For all mankind: (A l'échelle humaine)* trans. William Pickles. London, Victor Gollancz, Blum, L. (2003). *Lettres de Buchenwald* Paris, Gallimard.

⁸⁵ Crémieux-Brilhac, J.-L. (1996). *La France Libre: de l'appel du 18 Juin à la Libération*. Paris, Gallimard.

⁸⁶ Cordier, D. (1993). *Jean Moulin, L'Inconnu du Panthéon*. Paris, J.C. Lattès.

the organisation faced at the time.⁸⁷ Jean-Pierre Azéma's biography of Moulin⁸⁸ also looks at key figures in the re-establishment of the SFIO and Blum's continuing political role, though he, like the others, has little to say on the involvement of British activists. Jansen's biography of Pierre Cot⁸⁹ is especially helpful in showing the endeavours and vicissitudes of the French left before the war and how these subsequently affected their efforts both in France and the United States where Cot spent most of the war.

The challenge of how to take part in resistance in a way that would bring about a liberated France more willing to embrace socialist ideals has been discussed at length by Henri Michel, founder of the *Comité d'Histoire de la Deuxième Guerre Mondiale*, and his works remain a valuable source of evidence about the currents of thinking at the time.⁹⁰ Blum's right-hand man and founder of the *Comité d'Action Socialiste*, Daniel Mayer, gave his own perspective in his 1968 study of resistance socialists.⁹¹ Mayer's work was drawn upon by John Sweets in the final section of his study of the unification of the southern resistance movements *The Politics of Resistance in France*.⁹² Mayer's biographer, Martine Pradoux, also shows how her subject attempted to pursue political activity during the years of Vichy control and German occupation, a task that involved not only reviving debate about the future, but also competing with the communists for recognition within the new organisations that emerged as the resistance became unified and an embryonic state emerged at Algiers in the latter half of the war.⁹³ Julian Jackson provides an adroit summary of the difficulties of French socialists in his comprehensive study *The Dark Years*⁹⁴ and more recently, Jean-Louis Crémieux-Brilhac, in his biography of Georges Boris - a socialist at the heart of de Gaulle's entourage - has utilised hitherto unused archival material to illuminate the struggles within the ranks of left-wing French exiles in Britain, the achievements and the doctrinal disputes.⁹⁵ However, in these works little, if any, attention is paid to the interplay between these socialist resisters and their British supporters, while this thesis aims to shed light on this. No discussion of this episode in history can ignore the figure of Charles de Gaulle. As previously noted, a considerable body of work has been devoted to the study of his part in the Allied war effort and relations with other leaders. There are numerous biographies,⁹⁶ which generally have something to say about the leftward trajectory of his rhetoric, which is, of course, relevant here. However, there is

⁸⁷ Cordier, D. (2009). *Alias Caracalla*. Paris, Gallimard.

⁸⁸ Azéma, J.-P. (2003). *Jean Moulin: le rebelle, le politique, le résistant*. Paris, Perrin.

⁸⁹ Jansen, S. (2002). *Pierre Cot : Un antifasciste radical*. Paris, Fayard.

⁹⁰ Michel, H. and B. Mirkine-Guetzévitch (1954). *Les idées politiques et sociales de la Résistance*. Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, Michel, H. (1962). *Les courants de pensée de la Résistance*. Paris, Presses Universitaires de France.

⁹¹ Mayer, D. (1968). *Les Socialistes dans la Résistance*. Paris, Presses Universitaires de France.

⁹² Sweets, J. (1976). *The Politics of Resistance in France*, Northern Illinois University Press.

⁹³ Pradoux, M. (2002). *Daniel Mayer, un socialiste dans la Résistance*. Paris, Les Editions de l'Atelier.

⁹⁴ Jackson, J. (2001). *France: The Dark Years*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

⁹⁵ Crémieux-Brilhac, J.-L. (2010). *Georges Boris: Trente ans d'influence: Blum, de Gaulle, Mendès France*. Paris, Gallimard.

⁹⁶ Most notably Lacouture, J. (1990). *De Gaulle* London, Harvill: Harper Collins *trans* Patrick O'Brien.

usually only perfunctory discussion of the socialists amongst the Free French and, indeed, Alexander Werth is unsure of the political background of leading resistance figures, referring for instance to Henry Frenay as a 'left-winger'.⁹⁷ De Gaulle himself provides one of the better brief overviews of the roles played by these men in the second volume of his memoirs,⁹⁸ while there is a good summing up of his relationship with the resistance in a chapter by Bédarida in a collection of essays by Gough and Horne.⁹⁹

This part of the thesis also investigates how planning for the post-war period was enhanced by the contacts made between French and British socialists during the war. An important work here is Andrew Shennan's *Rethinking France*, which surveys the interplay of French groups working on future social and economic reforms – both in London and the internal resistance.¹⁰⁰ Shennan does not give details of British involvement, so this has to be gleaned from the Fabian records and publications, and the memoirs and biographies of some key players, such as René Cassin and André Philip.¹⁰¹ Blum's paper *Le Populaire* was revived by the clandestine press during the war and in its preoccupation with post-war reconstruction it includes articles showing the influence of British left-wing thinking on those planning for France after the war.

Conclusion

Chapter Eight, the conclusion, begins by setting the context and summing up the arguments of the preceding chapters of the thesis. It then goes on to present reactions amongst British left-wing commentators to the events of May 1944 and the liberation of France during that year. The preceding months had seen the consolidation of resistance in France and the establishment of the CNR and *Forces françaises de l'intérieur* (FFI). Although the American government, Churchill and others continued to try to marginalise de Gaulle, he became the acknowledged leader of the FFI in February, and in Algiers strengthened his position in the reformed CFLN in April claiming leadership of the Provisional Government in May. Events following the liberation of France supported his claims and confirmed his position.

This chapter discusses how themes that emerged in the discussion of France by the British left intelligentsia during the war were exemplified in coverage of the liberation of France. Here we look at how reportage in the left and centre left British press at this time encapsulated a narrative of Anglo-French co-operation, socialist renewal and heroic resistance that had been developing since June 1940,

⁹⁷ Werth, A. (1965). *De Gaulle*. London, Penguin. p 143

⁹⁸ De Gaulle, C. (1959). *Unity 1942-1944 trans Richard Howard*. London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson. Especially p94 and Chapter 5

⁹⁹ Bédarida, F. (1994). De Gaulle and the Resistance 1940-1944. *De Gaulle and Twentieth Century France*. H. Gough and J. Horne. London, Hodder Arnold.

¹⁰⁰ Shennan, A. (1989). *Rethinking France – Plans for Renewal 1940-46*. Oxford, Clarendon.

¹⁰¹ Cassin, R. (1975). *Les hommes partis de rien*. Paris, Plon. Philip, A. (1971). *André Philip par lui-même ou les voies de la liberté*. Paris, Aubier Montagne, Prost, A. and J. Winter (2011). *René Cassin*. Paris, Fayard.

enabling commentators to draw on French and British history to predict a new beginning for the two nations and envisage an era of an integrated Europe led by the two nations. This chapter points out some of the rhetorical devices that had come to characterise such accounts and reflects on the reasons why the British left intelligentsia chose to imagine France in such a way. It then surveys the main factors that had promoted and hindered a complete understanding between the British left intelligentsia and their French counterparts.

Finally, as a concluding observation, this chapter considers how and why the narrative described in this thesis has subsequently been ignored and even forgotten, and why the period of post-war Labour government did not see the close relationship between Britain and France that had been envisaged in so much of the left-wing press during the latter stages of the war. A brief survey of some key developments in the post-war era leads to speculation on some possible reasons.

Chapter Two - The Left in Britain and France c.1900-1939: dialogue and disagreement

This chapter aims to compare the development of left-wing parties in Britain and France during the period of the *Entente Cordiale* until the outbreak of the Second World War. It will try to establish whether such parties reflected distinctive traditions as well as structural differences within their respective societies and will consider how far they could construct a common approach to the challenges they faced during this time. Whilst needing to secure the future of their respective parties as independent, distinctive and attractive to the electorate, political leaders also had to respond coherently to the outbreak of the Great War and its aftermath, including the Russian Revolution and the rise of fascism. Perhaps most formidable was the question of communism and its adherents, and this will be touched on here, but discussed at greater length elsewhere. This chapter adopts a comparative perspective, drawing out the similarities and differences between the development of left-wing politics in Britain and France and prepares the ground for the study of attitudes to France of British socialists and their relationships with their opposite numbers in France, and, after 1940, in London.

Like the Labour Representation Committee (LRC) set up in 1900, the *Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière* (SFIO), created in 1905 by the merger of the French Socialist Party and the Socialist Party of France, represented the coming together of a number of disparate traditions. In different ways both of these organisations were responding to the effects of European industrialisation and encompassed a spectrum of opinion about how best to deal with its consequences. They also had to work out their relationship to existing parties. In Britain, a main aim of the LRC was to confront the dominance of the Liberal Party in British working class and trade union politics. This had been growing since the middle of the previous century, but had not resulted in substantial working class representation in parliament. However, whilst the LRC represented a tentative coming together of groups for the practical purpose of achieving parliamentary representation, those who formed the SFIO were still suffering from the aftermath of the Paris Commune of 1871 and suppression of those involved. This had left a legacy of distrust of the state which made the whole question of parliamentary activity – let alone relations with other groups – problematic.

Whilst the commitment to breaking with Liberalism varied amongst the participants in the LRC, and many trade unionists were slow to leave the Liberals and affiliate to the new party, there was an

underlying willingness to participate in parliamentary politics. The Labour Party was established in 1906 after winning its first parliamentary seats (thanks to an electoral pact with the Liberals). The next four decades would see a continuing movement of people and ideas from the Liberal to the Labour Party. Many of the Fabians who had helped set up the LRC remained partly Liberal in outlook, whilst the Marxists of the Social Democratic Federation seceded as early as 1901. Meanwhile there was a steady flow of trade unionists from Liberal to Labour Party in the years before the Great War, often bringing with them a viewpoint shaped by nonconformity or Christian socialism, i.e. reformist, opposed to all forms of violence and keen on improvement through education and co-operation.

By contrast, the SFIO had within it an important revolutionary tradition and a 'pronounced distrust of organisation, strong taste for direct democracy and virulent anti-clericalism'.¹ The experiences, not only of the revolutionary period following 1789, but also of 1848 and 1871, when the left, however briefly and partially, had held power, continued to inform debate. Followers of great figures of France's radical revolutionary past such as Fourier, Saint-Simon, Louis Blanc, Babeuf and Blanqui often found little common ground. While Marxist views were reflected in the Charter of 1905 which used the term 'proletariat' repeatedly and claimed it was 'pas un parti de réforme mais un parti de lutte de classe et de révolution', the rejection of revolutionary activism after the schism at Tours in 1920 did not preclude the continued presence of Marxists of some kind – such as the followers of Guesde. The leader's task could be dominated, even more than in Britain, by the need to persuade the party that active involvement in politics was acceptable. This was made even more urgent by the nature of the French electoral system which generally necessitated entering electoral alliances or coalitions of some kind. The fact that there was an organisational split with the unions of the *Confédération générale de travail* (CGT) would also make it difficult to build a mass party of the working class on the British model. The ninth congress of the CGT, at the time dominated by anarcho-syndicalists had adopted the Charter of Amiens, which insisted on complete independence from political parties.

The SFIO was not the only party to claim to be the heir to the French Revolution. The Radical Party (full title: Republican, Radical and Radical-Socialist Party) was founded in 1901, but traced its roots to 1789. James McMillan has pointed out 'Radicalism was fundamentally a militant commitment to Republicanism, deriving ultimately from a quasi-mystical attachment to the French Revolution'.² Whilst Radicals may have shared the anti-clericalism of the SFIO, their electoral support came especially from traditionally socially conservative peasants and small businessmen; as Julian Jackson remarks, 'The Radical Socialists...were in fact neither radical nor socialist'.³ With few exceptions, there would be little

¹ Sassoon, D. (1997). *One Hundred Years of Socialism*. London, Fontana.p12

² McMillan, J. F. (1985). *Dreyfus to De Gaulle : Politics & Society in France 1898-1969*. London, Edward Arnold.p13

³ Jackson, J. (1988). *The Popular Front in France: Defending Democracy 1934-38*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.p3

of the regular flow of ideas and members from the Radicals to the SFIO that characterised the relationship between Liberal and Labour parties.

Despite these differences, we can note some similarities between the Labour Party and SFIO. Keir Hardie, for example, founder of both the Independent Labour Party in 1893 and the LRC, was a committed internationalist and worked with Edouard Vaillant (founder member of the SFIO) to try to persuade the Second International in 1910 to support a general strike against war.⁴ However, the hope that a working class united across international frontiers could ensure the peace of Europe was shattered by the outbreak of war in 1914. The assassination of the Socialist leader, Jean Jaurès, in the name of French nationalism demonstrated the difficulty of reconciling patriotism and workers' solidarity. Both the SFIO and the Labour Party were prepared to support the war effort after initial hesitation. In Britain, MacDonald resigned as leader of the Labour Party in 1914 because of his opposition to the war, and Arthur Henderson took his place. MacDonald became involved in the efforts of the Union of Democratic Control to achieve a negotiated peace and in 1917 planned to visit Petrograd following the February Revolution, but his unpopularity at the time was demonstrated by his denunciation by the pro-war Seamen's Union in 1917.⁵ MacDonald was denounced the following year in the *Times* as a 'pacifist' who was willing to negotiate with Germans, as opposed to the 'solid mass of the organised workers' who were determined that 'the Germans shall not win'.⁶ Nevertheless, members of both the SFIO and the Labour Party participated in wartime government. Labour entered the wartime coalition in 1915, and although Henderson left in 1917, the clash with Lloyd George that sparked this resignation had the advantage of demonstrating his independence from the Liberals. There had also been some tangible achievements. In particular, the unions 'had substantially strengthened the recognition of their right to be consulted regularly on issues of national importance'.⁷ However, whilst the SFIO had also joined the 'Union Sacrée' government when war broke out, they had been largely ignored in decision-making and the experience left a 'bitter taste'.⁸ Even though Léon Jouhaux, the General Secretary of the CGT, was given the title of 'Delegate to the Nation' 'in practice this meant little as [he was] without a clear function'.⁹

Before looking further at the effects of wartime involvement in government it is worth commenting on some of the currents of thinking in the two parties, both of which were characterised by the involvement of well-to-do intellectuals in efforts to improve the lives of the working class. Thus both British and French parties included what were called in Clause Four of the Labour Party's constitution

⁴ Strachan, H. (2004). The Outbreak of the First World War. Oxford, Oxford University Press. p142

⁵ *The Times* 7.6.17

⁶ *The Times* 30.4.18 p3

⁷ Gallie, D. (1983). Social Inequality and Class Radicalism in France and Britain. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. p239

⁸ Jackson, J. (1988). The Popular Front in France: Defending Democracy 1934-38. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. p3

⁹ Gallie, D. (1983). Social Inequality and Class Radicalism in France and Britain. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. p237

‘workers by brain’: people who entered into debates and wrote seriously about politics, either as journalists, academics or activists. In Britain such intellectuals were often influenced by leading French thinkers of the previous centuries. Early members of the Fabian Society in Britain were a case in point, showing a marked preference for the positivism of Comte and the ideas of that noted Francophile, J.S. Mill, but distaste for Marx,¹⁰ perhaps resulting from a desire to create home-grown alternatives to his ideas, such as the Fabian theory of value. There was also an exchange of ideas with German colleagues such as the German theorist Eduard Bernstein, who was a close associate of the early Fabians and who, during exile to Britain was welcomed by Keir Hardie, Ramsay MacDonald and Sidney and Beatrice Webb, amongst others. Stefan Berger points out that he was impressed by ‘the undogmatic nature of the Labour Party with its pragmatic approach to policy-making’ and keen to promote this approach to the SPD when he returned to Germany in 1901, after which he kept in touch with British socialists.¹¹

An important influence on the British Labour movement was the assumption by many Fabians that socialism would not be introduced through class conflict, but through democratic welfare legislation administered by the civil service, which would bring about a type of evolutionary socialism. Although this did not go unchallenged, it helped frame the way in which the party responded to events in Russia in 1917 and after, and influenced how the party went on to formulate policy. However, whilst not entering into the fierce debates about how to apply Marxist economic theory that characterised the SFIO, Labour’s new constitution included a clause that, despite its vagueness, purported to pit the party against capitalism and substitute ‘common ownership’ for the ‘means of production, distribution and exchange’. This might seem to suggest a strong Marxist strand of thought in the Labour Party. However, Henry Drucker and others have argued that the clause, drafted by the gradualist Fabian, Sidney Webb, far from committing the party to any kind of overthrow of the existing order, let alone providing a blueprint for policy, was chiefly a means of keeping the delicate alliance between the different elements of the party intact. As Drucker says, ‘He offered...the stronger formulation with its syndicalist overtones to placate the ‘wild men’.’¹² It was not intended to prepare the ground for revolutionary activity.

British intellectuals, rather than wishing to emulate Lenin, were more likely to be influenced by their studies of the French Revolution, which had become a serious object of study in British universities since the end of the nineteenth century when history had developed as an acceptable and rigorous alternative to the classics. The French Revolution was a special subject on the Oxford history syllabus from the late 1890s and Acton gave a series of lectures on the subject when he became Regius

¹⁰ Lichtheim, G. (1980). *A Short History of Socialism*. London, Fontana.pp209-211

¹¹ Berger, S. (1996). "Organising Talent and Disciplined Steadiness': The German SPD as a Model for the British Labour Party in the 1920s?" *Contemporary European History* 5(2): 171-190.

¹² Drucker, H. (1979). *Doctrine and Ethos in the Labour Party*. London, George Allen & Unwin. p27

Professor at Cambridge in 1895. He went on to edit a Cambridge History of the Revolution in 1904.¹³ British scholarly interest in all aspects of French history continued to grow, with Clapham and Temperley, amongst others, writing welcoming reviews of new books of documents relevant to the revolutionary era in 1923. Untranslated French histories continued to be reviewed in *The Times Literary Supplement* as well as academic journals in the years following the war, while several of the leading French historians of the revolution were translated into English.¹⁴

Debates around the meaning and legacy of the French Revolution were intensified by the growing interest in the social sciences in British universities at this time. This was epitomised by the work of the London School of Economics: 'the intellectual powerhouse of progressivism'¹⁵ which had been established in 1895 by the Fabians and which adopted the motto *rerum cognoscere causas* (*to know the causes of things*) in 1922.¹⁶ Here there was great interest in the *philosophes* of the Enlightenment and what they had to say about the characteristics of good government, together with a willingness to challenge the assumption that the British political system could not be bettered. Harold Laski, Kingsley Martin and Hugh Dalton were all members of the LSE staff who went on to play an important part in Labour politics in the 1930s as journalists and party activists as well as academics. Both Laski and Kingsley Martin wrote about French history and thought.¹⁷

The British working class also maintained an interest in French history, if mainly through their reading of Carlyle's *History of the French Revolution* (1837)¹⁸ which it seems was amongst the most popular reading of the new Labour MPs in 1906. In a survey they rated only Dickens, the Bible and John Ruskin more highly, whilst showing no interest in the works of Karl Marx.¹⁹ The Labour movement was characterised by auto-didacts such as Walter Citrine, who left school at 12 but went on to become leader of the Trades Union Congress and President of the International Federation Of Trade Unions, and who was described by Beatrice Webb as an 'intellectual of the scientific type...He has no use for G.D.H. Cole, he believes in Laski'.²⁰ Citrine taught himself French.²¹

Leading figures of the French left however, seem to have been less intrigued by British history and philosophy. While Jaurès did read Hume shortly before he was killed and pronounced it 'one of his

¹³ Acton, J. (1904). *Cambridge Modern History*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

¹⁴ Cobban, A. (1946). *Historians and the Causes of the French Revolution* London, Historical Association.

¹⁵ Adrian Smith, 'Martin, (Basil) Kingsley (1897–1969)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/34902>, accessed 30 Jan 2008]

¹⁶ <http://www2.lse.ac.uk/aboutLSE/lseHistory.aspx>

¹⁷ For example H. Laski, (1933) 'Alexis de Tocqueville and Democracy' in F.J.C.Hearnshaw, Ed. (1933). *The Social and Political Ideas of Some Representative Thinkers of the Victorian Age*. London, Harrap., and Martin, B. K. (1929). *French Liberal Thought in the 18th Century: a study of political ideas from Bayle to Condorcet* London, Ernest Benn.

¹⁸ Carlyle, T. (1837). *The French Revolution: A History*. London, James Fraser.

¹⁹ Rose, J. (2002). *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Class* Newhaven and London, Yale University Press. p42

²⁰ Mackenzie, N. and J. Mackenzie, Eds. (1985). *Diary of Beatrice Webb 1924-1943: Wheel of Life*. London, Virago & LSE. p126

²¹ Citrine, W. (1964). *Men and Work: an Autobiography*. London, Hutchinson.

great intellectual joys', he, like the academic Charles Andler and the socialist politician, Albert Thomas, had been principally concerned with German thought, which reflected the interest of such French socialists in the German Social Democratic Party (SPD). The SPD was the most successful party of the left in Europe before 1914 and the focus of continuing debate on Marxism and its meanings. Andler, for instance, travelled to Germany frequently as a student and wrote his thesis on German socialism.²² However, by the 1930s, there was already some evidence of interest in British left-wing activity. André Philip, who had studied under the great French historian of Britain, Élie Halévy, while at the École Libre des Sciences Politiques, wrote his doctoral thesis on British guild socialism in 1922 and went on to publish *L'Angleterre Moderne*, on the subject of the 1924 Labour government, the year after its collapse.²³ Meanwhile, the young Robert Marjolin, who had left school at 14 and was trying to achieve the baccalaureate against considerable odds was fortunate to attract the attention of the academic Bouglé (expert on early French socialism and later president of the École Normale Supérieure) who helped him secure a study grant to research the development of the co-operative movement in London in 1931.²⁴

While Enlightenment principles and the French Revolution continued to fascinate intellectuals on both sides of the Channel, influencing the way they theorised about the way forward, the experience of participation in world war surely had an even more profound effect on the ways in which left-wing politics developed. Duncan Gallie has shown how the differing treatment of organised labour by political and industrial elites and the greater suffering of the French working class during the First World War produced a more militant attitude in France compared with Britain.²⁵ As a consequence, 'in 1919 and 1920 political reformism appeared very much more attractive to the British labour movement than insurrectionism'²⁶ whilst in France the harsh treatment of organised labour and the weak showing of the representatives of the left in the war-time government meant reformism had lost much of its appeal, at least among many in the leadership group of the SFIO.

As a consequence, those socialists in France who wanted to adhere to the Communist International - set up in the wake of the Bolshevik Revolution - were in the majority at the crucial SFIO Congress of Tours in 1920. Much of the debate centred on whether communists could claim to be the inheritors of the French revolutionary tradition, testifying to the continued passionate interest in Marx and his theories of revolution among the party elite and their desire to fit French history to his analysis.

²² Weisz, G. and C. Weill (1982). "Associations et manifestations: les étudiants français de la Belle Epoque " Le Mouvement Social **3**: 31-44. pp31-44

²³ Philip, A. (1971). André Philip par lui-même ou les voies de la liberté. Paris, Aubier Montagne

²⁴ Marjolin, R. (1989). Architect of European Unity: Memoirs 1911-1986 trans. William Hall. London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson. P23

²⁵ Gallie, D. (1983). Social Inequality and Class Radicalism in France and Britain. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

²⁶ Ibid. p240

Leading the faction not wishing to join the Comintern was the intellectual and aesthete Léon Blum, who denounced this initiative as an attempt at dictatorship: 'you conceive of terrorism not just as a last resource, not as the final measure of public safety to be used against bourgeois resistance, not as an act of vital necessity for the Revolution, but as a means of government'.²⁷ The minority followed Blum (now leader of the SFIO), while the majority Communist Party took the funds, the newspaper and, at least in theory, the membership. This split - and the attempts to exploit or heal it - would preoccupy and overshadow left-wing French politics in the future even if communist success at Tours was not translated into greater success at elections. In addition, the communists made inroads into the trade unions, setting up the CGTU to rival the CGT. Léon Jouhaux, who had become president of the CGT in 1909 and later Vice President of the International Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU), was a convinced anti-communist. He did not want, though, to tie his organisation to the SFIO, claiming 'I am a socialist in thought and spirit, but a party socialist I am not.'²⁸ The lack of a close relationship with the unions was probably the most significant difference between the SFIO and the British Labour Party and one that some on the British left found hard fully to comprehend.

In February 1918 the British Labour Party acquired a constitution and its improved performance in the general election that year is testament to a generally successful wartime strategy. Herbert Morrison was amongst those leading the effort to get the party organised on a national scale. Stefan Berger has shown that Morrison was in many ways trying to emulate the success of the German SPD, demonstrating that he was far from insular in his outlook.²⁹ The leadership of the Labour Party steered away from involvement with the Comintern established after the Russian Revolution; there was no schism and the party remained relatively unscathed by the communist upsurge on the continent. Meanwhile, the nascent British Communist Party (CP) was fissiparous from the start - initial sympathisers, such as Sylvia Pankhurst, soon finding Lenin's 'twenty-one conditions' too much to stomach.³⁰ Comparable Communist Party membership figures are telling: in France 80,000 in 1925, in Britain 12,500 in 1927, dwindling to 28,000 in France in 1933 and 2,500 in Britain in 1930-1.³¹

This does not mean, though, that relations between the British Labour Party and the British Communist Party were settled and secure or that British communists were lacking in influence. As Christopher Andrew has pointed out, the short-lived Labour government of Ramsay MacDonald was so concerned about communist influence in the trade unions that it used intelligence supplied by Special Branch, SIS

²⁷ Joll, J. (1960). *Intellectuals in Politics: Three Biographical essays*. New York, Harper Colophon. p23

²⁸ Berger, S. (1996). "Organising Talent and Disciplined Steadiness": The German SPD as a Model for the British Labour Party in the 1920s?" *Contemporary European History* 5(2): 171-190.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Dodd, K. (1993). *A Sylvia Pankhurst Reader*. Manchester, Manchester University Press.

³¹ Clark, J., M. Heinemann, D. Margolis and C. Snee, Eds. (1979). *Culture & Crisis in the 1930s*. London, Lawrence & Wishart. J. Klugman : 'The Crisis of the Thirties: A View from the Left' p23

and MI5 to find out about this.³² Macdonald had mentioned in his diary that ‘moderation and honesty [would be] our safety’³³ and his concern to ensure the safety of food, milk and coal supplies led him to use the Emergency Powers Act that he had denounced when it was introduced by Lloyd George. The Conservative Party would attempt to prove a continuing link through such devices as the Zinoviev Letter forgery which led to a ‘Red Letter’ campaign in the right-wing press in the 1924 election. Andrews notes that, given MacDonald’s actions against communists, ‘It was sadly ironic that Labour’s election campaign should be disrupted by another intercepted Comintern communication, which became known as the ‘Zinoviev letter’...the intercept was a fabrication...the Zinoviev Letter came from the SIS Reval station, which appears to have been deceived once again by anti-Bolshevik White Russian forgers’.³⁴ Nevertheless, communists were active in the Labour Research Department and other bodies in the party from the mid-1920s,³⁵ with consequences which will be explored in the fourth chapter and elsewhere in this thesis.

In terms of political strategy, though, the main concern of the British Labour Party in the 1920s was to differentiate itself from the Liberal Party. It aimed to make use of any potential Liberal defectors in its efforts to replace the Liberals as the main opposition to the Conservatives. Although MacDonald’s government lasted only as long as the Liberals allowed it to, in its nine months in office it asserted its independence from that party. The SFIO, by contrast, not only had to overcome problems ensuing from the split with the Communists, but also had to navigate the new French electoral system in order to maximise its position in the Assembly through participation in the Cartel des Gauches of 1924 – an alliance of parties on the left aimed at bringing down the right-wing Bloc National. This involved so much compromise and negotiation with the Radicals and their associates that some have seen it as marking the beginning of the collapse of effective parliamentary government in France.³⁶ It was harder for Blum than MacDonald to reconcile left and right within the party, so he turned down the opportunity to serve in Herriot’s 1924 government for fear of alienating the *néo-Guesdists* who rejected any notion of the SFIO as a reformist party. In 1927 Blum justified his decision in his pamphlet ‘Radicalisme et Socialisme’: ‘We were convinced that we would bring more strength to the Radical ministry by supporting it from without, with the unanimity of our party, than by collaborating in the name of an uncertain and divided party’.³⁷ As Tony Judt puts it, ‘preserving the old party and its ideological apparatus was necessary, both in order to continue and advance the cause of a truly

³² Andrew, C. (2009). *The Defence of the Realm: The Authorised History of MI5*. London, Allen Lane. p148

³³ Morgan, A. (1987). *Ramsay MacDonald*. Manchester, Manchester University Press. p96

³⁴ Andrew, C. (2009). *The Defence of the Realm: The Authorised History of MI5*. London, Allen Lane. p148

³⁵ Parker, J. (1982). *Father of the House*. London, Routledge Kegan Paul. Riddell, N. (1995). "The Age of Cole." *Historical Journal* 38(4): 933-957. pp933-957

³⁶ Wileman, D. G. (1994). "What the Market Will Bear: The French Cartel Elections of 1924." *Journal of Contemporary History* 29(3): 483-500.

³⁷ Colton, J. (1987). *Léon Blum : A Humanist in Politics*. Durham N.C., Duke University Press.p67

democratic and revolutionary socialism in France, and to keep in one piece the preferred instrument to that end'.³⁸

Yet refusal to enter into government with the Radicals would inevitably leave the SFIO not only politically impotent but also increasingly unattractive to the electorate at a time when its position vis à vis communists should have been improving. So, following further overtures from the Radicals in 1926, Blum produced a formula that he would later refer to as his most important contribution to SFIO doctrine: the notion of 'exercise of power' – through social reforms and economic measures within the existing system - as distinct from 'conquest of power' when the party might hope to transform society and replace capitalism.³⁹ The fact that Blum subsequently wrote that he got the idea for this from a discussion with Ramsay MacDonald about why the latter had assumed power in 1924⁴⁰ indicates how the conundrum of how to lead an ostensibly anti-capitalist party within a society whose economy was shaped by free enterprise, was one that faced both leaders. The strong trade union element in the Labour Party probably explains why MacDonald – in contrast to Blum - was able to face down the demand from the Independent Labour Party (ILP) that Labour should refuse to govern until a parliamentary majority would enable it to enact truly socialist legislation.⁴¹

Newspapers played an important role in British and French politics during the 1920s and trade union funding would also play its part in Britain, helping the *Daily Herald* become a mass circulation daily. Meanwhile, the debate over participation in coalitions continued to divide members of the SFIO: those advocating participation set up *La Vie Socialiste* in 1924, under Pierre Renaudel (an old associate of Jaurès) and Marcel Déat, whilst Zyromski and Bracke-Desrousseaux brought out *La Bataille Socialiste* in 1927 and gained, for a time at least, the support of the party's secretary-general, Paul Faure.⁴² Blum's task and the purpose of his formula for the 'exercise of power' was, as Colton puts it, to 'bridge the gap between the reformists and revolutionist elements and between the parliamentary group and the rank and file'⁴³ and to a large extent he attempted to do this through the medium of journalism. *Le Populaire* first appeared in 1916, when it was founded by anti-war socialists. Blum, Faure and Longuet co-edited it from 1921, (when the Communist Party took over *L'Humanité*) but it did not emerge from serious financial difficulties and appear regularly as a daily until 1927, when Blum took over as 'political director' of what became the official organ of the SFIO. Blum's editorials were a key way in which party policy was described and explained, Blum himself remarking that he wanted the paper to be 'a

³⁸ Judt, T. (1986). Marxism and the French Left: Studies on Labour and Politics in France 1830-1981. Oxford, Oxford University Press.p148

³⁹ Colton, J. (1987). Léon Blum : A Humanist in Politics. Durham N.C., Duke University Press.p71

⁴⁰ Bergounioux, A. and G. Grunberg (2005). Les socialistes français et le pouvoir : l'ambition et le remords. Paris, Fayard. P103

⁴¹ Foote, G. (1985). The Labour Party's Political Thought: A History. London, Croom Helm.p127

⁴² Pradoux, M. (2002). Daniel Mayer, un socialiste dans la Résistance. Paris, Les Editions de l'Atelier.p43

⁴³ Colton, J. (1987). Léon Blum : A Humanist in Politics. Durham N.C., Duke University Press. p81

journal of education and combat'.⁴⁴ However, the paper never experienced the kind of mass circulation enjoyed by the Radical-Socialist *L'Oeuvre* which reached over a quarter of a million in 1939, when *Le Populaire* was still only selling 55,000. Unlike the British *Daily Herald*, whose sales reached two million in 1933,⁴⁵ it did not sell to both party and trade unions, and the absence of trade union funding meant Blum and others had to put their own funds into *Le Populaire* on occasion. The full title was *Le Populaire de Paris*, and this is evidence of the fact that the SFIO in the 1920s was in some ways still a small metropolitan party. In addition, Hodge argues that the need to shore up party unity and the seeming success of the *Cartel des Gauches* strategy meant not enough effort was spent on 'rebuilding the SFIO as a self-sustaining national political corporation with a presence in every corner of France'.⁴⁶ Nevertheless *Le Populaire* provided a platform for the outstanding journalism of Blum, and his diatribes against the foreign policy of the Poincaré government 'helped shape social consciousness', according to Lacouture.⁴⁷

The search for a distinctive socialist foreign policy that would further international reconciliation also preoccupied the British Labour Party and would be further complicated by its brief accession to power in 1924 when it had to govern rather than merely oppose. In Britain the Union of Democratic Control, set up in 1914, had brought together progressives in urging non-annexationist war aims and democratic control of foreign policy during the conflict. Although not overtly pacifist, it became associated with an anti-war stance and a demand for a conciliatory peace. In 1919 it denounced the Versailles Treaty as too harsh on Germany. By this time the UDC was essentially a Labour Party organisation as well as a means whereby Liberals who blamed nationalism for war could shift to Labour. Labour Party international policy in the early 1920s became increasingly determined by the leadership of the UDC, which included MacDonald⁴⁸ and seemed to presage a distinctive approach to foreign policy. This included opposition to the League of Nations, which the UDC condemned as a council of victors dominated by imperialists.

It was also a policy that was largely hostile to the French government, if not France in general. One leading member, E.D. Morel, showed strong sympathy to Germany and antipathy to the French government and this approach was shared by many on the British left in the 1920s. Robert Boyce has pointed out that both the National Executive Committee (NEC) of the Labour Party and the Trades

⁴⁴ Ibid. pp 62-64

⁴⁵ <http://www.nationalmediamuseum.org.uk/~media/Files/NMeM/PDF/Collections/Photography/DailyHeraldNewspaperArchive.ashx>

⁴⁶ Hodge, C. C. (1994). *The Trammels of Tradition : Social Democracy in Britain, France and Germany*. Westport, Greenwood Press.p100

⁴⁷ Lacouture, J. (1982). *Léon Blum trans. G. Holloch*. London, Holmes & Meier. P152

⁴⁸ F. M. Leventhal, 'Union of Democratic Control (act. 1914–1924)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edn, Oxford University Press, Oct 2009 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/theme/95108>, accessed 6 Nov 2009]

Unions Congress (TUC) declared their opposition to any Franco-British pact in February 1921, noting that the British public, including the working class, was 'thoroughly disaffected' with France at this time.⁴⁹ So, whilst hostility to Poincaré's invasion of the Ruhr in 1923 was widespread in Britain, it was particularly strident amongst those on the left. Indeed, only the *Daily Mail* and *Evening News* showed any support for the French action. The *New Statesman* protested 'France has revealed herself as the latest – as she was the earliest – mad dog of Europe... The French are our enemies again – as they have been for a thousand years.'⁵⁰

However, the experience of power forced MacDonald and his party to modify their attitudes and during its short-lived period in office in 1924, Labour showed itself prepared to work within the existing treaty and League arrangements and to negotiate with the French government. Winkler has shown the importance of the work of the Labour Party Advisory Committee on International Questions, set up in 1918, in moving the party away from pacifism and towards a more pragmatic internationalism and acceptance of the League of Nations as the means to international security.⁵¹ Thus the London Conference of 1924 saw a successful resolution of the Ruhr crisis, which was eased by the assumption to power in France of Herriot's Radical government in July. MacDonald persuaded Herriot to accept the 'Geneva Protocol' 'for the pacific settlement of disputes' rather than insist on a treaty of mutual assistance⁵² (although it was not ratified before Labour fell from office). In addition, Britain recognised the Soviet Union. Whilst the strength of the UDC in 1924 is shown by the fact that nine members of MacDonald's cabinet were members, organisation started to go into decline after MacDonald began to disagree with its main tenets. MacDonald underlined this by refusing to give a ministerial post to E.D. Morel, whose influence waned as that of Arthur Henderson, a strong advocate of the League and Labour's representative in the wartime coalition, grew. Leventhal has pointed out that Henderson was 'never as wedded to Francophobe and pacifist attitudes as many in the movement' and later, as Foreign Secretary was keen to establish a close relationship with Briand.⁵³ Whilst there were later efforts in the 1930s to resuscitate the UDC and make it an anti-fascist campaigning group, its attempts to produce a truly distinctive approach to foreign policy had ceased. French socialists may have been spared the exigencies of office as they refused to enter a coalition with Herriot's Radicals, but the experience of the First World War may well have made many of them even more conscious of the problem of security for their country than their British counterparts, who had at least been spared the horrors of the invasion and occupation of the *Nord* region, although they still eschewed an active

⁴⁹ Boyce, R. (2009). *The Great Interwar Crisis and the Collapse of Globalization*. Hampshire, Palgrave Macmillan.p121

⁵⁰ *New Statesman & Nation* 20.1.23

⁵¹ Winkler, H. R. (1994). *Paths not taken: British Labour & International Policy in the 1920s*. Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press. p2

⁵² Morgan, A. (1987). *Ramsay MacDonald*. Manchester, Manchester University Press. p112

⁵³ Leventhal, F. M. (1989). *Arthur Henderson*. Manchester, Manchester University Press.p129 & p153

foreign policy. However, they were broadly in agreement with MacDonald's approach; though willing to accept the League of Nations, they argued that it should become a 'union of peoples and not just a syndicate of governments'.⁵⁴ They denounced Poincaré's action in the Ruhr, warmly welcomed the plan for a Geneva Protocol (with its promise of general disarmament), and were ready to support *La diplomatie Génevoise*, as it was continued by Briand later in that decade. Briand had been in the SFIO in the past, but while foreign minister from 1925 he is chiefly remembered for his enthusiasm for the League. Whilst the French and British left can be seen to have had broadly similar views on foreign policy - including a dislike of alliances - in the end persistent concerns about security meant Blum was prepared to countenance regional pacts as long as they were 'open to all', while supporting Locarno and the resumption of diplomatic relations between France and the Soviet Union in a way still unthinkable in Britain.⁵⁵ (In 1927 Britain broke off diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union, but these were restored two years later.)

It is possible to make some comparisons between the UDC and the Ligue des droits de l'Homme (LdH) that bring out some of the similarities and differences in the way such groups interacted with party politics. The LdH, founded in France during the Dreyfus Affair in 1898, and appealing to both Socialists and Radicals - including Hériot - represented 'an enormous moral authority' in French political culture of the second half of the Third Republic'.⁵⁶ However, the need to defend the republic and the values for which it purportedly stood meant that hostility to 'German imperialism' had militated against any kind of agreement during the First World War on the need for a negotiated peace, and, although there was considerable interest in an international organisation to maintain peace after the war, French interests would have to take precedence.⁵⁷ After the war, it was also divided on the right approach to take to the Soviet Union. However, such disagreements did not prevent the LdH from maintaining its important position in French politics. It would play a key role in bringing the parties of the left and centre together in the Popular Front government of 1936, 89% of whose cabinet ministers were members. However, Ingram has shown that disagreements over communism and the Soviet Union after 1937 led to a steep decline in membership, so that it was in 'complete disarray' by 1939.⁵⁸ Thus both the UDC and LDH were at their most successful when attempting to rally and influence thinking on the left, but in difficulties when the compromises forced by active involvement in government caused irreparable rifts within the membership. While the UDC drew on traditions of Christian socialism and nonconformity, the LdH traced its roots to republican virtues. Although both traditions

⁵⁴ Gombin, R. (1970). *Les socialistes et la guerre – SFIO et la politique étrangère entre les deux guerres mondiales*. Paris, Mouton.p110

⁵⁵ Colton, J. (1987). *Léon Blum : A Humanist in Politics*. Durham N.C., Duke University Press.p68

⁵⁶ Ingram, N. (2008). "Selbstmord or Euthanasia? Who killed the Ligue des droits de l'homme?" *French History* **22**(3).

⁵⁷ Naquet, E. (1998). "Entre justice et patrie: la Ligue des droits de l'homme et la Grande Guerre." *Le Mouvement social*(183): 93-109.

⁵⁸ Ingram, N. (2008). "Selbstmord or Euthanasia? Who killed the Ligue des droits de l'homme?" *French History* **22**(3).

challenged conservative doctrines and the power of religious hierarchies, they did not always promote mutual understanding between the British and French left, even impeding this at times.

Another area where compromises had to be made was in the formation of domestic policy. Ideology was not enough to unite the left, let alone woo the electorate. Whilst the issue of relations with other parties and participation in government had tended to dominate internal discussions, the SFIO did develop a programme in the 1920s, making use of some ideas from the CGT, such as the tripartite administration of factories. By 1924 there was a set of policies that included the eight hour day, a minimum wage, rights of trade unions, regulation of immigration, raising of pensions, rent controls, social housing, protection for mother and child, better educational opportunities as well as some kind of capture of national wealth, including transport, fuel, mines, banks, insurance companies, on behalf of the people. However, Alain Bergounioux and Gérard Grunberg insist that this was no more than the reformism of a pressure group and there was a marked absence of detailed plans.⁵⁹ The lack of such plans would make it difficult to formulate a clear response to the world economic crisis of the early 1930s and it took the crisis of war and occupation before the bulk of the French left would embrace more concrete policies.

The economic downturn of the late 1920s struck the British Labour Party soon after it formed its second government in the summer of 1929 shortly before the Wall Street crash. After this event unemployment - already a grave problem - was set to rise dramatically. The party had no overall majority and was again dependent on the support of the Liberal Party. The Liberals had produced a pamphlet - *We Can Conquer Unemployment* - in March that year. Its innovative recommendations for deficit financing of extensive public works were dismissed by the Labour leadership which instead promised "National Development and Reconstruction leading towards the Socialist and Co-operative Commonwealth ... the only alternative to Reaction and Revolution".⁶⁰ MacDonald preferred vague declarations to having any truck with proposals that emanated from the Liberal Party, showing that the need to assert Labour Party independence was still his uppermost priority. However, after Labour's accession to power, a split occurred when the Labour group appointed to tackle rising joblessness appeared hesitant and unwilling to challenge Chancellor Philip Snowden over his fixation with financial rectitude. One member, Oswald Mosley, resigned to take his more radical proposals to the party conference. On that occasion MacDonald won the vote by insisting that 'we are not on trial, it is the system that is on trial...' and Mosley left. Mosley's analysis of the unemployment problem has subsequently received some endorsement. A.J.P. Taylor claimed, "His proposals were more creative than those of Lloyd George and offered a blueprint for most of the constructive advances in economic

⁵⁹ Bergounioux, A. and G. Grunberg (2005). *Les socialistes français et le pouvoir : l'ambition et le remords*. Paris, Fayard. p110

⁶⁰ <http://www.labour-party.org.uk/manifestos/1929/1929-labour-manifesto.shtml> accessed 7.11.09

policy to the present day... evidence of a superlative talent".⁶¹ However, his breakaway party soon became embroiled with fascism and was increasingly marginalised, with membership dropping below 8000 in 1935.

MacDonald's government collapsed in 1931 when the leadership's insistence on financial orthodoxy and proposed cuts in unemployment benefit alienated several members of the government and caused a split. MacDonald's ensuing alliance with the Conservative Party in the National Government made the need to revitalise Labour Party policy all the more urgent. The disaffiliation of the ILP in 1932, following Maxton's continual attacks on MacDonald's government, suggested the party was disintegrating.

The need to respond coherently to the world crisis also had repercussions in France. A split in the SFIO occurred in 1933, mainly over the issue of participation in a Radical government but also over the question of a planned economy and a stronger role for the state. Twenty-eight deputies, dubbed *néo-socialistes*, were expelled from the party including Déat, Marquet, Renaudel, and Ramadier. Déat and Marquand were not only impatient with Blum's tactics; they also no longer saw capitalism as the problem and were increasingly interested in authoritarian alternatives. Some commentators have argued that 'Neo-socialism has been labelled fascism of a left-wing variety, but perhaps it was nearer to Nazism'.⁶² The actions of both Mosley and Déat testify to the appeal of fascism as a radical solution to the hesitations of the party leadership.

One of those who had sympathy with Mosley's frustration with MacDonald's style of leadership (if not with Mosley himself) was G.D.H. Cole, who combined the qualities and roles of 'the academic, the economist, the historian, the philosopher, the journalist and the politician' in a way reminiscent of Blum, but in a rather different mix. Cole preferred the role of *eminence grise* for the Labour Party⁶³ and was instrumental in bringing about a new forum for policy making after the 1931 débâcle. By the late 1920s, Riddell argues that Cole had moved away from his early advocacy of guild socialism as a panacea, arguing instead for the state to play the main role in combating unemployment – a view he put forward in a 1929 pamphlet *The Next Ten Years in Social and Economic Policy*, though this was largely ignored by MacDonald and Snowden.⁶⁴ Cole had decided that the Webbs' preoccupation with the Soviet Union had made the Fabian Society moribund as a centre for discussion and formulation of policy for the Labour Party. There were nine Fabians in MacDonald's cabinet of 1929-31 (including

⁶¹ Taylor, A. J. P. (1965). *English History 1914-1945*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.p285

⁶² Bernard, P. and H. Dubief (1988). *The Decline of the Third Republic*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. p204

⁶³ Riddell, N. (1995). "The Age of Cole." *Historical Journal* 38(4): 933-957.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

Sidney Webb as Colonial Secretary), but their failure to produce any kind of solution to the economic crisis seemed to support Cole's position.

Cole and associates started a series of meetings attended by, amongst others, Clement Attlee, Stafford Cripps, Ellen Wilkinson, Philip Noel-Baker, Hugh Gaitskell and Ernest Bevin to concentrate on the development of practical policy. They subsequently set up the Society for Socialist Inquiry and Propaganda (SSIP) in 1931 as a ginger group 'to bring back somehow into the Labour movement a sense of socialist purpose and socialist action'.⁶⁵ However, the SSIP itself was fairly ineffectual and was soon absorbed into Stafford Cripps's left-wing Socialist League (set up in 1932). The Socialist League was seen by its secretary, T. E. Murphy, as 'the organisation of revolutionary socialists who are an integral part of the labour movement for the purpose of winning it completely for revolutionary socialism'.⁶⁶ It did, however, for a time at least, provide a forum for discussion for an impressive number of Labour Party activists, including Aneurin Bevan, Clement Attlee and Ellen Wilkinson.

Much more important was the New Fabian Research Bureau (NFRB), also set up in 1931 by Cole, which was to play a significant role in the re-establishment of the Labour Party as an effective political force. Although the NFRB's membership never reached 1000 before it merged with the Fabian Society in 1939, it included leading Labour intellectuals of every wing and persuasion.⁶⁷ It was the home of planners and economists and acolytes of Hugh Dalton and Herbert Morrison. It began to develop detailed policy blueprints (later to form the basis of Labour policies after the Second World War). A visit by the NFRB to the Soviet Union in 1932 appears to have increased the group's interest in centralised planning. Meanwhile, although, as Ben Pimlott has noted, 'Keynes' appeal to socialists in 1932 to take up policies which were economically sound went unheeded',⁶⁸ the young protégés of Dalton, who had 'learnt their socialism in university common rooms' were to become much more enthusiastic about his theories. In 1936, one of these, Hugh Gaitskell, would travel along with Cole and the son of Stafford Cripps to attend the meeting of international planners at Geneva, hosted by the Swiss Foyer *Socialiste Internationale*.⁶⁹ This suggests that younger economists were not only open to new ideas, but keen to share them across national frontiers. From France an example of another of these was André Philip, who had met Cole in 1920, when researching his thesis in Britain and had gone on to lecture in Leeds and write about MacDonald's first government.⁷⁰ He was now teaching economics at Lyon, and would be elected as an SFIO deputy in 1936. Philip had something else in

⁶⁵ Cole, M. (1961). *The Story of Fabian Socialism*. London, Heinemann.p222

⁶⁶ <http://www.marxists.org/archive/murphy-it/1933/07/conference.htm> accessed 8.11.09

⁶⁷ Pimlott, B. (1977). *Labour and the Left in the 1930s*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

⁶⁸ Ibid. pp200-201

⁶⁹ Horn, G.-R. (2001). "From 'Radical' to 'Realistic' : Hendrik de Man and the International Plan Conferences at Pontigny and Geneva, 1934-1937." *Contemporary European History* 10(02): 239-265.

⁷⁰ Philip, L. (1988). *André Philip*. Paris, Beauchesne.

common with many on the British left, such as Attlee: he was a Christian Socialist, who saw his beliefs as predating Marxism and highly moral in their basis.

The question of how to respond to the world economic crisis of the 1930s fuelled debates on policy formation in France no less than in Britain, and brought into sharp focus the clash between ideology and feasible solutions. Whilst the left of the SFIO saw the crisis as leading to the imminent demise of capitalism, Blum and others, anxious to preserve unity while offering something concrete to the electorate, said socialists must work to bring about a state of affairs where such a crisis could not happen.⁷¹ This might seem dangerously close to the kind of vague statements with which MacDonald had tried to paper over the lack of concrete policy in Britain, and indeed internal bickering would mar Labour Party attempts to produce a convincing programme. Whilst Vincent Auriol was ready to call for large scale public works - *travaux d'outillage national*, the French left saw attempts to embrace *planisme* as accepting the mixed economy and compromising with capitalism, even if it did not go as far as taking on the departed *néo-socialiste* enthusiasm for 'order, authority and nation'.⁷²

French leftist interest in planning was stimulated by the work of the Belgian, Henri de Man, and small study groups began to form and promote the idea of an international planning conference.⁷³ However, at the SFIO Toulouse conference of 1934, Paul Faure rejected the idea of planning: 'cette chimère folle de réalisations partielles et progressives du socialisme par tranches au sein du capitalisme maintenu'.⁷⁴ Georges Lefranc, a young socialist intellectual and member of a group which tried to convert the party to 'planning', was thwarted by the party hierarchy and by Blum himself and so transferred his energies to the CGT.⁷⁵ Here, plans that would bring about the centralisation of credit and nationalisation of key industries were developed by Jouhaux, but links between the CGT and SFIO remained fragile and when the latter called for an international study week on planning, de Man was unresponsive, fearing socialist intellectuals would not want to attend an event where the pragmatic approach of Jouhaux might be dominant.⁷⁶ This epitomised the continued gulf between the unions and the politicians in France. Indeed, Jouhaux would refuse to join Blum's government in 1936 although many trade unionists had attended the 1934 international plan meeting, hosted by the Belgians at Pontigny, along with the now up and coming socialist deputy for the Rhône, André Philip, an early enthusiast for de Man's ideas. (There was only one British delegate, but a far bigger British presence in the 1936 event.)

⁷¹ Bergounioux, A. and G. Grunberg (2005). *Les socialistes français et le pouvoir : l'ambition et le remords*. Paris, Fayard. p113

⁷² Ibid. pp116-117

⁷³ Horn, G.-R. (2001). "From 'Radical' to 'Realistic' : Hendrik de Man and the International Plan Conferences at Pontigny and Geneva, 1934-1937." *Contemporary European History* 10(02): 239-265.

⁷⁴ A. Bergounioux & G. Grunberg op cit pp 107-8

⁷⁵ Jackson, J. (1988). *The Popular Front in France: Defending Democracy 1934-38*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. p xi

⁷⁶ Horn, G.-R. (2001). "From 'Radical' to 'Realistic' : Hendrik de Man and the International Plan Conferences at Pontigny and Geneva, 1934-1937." *Contemporary European History* 10(02): 239-265. p248

Nevertheless, in a series of articles in *Le Populaire* in 1935, Blum stated the case against nationalisation as a socialist policy. However, the fact that he compared nationalisation and socialism with the exercise and conquest of power respectively suggests he might accept state ownership as an expedient in the short term, and Sassoon claims that this was indeed the only policy of the *planistes* that Blum accepted.⁷⁷

A problem shared by would-be policy makers in both Britain and France was their desire to preserve the common heritage of liberal freedoms whilst achieving greater equality. The attempt to find a course between the Scylla and Charybdis of fascism and Soviet communism which would bring effective social and political change through an alternative kind of planning seemed at times impossible, if not futile. However, both Jaurès and Blum were fond of quoting Guizot's remark, '*les pessimistes ne sont que des spectateurs*'⁷⁸ and there were continued attempts to find solutions based on pragmatism as well as political principle.

On the political front, relations between socialists and communists were again a focus of passionate debate in the mid 1930s, especially after the reversal of Comintern policy of non-co-operation with other parties in 1933, following the success of fascism in Germany. David Blaazer, citing the Executive Committee of the Communist International 'Statement on the German Situation and the United Front' of 1933, points out:

Between 1929 and 1933, the Comintern had characterised Social Democracy as 'Social Fascism' and had urged its constituent parties to engage in the 'sharpest struggle' against its 'left' variety....In March 1933, however, after Hitler had come to power, the Comintern changed its approach to Social-Democratic leaders with offers of joint activity against fascism, and, if this were accepted to refrain, for the period of the common struggle against capital and Fascism, from attacks on 'Social-Democratic organisations.'⁷⁹

Whilst the collapse of the second Labour government had already turned the left of the British party towards more radical, even revolutionary, solutions to the problems of capitalism, in France the SFIO's tactic of giving very conditional support to Radical governments was producing virtual political paralysis, with the result that 'the executive had more or less ceased to function'.⁸⁰ There was an urgent need to look for a different kind of electoral alliance, especially after what seemed like the real possibility of a right-wing takeover in February 1934. So whilst the SFIO had tried to stop its members joining the intellectuals in the *Comité Amsterdam-Pleyel* in 1933 because of its Comintern origins, a

⁷⁷ Sassoon, D. (1997). *One Hundred Years of Socialism*. London, Fontana. p66

⁷⁸ *Political Quarterly* Vol 4:1 "Leon Blum"

⁷⁹ Blaazer, D. (1992). *The Popular Front and the Progressive Tradition 1884-1939: Socialist, Liberals and the Quest for Unity*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. p160

⁸⁰ Jackson, J. (1988). *The Popular Front in France: Defending Democracy 1934-38*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. p22

year later the scene had changed and the stage was set for the Parti Communiste Français (PCF) and SFIO to end the bitter feuds that had raged especially fiercely since the PCF's *classe v classe* tactic had led to SFIO members being labelled 'social fascists'. This led to the French 'Popular Front' government of 1936.

In Britain, there were two main proposals for broadening the response to fascism: the United Front and the Popular Front. While the *United Front* was based around the belief that fascism was a form of capitalism and thus bourgeois parties (Conservative, Liberal) must be excluded from the mix, the *Popular Front* broadly adopted a pragmatic position, seeking the best way to prevent the spread of fascism and oppose the fascist dictatorships, and to build as broad a political alliance as possible.⁸¹ By 1934 the ILP had already formed links with the Communist Party, which had expanded its appeal through the activities of the National Unemployed Workers' Movement. The Socialist League meanwhile propounded an analysis of fascism that was largely indistinguishable from that of the CP.⁸² The Labour leadership, however, continued to prioritise party independence and the need to appeal to an electorate mostly hostile to Bolshevism. It rejected the overtures that came from the Communist Party in the wake of the Comintern's volte face, the Labour Party Conference of 1937 dismissing the united front tactic and placing any association with the Communist Party out of bounds. The influential union leader Bevin argued that any extension of the power or influence of the Communist Party would produce a pro-fascist reaction⁸³ thereby rejecting a united front out of hand. Cripps, however, continued his campaign for links with the Communists and, despite his position on the National Executive Committee (NEC) and standing within the party, was expelled in 1939 – shortly after Hitler's invasion of Prague. Meanwhile, the notion of the *popular front*, which might have involved closer ties with Liberals and Conservative rebels, was largely played out in terms of the development of Labour policy towards rearmament and possible alternatives to appeasement. Certainly Pimlott sees the story of the Labour Party as one of missed opportunities caused largely by the kinds of divisions alluded to above, with the consequence that 'the impact of the entire British left on practical problems and immediate events was virtually nil.'⁸⁴ Similarly Hodge condemns Cripps' notion of a 'socialist foreign policy' as 'in effect...a philosophical escape from the need to have any foreign policy worthy of the name'.⁸⁵

⁸¹ Blaazer, D. (1992). The Popular Front and the Progressive Tradition 1884-1939: Socialist, Liberals and the Quest for Unity. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. p9

⁸² Ibid. p159

⁸³ Naylor, J. (1969). Labour's International Policy: The Labour Party in the 1930s. London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson.

⁸⁴ Pimlott, B. (1977). Labour and the Left in the 1930s. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. p1

⁸⁵ Hodge, C. C. (1994). The Trammels of Tradition : Social Democracy in Britain, France and Germany. Westport, Greenwood Press. p87

In contrast, Hodge applauds Blum's attempt to preserve and develop social democracy in France, despite the difficulties involved in leading a Popular Front government in 1936. The Radicals in this government made any departure from financial orthodoxy virtually impossible and Communists offered limited support and much criticism from the sidelines. At least, he argues, Blum successfully 'used the notion of republican defence to rally the Left and ridicule Bolshevism', whilst taking advantage of the moment of opportunity between electoral victory and a downward turn in French finances to bring in significant social and labour reforms. This, Hodge claims, despite the failure to rectify the structural weaknesses of the SFIO, was 'one of the great rearguard actions of European democracy in the time of Hitler and Stalin'.⁸⁶ Having come to power in singularly unpropitious circumstances - a resurgent Germany, an economy in deep difficulty and the Communist Party on an upward trend, Hodge asserts, 'the Popular Front was the ... SFIO's single flash of governing glory'.⁸⁷ The fall of France would later bring heavy criticism of the reforms of the Popular Front, especially in the British right-wing press, which blamed them for military unpreparedness. Yet they gave the SFIO tangible achievements in a decade when the British Labour Party had little to celebrate apart from being the main party of opposition.

Relations with the Soviet Union and communist parties were not the only issue preoccupying French and British socialists when trying to develop a coherent and practical response to the growth of fascism in the second half of the 1930s. Those who had long supported the League of Nations looked for ways in which it could be re-invigorated through closer Anglo-French collaboration following its failure to prevent Japanese expansion into Manchuria in 1931. Co-operation with Liberals or Radicals was central to the endeavour to re-establish the League as a force for peace. In Britain for a time it looked as though Conservative rebels could also be enlisted, through for example, the group Focus for Defence of Freedom and Peace set up in 1936 which included Churchill and Archibald Sinclair as well as Kingsley Martin (editor of the *New Statesman*) and the editors of the *Economist* and *Spectator*. The most prominent member from the Parliamentary Labour Party was Philip Noel-Baker. Noel-Baker was also a member of the NFRB. He went on to become the same year the Vice-president of the International Peace Campaign (IPC or RUP – *Rassemblement Universel pour la Paix*). This was a time when many of the left were having to re-examine their long-held pacifist beliefs. Internationalism no longer seemed an appropriate option, either, when so many European countries were acquiring fascist - or quasi-fascist - governments. Leonard Woolf, prominent on the Labour Party's Advisory Committee on international Questions, had always feared that internationalism with its appeal to the use of

⁸⁶ Ibid. p95

⁸⁷ Ibid. p142

reason in dealing with people across borders would be imperilled by nationalism – drawing its strength from control over mass psychology – and events seemed to be proving him right.⁸⁸

The presidents of the RUP were the maverick British Conservative, Robert Cecil, who had helped set up the League of Nations, and Pierre Cot, the left-wing French Radical, who was Air Minister in the Popular Front government. Jouhaux was also a member as was the French Socialist, Louis Dolivet, who became the main organiser.⁸⁹ The campaign aimed to co-ordinate the work of existing pacifist organisations supporting the League of Nations on a policy of respect for treaty obligations, arms reduction and the peaceful resolution of conflict.⁹⁰ Whilst this organisation does seem to have produced some useful exchanges (for example between Noel-Baker and Cot over policy on Spain), it also suffered from supposed links with communists. This was shown by the problem of whether to invite the Spanish communist fighter, 'La Passionara' to speak at their conference in 1938 in case this caused a 'scandal on the right'.⁹¹ Events were moving much too swiftly for the kind of agenda the RUP wanted to promote, though some connections were made that would be significant once war broke out. In any case, the RUP failed to restore the League's popularity or its position as a player in the increasingly desperate international situation following the Hoare Laval Plan in 1935 and the invasion of the Rhineland in 1936.⁹² Its failure perhaps typified the inability of progressives in Britain and France to find a means other than journalism to express their active opposition to fascism.

Despite the efforts of editors and politicians such as Noel-Baker and Dalton, there is no doubt that many in the British Labour Party remained suspicious of France and associated the French with a policy of treaty fulfilment that had fuelled fascism. Winkler has pointed out that Dalton had been 'influential in breaking down the almost psychopathic suspicion of France' that had characterised the attitudes of some in the party towards post-war French governments, but not all were yet won over to Blum's new government and its approach. This is indicated by a speech made by Maurice Schumann, a journalist and member of the SFIO, who came to Britain to speak to a Fabian weekend conference on Labour's foreign policy in June 1936. His main aim was to urge the Labour Party to embrace the need for collective security. He spoke of his reading of the early Fabians and declared that the Popular Front had brought in a revolution, where the workers sang the *Marseillaise* as well as the *Internationale*. (Indeed, the French left had only recently re-embraced the *Marseillaise*, which they had for a time seen as a symbol of the right.⁹³) When Labour MP Garro-Jones repeated a commonly held view amongst many

⁸⁸ Ashworth, L. M. (2007). *International Relations and the Labour Party*. London, New York, I. B. Tauris. p209

⁸⁹ Sessions, D. W. W. (1989). *Fighter for Peace - Philip Noel-Baker*. York, David Whitaker Ltd.p150

⁹⁰ Hull University Archives UDC DDC5/443

⁹¹ Sessions, D. W. W. (1989). *Fighter for Peace - Philip Noel-Baker*. York, David Whitaker Ltd. p149

⁹² Ceadel, M. (2000). *Semi-detached idealists the British peace movement and international relations, 1854-1945*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

⁹³ Pradoux, M. (2002). *Daniel Mayer, un socialiste dans la Résistance*. Paris, Les Editions de l'Atelier.p36

Labour back-benchers, that 'the Hitler regime had arisen primarily owing to the injustices of Versailles and the prolonged resistance of France to change, together with failure of the Allied Powers to give effect to the preamble of the Treaty, especially with regard to disarmament', Schumann countered by arguing that the National Government had made matters worse with the Anglo-German Naval Pact whilst the Popular Front government had taken the initiative in getting arms limitations – 'in nationalising the manufacture of war materials on French territory, thus assuming all the responsibilities which are implied in an international system of control'. Schumann spoke of his admiration for the Fabian Society and his reading of Fabian pamphlets, adding that he hoped they would conciliate British opinion, including socialist opinion, which was so strongly anti-French'. He appealed to the audience to support his government and collective security, avoiding isolation and 'the policy of Ethelred the Unready.'⁹⁴

This exchange suggests that despite the efforts of leading figures and intellectuals on the left, some sections at least of the Labour Party had not yet found a way forward to a foreign policy that would actively seek solutions to the growing international crisis and not merely rely on blame and the pursuit of the chimera of general disarmament. Thus the new Labour leader, Attlee, was still saying 'Do not compete with the fascists in arms and they will not rearm' and Labour continued to vote against the defence budget.⁹⁵ In addition, Schumann's speech indicates that, despite the efforts of the left intelligentsia, and the efforts of newspapers such as *Tribune*, Blum's representatives still needed to strive to convince some on the British left that France could be part of the solution to the threats facing Europe, rather than part of the problem.

Unlike the British Labour Party, Blum's Popular Front government had to make decisions on a day-to-day basis about foreign policy and could not indulge in wishful thinking that fascism could be defeated by exhortation and example. Blum's main focus on improving relations with Britain, helped by his good relationship with Anthony Eden,⁹⁶ constrained his choices, as did the need to conciliate the Radicals, particularly over policy in Spain. Blum's willingness to explore all possible avenues to peace resulted in his welcoming the Schacht mission from Nazi Germany in August 1936 to discuss a possible deal about colonies. Whilst Blum's willingness to entertain such an idea (dismissed by Eden as 'utterly impossible'⁹⁷) may show a certain naivety, it also indicates that he was prepared to consider revision of Versailles - amongst other options - in the interests of peace. The origins of the non-intervention strategy on Spain and how far Blum was pressed into this by Baldwin and Eden has been the subject of some controversy, but Colton points out that Blum never subsequently blamed the British for initiating

⁹⁴ LSE [Fabian Society Archive /J/15/9](#)

⁹⁵ Naylor, J. (1969). *Labour's International Policy: The Labour Party in the 1930s*. London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson. p156

⁹⁶ Eden, A. (1962). *The Eden Memoirs : Facing the Dictators*. London, Cassell. P181

⁹⁷ Colton, J. (1987). *Léon Blum : A Humanist in Politics*. Durham N.C., Duke University Press.p215

the policy or forcing him into it.⁹⁸ However the leadership of the Labour Party had comparable concerns about party unity, the attitudes of Catholic voters and fear of association with communism, but, above all, escalation into general war, which led it towards supporting the policy of non-intervention even when many in the movement denounced this as betrayal and became actively involved in efforts to aid the Spanish Republic.⁹⁹ For people like Bevin, Citrine and Dalton, those who called for intervention were 'wallowing in sheer emotion, in vicarious valour. They had no clue in their mind to the risks, and the realities, for Britain of a general war'.¹⁰⁰ In November, Blum, under increasing pressure, came to London to try to persuade the Labour Party to back him if he relaxed non-intervention, but received no encouragement.

With the fall of the Popular Front government in 1937 and the increasingly tense international situation, efforts to promote Anglo-French co-operation intensified. Hugh Dalton (along with Bevin) had spent much of his time in the late 1930s pushing the Labour Party towards rearmament and a united willingness to contemplate the use of force, achieving his first success when Labour stopped voting against the defence estimates in 1937. Dalton visited Paris several times in the hope that he could influence the SFIO in the same direction. During the Czech crisis in September 1938 he, Citrine and others flew to meet Blum and colleagues in an effort to promote support for Czechoslovakia.¹⁰¹ However, only a few months earlier, at the Royan congress, Blum had clashed with those in his party who opposed rearmament and mutual assistance pacts against the dictators. In an effort to preserve a semblance of unity, the party had passed a nebulous resolution, 'French socialism desires peace even with the totalitarian imperialist powers, but it is not disposed to yield to all their enterprises',¹⁰² which testifies to the difficulty in developing an assertive approach. Dalton remarked in his diary on Blum's embarrassment at the degree of defeatism in his party.¹⁰³ Lacouture contends that Blum's remark that he felt 'cowardly relief' at the subsequent Munich agreement did not reflect a willingness to accept its terms, citing several articles in *Le Populaire* expressing his condemnation of the plan, and putting the remark in a context that is highly critical of Chamberlain and Daladier.¹⁰⁴ Nevertheless the SFIO and its leadership were only too aware of the threat of war, and could not even take heart from the existence of a German socialist movement as this had been effectively crushed.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Buchanan, T. (1991). "Britain's Popular Front? Aid Spain and the British Labour Movement." *History Workshop Journal* 31(1).

¹⁰⁰ Naylor, J. (1969). *Labour's International Policy: The Labour Party in the 1930s*. London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson.p164

¹⁰¹ Dalton, H. (1956). *The Fateful Years 1931-1945*. London, Frederick Muller Ltd.p186

¹⁰² Colton, J. (1987). *Léon Blum : A Humanist in Politics*. Durham N.C., Duke University Press. p312

¹⁰³ Dalton, H. (1956). *The Fateful Years 1931-1945*. London, Frederick Muller Ltd.p252

¹⁰⁴ Lacouture, J. (1982). *Léon Blum trans. G. Holloch*. London, Holmes & Meier. pp393-395

Although Attlee and his party were highly critical of Chamberlain's policy, there was still a desire to avoid an aggressive approach to preparing for war. Fears of a repeat of the First World War were widespread and just as heartfelt as in France. The belief that a similar war of attrition must be avoided expressed itself in a strong resistance to any form of conscription, which was not appreciated by those in France who now wanted Britain to show solidarity. Blum came to the House of Commons in May 1939 to dine with Attlee and Dalton. He urged them that some limited form of call-up would impress Hitler, even if, as Dalton noted in his diary, 'He well understood the technical arguments against it, and was willing to believe that it would make no early addition to our military strength'.¹⁰⁵ However, when Blum went on to write a leader in his paper also urging this course, there was such an outcry – even amongst Labour Francophiles such as Noel-Baker – that Blum had to defend himself by claiming he had done so at the behest of Roosevelt and his article did not represent official SFIO policy.¹⁰⁶ Nevertheless, there were those within the Labour Party who fought to change the party's policy; Daniel Hucker has described how Douglas Jay and Hugh Gaitskell persuaded Hugh Dalton to suggest to the Party that conscription of wealth should accompany any conscription of manpower. Leftist opposition continued however, despite French papers, such as the trade unionist *Le Peuple*, expressing their dismay and disappointment at the attitude of so many socialists in Britain.¹⁰⁷

Dealing with the imminent threat of war still vied with considerations of party politics in influencing policy. Naylor argues that 'opposition to conscription [in Britain] was made on ideological, strategic, industrial and historical grounds'.¹⁰⁸ In the end, the differences in ideology and history, past strategy and industrial and economic development that characterised France and Britain and their political organisations would seriously impede full understanding and co-operation. Thus, for example, the close involvement of trade unions in the Labour Party came as a result of the way industrialisation had progressed alongside political strategies of accommodation and compromise that featured less noticeably in French political development. These also resulted partly from the greater separation from the rest of the continent enjoyed by Britain with a correspondingly different outlook on how security might be endangered and best preserved. However, whilst party politics often got the upper hand during the period of Entente Cordiale, there were real efforts to find common ground and solutions to shared dilemmas by the two main parties of the left on either side of the Channel. Bonds were forged that reflected individual sympathies often enhanced by mutual respect, but the need for closer collaboration was not yet fully recognised.

¹⁰⁵ Dalton, H. (1956). *The Fateful Years 1931-1945*. London, Frederick Muller Ltd. p252

¹⁰⁶ Churchill Archives Centre GBR/0014/NBKR letter May 1939

¹⁰⁷ Hucker, D. (2008). "Franco-British Relations and the Question of Conscription in Britain, 1938–1939." *Contemporary European History* 17(04): 437-456.

¹⁰⁸ Naylor, J. (1969). *Labour's International Policy: The Labour Party in the 1930s*. London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson. p281

Chapter Three: Representations of France in left-wing British journalism in the 1930s.

This chapter explores some of the ways in which British left-wing journalists, activists and intellectuals wrote about France in the 1930s. The previous chapter showed how the different histories of the Labour Party and the SFIO presented some obstacles to a fuller understanding of each other's approaches to policy-making and political participation, although there were sufficient similarities in the dilemmas they confronted to make dialogue worthwhile. Whilst some historians have pointed to a strengthening Francophobia at this time,¹ this chapter will concentrate on demonstrating how shared interests and an enthusiasm for greater understanding and closer ties developed during this decade and were reflected in the journalism of the left. The flow of ideas was stimulated by the growth in the number and circulation of the journals and newspapers discussed here. These had a variety of flavours, reflecting their different approaches to engaging readers with the critical issues of this decade. All showed a lively interest in events in the Soviet Union, the British Empire, the United States, and other parts of Europe. However the focus here is on how their writers commented on France and the French left and attempted to find common ground in their search for solutions to the predicaments they faced. This chapter, then, looks at just one aspect of the multi-directional flow of people and ideas in this critical period in Europe's history, thereby shedding light on one part of the transnational conversations of the European left at this time.

One of the publications examined here, the *New Statesman*, changed hands in 1931. This was a time when the British Labour Party was in crisis as the second Labour government failed to cope confidently with the economy as depression struck and then split, with seemingly catastrophic consequences for the movement. As shown in Chapter Two, 1930-31 was also a time when a number of initiatives were taken to stimulate new thinking on the left and one such was the founding of another of the journals to be considered here, the *Political Quarterly*. Although the early 1930s were in many ways a time of introspection for many on the British left, the *Political Quarterly* also began commissioning articles from writers from France and elsewhere, challenging the insularity of much of the British press. The *New Statesman* also began to look to the European left when the need for a stronger response to right-wing nationalism became more pressing after the success of the Nazi Party in Germany in 1933. Its journalists condemned the solutions of 'imperialist' politicians two decades earlier and began to look to new ways to bring together European socialists.

¹ Tombs, R. and I. Tombs (2006). *That Sweet Enemy - Britain and France : The History of a Love-Hate Relationship*. London, Heinemann. P 524 'In Britain ... progressive opinion became Francophobic'.

Another publication to be examined in this chapter is *Labour*. First published in 1933, this paper aimed to strengthen socialist internationalism, not only against fascism, but also against Soviet communism. The change in the Comintern's approach to social democracy, along with the French crisis of 1934 - when far-right leagues appeared able to threaten the republic - led to a renewed interest in collaboration between anti-fascist parties in France, Spain and Britain. The formation of popular front governments in Spain and France in 1936 would be the backdrop for many of the discussions and disputes in left-wing journalism for the rest of the decade. The ensuing Spanish Civil War helped to polarise opinion and sharpen the differences between the left and the centre left in Britain, particularly on the critical policy of non-intervention, whilst it brought into open debate the question of an alliance between Britain, France and the Soviet Union.

Whereas the British Labour Party had in the 1920s taken power in minority governments which had come in for widespread condemnation, it was the turn of the SFIO to take the helm in France in 1936. In the latter part of that decade its fortunes would be followed carefully by another publication to be discussed here: *Tribune*, founded in 1937. *Tribune* saw the French Popular Front government as an example: its achievements to be applauded, its failures to provide lessons for British socialists. Although *Tribune* was often combative towards other sections of the labour movement, its fascination with the French Popular Front and its leader were to varying degrees mirrored in the rest of the left-wing press. All the publications to be considered here looked to France for ideas on how to achieve and use power. As the preference of both the British and French left for disarmament and conciliation was put under strain by events in Europe in the late 1930s, they looked for new ways to work together.

Looking back on those years, the poet Stephen Spender wrote, 'The thirties was the decade in which young writers became involved in politics. The politics of this generation were almost exclusively those of the left'.² By the late 1930s the popular Conservative historian Arthur Bryant would complain that the highbrow press was 'almost entirely left-wing'.³ A mix of cultural matters with left-wing politics was evident in the *New Statesman*, with its front section devoted to current affairs and its back half to art, literature and reviews. 'It could be assumed', continues Spender on the subject of the *New Statesman*, 'that if the literary [writers] were put in a position in which they had to express a political opinion, it would, in most cases, be that of the first half of the journal'.⁴ An assistant director of the Conservative Research Department complained in 1935:

I have been told by those in close touch with political movements at the universities today, that our cause is greatly handicapped by the fact that the average

² Spender, S. (1978). *The Thirties and After*. London, Fontana.p13

³ Stapleton, J. (2005). *Sir Arthur Bryant and National History in Twentieth-Century Britain*. Oxford, Lexington Books.p119

⁴ Spender, S. (1978). *The Thirties and After*. London, Fontana. P14

undergraduate who is interested in politics has nowhere to turn today but to the *New Statesman* or to the books of the left-wing socialist intellectuals.⁵

This level of success for this weekly was relatively recent. During the 1920s, the *New Statesman* had been in a parlous position, as was its sponsor, the Fabian Society. Clifford Sharp, its editor since its inception in 1913, remained a committed supporter of Asquithian liberalism for some time after its salience to progressive politics had faded. Although Sharp had built up the journal as an influential political and literary review, the circulation remained low and largely confined to London, whilst his quarrels with those of his writers who took a broadly pro-Labour stance resulted in such shifts of direction that the paper often seemed to lack any overall sense of purpose. Sharp's increasingly ineffective editorial direction during the 1920s, together with his inability to overcome his alcoholism, led to his being effectively dismissed in 1929. However, by this time the paper was being largely run and much of it written by Mostyn Lloyd and G.D.H. Cole (academics from the LSE and Oxford respectively) so that, by 1930, Smith describes it as 'unequivocally a Labour paper'.⁶

At this time, and in common with other publications with extensive review sections, the *New Statesman* covered French writing and the visual arts in considerable depth and more frequently than cultural activity in other European countries. 'France is the country of the arts' wrote one writer, complaining about a lack of a comparable interest in public sculpture in Britain.⁷ It also devoted regular space to discussions of French political life, with a fortnightly article from its Paris correspondent, Sisley Huddleston. Huddleston, who also wrote regularly for the *Times*, produced many articles on the role of the Radical Party in French political life, whilst making occasional and generally favourable comments about Léon Blum's leadership of the SFIO. His overall objective appears to have been to explain the complications of French political life, whilst reassuring readers that its government functioned effectively, writing, for example, about the 'remarkable record of accomplishment' of the French parliament of 1924-28⁸ and asserting in December 1930 'France on the whole – though there have been tragic moments – is well governed'.⁹ However, while it was assumed that readers had an inherent interest in French political life, there was little emphasis in these articles on any commonality of values and concerns.

Whilst the *New Statesman* paid marked attention to French culture and politics throughout the 1920s, the paper remained largely hostile to French foreign policy in the wake of Versailles and its attitude to

⁵ Collini, Stefan *Absent Minds : Intellectuals in Britain*, (Oxford, New York, OUP 2006) p54

⁶ Smith, A. (1996). *The New Statesman: Portrait of a Political Weekly*. London, Frank Cass.p239

⁷ *New Statesman and Nation* 15.3.30

⁸ *New Statesman and Nation* 3.3.28

⁹ *New Statesman and Nation* 27.12.30

France was often contradictory and confused. Sharp has been described as a 'Francophobe'¹⁰ who saw that country as the major obstacle to a lasting peace in the wake of Versailles and his attack on France during the Ruhr occupation has been noted in Chapter Two. In articles on disarmament and reparations during the early 1930s, the *New Statesman* continued to characterise France as so obsessed with security as to be unable to make any sacrifices in the cause of reconciliation in Europe. So a 'Comment' column (presumably written by Mostyn Lloyd) in March 1930 claimed 'apart from a far-seeking interest in their own security, the French are the most insular of all the European nations.'¹¹ In the editorial sections of the paper, Briand's proposals for a federated Europe were also largely discounted.¹² The unstable editorial direction for the journal is revealed by Huddleston's remark in an article shortly afterwards:

I have never personally been prejudiced against the Dictatorship in Italy – at least not to the same extent as many liberal-minded men...¹³

While for this journalist (later an unashamed apologist for Vichy):

M. Briand has reconciled, with extraordinary skill, the contradictory desires of the French people... M. Briand gives them exactly the kind of comfortable consciousness they wish to have.¹⁴

Comparing the *New Statesman* under Sharp with the older and - at that time - more popular weekly the *Spectator* contributes to an understanding of the movement of opinion in the interwar period. In 1930 the latter journal was edited by Sir Evelyn Wrench, both a champion of the British Empire and an enthusiast for the League of Nations. During the 1920s the *Spectator*, like the *New Statesman*, took the line that France stood in the way of a more peaceful Europe based on reconciliation with Germany. It too, took a consistent interest in French culture, and in the relationship between Britain and France, including, for example, an article by the French academic, André Siegfried, in 1928, which made much of similarities as well as differences.¹⁵ Such interest in French matters was common among the British intelligentsia at the time. However, the *Spectator* differed from the *New Statesman* in being much more enthusiastic about Italian fascism, and about the prospects for the Kellogg-Briand Pact. It was far from being at that time, however, an avowedly right-wing publication. In 1932, it acquired a new editor, Henry Wilson Harris, who insisted that its political position was 'left centre'.¹⁶ Wilson Harris had been a pacifist in the First World War and then on the staff of the League of Nations Union (which attracted internationalists of many backgrounds, including leading Fabian Philip Noel-Baker). Benny

¹⁰ Smith, A. (1996). *The New Statesman: Portrait of a Political Weekly*. London, Frank Cass. p156

¹¹ *New Statesman and Nation* 1.3.30

¹² *New Statesman and Nation* 24.5.30

¹³ *New Statesman and Nation* 24.1.31

¹⁴ *New Statesman and Nation* 7.2.31

¹⁵ *Spectator* 4.2.28

¹⁶ *The Manchester Guardian* 13.1.55 obituary: "Henry Wilson Harris"

Morris has observed of Harris that 'he embodied the liberal Nonconformist conscience of Britain'¹⁷ and the *Spectator* showed a marked interest in matters of religion, as well as taking a strongly anti-communist line. Wilson Harris nevertheless insisted that '*The Spectator* is, and always has been, independent and non-party... the paper is not prepared to support a Conservative government simply because it is Conservative, or a Labour Government for similar reasons'.¹⁸ During his editorship, articles by French writers and politicians were a recurring feature (in fact articles written in French alternated with ones in German for much of the 1930s); one such was by the left-leaning Radical minister, Pierre Cot in 1934, testifying to the *Spectator's* willingness to give space to a variety of opinions.¹⁹ During the 1930s, however, the journal's circulation would be overtaken by that of the *New Statesman*, largely thanks to the talents of the new editor the latter acquired in 1931.

That year, the amalgamation of the *New Statesman* with the Liberal paper *The Nation* gave the journal a new lease of life. Arnold Bennett and John Maynard Keynes, having amalgamated their two papers, chose as the editor Basil Kingsley Martin, who set out to make the new publication 'the flagship weekly of the left', which, while supporting the Labour Party in general, would remain 'a perpetual critic of the Labour leadership'.²⁰ Kingsley Martin's ability to respond to the evolving zeitgeist is evidenced by the doubling of the *New Statesman's* circulation in six years to 30,000 in 1939 (against the *Spectator's* 25,000). Its actual readership has been estimated at 100,000 in 1936, suggesting a rapid growth of its influence.²¹ Circulation – and readership – would go on to rise even more rapidly during the war to reach 42,000 in 1942.²² Under Kingsley Martin, the paper became a site for the expression of strongly held but differing views amongst those on the left hoping to develop a coherent response to the growth of fascism. He later wrote,

I was a political hybrid, a product of pacifist nonconformity, Cambridge scepticism, Manchester Guardian liberalism, and a London School of Economics Socialism. ...I combined in myself many of the inconsistencies and conflicts of a period which long tried to reconcile pacifism with collective security.²³

So although the avoidance of a repetition of 1914-18 was a recurrent theme in editorials, there is considerable confusion over, for instance, the role and capabilities of the League of Nations, reflecting the arguments within the Labour Party and movement as a whole.²⁴

¹⁷ Morris, B. (1991). *The Roots of Appeasement: The British Weekly Press and Nazi Germany During the 1930s*. London, Frank Cass.p11

¹⁸ Harris, H. W. (1954). *Life So Far*. London, Jonathan Cape.p234

¹⁹ *Spectator* 14.12.34

²⁰ Adrian Smith, 'Martin, (Basil) Kingsley (1897–1969)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/34902>, accessed 30 Jan 2008]

²¹ Gilbert, M. (1990). *Foreign Policy & Propaganda in the Progressive Press 1936-1945*. PhD, Swansea.

²² Hyams, E. (1963). *The New Statesman 1913-1963*. London, Longmans. p227

²³ Martin, B. K. (1969). *Father Figures*. London, Penguin.p201

²⁴ Corthorn, P. (2002). "The Labour Party and the League of Nations: The Socialist League's Role in the Sanctions Crisis of 1935." *Twentieth Century History* 13(1): 62-85.

The merger of the two weeklies also meant the return of Leonard Woolf to the *New Statesman*, which thereupon became 'Bloomsbury's house magazine',²⁵ with the ardent Francophile Raymond Mortimer first as contributor to and, from 1935, literary editor of the increasingly successful 'back section'. Here reviews of French writing and the visual arts were featured far more than those of any other country outside Britain. At the same time the journal's strong economic team had links with the wider Labour movement, with Cole and Keynes coming into contact with Ernest Bevin through their participation in the Economic Advisory Council, a think tank originally set up by MacDonald in 1930 to advise the government on policy, which continued in other forms throughout that decade.²⁶

The creation between 1930 and 1932 of the Society for Socialist Inquiry and Propaganda, the New Fabian Research Bureau and the Socialist League testify to a growing awareness of the need to revive the left and find a new direction, especially following the failures of the second MacDonald government and the split in the Labour Party that ensued. The fact that Cole, who had played the lead in the establishment of these organisations, remained one of the *New Statesman's* leading journalists, helped ensure it would include deliberations on most of the controversies gripping the left in the face of fascism and militarism in Europe and beyond. As calls for action against Japan and then Italy grew louder during the 1930s, the need to clarify the concept of 'collective security', and decide how it might be realised became ever more acute, while the issue of disarmament versus rearmament was also hotly debated amongst contributors.

Kingsley Martin's editorship did not at first bring about any significant change of approach to France. In the early 1930s, overall coverage of France tended to be restricted to cultural and economic matters; in fact, interest in French politics seemed to wane as the paper turned its attention to India, Ireland and Germany. Huddleston was dropped as columnist. While discussion of the arts in France remained a dominant feature of the review section (with one article asserting 'in many respects ...the French mind is paramount in Europe',²⁷) and much interest was shown in French academic André Siegfried's book giving a critical look on Britain,²⁸ France continued to be castigated in the *Comment* section as the country that wishes to keep 'Germany in perpetual servitude', endangering reconciliation efforts by 'screwing out reparations'.²⁹ However, in such columns we can also find praise for Blum: 'the Socialist leader, [who] has pleaded for a policy of generosity which would aid Germany without exacting any conditions',³⁰ one of the 'sane men' who protested at the general anti-British tone of the French press

²⁵ Smith, A. (1996). *The New Statesman: Portrait of a Political Weekly*. London, Frank Cass. p192

²⁶ Ibid.p240

²⁷ *New Statesman and Nation* 21.3.31

²⁸ Siegfried, A. (1931). *La crise britannique au XXè siècle*. Paris, Librairie Armand Colin.

²⁹ *New Statesman and Nation* 25.7.31

³⁰ *New Statesman and Nation* 18.7.31

at this time.³¹ The importance of electoral victory for the French left was emphasised.³² A readiness to distinguish between French governments - seen as responsible for the iniquities of the Versailles Settlement – and the peace-loving French people is summed up in this comment in Kingsley Martin's London Diary on a French play entitled 'The Peace' which came out in 1933:

By a grim irony, the French populace (whose traditional fear of Germany has always been given as the excuse for a policy which is mainly responsible for the growth of militarism in Germany) seems to be growing every day more pacific... this comedy expresses their profound longing to be left to cultivate the land they so jealously love.³³

While the *New Statesman* was naturally condemnatory of the formation of the National Government in 1931, seeing it as symptomatic of a class-ridden political system in Britain, we also find criticism of the tendency in France for the left to fracture, and for talented politicians to drift into centrist parties. So, in his comments on Briand's death in March 1932, Kingsley Martin, who saw Briand as 'a great figure, a great politician, but not... a great man or a great statesman' complained that, 'His instincts and temperament made him a socialist, but he was too good a politician not to pass, in the France of the early 20th century, from Socialism to Liberalism'.³⁴ Later in the year he remarked that the new premier Joseph Paul-Boncour was supposedly an independent because 'socialism was cramping his style and ruining his career'.³⁵ On such occasions, Kingsley Martin accused socialist politicians on both sides of the Channel of being corrupted by the promise of power and willing to make tawdry compromises.

While the first two years of Martin's editorship saw a dearth of detailed writing on French politics, in 1933 Alexander Werth began to contribute articles, providing in-depth discussions of the French political scene and, for example, the possibilities for a 'cartel des gauches'.³⁶ Werth, a naturalised Russian whose family had fled the 1917 revolution, was Paris correspondent for the *Manchester Guardian* from 1931 (where he was also briefly Berlin correspondent in 1933). 'In the 1930s he was proud to be known as a man of left' according to his *Guardian* obituary,³⁷ although he remained critical of Soviet communism. Throughout this period, Werth published a series of well-received books on French politics, starting with *France in Ferment*, which appeared soon after the crisis of 1934 addressed

³¹ *New Statesman and Nation* 25.7.31

³² *New Statesman and Nation* 15.8.31

³³ *New Statesman and Nation* 28.1.33

³⁴ *New Statesman and Nation* 12.3.32

³⁵ *New Statesman and Nation* 24.12.32

³⁶ *New Statesman and Nation* 14.5.32

³⁷ *The Guardian* 8.3.69

the question of how French democracy could be sustained.³⁸ Werth became an increasingly regular contributor to the *New Statesman* during this decade.

At the same time as assuming the editorship of the *New Statesman*, Kingsley Martin, along with Leonard Woolf, Harold Laski and William A. Robson, founded the *Political Quarterly*. The appearance of this journal – launched at a meeting at the London School of Economics - was further evidence of the desire to reinvigorate left politics in the early 1930s. It was avowedly internationalist in outlook, aiming to reflect advanced thinking in Britain as well as drawing on opinion from the continent and the dominions and USA. Its prospectus included adherents of both Liberal and Labour Parties.³⁹ Woolf later wrote that the aim of this new journal was ‘to discuss social and political questions from a progressive point of view; to act as a clearing house of ideas and a medium of constructive thought’. It was ‘Left Wing politically, but of irreproachable respectability’, self-consciously elitist and aimed at the ‘men at the top’.⁴⁰ In this way it chimed with the tradition of the Fabian Society, with that group’s emphasis on expert-led reform. Unfortunately it has not proved possible to discover the 1930s and 1940s circulation figures for the *Political Quarterly* (which continues to exist to this day).

Both these publications brought together academics, political activists and journalists. Many of their contributors had been all three, usually having spent time at the London School of Economics which was growing rapidly in size; so much so that Kingsley Martin once told its director, William Beveridge, that ‘he ruled over an empire on which the concrete never set’.⁴¹ Kingsley Martin lectured there in the 1920s, producing in 1929 a text that remained standard for some time: *French Liberal Thought in the Eighteenth Century*.⁴² His colleague and friend, Harold Laski, remained at the LSE throughout his life, acceding to the Chair of Government in 1926. Laski’s obsession with the question of whether pluralist democracy could accommodate real social change led him at times to court controversy and Ralph Miliband would later comment, ‘For many people throughout the world, he was the LSE, which thereby gained the reputation of being a ‘red’ school, the breeding ground of revolutionaries.’⁴³ While this was no doubt unjustified (Miliband also points out that there were also right-wing economists at the school, as well as others representing a different strand of socialism, such as R.H. Tawney), Laski’s restless inquiry into the relationship between political ideas and current events helped give him an international reputation. Kingsley Martin later wrote of Laski that ‘he was on first name terms with

³⁸ Werth, A. (1934). *France in Ferment*. London, Jarrold.

³⁹ Robson, W. A. (1971). "The Political Quarterly in the 1930s." *The Political Quarterly* 42(5).

⁴⁰ Woolf, L. (1967). *Downhill all the Way*. London, Hogarth Press.p207

⁴¹ C. O. George Obituary: Lord Beveridge (The Statistician) Vol. 13, No. 2 (1963), pp. 137-143

⁴² Martin, B. K. (1929). *French Liberal Thought in the 18th Century: : a study of political ideas from Bayle to Condorcet* London, Ernest Benn.

⁴³ Miliband, R. (1993). "Harold Laski: An Exemplary Public Intellectual." *New Left Review* 200(1).

most of the leading British, American and French political figures while still in his twenties'.⁴⁴ In the 1920s Laski had lectured at the Sorbonne and in his most lasting work, *The Rise of European Liberalism*,⁴⁵ he strove to show the interrelatedness of French and British political development. His biographers have pointed out that 'Laski's kind of secular socialist intellectual was more typical of European social circles where he was often lionised and where his books and speeches were quoted and reprinted'.⁴⁶ By 1930 he was a close friend of literature professor turned politician, Léon Blum. Laski was a prolific journalist and his articles appeared in every kind of left-wing paper, including the *Daily Herald*, sponsored by the Trades Union Congress (TUC), for whom he wrote editorials.

Martyn Cornick has shown how *La Nouvelle Revue Française* (NRF) - a French journal primarily concerned with literary and cultural concerns - developed a political dimension drawing on its origins as anti-establishment publication for the left and centre-left and occupying a position in 'the intellectual and cultural hinterlands of the Radical and Socialist parties'.⁴⁷ Its advocacy of Franco-German rapprochement in the 1920s was comparable with that urged in the pages of the *New Statesman*. Both journals were highly critical of conservative political traditions. Both publications sought to find an alternative to the Versailles settlement which did not merely pander to German nationalism, and in so doing, attempted to draw lessons from French history. Both would also wrestle with the issue of Soviet communism. One figure active in both French and British intellectual circles was Russian émigré Dimitri Mirsky, who became lecturer in Russian at the School of Slavonic Studies, King's College, London in 1922 and wrote about his conversion to communism (brought about in part by events such as the general strike) in the NRF in 1931.

In 1933, a *New Statesman* article on *Mein Kampf* revealed how their knowledge of French history influenced how its writers assessed current events. If the tone of the article is more even-handed than one might expect (elsewhere events in Germany are deplored, though disarmament by France is still seen to be the answer), the underlying assumption is that *Mein Kampf* is a revolutionary tract, that needs to be appraised by reference to late eighteenth century France.

Mein Kampf reveals Adolf Hitler as not only the Robespierre but also the Rousseau of the German Revolution... One cannot help wondering whether, in the end, humanity will not feel more gratitude to the author of the *Contrat Social* and to the cutthroats of the Committee of Public Safety than to the first ministers of *Das Dritte Reich*...has

⁴⁴ Martin, B. K. (1953). *Harold Laski : 1893-1950 A Biographical Memoir*. London, Victor Gollancz Ltd.p270

⁴⁵ Laski, H. J. (1936). *The Rise of European Liberalism: An interpretation*. London, George Allen & Unwin.

⁴⁶ Kramnick, I. and B. Sheerman (1993). *Harold Laski – A Life on the Left*. London, Hamish Hamilton.

⁴⁷ Cornick, M. (2006). "Writers into Intellectuals, Culture into Politics: Grappling with History in the NRF, 1920-1940 " <http://erea.revues.org/index214.html>. Consulté le 09 novembre 2009.

revolutionary Germany really as much to give the world as revolutionary France, with its lofty, if exaggerated, belief in reason and the individual?⁴⁸

Meanwhile, a preoccupation with how to organise and where to form alliances brought together French and British socialists in the wake of Hitler's successes and the collapse of the disarmament conference in 1933. With *Pravda* urging the left to bury their differences from March that year, interest in some kind of popular or united front grew in Britain and these possibilities generated, as will be shown, much division and strife within the Labour Party. (As indicated in Chapter Two, a *popular* front included parties of both the centre and the left, a *united* front excluded any not seen as obviously committed to representing the working class.) From this time, French politics often featured as the second item in the *Comment* section at the beginning of the *New Statesman*, and Werth's article on the need for unity in the French left in August 1934 reflected a growing interest in ways to respond to the French far right.⁴⁹ At the same time, British newspapers such as the *Evening Standard*, which played down Nazi anti-Semitism and were deemed sympathetic to Hitler, were denounced.⁵⁰ The possibility of Franco-Russian rapprochement also became a preoccupation by the middle of the decade.

As members of the British Labour Party and their allies tried to rally and regroup following the 1931 crisis in the party and the rise of the far right in Europe, new publications attempted to reach out beyond the borders of Britain and revive the labour movement's international credentials. In August 1933, a new monthly journal called *Labour* appeared. This incorporated a number of existing small Labour publications and reflected the Labour Party's growing concern with events in Europe, whilst also including updates on the British labour movement. Set up with the backing of Walter Citrine of the TUC and Arthur Henderson (now chair of the Disarmament Conference), *Labour* was intended to be a 'digest of public affairs'. Each issue began with a section entitled 'All the World Over'. Labour International Secretary, W.G. Gillies, played a leading role and was active in seeking articles from French socialists. One example of this occurred during the crisis within the SFIO in the autumn of 1933, when Gillies told Herbert Tracey, the TUC publicity officer, that he was hoping for a contribution from Jean Longuet, Henry Hauck or Pierre Renaudel.⁵¹ He ended up with one by Gustav Winter, who was best known as the Paris correspondent of *Právo lidu* (the *People's Right*), the organ of the Czech Social Democratic party.⁵² Winter remained in Paris until 1938, when he moved to Britain. He was typical of a breed of journalists during that era who saw democratic socialism as an international movement that

⁴⁸ *New Statesman and Nation* 7.10.33

⁴⁹ *New Statesman and Nation* 1934 1.8.34

⁵⁰ *New Statesman and Nation* 1933 21.10.33

⁵¹ Gillies correspondence WG/LAB/12 Labour Party Archives, Labour History Archive

⁵² *Labour* January 1934

could be kept alive by their writing. It has not been possible to obtain circulation figures for *Labour* but its significance lies in its wide range of contributors, their diverse backgrounds and their focus on international affairs.

Other European journalists who wrote for *Labour* included Largo Cabaellero from Spain (who would be prime minister there during the turbulent years 1936-7), exiled Austrian socialists, Julius Braunthal and Otto Bauer, and Pietro Nenni and Viktor Schiff, exiled from Germany and Italy respectively and both living in Paris. Léon Blum also sent articles from *Le Populaire* to Gillies for reprinting in *Labour*. Whilst the paper pursued an anti-communist, anti-United Front line, it did occasionally include articles by communists such as Austro-German Max Beer, who fled to London in 1933. *Labour*, then, helped engender a community of European socialists, with its two pivots of London and Paris, thereby augmenting the work of the Labour Socialist International, whilst also providing exiles from fascism with a means of earning some money.

Whilst providing regular reports on the activities of the Labour Socialist International - such as the LSI's call for a boycott of German goods in 1933 - *Labour* was a place where a variety of socialists from all over Europe could denounce Francoism, fascism and Nazism. It included reports by Philip Noel-Baker on gatherings such as the 1934 Congress for the Defence of Peace in Brussels (organised by League of Nations Societies)⁵³ and other disarmament initiatives. In 1935, the hope that the British and French left could make common cause in the promotion of disarmament and reconciliation was reflected in a symposium involving Dalton, Blum, Nenni, and others on the London agreement which had resulted in the *Stresa Front* against Germany. Blum called for 'measures of pacific coercion' towards that country, urging it be brought back into the comity of nations to stop it rearming further, rather than France just rearming herself.⁵⁴ At this stage, Hugh Dalton was still in favour of the abolition of national air forces and had yet to be converted to the cause of rearmament. *Labour*, therefore, provides evidence that by 1935 the European left was largely united in a continued belief in the efficacy of disarmament as the way to prevent war.

In October 1935, Laski wrote a piece explaining why the SFIO was better at attracting working class votes than the Labour Party, as part of an article insisting that the only way to prevent war was the triumph of socialism.⁵⁵ In the same year, Alexander Werth also became a contributor to *Labour* and the twists and turns of French political life became a marked preoccupation. Shortly before becoming Labour leader that year, Clement Attlee reported back to the TUC conference on his recent visit to

⁵³ *Labour* February 1934

⁵⁴ *Labour* March 1935

⁵⁵ *Labour* October 1935

Paris to meet Blum.⁵⁶ Although Attlee had no intention of assembling a front of the kind Blum was planning, he was aware of the need to show solidarity with fellow socialists on the other side of the Channel.

The *Political Quarterly's* continued interest in French affairs in the 1930s was evident in its inclusion of articles by Léon Blum on public opinion in France, including one in 1933 where he attempted to allay anxieties about anti-democratic forces in France. Blum's stated aim was to foster Anglo-French understanding and to promote the cause of disarmament. He urged greater Anglo-French dialogue: 'Between nations as between individuals, it is necessary to understand in order to love and to know in order to understand'.⁵⁷ At the same time, Boris Mirkine-Guetzévitch was commissioned to write a series of pieces on constitutional developments in Europe for the *Political Quarterly* in the 1930s. This Russian émigré journalist had taken French citizenship in 1933 and become General Secretary of the Institute of Public Law in Paris. One of his articles in an edition from 1933 stressed the similarities between British and French constitutions, whilst others analysed the erosion of liberties in fascist states.⁵⁸ Elsewhere in the *Political Quarterly* we find more interest in French public opinion, with Pierre Cot contributing an article on the subject to an issue on disarmament in 1931.⁵⁹ The left intelligentsia's desire for the promotion of greater international co-operation was underlined in the final issue of the magazine of 1933, where Leonard Woolf bemoaned the fact that the British government was 'averse to international co-operation, against the strengthening of the League' and actually 'obstructive to any radical scheme of disarmament'.⁶⁰ In 1934, the *Political Quarterly* also began publishing articles by Paul Vaucher, former student of Élie Halévy, and Professor of Modern French History and Institutions in the University of London since 1924. Vaucher, an Anglophile and friend of R.H. Tawney and the Webbs, attended Fabian Society meetings and has been described as displaying a 'Radical Socialist brand of Republicanism' in his writings.⁶¹ He was therefore in a good position to explain 'The Internal Crisis in France' to the readers of the *Political Quarterly* in 1934.⁶²

Further evidence of strengthening ties with France is suggested by the visit to the LSE by the French historian, Marc Bloch, in 1934. Bloch met, amongst others, R.H. Tawney and Eileen Power. He gave lectures there and at other British universities, and was invited to contribute to the *Cambridge Economic History of Europe*. The demonstrations and riots in Paris in 1934 took place while he was in London and he attempted to explain the violence of the middle class rightists who had instigated them

⁵⁶ *Manchester Guardian* 28.8.35

⁵⁷ *Political Quarterly* 1933 Vol 4:1

⁵⁸ *Political Quarterly* 1933 Vol 2:2, (also 1934, issues 1 & 4)

⁵⁹ *Political Quarterly* 1931 Issue 3

⁶⁰ *Political Quarterly* 1933 Issue 4 pp507-8

⁶¹ Rule, J. C. (1967). "Paul Vaucher: Historian." *French Historical Studies* 1(5): 98-105.

⁶² *Political Quarterly* 1934 Issue 3

to his English hosts by referring to Napoleon's coup of the 18th Brumaire.⁶³ Later that year, the Labour leader of the London County Council, Herbert Morrison, gave a lecture at the Sorbonne on 'British Labour – its Policy and Outlook'. This was part of a series put on by the British Institute in Paris. The *Manchester Guardian* noted that the primary object of the lectures was 'to provide the large audience in Paris, which today is extremely interested in political, social and literary developments in Great Britain with the opportunity to meet outstanding authorities'.⁶⁴ This was also a time of renewed academic interest in the French Revolution, with books such as J.M. Thompson's *Leaders of the French Revolution* coming out in 1929⁶⁵ and Paul Gaxotte's *The French Revolution* translated into English in 1932.⁶⁶ At the same time the rising young academic, J.P.T. Bury, was preparing his first work on the history of France, a study of the French republican statesman, Gambetta.⁶⁷

As the number of refugees from academia in Germany and other dictatorial states increased, international gatherings were staged to express solidarity and develop broad anti-fascist fronts. A telling example is the International Writers' Congress for the Defence of Culture of 1935 in Paris, convened under the presidency of André Gide and bringing together André Malraux and Aldous Huxley, Louis Aragon and E.M. Forster, as well as Bertolt Brecht, Heinrich Mann and Boris Pasternak. This well-attended congress was part of the French Communist Party's project to further popular fronts and to present themselves as the defenders of culture against the pretensions of nationalists and the far right.⁶⁸ André Gide and others from the NRF were the stars.⁶⁹ The second such congress was held in war-torn Spain in 1937 when the British contingent included W. H. Auden, Stephen Spender and Silvia Townsend Warner. Rabinbach has spoken of the 'bolshevization of the European left liberal intelligentsia' in the mid 1930s.⁷⁰ Though this may be an exaggeration, it was the hope of many British and French socialists that some kind of unity amongst the groups and parties of the left would counter the right-wing and far right forces at home, and also address the growing anxiety about another war breaking out in Europe. Arguments would continue to rage over the ways in which communists – as well as the Soviet Union - could be incorporated in the 'forces of the left'.

One attempt to respond to the British public's growing interest in foreign affairs was the Left Book Club (LBC), set up by Victor Gollancz in 1936. It was strikingly successful and by the end of 1936 had 20,000

⁶³ Fink, C. (1989). *Marc Bloch: A Life in History*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. pp180-182

⁶⁴ *Manchester Guardian* 30.9.34

⁶⁵ Thompson, J. M. (1929). *Leaders of the French Revolution*. London, Barnes and Noble.

⁶⁶ Gaxotte, P. (1932). *The French Revolution*. London, C. Scribner's Sons.

⁶⁷ Bury, J. P. T. (2003). *France 1814-1940: with an Introduction by R. Tombs*. London, Routledge.

⁶⁸ Jackson, J. (1988). *The Popular Front in France: Defending Democracy 1934-38*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. pp119-120

⁶⁹ Cornick, M. (2009). "Une institution française : La nouvelle revue française de Jean Paulhan." *Études littéraires* 40(1): 77-96.

⁷⁰ Rabinbach, A. (2009). Paris, Capital of Anti-Fascism. *The Modernist Imagination*. W. Breckman. New York Berghahn Books. p203

members, a number that would quadruple in the next three years.⁷¹ There were discussion groups, summer schools, political-educational classes, lectures, film shows, theatrical productions, specialist groups from many professions, and three huge annual rallies addressed by eminent public figures, the last of them, in 1939, before an audience of 10,000. The LBC's first publication was by the leader of the PCF, Maurice Thorez: *France Today and the People's Front*, and its 1936-7 list included works by the British communist Palme Dutt, as well as Noel-Baker and George Orwell. The first biography of Blum and books on French social and economic issues were also published by the LBC. It seemed that all shades of leftist opinion could be accommodated in such an intellectual space, though Gollancz was condemned at times for giving too great a platform to communists. He asserted that his objective was to educate the public and to encourage them to join any party, but suspicions remained. The LBC published Attlee's *Labour Party in Perspective* in 1937,⁷² but Bevin insisted that the main object of the Club was 'to undermine and destroy the trade unions and the Labour Party as an effective force'⁷³ and the following year the Labour Party began a rival Labour Book Service.

The LBC testified to the increasing interest in politics, economics and associated subjects amongst the wider public. Janet Coles has shown how the Workers' Educational Association (WEA) came to play an important part in the furtherance of 'democratic education' for the working classes.⁷⁴ Its foundation before World War One brought together Oxford University and the trade union and co-operative movements, and it provided opportunities for academic and political elites to meet, teach and exchange ideas with working class people. (It was estimated in 1918 that two-thirds of its students were manual workers and another 20% were clerks.⁷⁵) Many Fabians were also active in the WEA. The first lecturer and president of the WEA was the leading economic historian, Christian socialist and Fabian, R.H. Tawney, who defined the Association's aims as 'the development of adult working class education, by methods which command the confidence of working class students, and in an atmosphere that such students themselves create.'⁷⁶ In receipt of a grant from the government since 1924, the WEA was accused by its generally less successful rival, the National Council Labour Colleges (NCLC), of being too much in cahoots with the 'establishment' but this was to an extent the result of the WEA's declared determination to promote 'education' and not 'propaganda' (whereas *Plebs* - the magazine of the NCLC - claimed that such distinctions were fatuous and that the WEA's supposed

⁷¹ <http://librarysupport.shef.ac.uk/leftbook.pdf>

⁷² Reid, B. (1979). *The Left Book Club in the Thirties. Culture and Crisis in Britain in the Thirties*. J. Clark, M. Heineman, D. Margolies and C. Snee. London, Lawrence & Wishart. p197

⁷³ Lewis, J. (1970). *The Left Book Club - an Historical Record*. London, Gollancz. p94

⁷⁴ Oxford University and WEA (1908). *Oxford and working-class education; being the report of a joint committee of university and working-class representatives on the relation of the university to the higher education of workpeople* Oxford.

⁷⁵ Coles, J. (1999). "'Looking the Fascist Tiger in the Eye? Workers' Education and the Approach of World War Two in England.'" *Paedagogica Historica* 35(1): 67 — 85.

⁷⁶ *ibid.*

impartiality failed to equip workers sufficiently with the tools to attack capitalism). Although Conservative MPs and others sometimes contributed,⁷⁷ those lecturing and writing for the WEA were overwhelmingly on the left of the political spectrum and included R.H.S. Crossman, Margaret and George Cole, Harold Laski, Sidney Webb, Konni Zilliacus, Alfred Zimmern, George Orwell, Barbara Wootton, and D. R. Gillie, all of whom had links to the Fabian Society or Labour Party. Fourteen members of the 1945 Labour government had in fact been either WEA tutors or members of its executive.⁷⁸ Coles has shown how the WEA attempted to assert its impartial and objective stance by publishing a controversial article on the Spanish Civil War by the Conservative historian, Arthur Bryant, (who had himself at one point given lectures for the association), whilst demonstrating its left-wing sympathies by following it up with numerous articles and letters attacking both the premises and particulars of his argument.⁷⁹ Its magazine, *Highway*, aimed to foster an internationalist outlook among its students and, as concerns about events in continental Europe attracted greater attention in the late 1930s, the WEA became increasingly active: sponsoring classes, day and weekend schools, exhibits at national exhibitions and study circles.⁸⁰

The League of Nations Union (LNU) was another organisation that encouraged public education and debate and the principle of 'active citizenship' at this time. It was intended to be non-sectarian, but Philip Noel-Baker played a prominent part and its internationalism attracted many of those on the left. It provided another opportunity for the left intelligentsia to present their ideas to those sections of the general public who had a growing interest in international affairs. Helen McCarthy has shown how 'league-themed rituals' of the interwar period promoted the idea of an 'international community'. The LNU organised the 'Peace Ballot' of 1934-45, in which nearly 38% of the adult population took part, thanks to the efforts of many voluntary associations, all engaged in encouraging the general public to become more involved in current affairs. McCarthy has also drawn attention to the growing involvement of the public with 'various socialist and radical forces in continental Europe', especially following the establishment of the International Peace Campaign (IPC) in 1936 which sponsored 'peace week' activities all over Britain that year.⁸¹

The remilitarisation of the Rhineland in 1936 was one event that made it evident that Nazi Germany was not just a problem in terms of its domestic policies, but also a potential threat to its neighbours.

⁷⁷ e.g. Sir Arnold Wilson in December 1939 edition of *Highway*

⁷⁸ Goldman, L. (1999). "Education as Politics: University Adult Education in England since 1870." *Oxford Review of Education* **25**(1/2): 89-101.

⁷⁹ *Highway* January 1938

⁸⁰ *ibid.*

⁸¹ McCarthy, H. (2010). "The League of Nations, Public Ritual and National Identity in Britain, c.1919-56." *History Workshop Journal* **70**(1).

The *New Statesman* leader on the subject showed a move away from the usual solution of further attempts to reopen talks on disarmament. It argued that:

It is urgent therefore for Great Britain and France to discuss a possible new basis for peace in Europe. French reluctance to discuss Germany's return to the League on Hitler's own terms seems to us natural and justifiable... Because the French see the situation clearly, and we do not, there is still serious danger that Hitler will succeed in dividing GB from the other League Powers. The best hope....of keeping together the democratic and Socialist States which still want peace is for Britain to make the most complete pledge of solidarity with France and the League...⁸²

There was noticeably much greater discussion of France in the *New Statesman* from 1936, and it was overwhelmingly positive, especially as the French Popular Front moved towards the formation of a government in June. A letter from a 'French senator' emphasised the Popular Front's support for a strong League and the need for 'the cordial and confident collaboration of GB and France.'⁸³ Another letter – from the historian Denis Brogan – endorsed sentiments to be found elsewhere in the journal, denouncing British readiness to assume superiority over the French and the need to make common cause:

The young men who are full of pretty sentiments about the niceness of the Germans should indulge these sentiments with their eyes open to the fact that no one, not even the most staunch isolationist, expects to be killed by a French bomb... lamentations about the irreparable psychological damage done by black troops in the Ruhr may provoke some Frenchmen to suggest that not all countries could run to Black-and-Tans. If we are going to talk sense in the next few months, that old British luxury of moral superiority will have to be rationed.⁸⁴

In the same issue Werth welcomed the Popular Front election victory in May: 'France today is a land of hope'. A fortnight later G. D. H. Cole wrote in praise of Blum.⁸⁵ Another article responded to recent educational initiatives in Germany by noting that French children were admonished in their school textbooks 'Vous ne voudrez pas dominer ni humilier les autres peuples'.⁸⁶

The outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in July 1936 further challenged any lingering isolationism and the orthodox left-wing line on disarmament. While the *New Statesman* would include lots of appeals on behalf of Spanish refugees, the question of whether armed support should be given to the republic could not be ignored. It was Spain that would eventually lead Kingsley Martin to accept the need for force to stop fascism. However, he posited an alliance with France and the Soviet Union as the

⁸² *New Statesman and Nation* 14.3.36

⁸³ *New Statesman and Nation* 25.4.36

⁸⁴ *New Statesman and Nation* 2.5.36

⁸⁵ *New Statesman and Nation* 13.6.36

⁸⁶ *New Statesman and Nation* 30.5.36

precondition for success, and argued that the National Government was incapable of fighting a war to protect democracy:

... if after allowing the democracies to be destroyed piecemeal and the world to be given up to Fascists, you then expect us to join in a fight for the remnants of the British Empire in some quarrel you muddle us into, we shall not be with you.⁸⁷

This argument – that rearmament in the hands of a reactionary government would not serve the purpose of defeating fascism – was repeated by many commentators in the left-wing press. While the contradictions of such a stance would be challenged by Hugh Dalton, R.H. S. Crossman and others with increasing frequency, it served for some time to enable supporters of ‘arms to Spain’ to continue to attack the National Government’s rearmament programme. On the other hand, in France a government of the left could not evade the issue of rearmament in the face of a strengthening Germany. There was little comment in British left-leaning papers on the Popular Front’s commitment to increased defence spending, despite the priority given to this by Blum’s government.⁸⁸ Instead, the left-wing press concentrated on the mechanics of the Popular Front coalition, its social reforms and its relations with the unions.

During the years 1936-9, these British papers reflected the increasingly desperate search for ways to counter the threat from fascism without repeating what were seen as the mistakes of the years leading up to World War One. That the Spanish Civil War made hopes for a broad centre-left consensus more difficult is shown by the divergence of opinion between the *Spectator* and the *New Statesman* in the latter half of 1936. Whilst both weeklies welcomed Blum’s accession to power and both initially applauded his proposal for non-intervention in Spain, the *New Statesman* became increasingly sceptical about this, following the breaches of the agreement by Portugal, Italy and Germany. In August, Werth explored Blum’s difficulties:

The position of the French government in this international tangle has been desperately difficult. When the trouble started in Spain, the Blum government was torn between the desire to see the Spanish government win and the fear that the Spanish civil war would bring on an international war. Hence its non-intervention proposal... [but this was] running the risk of a moral split between itself and its rank and file supporters...[and] created great consternation and discontent among communists and Trade Unionists.⁸⁹

Soon afterwards, in the *Comment* section, we read

There is in fact no evidence that the Fascist Powers mean honestly to observe any neutrality agreement, and the French and British Governments ought to put an early time limit to this tragic farce.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ *New Statesman and Nation* 29.8.36

⁸⁸ Thomas, M. (1992). "French Economic Affairs and Rearmament: The First Crucial Months, June-September 1936." *Journal of Contemporary History* 27(4): 659-670.

⁸⁹ *New Statesman and Nation* 'France in Crisis' 29.8.36

⁹⁰ *New Statesman and Nation* 5.9.36

A week later:

Arms for the massacre of Spanish working people continue to pour into Spain; it needs no 'communist propaganda' to persuade working people in France that it will be their turn next if General Franco wins with the help of Italian, German and Portuguese fascism. M. Jouhaux and the French Trade Union movement with him are as anxious as M. Thorez and the Communists to end the farce of non-intervention, but...the CGT's decision to stand by the Government strengthens M. Blum for the moment, but his difficulties are immense and it is deplorable that Britain should increase them.⁹¹

The British government, was, then, increasingly seen to be at fault in this matter and little blame was attached to the Popular Front government. The *New Statesman* asserted that non-intervention was a failed policy, one forced on Blum, but adopted with enthusiasm by a National Government with pro-Franco leanings. While the *New Statesman's* letters page was increasingly dominated by calls to provide arms for the Spanish Republic and information about the International Brigade, a leading article summed up the overall approach of the journal.

Was the National Government true to collective security when it declined in advance to stand by France if she should be attacked for maintaining customary relations with the sister republic in Spain? ...We do not suppose that the English governing class admires Spanish clerico-militarism as the Labour Party admires the Spanish workers, but if it had to choose it would on the whole prefer to see any brand of propertied conservatism victorious rather than a People's front sustained by Socialist votes and rifles.⁹²

By contrast, the *Spectator's* letter page was increasingly filled with stories of alleged atrocities by Republican forces echoing the *Daily Mail's* repeated reporting of these. During the year, the *Spectator* ran a series of articles on 'Christianity and Communism', and, while trying to maintain a neutral position on Spain, the paper's religious sympathies and dislike of communism led it to a much more critical position on the Republican forces than that of the *New Statesman*, and a continued faith in the policy of non-intervention. In October 1936, the *Spectator* claimed that non-intervention which had been 'initiated by Blum and warmly supported by this country, has unquestionably justified itself'.⁹³ Although the *Spectator* continued to maintain an impartial position on party politics, it ran major articles in 1936 that were highly critical of the Labour Party.⁹⁴ Thus, while maintaining some sympathy for Blum himself, whom the *Spectator* called 'elderly, refined, cultivated, and rich, with no love of action or power for its own sake',⁹⁵ the *Spectator's* overall stance was markedly at odds with that of the *New Statesman* on key issues at this point. To some this suggested that a popular front, encompassing both centre and left, could never work in Britain.

⁹¹ *New Statesman and Nation* 12.9.36

⁹² *New Statesman and Nation* 26.9.36

⁹³ *Spectator* 16.10.36

⁹⁴ e.g. *Spectator* 10.7.36

⁹⁵ *Spectator* 'Enter M. Blum' 5.6.36

Beyond a discussion of British public opinion on the issue of the Spanish Civil war, the *Political Quarterly* had relatively little to say on the matter. Willie Robson, co-editor with Leonard Woolf, later wrote that 'everyone was being saturated with news, views and assertions on the subject',⁹⁶ so it was decided to concentrate on longer term concerns. One of these was, of course, the fortunes of the Popular Front in France, which continued to be scrutinised by Paul Vaucher amongst others in the *Quarterly*. Vaucher's article on the 'Present Tendencies of Trade Unionism in France' appeared in autumn 1937.⁹⁷ The following year, British historian, A. L. Rowse, voiced the enthusiastic support for Blum amongst British progressive intellectuals at this time.⁹⁸ Attacking the French Right for taking 'any and every occasion to bleed the country of capital, export their holdings, make a profit on each devaluation which they rendered necessary by their financial sabotage', he went on to say, 'No one can deny that Blum is a man of great integrity, singularly incorruptible in the marasma of French politics.'⁹⁹

While the question of co-operation with the Soviet Union in an anti-fascist front was a matter of intense debate, the need to work more closely with France was a given. Leonard Woolf, convinced that the Labour Party needed to revise its whole peace policy in the wake of the failures of the League in Abyssinia and Spain, used his position on the Advisory Committee on International Questions to push the case for closer Anglo-French collaboration in late 1936 and continued to press for this throughout 1937 in the pages of the *Political Quarterly*.¹⁰⁰ He would later observe,

History will not forgive France and Britain for their part in the destruction of Spanish democracy. Wickedness often goes unpunished, vacillation and stupidity never.¹⁰¹

Although the Labour Party seemed to be making little headway in 1937, the circulation of the *New Statesman* continued to rise and Hugh Dalton's contributions to the letters page there prefigured his triumph at that year's Labour Party conference, when the notion of a united front was dismissed, any attempts to forge links with communists forbidden, and rearmament accepted as a regrettable necessity.¹⁰² By this point it was also taken for granted in the pages of the *New Statesman* that British and French socialists had mutual interests and the tribulations of the Blum government were followed closely. Its relations with the unions, business and finance were scrutinised to provide ideas about how the Labour Party (with or without allies) might cope in government. They could also provide a means with which to castigate the National Government. In a review of Werth's book, *The Destiny of France*, which came out in 1937, Harold Laski wrote:

⁹⁶ Robson, W. A. (1971). *The Political Quarterly in the Thirties* London, Allen Lane.p2

⁹⁷ e.g. *Political Quarterly* 1937 Vol 8;3

⁹⁸ *Political Quarterly* 1938 Vol 9 :1

⁹⁹ *Political Quarterly* 1938 Vol 9:3 p338

¹⁰⁰ Leventhal, F. M. (1992). "Leonard Woolf and Kingsley Martin: Creative Tension on the Left." *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 24(2): 279-294.

¹⁰¹ *New Statesman and Nation* 28.1.39 London Diary

¹⁰² Pimlott, B. (1977). *Labour and the Left in the 1930s* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.Ch 15

It is...I suggest, his [Blum's] tragedy that the victory of the Left in France should synchronise with the existence of a British government more willing than any of recent times to subordinate the claims of the democratic principle to the protection of the class interests it represents.¹⁰³

The fortunes of the Blum government were followed closely in other left-leaning publications. In *Labour*, Max Beer wrote on Blum's brand of socialism as 'rooted in the ethics and in the spiritual history of France... but slightly tinged with Marxism' in May,¹⁰⁴ and Gustav Winter described 'Peace and Public Welfare in the French Government's Programme' in June.¹⁰⁵

Despite Blum's resignation in June that year, there were hopes that a popular front government could continue in some form in France and the need for one in Britain was still seen as the way forward by many writing in the *New Statesman*. For instance, Kingsley Martin wrote a very favourable review of G.D.H. Cole's *The People's Front* - unsurprisingly a Left Book Club publication.¹⁰⁶ Calls for a political popular front, evident in the work of so many of Left Book Club contributors, were echoed by growing demands for a closer relationship with the Soviet Union. An article by C.E.M. Joad stated

If war must come, it is important to be on the right side. The right side is the side of Democracy and Socialism. Let us, then, form a military alliance with Russia as well as with France and invite all like-minded democratic Powers to join us. In a war fought with such allies, victory will bring peace to the world; it will also, incidentally, bring Socialism to the world.¹⁰⁷

The WEA's magazine, *Highway* (intended for 'tutors and discussion groups') also provides some examples of how such academics and activists hoped to influence public opinion about France as war approached. D. R. Gillie wrote about the collapse of the *Front Populaire*. At the same time John Hampden Jackson (later a biographer of Jaurès) reminded readers of the enduring relevance of French revolutionary ideals: 'What are the foundations of democracy? They were best explained in the slogan of the greatest of democratic revolutions: Liberty, Equality and Fraternity'.¹⁰⁸

The relationships between the parties of the left remained a major concern. Louis Lévy (diplomatic editor of *Le Populaire* and vice-president of the LSI) contributed several pieces on French politics to *Labour* in 1938. He stressed the similarities between the SFIO and Labour Party. He explained the collapse of the Popular Front, attacking the PCF members for deserting the socialists and consorting with the Radicals, and lamenting the arrival of Bonnet, who 'will range himself humbly behind

¹⁰³ *New Statesman and Nation* 7.2.37

¹⁰⁴ *Labour* May 1936

¹⁰⁵ *Labour* June 1936

¹⁰⁶ *New Statesman and Nation* 17.7.37

¹⁰⁷ *New Statesman and Nation* 15.3.37

¹⁰⁸ *Highway* January 1938 p 100.

Chamberlain'.¹⁰⁹ Lévy's criticisms of the PCF chimed with the generally anti-communist stance of both *Labour* and the *Political Quarterly*, both of which had little confidence in a 'united', or even a 'popular' front in British politics in the later 1930s.

Enthusiasts for such an alliance could be found instead in the pages of *Tribune*, a paper set up by the well-heeled Labour MP and chair of the Socialist League, Sir Stafford Cripps. Heavily subsidised by Cripps, *Tribune* attempted to appeal to a wide audience, adopting a style at times similar to that of the popular press. It aimed at stimulating a mass movement that would transform British politics. Its writers numbered many rising stars of the left, including Aneurin Bevan and Barbara Betts as well as established journalists such as Vernon Bartlett (also diplomatic correspondent for the *News Chronicle*), well-known writers such as Storm Jameson and Fabian grandee Sidney Webb. The first editor was William Mellor, who had left his previous post as editor of the *Daily Herald* when it was taken over by Odhams Press – a move which had led to a reduction in its coverage of politics in the interests of enhancing its commercial appeal and advertising revenue.¹¹⁰

Cripps, though, through his advocacy of a 'Unity' manifesto that envisaged an alliance between Labour, Communist and Independent Labour Parties, was already on 'a collision course with the Labour leadership'.¹¹¹ Its support for the united front meant the Socialist League was forcibly wound up in 1937, although Cripps avoided expulsion from the Party at that point. Such was official Party distrust of Cripps and his paper, Mellor was dropped by the Party as a possible parliamentary candidate, despite having been accepted as one twice before. However, in September 1938 Cripps was looking to a deal with the Left Book Club to secure the paper's future. In order to get the backing of Gollancz, Cripps resolved that editorial policy should now embrace the *popular* front of all those critical of National Government foreign policy, and thereby ditch the more exclusive *united front*; Mellor refused to play along, and was promptly sacked.¹¹² By October 1938 Gollancz was on the editorial board while the new editor, H. J. Hartshorn, oversaw a rise in circulation to 30,000 in April 1939.¹¹³ Nevertheless, there would be no loss of enthusiasm in *Tribune* for the Soviet Union, although Hartshorn kept his membership of the CP secret. However, Cripps was by May 1938 back on the Labour Party National Executive, arguing that 'It is better to join forces with anti-Socialist democrats than to see both

¹⁰⁹ *Labour* May 1938

¹¹⁰ Richards, H. (1997). *The Bloody Circus: The Daily Herald and the Left*. London, Pluto Press.p 149

¹¹¹ Peter Clarke and Richard Toye, 'Cripps, Sir (Richard) Stafford (1889–1952)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/32630>, accessed 8 Dec 2008]

¹¹² Pimlott, B. (1977). *Labour and the Left in the 1930s*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.p107

¹¹³ Hill, D., Ed. (1977). *Tribune 40: the first 40 years of a socialist newspaper*. London, Quartet Books.p5

Socialism and Democracy perish.¹¹⁴ He became less antagonistic to Dalton and even began seeking co-operation with anti-Chamberlain Conservatives.¹¹⁵

Though some might dismiss *Tribune* as a vanity project for Cripps (a 'rich man's trumpet' according to his biographer, Peter Clarke¹¹⁶) it did make a real attempt to provide a worldwide perspective, with articles on India, Mexico, Rumania, Switzerland, Egypt and Holland as well as France in the first three months alone. There were contributions by European socialists, including Otto Bauer, Julius Braunthal and Jean Longuet. Articles on Christian pacifism by George Lansbury and book reviews by Denis Brogan in the early months suggested some openness to views other than those of the Socialist League and the Unity Campaign. On the other hand, attacks on Walter Citrine indicated intolerance of those in the labour movement thought willing to 'collaborate with the ruling class'¹¹⁷. Citrine's appearance on the same platform as Winston Churchill at a League of Nations Union meeting was condemned. Bevin and Dalton – who openly criticised Cripps - also came under fire in *Tribune's* pages, as did on occasion, the *Daily Herald*.

For *Tribune*, France was largely covered in terms of what the successes and failures of the French Popular Front could teach the British left. In its second issue, the new paper had urged closer ties between the SFIO and PCF, reflecting its own desire for the equivalent in Britain. In an article on the Croix de Feu (a French far right league), the writer ('a special correspondent') proclaimed

as long as the Front Populaire can count on the whole-hearted support of the communists, as long as that Government continues to combat the crisis by means of social reforms, so long, as Blum puts it, will Fascism be settled.¹¹⁸

In line with its policy, the foreign editor of *L'Humanité* (the French Communist Party daily) was interviewed in the following issue and space was given to Maurice Thorez's proposal that the SFIO and PCF actually fuse. This was followed up with a plea for the Labour Socialist International and the Third International to unite and reverse the split of the early 1920s. However, *Tribune* took a pragmatic line on Blum's request for a loan to shore up the French economy:

Politically it is desirable that the remaining democracies in Europe should be in a healthy state economically...And in any event recovery in France would do much to promote international trade.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁴ Clarke, P. (2002). *The Cripps Version : The Life of Sir Stafford Cripps 1889-1952*. London, Allen Lane. p75

¹¹⁵ *ibid* p 78

¹¹⁶ *ibid* p 74

¹¹⁷ *Tribune* 15.1.37

¹¹⁸ *Tribune* 8.1.37

¹¹⁹ *Tribune* 29.1.37

While *Tribune* continued to give advice to Blum's government ('he should not hesitate to apply ...measures of nationalisation'¹²⁰), it attempted to try to present the Popular Front government on its own terms – essentially as an alliance of socialists and communists. Thus Harold Laski wrote an article under a photograph of a Popular Front march, claiming 'the *united front* has saved France and is saving Spain', asking 'What is this crime of unity?'¹²¹ Laski insisted he supported the Unity Campaign but had no part in its foundation – thus protecting his position as a Labour Party member. The incident at Clichy in March 1937, where left-wing demonstrators protested against the Parti Social Français, was again used to urge the cause of socialist and communist unity,¹²² and the rise in PCF membership (supposedly outstripping that of the SFIO in April that year¹²³) was cited as another reason for some kind of alliance between the left and far left.

France was held out as an example in other ways. Frank Jellinek's book *The Paris Commune Of 1871* (published by Gollancz) was reviewed by the left-wing cartoonist, Frank Horrabin. Horrabin argued that the book helped explain what was happening in Spain, declaring 'at last we have in English a full length study of one of the most heroic chapters of working-class revolutionary history'.¹²⁴ G.D.H. Cole, the following month, commented: 'Trade union membership in France has doubled in the last year. Why should it not be doubled here in Britain?'¹²⁵ Those involved in British local elections in October 1937 were urged to study the example of the Popular Front.¹²⁶ Julius Braunthal's review of *The Destiny of France* concluded that its coverage of the origins of Blum's government meant 'This is the most important political study that has appeared in England for years. Anyone who wants to understand the Europe of our day must read it.'¹²⁷ When Blum's book *Du Mariage* was eventually translated into English twenty years after he wrote it, Storm Jameson stated that it showed the author 'belongs to a higher civilisation than our own...inheriting a culture in which it is not the fashion to sneer at intellect.'¹²⁸ Her article was illustrated with a large photograph of the French leader. The reader of *Tribune* was thus repeatedly reminded that France and her history were essential to the promotion of progress.

In a full-page spread in March 1937, *Tribune* also pointed up the lessons Labour should draw from the difficulties Blum had experienced in developing an economic policy while working in tandem with Radicals and other centrist groups with capitalist leanings:

¹²⁰ *Tribune* 19.2.37

¹²¹ *Tribune* 5.2.37

¹²² *Tribune* 25.3.37

¹²³ *Tribune* 16.4.37

¹²⁴ *Tribune* 19.2.37

¹²⁵ *Tribune* 26.2.37

¹²⁶ *Tribune* 22.10.37 & 29.10.37

¹²⁷ *Tribune* 7.5.37

¹²⁸ *Tribune* 28.5.37

No Socialist working in a capitalist democracy can afford to disregard the lessons of the events of the past few weeks. We have seen financial sabotage in action against a Government elected by the workers.

...the failure of Blum in his perfectly legitimate crusade against wholly illegitimate profits should be carefully considered by those who will be responsible for financial policy in the next Labour Government.¹²⁹

The Radical Chautemps took office in France after Blum resigned in June 1937. Blum became deputy premier and the SFIO continued to participate in the French government. There was, nevertheless, a shift to the right and SFIO deputies left in January 1938. Cripps ended a *Tribune* editorial,

The lesson of the most recent French crisis is that we must prepare to meet just such a crisis in our own country, a crisis purposely created by financiers and industrialists with the sole purpose of alarming the people and so defeating the political power of the workers.¹³⁰

There was copious coverage of the Spanish Civil War in the pages of *Tribune*, with praise for the International Brigade and a call for 'Arms for Spain' on an early front page¹³¹ together with pictures and descriptions of the bombings of Spanish towns. Cripps had opposed non-intervention at Labour's conference in Edinburgh in 1936.¹³² However, *Tribune* was reluctant to blame Blum for the policy of non-intervention and preferred to turn its fire on the National Government. During the brief second Blum government of March 1938, the 'Paris correspondent', noting that Laval is the 'embodiment of French reaction and admirer of fascism in all its forms', opined that:

Blum ... is determined to fight. He sees his immediate task as the saving of Republican Spain. But his success depends as much upon the removal of Chamberlain as upon his own energy and that of the French working class.¹³³

The message of Anglo-French solidarity was reinforced by articles by Leo Legrange (a member of Blum's cabinet) and Jean Longuet, veteran French socialist and member of the LSI. Longuet ended his article commenting on Eden's resignation from the British government in February 1938:

France remains loyal to the Franco-Soviet pact while she is more desirous than ever of retaining Franco-British friendship. Only a Labour government can now put that policy into practice and save peace, liberty and democracy. We French socialists look to British Labour.¹³⁴

Tribune continued to promote Anglo-French solidarity after Daladier came to power in France in April 1938, although the French premier was shown in an unflattering light in photographs and cartoons,

¹²⁹ *Tribune* 12.3.37 and also see 23.7.37 & 6.8.37 & 8.10.37

¹³⁰ *Tribune* 21.1.38

¹³¹ *Tribune* 19.3.37

¹³² Pimlott, B. (1977). *Labour and the Left in the 1930s*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. p 91

¹³³ *Tribune* 25.3.38

¹³⁴ *Tribune* 4.3.38

and seen as open to the influence of 'British fascism' in the guise of the National Government.¹³⁵

French history was again invoked, this time by Aneurin Bevan, to depict the protests there: 'the French workers will defend the liberties consecrated by the blood of the communards'.¹³⁶ Whilst the problems of the SFIO, at the Royan Congress and elsewhere were given careful consideration, a lengthy article by Glyn Roberts summed up the *Tribune's* overall approach to France. Whilst claiming,

the innumerable political factions of France are the outward expression of one thing – the class struggle...

It ended:

The greatest thing any British democrat can do today is to stand firm with France, with the French people. There can be no better friends, no neighbours easier to respect and admire. In the face of appalling intrigues and double-crossing, the French are solving their problems.¹³⁷

As well as contributing articles to *Tribune*, Jean Longuet gave a lecture on 'France' in February 1938 as part of the lecture series of the New Fabian Research Bureau.¹³⁸ The NFRB provided policy documents, conferences and publications to assist local and national Labour politicians develop policies as the Labour Party began to become more successful at by-elections and public interest in current affairs grew. The circulation of the *New Statesman* continued to rise as its coverage of France and French politics expanded, with more articles by Werth, as well as by other correspondents and the editorial team. As in other publications, these journalists were concerned with what Britain could learn from the experience of the coalition of parties that had formed the Popular Front and the difficulties it had experienced while in government. The question of whether Labour should make electoral pacts with other parties opposed to the policies of the National Government continued to be debated with reference to the example of France. Much was made of the struggles of the French left both in the 1930s and in the past, and the ways in which history had given British and French socialists a joint heritage which should enable them to withstand the threat of fascism, even though this failed to stop a Francoist victory in Spain in January 1939. Typically a *New Statesman* leader article asserted,

...in England, as well as in France, it is on the left rather than on the right that one must seek for those who cherish our joint heritage of liberty and independence...¹³⁹

The *New Statesman's* success was undoubtedly partly a result of the range of views to be found there. Kingsley Martin and Keynes considered the possible advantages of redrawing the boundaries of Czechoslovakia to avoid war,¹⁴⁰ the former arguing in one leader that 'Spain is far more vital to British

¹³⁵ *Tribune* 29.7.38

¹³⁶ *Tribune* 18.11.38

¹³⁷ *Tribune* 26.8.38

¹³⁸ *New Statesman and Nation* 1.1.38

¹³⁹ *New Statesman and Nation* 2.4.38

¹⁴⁰ Gilbert, M. (1990). *Foreign Policy & Propaganda in the Progressive Press 1936-1945*. PhD, Swansea.

interests and to the preservation of democracy than the independence of Czechoslovakia'.¹⁴¹ However, both subsequently rejected the deal made in Munich with vehemence. Werth's articles, meanwhile, offered a view of the crucial events of 1938 and 1939 from the perspective of an intimate, knowledgeable and sympathetic critic of France and the French left. While Werth was not given to hyperbole, his writings showed an awareness of the gravity of the economic and political situation in France and he pointed out that 'France today is in the tightest hole she has ever been in'.¹⁴² Drawing on the French press (especially *Le Populaire*), as well as his contacts with key players such as Jouhaux, Werth discussed French opinion in the wake of what he characterised as the disaster of the Munich settlement, which he feared might signal the end of any hope of revival of the Popular Front as an 'anti-fascist' force:

The left had wobbled and the right and the defeatists got what they wanted ...The working class – or most of it – is revolted and disgusted.¹⁴³

Much of Werth's journalism at this time (both in the *New Statesman* and the *Manchester Guardian*) would be used as the basis for his third book: 'France and Munich before and after the Surrender',¹⁴⁴ which came out the following year and was praised for its perspicacious attack on the settlement and thorough understanding of the French point of view.¹⁴⁵ Werth, like other *New Statesman* writers, described the difficulties caused to the French government by Chamberlain's policies (for instance on the possible alliance with the Soviet Union). As hostilities became increasingly inevitable during 1939, his chief concern remained to persuade his readers to see the French point of view. Thus, on the issue of conscription (to which Kingsley Martin and most Labour Party supporters were completely opposed) he urged, 'You must try to get under the skin of the ordinary Frenchman'.¹⁴⁶

Another *Manchester Guardian* writer, the diplomatic correspondent, Robert Dell, appears to have taken over Werth's spot at the *New Statesman* in the summer of 1939, and it was he who captured the widely held view of the British left on the subject of the proposed banning of the French Communist Party. After pointing out that

papers like *Le Jour*, *Le Journal*, *Le Petit Journal* and *Action Française* are continually inventing stories of Communist activities in the hope of preventing an agreement with Russia...

Dell brought in a telling reference to the French revolutionary tradition:

¹⁴¹ *New Statesman and Nation* 27.8.38

¹⁴² *New Statesman and Nation* 26.2.38

¹⁴³ *New Statesman and Nation* 24.9.38

¹⁴⁴ Werth, A. (1939). *France and Munich Before and after The Surrender*. London, Hamilton.

¹⁴⁵ Gannon, E. D. (1939). "Reviewed work(s): France and Munich: Before and after the Surrender. by Alexander Werth." *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1931-1939)* 18(5): 700.

¹⁴⁶ *New Statesman and Nation* 1.4.39

It could hardly promote national unity to suppress a party that polled a million and a half votes at the last general election ... and is now the only party that stands as a whole for the Jacobin tradition.¹⁴⁷

The *New Statesman's* persistent enthusiasm for French artistic and literary life brought its literary editor, Raymond Mortimer, to the centre stage when war broke out:

I loved France as a child on my holidays, as a boy at the Sorbonne, as a worker in a French hospital during the last war, as a frequent guest during the twenty years of peace, but never have I been so impressed and moved as by the serenity of the French country and the French character during this fortnight of listening to the approaching steps of catastrophe.¹⁴⁸

Philippe Chalon has noted that 'le front culturel constitué contre les dictatures précède le front militaire de septembre 1939'.¹⁴⁹ Chalon has shown how cultural links between the two countries were fostered and maintained during the 1930s. While mainly concerned with noting the promotion of British culture in France - through visits by the Royal Academy of British Art, the efforts of the *Association France-Grande-Bretagne*, and the circulation of books about Britain by André Maurois, amongst others¹⁵⁰ - he also describes how, when the weak franc made it difficult for French students to come to Britain for summer schools, British academics put on a conference at the Sorbonne.¹⁵¹

Chalon makes much of the *Association France-Grande-Bretagne* which tended to put on events for the national and local elites. However some of the participants in the visits and other activities took the chance to encourage what the *Manchester Guardian* called 'plain people' to cross the Channel. Thus Alderman Toole of Manchester, in Paris with the Association, encountering a group of Macclesfield silk operatives while on an official visit to the tomb of the Unknown Soldier in 1937, commented 'Such an exchange of holiday makers is a vital necessity between nations'. He also noted 'I sincerely hope that holidays with pay will be introduced in Britain shortly; it is one of the best things the French have done'.¹⁵² In the same vein, in 1938 *Tribune* ran an advertisement for trips to Paris:

This Easter – Paris! – not just the Paris of the guide books, but the Paris of the Popular Front. French workers are waiting to show you their city...

¹⁴⁷ *New Statesman and Nation* 19.8.39 'The Men of Munich'

¹⁴⁸ *New Statesman and Nation* 9.9.39 'The Heart of France'

¹⁴⁹ Chalon, P. (2002) "La diffusion de la culture britannique en France à la fin des années trente à travers des structures d'échanges issues d'initiatives privées."

¹⁵⁰ for example : André Maurois *Edouard VII et ses Temps* (Les Editions de France :1933)

¹⁵¹ Chalon, P. (2002) "La diffusion de la culture britannique en France à la fin des années trente à travers des structures d'échanges issues d'initiatives privées."p4

¹⁵² *Manchester Guardian* 2.7.37 p13

Tribune also welcomed 'Paris comrades' at soccer matches in London¹⁵³ and promoted French films, seeing *La Grande Illusion* as showing 'France to be acknowledged as the leader of the intelligent cinema in the world'.¹⁵⁴

There was, then, continued interest in France demonstrated by the British left intelligentsia in the 1930s and a desire to spread this to the mass of Labour supporters. On many of their concerns, France provided a key point of comparison, especially as Europe was increasingly dominated by dictatorships. When racial discrimination in Britain was debated in the *New Statesman*, journalists and letter writers were keen to make contrasts with France.¹⁵⁵ In 1937, the British pavilion at the Paris Exhibition was compared unfavourably with that of the French¹⁵⁶ whilst the IPC's 'Peace Pavilion' at the same exhibition also brought together British and French peace activists with package holiday deals offered to British sympathisers.¹⁵⁷ In 1938, a Peace Pavilion at the Glasgow Exhibition was closely modelled on that of Paris.¹⁵⁸ French journalists, such as Geneviève Tabouis from *L'Oeuvre*, gave lectures for the Fabian Society in November 1938 and wrote for the *Daily Mirror* in 1939.¹⁵⁹ Academic exchange continued to the eve of war; Marc Bloch was giving a paper at a conference in Cambridge on 'The Problem of Classes in France and the England in the Middle Ages' when Hitler invaded Czechoslovakia in March 1939, whereupon he was hastily recalled to reserve duty in Paris.¹⁶⁰

The publications reviewed here reflect the divisions amongst the British left while their contents help us understand some of its difficulties in recovering from the débâcle of 1931 and facing the threat of fascism. However, they also demonstrate that France remained an abiding concern and the wish to collaborate with French socialists grew during the decade. If, at the beginning of this decade, there was a tendency to view France as run by people unwilling to see the follies of Versailles, by the end of it she was seen as the country which had shown a way for socialists to achieve power, even if France had also provided lessons on how such power might be lost. The notion that an electoral alliance as typified by the French Popular Front government of Léon Blum could stem the spread of fascism captured the imagination of many on the British left. This met with fierce opposition from those in the Labour Party and their supporters who feared any kind of association with Liberals, let alone Communist Party members. The arguments between the two camps occupied much space in the publications considered here and these were amplified by the need to find a coherent response to the

¹⁵³ *Tribune* 18.3.38

¹⁵⁴ *Tribune* 28.1.38

¹⁵⁵ *New Statesman and Nation* 20.8.38

¹⁵⁶ *New Statesman and Nation* 7.8.37

¹⁵⁷ Whitaker, D. (1989). *Fighter for Peace – Philip Noel-Baker 1889-1982*. New York, William Sessions Ltd. Ch 5

¹⁵⁸ McCarthy, H. (2010). "The League of Nations, Public Ritual and National Identity in Britain, c.1919–56." *History Workshop Journal* 70(1).

¹⁵⁹ *New Statesman and Nation* 20.8.38

¹⁶⁰ Fink, C. (1989). *Marc Bloch: A Life in History*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. pp203-4

civil war in Spain. However, both sides looked to French socialists as allies in their efforts to construct a foreign policy that would appeal to their supporters and deal with the crisis brought about by German designs on Czechoslovakia.

Chapter Four: British and French trade unionists and socialists endeavour to form a common response to communism and fascism

Reviewing the different efforts by British and French activists to co-ordinate a joint response to fascism which would reach out to others in Europe and beyond, one is struck time and again by the many difficulties in achieving any kind of common response to Soviet communism. There were many overlaps of personnel in groupings of organised labour and left-wing activists – both national and international - and very often no clear demarcation between those who held opinions sympathetic to communism and those who did not. In addition, many in the leadership of the British Labour Party campaigned against any association with card-carrying communists (even going so far as to expel those who advocated this from the party), while urging an alliance with the Soviet Union in 1939, if not before. This chapter will focus on the efforts by the leaders of organised labour and political parties to work across international boundaries before and just after the outbreak of World War Two and point to ways in which such efforts were undermined. It aims to show how the problem of communism could cause tensions and misunderstandings between the left in France and Britain both before 1939 and after the onset of hostilities. It includes a discussion of a publication of the Labour Research Department to show how communist sympathisers in the Labour Party reacted to developments in France in the early months of the war.

Whilst theorists might cling to the notion of communism as merely an inevitable (and desirable) stage in history, where the horrors of industrial capitalism were obliterated, its association with violent revolution in the interwar period meant it was denigrated in a variety of ways and from different positions. Communism could be vilified as an attack on the rights of property (in which case many reformist socialists were also suspect), or in its Soviet incarnation as an assault on the liberties of the individual, or worse still, as a blind willingness to obey the dictates of Moscow, to the point of furthering traditional Russian imperialism. The last view was expressed by Léon Blum when he called the *Parti Communiste Français* (PCF), ‘a nationalist party dedicated to a foreign cause’.¹ But it was possible to be critical of the Soviet Union and antipathetic to violent revolution whilst remaining an enthusiast for Marxist theory. Thus whilst the designation - and condemnation - of a lot of those on the left as ‘fellow-travellers’ may be useful when examining the politics of the Cold War, it surely oversimplifies the shifting and fluid nature of many of the groupings on the left before 1945. Communist parties were not always under the thumb of Moscow, as, for example, Jonathan Haslam has argued in

¹ Vinen, R. (1996). *France, 1934-70*. London, Macmillan. p94

his discussion of the PCF's initiative in the formation of the Popular Front in France.² The spread of violent and reactionary fascism could in the end only be halted by combinations that at least appeared to embrace liberal ideals, egalitarian principles, internationalism and, indeed, national interests. This chapter is about some of the efforts to produce such combinations and will attempt to point to some of the ways the confusions and contradictions of communism confounded such attempts.

Communism could be conceived as threatening, visionary, panacean or even just intellectually engaging. As has been shown, the attempts by some British socialists to form united fronts with communists (following the end, in 1934, of the Comintern's sectarian approach and its new instructions to sister parties to collaborate with others against fascism) were to lead to bitter disputes within a Labour Party whose leadership feared the taint of communism would destroy party integrity and alienate the electorate. The success, however, of Gollancz's Left Book Club (LBC) indicates that such attempts roused extensive interest and considerable support amongst the public, even if these did not translate into solid backing for Stafford Cripps's attempts to make the united front Labour Party policy.

Mark Gilbert has argued that along with Gollancz, 'both Cripps and Laski dramatically altered their most fundamental political convictions from liberal-socialism to semi-revolutionary communism under the influence of the Great Depression, the rise of fascism and the ideological innovations of Strachey.'³ The fact that Laski and Cripps played leading organisational roles in the Labour Party might suggest that the party's centre of gravity was shifting from its traditional reformism. However such 'semi-revolutionary communism' was surely superficial at best, given, for example, Laski's enthusiasm for Roosevelt's New Deal.⁴ It did not signify uncritical support for the Soviet Union or the British Communist Party. Indeed, after reading about the Moscow trials of 1938, Gollancz came into conflict with Harry Pollitt of the CP over the issue of intellectual freedom. Gollancz went on to publish Leonard Woolf's condemnation of Stalinism (admittedly after a protracted argument and attempt to dilute some of his criticisms).⁵ Cripps, meanwhile, lost much of his enthusiasm for the Soviet Union during his period there as ambassador during the war, but was not perhaps fully persuaded of the merits of a pragmatic reformist approach until his spell as Minister of Aircraft Production in Churchill's coalition government in 1942.⁶ Communism could be represented as intrinsically subversive of democratic activity or as providing tools for analysing afresh the ills of society. If the former, it is easy to

² Haslam, J. (1979). "The Comintern and the Origins of the Popular Front 1934 -1935." *The Historical Journal* **22**(03): 673-691.

³ Gilbert, M. (1990). *Foreign Policy & Propaganda in the Progressive Press 1936-1945*. PhD, Swansea.p38

⁴ Lamb, P. (1999). "Harold Laski (1893–1950): political theorist of a world in crisis." *Review of International Studies* **25**(2): 329-342.

⁵ Edwards, R. D. (1987). *Victor Gollancz*. London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson.pp96-97

⁶ Peter Clarke and Richard Toye, 'Cripps, Sir (Richard) Stafford (1889–1952)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/32630>, accessed 8 Dec 2008

understand the ferocious opposition to many of its proponents, if the latter we can appreciate how attractive it was to would-be reformers.

Charges of communism or crypto-communism have also continued to be levied at figures on the French left and at that time could work against efforts to create broadly based international organisations that might support the aspirations of socialists in Britain and France. Pierre Cot was involved in the international peace movement that was closely connected to the League of Nations and was joined on the International Peace campaign (IPC) by the British Conservative David Cecil, who was also active in the League of Nations Union (LNU) as well as Philip Noel-Baker, moderate socialist but keen internationalist. Cot and Noel-Baker had become friends in 1929 through their shared enthusiasm for the League of Nations at that time.⁷ The principal organiser of the IPC was the communist Louis Dolivet, and Ceadel argues that the organisation was 'sufficiently tarred with the Moscow brush to be anathematised by Britain's trade unions'.⁸ Ceadel has also claimed that 'Cot was not only a secret communist, but later, at least, a Soviet agent, too.'⁹ However, Cot's biographer, Sabine Jansen, has refuted this charge; although Cot may have been keen for France to develop better relations with the Soviet Union and later a supporter of Stalin (writing a eulogy for the Russian leader on his death in 1953¹⁰):

Ses contacts avec les membres des services de renseignements soviétiques s'expliquent par la volonté, non dénuée de naïveté, d'infléchir les choix de Staline et de l'inciter à basculer dans le camp antihitlérien. Mais les sources accessibles n'en font pas un espion à la solde de l'URSS. En aucune façon il ne se conçoit et ne se comporte en agent au service d'une puissance étrangère.¹¹

Some left the LNU in disgust at its links with the IPC, but while both organisations were deserted by anti-communists, they were also undermined by the failures of the League of Nations. This was a time when the Soviet trade union Profintern was trying various tactics to join the International Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU), whilst showing little inclination to abide by its rules, which added to the hostility towards Moscow of union leaders such as Walter Citrine, who told the Russians in 1936, 'You have tried to trick me. It is the old story. You can't play straight'.¹²

In Britain and France, the main preoccupation of union leaders was the struggle to maintain, if not improve, the living standards of their members in the face of economic dislocation and downturn in

⁷ Jansen, S. (2002). *Pierre Cot : Un antifasciste radical*. Paris, Fayard.p222

⁸ Ceadel, M. (2000). *Semi-detached idealists the British peace movement and international relations, 1854-1945*. Oxford, Oxford University Press. p350

⁹ Ibid.p349

¹⁰ Jansen, S. (2002). *Pierre Cot : Un antifasciste radical*. Paris, Fayard.p513

¹¹ Ibid.p 522

¹² Goethem, G. v. (2006). *The Amsterdam International: The World of the International Federation of Trade Unions*. Aldershot, Ashgate.ch 7

the 1920s and 1930s. Attempts on both sides of the Channel to organise workers had much in common, both in the attitudes and concerns of their leaders and in their limited achievements. Membership of unions in both Britain and France rose during the 1930s. In France the advent of the Popular Front appeared to end the split in the trade union movement following the Congress of Tours in 1920; thus the communist *Confédération Générale de Travail Unitaire* (CGTU) merged again with the reformist *Confédération Générale de Travail* (CGT) in 1936, with the latter - at least to begin with - firmly in the driving seat. Membership of the CGT rose to 4 million by 1939, whilst that of the British Trades Union Congress (TUC) reached 5 million. Efforts to promote the cause of organised labour internationally had produced the International Labour Organisation as part of the League of Nations in 1919. By 1939, affiliations to the IFTU, founded in 1913, stood at 20 million.

Whilst in the 1920s the IFTU had tended to present itself as the 'the voice of the socialist movement in the international arena', committed to active promotion of peace and international understanding in a way that the American Federation of Labour found alarming, by the 1930s (largely as a result of the moderating influence of Citrine) it had renounced the idea of a general strike and seemed unwilling to go beyond general condemnations of fascism.¹³ The leaders of trade union umbrella organisations in Western Europe tended to dominate the IFTU, especially after the loss of trade unionists from fascist and other dictatorships in central and eastern Europe. Overall the decline from 22 million in 1922 to 8.2 million in 1934 was set to continue as authoritarian governments and unemployment hit organised labour, but the need for collaboration between leading trade union figures in Britain and France became ever more evident.¹⁴

Both the CGT and TUC were led by men who had risen from poverty through their respective unions and largely educated themselves. A glance at their respective careers reveals a number of similarities which should have eased co-operation between them. Léon Jouhaux rose through the movement because of his 'intelligence, industriousness and organising ability'¹⁵ becoming Secretary-General of the CGT in 1909, whilst Walter Citrine was made acting (and then de jure) general secretary of the TUC in 1925 because of his 'reputation for administrative efficiency'.¹⁶ (Admittedly, Citrine, whose skills with shorthand had been an asset to his career, did not share Jouhaux' intense 'dislike of paperwork',¹⁷ which led to much of the day to day work of CGT being handled by René Belin). Jouhaux promoted the

¹³ MacDowell, L. S. (2002). "Review." *Labour/Le Travail* 50(2): 345-348.

¹⁴ Pasture, P. (2001). "The Interwar Origins of International Labour's European Commitment (1919-1934)" *Contemporary European History* 10(2): 221-237

¹⁵ http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1951/jouhaux.html accessed 10.12.09

¹⁶ Tom Buchanan, 'Citrine, Walter McLennan, first Baron Citrine (1887-1983)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/30931>, accessed 15 Dec 2009]

¹⁷ Jackson, J. (1988). *The Popular Front in France: Defending Democracy 1934-38*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. p77

principles of 'solidarity, political independence, democratic procedure, and internationalism' in the pages of *La Bataille Syndicaliste* which he edited between 1911 and 1921.¹⁸ Citrine became director of the *Daily Herald* in 1926 and at that time largely avoided getting too much involved in Labour Party politics and in fact the paper was frequently critical of the Labour leadership during the 1920s.¹⁹ While Citrine, if he could, preferred to stand above the political fray, Jouhaux was even more determined to keep the CGT independent of the SFIO.

Both leaders were keen to see real gains for organised labour in terms of access to policy making and the creation of nation-wide agreements. Both were willing to co-operate with their governments in order to achieve their goals. Following his active role in ending the General Strike of 1926, Citrine took a leading part in the Mond-Turner talks of 1927-29. Although these did not result in any lasting agreements, they set some sort of precedent in terms of employer/union co-operation and 'had an educative effect on both sides of industry.'²⁰ Similarly, though in rather different circumstances, the widespread stoppages and sit-downs in the spring of 1936 resulted in Jouhaux taking part in the conference that led to the Matignon Accords which signalled a victory for organised labour, however limited in the long run. He had supported the Popular Front government by preventing civil servants, railway workers and those working for the Bank of France from joining the recent strikes in order to avoid triggering monetary or financial panic which might destroy Blum's administration.²¹ However, Adrian Rossiter's examination of events in June-October 1936 suggests that most French employers were no more tractable than those in Britain in the late 1930s, despite prime minister Blum's backing for Jouhaux at this time.²² Indeed, as will be shown, industrial relations were fraught with difficulty in the two years immediately preceding the fall of France.

Citrine and Jouhaux were both also heavily involved in the international trade union movement. Jouhaux had been instrumental in the incorporation of the International Labour Office into the Treaty of Versailles and acted as a French delegate to the League of Nations in the 1920s. There he attempted to further the cause of arms limitation and opposed Italian fascists achieving senior posts in the organisation. Citrine became president of the IFTU in 1928, where he joined Jouhaux who had been vice-president since 1919. From 1930 Citrine would 'argue passionately' that international co-operation was the only means to overcome the depression.²³ Citrine and Jouhaux worked effectively

¹⁸ http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1951/jouhaux.html accessed 10.12.09

¹⁹ Riddell, N. (2000). "Walter Citrine and the British Labour Movement, 1925-1935." *History* **85**(278): 285-306.

²⁰ McDonald, G. W. and H. F. Gospel (1973). "The Mond-Turner Talks, 1927-1933: A Study in Industrial Co-Operation." *The Historical Journal* **16**(4): 807-829.

²¹ Chapman, H., M. Kesselman and M. A. Schain, Eds. (1998). *A Century of Organised Labour in France: A Union Movement for the Twentieth Century?* New York, St Martin's Press.p31

²² Rossiter, A. (1987). "Popular Front Economic Policy and the Matignon Negotiations." *The Historical Journal* **30**(3): 663-684.

²³ Riddell, N. (2000). "Walter Citrine and the British Labour Movement, 1925-1935." *History* **85**(278): 285-306.

together, even if Citrine tended to put more emphasis on practical ways to improve working conditions, whilst Jouhaux spent more time setting forth a broader picture of the movement's aims.

The danger of fascism to organised labour was to become an even more pressing concern in the 1930s. The emasculation of trade unions by Mussolini was followed by their wholesale destruction in Germany by the Nazis in 1933. The IFTU offices having been moved to Berlin in 1931, members could see at first hand the consequences of dictatorship. As extreme right-wing regimes took power throughout central and eastern Europe, the IFTU campaigned for sanctions against Italy and made a short-lived attempt to build an underground union structure in Germany in 1936. It set up a fund to help Spanish socialists after the nationalist rebellion against the Popular Front government there in 1936,²⁴ and supplied further aid to the 'victims of fascism' in Poland and the Baltic States.²⁵ Citrine helped organise a demonstration at the Albert Hall against Nazism in April 1933 and made trips to the USA to stress its dangers. The IFTU went on to denounce the recognition of Franco by Britain and France in February 1939.²⁶

Such gestures may have distracted the IFTU from more bread and butter issues such as the campaign for a forty-hour week, but an even greater preoccupation was the struggle to exclude communist influence from the organisation. Jouhaux was an anti-communist before Citrine. Whereas Jouhaux had forced out the communist trade unions from the CGT at Tours in 1921, Citrine was at first favourable to the Soviet Union - which he visited in 1925 - until criticism by communists of his handling of the 1926 General Strike and disruptive activity within the British trade union movement led to a much more critical stance. He subsequently endorsed the Labour Party's 1933 publication 'Democracy versus Dictatorship' which condemned dictatorships of both right and left much to the annoyance of those advocating a United Front.²⁷ Some writers, such as Christine Collette, have blamed the refusal of British Labour Party leaders to collaborate with communists for the failure of the IFTU and other international organisations to offer serious opposition to fascism.²⁸ However, the history of the French Popular Front government suggests that socialists and communists would never find it easy to work together, not least because they opposed fascism from different perspectives.

The even-handed condemnation of different kinds of dictatorship by the British Labour Party did, though, seem less appropriate to many at a time when a resurgent Germany posed a more obvious threat to general European peace than the Soviet Union. A desire to harness the resources of the

²⁴ Goethem, G. v. (2006). The Amsterdam International: The World of the International Federation of Trade Unions. Aldershot, Ashgate.p213

²⁵ Lorwin, L. L. (1953). The International Labour Movement: history, policies, outlook. New York, Harper.p190

²⁶ Riddell, N. (2000). "Walter Citrine and the British Labour Movement, 1925-1935." History 85(278): 285-306.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Collette, C. (1998). The International Faith : Labour's Attitudes to European Socialists. Aldershot, Ashgate.

Soviet Union began to overcome repugnance towards the Comintern and its agents, whilst sparking familiar anxieties over the effect any such rapprochement might have on the domestic affairs of those involved. The question of whether to admit the Russian trade union movement in order to broaden the anti-fascist front arose at the IFTU in 1936. In general, organisations in northern Europe were opposed to this, whilst those in southern Europe (and Mexico) were in favour, with Jouhaux tending to sit on the fence. In the end a compromise resolution was reached on 'opening negotiations with the USA, Australia and New Zealand, the Far East and the USSR'.²⁹ Jouhaux joined a delegation to Moscow, where the Soviets insisted on a leading role in the executive as the price of joining, whilst also demanding the IFTU call strikes across Europe to stop the Nazis. When in 1937 Jouhaux appeared to be willing to allow the USSR into the organisation, Citrine was so incensed that he threatened to withdraw the TUC from the IFTU altogether. This did not signal a drastic break between the two men, but rather demonstrates how both had to give domestic factors priority. The experience of the Popular Front had led Jouhaux towards a less hard-line attitude to communists - although he denied that he was prepared to go as far as the Soviets wished - while Citrine was looking towards better relations with the United States and anxious not to alienate the American Federation of Labour.

Events in Europe brought changes in attitude. Two years later, in July 1939, Jouhaux introduced the 'plan of action for peace' to the IFTU Congress, now meeting in Zurich, and called for an Anglo-Franco-Russian Pact to stop German aggression. Despite the fact that this mirrored diplomatic efforts to reach an understanding with the Soviet Union, American and Swedish delegates objected. However, Citrine was now anxious to support such a move. When the TUC (now with the backing of Citrine) called for the affiliation of Soviet trade unions – without special privileges – this was defeated by the American Federation of Labour (AFL), as well as delegates from Sweden, Belgium, Holland and Switzerland. The episode demonstrates not only the divisions within the IFTU on the usefulness of closer ties with the USSR, **but** also the growing role of organised labour in the USA and hints at the critical role American economic and industrial might would play in the forthcoming conflict in Europe. However, the insistence of Soviet representatives that they would only join on their own terms indicates the limits of their willingness to put aside national interests in the cause of anti-fascism. It was probably with some relief that the members of the IFTU could come together and condemn the Nazi-Soviet Pact shortly afterwards.

Another organisation that attempted to achieve co-operation across national boundaries was one that was closely linked to the IFTU - the Labour and Socialist International/*L'Internationale Ouvrière Socialiste* (LSI). The LSI lasted from 1923 to 1940 and included those socialist parties who had refused

²⁹ Lorwin, L. L. (1953). The International Labour Movement: history, policies, outlook. New York, Harper.p183

to align with the Communist International but still hoped to achieve 'the economic emancipation of the workers from capitalist domination'.³⁰ The expression of such Marxist-sounding sentiments may have been why some Conservatives tried to use his membership of the LSI as evidence of Ramsay MacDonald having communist sympathies before he became prime minister of the National Government.³¹ The purpose of the LSI, however, was to bring together reformist socialists from across Europe, thereby providing a forum for both politicians and union leaders which in Britain, at least, would counter any lingering insularity. Indeed, as with the IFTU (where Britain held the presidency throughout the interwar period) the British labour movement played a leading part in this venture. Britain provided the LSI secretariat in its early years and was consistently represented on the LSI Bureau and Executive. Then, following the demise of the German Social Democratic Party in 1933 and the subsequent destruction of the Austrian left, the British contingent, headed by Hugh Dalton and Labour's International Secretary, William Gillies, became the dominant force. Gillies, Britain's chief representative, was a fervent anti-communist, who was also strongly in favour of armed resistance to fascism, unlike the central European affiliates, who preferred neutrality.³² He opposed calls for a general strike against fascism and threatened to withdraw at any suggestion of collaboration with the Communist International.³³ British representatives seem to have wanted to use the LSI primarily to strengthen their negotiating position in Britain vis à vis their opponents in the Labour Party, dismissing attempts to stimulate action by workers throughout affiliated countries as unrealistic, doomed to failure and counter-productive, arguing instead for more assertive diplomatic alternatives to appeasement of the dictators. The LSI thereby provided a platform for the section of the Labour Party that wanted to move their party towards rearmament.

This was demonstrated in March 1936 at a combined LSI and IFTU conference in London. Here a resolution jointly formulated by Citrine, Hugh Dalton (Chairman of Labour's National Executive Committee), Vincent Auriol (Blum's Finance Minister) and de Brouckère of the Belgian Workers' Party asserted that 'any would-be aggressor must be confronted with overwhelming force' whilst urging national rearmament. The LSI executive passed a resolution that 'collective security be strengthened' by all European countries opposed to war: 'in particular a close coordination of the policy of Great Britain, France and the Soviet Union'.³⁴ However, the battle within the Labour Party was not yet over

³⁰ *The Communist Review*, July 1923, Vol. 4, No. 3.

http://www.marxists.org/history/international/comintern/sections/britain/periodicals/communist_review/1923/03/anti-communist.htm

³¹ <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1924/feb/12/labour-and-socialist-international> accessed 17.2.10

³² Christine Collette, 'Gillies, William (1884–1958)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/53998, accessed 21 Feb 2010]

³³ Collette, C. (1998). *The International Faith : Labour's Attitudes to European Socialists*. Aldershot, Ashgate. P80

³⁴ Brookshire, J. H. (1999). "Speak for England' Act for England: British National Security Under the Threat of War in the Late 1930s." *European History Quarterly* 29: 251-287.

and Dalton remarked wryly when the service estimates were again voted down that year: 'without the stimulating presence of foreign Socialists who lived nearer to Germany and of British trade unionists who lived nearer to common sense, the PLP soon relapsed into its narrow-minded and nonsensical negotiations.'³⁵ Whilst Dalton was able to use the LSI to build up his own standing and increase support for his position, a coherent response to fascism was no more developed here than at the IFTU. Indeed, some of the SFIO delegates to the LSI were on the pacifist wing of that party.

It has been persuasively argued by Pearce that in the British Labour Party Dalton had a better grip on foreign affairs than Attlee in the 1930s³⁶ and the LSI not only provided the latter with allies (and opponents he could demonstrably defeat), but also a knowledge of European socialism which he would put to use during the war. His determination to change Labour Party policy was accompanied by his own political ambition. Dalton put a revived Anglo-French alliance at the centre of efforts against fascism. Cairns mentions that In 1938 Hugh Dalton denounced those 'who fanned the flickering fires of anti-French prejudice in this country'.³⁷ He valued the connections he made at the LSI, and would explain his lack of enthusiasm for aiding the Spanish republic by pointing out 'we had many personal friends among French politicians on the Left, and especially among French Socialists. But we knew very little of Spanish Left-wing leaders... [who] did not attend meetings of the Labour and Socialist International'.³⁸ As has been shown in the previous chapter, the publications on the left in Britain had shown close interest in the intricacies of French politics; but whilst the demise of the Spanish Republic was deplored, the complexities of its genesis remained largely unexplored.

Dalton, however, did champion the cause of the Czechs and tried to improve relations between Poles and Czechs at the LSI Executive meeting in Brussels in May 1938. Meanwhile Gillies worked tirelessly to help socialist refugees. However, continued British refusal to countenance any kind of United Front, following overtures from Maurice Thorez in 1937, carried on causing the same kind of ructions in the LSI as within the Labour Party back home in Britain. Thus British intransigence on this subject infuriated de Brouckère and led Friedrich Adler, the Austrian exile and LSI general secretary, to threaten resignation in 1939, accusing the Labour Party of trying to destroy the organisation and of waging 'the struggle against Fascism not for the sake of the working class ...but on the basis of the general interests of the nation or the Empire'.³⁹ Adler's attempts to turn the LSI from a forum into a 'tightly disciplined international force' that he could dominate were thwarted by the Labour group.⁴⁰ Gillies himself, who

³⁵ Dalton, H. (1956). *The Fateful Years 1931-1945*. London, Frederick Muller Ltd. p90

³⁶ Pearce, R. (1997). *Attlee*. London, Longmans.pp86-87

³⁷ Cairns, J. C. (1974). "A Nation of Shopkeepers in Search of a Suitable France: 1919-40 " *The American Historical Review* **79**(3): 710-743

³⁸ Dalton, H. (1956). *The Fateful Years 1931-1945*. London, Frederick Muller Ltd. p96

³⁹ C. Collette (1998) p87

⁴⁰ J. Brookshire (1999) p261

saw communists as largely responsible for the rise of fascism, and coined the term 'communazis' whilst actively opposing communist infiltration of the Labour Party, was happy to accept Adler's resignation against the wishes of the French delegation.⁴¹

These disputes amongst the representatives of the remaining democracies and their (often exiled) fellow socialists can be seen as resulting from different perspectives consequent on inevitable differences resulting from geographic, historical, cultural and economic factors of European states, as well, perhaps, as from the needs of individual politicians to pursue their careers or follow their consciences and instincts. The issue of conscription in peacetime Britain (proposed in April 1939) was greeted with outrage by many in the Labour Party and put serious strains on relations between the British and French left. Some in Britain spoke up for joining France in efforts at military preparedness. In the *Political Quarterly*, R.H.S. Crossman, at that time WEA lecturer and leader of Oxford City Council, saw the row as exposing 'the divorce between Labour's defence and foreign policies...' and the weaker side of British socialism:

...in spite of the talk of a Peace Front and the adulation heaped on the Spanish Republican Army, the ideology of the Party springs from the Utopian Liberalism of Bright which Marx and Engels condemned so fiercely....No wonder the Frenchman whispers: 'The English Socialist will fight to the last French conscript'.⁴²

A similar point was also made by Conservative Prime Minister Chamberlain who taunted Willie Gallagher, the only British Communist Party MP about the attacks on the CPGB's opposition to conscription by Gabriel Péri of the PCF.⁴³ Citrine endorsed Dalton and Bevin's calls for rearmament so that Riddell has argued 'Citrine's contribution to the reshaping of Labour Party policy was momentous'.⁴⁴ However, the TUC leader's continued opposition to any conscription in peacetime reflected a conception of British interests that had long been held by socialists but was not appreciated by French colleagues. Citrine was less successful in shaping policy at the IFTU. When war actually broke out, the divisions within the IFTU between those representing belligerent and neutral nations became so intense a split seemed inevitable to many.⁴⁵

The outbreak of war in September 1939 might have been expected to improve the position of organised labour as governments sought to bolster production. For example, engineering was at the heart of rearmament and the co-operation of the Amalgamated Engineering Union (AEU) was essential

⁴¹ Christine Collette, 'Gillies, William (1884–1958)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/53998, accessed 16 Dec 2009]

⁴² *Political Quarterly* 1939 Vol 10: 3

⁴³ http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1939/apr/27/compulsory-military-training#S5CV0346P0_19390427_HOC_344

⁴⁴ Neil Riddell (2000) p305

⁴⁵ Goethem, G. v. (2006). *The Amsterdam International: The World of the International Federation of Trade Unions*. Aldershot, Ashgate.p229

for the British war effort.⁴⁶ In 1939 the TUC and CGT set up the Anglo-French Trade Union Committee. Citrine recalled that the 'collaboration between French and British workers at the Conferences held in London and Leeds during the world war of 1914-1918 had constituted a beginning of those international conferences which led to the ...establishment of the International Labour Office'.⁴⁷ He hoped wartime collaboration could result in another such initiative. The stated purpose of the new committee was to counter-balance German propaganda and promote consultation on issues 'on which it would be wise to compare experiences between the two movements'.⁴⁸ It met in Paris in December 1939, in London in January 1940 and again in Paris in February 1940. The reports of the meetings suggest a resolve for unity and mutual understanding between the two nations, which is evident elsewhere, and through virtually all of the British Press.⁴⁹ No doubt it was hoped that arguments over conscription would become a thing of the past.

This show of unity amongst socialists was enhanced by the gulf that opened up between communists and socialists following the Nazi-Soviet Pact, which appeared to vindicate the views of all those who had fought against a united front. However, while the French government outlawed the Communist Party in September 1939, the British were slower to act against (an admittedly much smaller) party. In fact, Pollitt continued to argue that British workers should fight a 'war on two fronts' (i.e. against imperialism and fascism) even after he was ousted as leader of the CPGB in October.⁵⁰ However, for many communists, Pollitt had become a 'social chauvinist' – one of those Lenin had condemned for forgetting their commitment to international socialism in favour of patriotic support for their country's war effort.⁵¹ The gulf between Labour support for the war and Communist support for the Soviet Union was further widened when that country attacked Finland in November that year.⁵² The visit by a representative of the CPGB to the PCF in Paris, shortly after the Nazi-Soviet Pact was signed, attempted to generate a common position and probably aimed, too, at finding ways to bolster flagging morale.⁵³

Meanwhile, the Labour Research Department (LRD) was now largely under the control of leading British communists Robin Page Arnot and Eva Reckitt. It had begun life as the Fabian Research Department in 1912, when it was intended to 'co-operate with Labour, Socialist and Co-operative movements in promoting and carrying out research into problems of importance to the labour

⁴⁶ Fishman, N. (1995). *The British Communist Party and the Trade Unions*. Hampshire, Ashgate. pp251-252

⁴⁷ <http://www.ilo.org/public/libdoc/ilo/P/09616/09616%281940%29.pdf> ILO report VOL. LXXIII (January-March 1940)

⁴⁸ Goethem, G. v. (2006). *The Amsterdam International: The World of the International Federation of Trade Unions*. Aldershot, Ashgate.p230

⁴⁹ Carswell, R. (2008). "Britain could not ask for a better ally": France in the British Press 1939-40. PhD, Reading.

⁵⁰ Fishman, N. (1995). *The British Communist Party and the Trade Unions*. Hampshire, Ashgate. p254

⁵¹ Thorpe, A. (2006). *British Communists and Anglo-French Relations, 1914-1945. Britain, France and the Entente Cordiale since 1904*. A. Capet. London, Palgrave Macmillan.p95

⁵² Thorpe, A. (2000). *The British Communist Party and Moscow, 1920-43*. Manchester, Manchester University Press. P262

⁵³ Ibid. p256

movement'.⁵⁴ Reckitt herself exemplifies the ways in which many British communists kept up links with the Fabians during the interwar period and indeed the Collet's bookshops which she founded 'stocked a wide range of socialist and progressive literature, adopting the non-sectarian approach characteristic of the 1930s popular front period'.⁵⁵ In June 1940 the Fabian Society, which prided itself on the openness of debate it engendered, decided that members of the CP could not be full members, only 'associates', sparking a lengthy row.⁵⁶ The LRD's communist affiliations led to its being eventually proscribed by the Labour Party, but it attracted the support of left-wing Labour trade unionists, such as Jack Little, who had been leader of the AEU until 1939.⁵⁷

The LRD is a useful example of an organisation with communist sympathies, which, while ostensibly highlighting the effects of war on workers in France and Britain, drove a wedge between those who supported the war and those who did not. It meant that reformists on the left had to conceive the war in terms that would serve socialist ends, and the ways in which they tried to achieve this will be examined in later chapters of this thesis. The LRD consistently followed the Comintern line that the governments of Britain and France represented the interests of businessmen and imperialists. This, at least, was their position until the fall of France, when, as Thorpe says, it became evident that 'there was something to choose between German imperialism on the one hand and French (and indeed British) imperialism on the other'.⁵⁸

The LRD began producing a weekly *Fact Service* sheet in 1939, which detailed the ways in which the war effort was affecting working conditions in Britain and France.⁵⁹ The organisation had been courting trade unions throughout the 1930s and this publication was clearly aimed at organised labour. The tone overall is strenuously factual and ostensibly objective, presumably in an effort to avoid accusations of sabotaging the war effort. There is also frequent quoting of other newspapers, including the *Times*, the *Manchester Guardian*, *Telegraph* and *Daily Herald*. This supposedly enabled the *Fact Service* to provide a selective digest of opinion across the political spectrum. It was especially strident in its attacks on Walter Citrine (who has been labelled 'Witch-Finder General of the Labour Movement' by Fishman for his pre-war attacks on communists)⁶⁰. Citrine had many enemies amongst activists; not only had he played a key role in ending the general strike of 1926, but his acceptance of a knighthood in 1935 (from Ramsay MacDonald) and friendly relations with figures such as the newspaper magnate,

⁵⁴ <http://www.lrd.org.uk/>

⁵⁵ Matthew Worley, 'Reckitt, Eva Collet (1890–1976)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edn, Oxford University Press, Jan 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/68893>, accessed 17 Dec 2009]

⁵⁶ LSE Fabian Society Archive 1/5: John Parker: *unpublished history of NFRB*

⁵⁷ Fishman, N. (1995). *The British Communist Party and the Trade Unions*. Hampshire, Ashgate. p233

⁵⁸ Thorpe, A. (2006). *British Communists and Anglo-French Relations, 1914-1945. Britain, France and the Entente Cordiale since 1904*. A. Capet. London, Palgrave Macmillan. p96

⁵⁹ LSE Fabian Society Archive /L/17 Labour Research Department (LRD) Information Service 1939-1942

⁶⁰ Fishman, N. (1995). *The British Communist Party and the Trade Unions*. Hampshire, Ashgate. p261

Beaverbrook⁶¹ had led to outright condemnation from those who despised his consensual approach, and especially from those who urged 'class war'. Citrine had also become an enthusiast for the theories of J. M. Keynes whose ideas on paying for the war through enforced savings came under heavy attack in a *Fact Service* issue in November 1939. Keynes's arguments were summed up in that edition as 'In order to pay for the war, it is necessary for the capitalists somehow or other to get the workers to consent to wage cuts'.⁶²

However, the LRD reserved its greatest criticism for the actions of the French government and employers, with regular (often leading) articles on labour legislation and conditions of work in France. These provided a kind of antidote to reports elsewhere in the press and on the BBC about the success of Anglo-French co-operation and French preparedness for war. Where possible, the *Fact Service* found quotations to illustrate the threat that developments in France might pose to pay and conditions in Britain. So Ernest Bevin (as leader of Britain's biggest union and fervent anti-communist) was reported as saying in January 1940, 'We on our part want to work with our French allies. We recognise the burden they are carrying, but we cannot harmonise our wage economy with theirs.'⁶³ The *Fact Service* then included a quote from an article in the *Manchester Guardian* by the CGT's René Belin, who was actually more anti-communist than Jouhaux, saying: 'Franco-British co-ordination in the economic and financial field will meet with some difficulty if the present divergence continues in British and French prices and wages', going on to claim that long hours of work in France were damaging the health of the workers.⁶⁴

Whilst the *Fact Service* reported the meetings of the Anglo-French Trade Union Committee in some detail, it followed these reports up with information that appeared to cast doubt on the explanations Citrine and Jouhaux gave for recent French government action. When at the February meeting the two leaders attempted to justify the abolition of the system of election of workshop delegates, this was followed by a report culled from French Assembly proceedings noting that 'workshop delegates have to be "agents of peace" and can be appointed by other groups than unions; [and] must follow essential principles of 'co-operation and appeasement' and a reference to 8000 recent arrests of communist sympathisers rather than the hundred mentioned by Jouhaux. Its report of the last meeting of the Anglo-French Trade Union Committee in April 1940 was followed by comments denigrating the French

⁶¹ Tom Buchanan, 'Citrine, Walter McLennan, first Baron Citrine (1887–1983)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/30931>, accessed 15 Dec 2009]

⁶² LSE: Fabian Society Archive /L/17 LRD. *Fact Service* Issue no 7 24.11.39

⁶³ LSE: Fabian Society Archive/L/17 LRD. *Fact Service* Issue 14 12.1.40

⁶⁴ LSE: Fabian Society Archive/L17 LRD. *Fact Service* Issue 17 2.2.40

system of family allowances which Jouhaux and Citrine appear to extol, many militants seeing these as a method of reducing wages and an example of the state interfering with collective bargaining.

The *Fact Service* took many opportunities – in articles such as ‘Intolerable Conditions of Work in France’⁶⁵ to highlight how the censorship authorities were trying to prevent reporting of worsening conditions in France. The French government’s action against the Parti Communiste Française (PCF) in September and October 1939, which included the arrest of communist deputies and suspension of communist controlled municipalities, provoked debate amongst many on the British left, not only communists. In the *Political Quarterly*, the reviewer of Werth’s latest book, *France and Munich* railed:

...the generous efforts of 1936 have been annulled, the Front Populaire destroyed, the great Trades Union movement half-shattered, the working classes disillusioned and depressed. France is governed now by Dictats, her liberties curtailed and threatened, her press unofficially controlled and her radio officially muzzled.⁶⁶

In the correspondence pages of *New Statesman*, one reader alleged that the French Chamber was becoming a ‘second Reichstag’, noting that French communists, who had at least supported the right side in Spain, had been arrested on flimsy charges of ‘espionage, high treason and intelligence with the enemy’.⁶⁷ Dorothy Woodman in *Tribune* took condemnation a step further, calling the French government ‘a thinly disguised Catholic-Military Dictatorship’ oppressive of ‘the more liberal, not to mention the revolutionary elements in France’. Another *Tribune* writer indicted ‘Anglo-French plutocracy supporting each other against their own working class’ and there was a cartoon of Daladier and Chamberlain drinking champagne over the prostrate body of the French worker.⁶⁸ *Tribune* continued to denounce the moves against the PCF during the early months of 1940, fearing their effects on Anglo-French relations meant ‘there can never be unity between us’.⁶⁹

In May 1940, the LRD included a supplement by the National Council of Civil Liberties (NCCL) purporting to show that the erosion of liberal freedoms in Britain was mirroring the French experience, with

...pacifists and conscientious objectors as well as trade unionists who complain about conditions ... liable for imprisonment... the government in general with a vicious attack on the printing profession ... having taken a more reactionary step towards real totalitarianism than would have been thought possible in this country 12 months ago.⁷⁰

The NCCL was widely suspected of being a communist front organisation, although the fact that its vice-presidents in the interwar period had included Clement Attlee, Aneurin Bevan, Vera Brittain,

⁶⁵ LSE Fabian Society Archive *Fact Service* L.R.D. *Fact Service* Issue 31 10.5.40

⁶⁶ *Political Quarterly* 1939 Vol 10:4

⁶⁷ *New Statesman* 10.2.40 letter from ‘GL’

⁶⁸ *Tribune* 5.1.40

⁶⁹ *Tribune* 12.4.40

⁷⁰ LSE Fabian Society Archive *Fact Service* L.R.D. *Fact Service* Issue 33 24.5.40

Dingle Foot, George Lansbury, A. A. Milne and J. B. Priestley - as well as the pro-Soviet D. N. Pritt - suggests it was another example of an organisation that had attracted progressives of all kinds at this time. (E.M. Forster, the Vice-President would say of the General Secretary, Ronald Kidd, that he had been accused of being 'a Communist, a Gladstonian Liberal, a secret agent, the wrong sort of Irishman and a hopeless John Bull'.⁷¹) It was such people who now had to decide whether they were for or against war and where they stood in relation to the Soviet Union.

Others on the far left joined in the debate on whether the war was worth fighting. Marxists such as Reg Groves pointed out that the so-called 'phoney war' had so far meant worsened conditions of work and the erosion of traditional freedoms in both Britain and France. In a pamphlet published by *Home Front*, a left-wing anti-war journal, Groves challenged the view of those on the left, and specifically Laski, who claimed this war was different in nature from the Great War, Groves claiming that

The demands of war invade every sphere of industrial and civil life; it is impossible to support the war and the Government waging it and to hope to create revolutionary opinion and leadership which will radically change that social system.⁷²

Not surprisingly, in Britain the Communist Party and its organs came under increasing pressure especially in the twelve months between the battle of France and the formation of an alliance with the Soviet Union following the onset of Operation Barbarossa in June 1941. In a famous court case that month, Citrine won a libel action against the *Daily Worker* which, according to the American *Time Magazine's* rather colourful report, accused him of having 'dined and wined with French Labor Minister Charles Pomaret' the previous December. This had led to a series of articles accusing him of 'plotting with the French Citrines to bring millions of Anglo-French Trade Unionists behind the Anglo-French imperialist war machine'.⁷³ *Time* persuasively surmised that 'The trial brought into the open opposing working-class attitudes toward the war', alluding to a pointed exchange between Citrine and the *Daily Worker's* lawyer, D.N. Pritt, over the nature of the war and whether it was worth fighting. D. N. Pritt had recently been expelled from the Labour Party for promulgating the Moscow line that this was an imperialist war.⁷⁴ The *Daily Worker* was suppressed in January 1941 and the TUC and Labour Party proscribed the LRD in 1942 so the *Fact Sheet* disappeared, although some guides and booklets continued to appear. It is noticeable that the *Fact Sheet* reported very little from France after the capitulation. While it is evident that there was a shortage of news about what was happening there, its silence is also surely indicative of its inability to develop a coherent view on the armistice and the Vichy regime. Apart from a quote from the *Daily Herald* that the 'CGT has given up the class struggle' and

⁷¹ Mark Pottle, 'Kidd, Ronald Hubert (1889–1942)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, May 2009 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/75674>, accessed 18 Dec 2009]

⁷² Groves, R. (1940). *It is an Imperialist War*. London, Home Front.

⁷³ <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,884032,00.html#ixzz0a2d3592H> accessed 18.12.09

⁷⁴ *ibid.*

that Jouhaux was thinking of resigning from his position, there is no mention of France during the remaining life of the publication.⁷⁵

It would be wrong, however, to dismiss the *Fact Sheet's* account of the erosion of rights and liberties in wartime France as mere propaganda for the communist version of events in 1939-41. Memories of the First World War played a part in the belief that organised labour needed to fight its corner to preserve any gains it had made since then. Duncan Gallie has shown how the coercive powers of French management and repressive government action towards the French labour movement during and after the First World War weakened the reformists in the movement and led to the rupture at Tours which was only partially repaired in 1936. In addition, in that war there had been no real attempt to involve the unions in policy-making. In Britain, by contrast, a stronger trade union movement, especially at shop floor level, was able to win concessions from a government more willing to negotiate. The relative security of Britain compared with France probably also made the British government less determined to crush any threats to production than a French government actually up against a partial German invasion.⁷⁶ Thus a pattern of government-employer-union relations had been set.

Talbot Imlay has shown how this pattern was replicated, indeed amplified, in the Second World War. By 1938 there was increasing disharmony between the leadership of the CGT and France's largest affiliated union, the Fédération des Métaux (FdM) which was communist led. In 1938, the FdM, tended towards a confrontational stance, believing after the Munich settlement that the Daladier government was moving toward an accommodation with fascism, if not outright adoption of its precepts. The 40-hour law, supposedly the great achievement of Blum's government, became the battle ground. When Paul Reynaud became Finance Minister, his determination to improve France's military capability led him to back the employers' organisations, issue a series of decree laws and even go so far as to tell the workers on the radio that they must live by the laws of capitalism: 'These laws are those of profits, individual risk, free markets, and growth by competition.'⁷⁷ Not only was collective bargaining effectively suspended but real wages were reduced - just as described in the LRD's *Fact Sheet*. Despite his moderation, Jouhaux was excluded from all policy making forums, with, Imlay argues, disastrous consequences for the direction and coordination of France's war effort. Whilst the industrial workers suffered genuine hardship, any expression of grievances was put down to communist agitation. 'The result was not only an extensive police effort to uncover communists but also mounting pessimism

⁷⁵ LSE Fabian Society Archive L17 LRD *Fact Service* issue 45 16.8.40

⁷⁶ Gallie, D. (1983). *Social Inequality and Class Radicalism in France and Britain*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

⁷⁷ Imlay, T. (2007). "Democracy and War: Political Regime, Industrial Relations, and Economic Preparations for War in France and Britain up to 1940." *The Journal of modern history* 79(1): 1-47.

among French leaders about the political reliability of French workers.⁷⁸ This lack of unity reflected continuing divisions in French society, exacerbated by the dread of imminent invasion.

Imlay contrasts this with Britain, where co-operation between government, labour and employers – building on the precedent of the First World War - had been growing since 1938 and was to lead to a far more co-ordinated approach to production. Although there were leading trade unionists with strong links with the British Communist Party, such as Jack Tanner of AEU, they were not suspected of sabotaging the war effort. In October 1939, even before the formation of the wartime coalition, the chief conciliator of the Ministry of Labour commented,

In organised industry there has been, with certain unimportant exceptions, a conspicuous absence on the part of employers of any tendency to use the war situation to attack rates and conditions, and on the Trade Union side almost the entire tendency of the officials has been towards moderation and the restraint of extreme elements.⁷⁹

Citrine and Bevin could take some credit for this relatively benign state of affairs. The fact that the trade union element of the Labour Party had been in the ascendant for much of the 1930s had helped to incorporate organised labour into the political process. Perhaps even more importantly, there were no memories of invading armies to panic the government into clamping down on the working class. Their representatives could respond more easily to the overtures of the government and employers.

Attempts to forge close links and develop common responses to the challenges of the interwar period were thus often bedevilled by factors that had their roots in each nation's past. Whilst there could be agreement on broad principles amongst French and British socialists, the particular needs of their respective parties, let alone the actual defence of their countries, could engender suspicion and mistrust. The warm words of the Anglo-French Trade Union Committee could not disguise the weakness of Jouhaux in the face of the onslaught on the rights of French labour after 1938. One further example will serve to show how differences in history and circumstance would interfere with the pursuit of common aims and the development of united action in the interwar period.

The pursuit of peace was one such common aim, and resulted, as had already been noted in the International Peace Campaign/ *Rassemblement Universel de la Paix*. Whilst this suffered, as did so many organisations of the left in the 1930s from accusations of links with Soviet communism, pacifism itself took different forms in Britain and France. It is noticeable how self-proclaimed British pacifists, perhaps drawing on Quaker and other non-conformist traditions, embraced the notion of conscientious objection much earlier than the French. Ruysen, a key figure in the *Association de la paix par le droit*, a French organisation that was typical of 'bourgeois internationalism' argued that the

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

concept of the 'nation at arms' made conscientious objection less acceptable in France, where such individual action also fitted less comfortably in a nation with a long tradition of authoritarian centralism.⁸⁰ Pierre Cot, writing in 1929 saw the distinction thus: 'For France the heart of the problem is less to pronounce a solemn and platonic anathema against war than to work towards the organization of peace. The land of Descartes and Voltaire prefers techniques to canticles...The Anglo-Saxon, it has been said, tours the world with his Bible and the Frenchman with his Code'.⁸¹ French socialists (amongst others) saw conscription as a vital part of a foreign policy that spurned appeasement and took an aggressive stance towards Germany. The British Labour Party, on the other hand, was prepared to vote against the Munich agreement, but still hoped that any war could be fought by economic means using the navy and air defence to prevent invasion.

Different experiences had produced differing approaches to problems and ways to maintain peace and prepare for war. Although it might seem that the continuing conundrum of how to deal with communism, let alone the Soviet Union, was a distraction, in reality the dilemmas this posed encapsulated all the concerns of those who wanted to bring about change while ensuring continuity with values that were seen by so many as intrinsic to national life. The exigencies of war, occupation and exile would lead to a willingness to put aside any differences, but they would not make them go away, however much those involved would be exhorted to concentrate on fighting fascism and preparing for a new kind of post-war society.

⁸⁰ Ingram, N. (1991). The Politics of Dissent – Pacifism in France 1919-1939. Oxford, Clarendon Press.p57

⁸¹ Ibid. p38

Chapter Five: The British left and France in war and disaster 1939-1940

Despite their differences over the issue of peacetime conscription, it is evident that most of the British left were well disposed towards their French counterparts when war broke out. In this they were not alone. Indeed, the imminent possibility of war had led to a concerted effort by the Chamberlain government to improve relations with France, apparent in the state visits of the King and Queen to Paris in July 1938 and President Lebrun to Britain in March 1939, which were followed up by efforts on the BBC, now to a considerable extent under the control of the government¹ to further Anglo-French co-operation, both through programmes featuring French culture and through an idealisation of military unity once hostilities began.² Whilst actual opposition to the war was mostly confined to the British Communist Party and inveterate pacifists, many others on the British left struggled to find a way to distinguish their support for war against Nazi Germany from an acceptance of the pre-war policies of the National Government or any upsurge of the kind of British nationalism they had often deplored. In their publications, support for France would not be unequivocal. While the French government might come in for severe criticism, a determination to develop war aims and a reading of the conflict that reflected progressive values provided some common ground for British and French socialists during the period of the 'Phoney War'.

Talbot Imlay has argued that a 'profound dislike and distrust of France had characterised Labour's international policy for much of the interwar period', and has sought to show how this was transformed during this period, thanks to a combination of 'realism' and 'idealism'.³ Certainly, when Blum visited the Labour Party congress in May 1940, he was welcomed with a standing ovation and a rousing rendition of the 'Marseillaise' before his speech.⁴ So far this thesis has attempted to show how such a change of attitude drew on an existing seam of Francophilia within the wider labour movement, one that has often been overlooked. Here it will therefore examine how attitudes to France - as reflected in publications of the left and centre left - evolved during this period.

This chapter will explore how the fall of France was analysed and explained and suggest ways it could be fitted into a narrative that could be considered both socialist and Francophile. It will then look at the ways in which relationships were developed with those left-leaning French journalists, activists and politicians who found themselves in London after June 17th 1940 or quickly made their way there. The

¹ Adamthwaite, A. (1983). "The British Government and the Media, 1937-1938." *Journal of Contemporary History* 18(2): 281-297

² Bonnery, A. (2005). *La France de la BBC, 1938-1944*. PhD, Bourgogne.

³ Imlay, T. (2003). "From Villain to Partner: British Labour Party Leaders, France and International Policy during the Phoney War, 1939-40." *Journal of Contemporary History* 38(4): 579-596.

⁴ Colton, J. (1987). *Léon Blum : A Humanist in Politics*. Durham N.C., Duke University Press.p347

aim here is to point out some of the ways in which these men and women forged links with their British counterparts and managed to frame and advance common aims despite the complexity of the circumstances in which they were operating. This chapter will therefore also look at developments in the BBC French Service following the defeat of France and the setting up of the Free French in June 1940. It will note the part played by some programmes broadcast by this service in the emergence of a left-wing narrative of resistance and redemption, reflecting strengthening links between exiled French socialists and members of the Fabian Society.

A desire for closer Anglo-French understanding can be found in most sections of the British media once war had broken out, and in the organs of the left this was especially pronounced. *Highway*, the magazine of the Workers' Educational Association, is a case in point. Arthur Zimmern, international relations professor and former deputy director of the Institute of Intellectual Co-operation in Paris, claimed that 'the promotion of mutual understanding between the British and the French peoples has become the major problem for all those of us who want to see a better world'. He argued that a far greater measure of social justice would have been achieved if only such an understanding had existed in the interwar period, going on to suggest what has stood in its way:

Can even our leaders be sure of being able to lay their minds alongside those of their French colleagues? Did Jaurès, for all his broad humanity, ever unlock the secret of our deep-rooted prejudice against compulsory military service, or of the very insular conception of liberty which is bound up with it? Is it certain that M. Blum and M. Jouhaux understand the workings of the Nonconformist conscience, still so powerful an ingredient in the British labour movement? How many of us, even in the WEA movement, realise that, to Frenchmen of all degrees, the muddle-headedness which has done so much to bring us where we are today is not an amiable weakness or a subject for after-dinner speeches but a cause for shame and remorse, in other words a *sin*?

These words demonstrate not only an expectation that students and tutors knew the names of key figures in the French socialist and labour movements, but could also appreciate the obstacles that lay in the way of better understanding. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Zimmern felt the problem could be solved with more education:

When the masterpieces of French thought are as widely read in WEA circles as some other Continental works that I will not mention, at least the foundations of a new European order will have been laid.⁵

A leader article in *Highway* in February 1940 wished for war correspondents to do more to bring the French home to the British, 'socially and culturally', seeing the 'social aspects' of the Anglo-French Alliance as equal in importance with military necessities.⁶ R.H.S. Crossman wrote about the failure of

⁵ *Highway* November 1939

⁶ *Highway* February 1940

British governments and peoples to understand justifiable French concerns about security in the interwar period, not only in an article entitled 'The French are not such Fools' in *Highway*⁷ but also in the *New Statesman*, where he concluded that 'whereas the French wanted Collective Security, the British Left seemed content with a Collective Pacifism'.⁸ In the *Political Quarterly* A.L. Rowse asserted that, 'the fact is that the French and English are part of Western civilization; it is questionable whether the Germans are'.⁹

Chapter Four alluded to the debate in the British left-wing press over the Daladier government's attempts to stifle opposition. However, whereas earlier in the interwar period such writers had been prone to condemn French governments (except for that of the Popular Front) and denounce the French governing class (apart from the socialists), there was now a reluctance to go as far as pro-communist publications such as the *Fact Service* of the Labour Research Department discussed in that chapter. The decision to clamp down on the PCF could be explained. In the *New Statesman*, Kingsley Martin quoted approvingly the words of Léon Blum following his interview with the French socialist leader in December 1939:

You in Britain can treat your Communists as a joke or a luxury: we have to deal with them as a serious menace, the instrument inside France of a foreign and unfriendly power.¹⁰

Other writers in the weekly had free rein to argue the case for the suppression of the PCF and Raymond Mortimer, no longer confined to the 'back section', would put his extensive knowledge of France to use elsewhere in the paper. He argued on the letters page,

Ever since the Revolution the French have been in the habit of sacrificing liberty in wartime; and while the suppression of any minority opinion at any time is disliked by English liberals like myself, the Communists cannot logically complain, since in their ideal state, Russia, liberty of speech and person is denied even in peacetime to all opponents of the Government.¹¹

Although it was nothing new for British socialists to distinguish between government and 'people' in France, those from the left who supported the war (often strengthened in their antagonism to the Soviet Union following the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact) were especially anxious to see France and Britain as the saviours of Europe in a war whose ideological parameters were clear cut. Whilst *Tribune* had denounced the Daladier government for its moves against communists, it wrote warmly of the meeting between Attlee and Blum after the Labour Party conference, the day before the Germans broke through the

⁷ *Highway* February 1940

⁸ *New Statesman and Nation* 20.1.40

⁹ *Political Quarterly* 1940 Vol 1:1

¹⁰ *New Statesman and Nation* 23.12.39

¹¹ *New Statesman and Nation* 13.1.40

French lines. It was pleased with the latter's attacks on censorship in France and welcomed the pro-British anti-appeaser Reynaud as premier in the French government.¹² It declared,

the world must see a full-scale working model of the new world order in the shape of an Anglo-French Union, covering defence, economic organisation, social policy, colonial emancipation, political confederation and the declaration of a common world purpose.¹³

The hope that the war would bring profound social change was a consistent theme in the left-wing press, which often referred to the major role solidarity between the British and French working classes would play in realising this aim. Aneurin Bevan in *Tribune* asked 'Have we the courage and determination, the mind not less than the heart, to make the present war the pathway to the first democratic socialist revolution in the history of the world?'¹⁴ Another noted Fabian, Harold Laski, called for 'world revolution' in a 1940 lecture for the Society and argued in the *New Statesman* that 'the government of the middle class must co-operate with the workers in the essential revisions [or] ... the forces of violent revolution will compel us to those changes'.¹⁵ Laski, like many on the left of the Labour Party, had some difficulty reconciling earlier denunciations of the plutocratic elements and capitalist priorities of the Chamberlain and Daladier governments, but in his pamphlet for the Labour Party, 'Is this an Imperialist War?', he argued on the basis that war against Germany was the lesser of two evils; 'It should surely be obvious that the danger to Democracy from Mr Chamberlain and M. Daladier is, in the present circumstances, far less than the danger represented by Hitler!'¹⁶ Laski couched the case for war in terms of the advance of the British and French working classes. The Labour Party's official declaration of war aims at this time also made much of solidarity with France: 'We share your determination that this recurrent German menace, requiring these repeated mobilisations of the whole manhood of France, shall not plague your next generation and ours.'¹⁷

In the end the goal of Anglo-French unity took precedence over concerns over repressive actions by French governments. In April 1940, the Fabian Society published 'Is France Still a Democracy?' This was the work of two leading members, Dorothy and William Pickles. Both were academics specialising in French language and politics and Dorothy, who had written on 'The French Political Scene' for the WEA¹⁸ would be later described as 'the doyenne of French studies in Great Britain'.¹⁹ While collaborating with her husband on this pamphlet, Dorothy was working at the Ministry of Information

¹² *Tribune* 29.3.30

¹³ *Tribune* 22.3.40

¹⁴ *Tribune* 14.6.40

¹⁵ *New Statesman and Nation* 2. 7.40

¹⁶ Laski, H. (1940). *Is this an imperialist war?* London, Labour Party.p 11

¹⁷ Attlee, C. (1940). *Labour's Aims in War and Peace*. London, Lincolns-Prager.pp90-91

¹⁸ *Highway* January 1939 issue

¹⁹ Douglas Johnson, 'Pickles, Dorothy Maud (1903–1994)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/55251>, accessed 3 May 2011]

(MOI) and was therefore able to make use of the knowledge she was acquiring in her position as head of the French Section in the Reference Division. In her many writings on France, she would go to great lengths to compare Britain and France on many different levels, bringing out the strengths and weaknesses of both political and social systems. In this pamphlet, the Pickles pointed out that university education was cheaper and more accessible in France, the army more democratic 'though the gulf between big industrialist and worker may be greater'. They alluded to concerns about the treatment of Spanish refugees in France, explaining that France had in recent decades accepted far greater numbers of refugees than Britain. They emphasised the achievements of revolutionary France:

For a century and a half the French worker fought, often in the literal sense of the term... while the English at best voted, in the struggle for liberty and equality... The traditions of 1789, of 1848, of the Commune ... are alive today. Nobody who knows France doubts for one moment that the defence of French democracy can safely be left to the heirs of those traditions.²⁰

Like others, they exonerated the French government for its attacks on the PCF, which they saw as culpable for its links with Moscow and efforts to undermine the war effort.

Can any responsible English Socialist ... seriously suggest that the organisation of the Communist Party and its allied bodies could safely or wisely have been left intact?²¹

Published shortly before the Battle of France, this pamphlet set the tone for much subsequent reporting by 'responsible socialists', i.e. those in favour of a war that would bring social transformation based on a closer association between Britain and France and drawing on the elements of both their histories that could be seen as consistent with a democratic socialist narrative. This was often encapsulated in the writings and activities of members of the Fabian Society, although there was no official Fabian 'line'. However, as Mark Minion has pointed out, although the Society insisted in 1939 that, beyond adopting a broadly socialist perspective 'No resolution of a political character expressing an opinion or calling for action . . . shall be put forward in the name of the Society', the Fabians by their 'very nature strove for definitive conclusions on a range of issues', one important example being the future of Europe and the place of France within it. In May 1940 the Fabian Society was planning to produce a book on France that would contain within it interviews with Blum and Jouhaux as well as with Georges Lefranc (the latter the director of *l'Institut supérieure ouvrier*, an organisation run by the CGT with echoes of Ruskin College and the WEA).²²

Even if not all those on the left of British politics were Fabians or sympathisers, we can see efforts to develop some kind of consensus on the place of France in the British imagination when looking at how journals and other publications on the left of the spectrum dealt with the fall of France in the months

²⁰ Pickles, D. and W. Pickles (1940). *Is France Still a Democracy?* London, Fabian Society.

²¹ *ibid* p 24

²² LSE Fabian Society Archive C26 Minutes 30.1.39 & 8.5.40

following the armistice of June 1940. Of the weekly papers, the *Economist*, which had celebrated the growth of Anglo-French trading links during the Phoney War, expressed perhaps the most eloquently the shock experienced in Britain and the attachment of the liberal intelligentsia to France:

The French people, the freest, the most intellectual, most cultured people of Europe, are to pass under the tyranny of a ruler whose chief aim since he achieved power has been to banish liberty, degrade reason and destroy civilisation. The eclipse, however temporary, of France, means more to Britain than the military loss of an ally. We lose part of ourselves when France's liberties are trampled underfoot. We know that our reeling Western society has taken one step further towards the abyss of annihilation when the mechanised columns of a slave State can crush out the resistance of a nation whose very name is incorporated in the idea of an enfranchised liberty. We grieve with France in this her darkest hour...²³

The causes of this catastrophe have been dissected by scholars in numerous articles and books ever since it occurred. Whilst the early analysis of historian Marc Bloch put the *Strange Defeat* down to deep-seated problems within the French state²⁴ and a common post-war view was displayed in the work of Jean-Baptiste Duroselle who blamed the failures of the political class in the 1930s,²⁵ more recent work has laid the blame on short-term military and political calculations²⁶ and on factors such as the marginalisation of intelligence in French decision-making processes in the 1930s.²⁷ Whilst these changes of approach can to some extent be understood in terms of the availability of new sources of evidence,²⁸ explanations by British commentators for the collapse in the immediate aftermath were most influenced by views on the lessons they offered to Britain in that time of crisis. Undoubtedly some of the journalism produced was speculative and patchily informed, but the majority of it focused on the issue of who was culpable for the collapse of the French war effort.

In line with the appetite for justifying participation in the war in ideological terms, *Tribune* immediately laid the blame on the '200 families and pro-fascist appeasers'.²⁹ An article a few days after the defeat asserted that:

Over the past week even the Tory press has admitted that it was the monopolies and trusts, represented by corrupt reactionary politicians, that betrayed France to Hitler.³⁰

The 'two hundred families' were supposedly the haute bourgeoisie in control of French industry and finance who had for some time been seen as the source of a lack of social justice in France, especially

²³ *The Economist* 22.6.40

²⁴ Bloch, M. (1968). *Strange Defeat - A Statement of Evidence written in 1940*. London, W.W. Norton trans Gerard Hopkins.

²⁵ Duroselle, J.-B. (1979). *La décadence 1932-1939*. Paris, Imprimerie Nationale.

²⁶ May, E. R. (2000). *Strange Victory: Hitler's Conquest of France*. New York, Hill and Wang.

²⁷ Jackson, P. (2000). *France and the Nazi Menace: Intelligence and Policy Making 1933-1939*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

²⁸ See, for instance Thomas, M. (2002). "Review: Crisis and Collaboration in France." *The International History Review* 24: 603-615.

²⁹ *Tribune* 21.6.40

³⁰ *Tribune* 28.6.40

during the period of the Popular Front.³¹ The *New Statesman*, in its leading article, 'The Lesson of France' would pick up the theme of the '200 families' the following year: 'If M. Blum and the leaders of the Popular Front had dared to stand up to the 200 families ...France would not have disintegrated'³², but in its initial reaction to defeat, in June 1940, the failure of the French army to heed the warnings of de Gaulle in the 1930s was indicative of a desire to support the General's *Appel* of 18th June and to hint that he represented

...the spirit of historic France [which] rose to meet the invader [before] the fundamental disunities which had long bewildered the country came again to the surface.³³

The article, written eleven days after de Gaulle had set up his organisation, *La France Libre* thus hammered home the need for unity in a Britain in which the Labour members of the new wartime coalition led by Churchill were urged to press forward working class interests. (The same June issue of the *New Statesman* also saw the publication of a special supplement, *France and Britain*, which will be considered below). A closing of the ranks of those in favour of war was evidenced by an article by Victor Gollancz in July's *Political Quarterly*. Gollancz, who had so often asserted that his support for a United or Popular Front did not mean he was in the pocket of the communists, now attacked the French Communist Party for making things worse for the class it purported to represent:

...they undermined the French resistance to Hitler as surely as did, with a different purpose, the French fascists themselves: and the result, as anybody could have foreseen, was not to create a social revolution in France, but to make Hitler's victory over France – the victory of Hitler and the French fascists over the French working class – inevitable.³⁴

The installation of the Pétain government in Vichy prompted another publication by Dorothy and William Pickles for the Fabian Society. 'France faces Fascism', was planned in July and came out in October 1940. Originally entitled 'How France went Fascist', it was appraised by Henry Hauck, de Gaulle's labour commissioner, and Richard Crossman before publication.³⁵ In it the Pickles carefully analysed the weaknesses of the French political system that had allowed a right-wing *coup d'état* by Pétain and his acolytes. They indicted the way in which patronage – especially prevalent in the liberal capitalist Radical Party - had brought corruption at the same time as right-wing and authoritarian cliques persisted in anti-democratic activities. In the end, the Pickles explained defeat and Pétainist dictatorship in terms of the weakness of the left – the splits in the SFIO and the wrecking tactics of the

³¹ see, for instance, P.J. Philip: 'Blum grapples with the '200 Families' *New York Times* 14.6.36 and Paul Vaucher: 'After the Elections' *Political Quarterly* 1936 Vol 7:3

³² *New Statesman and Nation* 31.5.41

³³ *New Statesman and Nation* 29.6.40

³⁴ *New Statesman and Nation* 13.7.40

³⁵ LSE Fabian Society Archive C26 Minutes of the International Committee 15.7.40

PCF against both the Popular Front government and the war effort. Therefore, despite its 'dominant democratic traditions and opinions'

France collapsed not because her democratic spirit was dead, not because her people no longer had the heart to fight for it, but because unscrupulous leadership on the Right and divided leadership on the Left weakened the country.

In this pamphlet, a key aim of the authors was to signal how and where resistance in France would develop:

What is needed now is a common anti-Fascist front of all working class parties – and if anti-Fascist Catholic and nationalist forces can also be brought in, so much the better.

Their other purpose was to again to spell out the lessons for Britain. Asserting that 'France at heart remains the highly civilised, determinedly democratic country she has always been. French democracy will rise again', they argued that Britain must be more supportive of French problems than it was in the crises of 1934 and 1936, less insular and more determined to promote Anglo-French solidarity. Britain must in future co-operate more closely with France to avoid similar catastrophes.³⁶

The failure of British governments to give adequate backing to the 1936-7 Blum government, thereby weakening French democracy, is a theme also taken up by Alexander Werth in his book, *The Twilight of France 1933-40*, published in 1942.³⁷ Werth's book had an introduction by the historian, Denis Brogan, whose *The Development of Modern France 1870-1939* had appeared in June 1940, to considerable acclaim, especially as its exposition of the divisions in French society and politics appeared to explain the recent military débâcle.³⁸ Brogan's commitment to France has already been noted in Chapter Three and in this book he spoke of France being 'the main sword and the main shield' of western civilization.³⁹ A Cambridge professor seconded to, successively, the Ministry of Information, the Political Warfare Executive and the BBC during the war, Brogan wrote about France - and the United States, his other specialist area - for many publications, including the *Manchester Guardian*, *Tribune* and the *Spectator*. He also spoke on Fabian platforms, and remained throughout a critical friend both of France and of the broad labour movement. In the *Spectator* in July 1940, where he also hoped to explain the defeat and rally the British to the support of those who refused to accept it, in the name of 'eternal France', he wrote:

Marshal Pétain has dreams, so it is said, of 'restoring order,' of undoing the evil things done in the last twenty years. Such dreams haunted the mind of another and less distinguished Marshal. Bazaine, besieged in Metz, thought more of restoring order than of aiding the amateur armies that Gambetta was creating out of nothing. When

³⁶ Pickles, D. and W. Pickles (1940). *France Faces Fascism*. London, Victor Gollancz.

³⁷ Werth, A. (1942). *The Twilight of France 1933-40: A Journalist's Chronicle, with an introduction by D Brogan*. London, Hamish Hamilton.

³⁸ *Times Literary Supplement* 6.7.40

³⁹ Brogan, D. W. (1940). *The Development of Modern France (1870-1939)* Hamish Hamilton. p.viii

he defended himself by saying there was no legitimate authority, the judge, the Duc d'Aumale, said 'Monsieur le Maréchal, il y avait la France'.⁴⁰

Brogan edited several of Werth's books on France and Werth's journalistic and often anecdotal accounts of the years leading up to the catastrophe largely echoed his themes and those of the Pickles. Thus Brogan drew attention to the ways in which the Blum government was weakened both by internal divisions and by the determination of the British government to keep its distance, despite the avowedly pro-British foreign policy of the Popular Front. Its collapse signalled the return of corrupt and sometimes pro-German politicians, whose failures of leadership accounted for defeat. Werth's book ends with the necessary rallying cry, 'The future of Europe needs – as the posters in the 1936 elections used to say – a Free, Strong and Happy France'.⁴¹ Writers such as Brogan, Werth and the Pickles never merely laid the blame for her defeat at the door of France's politicians; they implicated the British National Government as well. Those further to the left would also blame the capitalist system and sometimes 'the two hundred families'.

So far this chapter has mentioned only accounts by British writers with a left-wing perspective and strong connections to France. We turn now to initiatives that would lead to collaboration with French socialists living in London in the summer of 1940. The strength of the belief that eventual Anglo-French unity could be realised through the development of a common agenda that would justify and promote socialist participation in war and resistance was shown by the establishment of a Fabian Anglo-French Committee shortly before the fall of France.⁴² At a meeting in late April 'it was decided to commence work on a fairly large scale on the problem of Anglo-French co-operation' and a decision to invite Paul Vaucher's involvement was taken.⁴³ With defeat and retreat in France the need for the publication became, if anything, more urgent and the committee produced a pamphlet which formed a supplement to the *New Statesman* in late June 1940 and was reproduced in *Highway* later that year. The committee comprised several leading Fabians and WEA luminaries, including Leonard Woolf, Margaret and Douglas Cole, Richard Crossman and R.H. Tawney, all highly influential figures. In its analysis of the defeat, the pamphlet pointed to the absence of Anglo-French co-operation in the interwar period and the ineptitude and reactionary tendencies of the military in France, but it also included an article by a 'French socialist living in London who was a war correspondent with French forces, having been a foreign editor'.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ *Spectator* 5.7.40 'Il y avait la France'

⁴¹ Werth, A. (1942). *The Twilight of France 1933-40: A Journalist's Chronicle, with an introduction by D Brogan*. London, Hamish Hamilton.p387

⁴² LSE Fabian Society Archive C26 Minutes 19.5.40

⁴³ LSE Fabian Society Archive C26 Minutes 30.4.40

⁴⁴ FabianSociety (1940). *France and Britain*. London, Fabian Society.

This writer was the leading French journalist and long time member of the SFIO, Louis Lévy, who had been London correspondent of *Le Populaire* since the war began. As noted in Chapter Three, Lévy had contributed to British left-wing publications before the war and he was also the author of *Vieilles histoires socialistes*, published in 1933. His book on the defeat – *Verités sur la France* – was translated by William Pickles and came out in Britain in January 1941.⁴⁵ In his article for *France and Britain*, Lévy expressed an idea that would be picked up by other French and British writers in subsequent work – that the military feared to mobilise the French people because of the possibility of the emergence of a ‘quasi-revolutionary movement’, for ‘at the bottom of their hearts, many of them preferred the Hitler regime to a popular movement’.⁴⁶ This notion, that France could only defend herself if the spirit of 1792 was aroused, offered much to left-wing commentators as it encouraged a belief that the ‘people’ had been betrayed and would soon rise again. (There was also a hope that the same phenomenon would occur in Germany, hence the *New Statesman’s* enthusiasm for dropping leaflets there rather than bombs in September 1939.⁴⁷) Appeals to history frequently played a part in attempts to rally the French, and Lévy ended his piece:

Tell the truth to the French people... Show them, and go on showing them, that it is the England of Magna Carta which is today fighting for the France of the Rights of Man, and which will conquer.⁴⁸

The Anglo-French Committee was joined shortly after its inception by Henry Hauck, who had been recommended to the Fabians by Blum during the latter's last visit to Britain.⁴⁹ Hauck had also written in the past for *Le Populaire*, but when war broke out, he was mobilised, first as an interpreter with the British army, then, on the recommendation of Léon Jouhaux, as the first French Labour attaché at the French embassy in London.⁵⁰ Having in his youth studied at the University of Wales following a degree at the Sorbonne, he had returned to Wales to marry Mabel Williams after a spell in Paris as an English teacher and trade unionist. He had a thorough knowledge of Britain as well a good understanding of the French trade union movement (where he had been active in bringing the teaching unions into the CGT). Although he joined Déat's *Parti Socialiste de la France* in 1933 its increasingly right-wing turn had brought him back into the SFIO by 1936⁵¹ and Crémieux-Brilhac describes him as becoming a *militant* of the Front Populaire.⁵² In June 1940 he rallied to de Gaulle. Although In June 1940 he was described in

⁴⁵ Lévy, L. (1941). *The Truth about France* trans. W Pickles London, Allen Lane.

⁴⁶ Fabian Society (1940). *France and Britain*. London, Fabian Society.

⁴⁷ *New Statesman and Nation* 9.9.39

⁴⁸ *France and Britain* Issue 1 (supplement to *New Statesman*) 29.6.40

⁴⁹ LSE Fabian Society archive C26 Minutes of meeting of Anglo-French Co-operation sub-committee 29.5.40

⁵⁰ *The Times*, Saturday, Oct 14, 1967; pg. 10

⁵¹ John Maitron (ed) *Dictionnaire Biographique du Mouvement Ouvrier Française 1914-1939* (1987) Tome 31 (1964) Paris, Les Editions Ouvrières

⁵² Crémieux-Brilhac, J.-L. (1975). _____

Fabian minutes as belonging to the French Ministry of Information,⁵³ in fact he became de Gaulle's *Directeur du travail*, going on to develop and strengthen his connections with the British Labour Party and trade union movement. Yvon Morandat (a young French serviceman whom Hauck recruited to the Free French) wrote in his memoirs that Hauck was soon friends with Clement Attlee, Ernest Bevin, Herbert Morrison and Walter Citrine, indeed, 'tous les chefs du travaillisme britannique'.⁵⁴

It seems that the intention of the Anglo-French Committee was to publish another issue of *France and Britain* in a couple of months. However, the Ministry of Supply at first refused to permit the use of paper for this purpose⁵⁵ and the next edition did not appear until January 1941. The original pamphlet, nevertheless, gained wider circulation both through its appearance in *Highway* and as a separate publication in November 1941, when it was warmly reviewed in a number of newspapers, including the *Times*, *Manchester Guardian*, *Edinburgh Evening News* and *Evening Standard*, *The Bookseller* noting that 'The bulletin has the full support of M. Henry Hauck, formerly Labour Attaché to the French Embassy and now Labour Adviser to General de Gaulle'.⁵⁶ French socialist exiles were beginning to regroup and find ways to extend their influence.

At this point Hauck and Lévy were sharing a flat⁵⁷ and the two men, together with Levy's wife Marthe, a left-wing activist in her own right, attempted to revive - along with many other exiles from occupied Europe - the Labour and Socialist International. At a meeting at St Ermins Hotel on 13 July 1940 (a popular venue for Fabian gatherings, though also the headquarters of MI6), delegates from Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Holland, Norway, Poland as well as France set up the International Interallied Group as a kind of improvised continuation of the LSI.⁵⁸ William Gillies saw the purpose of the group as being to give the Labour Party advice 'for the effective prosecution of the war against Hitlerism and Fascism'.⁵⁹

British representatives at the meeting included Harold Laski, Hugh Dalton and Philip Noel-Baker. Dalton, who, as noted in the previous chapter, had met Blum and his associates on several occasions, had been appointed as Minister of Economic Warfare in the Churchill coalition. Noel-Baker, not yet a minister, was on the War Aims sub-committee of the Labour Party and had an in-depth knowledge of the key figures in the SFIO (shown, for instance, in a letter to him from Dalton in September 1939, asking him to write a report on divisions amongst French socialists⁶⁰). A fervent internationalist and

⁵³ LSE Fabian Society Archive C26 24.6.40

⁵⁴ Morandat, Y. (1994). *Souvenirs inédits d'Yvon Morandat*. Paris Institut d'histoire du temps présent. p39

⁵⁵ LSE Fabian Society Archive C26 Minutes of meeting of the Anglo-French Co-operation Committee 2.8.40

⁵⁶ LSE Fabian Society Archive J/81

⁵⁷ Morandat, Y. (1994). *Souvenirs inédits d'Yvon Morandat*. Paris Institut d'histoire du temps présent.

⁵⁸ Labour History Archive, Manchester LSI/23

⁵⁹ Labour History Archive, Manchester LSI 25/1/32

⁶⁰ Churchill Archives Centre, Cambridge. Noel-Baker archive, 4/261 letter 24/9/39

member of the League of Nations Union, Noel-Baker had visited France with Clement Attlee to try to further the cause of sanctions against Italy shortly before Blum became premier there in 1936. A subsequent visit after Blum came to power involved discussions about the Spanish Civil War and Colton has noted that Blum dispatched Admiral Darlan to try to spell out the dangers of a Franco victory to the British Admiralty 'at the suggestion of his Labour party friend Philip Noel Baker'.⁶¹ In June 1940, Noel-Baker, aided by Dalton, went to great lengths to try to get Blum out of France using the good offices of the United States, but failed, no doubt largely because of Blum's own inclination to remain in France.⁶² Through his association with Dalton and Noel-Baker, Hauck had access to the Labour Party, the Fabian Society and the government. He also wrote articles and reviews for *Highway*. Lévy, on the other hand, seems to have preferred to develop his friendship with Harold Laski⁶³. Laski, though on the Labour Party's National Executive Committee, was also a close friend of Blum, though a less mainstream figure on the British political scene, and frequently at loggerheads with more consistently ambitious and pragmatic figures such as Dalton⁶⁴. Lévy also contributed to *Tribune*.

In August 1940 Hauck and the Lévy's again worked together, this time to begin the revival of French socialism with a *Comité de Liaison des socialistes Français en Grande Bretagne*, to be known as the *Groupe Jean-Jaurès*. Lévy and Hauck also wrote a declaration of socialism in August 1940 where they affirmed their belief in the war producing a popular revolution.⁶⁵ The inaugural meeting of the new group was held at the Fabian Society headquarters, and included other French exiles, such as journalists Charles and Georges Gombault and Gustave Moutet, son of the Popular Front colonial minister, Marius Moutet. The *Groupe* saw itself as a continuation of the SFIO and hoped to link up with socialists continuing the struggle in France to bring about a popular revolution 'qui libérera les peuples de l'oppression étrangère et de la domination capitaliste'.⁶⁶ Crémieux-Brilhac has dismissed it as a 'coquille vide'⁶⁷ but, according to Andrew Williams, the *Groupe Jean-Jaurès*, while it might have spent much of its time arguing about just whom it represented, would nevertheless also become a *locus politicus* 'coordinating thinking between the French and British postwar planners of the centre-left'⁶⁸. One of its early activities was to co-operate with the Fabian Society in organising an Anglo-French conference for the following year.⁶⁹

⁶¹ Colton, J. (1987). *Léon Blum : A Humanist in Politics*. Durham N.C., Duke University Press.p248

⁶² Churchill Archives Centre, Noel-Baker archive, BLUM FILE 4/262

⁶³ see Martin, B. K. (1953). *Harold Laski : 1893-1950 A Biographical Memoir*. London, Victor Gollancz Ltd.p270

⁶⁴ see for example Pimlott, B., Ed. (1986). *The Second World War: Diary of Hugh Dalton 1940-1945*. (London, Jonathan Cape).

⁶⁵ Tombs, I. (1999). "Une identité européenne assiégée? Les exilés socialistes à Londres, 1939-1945" *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine* 46(2): 263-279.

⁶⁶ Mayer, D. (1968). *Les Socialistes dans la Résistance*. Paris, Presses Universitaires de France.p 74

⁶⁷ Crémieux-Brilhac, J.-L. (1996). *La France Libre : de l'appel du 18 Juin à la Libération*. Paris, Gallimard. p194

⁶⁸ Williams, A. (2000). "France and the New World Order, 1940-1947." *Modern & Contemporary France* 8(2): 191-202.

⁶⁹ LSE Fabian Society Archive Minutes of Executive Committee 3.3.41

At this point, the divisions amongst French exiles between supporters and opponents of de Gaulle had yet to become entrenched. On the August 26, 1940, the daily paper *France* appeared, with its front page largely occupied with a message from the leader of the Free French, now established at Carlton Gardens in London and, for the time being, supported by the Ministry of Information of the British government. Gustave Moutet, who remained close to de Gaulle throughout the war, was one of the paper's founders. One editor was André Labarthe, seconded from the Free French, the other Charles Gombault of the Groupe Jean-Jaurès, and its director was another leading French socialist, Pierre Comert. Many French volunteers training in British camps read the paper and it reported the fortunes of the Free French faithfully. However, it became increasingly, if subtly, critical of de Gaulle.⁷⁰ The Groupe Jean-Jaurès wrote quite positively about the leader of the Free French and his activities in the autumn of 1940,⁷¹ even if Georges Gombault had described him to his son as resembling the nineteenth century anti-republican nationalist, General Boulanger, after meeting him in July.⁷² This was a time when de Gaulle's position as leader of external French resistance was still insecure, but his value as a symbol was mostly accepted.

The British navy's attack on the French fleet at Oran on July 3 1940 left 1297 French sailors dead and over three hundred wounded.⁷³ De Gaulle was in the eyes of many in France damaged by his association with the British, later referring to the 'stale reek of old naval rivalry' that this 'lamentable event' evoked. Recruitment to the Free French was hit.⁷⁴ De Gaulle went on the BBC on July 8 and made a judicious broadcast, condemning those who represented 'cette odieuse tragédie comme un succès naval direct', whilst allowing the military justification for the attack and insisting that 'nos deux vieux peuples, nos deux grands peuples, demeurent liés l'un à l'autre'.⁷⁵ If the attack on the French fleet was staged in order to demonstrate to the United States that Britain was serious in its determination to prosecute the war against Germany, then it could also be seen as presaging the government's willingness to prioritise a possible alliance with the USA in a way that would have considerable impact on Anglo-French relations; a subject treated in more depth in Chapter Seven. However, the British left still saw close relations with France as crucial. *Tribune's* diplomatic correspondent accepted the attack as militarily necessary, but put the emphasis elsewhere, harking back to France's revolutionary past:

This is a European civil war as well as a war of nations, a class as well as an international struggle: we need a new French Revolution, which will apply the principles of the Great Revolution in the economic as well as the political domain, and

⁷⁰ Crémieux-Brilhac, J.-L. (1996). *La France Libre : de l'appel du 18 Juin à la Libération*. Paris, Gallimard. pp192-4

⁷¹ Labour History Archive, Manchester LSI25/2/2

⁷² Crémieux-Brilhac, J.-L. (1996). *La France Libre : de l'appel du 18 Juin à la Libération*. Paris, Gallimard. p194

⁷³ Smith, C. (2009). *England's Last War against France*. London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson. p87

⁷⁴ De Gaulle, C. (1955). *War Memoirs - The Call to Honour*. London, Collins. pp 26-27

⁷⁵ <http://www.ina.fr/fresques/de-gaulle/fiche-media/Gaulle00303/reaction-après-mers-el-kebir>

will build a new France, hand in hand with an England ruled by Labour and the revolutionary regimes that will succeed Fascism in Europe.⁷⁶

On the whole, the British left-wing press was also slow to criticise de Gaulle. *Tribune* greeted him as 'able and energetic' and 'a fine military leader' willing to put patriotism before the class interests of the elite to which he belonged and ready to include representatives of the French left in his French National Committee.⁷⁷ It did, however, doubt his abilities as a political leader and began to question his commitment to *Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité* after the disastrous failure by British and Free French forces to take Dakar in September 1940. *Tribune* was not sure that de Gaulle could liberate France, for:

...the forces on the Continent which will help us to liberate France and Europe are chiefly the forces of revolution, emanating from the working class and peasantry.⁷⁸

However, neither *Tribune* nor the *New Statesman* blamed de Gaulle for the Dakar fiasco, the former accusing a 'fascist 5th column' in Britain,⁷⁹ the latter poor support from British intelligence.⁸⁰ *Tribune*, nevertheless, true to its anti-imperialist principles, began to argue that de Gaulle would have more success rallying the French colonies if he promised them independence.

In November 1940, an article on the Free French in *Highway* cited the presence of Henry Hauck as evidence that de Gaulle was aware of the importance of the workers' movement and noted that the *Groupe Jean Jaurès* seemed willing to work with him. A similar point was made by Kingsley Martin's 'London Diary' in the *New Statesman* in December. Talking up the possibility of growing French resistance, Martin observed:

Vichy newspapers attack him, as one might expect, as a freemason surrounded by Socialists and Jews. In this country the rumour runs that 'he is a dangerous reactionary, a Fascist, and a would-be dictator'...Indeed, among the Free Frenchmen every class is represented, and every political idea, except that of subservience to Germany. They are a popular front. They want a good soldier as their general. I doubt if de Gaulle's political ideas are clearly formulated... To many the name of General de Gaulle has become a flag. His followers are the Deputies who act for a gagged nation.⁸¹

Hauck made it his business to ensure that the British left knew that their counterparts were represented in the Free French by keeping activists like Noel-Baker informed of events such as the public conference *Pour la resurrection de la France* held in London by the *Association des français de Grande Bretagne* (FGB) in October 1940. The FGB had been set up in July 1940 for all French people resident in London and purported to be the unofficial civil wing of *La France Libre*.⁸² It was addressed

⁷⁶ *Tribune* 12.7.40

⁷⁷ *Tribune* 28.6.40 & 5.7.40

⁷⁸ *Tribune* 5.7.40

⁷⁹ *Tribune* 4.10.40

⁸⁰ *New Statesman and Nation* 28.9.40

⁸¹ *New Statesman and Nation* 7.12.40

⁸² Atkin, N. (2003). *The Forgotten French : Exiles in the British Isles*. Manchester, Manchester University Press p211

by a leading figure in de Gaulle's entourage, the jurist and academic René Cassin.⁸³ Cassin had been active before the war in the *Rassemblement Universel pour la Paix* along with Léon Jouhaux and Philip Noel-Baker and so his role in the Free French and support for de Gaulle was also reassuring for the British left. Hauck furthered good relations between Noel-Baker and de Gaulle, for instance by keeping the former informed of its activities, sending him in October the Brazzaville Manifesto (Conseil de défense de l'empire), reports of which in the media had been vetoed by the Foreign Office, and explaining the proposals when they met for lunch.⁸⁴ Noel-Baker signalled his support by joining de Gaulle's *Amis des Volontaires Français*. Hauck also gave him copies of the first outpourings of the clandestine press, including the 'Manifesto of French Trade Unionists' which appeared in November and laid out antifascist principles, demanding 'respect for human personality, regardless of race, religion or conviction'.⁸⁵

Nevertheless, as winter 1940 approached there was clearly some disappointment that, despite some successes in French Equatorial Africa, the Free French movement was not growing as fast as had been hoped and there was little news coming out of France of active resistance to Nazi occupation and Vichy rule. Virtually all the British press tended to look hopefully for any signs of opposition to Pétain's regime (the *Times* was typical in hoping 'the expected reaction to the mood of resignation and despair has at length set in'⁸⁶), and the French service of the BBC played an important part in trying to encourage and stimulate dissent and revolt. This service would provide another arena where British and French socialists would come together and try to develop common themes.

It is hard to over-state the importance of radio broadcasting at this time. Before the war, pressure from the press magnates meant that the amount of time allowed for news on the BBC was very small, with 15 minutes a day the norm in 1936. However, no such restrictions had applied to the empire service, which had enabled the development of capable and well-informed news teams, able to meet the public's demand for news on the home and overseas services once war broke out so that by 1941 news took up 10% of all broadcasts.⁸⁷ While in Britain it was estimated that 50% of the French adult population listened to the 9 o'clock news on the BBC French Service,⁸⁸ the Vichy estimate (undoubtedly conservative) of those in France listening to BBC broadcasts was at least 300,000 in early 1941. Vichy admitted this had increased tenfold by the end of the following year, by which time they had prohibited listening to the BBC in public places. Meanwhile, the German Propaganda Department

⁸³ Churchill Archives Centre Noel-Baker Papers GBR/0014/NBKR Pamphlet

⁸⁴ Churchill Archives Centre Noel-Baker Papers GBR/0014/NBKR /4 Letter HH to PNB 20/12/40

⁸⁵ Churchill Archives Centre Noel-Baker Papers GBR/0014/NBKR Letter from Hauck to PNB Nov 1940

⁸⁶ *The Times* 30.8.40

⁸⁷ Hilmes, M. (2012). *Network Nations: A Transnational History of British and American Broadcasting*. New York, London, Routledge.

⁸⁸ BBC (1940). *BBC Handbook 1940*. London, BBC.

asked for more jamming, noting that in April 1942 'all politically interested Frenchmen either listened to the French broadcasts of the English radio or asked their neighbours to do so.'⁸⁹ Richard Vinen has concluded that 'If any single institution united the French by 1942, it was probably the BBC'.⁹⁰ Hilmes has argued that broadcasting 'imagined the nation state' and provided 'a conduit to speak to other nations.'⁹¹ The BBC French Service was thus able to communicate both an idea of 'Britain' to its French listeners as well as an idea of 'France' that contrasted with that being promoted by the Vichy government. Broadcasting thereby permitted an ongoing dialogue between the people of the two nations, and a study of transcripts can contribute to a transnational perspective of the state of left-wing opinion at this time. Laura Doyle speaks of nations being 'rhetorically figured' by those who describe them.⁹² The BBC French service is replete with examples of how France and Britain were so configured by contributors, whether politicians, journalists, trade unionists or others who had access to the airwaves, who told the French about Britain, and about France. The intensity of the debates over how Britain and France should be described on the BBC is testament to the importance attached to the medium. At the centre of such debates was the issue of whether Pétain or de Gaulle could better claim to represent 'France' and command British support.

It is not therefore surprising that the BBC was the site of intense wrangling for control over the messages it disseminated. The BBC had developed a significant degree of independence from government during the interwar period and its personnel were reluctant to accept direction. Duff Cooper (Minister of Information June 1940 - September 1941) struggled to get a grip on the BBC's output. He demanded that

Over political activities the government should exercise complete, direct and efficient control; no news bulletins should go out that have not been seen and censored by competent representatives of the government departments concerned, nor should any talks be delivered that have not undergone similar scrutiny.⁹³

However, the Foreign Office and service chiefs were often unwilling to channel information through the Ministry of Information (MOI). Michael Stenton has charted the frequent disputes between the Foreign Office, which vetted politically sensitive material and ostensibly had the power to guide and direct policy during the war, and the MOI.⁹⁴ The Foreign Office had had doubts about the wisdom of allowing de Gaulle access to the air waves in June 1940 and continued to hope that the Vichy government would find the armistice conditions intolerable and that someone such as General

⁸⁹ Stenton, M. (2000). Radio London & Resistance in Occupied Europe 1939-1943. Oxford, Oxford University Press. p133

⁹⁰ Vinen, R. (2006). The Unfree French : Life under the Occupation. London, Allen Lane.p92

⁹¹ Hilmes, M. (2012). Network Nations: A Transnational History of British and American Broadcasting. New York, London, Routledge. p3

⁹² Doyle, L. (2009). "Toward a Philosophy of Transnationalism." Journal of Transnational American Studies 1(1).

⁹³ TNA INF1/869 Memo from Duff Cooper December 1940

⁹⁴ Stenton, M. (2000). Radio London & Resistance in Occupied Europe 1939-1943. Oxford, Oxford University Press. p68

Weygand might turn again to the Allied cause and rally the colonies of North Africa, proving a more fitting and amenable leader than de Gaulle. They remained nervous about open denunciation of Pétain on the French service throughout the last six months of 1940 and beyond.

The Ministry of Information, on the other hand, was open to a number of countervailing influences. Oliver Harvey had been a diplomat in Paris between 1931 and 1936, and again there during the 'Phoney War'. After the fall of France he was in charge of propaganda to Europe and information for governments in exile at the MOI until June 1941. Stenton calls Harvey 'a radical democrat in the *News Chronicle* mould'.⁹⁵ He was much less willing than his counterparts at the Foreign Office to believe Pétain might change allegiances.⁹⁶ Harvey had known and admired Pierre Comert (now director of the journal *France*) when the latter was press officer at the Quai d'Orsay. Comert, who had been sacked by Bonnet in 1938 for his anti-Munichois stance,⁹⁷ certainly took his paper in an anti-Gaullist direction, but he was a man of the left, and he encouraged Harvey to let French socialists have their say on the BBC. In a memo on France to a Foreign Office diplomat, Harvey would write in January 1941:

The Right and the Rich were defeatist and pro-Nazi out of fright of the communists. People like Herriot, Jeanncy, Mandel and Blum never gave in and may yet play a role in the future.⁹⁸

Although only in office at the MOI for fourteen months, Duff Cooper's fervent Francophilia (and to some extent his continued faith in de Gaulle) was shared by many who worked there, including notable figures from the left intelligentsia. His Parliamentary Secretary was the journalist and former diplomat Harold Nicolson, National Labour MP and thus a supporter of the National Government, though 'fiercely anti-Tory in his private sentiments'.⁹⁹ Nicolson had several connections with the Fabians, having helped the Society when it was in financial difficulties at one point.¹⁰⁰ Raymond Mortimer, seconded from the *New Statesman*, played an important role in helping develop the BBC French news and talks service and was the MOI representative at their joint discussions.¹⁰¹ They were joined by Denis Brogan and Dorothy Pickles amongst others. The stage was set, then, for a degree of creative chaos and departmental wrangling, which will be examined further in the next chapter. Meanwhile the voice of Anglo-French socialism was achieving salience on the air waves, and describing Britain and

⁹⁵ *ibid* p68

⁹⁶ Stenton, M. (2000). *Radio London & Resistance in Occupied Europe 1939-1943*. Oxford, Oxford University Press. p129

⁹⁷ Crémieux-Brilhac, J.-L. (1996). *La France Libre : de l'appel du 18 Juin à la Libération*. Paris, Gallimard. P194

⁹⁸ TNA INF1/877 Memo from Oliver Harvey to Maurice Peterson

⁹⁹ T. G. Otte, 'Nicolson, Sir Harold George (1886–1968)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Oct 2009 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/35239>, accessed 6 Dec 2012]

¹⁰⁰ Sussex University Leonard Woolf Archive. Undated letter from Woolf to Nicolson c.1940

¹⁰¹ J. W. Lambert, 'Mortimer, (Charles) Raymond Bell (1895–1980)', rev. P. J. Connell, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 ;online edn, Oct 2006 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/31471>, accessed 7 May 2011]

France as nations who could throw off the trammels of reaction and unfettered capitalism and go forward to a shared future once peace was restored.

The French Service was in its infancy when war broke out. The BBC had begun broadcasting in foreign languages (French, Italian and German) on the eve of the Munich Conference in September 1938. On June 18 1940, largely thanks to the intervention of Churchill, it broadcast General de Gaulle's reply to Marshall Pétain's call for an armistice the previous day on French radio. It became urgent to set up a formal framework for broadcasting by the BBC to occupied France, especially as the existing French team had departed home. The number of news bulletins was expanded to six by the end of 1940,¹⁰² and to seven the following year. However, more had to be done to attract French audiences and achieve the stated aims of encouraging resistance and demoralising the enemy armies.¹⁰³ The bulletins were soon augmented with half hour magazine programmes in the morning and evening. By September 1940 there were two and a half hours of broadcasting to France and this rose to four hours by September 1941 and five a year later.¹⁰⁴

At the same time, 'black' radio stations, which purported to come from inside France were run by the Political Warfare Executive (PWE) and delivered a variety of messages to different groups in occupied France. Sometimes influential, they lacked the authority of the BBC. The PWE was set up in August 1941 with the purpose of co-ordinating all forms of propaganda, bringing together some sections of the MOI, the BBC and the Special Operations Executive. There were continual disputes between Dalton and others on the Executive, especially Eden and Bracken.¹⁰⁵ While BBC programmes were ostensibly 'white' and not overtly propagandist, they were subject to censorship to ensure they conformed with government policy. The 'black' stations (based at Woburn and numbering 50 at one point in the war) were given virtually free rein to stimulate resistance in Europe by whatever means.¹⁰⁶

Cecilia Reeves was Senior Talks Assistant for the French Service during June and July 1940 and would play a key role in making it 'a most effective propaganda operation'.¹⁰⁷ She was largely responsible for developing the magazine programmes that ran morning and evening and followed the news bulletins. Michel Saint Denis, a well-known theatre director who had been a liaison officer with the British Expeditionary Force in the First World War,, took the nom de guerre Jacques Duchesne (a name apparently inspired by the newspaper *Père Duchesne* of the revolutionary era) and headed the daily programme, the brainchild of Reeves, *Les français parlent aux français*. These put a strong emphasis on

¹⁰² BBC, *BBC Handbook 1941* (London: BBC, 1941)

¹⁰³ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ Crémieux-Brilhac, J.-L. (1996). *La France Libre : de l'appel du 18 Juin à la Libération*. Paris, Gallimard.p213

¹⁰⁵ Pimlott, B., Ed. (1986). *The Second World War: Diary of Hugh Dalton 1940 - 1945*. London, Jonathan Cape.p288

¹⁰⁶ Briggs, A. (1970). *The History of Broadcasting in the UK*. London, Oxford University Press.p14

¹⁰⁷ Susan Phelps, 'Gillie , Cecilia Grace Hunt (1907–1996)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/61152>, accessed 6 May 2011]

French history, literature and music (and by implication, one assumes, Britain's respect for them) and also included features such as *La Petite Académie* and the very popular *Les Trois Amis*, where Duchesne and two others would debate current issues. These carefully scripted, though seemingly open and spontaneous discussions, adopted a moderate, inquisitive tone and used wit and sarcasm to make subtle but incisive criticism of Vichy. The discussions did not follow a Gaullist (Duchesne, indeed, was markedly anti de Gaulle) or a pro-socialist line and, maybe as a result, they were the more successful, being later described as 'classics of propaganda in the best sense of the word'.¹⁰⁸ Mortimer himself contributed many times; on one occasion on the subject of the loveliness of French gardens, and their 'red, white and blue flowers'.¹⁰⁹ British literary figures, such as Rosamund Lehmann, also spoke. There were, in addition, talks by Georges Boris of the Free French, whose importance to the left wing of that movement and its relations with the BBC will be considered further below.

The main message these broadcasts hoped to convey was that Britain was committed to continuing the war and the British were well disposed and benevolent to the French, especially those in their midst. Moreover, French culture and history were portrayed as widely admired and respected in Britain, and the Vichy regime was pictured as an aberration that broke with French traditions and jeopardised their revival. Denis Saurat, academic and director of the *Institut français* (which he had placed at de Gaulle's disposal immediately after the armistice), quoted Victor Hugo and declared that 'la France est la mère de tous les esprits civilisés' on June 20.¹¹⁰ Novelist Rosamond Lehmann offered 'notre sympathie profonde' to the women of France the same day. In September, Alexander Werth spoke about the lack of censorship in Britain and why this made the BBC trustworthy¹¹¹ (although there was some concern that the BBC had shied away from giving the full story during the Battle of France.¹¹²) Richelieu was commemorated as someone who had stood up to the Austrians three centuries before¹¹³ and Lyautey as the man who built France's African empire which would rise up in the defence of the eternal France.¹¹⁴

The Free French were at first allocated five minutes a day. Their programmes were entitled *Honneur et Patrie*, no doubt in the hope of rallying elements in the French army, especially those in the Empire, who tended to be anti-republican and might be deterred by any mention of *Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité*. The main purpose of these broadcasts was surely to establish the credentials of the Gaullist organisation and thereby stimulate recruitment. Most of these broadcasts were delivered by de

¹⁰⁸ *Independent* 24.4.96

¹⁰⁹ BBC Written Archive, Caversham. French Service scripts *Les français parlent aux français* 3.10.40

¹¹⁰ BBC Written Archive, Caversham. French Service scripts; *News from France* 20.6.40

¹¹¹ *ibid* 3.9.40

¹¹² Bonnery, A. (2005). *La France de la BBC, 1938-1944*. PhD, Bourgogne.

¹¹³ BBC Written Archive, Caversham. French Service scripts *Ici la France* 11.9.40

¹¹⁴ BBC Written Archive, Caversham. French Service scripts *Les français parlent aux français* 31.7.40

Gaule's spokesman, Maurice Schumann, a former journalist for the Havas news agency. Schumann had been a member of the SFIO, but his fervent Christianity meant he was more at home with less secular groupings and he went on to found the *Mouvement Républicain Populaire* (a Christian Democrat party) after the war. Schumann's scripts had to be passed by both the Foreign Office and the MOI so were sometimes modified if considered too stridently anti-Vichy, as were the occasional contributions from de Gaulle himself, whose talks had a tone of 'studied contempt for the new political establishment' in France.¹¹⁵ There was no attempt at even-handedness and the Cointets have pointed out that Schumann's passionate speeches contrasted with the 'circonspection de l'équipe de Duchesne'.¹¹⁶ René Cassin also spoke sometimes, appealing to workers and veterans and claiming on one occasion that the 'unknown soldier' would have joined the Free French.¹¹⁷

It was, however, in the 'dawn bulletins' that we find the fullest expression of the views of French and British socialists. These were the idea of Henry Hauck, William Pickles and Jack Sandford.¹¹⁸ Sandford was formerly *Daily Herald* correspondent in Paris and then Hauck's counterpart as labour attaché at the British Embassy in Paris.¹¹⁹ Hauck had wanted to broadcast to French workers before the fall of France - while he was still at the French embassy - as a memo from Émile Delavenay, the Assistant Director for European Services at the BBC testifies.¹²⁰ Hauck suggested fortnightly fifteen minute evening talks, to be delivered by 'Labour and Trade Union leaders, selected among those who could speak French tolerably well',¹²¹ although Delavenay clearly thought Hauck was sufficiently versed in 'British industrial and labour problems' to be a suitable presenter himself. In the end, most of the *Emissions Ouvrières* lasted four to five minutes, and by the end of July were being put out regularly in the early morning.

They followed the news bulletin, usually broadcast around 6.15 a.m., in the hope that they would be heard by workers setting off for work, though Hauck's voice also reached Free French recruits in British camps such as the young and right-wing Daniel Cordier, who was disgusted by his attacks on the bourgeoisie.¹²² Hauck was asked to continue recording when he visited the USA in October and by November was producing so many talks he asked to be paid for three at a time so he did not have to spend so much time chasing up cheques (the BBC apparently having particular difficulties with changes

¹¹⁵ Stenton, M. (2000). *Radio London & Resistance in Occupied Europe 1939-1943*. Oxford, Oxford University Press. p132

¹¹⁶ Cointet, M. and J.-P. Cointet (1990). *La France à Londres 1940-1943*. Paris, Edition Complexe. p95

¹¹⁷ BBC Written Archive, Caversham. French Service scripts *Honneur et Patrie* 8.9.40

¹¹⁸ Briggs, A. (1970). *The History of Broadcasting in the UK*. London, Oxford University Press. p 253

¹¹⁹ Hauck, H. (1948). "Labour Attachés." *International Labour Review* 58(2): 144-150.

¹²⁰ Cornick, M. (1994). "The BBC and the Propaganda War against Occupied France: The Work of Émile Delavenay and the European Intelligence Department,," *French History* 8(3): 316-354.

¹²¹ BBC Written Archive, Caversham. Henry Hauck file. Memo 11.6.40

¹²² Cordier, D. (2009). *Alias Caracalla*. Paris, Gallimard. p159

of address).¹²³ Many of Hauck's scripts were not typed, but passed by the MOI in their handwritten form, perhaps indicating the pressures under which they were produced.

The underlying narrative of the labour talks was that France had been defeated by right-wing treachery, and solidarity between British and French workers would be her salvation. Ernest Bevin, now Minister of Labour, gave a talk on Bastille Day 1940, introduced by Hauck (who got half the normal fee on that occasion, though whether he had to translate for Bevin is not clear). In his broadcasts, Hauck downplayed his own diplomatic and Free French background, asking to be introduced as 'un militant syndicaliste Français'.¹²⁴ He also, on occasion, spoke on *Honneur et Patrie*, for instance reporting on the TUC conference there in October. On his July 17 dawn talk, Hauck put the defeat down to a reluctance to rally the people on the part of the capitalists and their allies: 'on s'est méfié du peuple, on ne voulait pas gagner une guerre populaire.' Paris had been declared an open city because the 'les grandes compagnies d'assurances, propriétaires de milliers d'immeubles à Paris' wanted no damage done to their assets. 'Vous avez été trahis, trompés, poignardés dans le dos, abandonnés' he fulminated.¹²⁵ He often made a point of referring to former British trade unionists, such as Bevin and the ex-miner D.R. Grenfell both now in the wartime coalition,¹²⁶ and stressed the heroic tradition of the British working class, whose victories against their employers would stand them in good stead against the Nazis. 'Cette tradition d'héroïsme du prolétariat anglais, elle est aussi celle de la classe ouvrière Française' he declared, calling on the French worker to remember the achievements of Blanqui, Vaillant, Guesde and Faurès and the great moments of 1789, 1830, 1848 and 1871 and remember that 'le combat pour l'indépendance nationale est aussi un combat pour le socialisme international.'¹²⁷

The attacks on the bourgeoisie in some of Hauck's scripts alarmed the Foreign Office, but the MOI usually let the scripts through; Harvey believing that appeals to the workers in France were most likely to stimulate resistance as 'those who recovered first were the Bretons, the peasants and the workers' and would help see socialists, rather than communists, in the vanguard of resistance.¹²⁸ In addition, Hauck could call on his friends in high places when necessary, as when he appealed to Attlee when attempts were made to stop a potentially inflammatory piece on the Paris Commune. Attlee contacted the Minister of Information, Duff Cooper, who assured him the MOI would let future scripts through.¹²⁹ *Tribune's* broadcasting correspondent also spoke warmly of the 'prominent French syndicalist' who

¹²³ BBC Written Archive Henry Hauck file 2.7.40

¹²⁴ BBC Written Archive Caversham. Henry Hauck file 11.6.40

¹²⁵ BBC Written Archive Caversham. French Service scripts *Émissions Ouvrières* 17.8.40

¹²⁶ *ibid* *Émissions Ouvrières* 19.8.40

¹²⁷ *ibid* *Émissions Ouvrières* 14.9.40

¹²⁸ Stenton, M. (2000). *Radio London & Resistance in Occupied Europe 1939-1943*. Oxford, Oxford University Press. p 147

¹²⁹ *ibid* p146

‘delivered an impassioned appeal to French factory workers not to allow themselves to be used to make munitions for Germans’.¹³⁰

On several occasions, Hauck was at pains to include as many groups as possible in his appeals. In November in a talk on ‘Civil Servants and Vichy’, he referred to his own role in setting up a teachers’ union in 1923, arguing that ‘les instituteurs, les postiers, les douaniers, les agents de trésor ont une longue tradition syndicaliste et républicaine et sont les adversaires nés du fascisme’.¹³¹ Two days later, in one of his attacks on the haute bourgeoisie - which incensed William Strang at the Foreign Office - he declared ‘les petites gens de France sont la France’.¹³² Earlier he had spoken of the hostility shown to Hitler by the ‘les ouvriers, les paysans, les petits boutiquiers, les fonctionnaires, les intellectuels Français’ who, he claimed, were making things difficult for the Gestapo with their acts of sabotage, clandestine tracts, defacing of Nazi and Vichy posters and refusal to co-operate with Germans.¹³³ Thus a narrative of resistance to Vichy and the occupiers was created and broadcast even before there was much evidence that this was occurring.

Certainly there were no reports of resistant activity in the *New Statesman*, *Spectator* or *Economist*, which were mainly preoccupied in the autumn of 1940 with the causes of the defeat, the consequences of the Dakar expedition, the privations being suffered by the French and the house arrest of Léon Blum. For many in Britain it seemed that any French support for Allied victory was confined to the Free French in London. However, Alexander Werth did write in the *Manchester Guardian* about the clandestine manifesto produced by French socialists denouncing those who had voted full powers to Vichy, which he saw as representing a ‘spirit of awakening’.¹³⁴ (Hauck had sent a copy of this manifesto to Noel-Baker,¹³⁵ but it seems to have drawn little comment elsewhere.) Werth’s article also made much of the success of the BBC broadcasts, as evidenced by, he said, numerous letters from France to the Corporation. Whether or not Hauck had any real evidence of organised dissidence or subversion in France, his message was that there was real resistance and this would bring about not only German defeat, but a transformation of the social structure.

In this endeavour, Hauck was assisted by the Fabian William Pickles, whilst Dorothy Pickles also broadcast for the BBC, having shown de Gaulle round London when he first arrived.¹³⁶ William Pickles began broadcasting in August 1940, at a time when he was still attached to the LSE, which moved to

¹³⁰ *Tribune* 5.7.40

¹³¹ BBC Written Archive, Caversham. French Service *Émissions Ouvrières* 19.11.40

¹³² *ibid* 21.11.40

¹³³ *ibid* 30.10.40

¹³⁴ *Manchester Guardian* 23.10.40. p7 ‘Awakening in France’

¹³⁵ Churchill Archives Centre, Cambridge. Noel-Baker archive NKBR 4/261

¹³⁶ Douglas Johnson, ‘Pickles, Dorothy Maud (1903–1994)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/55251>, accessed 3 May 2011]

Cambridge in June, thereby necessitating frequent journeys for him on wartime trains. Later that autumn he got a post at the Ministry of Information, where staff on occasion took over the task of chasing up his cheques from the BBC, whose billing department continued to confuse him with Wilfred Pickles until 1942. Introducing him for his first broadcast, Hauck stressed Pickles' credentials as intellectual and trade union sympathiser. Pickles was 'maître de conférence à l'Université de Londres [qui] a consacré sa vie à France; il a vécu à Paris; il a été mêlé au mouvement ouvrier Français; il vous connaît et il vous aime'. He embodied 'l'amitié attristée avec laquelle ces militants anglais suivent des événements de France'.¹³⁷ Pickles referred to himself as 'un ancien membre de la section socialiste 15e à Paris'.¹³⁸ Like Hauck, Pickles would go to great lengths to stress the common experience and sufferings of workers on both sides of the Channel:

Dans la paix, nous étions, vous et nous, des camarades qui travaillent ensemble dans le mouvement syndical; dans la guerre nous étions des alliés, et nous les sommes tous les deux encore dans ces jours sombres où nous vivons, l'un sous la botte allemande, l'autre sous les bombes.¹³⁹

Pickles also referred to the role of Bevin in ensuring that British workers were getting a better deal than their French counterparts:

la camarade Bevin... a indiqué dans un brillant discours comment la démocratie britannique poursuit sa marche vers un monde meilleur, même en temps de guerre.¹⁴⁰

Indeed, he said, even British communists enjoyed more freedom and better working lives than those in the Soviet Union.

Thus Pickles contributed to the development of a narrative of Anglo-French unity – one which had been only temporarily disrupted by the machinations of the haute bourgeoisie who had helped shape the fateful foreign policy of the pre-war years that had produced Nazi victories all over Europe. Like others on the left, Pickles claimed that victory would lead to radical social change : 'un monde plus près de celui que nous avons toujours rêvé dans les mouvements syndicalistes français et anglais'.¹⁴¹ The labour talks may not have attracted the audiences of *Les français parlent aux français* (although Stenton does not say on what he bases his conclusion that 'there was never much sign of an audience'¹⁴²). Hauck, though, brought in a number of notable speakers apart from Pickles and Bevin; Cassin – who began his talks 'travailleurs des villes, des champs et des mines' was of course a noted Gaullist – as was Georges Boris, but others included Marthe Lévy and André Labarthe, who were decidedly anti-Gaullist. Hauck was tireless in his efforts to persuade the Labour leadership to put aside their doubts

¹³⁷ BBC Written Archive, Caversham French Service. *Émissions Ouvrières* 11.6.40

¹³⁸ Crémieux-Brilhac, J.-L. (1975). _____ . p148

¹³⁹ BBC Written Archive, Caversham French Service. *Émissions Ouvrières* 20.9.40

¹⁴⁰ BBC Written Archive, Caversham. *Émissions Ouvrières* 20.9.40

¹⁴¹ BBC Written Archive, Caversham. *Émissions Ouvrières* 14.10.40

¹⁴² Stenton, M. (2000). *Radio London & Resistance in Occupied Europe 1939-1943*. Oxford, Oxford University Press. p132

about de Gaulle; the young volunteer Yvon Morandat claiming later that any success here was thanks to 'son bonhomie, son entregent', for Hauck was 'un très chic type, franc, patriote, fidèle'.¹⁴³

The BBC French Service broadcast not only to France, but also to the wider French Empire, most of which was under Vichy control in the autumn of 1940. Hauck was aware that the early morning talks could be heard later in the day in North and Equatorial Africa and on several occasions he attempted to appeal to listeners there, whilst suggesting to French workers that the colonies were a national asset that would assist in their liberation. The French Empire was configured as a force for progress and the promotion of republican virtues. He referred to France's benevolent attitude to her colonies, and contrasted it with Nazi policy:

...il me plait aussi de parler de l'Empire aux ouvriers et aux paysans de France. Le peuple de France a toujours marqué sa sympathie fraternelle aux peuples du couleur. Il a toujours instinctivement mépris et hait les distinctions de races qui sont à la base du nazisme et fascisme.¹⁴⁴

He reminded the natives of the colonies of the efforts of Marius Moutet of the Popular Front government to better their lot and insisted that 'les peuples coloniaux progressivement élevés à la civilisation, contribuait un formidable réservoir de liberté'.¹⁴⁵

The British Empire was a subject of great concern for many socialists. While the Fabians had been known in the past as advocates of British imperial expansion, many on the left were by the 1930s intensely critical. Riots, racial tension and unrest in Africa, the Caribbean and Palestine, as well as continuing civil disobedience in India, had led the Labour Party's Advisory Committee on Imperial Questions to produce a series of reports that heightened interest in the issue.¹⁴⁶ The Fabian Colonial Bureau was set up in 1940 following what to Margaret Cole seemed interminable and futile discussions on war aims for the post-war world. It aimed to keep the focus on aims specifically for the 'dependent Empires' and their 'liberation and transformation into self-governing states, as laid down time and again in the declarations and programmes of Socialist and Labour parties the world over'.¹⁴⁷ The development of the concept of a British Commonwealth, which term had been first officially used in the Anglo-Irish treaty of 1921, provided some with a means to imagine a peaceful route forward. As Callaghan has pointed out; 'the Commonwealth ideal gave all but the extreme left the opportunity of

¹⁴³ Morandat, Y. (1994). Souvenirs inédits d'Yvon Morandat. Paris Institut d'histoire du temps présent. p39

¹⁴⁴ BBC Written Archive, Caversham. *Émissions Ouvrières* 29.8.40

¹⁴⁵ BBC Written Archive, Caversham. *Émissions Ouvrières* 31.8.40

¹⁴⁶ Vickers, R. (2004). The Labour Party and the World, Volume 1 : The Evolution of Labour's Foreign Policy, 1900-51. Manchester, Manchester University Press.p148

¹⁴⁷ Cole, M. (1961). The Story of Fabian Socialism. London, Heinemann.p282

playing down the brute realities of colonialism. For faith in the noble vision, evidence of repression had to be treated as exceptional and deviant'.¹⁴⁸

However, there was very little discussion of the future of the French Empire in the left-wing press. In the first issue of *France and Britain*, an article by the Labour MP, Gilbert Mitchison, on the French Empire was primarily concerned with its relevance to the war effort, concluding '... it is of the greatest economic importance to prevent the French Empire from falling into the enemy's hands.'¹⁴⁹ This seems to square with Hauck's approach, though it is worth noting that at this time *Tribune* was arguing that liberation of the colonies of the British Empire (especially India) and the ending of racial discrimination was a central aspect of a socialist justification for the war. In November 1940, one *Tribune* writer argued in favour of de Gaulle setting up a 'negro assembly' in a colony that had rallied to the Free French. There is no suggestion of this kind of initiative in Hauck's broadcasts, and on the whole the British left seems to have preferred to go along with his version of events and concentrate on the future of France and her partnership with Britain in Europe. There appears to have been little willingness to enquire into conditions in the French Empire, let alone grasp the nettle of its future.

One member of the Free French who had experience of the British Empire was Georges Boris. Rather less extrovert than Hauck, but at least as influential a socialist, Boris was to become the official liaison officer for the Free French at the BBC in the spring of 1941. Boris had acquired English as a young tea planter in Ceylon. He went on to specialise in economics while serving on the Interallied Commission 1916-19.¹⁵⁰ On returning to France he joined the SFIO and the *Ligue de Droits de l'Homme* (LdH) and developed a career in journalism. He shared the directorship of the journal *La Lumière* with Georges Gombault; one of their reporters was the young Maurice Schumann. The full title of this weekly, founded in 1927, was *La Lumière, Hebdomadaire d'éducation civique et d'action républicaine* and after 1936, *La Lumière : le grand hebdomadaire des gauches*. It appealed to both socialists and radicals especially those in the LdH, at that time a strong force.¹⁵¹ An early admirer of J.M. Keynes, Boris had advised Blum on economics before becoming director of his cabinet and author of his economic programme.

Crémieux-Brilhac recounts how Hauck invited Boris, a liaison agent in the French army, to come to Britain to encourage British support for France in the days following the evacuation of Dunkirk. After a speaking tour in Scotland, Boris returned to London in time for the armistice which appalled him so

¹⁴⁸ Callaghan, J. (2007). *The Labour Party & Foreign Policy : a History*. London, Routledge.p105

¹⁴⁹ Fabian Society (1940). *France and Britain*. London, Fabian Society. Issue 1 June 1940

¹⁵⁰ Crémieux-Brilhac, J.-L. (2010). *Georges Boris: Trente ans d'influence: Blum, de Gaulle, Mendès France*. Paris, Gallimard. p27

¹⁵¹ Ibid. pp 38-41

much he stopped wearing his uniform in public.¹⁵² He was heartened by de Gaulle's stand, but hesitated to put himself at the General's disposal, worrying that he might not want a supporter of Léon Blum in his venture, or fear that the participation of a Jew in his enterprise would play into the hands of Pétain. De Gaulle's response to his anxieties surely demonstrates why he was able to attract someone like Boris (and, indeed, Cassin). De Gaulle assured him that

Je ne connais pas de différence de race et d'opinions politiques entre nous, je ne connais que deux catégories de Français, ceux qui font leur devoir et ceux qui ne le font pas.¹⁵³

Boris listened to de Gaulle's analysis of the likely outcome of the war and found he was largely in agreement. He was also convinced that the leader of the Free French would eventually have to come round to the side of "the people"; 'même si ses origines, son éducation, ses premiers préjugés devaient le prédisposer à une attitude contraire'.¹⁵⁴ Like Hauck, Cassin and the other progressives and socialists in the Free French, Boris saw his role as supporting de Gaulle as the man who represented the interests of France, but was not attached to any clique, while also edging him towards the left politically, for 'le mouvement devrait s'orienter vers le peuple ou qu'il périrait'.¹⁵⁵ At Carlton Gardens, the headquarters of the Free French, Boris reviewed the English and Vichy press and worked amicably with Hauck, Schumann and another socialist, Jacques Soustelle. At the BBC, where he impressed his British colleagues with his intellect and evident integrity, he developed good relations with Darsie Gillie, the French news editor, a man described by one French exile as 'un grand Francophile... un érudite, un fanatique de notre culture'.¹⁵⁶ He also got on well with Denis Brogan (for a time regional director for France for the Political Warfare Executive) and Nigel Law, Head of the French section of the MOI, who arranged for him to have access to the LSE library.¹⁵⁷ Through Brogan he made contact with Noel-Baker, but he was never active in Fabian activities, though he did give talks about the Free French around the country.¹⁵⁸ He steered clear of the *Groupe Jean-Jaurès* and fell out with his old colleague, Georges Gombault, as that group became more anti-Gaullist.

For the BBC French service, Boris gave short talks on economics, as well as taking part in *Les Français parlent aux Français*, and, on occasion *Les Emissions Ouvrières*. His subject was always the economic effects of the war on Europe, and he displayed a detailed knowledge of the cost of the occupation and rationing, labour problems and food shortages in both zones in France. Referring frequently to 'le

¹⁵² Ibid.p98

¹⁵³ Ibid. p 107

¹⁵⁴ Boris, G. (1963). *Servir la république: textes et témoignages*. Paris, Julliard.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid. p300

¹⁵⁶ Brossolette, G. (1976). *Il s'appelait Pierre Brossolette*. Paris, Albin Michel.p205.

¹⁵⁷ BBC Written Archive, Caversham. Georges Boris file

¹⁵⁸ Crémieux-Brilhac, J.-L. (2010). *Georges Boris: Trente ans d'influence: Blum, de Gaulle, Mendès France*. Paris, Gallimard. p122

pillage allemand',¹⁵⁹ he was able to make comparisons with the state of affairs in other occupied countries, such as Denmark, Slovakia and Bulgaria.¹⁶⁰ His talks were enlivened by references to the traditional French way of life; referring to German efforts to force a switch from viticulture to cereal growing, Boris commented, 'Les belles vendages gaies et la joie de vivre, c'est le passé.'¹⁶¹ He explained the economic benefits of the participation of French African colonies in the Free French enterprise. Boris ridiculed Vichy and attacked the proposed trial of Léon Blum and others at Riom, and he sought to justify unpopular British measures such as the blockade. His scripts do not appear to have suffered from censorship and he was clearly a highly respected commentator, who was consistently given more time for his talks than either Hauck or Schumann. From December 1940 he mystified (but delighted) the BBC accounts department by refusing any further payment for his talks; this may have been because his proposed job of Free French liaison officer for the BBC meant he felt these would no longer be appropriate, or possibly because the time involved in chasing up payments (especially when he changed addresses) had simply become too irksome.¹⁶² Boris never resorted to Hauck's revolutionary rhetoric; aiming for a wider audience he sought primarily to show that Britain knew just what was going on in France and was committed, along with the Free French, to liberating their country. His talks were nevertheless informed by an overt commitment to the values of democratic socialism.

Boris was therefore part of a group of French socialists who by the end of 1940 were resolved to support and strengthen the Free French movement while prodding it towards a greater commitment to such values. They had made some important connections with members of the Fabian Society and others on the British left, and were developing a shared discourse around the part the mass of the people must play in the defeat of Nazism and the rewards that would be realised through greater democracy and social transformation. Anglo-French unity was the consistent theme. The Fabians, the Workers Educational Association and similar groups were doing what they could to support the French in Britain, especially through their publications. In December Hauck and Louis Lévy were founder members, alongside, Noel-Baker, Hugh Dalton and William Gillies of the International Consultative Committee that in theory represented a continuing Labour and Socialist International in London.¹⁶³

Meanwhile, there was some indication of renewed activity on the part of the French labour movement and the clandestine paper *Libération* began to appear in Paris in December.¹⁶⁴ BBC programmes – of various kinds - were reaching and influencing the French. De Gaulle still enjoyed the support of the British government which had no remaining allies in Europe, though insistent voices at the Foreign

¹⁵⁹ for example BBC Written Archive, Caversham. French scripts *Demi-heure française du matin* 27.9.40

¹⁶⁰ BBC Written Archive, Caversham. French scripts *Demi-heure française du matin* 29.10.40

¹⁶¹ BBC Written Archive, Caversham. Georges Boris scripts. Georges Boris 12.10.40

¹⁶² BBC Written Archive, Caversham. Georges Boris file 1.12.41

¹⁶³ *Labour History Archive*, Manchester LP/LSI/26/1

¹⁶⁴ Stenton, M. (2000). *Radio London & Resistance in Occupied Europe 1939-1943*. Oxford, Oxford University Press. p144

Office still felt it was worth trying to woo Pétain away from the Nazis, especially after his dismissal of Laval in December 1940. In the period of Soviet neutrality, which lasted until June 1942, The French Communist Party instructed its members not to oppose the Nazi occupation or even mount a meaningful challenge to Vichy.¹⁶⁵ The situation was, though, very fluid and the following year would see continuing attempts to cement Anglo-French solidarity on the left both strengthened and imperiled by shifting alliances and power relationships both in Britain and in France and on the wider stage.

¹⁶⁵ Pike, D. W. (1993). "Between the Junes: The French Communists from the Collapse of France to the Invasion of Russia." Journal of Contemporary History **28**(3): 465-485.

Chapter Six: Networks of British and French socialists 1941-1942

This chapter covers the period from early 1941 to late 1942 when the left in Britain worked with socialist exiles - from France and elsewhere - to develop a narrative of working class heroism leading to post-war regeneration. By 1941 the left intelligentsia and its adherents had adjusted to the continuing bombing of British cities and consequent disruption and was creating and contributing to forums for exiled continental socialists in London. Pre-war transnational organisations, where matters of common interest could be thrashed out, were resuscitated. The presence of Labour Party figures in the wartime coalition reinforced the networks that could offer support to continental exiles. Many had connections to the Fabian Society and this chapter looks in particular at the work of the Fabian International Bureau and its part in reporting clandestine socialist and trade union activity in France and fostering a close association between the two countries once the conflict was over.

The changing nature of the war necessarily had an impact on discussions about the future, and inherent rivalries amongst the British and French left also made the vision of two socialist democracies remaking the world one it seemed at times impossible to realise. The growth and increasing audacity of communist resistance in France (and elsewhere), following the German attack on the Soviet Union in June 1941, was of great concern to the non-communist left, both French and British. To many French socialists, the consequent strengthening of communist groups in the internal resistance threatened the revival of their party. The ensuing Soviet Alliance led to a renewed interest in Britain in the concept of a united front against fascism, thereby reviving debates on the character and qualities of the Soviet system, as well as instigating discussions on strategy and the future role of the Soviet Union in a liberated Europe. As they increasingly turned their attention to plans for post-war social and economic reforms in the summer of 1942, both the British left and their French counterparts were necessarily conscious of growing public sympathy for the Soviet Union in Britain and resistant France and this chapter will look at how such awareness affected their hopes for post-war Europe.

The British left was also exercised by the changing relationship between Britain and the United States and the implications this had for relations with the France they believed would rise again when liberated, currently represented by all those who rejected the Vichy state. President Roosevelt's December 1940 pledge to make the USA the 'arsenal of democracy' was embodied in the Lend-lease programme in March 1941, leading to greater American involvement in the British war effort. In December 1941, the United States became a fully-fledged belligerent, following the

attack on Pearl Harbour by the Japanese air force. Study of the left-wing press provides insights into how efforts of the British left to envisage a post-war European future with a Franco-British relationship at its heart were affected by the growing role of the USA in strategic decisions.

Clearly, the acquisition of two important allies brought hope of eventual victory, but for most of this phase the news from the main theatres of war – North Africa and the Middle East – was grim. The need for some kind of victory to assuage and bolster public opinion made Churchill anxious to keep Roosevelt on side, and to privilege the relationship with the USA above any other. At the same time colonial rivalries with France re-emerged in operations in Syria and Madagascar, the involvement of Free French forces in Syria exacerbating tensions. The Free French movement would be boosted by the adhesion of colonies from sub-Saharan Africa and other areas which brought with them useful additional troops, but this in turn produced problems of its own. From a military point of view it might be argued that extra manpower was always a bonus to the Allied war effort, and its leadership was immaterial. Some on the left, however, saw de Gaulle's determination to assert control over these territories and their people as evidence of dictatorial tendencies.

The socialists in de Gaulle's entourage therefore endeavoured to give the Free French movement a democratic and republican flavour, one that would assuage the fears of their British colleagues over its leadership. This chapter will look at Laurent Douzou's contention that, 'le centre de gravité de la Résistance, à l'intérieur comme à l'extérieur, glissa ainsi graduellement à gauche'¹ during this phase and suggest some ways that the British left may have contributed to such a movement. The re-emergence of clandestine socialist and trade union movements in France was used by men such as Boris and Hauck in their efforts to persuade de Gaulle to modify his stance and rhetoric. By the end of the phase under consideration here, the Free French movement would begin to seem less reactionary than many had originally feared, but could also be seen to have more obvious political ambitions than were evident at its inception.

During this phase, French exiles continued to gather in formations such as the *Groupe Jean-Jaurès* and to produce their own publications, including *La France Libre* and *France*. (These publications routinely included contributions from British journalists.) Although debate continued over de Gaulle's character and intentions, few British commentators stuck to a consistently Gaullist or anti-Gaullist position at this time. Both at the BBC and in the press, de Gaulle's voice was one amongst many, and the British left – including those parts of it now in or close to the government – kept in touch with a range of French socialists, who themselves developed a variety of networks of varying

¹ Becker, J. J. and G.Candar, Eds. (2004). *Histoire des gauches en France: tome II : A l'épreuve de l'histoire*. Paris, La Découverte. p398

composition. Bickering between factions would give way to appearances on common platforms to promote a common cause. While it is impossible to ignore the 'problem' of de Gaulle, this chapter does not attempt to explore the complexity of his relations with the British establishment. Instead it notes that the antipathy towards de Gaulle felt by Roosevelt, his Secretary of State, Cordell Hull - and, intermittently, Churchill - led the leader of the Free French to realise the importance of bringing the internal resistance under his banner. Here we are concerned with how the growth of internal resistance and efforts to unify it under de Gaulle were understood and described in Britain.

At a time when the military situation often looked bleak, political diarists such as Hugh Dalton, Harold Nicolson and Oliver Harvey testify to the pressures on Churchill and the difficulties he had sustaining his position as head of a coalition government. There was continued jostling for position amongst the political class, and at a time when relationships with the United States and Soviet Union were being recalibrated, much uncertainty about the future of Europe. For some on the British left, it was of overriding importance that a republican, democratic and preferably socialist France emerge from the horrors of war, but it was not always easy for those in, or close to, government to convince colleagues that this was necessary at a time when there was still doubt about eventual victory.

Throughout 1941, the British government's attitude to the Vichy government continued to be equivocal. Distaste for the regime competed with the hope that it might turn away from collaboration with Germany, or that at least some of its personnel could be won over. Martin Thomas has shown that extensive intelligence co-operation had developed between Britain and France by June 1940 and this did not end with the fall of France, nor with the severing of diplomatic relations following the Oran episode. Men such as the great cryptologist, Gustave Bertrand, continued to decipher and transmit Axis communications to the British Secret Service.² There was even the possibility of a cipher link being developed between Churchill and Pétain in May 1941, mediated through the Canadian Chargé d'Affaires. Although this scheme was abandoned, contact was for some time maintained with General Weygand, Vichy's High Commissioner in French Africa, in the hope that he might be willing to come over to the British cause. Weygand's appointment itself has been shown by Simon Kitson to have been part of Vichy's attempt to maintain at least a semblance of independence as Weygand saw his role as to curb German demands and only to collaborate in the short term.³ Weygand, an Anglophobic reactionary and anti-Semite, was not popular in Britain, especially amongst the left, but, even after his dismissal by Pétain in November 1941, (largely because his collaboration was not as whole-hearted as Hitler demanded), a few in

² Thomas, M. (2000). "France in British Signals Intelligence, 1939-1945." *French History* 14(1): 41-66. p56

³ Kitson, S. (2006). *The Hunt for Nazi Spies: Fighting Espionage in Vichy France*. Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press trans. Catherine Tihanyi.p143

British governing circles never totally abandoned the notion that he might change sides. Meanwhile, other efforts to persuade French colonies to come over included broadcast propaganda and promises of economic assistance.

The lack of a consistent, clear line on Vichy is surely not surprising. The need to defend Britain from invasion and, concomitantly, preserve her empire and its resources, took precedence over the shaping of any offensive strategy most of the time. There was a profusion of voices and competing interests involved in the formation and articulation of British policy towards France. Francophiles at the Ministry of Information included the minister, Duff Cooper, as well as Harold Nicolson and Oliver Harvey. They felt it was important to show support for de Gaulle's Free French partly in order to discourage an anti-French mood from developing amongst the British public.⁴ However Harvey was alarmed by de Gaulle's seeming determination to distance himself from the republican form of government. He argued in a memo of January 1941 that

We should not ... throw stones at the Third Republic... co-operation with this country and America after the war will be easier with a republican and democratic regime (though its details may well be different from those of its predecessor) than with any new-fangled authoritarian system.⁵

Allegiances at this time, though, were never clear-cut. When Duff Cooper bowed to Foreign Office pressure on one occasion in February 1941 and did not let the BBC broadcast a speech by de Gaulle replete with anti-Vichy sentiments, he was accused by Noel-Baker of trying to appease Pétain. Noel-Baker wrote to the Foreign Office to express his disgust and was invited to lunch by de Gaulle.⁶ Soon after this, de Gaulle attended the Anglo-French Parliamentary Association, chaired by General Spears. At this point Spears was a strong supporter of the leader of the Free French and subsequently told the MOI that any reluctance to condemn Vichy was killing 'through sheer pusillanimity, the spirit of Free France'.⁷ He railed at the Foreign Office a few months later, saying, 'I strongly advocate that we should tear off the mask of duplicity with which Vichy has misled us'.⁸

Thus although the Foreign Office may have wished to keep lines open to Vichy at this time, any overt demonstration of this policy, for instance through heavy-handedness with the BBC, met with growing opposition – in government circles and beyond. For a short time after his sacking of Laval in February, some sections of the British press were prepared to put faith in Pétain, with the *Daily Mirror* declaring, 'The old soldier has not thrown quite **everything** at Hitler's feet. He has an 'heroic'

⁴ Stenton, M. (2000). *Radio London & Resistance in Occupied Europe 1939-1943*. Oxford, Oxford University Press. P51

⁵ TNA INF1/877 X96 2.1.41 Memo from Oliver Harvey to Maurice Peterson

⁶ Churchill Archives Centre Noel-Baker Archive GBR/0014/NKBR 4/262

⁷ TNA INF1/877 X96 5.3.41

⁸ TNA FO 371 /244 27.5.41

past. He resists. His obstinacy becomes a saving grace'⁹ and claiming 'Weygand defies the Nazis' a day later. By April, however, the *Mirror* accused Vichy of actively supporting the Nazi war effort, a view also echoed in the *Times*, especially as it became clear that the Germans were making use of aerodromes in Vichy-controlled Syria.¹⁰ While the still neutral USA kept diplomatic ties with Vichy that were at times useful to the Foreign Office, Hugh Dalton at the Ministry of Economic Warfare blamed American willingness to support pro-Vichy authorities in North Africa for at least some of the failings of the British blockade. When Dalton met the King in June 1941, he noted gleefully in his diary, 'The King has no use for Vichy and is surprised that the Americans have so long had illusions on this.'¹¹

These shifts and ambiguities in British attitudes towards Vichy reflected the paradoxes within the Vichy regime itself, as well as the contradictions long a feature of official British policy towards France, the failure of which in the interwar period had been one factor leading to the outbreak of conflict with Nazi Germany in 1939. In addition, in 1941, the early promise of de Gaulle's Free French seemed to be fading, de Gaulle himself was proving unpredictable and signs of resistance in France were few.

Broadcasting remained a contested terrain and one that was expanding rapidly. By January 1941 the BBC was already transmitting 16 bulletins in English overseas daily as well as 53 in 31 other languages to Europe and beyond and the problem of overseeing all these seemed insurmountable, even with the appointment of regional advisors. Much energy was expended in trying to clarify lines of communication, as shown in one memo:

News to foreign countries is closely conditioned by the requirements of foreign policy, but it is not entirely clear why for foreign bulletins the Foreign Office is consulted direct and for home bulletins reference is to or through the Ministry of Information.¹²

The Foreign Office would not relinquish control to the MOI and maintained its own Overseas News Liaison Unit even after the former senior diplomat, Ivone Kirkpatrick, became director of the MOI's Foreign Division in April. At the same time, there were continuing demarcation disputes between Cooper's MOI and Hugh Dalton's Ministry of Economic Warfare (MEW). While Cooper called for 'unity of propaganda' within his organisation, Dalton insisted that a distinction between covert propaganda (which was under the MEW) and overt propaganda (under the MOI) was nonsensical

⁹ *Daily Mirror* 7.2.41 Editorial and 8.2.41

¹⁰ *The Times* 19.5.41

¹¹ Pimlott, B., Ed. (1986). *The Second World War: Diary of Hugh Dalton 1940 - 1945*. London, Jonathan Cape. pp 214 & 219

¹² TNA INF1/869 Memo 8.1.41

and undermined his job of stimulating sabotage and resistance in Europe.¹³ Those responsible for making the programmes, meanwhile, resisted attempts to interfere with their output; Stenton claims many suffered from the 'delusion that political direction and editorial control could be divorced.'¹⁴ In the mean time, broadcasting to France continued to grow and by the end of 1941 there were twelve French programmes a day, twice as many as to any other country in occupied Europe.¹⁵

The propaganda offensive by the left, represented by Hauck, Pickles, Boris, as well as many other occasional contributors both British and French, went on. If the BBC attempted to placate the Foreign Office, or those attempting to do its bidding within the MOI or the Corporation itself, there were other forces upon whom to call. Although not exceptional in its attacks on the forces of the right, Hauck's script of January 10 was vetoed seemingly for promising that a new French republic would be installed after the war - 'd'où chasse les traitres, les affairistes, les exploiters et les combinards. Il nettoiera sa maison'.¹⁶ Presumably it was feared this might seem too alarmist for some in Vichy. Soon afterwards, Hauck contacted Ernest Bevin, whose activities featured so frequently in Hauck's talks. He explained that:

the line on which the talks are given is discussed and decided every week by a sub-committee consisting of Jack Sandford of the MOI, William Pickles and myself in accordance with the recommendations of the advisory committee of the French Division of the MOI... *However* last week Mr Gilly (sic) of the BBC stopped one of my talks and the next day refused to let me introduce as socialist and friend Governor-General Richard Brunot, head of the colonial department of the FFF, in spite of okay from MOI.

Hauck went on to accuse Darsie Gillie (the French news editor at the BBC and a former Paris correspondent at the *Manchester Guardian*), perhaps rather unfairly, as having 'a very narrow and conservative outlook in matters concerned with propaganda to French workers'.¹⁷ Then in February a talk by Hauck on the Paris Commune was stopped by Nigel Law (deputy director of the MOI) in order to appease the Foreign Office. Hauck appealed to Attlee, who contacted Cooper, who responded by saying that Law shouldn't yield again.¹⁸ Thus Hauck used his links with Labour figures in the wartime coalition to strengthen his message that Free France could and should present itself as appealing to the traditions of the French left, even before de Gaulle had himself made any nods in that direction.

¹³ Pimlott, B., Ed. (1986). *The Second World War: Diary of Hugh Dalton 1940 - 1945*. London, Jonathan Cape. pp208 & 221

¹⁴ Stenton, M. (2000). *Radio London & Resistance in Occupied Europe 1939-1943*. Oxford, Oxford University Press. p51

¹⁵ INF 1/894 report 21.11.41

¹⁶ BBC Written Archive, Caversham. French Service scripts *Émissions Ouvrières* 10.1.41

¹⁷ Churchill Archives Centre; Bevin Archive GBR/0014/BEVN 6/36 13.141

¹⁸ Stenton, M. (2000). *Radio London & Resistance in Occupied Europe 1939-1943*. Oxford, Oxford University Press. pp144-5

Hauck's talks continued to emphasise the benefits of Anglo-French solidarity. French workers were repeatedly told of the ways in which the British labour movement was benefiting from participation in both government and war effort and would surely go on to reap the rewards of victory. They were exhorted to see themselves as partners in this enterprise and to resist the blandishments of Vichy and its villains (especially Darlan) or the temptation to collaborate with 'des gangsters du Troisième Reich'.¹⁹ More emphasis, though, was now placed on the certainty of victory now the USA was the 'arsenal of democracy'. 1941 also saw a growing emphasis on the role of women in France: in January alone, Marthe Lévy spoke on the ways women could influence events, Dorothy Pickles impugned Vichy's curtailment of the rights of women and Hauck's wife, Mabel, described how British mothers were benefiting from new employment opportunities in war work, a theme taken up in subsequent talks by other speakers, including William Pickles.²⁰ Other new developments on the French Service were weekly discussions from April 1941 in Alsatian dialect on *Les Trois Amis*, programmes aimed specifically at children and talks for Belgian workers by de Brouckère and fellow Belgian socialist, Arthur Wauters. In this way the French Service contributed to the construction of a French resistant identity that encompassed regional, gender and class identities; one which was presented as more authentic than that put out by *Radio Paris* and other collaborationist stations.

In addition, in the first half of 1941, an increasing amount of attention was paid to the French Empire and its inhabitants and left-wing commentators had to find a way to respond to this. The Foreign Office had been alarmed that de Gaulle's Brazzaville Manifesto of October 1940 (where he had denounced Vichy unequivocally) meant de Gaulle was out of British control, had 'individualistic and fantastic' views,²¹ was determined to run his own show and might even declare war unilaterally on Vichy. However, Free French Equatorial Africa was giving the British land and air routes to the Middle East and clearly any further such gains would be welcomed. Hauck, on the other hand, needed to show that such gains did not mean a departure from his narrative of the Free French playing its part in the eventual triumph of socialist and progressive forces. When Hauck eventually presented Governor-General Brunot of the Free French Cameroons to dawn talk listeners, he emphasised that Brunot 'a toujours lutté pour la défense des indigènes', and represented 'la politique généreuse de la démocratie Française à l'égard des peuples de couleur'. He added that the British were also doing what they could for natives in their West African colonies, even helping them to organise trade unions when they were deemed capable of doing so.²²

¹⁹ BBC Written Archive, Caversham. French Service scripts *Émissions Ouvrières* 7.1.41

²⁰ BBC Written Archive, Caversham. French Service scripts *Émissions Ouvrières* 14.1.41; 17.1.41; 21.1.41 ; 14.5.41

²¹ TNA ADM 116/4816 Report by Admiral Chalmers for Cabinet Committee 305 *Relations with Free French Vichy and USA* 31/10/41

²² BBC Written Archive, Caversham. French Service scripts *Émissions Ouvrières* 11.1.41

As Vichy collaboration with the Germans in Syria became more evident, it was necessary for Britain to prepare the ground for the military mission there which would wrest control from the existing authorities and put it under Free French control. On Empire Day, May 24, William Pickles explained that he was a socialist 'not an imperialist' and had 'always struggled against imperialism'. He rejoiced that the British Empire had changed and was now willing to allow trade unions in its colonies.²³ A fortnight later, Georges Boris warned 'colones et indigènes' in the French Empire that Nazi racist policies, now adopted by Vichy, were a great threat to them.²⁴ On the anniversary of his June 1940 *appel*, de Gaulle broadcast on a familiar theme as British and Free French forces advanced on Syria and Lebanon, 'nous resterons fidèle à la France, à son honneur, à sa grandeur, à sa destinée'.²⁵ General Catroux, the only pro-consul of the French Empire to have rallied to de Gaulle, was now commander in chief of Free French forces in the Levant. Hauck was able to represent Catroux' promise of independence for Syria as showing that

la France a retrouvé d'un coup son prestige diminué, et l'affection des peuples qu'elle vient libérer. Car le seul moyen d'attacher à la France des droits de l'homme des peuples indigènes, c'est d'apporter chez eux, en son nom, non point l'oppression, l'exploitation et l'esclavage, comme prétendent le faire les Nazis au nom de leurs théories raciales, mais la liberté, l'égalité et la justice.²⁶

For much of 1941, the left-leaning British press was exercised over the issue of empire, but continued to be mainly concerned with pointing out the injustices wrought by British, rather than French, imperialism. Both the *New Statesman* and *Tribune* called for independence for British India and the West Indies and the abolition of racial discrimination, both in the British Empire and the USA,²⁷ while an article in the *Political Quarterly* castigated Afrikaners in South Africa for blocking 'native enfranchisement'.²⁸ Little interest in the French Empire was displayed until the question of Syria arose, and even then the main concern was what this demonstrated about Vichy and, in consequence, government folly, in imagining the Pétainist regime might change sides. So *Tribune*, when describing de Gaulle's French Empire Defence Council in one of a series of articles on foreign governments, noted that it had 'received tardy recognition from the British government, which has been very timid of burning its boats with Vichy'.²⁹ Various views of de Gaulle were expressed in the paper in early 1941, including one congratulating him on having Hauck as an advisor³⁰. However, it was the Syrian episode that brought a clear endorsement of the leader of the Free French and

²³ BBC Written Archive, Caversham. French Service scripts *Émissions Ouvrières* 24.5.41

²⁴ BBC Written Archive, Caversham. French Service scripts *Honneur et Patrie* 11.6.41

²⁵ BBC Written Archive, Caversham. French Service scripts *Honneur et Patrie* Broadcast from Cairo 18.6.41

²⁶ BBC Written Archive, Caversham French Service scripts *Émissions Ouvrières* 19.6.41

²⁷ For example, *Tribune* 9/5/41 *Negroes are Men* (report in US Supreme Court hearing).

²⁸ *Political Quarterly* 1941 12: 2 p220

²⁹ *Tribune* 25.4.41

³⁰ *ibid.*

condemnation of 'the policy of cajolery, bribery and flattery accompanied by deliberate blindness which aimed at keeping Vichy neutral in Europe and its empire independent overseas'.³¹ *France and Britain*, meanwhile, applauded French education policy in its middle eastern mandates and suggested Catroux' declaration of Syrian independence meant 'French socialists can congratulate themselves on this first step by which an authoritative (sic) regime set up by Vichy has been rightfully overthrown'.³² On the whole such publications generally alluded to the French Empire as part of their attacks on Vichy and the importance of the French Empire to the status and power of the Free French and de Gaulle seems for the time being to have precluded discussion of the need for radical thinking about its future in Anglo-French circles.

Fabian interest in colonial matters was evident in the setting up of the society's Colonial Bureau in 1940. Its success led to the establishment of the Fabian International Bureau, which was formally set up in April 1941 under the chairmanship of Philip Noel-Baker, and, from 1943, Leonard Woolf.³³ The young academic and expert on the Middle East, Doreen Warriner, who had spent much of 1938-9 rescuing refugees from Czechoslovakia, became its secretary.³⁴ One of its main objects was:

To clarify the conditions of a new epoch of socialist cooperation in Europe through personal contacts and discussions between members of the Fabian Society and European socialists now in this country.³⁵

It took under its wing the Anglo-French Committee that had been established the previous year and given its own research budget. The chief responsibility of this committee was the production of *France and Britain*. There was also talk of working with French socialists in London on a history of ideas about Anglo-French union since 1815, though nothing seems to have come of this.³⁶

There had only been one issue of this journal in 1940, but in 1941 it began to appear more often. Although billed as a monthly there were editions in January, February and March 1941, but thereafter its appearance became somewhat more erratic. Gilbert Mitchison continued to contribute articles on the French Empire. In the February edition, he was largely occupied with the Empire's strategic and economic potential and not with the possibility of eventual liberation. He concentrated on colonists of French extraction and explained why few had rallied to de Gaulle;

The French population of the colonies is politically and socially to the right and it was whispered that de Gaulle was surrounded by former supporters of the Popular front. Anti-semitism was also called in to discourage sympathy with de Gaulle.

³¹ *Tribune* 23/5/41

³² *France & Britain* Issue 7 December 1941

³³ Minion, M. (2000). "The Fabian Society and Europe during the 1940s: The Search for a 'Socialist Foreign Policy' " *European History Quarterly* **30**: 237-270.

³⁴ Grenville, A. (2011). "Doreen Warriner, Trevor Chadwick and the 'Winton children'." *Association of Jewish Refugees* **11**(4).

³⁵ LSE archive FABIAN SOCIETY/J/57 Scheme for International Bureau accepted by the Executive committee 3/3/41

³⁶ Pugh, P. (1984). *Educate, agitate, organize: 100 years of Fabian Socialism*. London, Methuen. P187

However, Mitchison was encouraging:

The British government have in fact undertaken to accept full responsibility for the economic welfare of colonies which come over to our side, and as this becomes known current opinion will move still further towards active resistance.

Independence for Syria was thus the strategic option. Since 'the native population has aspirations of its own' it was worth 'making an offer in order to transform the situation.'³⁷ Mitchison's approach shows how the perceived need to win the war outweighed considerations of a more progressive nature at this time.

In the next issue of *France and Britain*, the French Empire was still envisaged mainly in political and strategic terms, with an attack on the notion that Weygand was worth wooing:

We must not count on Weygand. We must count first upon the strength of the Free French forces: the de Gaulle movement, wave upon wave will eventually succeed in arousing the whole African continent, from East Africa to West Africa and the Near East.³⁸

However, in the March edition of *France and Britain*, an article entitled 'The French Colonies in Africa' pursued the line that the French Empire was a force for reform and progress. The writer (who may have been French – there is no by-line) claimed that these were flourishing before the war and the natives well looked after, with big planters and forest owners forced to pay normal wages to workers and opportunities for native representation at local level. Posts in the administration were also being opened up for them. Consequently they had not rebelled when France was defeated, but instead wanted to carry on the struggle against Vichy: 'in this respect the colonials and natives showed themselves truer Frenchmen than the men of Vichy'. Not all colonials, however. Algerian society, for example, was divided in terms of the propensity of different groups to join the British war effort. The article continues:

The army and air force are extremely favourable to de Gaulle. The naval officers are pro-Vichy. The big planters, fascist and reactionary, are interested only in increasing their wealth. The Arabs are much impressed by the British successes. The Jews have been placed in a pitiable situation by the abolition of the Crémieux decree of 1870, which made them French citizens.³⁹

There is very limited evidence of interchange between Fabians and Free French or other French exiles on empires as problems in 1941, though Noel-Baker, who felt strongly that anthropology was central to sound colonial administration, mentioned in a letter in February that a 'great African expert', Margaret Green, had been 'lecturing de Gaulle's people' on the subject.⁴⁰ Whilst there was

³⁷ *France and Britain* Issue 2, January 1941.

³⁸ *France and Britain* Issue 3, February 1941.

³⁹ *France and Britain* Issue 4, March 1941

⁴⁰ Churchill Archives Centre, Noel-Baker Archive NBKR 4/261

some limited acknowledgement of the iniquities of French colonialism in the left-wing press, the future of the French Empire continued to be mainly dealt with by the British left in terms of its contribution to the war effort. This was demonstrated by the fact that de Gaulle's statement on the setting up of the Empire Defence Council was printed in Issue 3 of *France and Britain* without any commentary. He characterised French colonies merely as 'possessions' which must play their part in the fight against Vichy and the Germans. The Gaullist mission to use the empire as a springboard for French recovery was, though, tempered by an insistence on the benefits bestowed by the civilising French mission. In a pamphlet published in London the following year, Free French press attaché, André Laguerre wrote, of how

l'histoire prouve que la France a préféré donner à l'Afrique Equatoriale les avantages de sa civilisation culturelle, sociale, médicale et scientifique...La politique impériale Française est d'aider et d'instruire les indigènes pour qu'ils participent aux affaires publiques et qu'ils assument ainsi en les comprenant les responsabilités de tout citoyen.⁴¹

As a consequence, he claimed, Africans were eager to join the Free French forces. While this kind of panegyric to empire would seem to be out of step with the outlook of most Fabians and their sympathisers at this time, it seems they felt this was not the appropriate time to challenge it.

Apart from looking towards a post-war future that would see a Europe reformed by the tenets of social democracy, a central preoccupation of the Fabian International Bureau (FIB) was the detection and encouragement of signs of resistance in Europe. Thus its first conference, held in December 1941, was entitled: 'After the Nazis' and its first pamphlet was 'Help Germany to Revolt'.⁴² While not as influential on the development of Labour Party policy as the Colonial Bureau, it became an important forum for debate, holding weekly meetings, attracting exiled socialists and, by the end of the war, claiming in excess of four hundred members.⁴³ It was part of the 'Third Blooming' of the Fabian Society described by Margaret Cole, a time when local Fabian societies proliferated, membership was rising⁴⁴ and a series of lectures entitled 'Towards a New Britain' was planned for the following autumn, with more to come after that.⁴⁵

Henry Hauck, already a member of the Anglo-French Committee in 1940, was an early member of the FIB and took part in its Anglo-French sub-committees. His work at the BBC meant working alongside Fabians such as the Pickles and leading Labour figures, including Bevin, whom he kept up to date with developments in the internal resistance, as well as the activities of left-wing French

⁴¹ Laguerre, A. (1942). *L'Afrique Française Libre*. London Oxford University Press.p20

⁴² Cole, M. (1961). *The Story of Fabian Socialism*. London, Heinemann. p289

⁴³ Minion, M. (2000). "The Fabian Society and Europe during the 1940s: The Search for a 'Socialist Foreign Policy' " *European History Quarterly* **30**: 237-270.

⁴⁴ Cole, M. (1961). *The Story of Fabian Socialism*. London, Heinemann. Chapter XVIII

⁴⁵ LSE Fabian Society Archive Minutes of Fabian Executive Committee 10.3.42

exiles in London. In November 1940, he had set up the *Centre Syndical Français* which purported to represent French workers in Britain and had offices in Transport House. Morandat later dismissed this as consisting merely of a smattering of French hotel workers,⁴⁶ but it still provided a semblance of union activity and a platform for Hauck and René Rous, who became its director. Hauck was also active in the WEA, undertaking a speaking tour of Wales in early 1941, followed up with engagements in Northampton, Norwich and Dunstable; *Highway* reported that he spoke on 'The Capitulation of France' as well as 'France and her People' and audience figures were gratifying (at Aberdare, for example, there were 400) and this was all good publicity for the organisation.⁴⁷ He also wrote occasional articles for Comert's daily, *France*. Hauck's status as de Gaulle's *Conseiller du Travail* and as 'a well known French socialist and trade unionist'⁴⁸ opened many doors for him.

While Hauck's position was also reassuring to some on the British left who were concerned about de Gaulle's political leanings and ambitions, he – and others in the Free French, including Boris and Cassin – were also from time to time beset by doubts about their leader's democratic credentials.⁴⁹ However, for them, and for their British colleagues, there was no obvious alternative. An article in *France and Britain* in February 1941 papered over the cracks:

De Gaulle is without question the most suitable person to lead free France in present circumstances...he is outside politics...all shades of political opinion are to be found in the Free French movement.⁵⁰

The left-wing British press in 1941, however, seems not to have had any problem in supporting anti-Gaullists such as Comert, Labarthe, Gombault or Louis Lévy, who could all be enlisted in the cause of a 'socialist revolution' after the war. They came together in forums such as the 'London International Assembly' (LIN) which was set up in the spring of 1941, 'to take advantage of the presence of foreign nationals in one capital in order to consider the principles of post-war policy, and the application of those principles to the problems of national and international reconstruction'.⁵¹ The LIN was not intentionally political, but had a progressive flavour, having its origins in the League of Nations Union. The active participation of Noel-Baker also suggests an attempt to revive some of the flavour of the International Peace Campaign of the 1930s. René Cassin addressed the inaugural meeting and its committees provided a meeting place for representatives of the Free French, as well as for those who mistrusted that organisation's leadership, and for British progressives and other foreign exiles. The mix of Gaullists, non-Gaullists and anti-Gaullists is not so dissimilar from the situation at the BBC Free French Service – or within the newspaper *France*.

⁴⁶ Morandat, Y. (1994). *Souvenirs inédits d'Yvon Morandat*. Paris Institut d'histoire du temps présent. p44

⁴⁷ *Highway* Vol 3 Feb 41

⁴⁸ *France and Britain* Issue 2, January 1941

⁴⁹ Crémieux-Brilhac, J.-L. (1996). *La France Libre : de l'appel du 18 Juin à la Libération*. Paris, Gallimard.p199

⁵⁰ *France & Britain* Issue 3 February 1941

⁵¹ Churchill Archives Centre Noel Baker Archive NBKR 4X 114

A more overtly political organisation was the International Socialist Forum announced with a flourish in *Left News* (the magazine of the Left Book Club, which had turned away from communism along with its progenitor, Gollancz). Laski was chair and Louis Lévy the French representative, and the Forum comprised various socialist exiles including de Brouckère for Belgium. Lévy wrote in the Forum's supplement to the paper to argue the case for supporting French socialists in order to prevent resistance being taken over by the communists. Like Laski, he saw the war as bringing about social revolution, emphasising that it must be 'democratic and socialist'. The Forum also expressed the hope that it might be able to influence the BBC and Ministry of Information.⁵²

Meanwhile, in the first half of 1941, the question of active resistance in France remained vexed; despite encouragement and exhortation by Hauck and others on the BBC, it was not easy to find out how French hearts and minds were responding. It was difficult to decide just what kind of action should be stimulated, beyond a refusal by Frenchmen to work for the Germans. So Hauck's appeal for May Day 1941 was typically broad and vague:

Vous résistez de milles manières...vous refusez de vous laisser séduire par les promesses de ceux qui veulent vous envoyer travailler en Allemagne. Vous refusez d'être les complices d'ennemi. Vous êtes plus fiers, plus résolus, plus courageux que les dirigeants corrompus et décadents qui ont trahi leur mission. Le premier mai, en refusant de vous associer aux mascarades nazis et vichyssoises, vous affirmez avec le mépris du peuple de France pour la trahison, cette grandeur morale et cette maturité civique qui feront de vous, après la victoire, les maîtres de votre propre destin.⁵³

One slightly more specific, if also more impractical, suggestion by William Pickles was that the French abandon their cities and go to the countryside in order to prevent the Germans getting their food; 'Plus vous mangez, moins vous laissez à l'opresseur'.⁵⁴ Nevertheless, their attacks on collaborators seemed to be having an impact. The Vicomtesse de la Panouse went so far as to contact Eden about attacks on the wealthy Wendel family in the early morning broadcasts. Richard Law at the Foreign Office noted, 'Personally I have not the slightest doubt that they, like most of the Comité des Forges [the employers' organisation for the iron and steel industry] are collaborating actively with the Germans...'⁵⁵

It was difficult to tell just what was going on in France. In January and February 1941 Hauck had made appeals to French listeners to write in and tell him what they thought of his broadcasts, how much they listened and how well they could hear; however, for the time being he did not report

⁵² *Left News* June 1941

⁵³ BBC Written Archive, Caversham *Émissions Ouvrières* 26.4.41

⁵⁴ BBC Written Archive, Caversham *Émissions Ouvrières* 3.6.41

⁵⁵ TNA FO 371 /244 24.6.41

back on what, if anything, he had learnt. Listener surveys reported that in mid 1941 only a hundred or so letters were reaching the BBC from France in May and June 1941, mostly coming through 'indirect channels' and assumed that many that were sent were intercepted,⁵⁶ although Georges Boris, in his pamphlet on French public opinion, referred to 'enormous files of letters received from France at the BBC'.⁵⁷

Fred Harold in *Tribune* had another way of garnering information about France; he wrote a column that reported on official broadcasting in France entitled 'Prison Voices' (his 'ear down by the bars of Vichy's cage'), in which he noted the condemnation of minor acts of resistance (such as the singing of the 'Internationale').⁵⁸ Subsequently, it appeared, Vichy radio was complaining that 'it is unfortunately true that 'Frenchmen, students and young workers, full of hope and courage, feel that their duty was to follow de Gaulle'.⁵⁹ On the whole, British commentators seemed to resort to warm but rather vague observations. In a *New Statesman* review of a book by André Maurois, *Why France Fell* (1941), Raymond Mortimer complained that the author had not mentioned resistance and thereby revealed himself as pro-Vichy. 'Fortunately' he wrote, 'the heart of France is proving sounder and more courageous than this book would suggest'.⁶⁰ Evidence that the British public were keen for news of activity embodying these sentiments includes a series of broadcasts on 'French Resistance' later that year for British listeners on the Home Service including one by Dorothy Pickles.⁶¹

In the same vein, an article in *France and Britain* in February, entitled 'What has happened to the French Labour Movement?' detailed the destruction of the CGT, and called on Britain to support a 'revival of the national and democratic spirit' in France.⁶² However the implication here was that the alternative was to hand anti-Vichy forces in France over to communist control. Although the Nazi-Soviet Pact still meant that communists were not supposed to offer active opposition to the Nazis, a few individual communists were becoming active in disseminating propaganda, against the orders of their party.⁶³ The position was summarised in *France and Britain*:

The French Communists have played a very equivocal role since Sept 1939; they continue to do so. In certain districts the Germans have tried to make use of them; in other parts, the Communists fight against the Germans and against Vichy. To their

⁵⁶ BBC Survey of European Audiences 27.8.41

⁵⁷ Boris, G. (1942). *Opinion en France après l'armistice* [Brochures de la France combattante. no. 2]. Oxford, Oxford University Press.p13

⁵⁸ *Tribune* 21.2.41

⁵⁹ *Tribune* 9.5.41

⁶⁰ *New Statesman and Nation* 8.3.41

⁶¹ BBC Written Archive, Caversham, Dorothy Pickles file

⁶² *France and Britain* February 1941

⁶³ Pike, D. W. (1993). "Between the Junes: The French Communists from the Collapse of France to the Invasion of Russia." *Journal of Contemporary History* 28(3): 465-485.

benefit may be counted their long practice in underground action, their lack of scruples, the appeal which a revolutionary propaganda must certainly have for the French workers, plunged as they are into material and moral misery. It is therefore indispensable that our democratic and socialist propaganda should be as vigorous and revolutionary as their own.⁶⁴

Louis Lévy's latest book, *Verités sur la France* was published in French at the end of 1940 and translated by William Pickles soon after. In this broad survey of recent French history and politics, Lévy also claimed that French communists were resisting and taking up the popular left-wing theme of the potential of the war to transform existing structures. He warned,

A new French revolution is inevitable and the only question is whether it shall be a democratic or a Communist revolution. The dilemma is unavoidable, and the democracies must make up their minds; if they do not help the revolutionary forces in France, the Communists will do it for them.⁶⁵

In March 1941, Lévy's book was very warmly reviewed in, amongst other publications, *Tribune* and *Highway*, both of which probably concurred with his warnings about the possible power of French communists to overshadow democratic socialists.

However, the Nazi attack on the Soviet Union in June 1941 necessarily brought about a shift in attitude amongst French socialist exiles and their British counterparts, especially once initial predictions for an easy German victory started to be disproved.⁶⁶ *Tribune* began to call for a treaty with the Soviet Union,⁶⁷ and in September produced a very pro-Soviet special Russian number. Hauck had always promoted the CGT and SFIO over their communist counterparts, and had told Ian Black, one of the controllers of French news and talks, that Britain must help prevent a communist France emerging after the war.⁶⁸ Nevertheless, Hauck went on the BBC after Operation Barbarossa began, and, having condemned Bolshevism and the PCF, conceded,

...le peuple de France sait aussi que la Révolution russe a constitué, en dépit de ses fautes graves et de lourds erreurs, un progrès sur le despotisme Tsariste, tandis que le nazisme en Allemagne et le fascisme en Italie ont été une monstrueuse régression.

In August 1941 Pierre Georges, alias Colonel Fabien, of the communist *Francs-Tireurs Partisans* resistance movement (formed following Operation Barbarossa) assassinated a German officer in Paris. In response to more such attacks on their military personnel, the German authorities in France began executing hostages. These reprisals attracted the attention of the British press and, at a time

⁶⁴ *France and Britain* January 1941

⁶⁵ Lévy, L. (1941). *The Truth about France*. trans. W Pickles London, Allen Lane.

⁶⁶ See, for instance, Harold Nicolson Diary for 22.6.41 p175; *New Statesman and Nation* 5.7.41

⁶⁷ *Tribune* 11.7.41

⁶⁸ Stenton, M. (2000). *Radio London & Resistance in Occupied Europe 1939-1943*. Oxford, Oxford University Press. p152

when the Soviet Union was enduring a savage invasion, looked likely to transform the reputation of communists and communism. British intelligence noted 'the more Communists are arrested, the more active the Party seems to become...It represents the only co-ordinated force of resistance to oppression'.⁶⁹ While Operation Exporter in Syria had brought widespread condemnation of Darlan and Vichy in June and much of July 1941, there now seemed to be real evidence of active opposition to both Vichy leaders and Germans within France. Articles from a London local newspaper, the *Hampstead and Highgate Express*, exemplify a trend away from any kind of truck with Vichy and towards sympathy with communist Russia. In June one reporter called for 'Gloves off against Vichy'; a month later there was a report on a talk given at the Institut Français on 'Sabotage in [French] Factories'. In October, following much coverage of the conflict in Russia, with rallies, talks and exhibitions, the news came that an Anglo-Soviet Committee was to be formed in Hampstead.⁷⁰

While reports of resistance activities multiplied in the British press at this time, there remained concern about what might be achieved in the long run. After attempts by communists on the lives of Laval and the Nazi sympathiser, Déat, when they were in the occupied zone, the *Economist* regretted that,

It is France's tragedy to lie at the moment between only three alternatives, the prolongation of the semi-Fascist, Pétainist, clerical rule of the *bienpensants*, the return to a discredited parliamentary regime, or a plunge into Communist revolution.⁷¹

In this period when news about France - as well as the news about the British and Russian war efforts - was scarce, confused and often depressing, we find many voices insisting that the communists were only one group of resisters amongst many. They argued that the Germans made communists the main focus of Nazi accusations and reprisals for political reasons. In September, an *Economist* writer noted,

France is convulsed by the sabotaging activities of the patriots and the crushing counter-action of the German, and to an only slightly lesser extent, of the Vichy authorities. The saboteurs are invariably executed as "Communists". However, just as Laval's assailant proved on examination to be a de Gaullist, it is highly probable that a great part of the sabotage is committed by men whose political objectives are concentrated on the liberation of France.⁷²

In a similar vein, Paul Vaucher (now cultural counsellor and head of educational services with the Free French) wrote in the *Political Quarterly*:

It is important here to notice that the Communists are standing aloof, fighting their own battle with undaunted spirit and implacable bitterness. The Germans and the

⁶⁹ FO 371/28428

⁷⁰ *Hampstead and Highgate Express* 13.6.41, 4.7.41, 24.10.41

⁷¹ *Economist* 30.8.41

⁷² *Economist* 27.9.41

men of Vichy, for obvious reasons, have chosen to consider all acts of resistance as being committed by Communists. But in fact resistance is a national undertaking...supporting it are Frenchmen of all parties and all classes.⁷³

In the *New Statesman* Elizabeth Castonier wrote of religious opposition, pointing out, 'it is the small French clergy, le petit curé de village who are heading the crusading campaign, hampering and disturbing the Nazis'.⁷⁴

While the British left and their French counterparts were generally agreed that the war must be fought with a view to bringing about a more equal society, a social democratic 'revolution', past struggles with their communist colleagues affected them differently. While some British socialists were unequivocal in their support for the Soviet Union and envisaged a post-war Russia playing a key part in a revitalised post-war Europe, their French associates often still had bitter feelings towards the PCF and feared attempts to revive the SFIO could be undermined by current developments. In a book brought out soon after Barbarossa, G.D.H. Cole (a member of the Anglo-French Committee) argued that a post-war socialist government in Britain should develop a common policy with the Soviets, thus removing the 'perpetual threat of war'.⁷⁵ He believed that 'the Soviet Union . . . is bound to play the premier part in Eastern Europe on the morrow of victory as Great Britain is in the West'. (He even saw a future for India in some kind of supra-national organisation with the Soviet Union.) He hoped the experience of war would 'end the disastrous cleavage on the French left', and 'Great Britain and France together can, if they are animated by a common idea', give the lead to a Europe of progressive forces.⁷⁶ Cole recognised the way the world had changed following the Soviet alliance, although it is not clear how he envisaged future relations between British socialists and communists.

In this publication, Cole was dismissive of pre-war French party politics, but French socialists saw the revival of their old party as vital. Daniel Mayer's biographer, Martine Pradoux remarks that

...c'est l'obsession de la menace communiste, anticipée en 1940 mais bien réelle à partir de l'été 1941, qui facilitera ... le ralliement des socialistes à la reconstitution de leur parti.⁷⁷

Mayer, who had been a journalist on *Le Populaire* before the war, was instrumental in the setting up of the *Comité d'Action Socialiste* (CAS) in the unoccupied zone in March 1941, following its inception in the north in January. However, other French socialists, such as another leading resister, Pierre Brossolette, were much less enthusiastic, and as will be seen, the stage was set for some bitter disputes which the British did not always fully comprehend or appreciate.

⁷³ *Political Quarterly* 1942 Vol13: 1 pp362-372 *The Meaning of French Resistance*

⁷⁴ *New Statesman and Nation* 6.12.41

⁷⁵ Cole, G. D. H. (1941). *Europe, Russia, and the future*. London, Victor Gollancz. P19

⁷⁶ *ibid.* p130.

⁷⁷ Pradoux, M. (2002). *Daniel Mayer, un socialiste dans la Résistance*. Paris, Les Editions de l'Atelier. P123

France and Britain celebrated the creation of the CAS and its intention to work towards a 'new social order, free from class distinctions and from the exploitation of man by man, an order in which the whole of humanity shall find its well being and freedom'.⁷⁸ It is clear, though, that for many British socialists the split between unions and party in France remained puzzling and in the sixth issue of *France and Britain* there were lengthy articles aimed at explaining the history of trade unionism in France and the principles behind the recent manifesto, which, disappointingly for some, did not mention 'resistance' as such, but showed that, while

French Trade Unionism still has a long road to travel and many lessons to learn before it recovers from the disorganisation of defeat and the mistakes of the pre-war years ... it has started on the road and is learning the lessons despite the danger from German bayonets and traitor leaders, in a way that offers every hope for the future.⁷⁹

Given Hauck's close links with the British labour movement and the frequent appearances on his morning talks of its leading as well as lesser known figures (including a postman who had learnt French during the First World War, who participated several times), he and his supporters at *France and Britain* saw it as important to explain apparent divisions and splits in the non-communist French left. Fabian records show that the Pickles' pamphlet 'Is France a Democracy?' (priced 1/-) was a best seller at this time and no doubt the revival of the French labour movement was discussed at the conference on France, organised by the Fabians in conjunction with the *Groupe Jean Jaurès*, that took place in March.⁸⁰

Of course de Gaulle's aspiration to leadership was the most obvious divisive force amongst the French in Britain. On September 25, 1941, de Gaulle set up the *Comité National Français* (CNF). A row immediately blew up with Admiral Muselier (head of the Free French navy) who had long been a thorn in the General's side and Labarthe, both of whom had not been included in the Committee. Eden stepped in and eventually a compromise was reached, but the episode was symptomatic of de Gaulle's difficulties in asserting his authority as well as his uneasy relationship with his hosts. Oliver Harvey (now Eden's Principal Private Secretary) provided an indication of the double-edged approach of the Foreign Office in his diary:

Our attitude is this: - we welcome the creation of this body [the CNF] as broadening the basis of the movement and we are anxious to spread recognition of de Gaulle over the Committee as a whole, while keeping de G. as a figurehead. At the same time we do not wish to give de G. jurisdiction over those Frenchmen outside France

⁷⁸ *France & Britain* Issue 3, February 1941.

⁷⁹ *France & Britain* Issue 5/6 July 1941.

⁸⁰ LSE Fabian Society Archive C26 Minutes of the Anglo-French Committee, 31.1.41 & 3.3.41

who do not wish to be Gaullists. We therefore only recognise the Committee as affecting the Gaullists and Gaullist colonies.⁸¹

The difficulties the British left also had with positioning de Gaulle in a way that did not appear at odds with their principles is perhaps shown by *France and Britain* taking the unusual step of issuing a disclaimer for an article on the subject of the CNF in its December 1941 issue. Here it was asserted that the article did not 'represent the views of the editorial board'. The writer (possibly William Pickles) noted that

His resolve to lead his compatriots in the defence of democracy had placed the general in a position very much like that of a dictator, exercising uncontrolled sway over a large portion of the earth's surface and several million inhabitants. The situation, to put it mildly, was paradoxical, and the creation of the National Committee is no doubt an attempt to find a way out.

A list of the problems surrounding de Gaulle's leadership is followed with the remark that

all kinds of rumours, some of them probably from enemy sources, have been in circulation about de Gaulle's own political views, and many Left-wing circles have been taught to look upon him as a dangerous Fascist – which is one hundred per cent plain nonsense. Equally, many others, especially among the French Colonial bourgeoisie, have seen him as a dangerous Bolshevik – which is no less stupid...

It is then suggested that Hauck should have been included in the CNF to give it a more balanced composition, although 'others feel that M. Hauck's inclusion among the officials of such a body is more likely to compromise the Left among its own supporters in France.'⁸²

The above extract perhaps illustrates how willing many on the British left were to accept de Gaulle as the leader of external French resistance, if only he would make a gesture indicating his willingness to head the kind of coalition of parties that Britain was experiencing in her wartime government – one where the left had a good chance of preparing, and even eventually implementing, its plans for post-war renewal.

The socialists at de Gaulle's side continued to plead his cause. Hauck explained the CNF in one of his BBC talks as an entity 'qui aura la grande mission de construire une France nouvelle, démocratique et libre', and assured listeners that its formation was a step towards a constitutional convention.⁸³ At a stormy meeting of the *Groupe Jean-Jaurès* on October 4, Hauck spoke out against a motion that claimed the CNF was not 'le représentant régulier et légitime de la France'. Cordier details how Hauck told the group that his first instinct on hearing of the composition of the CFN had been to resign, but how he had then decided that the best option was to press for a change in its personnel. To justify his support for the General's action, Hauck quoted Blanqui: 'là où l'on bat pour la liberté, là est le gouvernement de la

⁸¹ Harvey, J., Ed. (1978). *The War Diaries of Oliver Harvey*. London, Collins.pp46-47

⁸² *France and Britain* Issue 7, December 1941

⁸³ BBC Written Archive, Caversham. French Service *Emissions ouvrières* 27.9.41

République'; if de Gaulle had no parliament or president to defer to, it was up to French socialists to use their political skills to bring about changes. In the end a compromise motion was reached, which endorsed de Gaulle's stand and his promise to submit to the will of the people when the time came, but refused to endorse the *national* pretensions of the CNF. This was agreed unanimously.⁸⁴

For his part, Georges Boris (who kept his distance from the *Groupe Jean-Jaurès*) supported de Gaulle against the communists in his book on French public opinion that came out a few months later.

While he admitted that Barbarossa had inspired the French, he insisted that 'whatever Vichy and Berlin say' the workers at the Peugeot and Montbéliard factories had stopped work in October 1941 at de Gaulle's instigation.⁸⁵ If this was the case, it suggests that the promotion of de Gaulle in

Honneur et patrie, *Émissions ouvrières* and other programmes was having an effect, and the communists were not the only ones in France who could organise mass action. However, we can interpret the General's demand, broadcast on October 23, 1941, for Frenchmen 'not to kill Germans openly' as an attempt to assert his authority and diminish the growing reputation of the communists as the chief organisers of resistance. De Gaulle concluded his broadcast, '...as soon as we are in a position to move to the attack, the order for which you are waiting will be given.'⁸⁶ He later justified his position in his memoirs by reflecting 'in 1941 resistance was barely beginning, and at the same time we knew that literally years would go by before our allies would be ready for the landing'.⁸⁷

There is some evidence that British opinion also needed to be persuaded to see the problem of direct action at this time; an article in the *Spectator* a few months later (by a 'French correspondent') included the observation:

There is much talk of a 'revolt' in France. It is not, perhaps realised sufficiently that the revolt of an unarmed people against even a limited number of German divisions would merely lead to a slaughter as discouraging for enslaved Europe as it would be untimely for the Allies; that this revolt must be an act of war and coincide with the execution of an Allied plan, and that it must be led from inside (at least as much as from outside).⁸⁸

Two days after his broadcast, de Gaulle received a visit from the ex-prefect, Jean Moulin, with news of resistance movements in the unoccupied zone. Moulin had made contact with several key figures in the internal resistance and gave the leader of the Free French advice about the need for greater co-ordination. De Gaulle needed to bolster his own position – both in Britain and France – and Moulin would be central to this endeavour. Shortly after the meeting, Moulin told his sister that he

⁸⁴ Cordier, D. (1993). *Jean Moulin, L'Inconnu du Panthéon*. Paris, J.C. Lattès.p637

⁸⁵ Boris, G. (1942). *Opinion en France après l'armistice [Brochures de la France combattante. no. 2]*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

⁸⁶ BBC Written Archive, Caversham French service *Honneur et patrie* 23.10.41

⁸⁷ De Gaulle, C. (1955). *War Memoirs - The Call to Honour*. London, Collins. pp266-267

⁸⁸ *Spectator* 9.1.42

‘did not hide from the General that he was a man of the left, profoundly attached to the republic and its democratic institutions’. There were other political considerations; when he met Churchill’s personal assistant, Desmond Morton, Moulin emphasised that ‘thousands of young men in France’ would turn to the communists if they were not encouraged to look to de Gaulle whose name was a ‘symbol of resistance in France’.⁸⁹

As Crémieux-Brilhac has shown, as a result of such meetings and of the need to broaden his appeal to resistance groups in France, de Gaulle’s speech of November 15 not only denounced Vichy but included a commitment ‘aux principes démocratiques’. Crémieux-Brilhac adds, ‘Il n’y a rien là à quoi le socialiste Boris ne puisse souscrire’. Indeed, the first stamps issued for the Free French colonies in Equatorial Africa included the republican monogram (RF) as well as the Cross of Lorraine.⁹⁰ This shift may also have been a consequence of the ability of one of his team to achieve an international platform. In June René Cassin had represented de Gaulle at the Interallied Committee which included delegates from all the governments in exile where he encountered many figures who would come to play an important role in post-war European politics. Churchill presided and to all intents and purposes Free France was treated on equal terms with others there. Cassin put forward the case for a democratic post-war Europe buttressed by economic and social security. He was back at St James’s Palace for a second meeting of the Committee in September where he met the Soviet delegate, Maisky - the same day that de Gaulle announced the creation of the CNF.⁹¹ Whereas de Gaulle’s relationship with British government figures was often fraught with tension, those in his entourage who sought to liaise with key figures in London at this time, often drawing on pre-war ventures in Anglo-French and international co-operation, seem to have established some good working relationships.

It was also to their advantage that British Labour Party figures wanted to boost trade union and left-wing representation in the community of French exiles (many of whom may have been anti-Gaullist, but were still referred to as ‘Free French’). Bevin and the Transport and General Workers’ Union backed Hauck’s *Centre Syndical Français* and Hauck and the director of the Centre, René Rous, were supported in their attendance at the conference of the International Labour Organisation in New York and Washington in October 1941. Twenty-seven countries sent delegates to the conference, the large British contingent at the conference including Clement Attlee. Attendees from the rest of Europe mostly represented governments in exile. Vichy attempted to prove its neutrality and independence from the Axis by sending a delegate. However, although de Panafieu was the official

⁸⁹ Clinton, A. (2002). *Jean Moulin 1899-1943: The French Resistance and the Republic* London, Palgrave pp116-117

⁹⁰ Crémieux-Brilhac, J.-L. (2010). *Georges Boris: Trente ans d’influence: Blum, de Gaulle, Mendès France*. Paris, Gallimard.p151

⁹¹ Prost, A. and J. Winter (2011). *René Cassin*. Paris, Fayard.p185

representative of France, he was cold-shouldered by the other ILO delegates, while Jouhaux and other French trade unionists who had fallen foul of the regime were lauded in the opening speech, and Hauck was able to address a plenary session at length.⁹² His impassioned speech, recalling Albert Thomas and other French figures of the international labour movement and insisting that Free France stood for a free labour movement, was well received, whereas there is no record that de Panafieu spoke at all.⁹³ Hauck then went on to make several broadcasts from New York for the BBC French service, celebrating his success and assuring his listeners,

Vous n'êtes pas seuls, mes camarades. Des millions d'hommes ont les yeux tournés vers vous, croient en vous, espèrent en vous. La France a besoin du monde, mais le monde a besoin de la France.⁹⁴

Back in London, William Pickles confirmed in his broadcasts that there were no longer confessional divisions in the French trade union movement and several attacks on Vichy's *Charte de Travail* appeared in *France and Britain*, and subsequently in more mainstream journals, such as the *Economist*.⁹⁵

Hugh Dalton's correspondence shows that as Minister of Economic Warfare he was keen to bring French trade unionists to Britain. After the failed attempts to bring out Bothereau and Lacoste in January 1942 he requested more agents and a special budget. The same month Hauck gave him several names of 'leading socialist leaders' who had all voted against giving Pétain full powers, including André Philip, Félix Gouin and Marius Moutet, and the first two of these were brought out of France later that year.⁹⁶ Philip Noel-Baker – shortly before becoming a government minister in February 1942 - also went to considerable lengths to help Blum's Chef de Cabinet, Blumel leave France (using Boris as intermediary), but the Foreign Office was unhelpful and Blumel as a consequence was arrested.⁹⁷

It is not surprising that Dalton and Noel-Baker were not always supported in such ventures. Disagreements between and within government departments over relations with institutions and individuals with claims to represent France continued throughout 1941. The war was going badly and there were continuing disputes over leadership and strategy. Dalton noted 'A very bad spirit, pessimism and discontent with the conduct of the war' in the House of Commons on December 19⁹⁸

⁹² Daele, J. V., M. R. Garcia, G. V. Goethem and M. V. D. Linden, Eds. (2010). *ILO Histories Essays on the International Labour Organization and Its Impact on the World During the Twentieth Century*. New York, Peter Lang Publishing. p350

⁹³ [http://www.ilo.org/public/libdoc/ilo/P/09616/09616\(1941\).pdf](http://www.ilo.org/public/libdoc/ilo/P/09616/09616(1941).pdf) accessed 23.11.11

⁹⁴ BBC Written Archive, Caversham. French Service *Emissions Ouvrières* 8.11.41

⁹⁵ *Economist* 4.4.42

⁹⁶ LSE. Hugh Dalton Archive. Letter 28.1.42

⁹⁷ Churchill Archives Centre Noel-Baker Archive NBKR Letter December 1941

⁹⁸ Pimlott, B., Ed. (1986). *The Second World War: Diary of Hugh Dalton 1940 - 1945*. London, Jonathan Cape. p337

and Harold Nicolson looked back on a 'sad and horrible year' on the last day of 1941.⁹⁹ Many in the Foreign Office and elsewhere still hoped that Weygand might be persuaded to bring French North Africa over to the Allies, and if so, de Gaulle should somehow be forced to subordinate his organisation to the superior officer. It was Dalton's view that such a figure would be unable to stimulate resistance in France. In a report written on December 6, Dalton quoted a BBC French survey showing that the feelings and ideas of the masses '[against Vichy] are crystallising towards the Left.' He argued that:

Our best friends in occupied Europe are not the bourgeoisie; much less big business, or Generals, but the masses, and principally the industrial workers and propaganda must be directed towards them, with promises (based on careful planning) of real economic and social progress in the post-war world.

In doing this, Britain would be 'offering a real alternative to communism'.¹⁰⁰ Dalton was here following the same line as Hauck and Pickles in their broadcasts, seeing a growing trade unionist and socialist element in Free France as most beneficial to the war effort. That he met considerable opposition is indicated by his remark a few weeks later, 'We are all fighting each other instead of the enemy and with such zest!'¹⁰¹

Of course there were also plenty of rows amongst the French. Labarthe was a popular figure with the Francophile British intelligentsia, many of whom contributed to his journal, *La France Libre*. Harold Nicolson called him 'a passionate and brilliant man' and said, 'I cannot help feeling that he represents France far better than de Gaulle.'¹⁰² By contrast Oliver Harvey noted Labarthe and others 'won't join de Gaulle and crab his movement from the outside'. Harvey concluded that 'among all these minnows de Gaulle is a giant, awkward, obstinate, suspicious as he is.'¹⁰³ However Labarthe, Comert and the other anti-Gaullists tended not to make direct attacks on the General in their publications at this time; indeed they often joined in enterprises with de Gaulle's colleagues, such as the production of the book *Free France and Britain*, that came out in December 1941 with a foreword by Denis Brogan.¹⁰⁴ As well as pieces by Labarthe and others, it included Free French speeches, a manifesto by Maurice Dejean on Free France, and articles on 'art, music, peasants, cookery and poetry'.¹⁰⁵ Labarthe may have continued to complain about the presence of such as Passy and Fontaine in de Gaulle's team (from which he had been excluded in September 1941) to all

⁹⁹ Nicolson, N., Ed. (1970). *Diaries and Letters of Harold Nicolson: The War Years 1939-1945*. New York, Atheneum.p199

¹⁰⁰ INF 1/895 Report by Hugh Dalton 6.12.41

¹⁰¹ Pimlott, B., Ed. (1986). *The Second World War: Diary of Hugh Dalton 1940 - 1945*. London, Jonathan Cape.p363 Entry 6.2.42

¹⁰² Nicolson, N., Ed. (1970). *Diaries and Letters of Harold Nicolson: The War Years 1939-1945*. New York, Atheneum. 17.12.41 p197

¹⁰³ Harvey, J., Ed. (1978). *The War Diaries of Oliver Harvey*. London, Collins.p107

¹⁰⁴ Corp, W. G., Ed. (1941). *Free France and Britain*. London, J. M. Dent and Sons.

¹⁰⁵ *Times Literary Supplement* 20.12.41

who would listen but he was a friend of Jean Moulin (though did not meet him on the latter's visit to London that autumn).¹⁰⁶ He was on good terms with other exiled socialists, and shared their aim to 'promote an indelible association between the liberation of France and the triumph of social-democratic republicanism'.¹⁰⁷ In this way, despite any damage he may have done to de Gaulle, he was part of the project to revive and strengthen the left in France, a project eagerly supported by the Fabian Society. In the final 1941 edition of *France and Britain* the Fabian Anglo-French Committee put out a call for speakers to spread the news about resistance and the revival of socialism in France to counter the surfeit of news in the British press about the 'treacheries of Vichy' which they feared might produce bad feeling towards France.¹⁰⁸

The network of British socialists and their French counterparts became increasingly complex and influential. Before the war, Ernest Bevin had met Christian Pineau, the French socialist, and founder of the resistance paper *Libération*. Pineau came to Britain in March 1942 with the express purpose of persuading de Gaulle to deliver a manifesto showing his adherence to democratic and republican principles. Pineau, who had written for the Fabians in the 1930s, was well known amongst trade unionists and in close touch with Jouhaux, playing a key role in the revival of the CGT. The manifesto of French Trade Unionists, published in *France and Britain* had been largely his work. Hauck sat in on many of his discussions with de Gaulle and with Bevin.¹⁰⁹ Bevin was also involved in trying to get leading figures out of France and approached Eden in April 1942 about bringing over Jouhaux.¹¹⁰ On June 24 de Gaulle made the required declaration, pledging a national assembly with universal suffrage, social and economic reform.¹¹¹ This did not entirely satisfy Pineau's comrades,¹¹² but it fitted in well with the aims of the British left, and those like Oliver Harvey who 'had struggled to increase contact with Left Wing and CGT opinion in France' while at the MOI.¹¹³

It was an uphill struggle to restore confidence in the idea of a French socialist party. Although many back-bench MPs were often impatient with the performance of their representatives in the cabinet, the pre-war divisions in the British Labour Party attracted little attention in the left-wing press, which was more concerned with developing policy proposals for post-war Britain, or attacking those Conservative government ministers it viewed as inefficient (such as Cooper, or his successor, Bracken, at the MOI). By comparison, the French SFIO was seen to have vacillated over Munich and

¹⁰⁶ Clinton, A. (2002). *Jean Moulin 1899-1943: The French Resistance and the Republic* London, Palgrave p119

¹⁰⁷ Flood, C. (1993). "André Labarthe & Raymond Aron : Political Myth and Ideology in *La France Libre*." *Journal of European Studies* 23(1): 139-158.p141

¹⁰⁸ *France and Britain* Issue 7, December 1941.

¹⁰⁹ Crémieux-Brilhac, J.-L. (1996). *La France Libre : de l'appel du 18 Juin à la Libération*. Paris, Gallimard. P336

¹¹⁰ Harvey, J., Ed. (1978). *The War Diaries of Oliver Harvey*. London, Collins. P114

¹¹¹ Shennan, A. (1989). *Rethinking France – Plans for Renewal 1940-46*. Oxford, Clarendon.p57

¹¹² Cobb, M. (2009). *The Resistance: The French Fight Against the Nazis*. London, Simon & Schuster.p110

¹¹³ Harvey, J., Ed. (1978). *The War Diaries of Oliver Harvey*. London, Collins.p115

caved in to Pétain. Blum himself attacked his party in a piece written while imprisoned in the fort at Portalet in December 1941. The people, he felt, had been let down by

L'attitude contrainte et équivoque qu'il [SFIO] avait conservé depuis Munich vis-à-vis du problème de la guerre. ...cette attitude avait été ambiguë, balancée et comme honteuse d'elle-même.¹¹⁴

Although Blum had often been praised by left-wing journalists and politicians, for others he was inextricably linked to a regime that had been corrupt and compromised. Whereas the British Labour Party appeared to have redeemed itself since the debacle of 1931 and figures such as Dalton (at the Board of Trade from February 1942) and Bevin at the Ministry of Labour were now responsive to the demands of organised labour, the shortcomings of the Popular Front government (especially over Spain) continued to provoke comment in some circles. An example of this comes from *Tribune* in December 1941, in a review of the Corp anthology *Free France and Britain* mentioned above:

There was something rotten in the third republic; the regime of Daladier and Bonnet is not what men will die to restore; nor yet the recollection of Blum on the left and Weygand on the right. Before long, and with all the care that is needed not to break unity, our friends in the Free French, in particular the Jean Jaurès group, must think out a more positive programme.¹¹⁵

Here the Jean Jaurès group was seen as having the power and influence to plan the post war future. Even after the Riom trial opened, *Tribune* stuck to a critical position towards Blum saying, 'he failed because he was too timid in his dealings with the ruling class and because he failed to harness the potential for progressive action of the working class'.¹¹⁶ However, the trial itself would bring him back to prominence and influence, even while he remained imprisoned, first in France, then in Germany.

The plan to put politicians and military figures of the Third Republic on trial for failing to ensure France was equipped for war added weight to the view of Vichy amongst many in Britain as craven and vengeful. Harold Nicolson, now writing regularly in the *Spectator*, explained that the Germans had threatened to withdraw the benefits of collaboration 'unless France will consent to release herself from the influence of warmongers, Jews and Freemasons'.¹¹⁷ Blum and Daladier were the main defendants, as military figures who had been indicted, such as Gamelin, refused to recognise the court and remained silent. Stenton has pointed out that some communists supported the trial of politicians at Riom, and even provided some witnesses; if so, it was even more important that Blum not allow the occasion still further to weaken the non-communist left.

¹¹⁴ Pradoux, M. (2002). *Daniel Mayer, un socialiste dans la Résistance*. Paris, Les Editions de l'Atelier. p106

¹¹⁵ *Tribune* 5.12.41

¹¹⁶ *Tribune* 27.2.42

¹¹⁷ *Spectator* 13.3.42

In the event, Blum and his attorneys were able to turn the tables on his accusers and demolish their arguments. The trial was suspended on April 14 1942, and a few days later Vichy's impotence was further revealed by the return to power of Laval at the insistence of the Germans. American journalists attending the trial were especially impressed, the *New Yorker* journalist noting that 'it gave hope to Europe' and comparing it with the trial of Dreyfus in the interest it aroused. The anger of the collaborationist press testifies to Blum's success: *Nouveaux Temps* fulminated, 'We will never regret enough that today's accused were not, a year and a half ago, tried in twenty-four hours, sent before a firing squad and buried deep in some forest.'¹¹⁸

This was picked up by Freda White, assistant editor of the *New Statesman*. Like so many commentators at this time, she situated the events in France in her revolutionary history:

The Paris press has deplored the Riom case because the accused were not put against a wall and shot in 1940. One of them observed that this trial was the most important since the Convention of 1793 which condemned Louis XVI for treason against the nation. He was right. In 1793 the Monarchy was on trial; in 1942 the Republic. So Léon Blum has said during the *instruction* and, last month, in court. The republic is on trial and so far it has a good chance of winning, which is precisely why the case has now been indefinitely adjourned.¹¹⁹

The trial was the subject of several articles in *France and Britain*, with Georges Gombault setting the scene in February with a piece on 'The Martyrdom of Léon Blum', Hauck writing on the political significance of the trial in April, and Louis Lévy detailing Blum's defence in August. Hauck claimed 'Today the head of the Socialist Party appears as the leader of the opposition to the Germans and to Vichy' and certainly the circulation of the trial's proceedings raised Blum's profile amongst many doubters in Britain. The Labour Party brought out a booklet on the trial the following spring; in his foreword, Attlee said how,

Léon Blum, the brilliant and gifted leader of French Socialism, seemed ... to symbolise in his person everything which their German masters were seeking to destroy – democratic faith, intellectual and moral integrity, democracy, and the claims of workers for a full life. Striking at him they struck at the France which was one of the great lamps of civilization.¹²⁰

Blum's legal team had included Félix Gouin from Marseille, former president of the Socialist group in the French parliament and one who had opposed giving Pétain full powers, then founder - with Daniel Mayer - of the CAS. In May, shortly after the trial was suspended, Gouin agreed to go to London to represent the emerging French socialist party to de Gaulle and to the British Labour Party.

¹¹⁸ Colton, J. (1987). *Léon Blum : A Humanist in Politics*. Durham N.C., Duke University Press.p422

¹¹⁹ *New Statesman and Nation* 18.4.42

¹²⁰ TUC (1943). *Léon Blum before his Judges at the Supreme Court of Riom* foreword by Right Hon. Clement Attlee, introduction by Félix Gouin. London, Labour Party.

The growth of clandestine socialist activity – and the willingness of the British Special Operations to provide funding for this - was demonstrated in the revival the same month of *Le Populaire* in the southern zone.¹²¹ The clandestine CAS had also just made an appeal for funds to the Labour Party, anxious to dismiss any lingering notion that Vichy had anything to offer:

We are certain Vichy will act against the Allies when the moment comes. Give us the means to help you, all the means you consider appropriate to send us. Establish regular, effective contact between us.¹²²

At the same time, Blum sent a message to London, saying that de Gaulle embodied 'republican legality'.¹²³ According to Lafon and Morin, Georges Boris had been instrumental in persuading Blum to support de Gaulle back in January.¹²⁴ Gouin's departure was delayed when he was betrayed and imprisoned in Spain but the intervention of the British ambassador meant he arrived in London in August 1942. However, once in London, he kept in touch with Blum, using the American ambassador at Vichy as intermediary when necessary, thus keeping Blum informed of the activities of the London French. He often clashed with de Gaulle, but stayed loyal to him on Blum's instructions. When Gouin wrote to Blum at length about what he saw as de Gaulle having created 'une sorte de copie en rédaction du gouvernement Pétain',¹²⁵ Blum responded 'I believe firmly and completely in the rectitude and loyalty of the General...My personal instinct is corroborated by the unreserved judgment that men like Georges Boris and Maurice Schumann have drawn from a long acquaintance with him.'¹²⁶

Another prominent socialist, André Philip, had a slightly less troubled journey than Gouin and arrived in London a fortnight earlier, on July 25. This provoked great enthusiasm amongst British socialists. The Fabians gave a lunch in his honour at the Royal Hotel and the next issue of *France and Britain* included a front page article, welcoming him as an intellectual, an academic with expertise in economics, an Anglophile and a future leader for the French socialists, concluding, 'We pay him tribute along with all other resisters'.¹²⁷ His Protestant convictions were noted in several places, Harold Nicolson in the *Spectator* describing him as 'a left-wing politician of the Christian Socialist type'.¹²⁸ Philip was especially welcome to the British left as one who, like them, was engaged with planning for the post-war era. Shennan recounts that Philip had met with prominent resistance leaders in the southern zone in order to set up groups of anti-Vichy intellectuals 'so that they could

¹²¹ Morandat, Y. (1994). *Souvenirs inédits d'Yvon Morandat*. Paris Institut d'histoire du temps présent.

¹²² Labour History Archive LP/ID/FRA/8 Meeting of International SUB-Committee of Labour Party 9.6.42

¹²³ Clinton, A. (2002). *Jean Moulin 1899-1943: The French Resistance and the Republic* London, Palgrave p138

¹²⁴ Lafon, F. and G. Morin (1990). *Les socialistes. De Gaulle et son siècle*. Paris, Institut Charles de Gaulle. II. p384

¹²⁵ Mayer, D. (1968). *Les Socialistes dans la Résistance*. Paris, Presses Universitaires de France. p80

¹²⁶ Colton, J. (1987). *Léon Blum : A Humanist in Politics*. Durham N.C., Duke University Press. p432

¹²⁷ *France & Britain* Issue 11 August 1942

¹²⁸ *Spectator* 14.8.42

prepare at once to draw up the political, economic and social structure of the 4th republic'. The network of groups he established formed the basis for the *Comité Générale d'Études* set up by Moulin, after consultations with Philip, in July 1942.¹²⁹ This reflected Fabian preoccupations, and encouraged those who saw such moves as presaging a reformed France, led by socialists who shared the aspirations of their counterparts in Britain. Two days after he arrived, Philip made a broadcast to France where he called on those active in economic or administrative affairs to come over to the resistance, before it was too late, ending,

Nous voulons, pour demain, dans une France libérée, une République nouvelle, une démocratie renouée, faisant à la classe ouvrière une large place, adaptant aux conditions techniques modernes l'idéal éternel de notre pays, celui qui s'exprime dans notre fière devise Liberté Egalité Fraternité.¹³⁰

These kinds of sentiments may have been familiar to many from Hauck's broadcasts, but coming from Philip, now made de Gaulle's Commissioner of the Interior, they provided some evidence that the internal and external resistance were actually coming together and moving in a direction acceptable to the British left. The enduring concern of the British press with the issue of de Gaulle was demonstrated when they clamoured for his opinion on the subject. Philip replied,

Le Général de Gaulle je m'en fiche...Je viens rejoindre le sous-secrétaire d'Etat à la guerre du dernier gouvernement libre, donc légitime, de la IIIe République.¹³¹

Philip and Gouin kept up their contacts with the British left and Gouin went on to speak on the Riom trial at a Fabian meeting, as well as writing on the subject for the Labour Book Service, and in a series of articles for *La France Libre*. However, Mayer has pointed out that, whereas Gouin remained sceptical about de Gaulle and reluctant to take office under him (though he did preside over the Commission for the Reform of the State), Philip seized the opportunity. Nevertheless, he expressed his disapproval of any cult of personality by taking down the picture of the General in his office and enjoyed confronting him and arguing with him about the need for a more democratic approach.¹³² Unlike Gouin, Philip had excellent English as well as a better track record (like Gouin, he had opposed Pétain's assumption of total power, but he had also been anti-Munich, unlike Gouin). An editorial item in the *New Statesman* suggests that André Philip was a recognised figure in Britain only a few weeks after his arrival. The article, entitled 'The Fourth Republic' and stressing the role of trade unionists in the resistance, declares,

It was the working people who demonstrated at Lyons when the Germans had put on a concert by the Berlin Philharmonic to coincide with the execution of twenty-

¹²⁹ Shennan, A. (1989). *Rethinking France – Plans for Renewal 1940-46*. Oxford, Clarendon.p34

¹³⁰ Philip, A. (1971). *André Philip par lui-même ou les voies de la liberté*. Paris, Aubier Montagne p54

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Mayer, D. (1968). *Les Socialistes dans la Résistance*. Paris, Presses Universitaires de France.p80

five hostages in Paris. They marched past the hall singing the Marseillaise. The seats remained almost empty and the orchestra gave up after one piece. The men of St Nazaire, the men of Bir Hakeim, were one, said André Philip ; the workers of France will receive their liberty, they will reconquer it, and realise in a Fourth Republic the social and economic principles of '89.¹³³

Thus a narrative of working class heroism that would lead to a transformation of society could be developed both through the struggle and sufferings of British (and, indeed, French) sailors, soldiers and airmen and civilians (reported elsewhere in the journal, along with those of the subjects of the British Empire) and those of the French who were resisting, either in London or France. There was, it seems, growing confidence that the war could be the agent of revolutionary change, and that the class system could be dismantled. As a writer in *France and Britain* argued, de Gaulle should be accepted, even supported, even if he had yet fully to accept 'left-wing' policies:

...the fact remains that the logical progress of events forces him to depend on the people's movements in France, to take his stand against the middle classes who betrayed and failed their country; events have also forced him to become the leader and the symbol of the democratic revolution which the French nation will bring about after their victory...¹³⁴

Several more important visitors were to arrive in London in September 1942, including the leading resisters d'Astier de la Vigerie, Henri Frenay and Pierre Brossolette. Arguments over leadership and direction would continue, but so would the opportunities for the British and French to map out plans for the future and find ways to portray themselves as engaged in a joint endeavour. The network of British and French socialists had expanded and given French exiles opportunities to work with British colleagues to present their case on the radio and attempt to influence the character of Free France. By the end of this phase, Nazi domination of Europe was at its height, but the British had begun to have success in North Africa, while the Germans had started their ill-fated assault on Stalingrad. The United States was becoming more involved in the European conflict and the stage was set for Operation Torch and the total German occupation of France. Planning for the post-war world could begin in earnest.

¹³³ *New Statesman and Nation* 15.8.42

¹³⁴ *France & Britain* Issue 10 June 1942

Chapter Seven: The British and French left look to victory, liberation and a reborn republic

The third and final phase of the war to be considered runs from late 1942 to late 1944, by which time the liberation of France was almost complete and a provisional government, headed by de Gaulle, had been installed in Paris. In July 1944, the State Department had stated that 'The United States recognises that the French Committee of National Liberation is competent to ensure the administration of France'¹ and by October that year the FCNL had gained worldwide recognition. As the *Manchester Guardian* reported, 'General de Gaulle's administration has at last received international recognition as the Provisional Government of the French Republic'². By this time it was engaged in negotiating its way on to the international stage. During the previous two years, the exigencies of war forced a recalibration of Britain's relationships with the United States and Soviet Union which would inevitably affect its place in Europe and the world. The continued insistence on the importance of France – especially noticeable among the British left – was one way to try to resist the loss of agency resulting from such a reconfiguration. The desire for a strong Franco-British partnership meant that writers in this phase were even more preoccupied than before with the kind of France that would emerge at liberation, especially as French exiles in London became more numerous, more vocal and more disputatious. The political future of de Gaulle remained a vexed question, often made more controversial by influences from across the Atlantic. It did not obliterate, but at times it overshadowed, joint projects between British and French socialists aimed at projecting their ideals into the post-war world.

In the first part of this phase the eventual liberation of France (and the rest of Europe) was becoming steadily more assured, as both the United States and the Soviet Union stepped up their attacks on the Axis powers and British troops met with increasing success in North Africa. Free French forces were also playing a part, albeit a small one, in the Allied war effort. On July 13 1942 their official title became *Forces françaises combattantes* (FFC or Fighting French) – a title intended to encompass all those who opposed Vichy and the Axis powers both outside and inside France, and to assert de Gaulle's authority over them. Nevertheless, the designation *Free French* continued in widespread use. Crémieux-Brilhac has referred to summer 1942 as the 'Le bel été de la France Libre' when it seemed that the organization was attracting important adherents from inside France, while its military success at Bir Hakeim in North Africa gave it credibility in the field of battle.³ Much of the left-wing press in Britain

¹ Lacouture, J. (1990). *De Gaulle* London, Harvill: Harper Collins *trans* Patrick O'Brien.p546

² *Manchester Guardian* 24.10.44

³ Crémieux-Brilhac, J.-L. (2010). *Georges Boris: Trente ans d'influence: Blum, de Gaulle, Mendès France*. Paris, Gallimard.p 158

was impressed by André Philip's allegiance to the FFC and by the declarations of support for de Gaulle in the clandestine press, especially that of Léon Blum in the revived *Le Populaire*, where he acclaimed the general as 'le symbole conscient ou non, de la restauration démocratique de l'état'.⁴ Tensions between Churchill and the leader of the Free French in the latter part of 1942 (particularly over the administration of Syria) were largely kept out of the press while the appointment of General Paul-Louis Gentilhomme as ruler of Madagascar, recently seized by the British, appeared to show that the FFC were working alongside British forces in reasonable harmony.

As the trajectory towards Allied victory became ever more pronounced, those on the left of the British political spectrum became more preoccupied with the political complexion of post-war Europe. They were increasingly concerned with how territories released from Vichy or Axis control should be administered. The wartime coalition's alliances with the United States and the Soviet Union were accepted as military necessities, but recognised as having political ramifications with potentially profound effects on the future of Europe. A strikingly consistent theme in the journalism of the left and centre left during this phase was the paramount importance of a revived partnership between Britain and France once the war was over. While all agreed on the need for a restored and democratic France which could work with Britain to deal with the 'German problem' and rebuild Europe, the more left-wing journalists also insisted that France should join Britain in a project to transform Europe to ensure greater equality and an end to privilege. This project, seemingly buoyed by the movement of public opinion in Britain and in France, appeared threatened by the actions of the United States and by the British government's perceived reluctance to criticise its ally. Throughout this phase, left-wing writers and activists expressed a mixture of incredulity, disgust and alarm at the United States' policy towards France and this affected their reporting on other matters concerning France, including its treatment of its colonial subjects.

The British left became ever more discontented with the Labour leadership's uncritical support for the USA and increasingly frustrated by coalition politics. This led to reinvigorated political debate and fuelled attempts to challenge the supposed consensus on policy. As British politics became reanimated, political life in France also revived. Despite the need to operate covertly, individuals and groups engaged in earnest arguments over how France would be governed when liberation came. As the Nazis attempted to shore up their war effort and implement their colonial and racial projects with increasing haste and violence, there was a surge in resistance activity throughout many of the lands they occupied. In France such activity led to the re-establishment of parties and trade unions and a growing proliferation of clandestine newspapers as well as some direct action against the occupying

⁴ *Le Populaire* 15.6.42

forces. New groupings of men and women on both sides of the Channel looked for seeds of a reinvigorated public life informed by common values and shared traditions that would lead to political, social and economic reform in both Britain and France. Common themes emerged in the ensuing discussions, enriched by cross fertilisation of ideas.

Questions of leadership inevitably emerged in these debates. As the FFC became more active, de Gaulle's aspiration to lead all the forces of resistance sparked continued controversy. The publications alluded to here tended to fluctuate in their assessments of him, often affected by the support given to de Gaulle by the internal resistance, his treatment by wartime leaders - especially Roosevelt - and the influence of pro- and anti-Gaullists in London (and Washington). British left-wing journalists and activists expressed opinions of de Gaulle ranging from admiration if he was seen as representing a France that refused to submit, sympathy if he could be seen as the victim of the machinations of the US State Department and elements of the British Foreign Office, suspicion if he seemed to be taking a political course that might not lead to the revival of the French republic, and outright hostility if he showed any pretensions of becoming an Anglophobe dictator. Despite the obstacles in his path (some arguably self-imposed), de Gaulle's influence and importance increased immeasurably during this phase and his presence loomed over any discussion of Anglo-French relations at whatever level.

This phase saw a growing number of important French exiles coming to Britain, often to play a part in bringing together internal and external resistance. For the British left, the actions of the French in London could affect their treatment of de Gaulle and their hopes for the future of French socialism. French intellectuals (especially socialist ones) were normally highly regarded by the left-wing writers mentioned in this thesis. These included both Gaullist Anglophiles including Saurat, Vaucher and Philip as well as anti-Gaullists, such as Labarthe and Comert. However, Pierre Brossolette was little known in Britain when he arrived on September 14 1942. A socialist and former journalist on *Le Populaire*, Brossolette had been a leading member of the Musée de l'homme resistance group, helping to produce its clandestine newspaper *Résistance* until the Gestapo arrested most of the group's members in April 1941. He was a fervent Gaullist, arguing, 'En France on est gaulliste ou anti-gaulliste. Et on ne peut pas être autre chose',⁵ and had already undertaken a mission to strengthen political support for de Gaulle on both sides of the demarcation line in France.⁶ De Gaulle now made him Compagnon de la Libération. Brossolette was therefore dismayed by the anti-Gaullists in London, especially his old friend, Comert, who he thought did not understand how the internal resistance felt undermined by factionalism in London. He wrote to Comert:

⁵ Pradoux, M. (2002). *Daniel Mayer, un socialiste dans la Résistance*. Paris, Les Editions de l'Atelier.p 120

⁶ Piketty, G. (1998). *Pierre Brossolette – Un Héros de la Résistance*. Paris, Éditions Odile Jacob.p175

Vous n'avez aucune idée que vous, les Français de Londres, vous n'êtes pas unis comme nous le supposions...pour toute la France asservie, la France libre, vous ne pouvez savoir combien tout cela nous meurtrit et nous inquiète.⁷

It might, then, have been expected that British socialists would warm to Brossolette. However, many felt that, in order to realise its project for close Anglo-French co-operation in the transformation of Europe once war ended, a revived Labour Party, free from the constraints of coalition, needed a revived French Socialist Party. However, Brossolette was not in tune with those who were working to revive the socialist – or any other – parties. Despite having been a member of the SFIO, Brossolette wanted to draw a line under the Third Republic and the political organisations within it. In an article in the FFC's house journal, *La Marseillaise*, on September 27th 1942 entitled 'Renouveau politique en France', Brossolette put forward a plan for dissolving the pre-war parties and creating 'a permanent Gaullist movement, which would be socially progressive, economically dirigiste and constitutionally reformist'.⁸ Moreover, his enthusiasm for such a broadly based movement meant a willingness to associate not only with communists, but also with members of the French far right in a way that was bound to upset socialists. As a result, Brossolette brought with him to London Charles Vallin, a former member of the right-wing Croix-de-Feu who had helped persuade Pétain to put Blum on trial. Piketty notes that his defection caused consternation in Vichy, especially as Vallin wrote of his reception in London as 'Acceuil très chaleureux...Mon arrivée avec Brossolette fait apparaître unité nationale', with Henry Frenay, leader of the resistance organisation *Combat*, welcoming his conversion as signalling a new 'union sacrée contre l'Allemagne et Vichy'.⁹ Vallin proceeded to give talks on the BBC which were approved by André Philip and Maurice Schumann,¹⁰ where he explained his disillusionment with Vichy and called on his former comrades on the right to unite behind de Gaulle.

Brossolette seemed unprepared for the *levée de bouclier* that followed, both amongst French socialist exiles and their British supporters. Up till this time, despite their differences, Gaullists and anti-Gaullists in London often worked together; members of the FFC would contribute to the *France* and *La France Libre* although both were edited by anti-Gaullists, and they would take part in BBC programmes that were hosted by others who remained sceptical about de Gaulle. As for divisions among French socialists, it might have been hoped that the adherence of such as Philip and Gouin to de Gaulle's organisation (despite the reservations of the latter) would win over the support of other Blum loyalists in the *Groupe Jean-Jaurès*. Indeed, Hauck had kept his links with this group and the two new arrivals attended a reception there in late August. Gouin, however, was alarmed by the implications of Vallin's

⁷ Ibid.p178

⁸ Shennan, A. (1989). *Rethinking France – Plans for Renewal 1940-46*. Oxford, Clarendon.p57

⁹ Piketty, G. (1998). *Pierre Brossolette – Un Héros de la Résistance*. Paris, Éditions Odile Jacob.p208

¹⁰ Ibid. p206

admittance to the FFC and wrote to Blum expressing his concerns on October 2.¹¹ The following day Brossolette attended the meeting of the *Groupe Jean-Jaurès*, held at the Fabian Society's offices. The meeting was explosive: Philip accused Lévy and Gombault of behaving like émigrés and Hauck walked out, but the motion insisting that no one ever associated with Vichy should be allowed a part in the resistance was passed.¹²

The Vallin affair fuelled the controversy about de Gaulle within the left-leaning British press, despite the growing number of socialists in his entourage and further evidence of support for him from much of the internal resistance. Brossolette was not well known to the British left before his arrival and although he soon made a name for himself on the BBC (where he took on Schumann's role for a time in 1943) and at events such as the Albert Hall rally in July 1943, the *New Statesman* commented that Brossolette's support for a single party 'has a Bonapartist air about it, which does not look very much like the revival of French democracy', protesting that France should not have a 'kind of permanent national government'¹³, a position that also demonstrates how such journals often saw French resistance politics through the prism of recent political arrangements in Britain. The episode would thus make the British left more open to an increasingly intransigent anti-Gaullism amongst the *Groupe Jean-Jaurès*, who developed a myth of the "BCRA-Gestapo", a notion also spread by Cambon and Labarthe in the journal *France*,¹⁴ which helped damage de Gaulle's reputation with Roosevelt, amongst others. (The BCRA was the Free French intelligence service). Julian Jackson has recently asserted that it was in fact this group who developed the notion that de Gaulle was a follower of the anti-republican Charles Maurras.¹⁵ For many on the British left, the suspicion aroused by such charges competed with the sympathy evoked by de Gaulle's treatment by the Allied leaders. The Vallin affair continued to be used as ammunition by anti-Gaullists throughout this period.

Also anti-Gaullist were the American President and his State Department. During the first three years of war, the British welcomed the growing involvement of the United States in the conflict. In the left-wing press there was increased interest in American political and social life leading to fresh perspectives on social, economic and colonial questions. For example, Roosevelt's pre-war 'New Deal' supplied material for discussion on how to alleviate unemployment and spread prosperity. This, coupled with the 1941 Atlantic Charter (a 'joint declaration' of Churchill and Roosevelt, but generally seen as an initiative of the latter), helped ensure sympathetic treatment of the Democratic administration at this time, especially as the fourth item - 'freedom from want' - seemed so much in

¹¹ Pradoux, M. (2002). *Daniel Mayer, un socialiste dans la Résistance*. Paris, Les Editions de l'Atelier.p121

¹² Crémieux-Brilhac, J.-L. (2010). *Georges Boris: Trente ans d'influence: Blum, de Gaulle, Mendès France*. Paris, Gallimard.pp183-4

¹³ *New Statesman and Nation* 10.10.42

¹⁴ Crémieux-Brilhac, J.-L. (1996). *La France Libre : de l'appel du 18 Juin à la Libération*. Paris, Gallimard. p479

¹⁵ <http://www.mfo.ac.uk/en/podcasts-by-title/de-gaulle-oxford-25-november-1941>

tune with the left's interest in eradicating social inequalities. On the subject of colonialism, the United States could be seen as aspiring to occupy the same moral space as many of those critics of empire who laboured in the Fabian Colonial Bureau or wrote for papers such as *Tribune* and the *New Statesman*. A contemporary observer noted that 'the abolition of imperialism and the colonial system, though not mentioned in the *Atlantic Charter*, is likely to occupy as prominent a place in the peace programmes of World War Two as the abolition of militarism and the vindication of the right of self-determination took in the American peace programmes of World War One'.¹⁶

However, such attitudes were to be challenged in the aftermath of 'Operation Torch', the Allied invasion of North Africa in early November 1942. There was some expectation amongst Americans that there would be little if any resistance from Vichy French troops there, thanks to the good relations hitherto between the USA and the Vichy regime and the putative 'Lafayette tradition'.¹⁷ The United States had maintained diplomatic recognition of Pétain's government even after its entry into the conflict, Roosevelt later justifying this on the grounds that 'there remained important French assets that might be salvaged from the wreck' which could be used to assist the Allies.¹⁸ For the USA, North Africa was primarily a springboard for operations in Nazi-occupied Europe, rather than an area of legitimate French interest. American ties with Vichy were seemingly made starkly evident by the appointment of Admiral Darlan as High Commissioner of French North and West Africa on November 14 1942, a move that might be justified on the grounds that it brought a swift capitulation of Vichy forces. However, the political, rather than military, aspects of this arrangement caused widespread dismay. Darlan had held high office in Vichy, and despite being disowned by Pétain following his acceptance of the role of High Commissioner of North Africa, felt under no obligation to depart from the authoritarian, reactionary and discriminatory tenets of that regime while in office. This caused so much outrage in both the United States and Britain that Roosevelt had to issue a statement that Darlan was a 'temporary expedient, justified solely by the stress of battle'.¹⁹

The left-leaning press in Britain was especially vehement in its denunciation of the appointment. Far from accepting this on grounds of military necessity, it expressed revulsion at the ideological implications of the Allied action. For those who had been arguing that the war was a struggle of ideologies, the way in which French territory was liberated was a matter of intense concern. Before the war commentators had often depicted Britain and France as the two European peoples whose histories and democratic pretensions put them at the forefront of the struggle against fascism. For left-wing writers and activists, the Vichy regime represented a step backwards for civilisation. Events in North Africa

¹⁶ Bentwich, N. (1943). "The American Approach to the Peace." *Contemporary Review* 164(2).

¹⁷ Thomas, R. T. (1979). *Britain and Vichy : The Dilemmas of Anglo-French Relations 1940-42*. London, Macmillan.p139

¹⁸ Maguire, G. (1995). *Anglo-American Policy towards the Free French*. New York, St Martins Press.pp18-19

¹⁹ Thomas, R. T. (1979). *Britain and Vichy : The Dilemmas of Anglo-French Relations 1940-42*. London, Macmillan. p162

appeared to threaten the vision of Allied victory as the harbinger of a social revolution reflecting the triumph of the forces of progress. Moreover, many argued that the Labour Party's participation in the coalition made it complicit in such developments and potentially unable to play a leading role in the realisation of such a revolution.

For example, *Tribune* saw the appointment of Darlan – and the exclusion of the Free French from the operation – as proof of the machinations of ‘the architects of reaction’ who

Having beguiled, seduced, bewildered and tricked the Labour Party into a condition of impotency at home ... are now turning their attention to the situation abroad. Their chief difficulty may be summed up thus: - How is it possible to win a military victory over Hitler without paying the price for it in a European revolution? That is the explanation of their treatment of de Gaulle and the black treachery of their bargain with Darlan.²⁰

In subsequent weeks, left-wing Labour back-benchers, already suspicious of the government's reluctance to publicise, let alone act on, the Beveridge Report²¹ (published on December 2, 1942) used the Darlan deal as further evidence of the need to break with a coalition which had turned its back on progressive reform. In an article in *Tribune* entitled ‘Labour and the Coalition’, Aneurin Bevan asserted that,

The slumbering suspicions of the British people about the post-war intentions of the Government have sprung into new life under the stimulus of this sordid bargain ... the Darlan affair follows naturally from the failure to adopt a revolutionary policy towards the European masses. If social revolution is rejected then the only alternative is intrigue and attempts to induce palace revolutions, and that inevitably leads to pacts with men like Darlan.²²

Indeed, even publications that tended to eschew prophesying ‘socialist revolution’ nevertheless took any threat to future Anglo-French leadership of reformed Europe very seriously. This is evident in the reporting in the *Manchester Guardian*, which in November quoted approvingly from the paper *France*, which it mistakenly called ‘the London organ of the FFC’, that ‘in the name of morality and patriotism, of democracy and just laws, the French Republic repudiates Darlan’.²³ In December it reflected that Allied policy was ignoring the lessons of French history:

What the Allies should desire above all things is that France should escape a civil war, that she should discover enough mutual tolerance to be a strong political force in Europe and produce a government that will co-operate with the United Nations in giving shape and force to the Atlantic Charter.²⁴

²⁰ *Tribune* 27.11.42

²¹ Beveridge, W. (1942). Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Social Insurance and Allied Services. London.

²² *Tribune* 11.12.42

²³ *Manchester Guardian* 18.11.42

²⁴ *Manchester Guardian* 14.12.42

The Darlan appointment strengthened de Gaulle's standing in much of the British press. For the *New Statesman*, Darlan was the man who had imprisoned Léon Blum, and his appointment 'a deliberate affront to General de Gaulle and the Fighting French'.²⁵ In the *Spectator*, Denis Brogan (who also wrote many of the leading articles for the *Manchester Guardian*) admonished the *Times* for giving de Gaulle the 'brush off'. Calling on his readers' knowledge of French history and military tropes, he placed him as the heir of French heroes such as the Duc d'Aumale and Macmahon and even Napoleon:

...among the Frenchmen who rallied to our apparently desperate cause in the summer of 1940 [were] men who ... like the French officers before Waterloo... advanced to the new battle without fear and without hope. All was lost, they thought, save honour.²⁶

Events in North Africa also led the *Economist*, which in common with the *Observer*, was inclined to be critical of de Gaulle's 'authoritarian tendencies', to portray him in heroic terms:

In the liberation of France and the French empire, General de Gaulle wrote the first and most difficult chapter; and on the final pages his name must stand out as brightly as it did in the dark summer of 1940.²⁷

Then when Darlan set up a French Imperial Council to take charge of North Africa, the *Spectator* insisted,

Until such time as France is able to choose a government of her own it is unthinkable that the Allies should recognise the authority of any body of men to represent France in the world unless it included General de Gaulle and his fighting French colleagues.²⁸

For nearly two more years, the centre-left and left-wing press condemned the efforts of the Allies – especially the United States – to exclude the FFC and its leader from decisions about military strategy and the administration of French territory, even though it was frequently critical of de Gaulle himself and sometimes called for his replacement by someone with more democratic or socialist credentials. A narrative that centred on the brave Frenchman's willingness to support Britain when she 'stood alone' was reinforced by continuing contact with Gaullists such as Boris, Philip, Hauck and Cassin. The many French socialists who came to Britain in 1943 also brought fresh evidence of support for de Gaulle in the internal resistance.

The continued participation of left-leaning activists and journalists in BBC French Service broadcasts was also important. André Philip's remark that 'At first the only form of resistance was to gather round the radio set and listen to the BBC',²⁹ illustrates the importance attached to that medium on both sides of the Channel. The BBC itself was anxious to attune its broadcasts to the needs of its French listeners

²⁵ *New Statesman and Nation* 14.11.42

²⁶ *Spectator* 20.11.42

²⁷ *Economist* 21.11.42

²⁸ *Spectator* 4.12.42

²⁹ *France and Britain* Volume 2 No 1, November 1942

and produced regular audience surveys, based on an admittedly rather haphazard collection of letters that found their way to Britain, as well as transcripts of interviews from people who had managed to cross the Channel. The surveys not only testified to the symbolic importance of de Gaulle for many in France, but also often included sections headed “The Trend to the Left” which noted, among other things, the growing willingness of socialists to rally to the FFC. Thus the survey of October 1942 noted that the ‘dawn talks’ were becoming more popular and their instructions to workers taken more seriously. While many British commentators had reservations about de Gaulle,

There is, however, a strong left-wing popular support for the Fighting French movement, generally supposed to be imbued with the militant spirit of democratic republicanism...The arrival of M. Philip and M. Gouin has done much to spread belief in the London Frenchmen as pillars of democracy and socialism.³⁰

Not surprisingly, the British government’s attempt to prevent adverse comment on events in North Africa led to further disquiet amongst the British left. Immediately after the landings, despite not having been informed in advance about them, de Gaulle broadcast a message of unalloyed support, associating the FFC with the operation and calling on Frenchmen in North Africa to rally to the Allies. However, even before the deal with Darlan had been made, Schumann was refused permission to deliver an anti-Vichy broadcast on the BBC’s French Service, and after the Admiral was installed, de Gaulle found his proposed broadcast dissociating the FFC from the arrangement blocked.³¹ Henry Hauck’s dawn talk on November 17, which was mostly concerned with the usual appeal to French workers not to go to Germany, was not transmitted (possibly because of its denigration of ‘Nazi accomplices’³²), and two days later, Churchill vetoed the broadcast of a declaration from resistance groups in support of de Gaulle.³³ A de Gaulle speech for November 21 was recorded but not broadcast and, as a result, the FFC decided to be uncooperative; the usual *Honneur et Patrie* slots would remain empty until the end of that month. Henry Hauck refused to give the dawn talks.³⁴ De Gaulle did broadcast on the scuttling of the French fleet at Toulon on November 27 (following the German occupation of the southern zone), but the normal pattern of Free French broadcasts did not resume until late December 1942, after the assassination of Darlan on the 24th of that month.

If such censorship was intended to weaken de Gaulle, it was counter-productive as it actually strengthened his standing among French socialists and their British supporters. The rift between the British government and the FFC was exposed, bolstering support from those critical of Britain’s acceptance of American policy. De Gaulle made sure his message got across by other means. In a

³⁰ BBC Surveys of European Audiences, France, 21.10.42

³¹ Luneau, A. (2005). *Radio Londres 1940-1944*. Paris, Perrin.

³² BBC Written Archives Caversham French Service scripts 17.11.42

³³ Luneau, A. (2005). *Radio Londres 1940-1944*. Paris, Perrin.p218

³⁴ BBC Written Archives Caversham French Service scripts 3.12.42 – 23.12.42

rousing speech at the Albert Hall on November 11, he was unequivocal: 'l'ennemi c'est l'ennemi...c'est dans la France Combattante que toute la France doit se rassembler. Une seule France pour un même combat!'³⁵ (Crémieux-Brilhac notes that even anti-Gaullists in the audience wept.³⁶) This speech and the banned broadcasts were published in *La Marseillaise* (the house paper of the FFC) and broadcast on Radio Brazzaville and all other stations in the liberated French Empire free of BBC control. De Gaulle's disavowal of negotiations with Darlan was the front page story in the clandestine *Le Populaire*³⁷ and reported elsewhere in the underground press, demonstrating that he had support amongst the resistance, especially the socialist resistance. Now French communists joined in the protest against Allied North African policy. Moulin wrote to London: 'En dépit de leurs erreurs passées, ils comprendront où est leur intérêt: il serait surprenant que Darlan libère leurs députés internés en Algérie.'³⁸

Thus the attempt to muzzle criticism of Allied policy in North Africa backfired and left-wing commentators became more, not less, critical of government policy. Foreign Secretary Eden was forced to make a statement to the House of Commons where he struggled to defend the treatment of the FFC in Operation Torch, as well as the refusal to let de Gaulle speak on the BBC. Aneurin Bevan demanded, 'Is it not a fact that there is great discontent among the Free French Forces in Britain and that they are not broadcasting at all now, anywhere?'³⁹ Bevan went on to join forces with maverick Conservative ex-minister, Robert Boothby, in putting down a motion condemning the appointment of Darlan. Writing in the *Observer*, Mass Observation's Tom Harrison commented on the absence of familiar Free French voices damaging the BBC's 'reputation for radio integrity'.⁴⁰ The next BBC audience survey expressed anxiety about 'the listener's long-term confidence in the BBC', commenting that 'underground resistance groups...demanded with insistence that North Africa should be placed in the hands of de Gaulle'.⁴¹

Eden later told an official, 'it would be unfortunate for the future of the world if U.S. uninstructed views were to decide the future of the European continent'.⁴² For Francophiles of the left, subservience to the USA was the cause of the rift between the British government and the FFC and undermined their efforts to reach out to their French counterparts in occupied France. Their hopes that the forces of

³⁵ <http://www.ina.fr/fresques/de-gaulle/fiche-media/Gaule00001/discours-de-l-albert-hall>

³⁶ Crémieux-Brilhac, J.-L. (1996). *La France Libre : de l'appel du 18 Juin à la Libération*. Paris, Gallimard.p427

³⁷ *Le Populaire* November 1942

³⁸ Cordier, D. (2009). *Alias Caracalla*. Paris, Gallimard.pp505

³⁹ <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/> 25 November 1942

⁴⁰ *Observer* 29.11

⁴¹ BBC Surveys of European Audiences, France 25.2.43

⁴² Eden, A. (1962). *The Eden Memoirs : Facing the Dictators*. London, Cassell.p341

resistance could become forces for progress were being threatened by American insensitivity. *France and Britain* feared that,

When they find their own resistance and their country's representatives apparently treated as pawns in a political game, their leaders not allowed to speak their mind on what all Frenchmen thought was 'their radio' and themselves left lamentably and ignominiously in the dark as to the significance of the operation, they may well relapse into a kind of jingoist, anti-British Gaullisme, whose significance for post-war Anglo-French relations must not be overlooked....The irony lies in the fact that the responsibility for the political blunders is so patently American.⁴³

Denis Brogan, whose academic career had embraced the study of both the United States and France, and who worked for both the European and North American services of the BBC at this time, argued in the *Manchester Guardian* that Britain's future lay with France. Writing on 'Anglo-American Relations: the Censorship and Darlan', he made a clear link between the British public's appetite for social reform and the need to reject Vichy. Pointing out that Darlan had defenders in the USA (who imagined he was a 'smart guy who knows what it takes to double-cross Hitler'), but none – apart from 'cranks and sophists' - in Britain, he insisted:

We are nearer geographically and spiritually to Europe than America can ever be... Is it wise that at a moment, as the welcome reaction to the Beveridge Report shows, we are moving to the Left, the fact should be ignored or minimised that American opinion, as reflected in Congress, is moving to the Right?⁴⁴

The British left supported their French counterparts in criticising American policy in North Africa, for while disputes over de Gaulle's leadership continued, all could unite on the need to refrain from giving succour to Pétain's *État français* or its values. In December, *France and Britain* published the resolution of the *Groupe Jean-Jaurès* calling for the 'reinstatement of the laws of the Republic' in liberated French territory.⁴⁵ The Hendon Labour Party gave a platform to Brossolette to speak on 'The Fighting French Attitude towards Darlan', attacking the United States' willingness to deal with quislings, and emphasizing that in France men and women 'were risking their lives to spread the spirit of resistance called Gaullism'.⁴⁶ On this occasion, there seems to have been no mention of Vallin.

'The news of the Admiral's timely death enlivened the festivity in every Christmas home in Britain',⁴⁷ according to *Tribune*. Following his assassination on Christmas Eve 1942, Darlan was replaced by General Henri Giraud. Giraud also had few qualities that would endear him to the left in Britain. He rejected overtures from resistance leaders including Frenay and Moulin who urged him to work under

⁴³ *France and Britain* Volume 2 No 2, December 1942

⁴⁴ *Manchester Guardian* 4.12.42

⁴⁵ *France and Britain* December 1942 Vol 2 No 2

⁴⁶ *Hampstead and Highgate Express* 4.12.42

⁴⁷ *Tribune* 1.1.43

de Gaulle, fortified, as Clinton writes, 'by an arrogant self-belief that made de Gaulle look positively timid'.⁴⁸ One of Giraud's first actions was to imprison Gaullist resisters in Algiers. The *New Statesman* observed pessimistically, 'Giraud, like Darlan, is working from a fascist base and with a Fascist army',⁴⁹ while *Tribune* dismissed Giraud's claim that he 'has no politics' as meaning 'he has no progressive politics' (and by implication was, in fact, a royalist).⁵⁰ However, Giraud was popular with sections of the French army in North Africa and he was backed by the Americans. In theory, he had 300,000 men at his command, compared with de Gaulle's 20-30,000.⁵¹ Leahy, Roosevelt's chief of staff and former ambassador to Vichy, described de Gaulle as 'the British sponsored leader of the Free French'⁵² and would later be himself depicted as the 'author of evil counsels' to the President on the subject.⁵³

Tribune voiced the anti-American sentiments roused by the appointment of Giraud:

Do some of these American politicians, admirals and generals, who long ago earned their retirement, imagine that we are fighting to re-establish clerical fascism in France?

It concluded that

...right through all these expressions of American policy runs the thread of tender devotion to Europe's reactionary circles.⁵⁴

Leahy and Roosevelt may have wished to exclude de Gaulle, but this was not possible, thanks largely to the support given to him by the internal resistance. The British left-wing press continued to disapprove of Giraud, especially when he appointed Peyrouton, a man who had been Vichy Minister of the Interior, and told a meeting of Jewish leaders in Algiers that the Jews 'have been declared responsible for our defeat'.⁵⁵ There was little sympathy for the American position that the need to win the war overrode political considerations: for the left political considerations were what the war was about. The *Manchester Guardian* commented that Peyrouton's appointment 'made the unification of all French forces fighting for the liberation of France very difficult to achieve',⁵⁶ while for the *New Statesman's* satirist, Sagittarius, a war that furthered the values of Vichy was a war not worth winning.⁵⁷ The growth of resistance throughout Europe was heralded in that paper by a series of articles in January and February 1943, and the need to differentiate between those who had collaborated and those who had resisted became ever more paramount. While doubts about de Gaulle's commitment to republican

⁴⁸ Clinton, A. (2002). *Jean Moulin 1899-1943: The French Resistance and the Republic* London, Palgrave p146

⁴⁹ *New Statesman and Nation* 2.1.43

⁵⁰ *Tribune* 15.1.43

⁵¹ Robertson, C. (2011). *When Roosevelt Planned to Govern France*. Amherst, University of Massachusetts Press.p34

⁵² Maguire, G. (1995). *Anglo-American Policy towards the Free French*. New York, St Martins Press.p75

⁵³ *France and Britain* June 1944 Vol 4 No 7

⁵⁴ *Tribune* 1.1.43

⁵⁵ Marrus, M. R. and R. O. Paxton (1995). *Vichy France and the Jews*. Stanford, Stanford University Press.p195

⁵⁶ *Manchester Guardian* 21.1.43

⁵⁷ *New Statesman and Nation* 23.1.43

values persisted amongst British and French socialists, for most Giraud was irredeemably tainted with the values of Vichy.

British newsreels and the press featured the stage-managed handshake between de Gaulle and Giraud at the Casablanca Conference in late January 1943. While the BBC French Service celebrated the two generals' presence on French soil with the Allied leaders, one Free French spokesman on the BBC drew attention to the need to get rid of quislings: 'Hitler survit, là où Quisling survit.'⁵⁸ A month later a Fabian evening conference on 'The Quislings of the Peace' was addressed by Kingsley Martin along with André Philip and exiled European socialists, providing an occasion to insist on taking political considerations into account when developing military strategies for a liberated Europe.⁵⁹

The struggles between de Gaulle and Giraud, which continued throughout 1943, were not finally over until Giraud's complete exclusion from the *Comité Nationale de la Libération Française* a month before D-Day in 1944. The *Economist's* attempt to be even-handed in its summing up of the situation in May 1943 still points to part of the explanation for de Gaulle's eventual triumph, despite US backing for Giraud:

To [the mass of French people] General de Gaulle is, and will probably remain, the unheeded and unrecognised prophet, the 'voice in the wilderness'. General Giraud, for all his extraordinary courage, character and patriotic record, does not appeal in the same way...he has tended to stay within the narrow limits of the conservative, extreme right milieu...General de Gaulle has the almost unconditional support of the resistant wing of the Croix-de-Feu, of the Catholic Trade Unions and of the CGT, of Radicals, Socialists and Communists. To the mass of Frenchmen, General de Gaulle remains the symbol of French resistance. The less emotional student of political affairs looks with some uneasiness to the authoritarian lining of that symbol...⁶⁰

This 'uneasiness' continued to dog journalistic treatment of the leader of the Free French however much individuals within it managed to attract positive attention. André Philip remained on the whole a trusted spokesman for the FFC in Britain and a speech by him on 'The Unification of Resistance' reproduced in the *Observer* in January received favourable comment in the *Economist* amongst other publications.⁶¹ His appearances on Fabian platforms present an acceptable face of Gaullism to that Society's adherents, and he was able to represent the General's cause to Attlee. André Philip had also played his part, along with Georges Boris, in improving relations between the FFC and the Political Warfare Executive (and hence the BBC). These had been strained by the discovery that one of the 'black' radio stations run from SOE's propaganda operation at Woburn, and purporting to come from inside Europe, had been trying to take control of the internal resistance by speaking in the name of de

⁵⁸ BBC Written Archives Caversham. French Service scripts 27.1.43

⁵⁹ Fabian Society/J/61 LSE Archives

⁶⁰ *Economist* 22.5.43

⁶¹ *Observer* 3.1.43 ; *Economist* 2.1.43

Gaulle without his knowledge.⁶² Thanks to their efforts, Eden promised the station would no longer pretend to speak for the FFC, although it was not actually closed down and replaced with the Gaullist *Honneur et Patrie* until May 1944.

While Philip, Boris and Hauck could each play a role as 'fixer' for de Gaulle, French socialists who took a more critical, even hostile stance towards him also maintained their connections with the British left. This goes some way to explain the fluctuations in journalistic treatment of the General during 1943. In the earlier phase of the war, arguments about the suitability of de Gaulle had centred largely on his record as a writer on military matters and his support for Britain's lone stance against fascist Europe. They now focused increasingly on his suitability as political leader, with the Vallin affair lending credibility to the arguments of his enemies, at least one of whom, Labarthe, a man with many admirers amongst the British intelligentsia, now supported Giraud⁶³ (becoming his Secretary for Information in May 1943).

It is also possible to see such fluctuations as stemming from changes within some British newspapers and their links with French exiles. Since mid-1942, the owner of the *Observer*, David Astor, had changed 'the character of the publication from a staid conservative paper to an arena for left-wing ideas about the conduct of the war and the future post-war society, with a strong commitment to the welfare state and full employment'.⁶⁴ In his efforts to change the direction of the paper, Astor had replaced the previous editor, Garvin, with for a short while, Geoffrey Crowther and Barbara Ward of *The Economist*, before settling on Ivor Brown who would 'lead the paper with a light and liberal hand'.⁶⁵ Many émigré reporters were employed and other connections may have helped to make the paper especially suspicious of de Gaulle's 'dictatorial' tendencies. On one occasion, though, the *Observer* took credit for developments in the FFC; namely, when de Gaulle announced his plans for a consultative assembly:

His stand is now taken on a policy almost exactly that advocated in the *Observer*...[confuting] those champions of the Free French who protested that such a policy was impracticable when the *Observer* suggested it...it should clear the way for more amicable co-operation between French and Anglo-Saxons.⁶⁶

However, the paper also observed that neither Churchill nor Roosevelt fully supported de Gaulle, though both were 'deeply Francophile' and neither was 'lacking in desire to co-operate fully and loyally

⁶² Crémieux-Brilhac, J.-L. (2010). *Georges Boris: Trente ans d'influence: Blum, de Gaulle, Mendès France*. Paris, Gallimard. p194

⁶³ Flood, C. (1993). "André Labarthe & Raymond Aron : Political Myth and Ideology in *La France Libre*." *Journal of European Studies* 23(1): 139-158.

⁶⁴ Anthony Sampson, 'Astor, (Francis) David Langhorne (1912–2001)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Jan 2005; online edn, Jan 2009 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/76549, accessed 29 Feb 2012]

⁶⁵ Philip Howard, 'Brown, Ivor John Carnegie (1891–1974)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004

⁶⁶ *The Observer* 14.2.42

with Frenchmen'.⁶⁷ This suggests a disposition to reflect the view of the State Department unusual in the centre-left and left-wing press of the time.

Editor of the *Economist* since 1938, Geoffrey Crowther had greatly increased its circulation (from 10,396 in 1943 to 17,744 in 1945) while steering it in a progressive direction; so much so that in its anniversary issue it asserted that the main aim of economic policy was 'to abolish poverty, to diminish unemployment and to reduce inequality'.⁶⁸ Indeed *Tribune* called it 'an informative and useful weekly'⁶⁹ and made several positive references to the journal in 1943. Both Crowther and Barbara Ward (the latter a Fabian and referred to by Ruth Dudley Edwards as 'Geoffrey Crowther's social conscience'⁷⁰) had taken part in Fabian conferences and meetings⁷¹ and their brief tenure at the *Observer* was part of the project to move that paper in a leftward direction.

It is not surprising, therefore, that there were some similarities in the approach of these two publications to the Fighting French. While other journals and papers which shared their interest in social transformation and longing for a restored and stable French democracy continued to have reservations about de Gaulle, the *Observer* and the *Economist* were consistently more suspicious of him and more inclined to impugn his motives. This may well be connected to their generally sympathetic approach to the United States. The *New York Times* was now stridently anti-Gaullist, as were two influential French émigré journalists in that city, Henri de Kerillis and Geneviève de Tabouis, who had come into the Giraudist camp and denounced de Gaulle as 'Bonapartist'.⁷²

Certainly both Ivor Brown and Crowther had some reservations about André Philip, whose mission for de Gaulle to Washington to improve relations in the wake of the Darlan furore had proved disastrous and had strengthened Roosevelt's detestation of the FFC which 'elevated such ingrates to positions of power'.⁷³ In January 1943 the *Observer* judged Philip's assertion that 'the French Nation has already designated the leader who is entitled to speak in its name'⁷⁴ as evidence of the 'mysticism of designated personal leadership' it deplored, conjured by a French general who 'only became widely known to the French public through the agency of the British Broadcasting Corporation'.⁷⁵ The *Economist* also saw Philip's statement as an 'unfortunate formula' and did not see the support of

⁶⁷ *The Observer* 14.2.42

⁶⁸ *The Economist* 4.9.43

⁶⁹ *Tribune* 2.1.42

⁷⁰ Edwards, Ruth Dudley. *The Pursuit of Reason : The Economist 1843 - 1993*. London: Hamish Hamilton, 1993.p279

⁷¹ Fabian Society Archive, LSE J 16/13 and Leonard Woolf Archive, Sussex University

⁷² Robertson, C. (2011). *When Roosevelt Planned to Govern France*. Amherst, University of Massachusetts Press.p33

⁷³ Maguire, G. (1995). *Anglo-American Policy towards the Free French*. New York, St Martins Press.p164

⁷⁴ *The Observer* 10.1.43

⁷⁵ *ibid.*

French socialists as likely to make de Gaulle any less dangerous. In one article, claiming that Giraud was actually doing more to unite the French resistance than de Gaulle, it commented

Last week the French trade unionist, M. Guigui, recently escaped from France, assured the press that the 'French Republic will organise itself around General de Gaulle and his National Committee'. This sounds somewhat strange coming from Socialists and Trade Unionists, who ought perhaps to realise that a republic or constitutional monarchy cannot possibly 'organise itself around' one exclusive leader, no matter how great his military and political merits.⁷⁶

Tribune was almost equally hostile on occasion. In the spring of 1943 it continued to hark back to Brossolette's proposal for a single party, seeing evidence of this in de Gaulle's seeming reluctance to broaden the composition of the CNF: 'It is in the power now of de Gaulle to have all the reformation he announced translated into fact' and referred to him as one of 'two ex-Monarchist generals'.⁷⁷ The following week, *Tribune* produced a long piece alleging all kinds of disquieting practices in the FFC, including one saying that newcomers had to swear an oath of loyalty to the general. This claim was in line with remarks made by Louis Lévy and others in the *Groupe Jean-Jaurès*, and a number of allegations against de Gaulle's dictatorial methods were made in the same issue. There were echoes of reports in the American press.⁷⁸ Such accusations provoked numerous letters to the editor, testifying to the interest in France shown by *Tribune* readers, both pro and anti-de Gaulle. These included a lengthy one from Henry Hauck insisting socialists and communists were being incorporated into Fighting France and its commissariats, that there was no loyalty oath and that both clandestine trade unions and the Socialist Party in France were prepared to back a provisional government led by de Gaulle after liberation.⁷⁹

Tribune did not climb down and remained generally sceptical of de Gaulle. Its favourite French exile was Félix Gouin, whose article, 'The Role of Léon Blum', was printed in the same edition. At this point Gouin rivalled Philip as the leader of French socialist exiles. Although his poor command of English, his background as a *munichois* and his less 'modern' views on economics put him at a disadvantage, he remained in demand for speaking engagements because of his role as Blum's attorney at Riom.⁸⁰ He wrote articles for, amongst others, *Left News* about the revival of socialism in France.⁸¹ Gouin found much to dislike in de Gaulle's entourage and wrote at length to Blum about his misgivings, but the latter insisted that he stay loyal, as he believed 'in the rectitude and loyalty of the general' (thanks to

⁷⁶ *The Economist* 3.4.43

⁷⁷ *Tribune* 19.3.43

⁷⁸ Robertson, C. (2011). *When Roosevelt Planned to Govern France*. Amherst, University of Massachusetts Press. p78

⁷⁹ *Tribune* 2.4.43

⁸⁰ Mayer, D. (1968). *Les Socialistes dans la Résistance*. Paris, Presses Universitaires de France. p80

⁸¹ *Left News* July 1943

the information he was getting from Boris and Schumann).⁸² Gouin's unwillingness to take high office in the FFC, on the grounds that its charter was insufficiently democratic, endeared him to *Tribune*.

The attacks on Fighting France by *Tribune* and others were challenged in *France and Britain*, which managed to combine support for the revival of French socialism and recognition of Fighting France in more or less equal measure, both of which it saw as necessary for the post-war Europe it envisaged. In April 1943, the leading article in *France and Britain* reported on the attacks on de Gaulle in other sections of the British press. It noted the 'patent and spiteful malevolence' of the *Observer* and then commented that *Tribune*

has printed an article by a special correspondent, containing not only a number of statements that are, in the most literal sense, 100% untrue, but a good deal of rather surprising interpretation of facts in themselves beyond dispute.

France and Britain detected 'a systematic campaign of slander against Fighting France', which it opined was the work of a 'government person' with contacts in Fleet Street. It stated its position:

France and Britain holds no brief for Fighting France. As an organ of the International Bureau of the Fabian Society, it has in the past published contributions from both supporters and critics of General de Gaulle and will continue to do so...But its editors cannot overlook the fact that words spoken and deeds performed today in England inevitably have a profound effect on the relations between our own country and France ...⁸³

In the same April issue, it included a long article on the 'Evolution of Fighting France', which attempted to put a positive gloss on Brossolette/Vallin affair. Pointing out Brossolette's credentials as a socialist of long standing and a former member of the staff of Blum's paper, it explained his decision to consort with Vallin as consequence of the fact that 'many in the French underground movement have developed a taste for living dangerously, politically as well as physically'. It concluded with one of the most positive statements about de Gaulle that can be found in the British press at this time, arguing that 'those of us who have kept faith with the French people' could not object to a leader, who, despite his faults

...has from the beginning striven hard to keep his finger on the pulse of French opinion. That is what he was doing two years ago when *France and Britain* reproached him for his reluctance to use the word 'democracy'; that is what he is doing today when his democratic vocabulary alarms the Foreign Office and the State Department, and that was what he was doing when he accepted Vallin into his movement.⁸⁴

France and Britain continued its more pronounced pro-Gaullist approach after de Gaulle was at last allowed to go to Algiers at the end of May. There he agreed to share power with Giraud, setting up *Le*

⁸² Colton, J. (1987). *Léon Blum : A Humanist in Politics*. Durham N.C., Duke University Press.p432

⁸³ *France and Britain* Vol 2 No 6 April 1943

⁸⁴ *France and Britain* Vol 2 No 6 April 1943

Comité Français de Libération Nationale (CFLN) on June 3. However, 'the rather definite pro de Gaulle line taken recently in *France and Britain*' was queried by the paper's advisory committee at the meeting of the Fabian International Bureau in July.⁸⁵ This may have been because Harold Laski was on the advisory committee and, like his good friend Lévy, continued to harbour suspicions that de Gaulle wished to be a dictator, or the result of an intervention by Kingsley Martin, another member of the committee, whose paper had always been inclined to waiver on the subject. Martin had been persuaded on at least one occasion by Raymond Mortimer to remove an attack on the leader of Fighting France,⁸⁶ and had conceded, at the height of the controversy over the allegations made in *Tribune*, that 'he is a symbol and rallying ground for the popular forces in France'.⁸⁷ William Pickles, absent from this meeting, may also have played a part in ensuring *France and Britain* continued its support for de Gaulle.

However, the *Observer* – which *France and Britain* dubbed 'a leading Giraudist organ'⁸⁸ and 'the favourite bedside reading of Vichy propagandists',⁸⁹ harped on about the 'Gaullist Vallin' into the autumn of 1943. *France and Britain* continued to attack that paper, and to criticise American policy towards de Gaulle. By this stage, a thousand copies of the journal were being sent to the United States every month; copies were also bought by the FFC for distribution in France, and that organisation's willingness to buy up more copies than they needed effectively meant that *France and Britain* was 'dependent on the support for the Free French'.⁹⁰ Members of the Fabian International Bureau automatically received copies and others were sold for 2d. While it is not possible to be certain that it had the effect of improving de Gaulle's reputation amongst the broad British left, we can conclude that leading Fabians were willing to endorse de Gaulle as leader.

Another meeting place for British socialists and their French counterparts in London was the International Socialist Forum. Lévy, Hauck and Gouin wrote articles for its newsletter and we know Lévy spoke at Left Book Club meetings, for instance the one in Hampstead in August 1943.⁹¹ In May's edition of *Left News*, Lévy's new book, *France is a Democracy*, was chosen as the forthcoming book of the month for the Club. This book provided a guided tour of the regions of France and their history and made the case for the strength of republican, democratic and socialist traditions. Harold Laski contributed a lengthy introduction to the English version (translated by William Pickles) and, as George Orwell noted in his review of this in the *Observer* 'voiced his doubts about the political complexion of

⁸⁵ Fabian Society Archive LSE J/57 Minutes of Meeting of Advisory Committee of the International Bureau 20.7.43

⁸⁶ Rolph, C. H. (1973). *Kingsley: The Life, Letters and Diaries of Kingsley Martin*. London, Victor Gollancz.p219

⁸⁷ *New Statesman and Nation* 17.4.43

⁸⁸ *France and Britain* Vol 2 No 8 July 1943

⁸⁹ *France and Britain* Vol 3 No 1 Dec 1943

⁹⁰ LSE Fabian Archive Minutes of Executive Committee 24.1.44

⁹¹ *Left News* July 1943 (forthcoming events)

the Gaullist movement a good deal more forcibly than Mr Lévy'.⁹² Laski, who was 'proud to salute a French comrade whose *patrie intellectuelle* has the same frontiers as my own' returned to a theme he had expressed many times before: that France needed to complete 'the general movement we call the French Revolution'. He criticised de Gaulle, condemning the suspect elements in his entourage, especially Vallin, and also took the opportunity to upbraid the coalition for not doing more to control the Free French leader: 'it is not easy to understand why, in the years since 1940, the British Government has not been able, perhaps not sought, to persuade General de Gaulle to build his authority upon an unimpeachable foundation'.⁹³

The notion that de Gaulle would be acceptable if only the British could insist he reformed his organisation, was not uncommon, and suggested that his critics were coming to see as him as less unsatisfactory than Giraud or perhaps as immovable, despite all the forces ranged against him. The *New Statesman*, for instance, argued, 'It should be within our power to purge the de Gaulle staff of Cagoulard and other pro-Fascist elements.'⁹⁴ Francophile British socialists, usually steeped in French history, listened to the arguments for and against de Gaulle and often endeavoured to find a way to accommodate both. Positioning de Gaulle in a narrative of the war as an ordeal bringing the triumph of progressive forces was difficult, since such commentators tended to characterise French history in left versus right terms (Dreyfusards versus anti-Dreyfusards, dictators versus republicans, rationalists versus egotists) and de Gaulle's military background and demeanour could never, for them, be mitigated by support from socialists, even that of Léon Blum himself. Unlike many Americans, who hoped de Gaulle could be replaced with someone more amenable – if not Giraud, then Monnet - British critics such as Laski had no obvious substitute (apart, in *Tribune's* case, from Gouin) and could not ignore de Gaulle's stand in June 1940, so they concentrated on ways to 'democratise' him. Their heroes remained men like Jean Jaurès, 'probably one of the noblest expressions of French civilization',⁹⁵ as Hauck wrote in *Highway*, reviewing a new biography of the socialist hero. Brogan, in the *Manchester Guardian*, claimed Jaurès would have stood up to fascists and collaborators, for 'the tradition of the rights of man, of the freedom of conscience, of the rule of law was as living to him as was the Nonconformist-Radical tradition to many founders of the Labour Party.'⁹⁶ Local Fabian societies would continue to discuss his legacy, the group at Bath, for example, holding a meeting on 'The Life and Work of Jean Jaurès' in January 1944.⁹⁷

⁹² *The Observer* 12.9.43

⁹³ Lévy, L. (1943). *France is a Democracy*. London, Victor Gollancz. pp1-16

⁹⁴ *New Statesman and Nation* 17.4.43

⁹⁵ *Highway* April 1943

⁹⁶ *Manchester Guardian* 23.1.43

⁹⁷ *Fabian News* Vol 56 No 1

The first part of 1943 also saw turmoil in the British Labour Party, with a major backbench revolt during the debate on the Beveridge Report in February and a refusal to honour the electoral truce by a succession of left-wing candidates standing against government appointees in by-elections either as independents or for the ILP or Common Wealth Party. British communists were also causing a stir and there was talk again of a United Front of all those on the left. Membership of the Communist Party grew rapidly from 20,000 in June 1941 to 56,000 in December 1942 - 25% that of the Labour Party.⁹⁸ The red flag flew alongside the Union Jack next to Hampstead (and many another) town hall and there were reports of crowds at public gatherings following 'God Save the King' with a rendition of the 'Internationale'.⁹⁹ The ban on the *Daily Worker* was lifted after the beginning of the Battle of Stalingrad in 1942, and the newly re-named Communist Party of Great Britain 'was well established as part of the British political scene in trade unions and workplace' by 1943.¹⁰⁰ Although the Labour Party repeatedly rejected calls for affiliation, the left of the party began again to call for 'Progressive Unity'. In *Left News*, Laski argued 'We admire the great Russian resistance; we ought to make our admiration the road to unity'.¹⁰¹

The arrival in London of Fernand Grenier, a leading member of the French Communist Party in January 1943, with a letter pledging the party's support to de Gaulle, exercised the minds of British socialists. Grenier combined his commitment to a unified resistance with encomiums for the communist partisans. He spoke on the Fighting France slot on the BBC on January 14, welcoming the broad church the movement was becoming. He mentioned not only Philip, Gouin and Brossolette, but also Pierre Mendès France who was seemingly no longer a representative of a bourgeois party (the Radical Socialists), and even Vallin, who had broken with his former far right colleagues and was now part of the 'united front against the invader'. Grenier spoke of communists recently executed by the Nazis and, indeed, referred to 10,000 slaughtered comrades. The sufferings of communists, compared with other groups, would be a recurring theme for Grenier and others from his party, though there was also a constant emphasis at this time on their willingness to work with others.¹⁰² Thus in March he gave a dawn talk, describing 'notre armée a martyres innombrables', although also claiming 'socialistes et communistes sont fraternellement unis'.¹⁰³ The effectiveness of his message is evident in this comment in *France and Britain*, 'if some Socialists, quite understandably, still distrust their communist friends,

⁹⁸ Thorpe, A. (2000). "The Membership of the Communist Party of Great Britain 1920-1945." *The Historical Journal* 43(3): 777-800.

⁹⁹ *Hampstead and Highgate Express* December 1942

¹⁰⁰ Rees, T. and A. Thorpe, Eds. (1998). *International Communism and the Communist International, 1919-43*. Manchester & New York, Manchester University Press.p81.

¹⁰¹ *Left News* January 1943

¹⁰² BBC Written Archives Caversham French Service scripts 9.1.43

¹⁰³ BBC Written Archives Caversham French Service scripts 20.3.43

none will be able to withhold admiration from their many martyrs, or from the thousands who risked all for their principles'.¹⁰⁴

Aware that Communist Party discipline and willingness to risk lives could put the PCF in a position to seize power on its own after liberation, de Gaulle welcomed Grenier into the fold. Churchill, with some justification, complained in 1943 that 'de Gaulle is now banding (sic) on the Communist movement in France, although telling us he is the sole obstacle to it.'¹⁰⁵ Others saw the move as damaging to the revival of French socialism. Blum was very alarmed when the communists gained a voice in the co-ordinating committee of underground movements in February 1943, and there was even talk of socialists withdrawing from efforts to forge a unified resistance. Blum, who was determined to see a reconstructed socialist party play a key post-war role, wrote a strong letter of protest to de Gaulle and action was taken to prevent socialist resisters being put under the command of communists.¹⁰⁶ Daniel Mayer came to London on his behalf to insist that all members of the *Groupe Jean-Jaurès* accept de Gaulle's leadership and met with some success.¹⁰⁷ The Riom Trial and the revival of *Le Populaire* had helped re-establish socialist politics in France, but the efforts of Daniel Mayer and others to re-establish their party were hampered by the fact that so many had voted full powers for Pétain in 1940 (unlike the communists, imprisoned at that time). Compared with the communists, the socialists lacked funds¹⁰⁸ and Mayer also urged Gouin and Philip to persuade the Labour Party to provide some finance.¹⁰⁹ Mayer realised the necessity for working with the communists, though he was dismayed by the success of their propaganda, noting, 'Nous avons, nous aussi, nos martyrs'.¹¹⁰

For some British commentators the translation of the clandestine CAS into a strong French socialist party would mirror a reinvigorated Labour Party, free from the shackles of coalition. Others argued that the union of all groups on the left would provide stronger opposition to conservative forces in both countries. Many of those who sought 'progressive unity' in Britain were pleased to see French communists and socialists sharing platforms and some even harked back to the Blum government of 1936. The Union of Democratic Control organised an 'Any Questions?' session, chaired by Kingsley Martin at Livingstone Hall on 'What is Happening in France?' with a panel that included Grenier, Gouin and Lévy.¹¹¹ In *Left News* Tom Wintringham hailed the resistance as 'a new form of Popular Front'.¹¹² A BBC audience survey also opined that 'Gaullism seems to some as the revival of the Popular Front'.¹¹³

¹⁰⁴ *France and Britain* Vol 2 No 4 February 1943

¹⁰⁵ Kersaudy, F. (1981). *Churchill and De Gaulle*. London, Harper Collins. p275

¹⁰⁶ Colton, J. (1987). *Léon Blum : A Humanist in Politics*. Durham N.C., Duke University Press. p435

¹⁰⁷ Pradoux, M. (2002). *Daniel Mayer, un socialiste dans la Résistance*. Paris, Les Editions de l'Atelier. Ch 7

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.* p115

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.* p174.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.* p202

¹¹¹ *Tribune* 14.5.43

However, the main focus of this survey was the continuing issue of de Gaulle *versus* Giraud, and most of the left-wing press continued to focus on this throughout much of the year, apparently knowing very little, if anything, about the significance of Moulin's achievement in setting up the *Conseil National de la Résistance* (CNR). A *New Statesman* leader mentioned a 'secret 'Council of French Resistance' whose headquarters in France are presided over by anonymous Commissioners responsible to General de Gaulle',¹¹⁴ but provided little detail and was more concerned about the need for 'a purge of certain elements' amongst the London Free French. Not until October 1943 did the *Manchester Guardian* see the importance of this body. In an article on 'Resistance in France' a French correspondent referred to the emergence of the CNR demonstrating that 'the whole of French political life is with the Gaullists in opposition to Germany and Vichy.'¹¹⁵ But it took time for the left-leaning press to realise the importance of a unified resistance in ensuring France could be liberated on her own terms.

France Resurgent was published in 1943 by the Socialist Vanguard Group, now largely a Labour Party offshoot.¹¹⁶ This short book might have been a Fabian Society publication, with an introduction written by a 'British socialist with expert knowledge and wide experience of France' who may well have been William Pickles. It aimed 'not only to enlighten the English-speaking public, but also to strengthen the links between the French and British labour movements' and included articles by 'leading Frenchmen, representative of all sections of the resistance movement',¹¹⁷ namely Gouin, Philip, Lévy, Grenier, Hauck and two trade unionists from Fighting France: Yvon Morandat and Albert Guigui. Each of these pressed his case on France's political future and both Gaullist and anti-Gaullist sentiments were expressed. However, the book glossed over the rivalries between London resisters, such as that between the socialist Guigui and the communist Grenier over whose party would dominate the reunited CGT. It also reflected how at least one section of the British left had come to view 'Gaullism'. The 'British socialist' recognised the importance of the internal resistance and dismissed concerns about de Gaulle's 'autocratic intentions' as either 'wholly inaccurate or pettifoggingly trivial' declaring,

Gaullisme means two things: it means republicanism in its broadest sense of the term, including bold social and political experiments, probably going as far as socialism, and it means a belief that the provisional government of France on the morrow of liberation will be headed by General de Gaulle himself, and will implement the pledges he has given. Every underground newspaper in France expresses this point of view.¹¹⁸

¹¹² *Left News* September 1943

¹¹³ BBC Surveys of European Audiences, France: *Summary* April 1943

¹¹⁴ *New Statesman and Nation* 22.5.43

¹¹⁵ *Manchester Guardian* 2.10.43

¹¹⁶ Minion, M. (1998). "The Labour Party and Europe during the 1940s: the strange case of the Socialist Vanguard Group." *South Bank European Papers*(4).

¹¹⁷ Gouin, F., L. Morandat, A. Philip, A. Guigui, H. Hauck, L. Lévy and F. Grenier (1943). *France Resurgent*. London, International Publishing Company.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.* p8

One area not touched on to any degree in *France Resurgent* was the question of the future of the French Empire. This was a time when British journals such as the *New Statesman*, *Left News* and *Tribune* repeatedly urged an end to ‘imperialist exploitation’, and in *Tribune*, Rita Hinden of the Fabian Colonial Bureau mocked Morrison’s claim that the British Empire was a ‘model for the world’, calling for a ‘stiff injection of democracy’ which would enable colonial people themselves to run their own states,¹¹⁹ a message also promoted in the Colonial Bureau’s own monthly journal, *Venture*. However, the importance of the French Empire in providing manpower and bases to the FFC continued to militate against serious discussion of the rights and aspirations of its indigenous inhabitants throughout most of 1943. A sign of improving relations between the British government and de Gaulle after the Darlan affair came when the latter was given permission to broadcast in January 1943 a speech exalting the actions of French colonial soldiers in Libya. Soon afterwards, the narrative of beneficent imperialism was reiterated by another Free French broadcaster who gave a tour d’horizon of the French Empire, calling Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria the ‘perles de la couronne... avec ses grandes villes françaises que sont Alger, Casablanca ou Oran, et ces métropoles de la civilisation arabe que sont Fez, Biskra ou Kairouan’.¹²⁰

Empire was intrinsic to the ambitions of Free France. The broadcast of Moulin’s telegram affirming the support of the internal resistance for de Gaulle on May 15th helped overcome Roosevelt’s pressure on Churchill to eliminate the General ‘as a political force’¹²¹ and bring the leader of the FFC to Algiers on May 27th. His arrival was followed by a message from inside France that the resistance relied on de Gaulle ‘pour réaliser l’union de tous les Français de la Métropole et de l’Empire.’¹²² Shennan has noted that very few resistance publications made any mention of the need for colonial reform, seeing the restoration of France and French political life as a higher priority. Although the *New Statesman* referred to the communists’ advocacy of a more progressive Arab policy in 1943,¹²³ the manifestos of the left in 1945 made hardly any mention of this subject.¹²⁴

Meanwhile, the British Empire was also hailed as a force for good by left-wing journalists on the BBC French Service if not by all the left-leaning press. British seizure of Italian colonies was thus a means to get rid of fascism and help the inhabitants, one broadcaster in January 43 asserting, ‘L’Empire britannique a détruit l’Empire italien. Triomphe d’un impérialisme sur un autre? Non!’¹²⁵ Presumably the intention was to reassure the French that victory was in sight, encourage French colonial troops to

¹¹⁹ *Tribune* 5.2.43

¹²⁰ BBC Written Archives Caversham French Service *Honneur et Patrie* 24.1.43

¹²¹ Kersaudy, F. (1981). *Churchill and De Gaulle*. London, Harper Collins.p275

¹²² BBC Written Archives Caversham French Service 30.5.43

¹²³ *New Statesman and Nation* 4.12.43

¹²⁴ Shennan, A. (1989). *Rethinking France – Plans for Renewal 1940-46*. Oxford, Clarendon.p141

¹²⁵ BBC Written Archives Caversham French Service 27.1.43

fight alongside their British counterparts and dispose of any notions of the British Empire as predatory and covetous of French possessions. Thus on Empire Day, in May that year, British colonial rule was praised by Denis Brogan and Darsie Gillie (the French news editor and, like Brogan, a correspondent for the *Manchester Guardian*). Brogan spoke of the benefits British rule of law had brought to her colonies (at a time when Gandhi was under arrest and the Bengal famine was claiming countless victims):

Voilà pourquoi au moment le plus grave de notre histoire les dominions, les Indes, les colonies ont tous envoyé des volontaires à l'aide matérielle. Voilà pourquoi l'Empire britannique est invincible dans ce sens que l'idée du droit, une fois qu'une population l'a reçue, est impossible à déraciner.¹²⁶

Gillie spoke on a similar theme a few days later:

En Angleterre et sous le soleil d'Afrique, gouverner pour un Anglais n'est pas seulement chercher le bien-être et l'équité pour les administrés, c'est surtout donner aux administrés les moyens de s'exprimer et de se gouverner eux-mêmes.¹²⁷

However, in November 1943, a crisis erupted in the Lebanon. In theory both Syria and Lebanon were now independent, but both were occupied by the British Ninth Army along with small numbers of FFC Forces Speciales, with political authority in the hands of the FFC. When elections took place and the new Lebanese parliament effectively ended the French mandate, the French delegation, far from accepting a reduction of its status to that of a diplomatic mission, closed the parliament and arrested its leaders. Against a background of strikes and protests, de Gaulle insisted that 'France cannot be suspected of endangering the liberty of the Lebanese',¹²⁸ although this was surely belied by his insistence on a treaty of alliance to accompany independence. The French determination not to relinquish its position in the Middle East presaged a resumption of the often bitter rivalry with Britain in the region that went back centuries.

Tribune was one of the few publications of the British left to speak out against French policy. In a long article entitled 'Where Oil, Arabs and Empires Meet' their reporter castigated the *Daily Worker* and *Reynold's News* for condoning 'the ruthless and authoritarian application of force by de Gaulle's Lebanese delegate', arguing that 'French imperialism – any more than British or American – has no call on the quixotic sympathy of the left'. Whilst maintaining that British policy in India was even more harmful - it had been running a series of articles on the Indian famine - the writer noted that, 'the comparison of French rule in Syria with that of Britain was too striking to miss'. This criticism formed part of *Tribune's* ongoing campaign on behalf of Félix Gouin (now President of the Consultative Assembly in Algiers) who it argued should be put in charge of sorting out the situation. It did not form part of any sustained attack on French imperialism as such. The paramount concern remained

¹²⁶ BBC Written Archives Caversham French Service 24.5.43

¹²⁷ BBC Written Archives Caversham. French Service 28.5.43

¹²⁸ *Manchester Guardian* 15.11.43 and 17.11.43

friendship with France after her liberation and the article concluded by insisting on the 'overriding need to avoid a poisoning of Anglo-French relations that will make the essential collaboration on the Continent immediately after the war most difficult'.¹²⁹

In the ensuing parliamentary debate on Lebanon, Aneurin Bevan deplored 'innuendoes against the Free French movement'.¹³⁰ When the episode was seen in terms of Free France and the resistance versus the State Department and its British apologists, the issue of the iniquities of imperialism disappeared into the background. Indeed, Shennan has noted that very few resistance publications made any mention of the need for colonial reform, presumably because the restoration of France and French political life was for them a higher priority. Thus the conference of colonial administrators called by the *Commissaire aux Colonies*, René Pleven, in January 1944 at Brazzaville, rejected autonomy, and advocated 'federalism' which seemed to stand for a very limited degree of local autonomy. Both the socialists and communists talked of emancipation and a degree of self-government, but insisted on the unity of all French territories.¹³¹

The need for conciliation informed the line taken over the crisis in the Lebanon by the *New Statesman* and others, including *France and Britain*. The former excused de Gaulle's action in the Lebanon as that of someone 'bent on restoring the greatness of liberated France' after 'bitter humiliation', claiming

The ugliest thing that could happen would be that we should seem to use this awkward affair as a pretext for ousting France, when she is weak, from the Levant.¹³²

In the December edition of *France and Britain*, an article entitled 'A Child's Guide to the Lebanon' set out to explain Arab rivalries in the Middle East. Noting the impossibility of genuine independence for Syria or Lebanon in 'an armed world' it emphasised the overriding need not to reawaken distrust:

If we try to throw out the French, every realistically-minded person the world over will believe that we do so in order to put ourselves in...Anglo-French friendship is at least a vital element of world peace as calm in the Near East and Anglo-French friendship cannot be assisted by refusal to understand the French viewpoint.¹³³

The readiness to accommodate French behaviour was most clearly demonstrated by an article by Harold Nicolson in the *Spectator*. The previous week he had observed 'Never was this country more pro-French',¹³⁴ and Nicolson well represented the Francophile tendencies of the British progressives, appreciating as they did what made France (and Britain) ancient nations whose attachment to their histories would outlast any pretensions to power of newer states. Nicolson pointed to 'the immense

¹²⁹ *Tribune* 19.11.43

¹³⁰ *Manchester Guardian* 12.11.43

¹³¹ Shennan, A. (1989). *Rethinking France – Plans for Renewal 1940-46*. Oxford, Clarendon.p141

¹³² *New Statesman and Nation* 20.11.43

¹³³ *France and Britain* Vol 3 No 1 December 1943

¹³⁴ *Spectator* 19.11.43

and ancient ties of sentiment which attach the French to Syria and the Lebanon' going back to Charlemagne and reflected in the work of such as Chateaubriand:

It is not, therefore, merely some mandate of the League of Nations which the National Committee are surrendering; they are abandoning one of the most ancient, one of the most sentimental, of all French traditions... We should tread lightly, since we are treading on their dreams.¹³⁵

The *Manchester Guardian* was also sympathetic, seeing de Gaulle's occasional 'headstrong and illiberal actions' arising from Britain's refusal to 'differ from the government of the United States in the matter of recognizing the Committee' (the FCNL) and noting the Fighting French 'are exposed to flank attacks from Vichy men who accuse them of surrendering the French Empire to the Allies'. The paper reiterated the paramount need to maintain 'that friendship between France and Britain...essential to the stability of Western Europe...This is the lesson of history. Prussia made her sinister way because Britain and France were drawn apart.'¹³⁶

The need to secure a role for France in post-war Europe was subsumed in the necessity of supporting de Gaulle, and the nature and institutions of the French Empire thus remained largely outside the scope of debates among the British left. Rumours that 'the mystery of President Roosevelt's opposition to General de Gaulle' was the result of 'disagreement about the future status of the French Empire' and the dangers to the USA presented by continued French possession of certain territories were subsequently reported in the *Manchester Guardian* in June 1944.¹³⁷ In August the *New Statesman* concurred that the continued hostility of the State Department was the result of a clash of imperial ambitions. There was little sympathy shown for what was seen as thinly disguised American imperialism. Reporting on a number of articles in 'several reputable journals' in the USA, the leading article explained the dispute between the President and the FFC as stemming from

the fear of the President that certain French Colonies may one day be a military menace to the USA. He demands that these colonies shall be "internationalised" – a term which the article does not define. The Colonies in question are Martinique, French Guiana, Dakar, St Pierre et Miquelon, and even Indo-China.¹³⁸

While the crisis in Lebanon was taking its course, de Gaulle was in Algiers, consolidating his position in the Comité Française de Liberation Nationale (CFLN/FCNL) set up in June 1943, originally with de Gaulle and Giraud as joint heads. By November the committee had been reconstituted with Giraud and most of his close allies sidelined and it had achieved a degree of acceptance as a provisional government, the British government recognising it as 'administering those French overseas territories

¹³⁵ *Spectator* 26.11.43

¹³⁶ *Manchester Guardian* 22.11.43

¹³⁷ *Manchester Guardian* 17.6.44

¹³⁸ *New Statesman and Nation* 19.8.44

which acknowledge its authority'.¹³⁹ The British left, much of it remaining sceptical about de Gaulle, was increasingly interested in the Consultative Assembly, which met for the first time in Algiers on November 3. It could be perceived as a parliament that needed to stand up to an overweening executive, but which could also give legitimacy to a potential government if it acted with prudence and boldness. In some ways it was comparable with the British political situation which gave it added interest.

Gouin, who had been chairing a Commission on the reform of the state while in London, played a leading role in organising and convening the Assembly, over 40 of whose 84 members were resistance leaders who had been brought out of France. They were joined by 20 former deputies. The *Manchester Guardian* saw the composition of the Assembly as proving that 'No political body from any of the occupied countries represents so directly the temper of the nation for which it speaks', thus making American treatment of the Fighting French and their refusal to recognise the CFLN even more reprehensible.¹⁴⁰ Gouin subsequently became the president of the Assembly, much to the gratification of *Tribune*, which hoped to see him succeed in developing the Assembly as a counter balance to de Gaulle, despite its supposedly merely consultative role. It took the opportunity, though, to attack the Labour Party for not delivering the kind of rousing speech Gouin gave when he took office and for not giving enough support to him during his stay in London in order to strengthen his hand in Algiers, an accusation hotly rejected by Gillies.¹⁴¹ In an article reviewing Lévy's recent book, one *Tribune* contributor asked, 'When will the British Labour movement, one wonders, learn that its interests are identical with those of its opposite numbers on the continent?'¹⁴² *Tribune* continued to report on the progress of the Assembly throughout 1944, arguing persistently for its being given greater powers and more control of finance. A few months later it upbraided the Labour leadership both for pusillanimity in the face of Washington and for producing a report on post-war Europe which failed to realise that 'the French people are at the beginning of an epoch of spiritual resurgence'.¹⁴³

France and Britain rejoiced in the composition of an Assembly which was in many respects what a Fabian might wish for. Its members' varying backgrounds proved its independence from de Gaulle as well as his willingness to tolerate dissent:

Not all are experienced politicians; some are parliamentarians, at home in a familiar atmosphere, but others are university men and some are working class leaders thrown

¹³⁹ Jackson, J. (2001). *France: The Dark Years*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.p459

¹⁴⁰ *Manchester Guardian* 5.11.43

¹⁴¹ *Tribune* 29/10/43 and 12/11/43

¹⁴² *Tribune* 1.10.43

¹⁴³ *Tribune* 21.4.44

up by the resistance movement, who speak in terms of moving simplicity and directness.¹⁴⁴

Left News also spoke of the 'great breath of democracy that is aiding French resistance' and bringing influence to bear on de Gaulle. It was also pleased to note the reappearance of parties: 'The Socialists elected by the resistance group will probably form one group with the parliamentary Socialists. The same applied to the Radicals, the Communists and the Moderates.'¹⁴⁵ Louis Lévy, writing in *Left News* in February 1944, rejoiced that 'the assembly has raised solid obstacles to the growth of dictatorship'.¹⁴⁶

The British left was also ready to comment on the proposals coming out of Algiers for a new constitution for France, although its main concerns continued to be the need for the Allies to recognise the CFLN as the provisional government of France, anxieties about de Gaulle's fitness to lead it and the issue of how to treat former collaborators. In an article on 'French Democracy at Work', the *New Statesman* observed, 'It is a significant indication of the spirit of this reviving democracy that all parties are agreed that in this decisive election [for a constituent assembly], women for the first time in France will have votes.'¹⁴⁷ Other commentators welcomed signs that France was learning from the British experience, the *Economist* applauding a communist deputy in the Assembly who called for 'the British fiscal system; British parliamentary government and British freedom of the press.'¹⁴⁸ André Philip and Gouin produced reports suggesting an inclination to 'remodel French politics in the British manner', that many found gratifying.¹⁴⁹

However, not all agreed that key figures in Algeria were moving in a democratic direction. The *Economist* saw de Gaulle's becoming sole president of the CFLN and the Consultative Assembly's declaration of the Third Republic's constitution as null and void, not as presaging a new and more effective republic, but as evidence of looming dictatorship. It reached into French history in its efforts to analyse and assess what was happening, seeing de Gaulle as a new Napoleon III, using the extension of the suffrage to women as a means to power:

Like Louis Bonaparte, General de Gaulle defeats his traditionalist opponents by the appeal to popular will, popular sentiments, and popular prejudice. Louis Bonaparte – Emperor by grace of the People – established his Empire on the basis of universal suffrage, which he had introduced against the opposition of his traditionalist adversaries. General de Gaulle has extended universal suffrage to the women of France against the opposition of those Frenchmen who would prefer to stick to the constitution and laws of the Third Republic...It seems less and less likely that French

¹⁴⁴ *France and Britain* Jan 1944 Vol 2 No 3.

¹⁴⁵ *Left News* December 1943

¹⁴⁶ *Left News* Feb 1944

¹⁴⁷ *New Statesman and Nation* 29.1.44

¹⁴⁸ *Economist* 4.12.43

¹⁴⁹ Shennan, A. (1989). *Rethinking France – Plans for Renewal 1940-46*. Oxford, Clarendon.p117

democracy can be rescued and invigorated in the political climate of North Africa. Will it, at least, regain its strength when it reaches its native – and liberated – soil?¹⁵⁰

While the arguments over de Gaulle continued to rage, French plans for the reform of social security clearly drew on public debates on the subject in Britain during the war. For example, Georges Boris, who had urged de Gaulle to promise ‘la libération sociale’ saw valuable lessons to be learned from rationing, the minimum wage and the end of unemployment:

En Grande Bretagne, tout au moins, nous avons vu s’atténuer les grandes inégalités dans la répartition des revenus, et le sentiment d’une plus grande justice sociale pénétrer les masses.¹⁵¹

Hauck had declared at the London International Assembly back in 1942 that de Gaulle was in favour of ‘progressive and constructive revolution’ and so ‘the Free French have set up a Social Commission to mark the goal to be reached and an Economic Commission to indicate the means’.¹⁵² This ‘Section Sociale de la Commission pour l’Étude des Problèmes d’Après Guerre’ would look at social insurance, family welfare and the state’s role in economic planning.¹⁵³ It surveyed what Vichy had done in this field, but paid special attention to developments in Britain. As chair, Hauck welcomed the Beveridge Report in late 1942 as ‘a new and very important landmark in the study of post-war social problems’ and his group immediately produced a précis which was dispatched to resistance groups in France.¹⁵⁴ Beveridge’s principles of universality and comprehensive provision were taken especially seriously.¹⁵⁵ The report was also praised on the BBC French Service by Belgian socialists when the FFC was off the air in December that year, presumably there being a hope that this might counteract some of the damage being done by the dispute over the Darlan Affair at the time.¹⁵⁶ The *sous-commission* drew on the work of the London International Assembly, with its substantial French presence, which also produced a report in 1942 on the implications of ‘Freedom from Want’ and ‘Social Security’.¹⁵⁷ However, the work of the London International Assembly tended to be underreported in the British press, only getting the occasional mention in the *Manchester Guardian*, possibly because the Foreign Office was wary of allowing a higher profile to a body representing so many governments in exile.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁰ *Economist* 22.4.44

¹⁵¹ Boris, G. (1963). *Servir la république: textes et témoignages*. Paris, Julliard.p326

¹⁵² Churchill Archives Centre, Noel-Baker Archive NBKR 4X 114 London International Assembly

¹⁵³ Dutton, P. V. (2002). *Origins of the French Welfare State: The Struggle for Social Reform in France, 1914-1947*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. P202

¹⁵⁴ Shennan, A. (1989). *Rethinking France – Plans for Renewal 1940-46*. Oxford, Clarendon. p216

¹⁵⁵ Dutton, P. V. (2002). *Origins of the French Welfare State: The Struggle for Social Reform in France, 1914-1947*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. p204

¹⁵⁶ BBC Written Archives Caversham French Service scripts 13.12.42 and 27.12.42

¹⁵⁷ Churchill Archives Centre, Noel-Baker Archive: London International Assembly

¹⁵⁸ Birn, D. S. (1981). *The League of Nations Union*. Oxford, Clarendon. p212

In the field of education - a matter of great concern to the British left, and especially the Fabians - there is again some evidence that French plans for reform owed something to the work on this subject in Britain. Cassin and Vaucher joined the Interallied Conference on Education in 1942, where they were joined by R.A. Butler, architect of the British 1944 Education Act. In Algiers, Philip encouraged the new committee on education to look at British reform projects for the extension of secondary education, producing a plan with many features of the tripartite system found in Butler's scheme.¹⁵⁹ Evidence of British interest in French thinking on the subject is indicated by a talk for Fabians in the north-east entitled 'A Socialist looks at Education Policy' by Louis Lévy in February 1944. At the same time, Cassin was working to rebuild the pre-war Institute of Intellectual Co-operation, and helped thereby establish a strong French presence in UNESCO, whose founding conference in 1945 was attended by Léon Blum, as well as Britain's new Labour Education Minister, Ellen Wilkinson.¹⁶⁰

It would be a mistake, though, to exaggerate the extent to which there was cross-fertilisation of ideas between the British and French left in this area. There are few signs, indeed, that the British left-wing press was interested in the French plans for social security or with what Williams has called the 'distinctively French obsession' of 'dénatalité'.¹⁶¹ Those remaining in France were perhaps less susceptible to British visions than those who had spent a lot of time in London. The CAS, for example, put the re-establishment of Popular Front social reforms as a priority in its political programme of 1943.¹⁶² In addition, while the *Conseil National de la Résistance* put 'a comprehensive social security plan' in its programme of March 1944, this was something the CGT had been advocating since before the war.¹⁶³ Wartime occupation also influenced French plans, and the scheme to create the *École Supérieure d'Administration* in order to create a new kind of elite for liberated France found no parallel in Britain.

By 1944 the main concerns of the *Political Quarterly* were domestic reforms (especially in education), the future of the British colonies and the forthcoming peace settlement. While Paul Vaucher had written at length on France in the last edition of 1943, his article was aimed at allaying fears about de Gaulle. Interest in international aspects of the post-war world was, however, reflected in an article in the first 1944 edition about the International Labour Office. The ILO's future in the United Nations was the subject of some discussion at this time and a conference was planned for April 1944. The writer recognised the contribution of the Beveridge Report to ILO thinking and the widespread desire that the peace settlement should bring not merely 'security from future war, but also social security from fear

¹⁵⁹ Shennan, A. (1989). *Rethinking France – Plans for Renewal 1940-46*. Oxford, Clarendon.p177

¹⁶⁰ Prost, A. and J. Winter (2011). *René Cassin*. Paris, Fayard.pp280-282

¹⁶¹ Williams, A. (2000). "France and the New World Order, 1940–1947." *Modern & Contemporary France* 8(2): 191-202.

¹⁶² Shennan, A. (1989). *Rethinking France – Plans for Renewal 1940-46*. Oxford, Clarendon.p213

¹⁶³ *Ibid.* p211

and want'. It acknowledged the vital contribution of its first director, Albert Thomas, and may possibly have been written by Hauck.

While the British press became increasingly concerned with planning its own future, there were still comparisons to be made with developments in France and Algiers when it came to the role of the trade unions in the post-war economy. *Tribune* maintained an interest in the revival of French trade unionism. It supported attacks by French trade unionists on banks and big business which were in tune with its own campaign for extensive nationalisation in Britain. In July and September 1943, the paper quoted – with approving commentary – from the *Mouvement Ouvrier Français* (the clandestine Journal published jointly by the Socialist and Catholic trade unions), praising its assertion that, 'The French working class could never lend itself to the eleventh hour manoeuvres of the opportunists and traitors of the Banks and the Trusts'.¹⁶⁴ De Gaulle's speech to the Consultative Assembly where he declared an end to 'an economic regime in which the great sources of national wealth did not benefit the nation...in which the conduct of enterprises excluded participation of the workers and technicians',¹⁶⁵ was reported in the *Manchester Guardian* at a time when the future of those industries that had been taken under state control for the duration of the war in Britain was becoming a matter of sharp debate, and there were vociferous demands for an end to coalition government. Labour members of parliament called for extensive 'social ownership' of industry, control of finance, a planned economy and social security in the debate on the King's speech in December 1943.¹⁶⁶ Shortly afterwards, *Left News* underlined the links between British and French thinking on the subject, reporting on a member of the CGT who had recently arrived from France calling both for 'European unity' and a planned economy, recording that

French trade unionists desire, in particular, that banking, insurance, production and distribution of power, water supply, mining, transport by land, sea and air, importation and distribution of liquid fuels, be in future run as public corporations.¹⁶⁷

Thus there was a large measure of agreement between the Labour Party, French socialists and de Gaulle on the need for state intervention in the economy. The desire to strengthen the French state was shared by both de Gaulle and socialist resisters, including Philip, Boris and Hauck, who had been working on economic strategy well before the move to Algiers. In July 1942, Boris had warned of economic domination by the United States and the doubtful 'panacées du libéralisme'¹⁶⁸ and Hauck had stated that 'France must take the lead in Europe and not be afraid to be at the head of new ideas

¹⁶⁴ *Tribune* 3.9.43

¹⁶⁵ *Manchester Guardian* 4.11.43

¹⁶⁶ *Manchester Guardian* 8.12.43

¹⁶⁷ *Left News* January 1944

¹⁶⁸ Williams, A. (2000). "France and the New World Order, 1940–1947." *Modern & Contemporary France* 8(2): 191-202.

at the risk of causing displeasure to a certain Anglo-American capitalism.¹⁶⁹ Although there may have been some differences of opinion on the relationship between syndicalism and dirigisme, de Gaulle was in sympathy with the importance of centralised planning to the recovery of France, having seen what could be achieved by Bevin's Ministry of Labour. May Day was celebrated in Algiers in 1944 (albeit on Sunday April 30 to avoid 'interruption of the war effort') and de Gaulle promised no exploitation of the workers, to which Grenier replied 'Let us henceforth work together and never again drift apart'.¹⁷⁰ Indeed *Tribune* applauded the work of the communists in the Consultative Assembly as producing 'a programme of radical democracy cum social services, rather than...traditional communism'.¹⁷¹ De Gaulle (and the communists) thus accepted what Shennan has called 'the resistance triptych' of 'Republic, Socialism and Nation', although possibly in a different order,¹⁷² as well as the resistance economic ideology – *dirigiste, planiste et socialiste*.¹⁷³

These developments still did not persuade all sections of the British left that de Gaulle was an acceptable leader and *Tribune* continued to suspect de Gaulle, complaining that 'his right-wing sympathies are well known in France, in spite of his Left Wing vocabulary'.¹⁷⁴ *France and Britain* went on to deplore the anti-Gaullism of the *Observer*, running as its leading article in April 1944, 'Trade Union Organisation and Action in France' in which Albert Guigui affirmed the loyalty of the CGT to the CFLN and de Gaulle and promised that French trade unions would play their part in any international forum.¹⁷⁵

Underlying such seemingly opposing views was the desire for a strong post-war relationship with France that would bring a lasting peace and advance social change. Whether de Gaulle was fit to lead such a France remained contested, but the arguments on the subject testified to this overriding aim. For the left, the war was a time of grand projects for the future; Prost and Winter refer to 'ce moment de réflexion utopique',¹⁷⁶ when it seemed the world could be remade to ensure human rights and a transformed social order once victory was achieved. Neither American liberalism nor Soviet communism offered an attractive model and the need for the British and French to co-operate in realising their vision of social democracy seemed obvious.

In an article on the Fabian Society in the *Political Quarterly* in spring 1944, Margaret Cole testified to the Society's success in catering for the 'demand for political thinking while the political truce has been

¹⁶⁹ Shennan, A. (1989). *Rethinking France – Plans for Renewal 1940-46*. Oxford, Clarendon. p 279

¹⁷⁰ *Manchester Guardian* 2.5.44

¹⁷¹ *Tribune* 7.1.44

¹⁷² Shennan, A. (1989). *Rethinking France – Plans for Renewal 1940-46*. Oxford, Clarendon.p49

¹⁷³ *Ibid*.p239

¹⁷⁴ *Tribune* 16.6.44

¹⁷⁵ *France and Britain* March-April Vol 3 Nos 4-5

¹⁷⁶ Prost, A. and J. Winter (2011). *René Cassin*. Paris, Fayard. P202

hamstringing the local Labour parties' and its openness to differing views, acting as a stimulus to debate amongst members and non-members alike. She also claimed that its character 'makes it more possible for foreign comrades of varying types and nationality to feel that the FIB is a place where they will be welcomed and their problems discussed'.¹⁷⁷ The Society had become increasingly influential during the war, an important node in a network of socialists that embraced cabinet ministers as well as left-wing academics and journalists from Britain and occupied Europe. The increase in the number of local branches of the Fabians (from single figures before the war to ninety and rising by 1942¹⁷⁸) was symbolic of its growing reach and popularity with a public looking to change once the war was over.

The impending end of the Fabian Society's role as an intellectual refuge and platform for foreign socialists was symbolised by the farewell gathering hosted by the Fabian International Bureau on October 22 1944.¹⁷⁹ In the previous month's issue, *France and Britain*, reflecting on the efforts of its contributors to 'tell something of the role of French socialists and the French working class in general in the resistance movement', hoped that 'British Socialists at least will enter the post-war period with a better understanding of what their opposite numbers in France have done and thought'. Lamenting that there had in the past been too much ignorance of each other's problems, it concluded that:

The British labour movement has made a great many friends among French socialists during the last four years and the venture of publishing *France and Britain* has revealed the existence of a great many friends of France in the British labour movement. These friendships and contacts must be maintained and extended.¹⁸⁰

During the previous two years, the prospect of the liberation of Europe had moved from possibility to near reality. The British left had continually expressed the hope that France would become a revitalised republic, able to work closely with Britain to bring about a new Europe, free from the extreme nationalism that had disfigured the continent and led to the global conflict. There was a belief that British and French socialists, who had formed close links during the war, could together bring about the social and economic reform that many of them had characterised as the best way to prevent any future war. However, the war had brought about changes to international relationships the implications of which they had yet fully to realise.

¹⁷⁷ *Political Quarterly* 1944 Vol 15 no2

¹⁷⁸ Pugh, P. (1984). *Educate, agitate, organize: 100 years of Fabian Socialism*. London, Methuen.

¹⁷⁹ LSE Archives Fabian Society/J/61

¹⁸⁰ *France and Britain* September 1944 Vol 3 No10

Chapter Eight: Conclusion

The concluding chapter of this thesis is in four parts. Firstly it will review the arguments in the preceding chapters concerning attitudes of important sections of the socialist and democratic left in Britain towards France in the period before and during the Second World War. The second section looks at some of these themes as revealed by reactions amongst the British left intelligentsia to France's liberation in 1944, and reflections on the future of post war democratic socialism on both sides of the Channel. The third part summarises the discussions in this thesis of the factors that affected the attitudes to their French counterparts and perceptions of France during the period 1930-1944. The final section speculates on why the marked "Francophilia" of much of the British left during this period did not lead the post-war Labour government to embrace closer Franco-British relations. It includes the author's reflections on why post-war historians have put more emphasis on "Francophobia" in their accounts of Anglo-French relations.

Following the introductory chapter and literature review, Chapter Two compared the development of the Labour Party and SFIO in Britain and France following the Anglo-French Alliance in the First World War, showed how the development of these two parties reflected political and economic characteristics of both countries, and how such differences could at times undermine attempts to reach an understanding. Since both parties purported to be attached to a set of principles, they had to find ways to navigate the political systems in which they operated without alienating too many of their supporters, and reach out to a mass electorate while striving to develop policies which could be seen as putting these principles into practice. One such principle was anti-militarism which meant that many on the British left remained critical of French governments that appeared to be in favour of fulfilment of the Versailles Treaty. The later rise of fascism in Europe presented two main problems: whether to counter such a phenomenon at home by going into alliance with other parties and whether to develop a less pacific foreign policy. For those in Britain advocating an alliance with communists and others, the French Popular Front government 1936-7 offered an intriguing example, and one that encouraged the left intelligentsia to attempt to engage the British public in vigorous debate. Communism was central to discussions over tactics amongst the left in both countries. However, the leadership of the British Labour Party, strengthened by its ties with trade unions, refused any such pact. While the party moved away from a refusal to contemplate any form of rearmament by the time war looked imminent, it still rejected conscription, something that dismayed those French socialists who were now convinced of the need to contemplate the use of force. The problem of constructing a 'socialist foreign policy' had yet to be resolved.

Such problems are explored in greater depth in Chapter Three, which discussed the interface between left-wing British journalism, French political life and the advance of the far right in Europe in the 1930s, a decade when internationalism remained a feature of much left-wing thinking. This was reflected in the publications and organisations, many newly launched or reconfigured, which actively sought to encourage democratic socialists to come together in international forums and formulate joint responses to perceived threats to peace, including the Spanish Civil War. The British left also sought to find answers to the problem of how socialists should govern. The French Popular Front government was the subject of extensive discussion in the publications described here; while there might in the past have been scepticism about aspects of the French political system, the failure of the Labour government of 1929-31 and antipathy towards the National Government fuelled a readiness to learn from the French experience. Events on the continent also increased calls for Anglo-French solidarity and brought about greater interest in cultural links with France. However, the question of whether to work with communists and form a *popular* or *united* front, continued to cause divisions in the Labour Party.

Chapter Four looked more closely at how the issue of communism affected attempts to forge a common front by the British and French labour movements hoping to pursue common objectives through international forums. This chapter investigated in particular initiatives aimed at fostering co-operation between French and British trade unions. It also brought out how international forums might be used to advance sectional interests while also being sites of debate over whether pacifism was an appropriate response to fascism. The Nazi-Soviet pact and the outbreak of war might appear to drive a wedge between communists and socialists, but the repression of the Communist Party in France, along with the apparent erosion of French workers' rights and the issues of conscription and conscientious objection, caused alarm on the left in Britain and exposed differences between the ways the countries had experienced previous conflicts.

Chapter Five touched on how the left in Britain debated the actions of the French government during the 'Phoney War' and how so-called 'responsible socialists' argued the case for repression of the PCF at this time. This chapter was concerned with the development of a narrative in the left-wing press and on some programmes of the BBC French Service which explained the defeat of France in terms of the failures of those on the right to support the country's war effort. Such a narrative, developed at a time when France came under Vichy rule and Britain had no allies, insisted that solidarity between the French people and Britain – now with Labour ministers in positions of power in the wartime coalition - would bring eventual victory as long as there was a commitment to war aims that would bring social transformation along with military success. This chapter also

discussed the early efforts of French socialists in London to work with their British counterparts to make this a transnational narrative. Largely excluded from this narrative was any noticeable attempt to see the French Empire as anything other than as a source of support for de Gaulle's Free French organisation.

Chapter Six covered the period from early 1941 to late 1942 when this narrative of working class heroism leading to eventual victory was reinforced by the emergence by degrees of internal resistance in France. The Fabian Society played an especially important role in reporting on the recovery of socialist activity in France and provided a forum for Gaullists and non-Gaullists alike. This recovery was aided by the failure of the trial at Riom of Léon Blum and others. While de Gaulle appeared to many on the British left as inadequate as the future leader of France, efforts by the growing number of socialists in de Gaulle's entourage (as well as by Blum himself) to give the Free French movement a democratic, republican flavour met with some success when high profile socialists began to arrive in Britain and lend him support. The German attack on the Soviet Union in June 1941 led to fears that communists might use participation in resistance as a means to power, and some on the British left argued that a reformed Gaullist organisation taking the leadership of the internal resistance was the best way to prevent this. De Gaulle's actions in trying to assert authority over those parts of the French Empire taken over by Britain reawakened old rivalries, but the message on the BBC was that the empires of Britain and France were a force for progress, while the left-wing press tended to concentrate only on the need for British possessions to be granted some form of autonomy.

Chapter Seven explored the ways in which the British left reacted to events from late 1942 to 1944. This was a time when eventual victory could be anticipated and socialists in both Britain and France became eager to develop policies to put in place when peace came. British socialists became increasingly vexed by the wartime coalition's seeming subordination to the United States and its cold shouldering of the Free French, exemplified by its preference for Darlan, then Giraud, over de Gaulle. De Gaulle presented himself both as a bulwark against communism and as someone willing to work with communists and bring them into the Free French fold, which alarmed many French socialists, but led some British commentators to claim de Gaulle's organisation represented some kind of 'popular front', while others remained highly critical of attempts to make links with right-wing French exiles and the suggestion that the old parties of the Third Republic should not be revived. At the same time there was a reopening of the arguments within the British left about whether the Labour Party should pursue a possible alliance with British communists, who were enjoying a boost from the achievements of the Soviet Union on the Eastern Front.

The efforts to exclude the FFC from the D-Day landings and the seeming refusal of Allied Command to recognise the potential of the French resistance in the replacement of Vichy and Nazi officials following liberation continued to fuel anti-American sentiments amongst many on the British left. This did not mean that the British left accepted de Gaulle's pretensions; indeed criticism of the General became more outspoken and prevalent in some of the publications under review at this time, and some went so far as to criticise his behaviour in the Lebanon, while others condemned Britain and the United States for imperialist ambitions with regards to French colonies. Any seeming contradiction in the treatment of de Gaulle can be explained by the anxiety on the part of British progressives to see a strong but democratic and republican France acting in close association with Britain to bring about economic and social reforms that would transform Europe. The continued interest in and concern for France were also manifested in reporting of the Consultative Assembly in France, especially when it seemed to be adopting some British parliamentary conventions which reassured British commentators that France would not become a Gaullist dictatorship.

While the achievements of the Consultative Assembly were celebrated, the British left intelligentsia's enthusiasm for a version of events that depicted an heroic French resistance, composed of workers who were heirs to the barricades of episodes in French revolutionary history, was exemplified in their writings about their visits to Algiers and the liberation of Paris as detailed in the 'Afterword' that follows. The idea that Paris had been liberated by its own people had powerful appeal and fed a narrative of resurrection and redemption that dispensed with anxieties over the role of communists or any dictatorial tendencies on the part of de Gaulle, who could again embody the defiance of the armistice that he had sought to symbolise in June 1940. Initiatives to bring together representatives of organised labour from both Britain and France as France was liberated seemed to presage a future of close co-operation. Any critical note was concentrated on the United States for their treatment of the Free French during this period.

This section of the concluding chapter of the thesis reviews events leading up to and following the liberation of France in 1944 from the perspective of left-wing journalists and intellectuals in Britain. In May 1944, shortly before the D-Day landings, two celebrated British journalists - Raymond Mortimer and Harold Nicolson - visited the French Consultative Assembly in Algiers and reported back to the *New Statesman* and the *Spectator* respectively. Their reports added to the chorus of demands for recognition of the CFLN while expressing the desire for a close relationship with France. Mortimer made a point that had been made many times before in the war (especially, but not exclusively, in left-leaning publications), but now had added immediacy:

Great Britain and France must be joined in the closest friendship or we shall dwindle into a mere satellite upon some more multitudinous nation, and ...[the] Western European tradition of respect for the individual will at least for a time disappear from the earth.¹

At a time when both the Soviet Union and the United States were strengthening their presence in Europe, this remark reflects an awareness that the influence as well as the status of Britain and France were under threat. It implies that Britain and France were the guardians of the tenets of Enlightenment *philosophes*, which may have been expressed differently but contributed to a common culture underpinned by shared values.

In his piece, Nicolson saw hope for the future in France's politicians behaving more like the British. He described how, in the Consultative Assembly

...the old habits of desk-slamming and ink-pot throwing are being discarded in favour of the quieter and more courteous manners of our own House of Commons.²

Congratulating de Gaulle on 'the speed with which he has adapted himself to what is developing into a parliamentary system', Nicolson also applauded the Assembly for adopting 'the British system of parliamentary questions'.³ The idea that France could learn from Britain was certainly nothing new, though we have seen that many British commentators had in the mid-1930s hoped British activists could learn from the Popular Front. The belief in progress, a fundamental principle of enlightenment, is predicated on the importance of learning by example, a theme that pervaded much of the journalism of the left and centre-left.

The notion of heroism also had especial appeal. Not only did it play to people weary of the destruction and compromises of war, it also resonated with an intelligentsia brought up on the European literary 'canon', the classics and the Bible. By 1944 the French resistance was much more visible in Britain; numerous books and eye-witness accounts were being published and articles on individual figures appeared frequently in the press. Many French resisters told their stories on the radio, where Gilberte Brossolette, wife of one of the most prominent, liaised between the CFLN and the BBC.⁴ The heroes of such narratives were brave and intrepid but self-effacing. The resistance could be conceived as providing a narrative of redemption, both for the evils of Vichy and the mistakes of the Third Republic. Even Mortimer, who had feared a 'government of heroes' dismissed

¹ *New Statesman* 20.5.44

² *Spectator* 5.5.44

³ *Ibid*,

⁴ Brossolette, G. (1976). *Il s'appelait Pierre Brossolette*. Paris, Albin Michel. pp204-205

such qualms as baseless, acclaiming the representatives of the Resistance in the Assembly for 'their intelligence, their seriousness and evident integrity.'⁵ Nicolson waxed lyrical:

For the French Resistance has grown in these years from something which was little more than an underground activity executed desperately by a few desperate men into an organisation which today leads and directs all that is noblest in the French nation... It is not a conspiracy of a few heroic men; it is the disciplined expression of the will-power of the whole French people. These rare young men, these heroic women, are building up in France a legend such as will compare in after years with the finest legends of all French history...which will once again restore France to her proud place in the councils of the world...⁶

Such accounts of resistance could thus symbolise the new beginning that the discussions on war aims during previous years had sought to devise. Nicolson wrote of how such figures would create a 'France, younger, stronger and cleaner, than any France of the last hundred years'. Notions of rejuvenation and resurrection were especially attractive at a time when the British government was often characterised as excessively subservient to the USA, especially on the matter of France. The Labour leadership, still in the trammels of coalition, was characterised in *Tribune* as 'nerveless' and 'losing its sense of direction', especially with regard to its development of a socialist foreign policy.⁷ As Richard Vinen has observed, 'If there is a "myth" of wartime France as a united nation of resistance supporters then it might be argued that it is the English who have done much to create that myth'.⁸

The BBC also played its part in the celebration of French resistance, and Audrey Bonnery has shown how stories of maquis and underground adventures became a feature of both the BBC Home and French services from 1943 and observes 'La BBC a ainsi transformé les années d'occupation en années de résistance'. The French team continued to talk of the need for a revived Entente Cordiale, while glossing over diplomatic tensions: 'les relations franco-américaines ne sont bonnes que dans les émissions de la BBC'.⁹ The D-Day landings brought renewed clashes between broadcasters and those in power, now embodied in the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEP) based near London. Rows erupted after de Gaulle was excluded from the planning and execution of the invasion, and then over how and when the organised resistance, the Forces françaises de l'Intérieur (FFI), should be activated. Crémieux-Brilhac has described how Georges Boris was able to bring most of the French Service under the CFLN at this time, and struggled, along with eminent

⁵ *New Statesman* 20.5.44

⁶ *Spectator* 5.5.44

⁷ *Tribune* 7.4.44 & 28.4.44

⁸ Vinen, R. (2006). *The Unfree French : Life under the Occupation*. London, Allen Lane. p3

⁹ Bonnery, A. (2005). *La France de la BBC, 1938-1944*. PhD, Bourgogne.

resisters now in London, such as Raymond Aubrac and Emmanuelle D’Astier de la Vigerie, to get news of the exploits of the FFI on air during the summer of 1944.¹⁰

The liberation of Paris enabled the Francophiles of the British left to express their opinions on France without reserve. Their activities, particularly those of socialist resisters in their roles both as fighters against the occupiers and as people who had kept alive political life and discussion of the future of French society, could now be celebrated. British commentators could make use of French history to point out the lessons of the past and envisage a future where the mistakes of that past in both countries could be put behind them. Some of the themes of Anglo-French socialism are especially clear in the commentary on the events surrounding the liberation of France’s capital city.

On August 22 1944, the *Manchester Guardian* relayed a report from Radio Algiers that ‘the *Forces francaises de l’Intérieur* have started operations outside Paris. Paris is liberating itself’.¹¹ Georges Boris was then instrumental in getting the electrifying news that Paris had actually been liberated by resistance forces transmitted on the French Service at 12.45 pm on August 23. But this was premature; while there was news of barricades, strikes and skirmishes, German tanks were still patrolling much of Paris. However, such news was so eagerly anticipated that it proved impossible to prevent further dissemination. Despite the efforts of SHAEF to stop any re-broadcasting, the Home Service already had the story and the One O’clock News proclaimed ‘Paris is free!’ General Leclerc’s 2nd French Armoured Division did not actually enter the capital until the night of August 24/25, but by this time King George VI and others had already sent congratulations.¹² While the 4th US Infantry Division had also played a crucial role, it was the role of the FFI that captured the imagination of many British commentators. The idea of the resistance liberating Paris was immensely attractive; a chance acquaintance remarked to the writer and friend of Raymond Mortimer, Frances Partridge on August 23, ‘Glorious news, isn’t it... and especially that the Free French did it themselves’. In the pub where they met, the Marseillaise was being played¹³. On 25th August, the day de Gaulle returned to the Hotel de Ville to acclaim Paris ‘libéré par lui-même, libéré par son peuple, avec le concours des armées de la France’, the *Manchester Guardian’s* war correspondent contributed an article entitled ‘Battle of the Barricades’, showing how the heroes of the hour were the descendants of the insurgents of 1789, 1830, 1848 and 1871.¹⁴

¹⁰ Crémieux-Brilhac, J.-L. (2010). *Georges Boris: Trente ans d’influence: Blum, de Gaulle, Mendès France*. Paris, Gallimard. p290

¹¹ *Manchester Guardian* 22.8.44

¹² Crémieux-Brilhac, J.-L. (2010). *Georges Boris: Trente ans d’influence: Blum, de Gaulle, Mendès France*. Paris, Gallimard. pp300-302

¹³ Partridge, F. (1978). *A Pacifist’s War*. London, Hogarth Press.p191

¹⁴ *Manchester Guardian* 25.8.44

This was another example of the expectation of those writing that their readership would have knowledge of key events in French history. Both in self-consciously highbrow journals as well as in publications aimed at a wider readership, the great figures of the revolutionary and socialist movements in France, as well as those who had attempted to destroy the republic, were important reference points amongst left circles in Britain. Left-wing intellectuals were well acquainted with such history, and they were also keen to disseminate it through channels such as the Left Book Club, the WEA, Fabian Society publications and activities, and new non-statutory educational initiatives that sprang up during the war, such as Civil Defence discussion groups. During the Second World War, the defeat of France, the destruction of its republic and establishment of the Vichy regime had led such writers to attempt to place events in France and the emergence of anti-Vichy forces as part of a narrative of fall and redemption. They drew on figures in French historical and political life who could be represented as embodying resilience as well as a commitment to universal values which would be embodied in the social revolution that victory in the conflict should bring, as long as socialists took control of events. Such figures would be characterised as the true representatives of the 'French nation' as imagined in the discursive practices of writers in the left-leaning British press, as well as French journalists in exile in London. Jean Jaurès continued to be written about and discussed in the last years of war and Léon Blum's trial at Riom remained a touchstone of how the republic stood up to fascism. These heroes had latterly been joined by such figures as André Philip and Félix Gouin and more recently by the leaders of the internal resistance, such as Georges Bidault, as well as those recently murdered in France, such as Georges Mandel.

Two leading *Manchester Guardian* articles by Denis Brogan in September 1944 exemplify some of the major themes of this narrative. In the first he discussed the divisions in France that contributed to its defeat in 1940, asserting that 'Vichy drew its support mainly from the classes who were the chief cause of the disunity in France before the war' and comparing the interwar French right to 'reactionary aristocrats in the eighteenth century' who did nothing for the 'welfare of France' and were 'inspired by the spirit of emigrant nobles'. Making pointed reference to the establishment of the Third Republic following the collapse of the Third Empire, Brogan also saw in the Resistance an end to the enmity between church and state that had dogged French political life and which had also made it less comprehensible to British observers. Brogan pointed to the 'close co-operation of the Catholic and Republican trade unions' and the contribution of members of the clergy to resistance, noting the role of Georges Bidault, former editor of the Catholic paper and a leading figure in the Conseil National de la Résistance. Brogan went on to suggest that Bonapartist tendencies in the

army would also be set aside as the army now formed by the Maquis would be 'linked closely with democratic France' and would bear comparison with the armies of 1792.¹⁵

In the second leader, two weeks later, Brogan made further references to the turning points in modern French history. He also sought to make comparisons between Britain and France which emphasised how much they owed to each other despite their differences. Brogan referred to British criticisms of the 1789 revolution and the ways it had divided the French state, only to insist that the resistance 'lived by the fire' of the Revolution which had made France once again 'the pioneer and martyr of great ideas, once more a moral force'. According to Brogan, 'the ideas of the Revolution are a greater force for unity than they have been since 1789', and had united men as diverse as André Philip, Charles de Gaulle and Georges Bidault. He went on to draw explicit parallels between the new Britain which had turned its back on appeasement, and the new France that these men, who had 'remade the spirit of France', represented. Brogan ended the piece with a call for France to be given a leading role in the reconstruction of Europe.¹⁶

Brogan's stance is typical of many British left-wing and left of centre commentators; other publications also situated the liberation of Paris in a history of French heroes. The *Spectator*, for instance, delighted that 'it is characteristic of Paris that her liberation came from within. Her own arms brought salvation. Armed risings are in her tradition. Nowhere has the call "aux armes, citoyens" been responded to through the centuries with greater zest. Georges Clemenceau was one of those who rallied to it against the same foe in 1870.'¹⁷ The *Observer's* deputy editor, Donald Tyerman, celebrated the end of an aberrant regime:

To the Resistance, to their resolution and their leadership belongs the biggest of the tributes..The republic re-emerges into life...we can now say, after all our doubting 'Vive la République'¹⁸

And, a week later, when collaborationist radio closed down, 'the air of Paris itself has been freed'.¹⁹

The celebratory tone of such articles was not impaired by concerns over de Gaulle's leadership credentials, although debates over these continued during 1944 and beyond. As for the position of French communists, while Boris's precipitate action at the BBC may have been prompted by fears that the communists were aiming to take the credit for the liberation of Paris, this was not apparently of great concern at the time to British commentators who preferred to emphasise the unity of the resistance. Following the Liberation, French communists were generally discussed at

¹⁵ *Manchester Guardian* 6.9.44

¹⁶ *Manchester Guardian* 23.9.44

¹⁷ *Spectator* 25.8.44

¹⁸ *Observer* 20.8.44

¹⁹ *ibid.* 27.8.44

some length in the left-leaning British press in terms of the part they were playing in the provisional government. It was hoped they would put loyalty to France before any other commitment. In the *New Statesman*, Raymond Mortimer stressed the patriotism of 'this most articulate and the most disciplined French party, insisting 'their passion is to build a happy and powerful France'.²⁰

Thus ideas of nationhood remained powerful and were accommodated within a grand narrative of a movement towards democratic socialism in which both the French Revolution of 1789 and constitutional and socio-economic progress in Britain could be accommodated. Amidst stories of liberation and the announcement of the reappearance of the *Ligues des droits de l'Homme*, the October 1944 edition of *France and Britain* carried an article recounting the work of Jean Moulin and describing the contents of the programme of the *Conseil National de la Résistance* which he created, with its promise of 'true economic and social democracy'²¹ and a range of social security measures. It then looked at the practical work the CNR was doing in organising health provision in the liberated areas of France, drawing obvious parallels with current debates in Britain on such matters. Significantly, it stressed the 'use that was made of revolutionary and national sentiment in the creation of such a movement'.²²

The aim of positioning the French resistance in a narrative of suffering and renewal alongside a Britain that had stood up to the Nazis and fascists tended to dominate. One account of a resistance heroine: ('Let's call her Mme X' by the novelist, F. Tennyson Jesse) appeared in the *Manchester Guardian*,

For though it is true...our greatest glory that Great Britain saved the world, and saved it along with her Dominions and colonies, it is equally true that only France can save England...We were the bulwark which held the world, but France has always been the flame that lit it, guttering low at one time...but cherished by thousands of French people, many of them now dead.²³

Pierre Brossolette, who took his own life rather than face further Gestapo torture was one of those dead. His actions no longer divided left-wing opinion in Britain, but contributed instead to ideas of heroic resistance. His wife's connections with the Ministry of Information and the BBC may have played a part. The work of the Brossolettes could be represented as emblematic of Anglo-French co-operation.²⁴

²⁰ *New Statesman* 23.12.44

²¹ Michel, H. and B. Mirkine-Guetzévitch (1954). *Les idées politiques et sociales de la Résistance*. Paris, Presses Universitaires de France.p218

²² *France and Britain* October 1944 Vol 3. No 11

²³ *Manchester Guardian* 1.9.44

²⁴ *France and Britain* November 1944 Vol 3 No 12

British Labour Party supporters gave support to their French opposite numbers in the autumn of 1944 and referred to the French Socialist Party as unified, resistant and committed to revolutionary principles. A British delegation attended the French Socialist conference in October; it included William Pickles who broadcast an account on the BBC and referred to the many 'old friends' he had met there. *France and Britain* assured readers that it 'welcomed into its ranks honest democrats, anti-clericals, sincere Christians and ardent revolutionaries'.²⁵ This was the kind of broad church the Fabians prided themselves on offering. Harold Laski, also at the conference, wrote in the *New Statesman*:

I doubt whether there has ever been a moment in French history when the people of France were more ready or more eager in their desire to complete the revolution of 1789.²⁶

The narrative of Anglo-French friendship and socialist renewal, although still based around notions of nationhood, also included a continued commitment to internationalism. The *Manchester Guardian* welcomed the resurgence of co-operation across frontiers by trade unionists, applauding the visit to France by Walter Citrine in October and the forthcoming World Trade Union Conference at a time when 'the spirit of revolution' was again present, urging the strengthening of the ILO.²⁷ The notion of a 'Federal Europe' had long been an attraction, and in some cases an obsession for those hoping to develop a distinctive socialist foreign policy²⁸ and there was renewed discussion on how Britain and France could take a lead in bringing this about, especially in the light of the 'German problem' that would need to be tackled when peace was finally achieved.

The military dominance of the United States that had now been established and its commitment to unrestrained capitalism appeared to threaten the establishment of a Europe led by democratic socialists from France and Britain. The fact that recognition by the USA and Britain of the French Provisional Government was delayed until October 23 1944 was interpreted by the British left as grudging, high-handed and an affront to the heroes of resistance as well as likely to prevent the revival of the 'Entente Cordiale' that would ensure a peaceful Europe. Pierre Viénot was a man known to British socialists as a member of the SFIO before the war. When he died in the spring of 1944, his role as ambassador for the CFLN (following his escape from prison in France) and tireless

²⁵ *France and Britain* October 1944 Vol 3 No 11

²⁶ *New Statesman* 25.11.44

²⁷ *Manchester Guardian* 14.10.44

²⁸ Minion, M. (2000). "The Fabian Society and Europe during the 1940s: The Search for a 'Socialist Foreign Policy' " *European History Quarterly* **30**: 237-270.

efforts to get recognition for this organisation was commemorated in obituaries that indicted the USA's reluctance to work with the Free French.²⁹

As news about French resistance became more widespread, the 'problem' of de Gaulle became somewhat less pressing. Even before the liberation of Paris, the *New Statesman* found a way to conflate the two, in an article berating the USA for its reluctance to recognise the Provisional Government:

Gaullism is the political idea of resistance leading to liberation, in which many different parties have a share. In that sense of the word, Gaullism, after the liberation, will no longer represent a programme for France. It will be merely an honoured memory. On the day of liberation, the idea of Gaullism will yield to the idea of France.³⁰

France and Britain celebrated the eventual recognition of the Provisional Government with an article entitled 'French Socialists were Right', for putting their faith in de Gaulle, who, for all his faults, had shown

an uncanny ability for keeping his mind in almost daily contact with the slowly shifting trends of French home opinion, and he realised before any other European politician the significance of the new men and new ideas of resistant movements and resistant parties and the importance of perpetually renewed contacts with them.

The writer went on to hope that the General would 'move towards a dignified and honoured retirement when political life becomes normal'.³¹

This thesis has made extensive use of journalistic and other contemporary writings in an attempt to capture a strand of public opinion in Britain – that of those on the left of the political spectrum who remained - at least most of the time - sceptical about communism, broadly committed to democratic socialism and mostly supportive of the Labour Party. While it is notoriously difficult to pin down the exact nature of what any part of British society desired or believed, this study has attempted to address the question of how the British left intelligentsia described France between 1930 and 1944 and made connections with their French counterparts by looking at some of the journalism they produced.

The contention here is that many of those who wrote articles and took part in other activities organised by or involving people from the left of British society remained interested in and committed to a France which they saw as playing an essential role in the development of liberal

²⁹ *France and Britain* July/August 1944 Vol 3 No 8/9

³⁰ *New Statesman* 15.7.44

³¹ *France and Britain* December 1944 Vol 4 No 1

democratic values in the past and social democratic values in the future. Such an account provides a contrast to the view that has held the attention of historians and invaded the popular imagination for so long: one that focuses on Anglo-French relations as beset by misunderstandings and animosity. Such poor relations were seemingly displayed in the diplomatic rift that emerged from World War One and subsequent peace negotiations, the failures of the governments of the two countries to co-operate in their treatment of Germany and prevent the rise of Nazism, the weaknesses of the Third Republic leading to the collapse of France in 1940, and the subsequent tensions between the British government and de Gaulle. Such a perspective remains persuasive, but is open to the charge that it exaggerates the extent of Francophobia in Britain. While acknowledging that many – on all sides of the political spectrum - were critical of some aspects of France and the French people during the period under review, this thesis, by shifting the focus from leading politicians and diplomats towards those intellectuals who attempted to influence others through their writings and broadcasts, contributes to a more balanced account of British attitudes to France.

This thesis also provides a glimpse into ways in which the left intelligentsia hoped to reach a broader public during this period. Those writing in the journals discussed here also sought to influence political culture and reach people who might have felt excluded from political life at a time when Britain was emerging as a full liberal democracy following the extension of the franchise in 1928. The spread of basic education, along with urbanisation, industrialisation and rapidly improving communications and transport, was changing attitudes and aspirations of the mass of the people and the concerns of elites. Recent work has drawn attention to the development of ‘associational culture’ during this period.³² Such culture took many forms, but this thesis has been interested in those organisations which aimed to inform and influence the general public, such as the WEA, the Fabian Society, newspapers such as *Tribune* and the Left Book Club. It details how, whilst seeking to nurture political participation in Britain and to encourage a wider knowledge of international affairs, many writers and activists also chose to make links with those of a like mind in Europe. In particular, and especially once general progress towards democracy in Europe seemed to be under threat, they drew attention to the shared traditions of the British and French left.

Amongst such traditions, the British left could include critiques of capitalism - both those of early socialists as well as Marx - and convictions about the triumph of progress and reason through science and rational enquiry occasioned by the debates sparked across Europe by the Reformation, the Renaissance and Enlightenment. These provided a basis on which many on the British left could construct a grand narrative of a movement towards democratic socialism in which both the French

³² McCarthy, H. (2012). "Whose Democracy? Histories of British political culture between the wars." *The Historical Journal* 55(01): 221-238.

Revolution of 1789 and the advances in British parliamentary reform could be accommodated. Educated elites in both countries had customarily encountered each other's literature and acquired some knowledge of each other's languages. French had been the language of diplomacy and culture for centuries, even if English was starting to become more prominent following the end of the First World War. It could be said that the left intelligentsia in Britain and France belonged to communities that were, in the words of Marc Bloch, 'exposed through their development to the action of the same broad causes ... because they are close and contemporaneous, owing their existence in part at least to a common origin'.³³ In addition, socialists were attracted to the idea of internationalism – with its emphasis on common values and the advantages of co-operation across borders – and this led to their participation in international organisations and forums that brought them into contact with their French counterparts as well as with socialists from elsewhere.

There were, however, limits to this 'internationalism'. Alongside talk of 'international brotherhood' and the need for 'international associations' and 'a United Europe', the concept of the 'nation' was never wholly abandoned, and, indeed, remained commonplace in the publications considered in this thesis. This imposed limits on Anglo-French co-operation in several areas. While discussing the efforts to achieve understanding and co-operation between the British and French left, this study has drawn attention to factors which militated against a harmonious relationship between them. These factors included socialist ideals, party politics and the question of how to achieve power, the problems presented by communism and the demands of nation states at a time of rapid change. A review of these factors may help explain why such efforts have been to a large extent forgotten and may also shed light on why there appears to have been a diminution in such efforts following the end of the Second World War.

One such factor is evident in efforts to bring about a 'socialist foreign policy': one that would pursue the socialist ideal of equality in the interests of securing a lasting peace. Ashworth has referred to 'the perennial problem of constructing a social democratic foreign policy in a world still dominated by inter-state politics and by the problem of war'.³⁴ International harmony through negotiations and disarmament may have been the ideal, but doubts about the efficacy of pacifism, anti-militarism and neutrality arose in the inter-war period in dealing with expansionist dictators, leading to confusion and disputes within the left and problems forming a coherent policy on the eve of war. While there was a concerted attempt to emphasise Anglo-French unity when the Second World War broke out, national concerns were evident in disagreements over conscription, conscientious objectors, treatment of opposition to war and government direction of the war effort, although many such

³³ Tyrrell, I. (2007). What is transnational history? *séminaire collectif du CENA*. Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociale.

³⁴ Ashworth, L. M. (2007). *International Relations and the Labour Party*. London, New York, I. B. Tauris.p230

disagreements were papered over. One might ask whether the idea of Franco-British co-operation was something that flourished more in the minds of those whose notions of what was possible were shaped entirely by hopes for the future rather than awareness of the present. However, the defeat of France in 1940 did not dash all hopes that a 'socialist foreign policy' could be developed once victory had brought to power those representing the 'common people' in both Britain and a liberated France. At least until the liberation, French resistance could be imagined as embodying France's revolutionary heritage, socialist ideals, internationalist sentiment, even lessons learnt from Britain. The wartime doubts about de Gaulle's leadership often concerned his obvious attachment to specific French interests. The socialists in his entourage could – and indeed did - make the case for his willingness to embrace republican principles, but did not claim that he might be willing to pursue a foreign policy based on internationalism and equality amongst nations.

While internationalism might be seen as a cornerstone of any 'socialist foreign policy', the social democratic left in both Britain and France pursued a different kind of internationalism from that pursued by the communist far left: one intended to be more accommodating of specific national interests. Finding a way to deal with the attractions of communism and the activities of communists themselves remained a challenge throughout the period under review. Both the British Labour Party and the SFIO had consciously distinguished themselves from those who followed the dictates of the Second Congress of the Comintern in 1920 and accused communists of owing their first loyalty to the Soviet Union rather than the nation. However, parties on the left who aspired to power were engaged in ongoing debates on policy and tactics and these required an engagement with the tenets of communism, and, on occasion, with the Soviet Union as a power in world politics. Communism remained a preoccupation for both British and French socialists and although at times a common approach could be established, national and party political considerations could lead to misunderstandings and even rancour.

Any 'socialist foreign policy' would have to get to grips with the problem of inequalities on a global scale exemplified by the extensive colonial empires attached to Britain and France, which had sustained their power and status in the twentieth century. That the peoples of the world were divided into races was then conventional wisdom, while only limited notions of 'racial equality' had yet to be widely accepted by the left. Discussions of 'human rights' that went beyond those proclaimed in 1792 did get underway in the interwar period, especially once discrimination and persecution in the dictatorships became widely known, as evidenced, for example, by the

declaration of the *Ligue de droits de l'homme* in 1936.³⁵ Such discussions gathered pace from 1939 but their logical consequence - full scale emancipation of colonial peoples – seemed at odds with national interests in a time of war whilst remaining potentially explosive to good relations between British socialists and the French counterparts.

Relations with other important powers would also on occasion test attempts to develop a strong Anglo-French relationship based on a belief in a common interest in moving towards a socialist future. In 1930 it could still be claimed by some that the United States did not have a central part to play in European affairs, but by 1944 it was impossible to ignore her growing might, even if its future commitment to the continent appeared uncertain. During the war, the numerous exiles from occupied Europe in London may have given an impression of what post-war Europe would look like, but the belief that Anglo-French leadership of a liberated continent could transform Europe was challenged by Germany's imminent defeat by the armies of the Soviet Union and the United States, with their allies playing a somewhat subordinate role.

This thesis has aimed to shed light on a strand of British opinion about France that has been to some extent ignored in accounts of Anglo-French relations. Its aim has been to identify and describe how such opinion was reflected in left-wing journals and publications intended to influence political elites as well as the wider public from 1930 to 1944. The contention here is that such opinion remained largely positive about the past, present and future of France and saw Britain's relationship with that country as vital to the realisation of socialist principles, even if there remained points of disagreement and misunderstanding.

It remains to be asked why the Francophilia of much of the British left during the period 1930-1944 has largely been forgotten and, indeed, why it seemed to dissipate in the years following the end of the Second World War. Such an investigation is beyond the scope of this work, but it is possible to speculate on some possible causes.

The experiences of British and French socialists during the Second World War, despite the contacts and conversations that occurred in London, were different in so many respects that their respective political parties and movements emerged from the conflict with less in common than had been the case following the First World War. Even when many on the British left were sharply critical of French governments following the earlier conflict, there could be common cause between

³⁵ Burgers, J. H. (1992). "The Road to San Francisco: The Revival of the Human Rights Idea in the Twentieth Century." *Human Rights Quarterly* 42(4).

supporters of anti-militarism, disarmament, internationalism and anti-fascism during the interwar period. While the fall of France in 1940 was followed by energetic attempts on the part of the British left to support resistant France and encourage it to acquire and maintain democratic and socialist credentials, the challenges facing the British Labour Party and the reconstituted SFIO were radically different. The Labour Party's remarkable election victory of 1945 represented an opportunity to realise an ambitious programme of domestic reform which in itself demanded the attention of many commentators and analysts, who were less willing to examine the example of France. The position of the SFIO was far more difficult; organisation and membership had suffered during the years of occupation and recent history had left a legacy of bitterness. The exclusion of those who might have been Pétainists or collaborators took up the time and energies of the leaders. Camus remarked in 1945, 'The killers once gone, the French were left with a hatred partially shorn of its object. They still look at one another with a residue of anger'.³⁶ Attempts to re-establish any unity among politicians from different backgrounds who had taken part in resistance seemed unlikely to succeed. Antipathy between French socialists and communists was nothing new and hopes that involvement in the resistance would prove a basis for long-term post-war co-operation proved unfounded. Even though the three main parties representing resistance – the PCF, the SFIO and the Mouvement républicain populaire (MRP) went into coalition together in 1945, such apparent collaboration between socialists and communists did not last long. The PCF showed little interest in the programme of the CNR and insisted on its primacy amongst the forces of resistance. Even when it was forced out of government in 1947, it remained the biggest party in the National Assembly, while the SFIO had difficulty carving out a distinctive position for itself.³⁷ Such disputes surely made it harder to write about French politics in a way that followed easily from the narrative that had been developed during Liberation in which French resistance was imagined as a unifying and transformative force.

In contrast with the PCF, the British Communist Party, despite enjoying a period of unprecedented popularity, won only two seats in the general election of 1945. The Labour Party was more popular, more organised and more prepared. Even those who had toyed in the past with ideas of a united front, such as Harold Laski, now Labour Party chairman, repelled the overtures of the CPGB and an attempt by that party in 1945 to affiliate to the Labour Party was rejected even more decisively than in 1943. The CPGB may have ceased to pose an electoral threat to the Labour Party, but its influence in some trade unions was blamed for industrial unrest which threatened economic recovery. As the

³⁶ Judt, T. (1992). *Past imperfect: French intellectuals 1944-1956*. Berkeley, University of California Press.p35

³⁷ Hodge, C. C. (1993). "The Long Fifties: The Politics of Socialist Programmatic Revision in Britain, France and Germany." *Contemporary European History* 2(1): 17-34.

British left became increasingly critical of the Soviet Union during the late 1940s, many of its supporters came to see French communism as a potential threat to the burgeoning western alliance.

However much the non-communist left in Britain and France might purport to pursue policies that would embrace internationalist rather than national considerations, in the end they had now achieved political power within states that had histories as great powers with extensive empires. The Fabian Colonial Bureau and the Labour Party's Imperial Advisory Committee had worked out plans for the British Empire which appeared progressive, even if Foreign Secretary Bevin continued to see the British Empire as 'at the heart of [Britain's] destiny'³⁸. The granting of independence to British India and talk of eventual autonomy for other possessions offered the prospect of the eventual dismantling of the British Empire. Military weakness and financial considerations may have played a greater role than ideology, and the notion of the Commonwealth may have continued to feed ideas of national greatness, but France's determination to recover her status by means of restoring her empire did not fit the narrative of France as transformed by the heroism of a French resistance committed to ideas of liberation and equality. If Britain was willing to contemplate a limited retreat from empire, its part in the Allied victory gave it a confidence in its continuing status in the world. This contrasted with the view expressed by Gaston Monnerville, the deputy and resister from French Guiana put in charge of the future of French colonies in the Provisional Government, who remarked that, 'Without her empire, France is just another liberated country. Thanks to her empire, France is a victorious country'.³⁹ The sight of former resisters in post-war French governments – many of them socialists – supporting French colonial wars in Indochina and then North Africa made any kind of dialogue between the British and French left more difficult.

Ernest Bevin, the British foreign secretary in the post-war Labour government, had at first seemed to favour a close Anglo-French partnership. He struck up a productive relationship with Georges Bidault (Moulin's successor at the CNR and now leader of the Christian Democrat MRP), leading to the Treaty of Dunkirk in 1947. However, differences over the treatment of the Ruhr region had already surfaced and were exacerbated by Bevin's growing inclination to see the spread of Soviet communism as a greater threat to peace and stability than a restored Germany. The British left may have had reservations about the wisdom of close relations with the USA (and Bevin may himself have expressed doubts about American culture), but the Labour leadership was quick to accept United States support when it was offered by Truman that year. The pursuit of the Atlantic relationship took precedence as the Cold War developed and steadily eroded the idea of France as

³⁸ Vickers, R. (2004). *The Labour Party and the World, Volume 1 : The Evolution of Labour's Foreign Policy, 1900-51*. Manchester, Manchester University Press.p164

³⁹ Fitzgerald, E. (1988). "Did France's Colonial Empire Make Economic Sense? A Perspective from the Postwar Decade, 1946–1956." *The Journal of Economic History* 48(02): 373-385.

Britain's natural ally. Marshall Aid for European recovery in 1948 was accepted with enthusiasm in both Britain and France and meant those on the British left who had criticised Bevin's foreign policy as too pro-American and demanded a 'Third Way' were effectively silenced, with Richard Crossman, one of the 'Keep Left' group saying 'I will be frank. My own views about America have changed a great deal in the last few months'.⁴⁰ In *Tribune* and the *New Statesman* Marshall Aid was applauded. Kenneth O. Morgan has pointed out 'a revolution in Britain's relations with the North Atlantic powers, with western Europe and with the Soviet Union and its satellites'.⁴¹ Although Bevin spoke warmly and eloquently about the 'unity of Europe', for instance in his speech on January 22 1948, he showed little enthusiasm for federalist or integrationist schemes and spoke more and more about Britain's 'special relationship' with the United States.⁴²

The end of the Second World War saw a radically altered Europe soon to be divided on ideological lines. In Britain and France socialists were in power, but on very different terms. The factors that had inhibited complete understanding between the left of the two countries were now magnified, with communism playing a different role in each state and affecting the parties of social democracy differently. Internationalism was now a concern of the New York-based United Nations or seen as realisable in an integrated Europe in which Britain had little interest. National interests in a bi-polar world were paramount. While domestic policy on both sides of the Channel might seem to embody socialist ideals, it was more difficult to put such principles into practice on an international, let alone a colonial stage. For some on the British left, France was a disappointment.

This is not to say that French culture did not continue to attract the interest of the British left. Noel Annan, commenting on the importance of France in the first half of the twentieth century to 'Our Age' commented, 'Immediately after the Liberation Sartre captured British intellectuals as well as his countrymen'.⁴³ However, the communist proclivities of Sartre's new review, *Les Temps Modernes*, and the fact that many French intellectuals lent towards communism when many in Britain were leaning away from it, made conversation more difficult.

To track the decline of interest in French politics and enthusiasm for French culture amongst the British left intelligentsia would be the subject of another thesis. There is a need for research into the preoccupations of the left intelligentsia in the post-war period as demonstrated not only in their publications, but also in the activities they undertook in order to reach a wider public. Such research might encompass the success of efforts to establish international forums for European socialists in

⁴⁰ Vickers, R. (2004). *The Labour Party and the World, Volume 1 : The Evolution of Labour's Foreign Policy, 1900-51*. Manchester, Manchester University Press.p172

⁴¹ Morgan, K. O. (1984). *Labour in Power 1945-1951*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.p277

⁴² *Ibid*.p276

⁴³ Annan, N. (1990). *Our Age*. London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson.p253

the post-war world. While the exploits of the French resistance have continued to be a popular subject with British writers, film directors and television programme makers, further investigations might reveal whether they have contributed to a narrative that embodies specific ideas about Britain and France and their joint concerns.

Finally, let us recall the close friendship between the two socialist intellectuals, Léon Blum and Harold Laski, both of whom died in March 1950. Blum wrote of Laski

In matters where I have acquired some competence – the literary and political history of France in the last two centuries – I have always found him the master. It was he, more than any other person, who made British people see the revolutionary nature of the war.

Five days before his death, Blum wrote Laski's obituary, concluding 'Entre le papier ou j'écris et moi l'image de l'ami que j'aimais s'interpose...comme il était jeune encore'⁴⁴.

⁴⁴ Martin, B. K. (1953). Harold Laski : 1893-1950 A Biographical Memoir. London, Victor Gollancz Ltd.p271

Bibliography : Archives

Archive	Type	Dates	Location
Ministry of information INF/1	INF/1 Correspondence, reports, memoranda	1940-1945	The National Archive
Foreign Office FO/371	FO/371 French resistance: Memoranda, letters	1940-1945	The National Archive
Fabian Society	A/: correspondence C/: Exec committee & lectures F/: Local societies J/: Bureaux L/: Labour Party Relations	1930-1945	London School of Economics
Hugh Dalton	PA272 Political and general Correspondence	1930-1945	London School of Economics
BBC French service	Scripts Files on Henry Hauck, Georges Boris; Dorothy Pickles; William Pickles	1940-1944	BBC Written Archive, Caversham
BBC Listener Research Department	Surveys of European Audiences	1941-1943	BBC Written Archive, Caversham
Labour History	LP/WG/ William Gillies Papers LP/LSI/ London Socialist International - correspondence & reports	1936-1945	People's History Museum, Manchester
Philip Noel-Baker papers	GBR/0014/NKBR	1936-1945	Churchill Archives Centre, Cambridge
Ernest Bevin papers	GBR/0014/BEVN	1940-1944	Churchill Archives Centre, Cambridge
Kingsley Martin papers	SxMs11 : Letters, newspaper cuttings	1927-1945	University of Sussex
Union of Democratic Control	DDC5 & 6 Pamphlets, cuttings, reports DYO/10 International Peace Campaign correspondence	1930-1945	University of Hull

PRESS

<i>Journal/newspaper</i>	<i>Dates</i>	<i>Location</i>
New Statesman and Nation	1923-1945	British Library St Pancras
Political Quarterly	1930-1945	British Library, St Pancras
The Economist	1923-1945	British Library, St Pancras
The Spectator	1923-1945	British Library, St Pancras
Fabian News	1940-1945	British Library, St Pancras
Fabian Quarterly	1940-1944	British Library, St Pancras
Left News	1936-1944	British Library, St Pancras
Highway	1938-1945	British Library, St Pancras
Labour	1933-1938	British Library, St Pancras
Tribune	1940-1944	British Library, Colindale
Hampstead and Highgate Express	1941-1944	British Library, Colindale
Daily Mirror	1941	British Library, Colindale
France and Britain	1940-1945	L.S.E. Library
Fact Service	1939-1941	L.S.E. Archive, Fabian Society Archive
Manchester Guardian	1940-1945	ProQuest Historical Newspapers (online)
The Observer	1940-1945	ProQuest Historical Newspapers (online)
The Times	1941	The Times Digital Archive (online)
The Times Literary Supplement	1919-1930 1941	The Times Digital Archive (online)
The Independent	2004	www.independent.co.uk/news/media/online/
Le Populaire	1942	http://gallica.bnf.fr/

ONLINE RESOURCES

http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/	1924-1942	Transactions of Houses of Parliament
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http://www.ilo.org/	1940	Conference report of International Labour Organisation
http://www.labour-party.org.uk/	current	Labour Party history
http://librarysupport.shef.ac.uk/	1935	Genesis of Left Book Club (1936)
http://www.lrd.org.uk/	1939-1941	Labour Research Department Archive
http://www2.lse.ac.uk/aboutLSE/lseHistory	1922	History of LSE
http://www.marxists.org/archive/	1923	Communist Review
http://www.mfo.ac.uk/	2011	Maison Française Oxford conference podcasts
http://www.nationalmediamuseum.org.uk/	1933	Daily Herald history
http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/	1951 1968	Nobel prize citations for Léon Jouhaux and René Cassin
http://www.oxforddnb.com/	2004 ed.	Biographies of politicians, journalists and activists
http://www.time.com/time/magazine/	1941	Time magazine archive
http://www.ina.fr	1942	Transcripts of de Gaulle's speeches

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