

Schism and Solidarity in Social Movements

THE POLITICS OF LABOR IN THE
FRENCH THIRD REPUBLIC



Christopher K. Ansell

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Like many organizations and social movements, the Third Republic French labor movement exhibited a marked tendency toward schism into competing sectarian organizations. During the roughly fifty-year period from the fall of the Paris Commune to the creation of the powerful French Communist party, the French labor movement shifted from schism to broad-based solidarity and back to schism. Ansell analyzes the dynamic interplay between organization, ideology, and political mobilization that produced these shifts between schism and solidarity. The aim is not only to shed new light on the evolution of the Third Republic French labor movement, but also to develop a more generic understanding of schism and solidarity in organizations and social movements. This book builds on insights drawn from sociological analyses of Protestant sects and anthropological studies of segmentary societies, as well as from organization and social movement theory.

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The Politics of Labor in the French Third Republic

CHRISTOPHER K. ANSELL

University of California, Berkeley



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*To Jeannine Mathyer Ansell
and the memory of
Robert James Ansell*

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Acknowledgments

Upon completing this book, I feel a bit like I imagine a French journeyman may have felt after completing his *tour de France* – that obligatory journey around France to hone his skills. It was quite an ordeal, but he knows he is a better craftsman now than when he started. He is also highly aware of the fact that he could neither have developed these skills nor completed the trip without the sustained help of others. My *tour de France* began at the University of Chicago. In my mind's eye, that experience is forever associated with trudging through wintery Hyde Park to the weekly meeting of the Workshop on Organizations and State-building. Under the inspired leadership of John Padgett (master craftsman), that workshop became my intellectual hometown, the place where the ideas for this book were hatched and nurtured. Sincere thanks to John for his continuing guidance and unswerving commitment to this project over many years. Many others also contributed to the special intellectual atmosphere at Chicago, especially Camille Bussette, José Cheibub, Roger Gould, J. David Greenstone, Frances Haman, Gary Herrigel, Roland Hsu, Antoine Joseph, David Laitin, Walter Mattli, Paul McLean, Janet Morford, Adam Przeworski, Bill Sewell, Bernie Silberman, Natalie Silberman-Wainwright, Bat Sparrow, Greg Vince, Pat Vince, and Mark Wainwright. In particular, David Greenstone had a profound influence on this book, although he died of cancer at a very early stage in my research. I recall David telling me once that the project needed a “little more Tocqueville.” I ignored him at the time, but I hope he might be less critical of the final product.

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money ran out, I was frantic to complete some critical archival research before returning to Chicago. There was no money for photocopies or even Metro fare. Suzanne walked from the Twentieth Arrondissement to the Marais every day for two weeks and spent eight hours a day hand copying the elaborate orthography of French clerks. Love knows no bounds!

1

The Struggle and the Conciliation

Church or sect? For French trade unions and socialist parties that seems to have always been the question. Two of the leading socialist leaders of the Third Republic, Jean Jaurès and Jules Guesde, even came to personally embody this choice. As their fellow socialist Charles Rappoport, who knew them both, wrote in his memoirs:

Jules Guesde and Jean Jaurès, two men, two worlds: two psychologies, two characters, two philosophies; the struggle and the conciliation; the analysis and the synthesis; harshness and generosity; intransigence and suppleness. (Rappoport 1991, 185)

Trotsky described Jaurès as a “capacious spirit” with “a physical revulsion for all sectarianism” (Goldberg 1968, 329, his translation). In contrast, Jules Guesde was the “guardian of the dogma” for whom “all deviation inspired . . . the same horror as the Christian schism did Innocent III” (Willard 1991, 93; Lefranc 1963, 50).

Between 1884 and 1905, French socialists were organized as sects – the Guesdists, the Possibilists, the Allemanists, the Independent Socialists, the Blanquists, and the anarchists – fighting among themselves for influence with the unions. Then, in 1905, these socialist sects set aside their differences under the broad tent of Jaurès’s ecumenical ministry – his intellectual synthesis of the competing “traditions” of French socialism. In 1920, this Jaurèsian synthesis unraveled: the French Communist party was founded in a schism of, in Léon Blum’s words, “the Old House.” To this day, the French Left remains fundamentally divided, albeit with important moments of alliance along the way – the Popular Front in 1936 and the Common Program in the 1970s.

In parallel with the socialist parties, the French unions have also struggled between church and sect. Between 1884 and 1902, the unions were balkanized by their allegiance to different political sects. But in 1902, the unions tentatively united in the *Confédération Générale du Travail* (General Confederation of Labor; CGT); by 1906, in the famous “Charter of Amiens,” the CGT further consolidated this unity by ratifying a principle of strict autonomy from political parties. But like party

unity, the solidarity of the unions was not to last. In 1921, approximately a half year after the party schism, the CGT itself broke into two rival blocs. Unions were again divided by their allegiance to competing parties. Contemporary French unions remain divided between several rival union confederations.

This book analyzes the organizational and ideological development of the French labor movement between 1872 and 1922. These were critical formative years for the modern French labor movement, institutionalizing a pattern of labor organization and ideology still visible in contemporary France. In trying to understand these developments, the book has two goals. The first is to describe the particular social, political, and economic conditions that explain these historical outcomes. From this perspective, understanding the formation of the French labor movement has its own intrinsic importance. The second is to provide a general framework for explaining a pattern of schism and solidarity common to many organizations and social movements. Here, French labor history has been used more instrumentally to develop and evaluate this general framework. Although sometimes tugging in different directions, these two goals are generally complementary. They will be discussed in turn.

Urban Populism and Communal Unionism

With its early appearance (alongside the British and American labor movements) and international visibility, the French labor movement has always been regarded by some as a critical comparative case for understanding the emergence of “modern” labor movements (Katznelson and Zolberg 1986). For others, the formation of the French labor movement provides insight into the political and intellectual development of a nation with enormous influence in Europe and abroad. From either perspective, the French labor movement has four distinctive (though not unique) characteristics that this book seeks to explain:

1. The development of a divided labor movement, rent by the schisms of 1920–1 into communist and socialist blocs
2. The establishment of one of the largest Communist parties (with Italy) in Western Europe
3. The mobilization of a prewar labor union movement around an ideology known as “revolutionary syndicalism,” which had its intellectual counterpart in the theories of the philosopher Georges Sorel

4. The development of a form of strike and union mobilization that rejects bureaucratic unionism, eschews representation by political parties, celebrates grassroots “direct action,” and makes broad-based social and political demands; in other contexts, this form of mobilization has been labeled “social movement unionism” (Seidman 1994)

This book argues that the distinctive evolution of the French labor movement in the late nineteenth century can be understood in the context of a populist tradition in France that reaches back at least to the Revolution. There can be no more succinct summary of the populist creed than this phrase from a manifesto written by French Republicans in 1848: “Hence, the State is the people, the producer . . . [I]s it not sovereign, the producer of all riches?” (cited by Sewell 1980, 250). The analytical value of the term “populist” resides in its similarities to and differences with “class mobilization” and “republicanism.” On the one hand, like class mobilization, populism is oriented toward the mobilization of producers, although “the people” is a more elastic category than “the working class.” On the other hand, in its concern for sovereignty and its suspicion of the state and representative institutions, populism is close to republicanism. Like republicanism, populism tends to attribute the economic woes of the people as much to political causes as to economic ones.

In the late nineteenth century, the French labor movement was torn between its traditional republicanism, which organized a cross-class coalition in defense of Republican institutions, and a movement that sought to sever the link with republicanism by organizing workers strictly along class lines. Since populism overlapped with both Republican forms and class forms of mobilization, it provided a discourse that partially superseded this polarization. While populism is often thought of as a form of rural agrarian protest, the French working class was predominantly urban. French trade unions developed this urban populism into a doctrine known as revolutionary syndicalism, elements of which became a type of constitutional framework for the unification of the union movement. A form of “class populism” mediated between the republicanism of French workers and the pure class-conflict model advocated by Jules Guesde and, later, by the Communists. This class populism not only expressed the links of the labor movement to the Republican movement but also affirmed its position as a class movement within that larger movement.

Populism was a pattern of mobilization as well as a discourse. During the Third Republic, populism was associated with a series of strike waves

that erupted every ten years or so (Figure 1.1). These strike waves were contagious grassroots protests that expanded across the boundaries of trade, industry, and skill. As these protests snowballed, strike demands became increasingly political in character and national in scope. Their timing typically coincided with significant political crises and important episodes of republican state building. For the French labor movement, these populist strike waves were the “critical junctures” of both organization building and ideological articulation. They followed a distinctive pattern: increasingly expansive organizational and ideological solidarities developed in the ascending phase of the strike wave; then, during the descending phase, the movement tended to splinter into rival organizational and ideological camps. Sectarian groups like the Guesdists or the Communists were born in the descent.

This urban populism was associated with a second critical characteristic of French working-class mobilization: the strong tendency of French workers to mobilize and organize along territorial lines. Community-based labor movements were common in many countries in the nineteenth century. Many authors have described the local working-class subcultures that developed dense institutional infrastructures in neighborhoods and cities.¹ But the local “embeddedness” implied by these subcultures was challenged at the end of the nineteenth century, and in some cases much earlier, by the rise of powerful national organizations to represent labor. Although territorial unions organized by city or region thrived in many countries in the late nineteenth century, sectoral unionism emerged as the dominant trade-union structure in most nations by 1900. In the United States, for instance, the rise of national trade federations tended to undermine the autonomy of local unions and, consequently, the vitality of territorial unionism (Ulman 1966). Although territorial unions continued to exist, they played second fiddle to the sectoral unions. In France and a few other countries (like Italy), however, territorial unionism provided a strong counterweight to the power of the sectoral federations.

Political parties also posed a challenge for territorial unionism. Not only did political parties claim territorial representation for themselves, but the national scale of parliamentary representation also tended to “disembed” this representation from autonomous local working-class cultures. The famous German Social Democratic party, for example, devised institutional mechanisms that essentially disenfranchised vigorous urban subcultures (Schorske 1955; Nolan 1981). French parties

1 An important sample includes Bell (1986); Bonnell (1983); Greenberg (1985); Kealey (1980); Merriman (1985); Nolan (1981); and Oestreicher (1989).

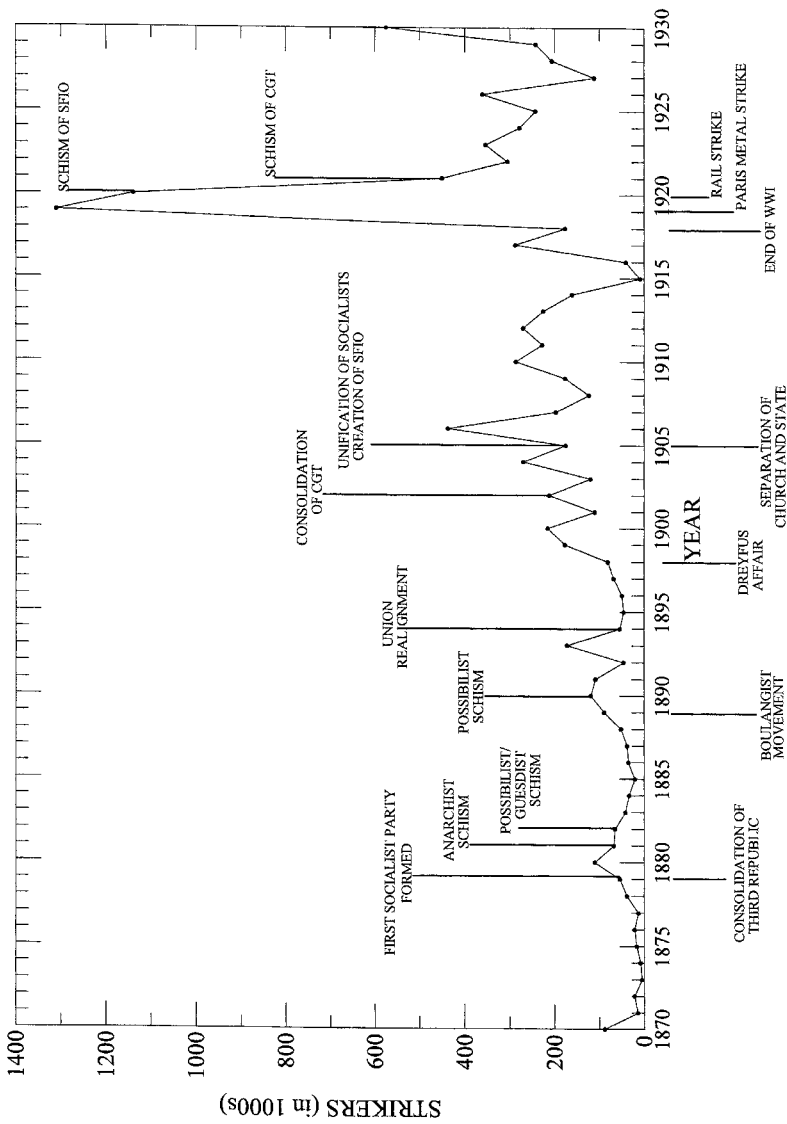


Figure 1.1. Strikes, politics, and organization building. *Source of strike data: Shorter and Tilly (1974, 361-2).*

mounted similar challenges, but territorial unions in France were able to establish and maintain an independent role in the labor movement. As examined in detail in this book, the relative importance of territorial unionism in France reflected the character of the nation's industrial organization and labor markets, its corporatist and mutualist traditions, and its republican electoral dynamics. Ultimately, territorial unionism both reflected and reinforced the populism of the French unions. By mobilizing unions around political issues that transcended the narrower economic concerns of sectoral unions, the territorial unions encouraged a type of communal solidarity more like that of political parties than of sectoral unions. Alfred Rosmer, a French revolutionary syndicalist turned Communist, observed that the pre-1914 French trade union confederation, the CGT, which gave a prominent place to territorial unions, was "something hybrid, at once a syndicalist organization and a political party, and more of a party than a syndicalist organization."²

Territorial unionism was the primary manifestation of a communal unionism that saw unions as a comprehensive moral agency – a role more commonly asserted by socialist parties, which saw sectoral unions as special-purpose associations designed to defend working-class interests at the workplace. Territorial unions portrayed themselves as centers for moral development and education (much as the Republican schools did for the larger society) and as champions of general ethical causes like anti-militarism (a position that inverted the traditional Republican celebration of military virtue). Communal unionism essentially fused two medieval institutions – the commune and the corporation – into one.³ The medieval commune and the medieval guild corporation were both autonomous self-governing moral agencies built around fraternal fellowship. In the late-nineteenth-century context, communalism, as symbolized by the Paris Commune, represented political autonomy from the centralizing Republican state. Corporatism, as symbolized by modern unions, represented the economic autonomy of workers. Together, they embodied a populist challenge to more conservative Republicans. The link between urban populism and communal unionism drew its clearest expression from Paul Brousse, an important figure in the Third Republic labor movement, who argued: "The Commune and the Corporation are the only means that the people will have, one day, to make its will prevail."⁴

2 Cited in Wohl (1966, 43, his translation).

3 In *Work and Revolution* (1980), William Sewell developed the argument that the postrevolutionary French labor movement strongly continued the traditions of ancien régime corporatism.

4 Cited in Lefranc 1963, 22.

Sectarian and Segmentary Systems

The book's second goal is to use French labor history to develop a more general theoretical perspective on the dynamics of organizational schism and solidarity.⁵ In the annals of many organizations and social movements, the history of the French labor movement represents an oft-heard story: hyper-politicization and ideological polarization followed by organizational schism and fragmentation. At the same time, the French labor movement (like other such movements) often exhibits a surprising capacity for broad-scale solidarity and mobilization. Under certain conditions, narrow sectarianism can evolve into the most surprising ecumenicalism, only to descend again into sectarianism. In both Protestantism and the French labor movement, schism and solidarity appear as the two sides of the same coin.⁶

As illustrated in Figure 1.2, three distinct alignments of union and party organization can be identified over the course of the fifty years between 1872 and 1922.

The first alignment, which was complete by 1882, was sectarian in the sense that a number of groups, arising through schism, competed for the heart and soul of the French working class. The third alignment (c. 1922) also arose through schism, though it produced two ideological blocs (Socialist and Communist) rather than myriad small sects. In both the first and the third alignments, unions were divided by their allegiance to different party groups. The second alignment (c. 1906) was the mirror image of these sectarian alignments: unions overcame their disagreements to unite in a broad-based union confederation, and party sects united into a single integrated Socialist party. A division between unions and parties replaced the division within unions and parties.

As chaotic as these organizational alignments and realignments may appear, the purpose of the book is to demonstrate that they have a type

5 There is a limited but interesting theoretical literature focusing on schism. In social movement theory, see Gerlach and Hine (1970), Defrance (1989), Gamson (1990, 103–8), Zald and Ash (in Zald and McCarthy 1994, 121–41), and Balser (1997). In the sociology of religion, see Wallis (1979), Bryant (1993), Bruce (1990), Stark and Bainbridge (1996, 121–49), and Liebman, Sutton, and Wuthnow (1988). In social psychology, see Sani and Reicher (1991). In anthropology, see Bateson (1958). Among studies of political parties, see Nyomarkay (1967, 145–50) and Schorske (1983). For an important theoretical discussion linking schism and solidarity, see Lockwood (1992).

6 A number of authors in different fields have remarked on the sometimes surprising juxtaposition of fragmentation and integration in social systems. Examples include Chisholm (1989), Eckstein (1966), Gerlach and Hine (1970), Kaufman (1967), Oestreicher (1989), Padgett and Ansell (1993), Perry (1993), and Price (1997).

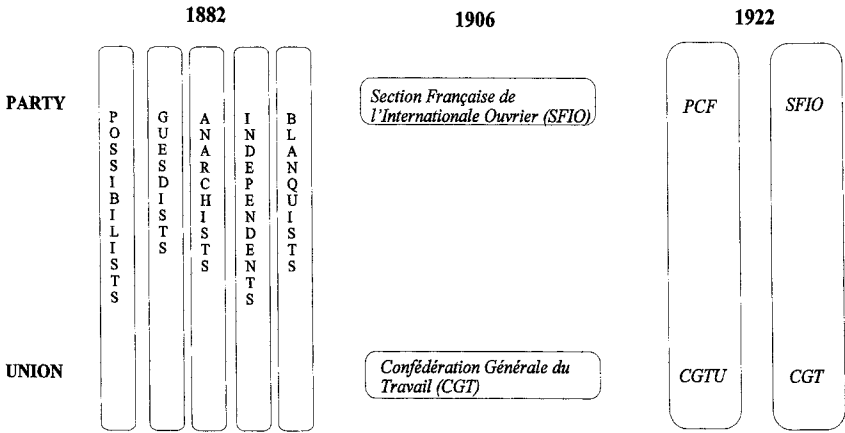


Figure 1.2. Three party-union alignments, 1882-1922.

of systemic logic. This logic is demonstrated by drawing an analogy between the organizational evolution of the French labor movement and that of two other social systems: Protestantism and segmentary lineage systems. Like the French labor movement, Protestant sects and lineage segments are known to have a propensity to schism. Yet they are also known, like the French labor movement, to recombine into broader solidaristic alliances. Protestant sects are able, on occasion, to shift from narrow sectarianism to more inclusive ecumenicalism. Segmentary lineage systems can shift from systems in which cousins fight cousins to interclan alliances.

As analogies, Protestantism and segmentary lineage systems bring different but complementary insights to bear on the pattern of schism and solidarity. The core dynamic of Protestant sectarianism is the tension, first noted by Weber (1946, 1978) and Troeltsch (1956), between church and sect. From this perspective, the central dynamic producing organizational schism is the tension over the institutional intermediation of religious salvation. In the Reformation, rebellion against the Catholic doctrine of immanence and against the priestly hierarchy of the Catholic Church led to the formation of schismatic religious sects. At the heart of this conflict was always the tension between whether the "invisible church" (*ecclesia*) resided in the concrete visible institutions of the Church or with the faithful themselves (Wach 1972, 191-2). Once the Reformation began, it spawned increasingly more radical challenges to

Church institutions leading to what has been described as a “revolution within the revolution” or a “reformed” reformation (Lewy 1974; Moeller 1982, 103). New organizational schisms (and civil wars) followed, creating a plethora of new churches divided by doctrine and organizational structure. Whereas the Catholic Church lodged authority in a sacerdotal hierarchy crowned by the patriarchal authority of the pope, Lutheran and Anglican churches sought to lodge authority in the more collegial, though still patriarchal, authority of bishops. Presbyterians, Baptists, and Congregationalists sought to decentralize further, placing authority in the hands of elders, of ministers of the presbytery, or of local congregations. Quakers went still further by rejecting any ministerial intermediary between people and God.

The analogy to Protestantism has concrete historical referents in the French case. If the Protestant Reformation failed in France, it reappeared in political and secular form in the French Revolution.⁷ The parallel between the Reformation and the Revolution was voiced by Tocqueville, who wrote:

In all the annals of recorded history we find no mention of any political revolution that took this form; its only parallel is to be found in certain religious revolutions. Thus, when we seek to study the French Revolution in the light of similar movements in other countries and at other periods, it is to the great religious revolutions we should turn. (Tocqueville 1955, 10)

Much like the earlier English Revolution, the French Revolution fused political and religious protest. And much like English Protestantism, French republicanism demonstrated a strong tendency toward sectarianism. Eduard Bernstein drew the parallel in reverse between the French Revolution and the more obviously religiously inspired English Revolution: “Its Girondists were the Presbyterians; its Hébertists and Babeuvists were the Levellers, whilst Cromwell was a combination of

7 Although Te Brake’s (1998) study of the Reformation does not go beyond the seventeenth century, his argument suggests that the relationship between these religious upheavals and patterns of nineteenth-century popular mobilization in France may, in fact, have been historically connected. In France, the Counter Reformation’s consolidation of territorial sovereignty over cities left a legacy of urban sectarianism. This contestation penetrated directly into the heart of popular politics. Religious confraternities, for example, were instruments of the Counter Reformation, though they often cultivated a form of popular religiosity that escaped the control of both religious and secular authorities (Te Brake 1998, 92–3; Truant 1994, 68–9, 288). These religious associations influenced the development of the journeymen’s associations known as the *compagnonnages*, which in turn influenced post-Revolution working-class formation (Sewell 1980; Truant 1994). The *compagnons* were often fiercely sectarian, and Icher suggests that divisions between Catholic and Protestant *compagnons* were at the root of their critical historical schisms (Icher 1992, 253; Truant 1994, 288–9). I am indebted to an anonymous reviewer for suggesting the possibility of these connections.

Robespierre and Bonaparte, and John Lilburne the Leveller was Marat and Hébert rolled into one” (Bernstein 1963, 10). French Republicans were avowedly anticlerical but nevertheless took on many of the trappings of quasi-religious movements.⁸ The labor movement of the Third Republic inherited the tendency toward sectarianism that grew out of the Republican revolutionary tradition.⁹

Although Protestant churches have a propensity for schism, they can sometimes join in broad ecumenical alliances built upon a respect and tolerance for religious differences. The sociology of religion points to a distinctive organizational form around which ecumenicalism is built: the denomination (Wach 1972, 191–6). Like the sect, the denomination organizes itself in opposition to both the Catholic Church and the reformed ecclesiastical bodies (e.g., Anglican or Lutheran churches), but its defining feature is “an insistence upon the independence of the local congregation, with correspondingly less emphasis on unity and universality.” It is more radical in doctrine than that of the ecclesiastic bodies but less exclusive “owing to a less institutional and more spiritual notion of Christian fellowship.” Whereas one approach to religious denominations views them as routinized sects, another interprets their evangelism and decentralized congregationalism as promoting broad-based solidarity.¹⁰ The covenantal theology that grew out of the Protestant Reformation also encouraged solidarity. A covenant is a morally binding pact that rejects hierarchical organization and embraces the moral autonomy of multiple sovereignties. It leads directly to a theory of federalism (Elazar 1998). In the French case, territorial unions were the equivalent of decentralized congregations and the basis for strong federalism within the broader labor movement. The “myth” of the general strike, as Georges Sorel called it, was the equivalent of an evangelical and morally binding covenant.¹¹

8 See Brinton (1957, 1961), Mazlish (1976), Talmon (1955), and Walzer (1965); cf. Yack (1986).

9 A number of authors, including Bernstein (1963), Engels (1926), Gramsci (see Fontana 1993, 39), and Mannheim (1985) have drawn the parallel between Reformation sects and early working-class organizations. For other studies on sectarianism in labor organizations, see Coser (1970, 1974), Hobsbawm (1959), Lipset (1963, 97–100), O’Toole (1975, 162–89; 1977), and Pope (1942). For additional examples of political sectarianism, see Douglas and Wildavsky (1982) and Apter and Sawa (1984).

10 The first approach is represented by H. Richard Niebuhr (1957), and the second is expressed in Richey (1977).

11 The early civil rights movement in the United States provides a nice parallel example to this denominationalism and ecumenicalism. Aldon Morris describes the way that the creation of local umbrella organizations, like the Montgomery Improvement Organization, helped to overcome factionalism and “organized schisms” in black communities in the mid-1950s (Morris 1984, 42). These city-based umbrella organizations corresponded to the French territorial unions.

The literature on segmentary lineage systems contributes something quite different to the analysis of shifts from schism to solidarity. The earliest description of a segmentary lineage system is probably Fustel de Coulanges's portrait of the clan as the basic unit of the ancient polis (Coulanges 1956 [1877]). But it is to Durkheim's distinction between mechanical and organic solidarity in *The Division of Labor in Society* that we owe the modern anthropological concept. Durkheim called clan societies segmentary "to denote that they are formed from the replication of aggregates that are like one another, analogous to the rings of annelida worms" (1984, 127). The principle of cohesion in such societies is mechanical solidarity or "solidarity by similarity," in which each segment (clan) is united by a common genealogical heritage (shared ancestors).

Durkheim argued that segmentary societies are not particularly cohesive or stable (1984, 123). The absence of a division of labor between segments means that the segments are not bound together by interdependence. Thus, all the weight of social solidarity hangs on a shared collective consciousness that takes on a sacred religious form. As Evans-Pritchard (1940) and Fortes (1949) observed in their classic anthropological studies of segmentary societies, these societies exhibit a notable tendency toward "fission and fusion." When faced with an external threat, the whole segmentary structure may fuse into a cohesive fighting group. But in the absence of external threats, segmentary lineage systems have a tendency to "fission" into smaller and smaller segments.

Craft communities in France were the equivalent of clans in the segmentary lineage system.¹² This parallel was particularly true of the trade organizations known as the *compagnonnages* that joined journeymen together around a common craft. The *compagnons* were organized around the fictive kin relationship of brotherhood that was created through elaborate religious and quasi-religious rituals of initiation and commensalism. These trade organizations were loosely federated with other trades in larger multitrade associations, but, as Sewell has noted, "[T]he links between trades were not nearly as strong as those between *compagnons* of the same trade" (Sewell 1980, 52). However,

12 Marx's famous line about French peasants being like "potatoes in a sack" is perhaps the most infamous statement ever made about the segmentary character of French life (Marx 1987, 124). Tocqueville provided a similar portrait of the "segmented" French bourgeoisie (Tocqueville 1955, 94). Hoffmann has made the most general argument, observing that the "segmentation of solidarity" was the foundation of the "stalemate society of France under the Third Republic" (Hoffmann et al. 1963, 3). Sahllins (1989) has applied the segmentary lineage model to French state building. France, however, is not exceptional in this regard. On segmentalism in Norway, see Eckstein (1966); in the United States, see Wiebe (1979).

the different trades did unite to engage in ongoing warfare with rival multitrade “sects.” By the beginning of the twentieth century, though they still existed, the *compagnonnages* were regarded by modern unionists as conservative and archaic forms of organization. Yet fin de siècle unionism inherited many traces of the esprit de corps of the earlier journeymen’s associations.

Studies of segmentary lineage systems have suggested that different segments tend to fuse only in the face of an external threat (Fortes and Evans-Pritchard 1963, 5, 11–14). Yet work by the anthropologists Marcel Mauss, Max Gluckman, Claude Lévi-Strauss, and Victor Turner also suggest endogenous mechanisms that can promote broad-based solidarity. For example, Lévi-Strauss (1969) has advanced a theory of how the principles of lineage, residence, and marriage can combine to produce radically different patterns of social integration. In what he calls restricted exchange, two clans engage in bilateral wife exchange ($A \leftrightarrow B$), which leads to only narrow social integration. In generalized exchange, however, a unidirectional exchange occurs ($A \rightarrow B \rightarrow C \rightarrow D \rightarrow A$) that leads to more expansive marriage cycles and, consequently, to wider social integration. Lévi-Strauss argues that generalized exchange occurs in segmentary societies with “harmonic” principles of lineage and residence (patrilineal = children belong to the father’s lineage; patrilocal = the children live in the father’s village). The principle of marriage exchange that tends to be adopted by such societies (matrilateral cross-cousin exchange) encourages unidirectional marriage cycles that lead to broad social integration.

The French case suggests that Lévi-Strauss’s model may be more generalizable. In ancien régime corporatism, for example, the *corps des métiers* organized a particular trade (lineage) and regulated that trade in particular cities (residence). The central organizing principle of these guilds was paternal hierarchy. The *compagnonnages*, in contrast, were intercity organizations that provided job placement for migratory journeymen on their *tour de France*. At each stop along this circuit, the journeymen stayed with other *compagnons* at a local boarding house called the *mère* (mother). It is probably not coincidental then that this journey was itself organized as a large unidirectional cycle around France (generalized exchange).

The union movement of the late nineteenth century continued to reflect aspects of this system, yet the precise interaction between principles of lineage, residence, and exchange were transformed. Relatively well-established trades that preserved some degree of hierarchy on the shop floor – like molding, printing, and glassblowing – were able to establish national craft federations (lineage). Although these trades were fraternal,

national organization encouraged centralized authority within the trade. In contrast, opposition to hierarchy (on the shop floor and in craft organizations) prompted workers to join in fraternal solidarity. This intertrade solidarity operated within the same city (residence). In this case, the generalized cycle of exchange occurred locally, through an institution known as the *bourse du travail* (labor exchange). These city-based union federations fostered fraternal solidarity among workers across different trades operating within the same city.

Whereas church-sect theory and segmentary lineage theory offer different explanations for systemic shifts from schism to solidarity, Chapter 2 explores the complementarity of the theories and argues that the two perspectives share a deeper structural-cultural dynamic. The intention is to develop a richer and more generalizable model of schism and solidarity.

Plan of the Book

This book proceeds from the general to the specific. Chapter 2 develops a theoretical framework for understanding the organizational characteristics of schism and solidarity. It argues that communal organizations, especially those that I will refer to as “clans” (closed, communal organizations), have a propensity for schism. Clans tend to fluctuate between hierarchy and “inverted” hierarchy – a tendency common to both sectarian and segmentary systems. This chapter then examines the institutional conditions under which segmentary and sectarian systems can “fuse” or link together in broad ecumenical alliances.

Chapter 3 analyzes the populist character of mobilization in the French labor movement and identifies a populist tradition in France that can be traced back to the French Revolution. This populism tends to organize itself around a religious master frame, though after 1848 a distinctly secular one. The Republican rebellion against the Catholic domination of society and politics associated with the *ancien régime* gave this populist religiosity a distinctly “Protestant” cast. The sectarianism of the Third Republic labor movement can be seen, in turn, as a “Protestant”-style rebellion against Republican domination of society and politics.

Chapter 4 examines some characteristics of industry and work that shape the relationship between different structuring principles of French unionism – craft (intracraft vs. intercraft solidarity) and community (union vs. party mobilization). Most importantly, the chapter emphasizes the focus of French workers on organizing the workplace rather than the labor market. Whereas a labor market focus encourages a sectoral

approach to mobilization (by trade or industry), organizing at the “point of production” created opportunities for French workers to join together across the boundaries of trade and skill. It also tended to politicize the workplace around generational, trade, and skill-related differences. Although the reliance of French industry on skill specialization and the weakness of unions in collectively controlling skill reproduction fragmented skill communities in France, they also encouraged alliances that spilled over the boundaries of trade and industry. Finally, the workplace focus of French workers not only encouraged unions to become engaged in local politics but also counterposed unions and political parties as alternative agencies of community mobilization.

Chapters 5–10 provide a detailed empirical analysis of the three types of union–party alignments described at the beginning of this chapter. Chapter 5 examines the reemergence of an organized post-Commune labor movement, which led to the creation of the first French Socialist party in 1879. The chapter then analyzes the subsequent organizational schisms that divided the labor movement into rival political sects.

Chapter 6 analyzes the beginnings of a major realignment of the labor movement that developed between 1887 and 1894 as the result of the rise of *bourses du travail*. These communal institutions encouraged unification of trade unions across their political divisions and around a local, territorial model of union organization.

Chapter 7 examines the final consolidation of a union realignment that was only partially completed in 1894. The chapter focuses on the complementary relationship that eventually developed between the national trade federations and local multitrade federations.

Chapter 8 examines the parallel reorganization of the party sects that occurred in response to the realignment of the unions. This period, between 1898 and 1905, witnessed the proliferation of party organizations that “federate” the competing party sects at the local level, a structure paralleling the *bourses du travail*.

Chapter 9 describes the tensions among unions as pressures developed toward the consolidation of industrial unionism and more centralized organizational control, especially between 1910 and 1914. Parallel tensions in the Socialist party prompted several unsuccessful prewar attempts to form a more revolutionary party that prefigured the postwar creation of the Communist party. Wartime corporatism enhanced the centralization of the labor movement, but accelerated wartime production also initiated a grassroots strike wave that culminated in the massive strikes of 1919–20. Finally, Chapter 10 describes the decisive polarization of the labor movement that occurred as the result of this strike wave.

2

Schism and Solidarity

A generic model of organizational schism can be constructed around Max Weber's simple and widely known analytical distinctions between different types of social relationships. Weber distinguished two basic dimensions: associative versus communal relationships (vertical axis) and open versus closed relationships (horizontal axis). The labels given to the four cells of the resulting table (Table 2.1) resonate with contemporary parlance: fellowship (open, communal), clan (closed, communal), interest association (open, associative), and bureaucracy (closed, associative).

My basic argument is that organizational schisms will occur when communal groups move toward closure – from fellowship to clan. Communal closure entails the articulation of sharply drawn symbolic and behavioral boundaries between in-group and out-group, an elaborated “closed” ideology, hierarchical authority, centralized control of ritual, and a process of depersonalization (of individuals or constituent units). Communal closure represents an alternative path of organizational rationalization to Weber's well-known analysis of routinization as a strategy of organizational maintenance (and may be initiated in opposition to it); instead, communal closure corresponds to Weber's analysis of the transformation of a religious sect into a hierocratic organization (church). In that transition, personal charisma is transferred to the institution of the church, and a priestly corps monopolizes the “administration of grace.” Communal closure is a likely strategy of organizational maintenance (in contrast to routinization) the more that community is regarded as an end in itself, that is, when communal identity is a large part of individual identity or when it is treated as an object of sacred reverence. To the extent that communal closure is successful, it may be quite stable (e.g., the Catholic Church). However, a strategy of communal closure is likely to be met by a countermobilization aimed at preserving individual autonomy, decentralizing decision making, and encouraging fraternal equality. This countermobilization is likely to lead to schism.

Table 2.1. *Social relationships and organizational forms*

	Social relationships	
	Open	Closed
<i>Social relationships</i>		
Associative	Interest association	Bureaucracy
Communal	Fellowship	Clan

An alternative response to communal closure is to reject sharp distinctions of us versus them by embracing diffuse symbols and syncretic ideologies and by celebrating individual conscience and freedom of affiliation. This strategy shores up the interstitial character of social and organizational life as a bulwark against the tendency to bound it. When such a strategy is successfully generalized across the boundaries that differentiate groups, broader-based solidarity is likely to be the result.

The Basic Model

I begin my description of the basic model of organizational schism with Max Weber's distinction between associative and communal relationships. According to Weber, a relationship is communal "if and so far as the orientation of social action . . . is based on a subjective feeling of the parties, whether affectual or traditional, that they belong together." He includes among communal relations "[e]very social relationship which goes beyond the pursuit of immediate common ends, which hence lasts for long periods, involves relatively permanent social relationships between the same persons, and these cannot be exclusively confined to the technically necessary activities." For example, he includes "a religious brotherhood, an erotic relationship, a relation of personal loyalty, a national community, the esprit de corps of a military unit" (Weber 1947, 136). In contrast, an associative relationship rests on a rationally motivated adjustment of interests or a similarly motivated agreement, whether the basis of the rational judgment be absolute values or reasons of expediency. Weber offers "rational free market exchange" and "the pure voluntary association based on self-interest" as examples.

Weber's well-known contrast between "class" and "status group" parallels this distinction between associative and communal relation-

ships.¹ Whereas class is defined simply by market position (and thus by impersonal economic interests), status groups are marked by having “a specific style of life” (Weber 1978, 932). Weber defines a status situation as “every typical component of the life of men that is determined by a specific, positive or negative, social estimation of honor.”² Communal relationships imply status groups and vice versa (Gusfield 1970, 16).

Communal groups, status groups, or groups generally oriented toward sacred, charismatic, honorific, value-rational, or symbolically expressive identities will be prone to schism. The reason is not that such groups are irrational, but that the collective identity is valued for itself. One way to think about this is in terms of what Hirschman calls “exit” (Hirschman 1970; Rochford 1989). On the associative side of Table 2.1, participation is based on individual self-interest and individual exit reigns: if you don’t like the terms of exchange, you go elsewhere in search of improvement. “Identities” are not so easily divisible, which promotes a type of collective exit – splits between groups that each claim to represent the “true” identity (Balser 1997; Fish 1995; Sani and Reicher 1991; Shain 1989). When “collective consciousness” is strong, control over that identity will be of major importance. To lose control of the identity is to lose control of the reason for being together in the first place.

Communal groups also tend to adopt a holistic or encompassing view of their membership (Kanter 1972; Ouchi and Johnson 1978; Selznick 1948, 1952, 1957, 1992; Zablocki 1980). In such groups, individuals invest their whole personalities in the group and not just “segments” of themselves. Schism is much more likely when individual personality and group identity become fused in this way (Coser 1956, 68–9). Personal conflicts within the group become easily politicized, and political conflicts within the group become quickly personalized.³ In such groups, individuals are likely to see their own behavior in charismatic or

1 However, Weber tentatively recognized the possibility of class-based status groups (Weber 1978, 306). A number of authors have suggested that working-class mobilization has either a status or a communal basis (Calhoun 1982, 1983a; Jowitt 1992; Lipset 1983; Parkin 1979; Reddy 1987).

2 We can begin to see the parallel between church-sect dynamics and segmentary lineage systems by noting the parallel that exists between associative and communal relationships and between mechanical and organic solidarity in Durkheim (Nisbet 1966, 78–80). The equivalent to status honor in mechanical solidarity is orientation toward the sacred (see Milner 1994, 12; Nisbet 1966, 221; and Parsons [in Weber 1947, 75–76; 361, 361 n]).

3 In the French labor movement, the police (and labor activists and labor historians too) often attributed schisms to “personality conflicts.” For a long time, I thought that this was merely a way of trivializing the conflicts. The theoretical perspective just advanced, however, suggests why identity conflict within the labor movement was perceived by many as personality conflict.

expressive terms, especially if their participation is motivated by moral ends (Etzioni 1975, 313–15). They view their participation as a moral duty and an expression of identity (Rothschild-Whitt 1979). Members therefore will rapidly mobilize to oppose whatever they regard as an offense against the collective identity or their prerogative to express and represent that identity. Schisms are then likely because disputants can claim to “be” the organization.⁴

Another reason why communal, status, or identity groups have a propensity for schism is their tendency to insist on group autonomy. This tendency can be seen in their inclination to pursue “self-help” strategies. These may include strategies to defend the group, such as the creation of a militia (e.g., the Black Panthers) or to provide various forms of service to the community or status group. Cultivating this autonomy often means encouraging an alternative or oppositional identity (Parkin 1979, 69). Yet this subcultural or countercultural autonomy creates a “tension” with the dominant culture that produces a threat of internal schism as leaders or groups are accused of impure associations, of being coopted, or of being insufficiently oppositional.⁵ Schism within religious groups has often been explained in terms of such tension with the surrounding environment (Berger 1967, 163; Stark and Bainbridge 1996).

Weber’s distinction between open and closed relationships provides the foundation for the second dimension of social organization. According to Weber:

A social relationship, regardless of whether it is communal or associative in character, will be spoken of as “open” to outsiders if and in so far as participation in the mutually oriented social action relevant to its subjective meaning is, according to its system of order, not denied to anyone who wishes to participate and who is actually in a position to do so. A relationship will, on the other hand, be called “closed” against outsiders so far as, according to its subjective meaning and the binding rules of its order, participation of certain persons is excluded, limited, or subjected to conditions. (Weber 1947, 139)

4 Gerlach and Hine argue that schism will tend to occur where there is an “ideology of personal access to power” and “a rhetoric of individual initiative, independent action, and personal responsibility” (Gerlach and Hine 1970, 42–3). Nyomarkay (1967) and Wallis (1979, 181–2) argue that schisms will be more likely when the means of legitimation are widely dispersed.

5 Epstein describes the “prefigurative politics” of social movements, where the broader social claims of the movement are “prefigured” within its own organization (Epstein 1991, 122).

Weber referred to the process of moving from an open relationship to a closed relationship as “closure” (1947, 140–3).⁶ Whereas “open” and “closed” misleadingly suggest dichotomous variables, the term “closure” is easier to conceptualize as a continuous variable.

In describing the closure of communal groups, in particular, it is useful to distinguish between structural and symbolic closure. Groups and organizations can be understood to be relationships between individuals, between groups of individuals, and between groups of groups. A model of structural closure suggests that changes will occur in the structural relationships between individuals and groups. In an open environment, individuals or groups will have multiple affiliations through which they interact with a variety of other individuals or groups. These affiliations are loose and informal, and interaction with one individual or group does not preclude or prevent relationships with others. Such relationships are typically horizontal and direct. Groups are “aggregative” in that the whole is a collection of otherwise independent parts. As structural closure occurs, individuals or groups become more deeply invested in or constrained by particular relationships over and against others. Particular relationships are strictly prioritized, and relationships become more formally regulated. Direct relationships give way to relationships that are first mediated by third parties and then controlled by third parties. Horizontal relationships are transformed into hierarchical relationships, and aggregative collectivities are replaced by unitary collectivities in which the parts are derivative of the whole.

Closure means that the structuring principles relating individuals to other individuals, individuals to groups, and groups to other groups are likely to become the object of contention as certain relationships are rejected, denigrated, regulated, or subordinated in favor of others.⁷ This contention is quite likely to be at the heart of the conflicts that precipitate schism.

Organizations are complex structures. Individual social networks aggregate into small groups; small groups aggregate into large organiza-

6 Interesting discussions of closure from a variety of perspectives include Brubaker (1992), Cohen (1981), Della Porta (1995), Douglas (1982a), Kanter (1972), Katz and Kahn (1966), Moscovici and Doise (1994), Parkin (1979), and Simmel (1967, 345–76).

7 Structural closure coincides with a shift from egocentric networks to corporate groups (Boissevain 1968; Weber 1947, 145; Maine 1986; on lineages as corporate groups, see Smith 1974, 94–5). This shift corresponds to a shift from part-to-part relations to whole-to-part relations. At the open end of the spectrum, relationships are defined by one constituent part’s relationship with another constituent part. As the system closes, the perspective changes: the whole becomes more than the sum of its parts, and the key relationship becomes that of the part to the whole (see Kontopoulos 1993).

tions; and large organizations are linked together in interorganizational networks. With structural closure, the same principles of transformation operate at each of these levels – the individual, the organizational, and the interorganizational – simultaneously. At each level, multiple affiliations of a horizontal, informal, direct, and aggregative character are transformed into more exclusive relationships of a hierarchical, formal, mediated, and unitary character. Thus, an informal social network is transformed into a clearly bounded local group, and a local group with informal ties to other such groups is transformed into a “cell” of a larger hierarchical structure; this larger organization will either subordinate or become subordinated to other organizations. Closure at one level is likely to reinforce closure at other levels.

At the interorganizational level, structural closure refers to what is called “vertical integration” (Williamson 1975). As organizations undergo closure, they often attempt to subordinate or internalize affiliated organizations – an interorganizational equivalent of internal hierarchicalization. This strategy may produce a parallel move to closure in the affiliated organizations. A triangulation of this conflict then leads to an alliance of the opponents of closure that cross-cuts organizational boundaries. Parallel schisms within the primary organization and its affiliates are then a likely result. This dynamic was central to the schismatic pattern of the French labor movement. As political parties and trade unions underwent closure, they each attempted to subordinate affiliated organizations to their control. The result was parallel schisms in the party and unions.

Symbolic closure refers to discursive or symbolic representations. For understanding schism, the most important aspect of symbolic closure is an increasingly dualistic representation of the world.⁸ The most important of these dualisms is the sharply drawn distinction between us (in-group) and them (out-group). When this dualism defines an external enemy, as Simmel suggests, it may strengthen internal solidarity.⁹ However, the increasing dualism of us versus them may also encourage witch hunts for internal enemies – for the “insiders” who represent or consort with external interests. Sharpened dualism between in-group and out-group may then lead to internal factionalization or schism.

In addition to an increasingly dualistic representation of the world, symbolic closure entails a number of other changes: (1) Strong Classification. In addition to a strong demarcation of the boundary

8 See Aho (1990), Apter and Sawa (1984), Barth (1969), Cash (1996), Dittmer (1987), and Douglas (1982a, 105).

9 See Kanter (1972) on the group commitment process and Sherif et al. (1988) on in-group/out-group conflicts.

between the inside and the outside of the organization, we can also expect an increasingly sharp articulation of internal roles (both vertical and horizontal classification of parts) (Atkinson 1985, 133; DiMaggio 1982; Douglas 1980, 1982a, 1986). (2) Condensed Symbolism. Closure entails the emergence of a single dominant symbol or symbolic theme (e.g., the shift from polytheism to monotheism) that unifies or “condenses” multiple symbolic references. Condensation therefore makes a symbol “multivocal” and thus potentially permits multiple interpretations of the symbol by different audiences (Turner 1967; Douglas 1982a, 73–4). With closure, however, alternative interpretations come to be increasingly contested and rejected.¹⁰ (3) Ideological Closure. A closed ideology is one that claims to offer a comprehensive and internally consistent guide to behavior (Coser 1974; Gerlach and Hine 1970; Toch 1965, 149).¹¹ (4) Depersonalization. Closure relocates personality to the level of the group and substitutes impersonal norms and rules for personal distinctiveness.¹² (5) Internalization and Centralization of Ritual. With closure, ritual is internalized within organizational boundaries and hierarchically ordered. It comes to be used to represent organizational or group distinctiveness (Kertzer 1988, 1996; Bell 1992).¹³

As with structural closure, the exclusive and regulative nature of symbolic closure can generate conflicts that foster organizational schisms. The particular lines of organizational cleavage can be analyzed in terms of Weber’s discussion of rationalization.

Routinization versus Retraditionalization of Charisma

The ebb and flow of constituent participation is a critical trigger to organizational change in mass-based organizations, particularly when this participation comes in waves (Zald and McCarthy 1994, 128; Tarrow 1994). Although a major upswing in participation often calls into question prior collective understandings and institutional arrangements, it is

10 Weick argues that removing equivocality from the information environment is a central process of organizing (Weick 1969, 40).

11 See Wieviorka (1993, 70) on terrorist groups and Parkin (1979, 103) and Abbott (1988, 98, 108) on the relationship between professional autonomy and ideological abstraction.

12 For discussions, see Coser (1974, 112), Gerlach and Hine (1970, 117), Goffman (1961, 14–22), Kaufman (1967, 197), Merton (1940), Simmel (1967, 363), Turner et al. (1994, 455), Turner et al. (1987), and Turner (1991).

13 Under open conditions, ritual will be “externalized” – linking different groups together as described by Gerlach and Hine in their study of social movements (Gerlach and Hine, 1970, 57–8); that is, ritual will be the sort of festive and liberating celebration that Victor Turner implies with the concept of *communitas* (Turner 1977).

the ebbing phase that typically produces schisms. As participation declines, leaders and groups scramble to perpetuate participation, maintain commitment, or consolidate prior organizational expansion. In terms of Table 2.1, communal groups can adapt to ebbing participation in two basic ways. The first is to shift to more instrumental conceptions of organizational goals and mobilization, that is, to make a relative shift from communal to associative organization. The second, already mentioned, is to shift toward structural and symbolic closure.¹⁴ These different forms of adaptation may lead to conflicting strategies of organizational rationalization.

One widely recognized type of organizational rationalization is the process Weber called the “routinization of charisma.” Routinization implies the factoring and decomposition of broad and vaguely defined intentions and sentiments into narrower and more tractable “goals” and “tasks” that can be handled pragmatically, sequentially, and formally. It substitutes “cold” cognitive interaction for “hot” emotive interaction by sublimating emotion into routine observance of scientific or legal norms or instrumental rationality (Smith 1992). A narrowing or focusing of the goals or constituencies represented occurs. Those selected for attention will be those that produce concrete feedbacks of participation and resources supporting organizational growth or survival. Revenues and expenditures will be systematically organized, and instrumental incentives for participation will be substituted in place of affectual or value-oriented motivations.¹⁵ Consequently, effective organizational representation of selective goals or constituencies may survive despite waning broad-based participation.

With the narrowing of goals or constituencies, the movement becomes structurally differentiated, and a pluralistic division of labor between organizations tends to develop. The organization claims to speak not for the social movement as a whole but only for specific goals or interests within that social movement. The legitimacy of this claim is based on effective performance either to achieve specific goals or to deliver bene-

14 Weber notes that “in the case of many relationships, both communal and associative, there is a tendency to shift from a phase of expansion to one of exclusiveness” (Weber 1947, 141).

15 Michels’s famous study of social movement bureaucratization suggests that social movement organizations develop a concern with their own maintenance (Michels 1959). This follows from the idea that the administrative staff have a vested interest in setting up the organization on a self-sustaining basis, able to weather the ebbs and flows of constituent interest. Mayer Zald’s “political economy” perspective builds on this idea by emphasizing that organizations seek to systemically organize the movement as a positive balance of revenues and expenditures (Zald 1970a, 1970b).

fits to certain constituencies. Closure here implies the development of exclusive jurisdictional ("sectional") claims over particular goals or constituencies, the development of an extensive internal division of labor to service these claims, and the development of experts and codified expertise to perform these specialized tasks. This view of routinization is well recognized in the social movement literature (Staggenborg 1988).

Another path toward organizational rationalization is possible and likely to conflict with the strategy of routinization just described. Mass political mobilization often creates a collective sense of emotional intensity variously described using terms like "charisma," "cognitive liberation," "cathexis," "effervescence," "communitas," or "moments of madness" (Weber 1968; McAdam 1982; Zablocki 1980; Durkheim 1965; Turner 1977; Zolberg 1972). This alternative path to rationalization seeks to preserve the sense of total commitment, unity of purpose and will, or collective empowerment experienced at these moments. Instead of substituting instrumental incentives, participation is ritualized to manage and maintain emotional commitment.¹⁶ In place of problem decomposition, this strategy is holistic and comprehensive. Structural integration prevails over differentiation. Through the encapsulation of community, this strategy seeks to create a "total," or "greedy," institution (Coser 1974).¹⁷ Instead of pursuing a partial goal or interest, the strategy is to represent and organize the communal or status group as a whole. As closure occurs, the organization claims to be the embodiment and exclusive representative of a communal or status group. Thus the Catholic Church and the Communist party claim to embody and exclusively represent Christians and the working class, respectively.

Communal closure is consistent with a different path toward the rationalization of charisma. Weber suggested that charisma could be conserved by transferring it from an individual to a clan or an office (which he called "clan" or "office" charisma).¹⁸ For my purposes,

16 Selznick argues that only those groups in which people participate with a small segment of their total selves are likely to undergo the type of bureaucratization that leads to Michelsian oligarchy (Selznick 1992; Lipset, Trow, and Coleman 1956). And Kriesi has argued that only "instrumental groups" are likely to evolve toward oligarchy, whereas countercultural groups are likely to radicalize (in McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996, 152-84).

17 Studies of political parties and consociational democracies suggest that communal groups will internalize ties by creating interlocking networks of organizations that "encapsulate" group members (Rokkan 1977; Wellhofer 1972, 1979a, 1979b).

18 On the distinction between the routinization and depersonalization of charisma, see Schluchter (1989, 232-3, 392-408). Selznick's analysis of institutionalization as a

Weber's analysis of the transformation of a religious sect into a "hierarchical" organization (church) is most revealing. Weber argued that the distinctive feature of the emergence of a hierarchical organization is "the separation of charisma from the person and its linkage with the institution and, particularly, with the office" (Weber 1978, 1164). This transfer of charisma from person to office typically takes place by conveying charisma to a priestly corps (a "sacerdotal corps" or "paladins") who systematically organize and administer it through dogmas and rites.¹⁹ To stress the connection of this process to status groups, Ken Jowitt has argued that this process represents a retraditionalization of charisma.²⁰ Whereas the model of routinization embraced by the social movement literature emphasizes the shift toward instrumental rationality (*zweckrationalität*), retraditionalization leads to organizational rationalization around absolute values (*wertrationalität*).²¹

This analysis implies that one outcome of declining mass mobilization will be the creation of organizations that claim to embody and speak exclusively for communal or status groups. Their claim to legitimacy will be based on their systematic and exemplary administration of a value rationality expressing communal or status identity. Whether this is a Communist party, the Black Panthers, the Irish Republican Army, or the Gay Liberation Front, such claims will certainly provoke opposition and, for reasons described earlier, organizational schisms. These conflicts may pit the "realist" promotion of instrumental action (routinization) against the "fundamentalist" pursuit of collective solidarity (retraditionalization) or one fundamentalist faction against another. However, the strategies of routinization and retraditionalization may both be resisted by those who wish to maintain the sense of individual engagement and empowerment experienced during mobilization, leading to what I call "inverted hierarchies."

process of infusing value has a logic similar to the depersonalization of charisma. Jowitt has greatly extended Weber and Selznick's analysis in his discussion of Leninist parties as exemplifying the principle he calls "charismatic impersonalism" (Jowitt 1992).

19 For an application of this idea to the Nazi party, see Brooker (1991).

20 Jowitt characterizes Leninism as follows: "The distinctive quality of Leninist organization is the enmeshment of status (traditional) and class (modern) elements in the framework of an impersonal-charismatic organization" (Jowitt 1992, 16).

21 Status movements, Gusfield argues, are oriented toward symbolic action rather than toward instrumental goals (Gusfield 1970, 21). Rothschild-Whitt argues that "collectivist-democratic organizations" (a type of organization equivalent to my "fellowship"), "explicitly reject instrumentally-rational social action [*zweckrational*] in favor of value-rational behavior [*wertrational*]" (Rothschild-Whitt 1979, 510).

Inverted Hierarchy

Collective emotional intensity often leads to attempts to “invert” the symbols and structures of opponents.²² Inversionary movements may counterpose the illegal to the legal, romanticism to scientism, faith to reason, spontaneity to order, and so on. Yet in the face of declining participation and waning emotional intensity, inversionary movements may themselves undergo closure. Both communal and associative closure transfer initiative from the individual to the organization. But this process may lead to further “inversions” as individuals resist this transfer. Where communal closure seeks to maintain the sense of collective empowerment, individuals may also wish to preserve the sense of empowerment and spiritual engagement they experienced during intensive mobilization. Communal closure was described as leading to hierarchical organization, a sharp demarcation of us versus them, strong classification, condensed symbolism, ideological closure, depersonalization, and centralized control of ritual. “Inverted” hierarchies share with this description of closure the sharp demarcation of us versus them, but they reverse the other characteristics. They reject hierarchy and the intermediation of “priests” in favor of individual freedom and self-control; they insist on human “wholeness” against any internal differentiation of roles;²³ they are intuitive rather than intellectual; they celebrate spontaneity over the dead hand of ritual and individual virtuosity over depersonalization. Ideology may be closed and symbolism condensed, but they will invert the relationship between individual and organization.²⁴

To prevent the retraditionalization of charisma, the ideology of individual efficacy may itself undergo rationalization. Hierarchical inversion may thus lead to a type of rationalization that Weber associated with “rational sects” – “a rational action . . . involving a conscious belief in the absolute value of some ethical, religious, or other form of behavior, entirely for its own sake and independently of any prospects of external success” (Weber 1947, 115).²⁵ Weber saw this rationality as exemplified

22 For current discussions of “inversion” in social movements, see Wieviorka (1993) and Apter and Saich (1994). Inversion is similar to what Turner (1977) calls “anti-structure.”

23 Rothschild-Whitt (1979) has described a variety of contemporary “collectivist” groups that celebrate direct individual participation and strongly resist any internal division of labor that might lead to bureaucratization.

24 On symbolic inversion, see Yinger (1982).

25 Weber noted that Puritan sects “reject” office charisma and insist instead upon “direct democratic administration” (Weber 1978, 208, 1141, 1204). He also noted, more generally, that charisma could be transformed in an “anti-authoritarian” direction (Weber 1968, 386–92).

by the inner-worldly asceticism of the Puritans.²⁶ But it is well represented in secular form by anarchism, as exemplified by William Godwin: “There is but one power to which I can yield a heart-felt obedience, the decision of my own understanding, the dictate of my own conscience” (Woodcock 1962, 34). In a sense, it is the individual self rather than the collective group that undergoes closure.

Radical Protestantism represents an “inversion” of Catholicism.²⁷ The Catholic Church traditionally aimed to contain all the world within it – it was a system that was simultaneously political, economic, social, and, most generally, religious. Purity (and control) was attained by internalizing the world within the community of the Church (and exteriorizing personhood onto the community). The Church was the encompassing institution. The institution itself was sacred and bound together its members. The Protestant Reformation sought to turn this world “upside down” (Hill 1972). Radical Protestantism rejects the immanence of God in the institutions of the Church. The relationship between people and God transcends the Church, radically interiorizing this sacred relationship with God and making each person a potential saint.²⁸ This interiorization of the sacred has profound consequences for institutions. The rejection of immanence means that exterior institutions can no longer bind people together. Individuals must be bound together by their own sacredness as individuals, producing unstable social relations (Douglas 1982a, 139).²⁹

The principle of inversion can operate at different (or multiple) levels of analysis: the individual person versus the group; the individual group against the larger organization; the larger organization vis-à-vis other organizations. Like Protestantism, segmentary lineage systems

26 Weber described the inner-worldly asceticism of the Puritans to be “the most consistent and, in a certain sense, the only consistent antithesis to the universalist Catholic Church” (Weber 1946, 321). When the strict internalization of the sacred undergoes closure, there is a transition from what Douglas calls the “affirmation of spiritual joys” to “asceticism” (Douglas 1982a, 142–4).

27 The organizational tensions associated with direct, holistic, and dispersed participation can be described as tension between the “interiorization” and the “exteriorization” of identity (Douglas 1980, 61; 1982, 52).

28 As written in a Leveller tract, “Every man by nature being a king, priest, prophet, in his own natural circuit and compass, whereof no second may partake but by deputation, commission, and free consent from him whose right it is” (cited in Dahl 1989, 32).

29 Steve Bruce builds on Wallis’s argument about schism to argue that Protestantism has a tendency to schism because it does not invest legitimacy in the institution of the church itself. Legitimacy resides with the Bible and not with the church (Bruce 1990, 44–5).

represent an inversion of hierarchical systems. Pure segmentary systems are often “acephalous” – that is, without a state.³⁰ Whereas it is the individual person who rebels against hierarchical integration in radical Protestantism or anarchism, the immediate kinship unit is the unit of inversion in segmentary lineage systems. Intersegmental unity may be mobilized in response to an external threat. But absent the external threat, segments will return to a pattern of mutual opposition. Gellner’s dictum about the rule of fission in segmentary societies is “Divide That Ye Need Not Be Ruled” (Gellner 1969, 41). Attempts to compel intersegmental unity (typically through a hierarchical structuring of lineage segments) will be met with resistance.³¹

In the Protestant Reformation, the same pattern can be seen. Sects competed against one another (like segments). They could also be mobilized in coalition by an external threat (Catholicism or state intrusion into religious affairs). With its lack of any centralized governing apparatus and its tendency to divide in order not to be conquered, Protestant sectarianism – with its opposition to an all-encompassing hierocratic church – is structurally similar to a segmentary lineage system.³² Now, we see that clan organization can take two modal forms. A “clan” like the Catholic Church represents a form of hierarchical integration; Weber’s rational sect represents an inverted hierarchy (and a fragment of a larger Protestant movement).³³ This inversion can take a range of forms, with sects like the Pentecostals adopting more extreme forms of antagonism to ecclesiastical structures. Likewise, a centralized hierarchical state (best represented perhaps by royal absolutism) is the opposite of an acephalous segmentary system.³⁴

30 For a discussion of the varieties of segmentary lineage systems (not all of them stateless), see Middleton and Tait (1958). Smith argues that acephalous systems develop where there are no corporate offices, which is equivalent to the Protestant rejection of the intermediation of the priest (Smith 1974, 52–3). This argument corresponds to Mary Douglas’s view that sectarian groups are found where there is high group, but low grid. But cf. Rayner for a comparison of the Nuer and a Marxist political sect (in Douglas 1982b).

31 Expressing what Sahlins calls the principle of structural relativity: “The level of political organization that emerges as a collectivity is always relative to the opposition” (Sahlins 1967, 106).

32 For suggestions along these lines, see White (1992, 237–8).

33 Fernandez-Armesto and Wilson observe that “reformations” are characterized by the creation of “subverted hierarchies” – “churches which create within themselves patterns of rank or of the absence of rank at variance with those prevailing in society at large” (Fernandez-Armesto and Wilson 1996, 206).

34 Smith distinguishes between a “completed hierarchy” (centralized administration) and an “uncompleted hierarchy” (segmentary systems) (Smith 1974, 52).

This dualism between hierarchy and inverted hierarchy suggests a tendency toward oscillation between the extremes.³⁵ Strong central states may alternate with warlordism; a strong pan-nationalism may alternate with ethnic balkanization; aristocratic oligarchy may oscillate with egalitarianism. In the next section, however, I suggest that there are organizational and ideological structures that can successfully transcend this oscillation between hierarchy and inverted hierarchy.

Possibilities for Syncretism

To this point, the schismatic tendencies of Protestant sectarianism and the fissiparous tendencies of segmentary lineage systems have been emphasized. Under certain conditions, however, Protestant sects or segmentary clans may take a different path. Protestant sects may move toward interdenominational solidarity and ecumenicalism, and segmentary clans may fuse into cohesive tribal units. This ecumenicalism or fusion can occur, I shall argue, even in the absence of an external threat.³⁶ Solidarity among sects or clans can be produced through “endogenous” as well as “exogenous” mechanisms. The basic mechanism requires overcoming the structural and ideological dualisms inherent in schismatic tendencies, which might be called syncretism.³⁷ Both sectarian and segmentary worlds are characterized by sharp dualisms that pit us versus them and person versus group. In Simmel’s conflict model, an external threat produces solidarity simply by displacing the social location of conflict (i.e., creating a new “them”). From this perspective, the trigger for realignment is always exogenous. Yet an endogenous process of realignment is possible if conditions develop, whether intentionally or not, that produce a balance between the dualisms of us versus them or person versus group. Simmel himself

35 Building on Tocqueville, Tarrow has suggested that, in the absence of intermediate-level “mobilizing structure,” social movements will tend to polarize between decentralized “anarchist” models and centralized “social democratic” models (Tarrow 1994, Ch. 8).

36 Studies of segmentary lineage systems suggest that an overall equilibrium occurs through complementary opposition. Segments are normally in a state of competitive opposition. Order is achieved through balanced conflict (Fortes and Evans-Pritchard 1963, 5, 11–14). But these segments may also be allied by mutual opposition to a third party. Lacking an external enemy, however, two “segments” will fall back to fighting with each other.

37 “Syncretism” is defined as “the attempted reconciliation or union of different or opposing principles, practices, or parties, as in philosophy or religion” (*Random House College Dictionary*). For an application of the term to describe political party coalitions, see Di Palma (1978).

identified this principle of balanced duality in his discussion of the mutual constitution of persons and groups. In his essay “How Is Society Possible?” Simmel argued that social integration can occur because “[t]he individual is contained in socialization and, at the same time, finds himself confronted by it” (Simmel 1971, 17). And in another essay, he described this balanced dualism in terms of the multiple group affiliations of individuals (Simmel 1955, 124–95). He argued that groups tie individuals together, but multiple overlapping affiliations of individuals also tie groups together. In the network literature, this position has become known as the “duality of person and group” (Breiger 1974).

In practice, a number of types of syncretism are possible. One is simply the classic centrist’s strategy of finding the archimedean balance between extremes. Another is hybridity or creolization, where a distinctive category of action or actor is established that mixes the traits of the dominant types. A third condition or strategy – interstitiality – is an activity or a relationship that operates in the interstices of the segments or sects. As realists will note, however, centrists are cannon fodder in a polarizing world, and no one is more despised than the “half breed” in the world of castes. Thus, two conditions must be met for broad-based solidarity. The principles of balanced dualism (1) must be generalized to the system of interrelationships and (2) must inhere in both the structure and culture of the system.

The literature on segmentary lineage systems offers some insight into “endogenous” mechanisms of interclan solidarity. Max Gluckman, for example, suggested an alternative view of the mechanisms of stability within segmentary lineage systems (Gluckman 1955). He identified a network of cross-cutting balance between segments that created a different pattern of conflict mediation. Revisiting the segmentary Nuer analyzed by Evans-Pritchard, Gluckman found a “peace in the feud” that resulted from cross-cutting affiliations between segments. He concluded that village and economic relationships that cross-cut the corporate lineage structure (the basis of feuds) led those who stood at the nexus of the two networks to mediate conflicts that could result in bloodletting.³⁸ In other words, these cross-cutting networks operated interstitially to mediate conflict.

In a logic already described in Chapter 1, Lévi-Strauss found that patrilineal-patrilocal tribal organization combined with rules of matrilateral

38 This emphasis on cross-cutting cleavages is also a basic principle of Madisonian and pluralist political thought (Bentley 1967; Truman, 1993). “Countervailing powers” are also a version of cross-cutting cleavages (Hirschman 1977). In sociology, see Coleman (1957) and Blau and Schwartz (1984).

cross-cousin marriage to produce broad-scale social integration, or what he called “generalized exchange,” and that matrilineal-patrilocal structure combined with a rule of patrilineal cross-cousin marriage to produce narrower parochial “segments” or “restricted exchange” (Lévi-Strauss 1969). In network theory, a similar argument is made that “weak ties” provide for broader social integration because they cross-cut narrower social segments (Granovetter 1973).³⁹

Victor Turner’s analysis of schism and solidarity among the segmentary Ndembu offers further insight (Turner 1957). He found that villages had a strong tendency toward fission along lineage lines. These schismatic tendencies, however, were checked by ritual ties that cross-cut village and lineage segments. Turner noted that ritual cults counterbalanced the extreme tendency toward fragmentation of the Ndembu by celebrating the values and identity of the Ndembu as a unified people. Again, these ritual groups created a type of interstitial alignment between otherwise rival groups.⁴⁰ Within these ritual groups “dominant symbols” were conspicuous – symbols that stressed “likeness of interests and characteristics as the basis of association rather than commonness of descent or common occupation of particular localities” (Turner 1957, 330).

It was argued earlier that schism is produced by countermobilization against communal closure. Figure 2.1 illustrates how countermobilization against closure might interact with cross-cutting affiliations to create broader patterns of schism and solidarity.⁴¹ In panel A, the dissident factions in the two communal “segments” are independent of one another. The claims of the community against the dissident faction can be resisted only through schism. In panel B, however, the dissident factions are linked by cross-cutting affiliations, providing each with mutual support that enables them to resist communal closure. The cross-cutting tie provides a balance against closure.⁴² The sense in which broad-based solidarity rests on a balance between cross-cutting affiliations is suggested by panel C. If the alliance of dissident factions pursues its own closure, schism may ensue. This may be encouraged by the collusion of the two original communal segments, who may provide mutual support for com-

39 For interesting examples, see Gould (1995) and Bearman (1993).

40 See also Cohen (1981), Gellner (1969), and Evans-Pritchard (1968, esp. 71–3, 88).

41 The importance of cross-cutting ties can also be seen in the distinction between hierarchy and heterarchy (Kontopolous 1993). In contrast to the clear chain of command in a hierarchy, lower-level units in a heterarchy establish links to multiple higher-order centers.

42 This argument about cross-cutting ties is similar to Simmel’s point that multiple affiliations create the conditions for individual freedom (Simmel 1955, 138–54).

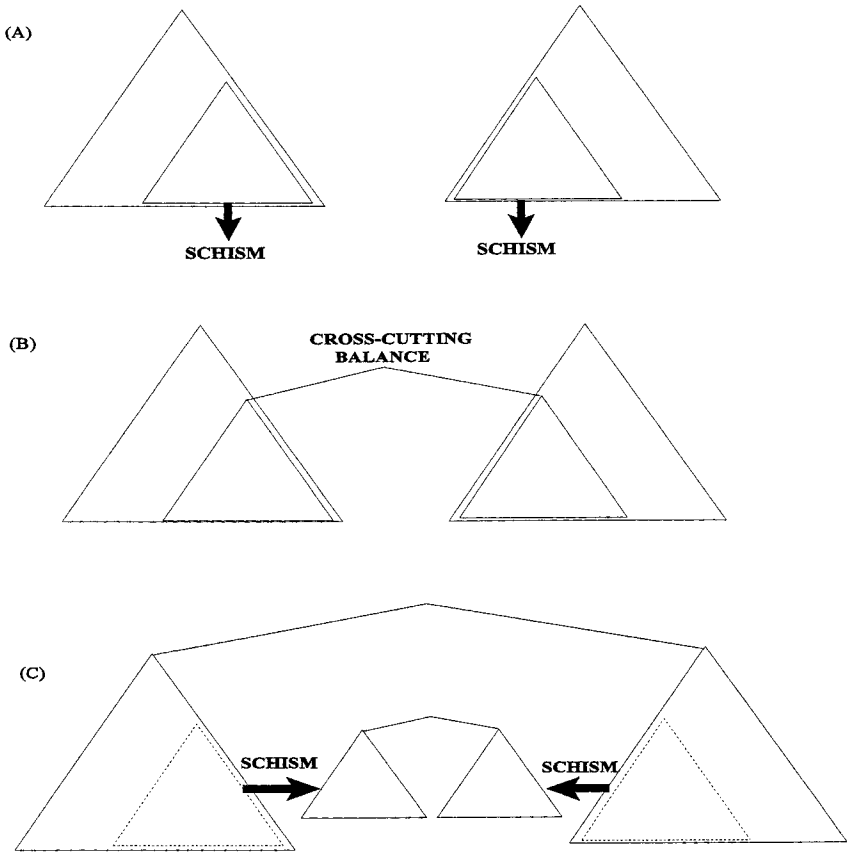


Figure 2.1. Schism and solidarity.

munal closure. Thus, as Figure 2.1 schematically suggests, broad-based solidarity will be sensitive to the precise structural balance achieved between closure and countermobilization against closure.

Cross-cutting linkage should not be treated too mechanically as if all that mattered were a structural connection. In the examples just cited, cross-cutting linkages mobilized alternative identities with their own symbolic potency. In Lévi-Strauss's case, marriage exchange was highly charged with symbolism. And among the Ndembu, cross-cutting ties were ritual cults that celebrated the unity of the Ndembu people. Both Mary Douglas and Victor Turner have argued that actors or objects

finding themselves interstitially “betwixt and between” dominant social categories develop symbolically potent and emotionally charged sacred identities (Douglas 1980; Turner 1977). A more general proposition on solidarity among sectarian or segmented groups can be stated as follows: cross-cutting networks that reflect or mobilize syncretic identities or symbols will have the greatest likelihood of bringing about broad-based solidarity.⁴³

The more localized the cross-cutting structural balance, the less stable it is likely to be. External influences or events will then easily repolarize relationships. Madison says as much in Federalist Number 10 when he argues that the mischief of faction can be cured through the creation of a large republic (Rossiter 1961, 83). Mauss and Lévi-Strauss propose an analogous mechanism when they suggest that broad-based solidarity will be produced by circular flows of exchange (generalized exchange). A necessary but not sufficient condition for the generalization of exchange is the principle of exogamy – marrying outside the clan. Balanced dualism can be generalized by partially “exogenizing” social relations. In contrast to the “endogenizing” of social relations and cultural logics associated with closure, the process of generalizing balanced dualism requires a continuous “exogenizing.”

Studies of Protestant churches offer complementary insights into the nature of balanced dualism. First, sociologists of religion have noted the association between denominationalism and ecumenicalism. The prevailing view is that the denomination is a routinized sect that reflects flagging religious intensity and secularization.⁴⁴ An alternative view emphasizes the institutional features of denominations that encourage interstitial alignments among different religious perspectives. Recall that Wach described a defining feature of denominations as “an insistence upon the independence of the local congregation, with correspondingly less emphasis on unity and universality” (see also Wilson 1967, 244). The denomination is more radical in doctrine than the ecclesiastic bodies, but less exclusive than the sect “owing to a less institutional and more spiritual notion of Christian fellowship.” Denominations stress the distinctiveness of individual congregations and resist the transfer of author-

43 Mauss provides glimpses of such an argument in his analysis of gift exchange (Mauss 1967, 24).

44 One view of denominationalism presumes that sects will evolve into denominations in which there is a “steady relinquishment of the pristine rigour of its theology and ideology” (Wilson 1990, 119). Ecumenicalism results from the possibilities for co-operation that occur when this pristine rigor declines. Berger (1963) develops a “cartelization” model of ecumenicalism that argues that denominations cooperate to prevent destructive competition.

ity to centralized church bureaucracies. Thus, the denomination is a sort of balance between “hierarchy” and “inverted hierarchy” described earlier. For Weber, the congregation was distinct from either a sect or a church (though closer to the former than to the latter). According to Schluchter, what distinguishes the congregation is the creation of stable communities of worship that avoid (though not always successfully) the routinization of charisma (Schluchter 1988, 213–18). Interestingly, the first Christian congregations were based on neighborhood associations and on the segmental differentiation of the neighborhood by household. As Weber noted, these segmental groups were built on “the dualism of in-group and out-group morality” (Weber 1946, 329). Congregations “exogenized” the reciprocity associated with “in-group morality” to out-groups – first from household to neighborhood and then from neighborhood to other congregations. As Schluchter notes in an extension of this argument, the congregation created a (sometimes tense) balance between patriarchal “household communism” and the more egalitarian “communism of love.” It achieved this through at least three means: (1) a balance between local congregational autonomy and interlocal congregational union, (2) the partial structural differentiation of religious from social commensalism, and (3) the creation of “rituals of spontaneity” that prevented religious inequality. Taken together, congregational religion represents an elaborate balancing act between in-group and out-group morality, between patriarchal hierarchy and fraternal equality, between local and interlocal solidarity. Each aspect of this balanced dualism tends to reinforce the others, though not without tension.

Another concept of religious organization that works by balancing the dualisms of us versus them and person versus group is the covenant. The covenantal model of religious unity has a long history but was greatly advanced by the religious strife generated by the Reformation. As Elazar defines the covenant:

A covenant is a morally-informed agreement or pact based upon voluntary consent and mutual oaths or promises, witnessed by the relevant higher authority, between peoples or parties having independent though not necessarily equal status, that provides for joint action or obligation to achieve defined ends (limited or comprehensive) under conditions of mutual respect which protect the individual integrities of all parties to it. (Elazar 1988, 7)

Elazar has argued that what is distinctive about the covenantal model (in contrast to an “organic” and “Jacobin” model) is its rejection of hierarchical forms of association and its embrace of multiple sovereignties. After the Reformation, covenantalism gradually evolved into a federal theology (Elazar 1988; Everett 1988). The parallel between

coventantalism and congregationalism is the combination of a mutual respect for difference and a sense of transcendent commonality.⁴⁵ As a “master frame,” the covenant operates at two levels: it binds together different congregations in an interlocal union, while respecting their local autonomy; it also binds together individuals in a compact with a transcendent God. Thus, it creates a double balancing act between person and group: a balance between local and extralocal congregations and a balance between the corporate congregation and individual personal initiative.

If we combine these insights about cross-cutting balance, congregationalism, and covenantalism we begin to see a distinctive form of social solidarity.⁴⁶ This form of solidarity maximizes the duality of person and group at multiple scales of organization (individual and corporate). Overlapping group affiliations balance autonomy against integration. On the autonomy side, multiple affiliations prevent individuals (or groups) from being locked into narrow social roles. At the same time, broader social integration is made possible by the freedom of individuals (or groups) to have multiple affiliations. Congregationalism also enhances the duality between person and group. First, the emphasis on the spiritual over the institutional preserves a duality between the church as a community of believers and the church as an institution. In addition, by insisting on the distinctiveness and autonomy of the local church community, congregations create a duality between local churches and the denomination as a whole. Covenantalism encourages a similar duality. By explicitly recognizing multiple sovereignties, covenantalism preserves the autonomy of different communities of belief. Yet the moral pact also transcends these different communities of belief, safeguarding the freedom of individuals in their local communities. Ultimately, the duality between person and group trumps the duality of us versus them.

Although the conditions just stated are static structural conditions, the model is meant to be thought of in dynamic and coevolutionary terms. As collective participation or commitment declines in a social movement or political mobilization, communal groups are likely to maintain commitment through communal closure. Attempts at hierarchical closure, however, are likely to produce schisms as dissident factions counter-mobilize around “inverted hierarchies.” In the face of such schismatic

45 Note the similarities here with Bellah’s conception of a “civil religion” that transcends denominational differences (Bellah and Hammond 1980) and with Gusfield’s analysis of “pluralistic” as opposed to “superimposed” appeals (Gusfield 1970, 98).

46 This form of solidarity is similar to the consociationalism that has been described for the national level (Lijphart 1968).

tendencies, two possibilities for broader social integration emerge. The first is that communal closure is actually achieved, usually through some form of hierarchical integration. Yet this strategy is problematic precisely where the tendencies toward schism are the greatest. The second possibility is that attempts to countermobilize against hierarchical communal closure will produce alliances that cut across sectarian boundaries. When this countermobilization is local, it may produce parallel local “congregations” that seek to counterbalance global divisiveness. Internally, these congregations allow individualized freedom of faith (or ideology) within a communal setting. Externally, they will be unified with other similar congregations by a sense of covenantal unity that transcends their respective differences, even as they insist on their own local autonomy. Among groups with a propensity toward schism, this form of institutional integration can produce broad-based global solidarity. As I shall argue in Chapters 6–9, just such an institutional equilibrium was the basis for the unification of the French labor movement in the first decade of the twentieth century.

An institutional equilibrium that counterbalances cross-sectarian alliance against communal closure, local against global integration, and individual freedom against congregational solidarity may be a delicate one. It may be sensitive to perturbation from a number of quarters: local cross-sectarian alliances may be repolarized, tolerance for individualized freedom of faith may erode, or centralization may undercut the local autonomy of congregations. When this counterbalancing dynamic is upset, the result is likely a return to schismatic tendencies. Chapters 9–10 will examine how this institutional equilibrium came apart in the French case and led to the 1920–1 schism of the labor movement.

Summary of the Argument

The major points of the preceding argument can be summarized as follows:

1. Communal, status, or identity groups will have a high propensity toward schism, particularly when participation is direct, holistic, broad-based, and emotionally intense, and when collective identity is in tension with dominant cultures.
2. Such schisms will occur as such groups initiate closure in response to the phases of declining participation that follow emotionally intensive mobilization.

3. At the interorganizational level, closure is an attempt to subordinate or internalize affiliated groups, which may lead to parallel schisms in affiliated organizations (as parallel oppositions emerge).
4. Schisms are precipitated by conflicting strategies of closure (routinization vs. depersonalization of charisma) and by countermobilization against closure (inversion).
5. Although solidarity among schismatic groups can be provoked by “external threat,” an endogenous mechanism is also possible.
6. The general principle of endogeneous solidarity is “balanced dualism.” Schism occurs where there is a strong dualism of us versus them and a fusion of person with group; balanced dualism works by a structural and cultural “balancing” of us versus them and person versus group.
7. Cross-cutting networks that counterbalance against closure are one mechanism of broad-based solidarity; they will be particularly effective when they reflect or mobilize syncretic cultural meanings.
8. Congregational organization (local community organization with an emphasis on individual spirituality) and covenantal unity (respect for multiple sovereignties combined with transcendent unity) provide model forms of balanced dualism.
9. Cross-cutting balance, congregationalism, and covenantalism may be produced as a result of countermobilization against communal closure (as in Figure 2.1, panel *B*).

3

Vox Populi, Vox Dei

Le peuple is the true successor to Christ, the sole worldly representative of God. Vox populi, vox Dei. Félix Pyat

Among Protestant peoples, the more vigorously the Established Church is assailed by dissident sects the greater the moral fervour developed. We thus see that conviction is founded on the competition of communions, each of which regards itself as the army of truth fighting the armies of evil. Georges Sorel

Chapter 3 argues that to understand the development of the French labor movement during the Third Republic, it is necessary to place the movement in a populist tradition. Peter Wiles defines populism as “any creed or movement based on the following major premise: virtue resides in the simple people, who are the overwhelming majority, and in their collective traditions” (Ionescu and Gellner 1969, 166).¹ Or, as James Q. Wilson nicely puts it in describing the worldview of the American populist:

The people were fundamentally good and their intuitions could be trusted if they were freed from institutional constraints and the blandishments of self-seeking leaders. Political organization generally, and political parties specifically, were at best necessary evils which should be shackled. Populism represented distrust of organization and a commitment to direct democracy. The problem to be solved was not simply bad organization but over-organization (Wilson 1966, 26).

Populism is suspicious of representative democracy and likely to call for direct democracy both within its movement and in the larger polity. Populists regard political parties and the state suspiciously as potential usurpers of popular sovereignty.²

¹ Taguieff argues that populism typically contains a “direct” appeal to the “authentic” people (Taguieff 1997, 10).

² A number of authors have mentioned the populist character of Radical Republican discourse in 1848 (Agulhon 1989, 8; Aminzade 1993, 51; Calhoun 1983b, 1988a, 1989; Cottereau [in Katznelson and Zolberg 1986], 150–1, 150n). Proudhon, in particular, can

Although the concept of populism is undoubtedly fuzzy, the French labor movement shared a number of traits commonly associated with populist movements: a tendency toward decentralized communalism and the concomitant valuing of fraternity, federalism, and self-sufficiency; a tendency to moralize economic issues; and a tendency to oscillate between rapid and broad-based mobilization and sectarian fragmentation.³ In contemporary social movement theory, populism might be understood as a “repertoire of contention.” It suggested forms and strategies of protest that could be called upon like a template. At the same time, it was a political theory embodied in the traditional discourse of radical republicanism in France.⁴

During the Third Republic, the populist strain in the French labor movement culminated in the movement and ideology known as revolutionary syndicalism. Like populism more generally, revolutionary syndicalism expressed a distrust of representative democracy and a preference for direct democracy, an anti-intellectualism, and a distrust of the state. It linked political citizenship and virtue to one’s position as a producer (defined as membership in a trade union). Certainly, a potential difference between populism and revolutionary syndicalism is that the former does not halt at the boundaries of class. Populism encompasses small independent producers and, unlike socialism, is not against private ownership. Revolutionary syndicalism, in contrast, exemplifies virulent class rhetoric. But as Moss (1976) has argued, revolutionary syndicalism was in part produced by the radicalization of mutualist traditions in which skilled workers sought to become independent producers. Although syndicalism broke with mutualist ideals of independent ownership, it retained the broader populist concern with independence and self-

be analyzed in populist terms (Calhoun 1989; Billington 1980, 295, 303–4). The most sustained analysis comes from Berenson’s discussion of the “populist religiosity” of left-wing movements from the Restoration through the Second Republic. Of Third Republic social movements, George Lichtheim (1966, 18) and Hutton (1981) characterize the Blanquist movement as populist. Stuart has argued that the class rhetoric of the Marxist Guesdist party at the end of the nineteenth century was intended to overcome the populist rhetoric of French Radicals, though the Guesdists occasionally adopted populist rhetoric themselves (Stuart 1992, 50, 88–90, 268, 422). Pombeni notes that antiparlamentarism is a prominent characteristic of European populism in the decades that straddle the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries (Pombeni 1997, 66).

3 A number of scholars have invoked the more general relevance of populism for understanding both historical and contemporary social and political movements (Canovan 1981, 1982; Ionescu and Gellner 1969). Calhoun (1982, 1983a, 1988b) emphasizes the communitarian aspects of populism.

4 In Steinberg’s (1999) terminology, populism was both an instrumental and a discursive repertoire.

determination. The languages of class conflict and of populism were reconciled by making the “working class” the “people.” As Laclau writes, “populist discourse can refer both to the people and to classes” (presenting, e.g., a class as the historical agent of the people’s interest) (Laclau 1977, 165). Revolutionary syndicalism represented a class populism linked to the trade union milieu.⁵

Many of the characteristics associated here with populism are frequently discussed under the rubric of republicanism.⁶ Populism and republicanism clearly share many features, but this chapter argues for distinguishing them on the grounds that the distinction provides important analytical leverage. By the nineteenth century, republicanism and socialism were making competing claims on worker loyalties. Populism could operate as a syncretic ideology that bridged republican and class ideologies. Like republicanism, populism stressed the importance of manly virtues, fraternity, independence, civic virtue, and a suspicion of the state. But like socialism, populism stressed the importance of economic expropriation and alienation and the validity of the common man. Whereas republicanism was primarily an ideology of political citizenship, Marxian socialism was an ideology about economic injustice. Populism bridged these two ideologies because it emphasized the centrality of producer status as the basis of political citizenship and attributed economic ills to political causes.

The internal tensions within populism help to explain both its amorphousness and its instability.⁷ Populism is pulled in two directions. The more it unites all producers broadly defined, the more it will unite against a very small internal enemy or a “foreign” threat. The enemy will be aristocrats, Jews, international financiers, or the pope. When populism has such a broad multiclass appeal, it will take the form of a strongly nationalistic or ethnic populism. Yet the more it focuses on producers as those who do manual or nonmanagerial work, the more it will tend to identify a broader “class” of internal exploiters who may be “merchant-capitalists” or “corporations.” In this case, populism will be pulled toward a class-based populism. An important consequence of this tension is a conflict within populist movements between nation and class as opposing bases of loyalty.

5 Hutton (1976) has noted the connection between populism and syndicalism in his study of popular Boulangism.

6 For an introduction to the rich literature on French working-class republicanism, see Agulhon (1982), Aminzade (1981, 1993), Friedman (1990, 1998), Moss (1976), and Tucker (1996).

7 Laclau argues that the basic source of ambiguity in the concept of populism stems from the theoretical ambiguity of its central defining concept – the people (Laclau 1977, 165).

The French Populist Tradition

In the classical Marxist historiography of the French Revolution, the Revolution was a bourgeois revolution, and the sansculottes, as Soboul has argued, were a petit bourgeois movement rather than a distinctively working-class one (Soboul 1980). This perspective sets up history as the progressive appearance of the working class on the scene. Thus Rudé talks about 1848 as being the first class conflict, and Sewell argues that class consciousness and mobilization appear in the 1830s and then explode in 1848 around the idea of association (Rudé 1973; Sewell 1980; cf. Traugott 1980, 1985). One implication of this argument is that as modern class mobilization becomes more prominent, traditional populist radicalism becomes increasingly irrelevant. Calhoun (1982) has made this point for the British case. This book argues that populism continued to characterize popular mobilization well beyond 1848, even though it is increasingly bifurcated into a nationalist populism and a class populism.⁸

If we move to the end of the Second Empire, Gould has challenged the “class conflict” interpretation of the Paris Commune, arguing that it reflected communal rather than class-based mobilization (Gould 1995). Yet the communal protest described by Gould can itself be broadly characterized as “populist.” Treating both the sansculottes and the Paris Communards as populists leads us to emphasize continuity rather than change – the constancy of a type of populist tradition. Thus Hutton traces the populism of the Blanquists back to the Hébertists (Hutton 1981, 136–40). When we do this, we begin to see a number of intellectual trends and events in a new light. For one thing, we notice the overwhelming rhetorical importance of the “people” in nineteenth-century Republican discourse (Michelet 1967; Livesey 1977; cf. Gould 1995, 56–8). Judt has argued that the emphasis on the virtue of the one and indivisible “people” and the corruption of their representatives “accounts for a lot of the anti-parliamentarism of French popular organizations, including workers’ societies and the early syndicalist movement” (Judt 1989, 109).

Nineteenth-century populist movements located the sovereignty of the “people” with grassroots associations. Soboul observes that for the sansculottes, “Sovereignty resides in the people. This principle lies at the root of every aspect of the political behavior of the popular militants; sovereignty being for them not an abstraction but the concrete

8 On the continuity of populism in Britain and the United States, see Joyce (1991), Kazin (1995), and Lasch (1991).

reality of the people united in sectional assemblies and exercising all their rights” (Soboul, 1980, 95). Sovereignty of the people meant “direct” – not representative – democracy, and the sectional assemblies of the sansculottes became the agency for exercising this popular sovereignty. Of 1848, Sewell describes the popular processions in Paris in which “the sovereign people presented itself as an aggregation of workers’ corporations” (Sewell 1980, 262). Similarly, in the pre-Commune club movement, the clubs saw themselves as an expression of the sovereignty of the people – an exercise in direct democracy (Johnson 1996, 156–62, 197, 227, 233).

The populist tradition in France, as elsewhere, was often infused with a strong religiosity – even if that religion was sometimes deeply antagonistic to established religion.⁹ This populist religiosity can be traced back at least to the Revolution where Catholic revolutionaries conceived of an evangelical socialism that would be based on the fraternal and egalitarian Gospels (Desan 1990, 7). Both the Jacobins and the sansculottes expressed secular versions of this religiosity. Brinton argues that the Jacobins held their philosophy to be a matter of faith: “[I]t is possible to sketch from the proceedings of their clubs the outlines of a polity held together by concepts primarily theological” (Brinton 1961, 218). Soboul has noted that when two sansculottes sections met “they were linked together in a quasi-religious pact” (Soboul 1980). And as Kimmel characterizes the sansculottes:

While some religious groups have organized themselves to achieve political ends, the sans-culottes were a political movement that generated religious sentiments connecting individuals to a political movement. This created, in their revolutionary praxis, what Bellah has called a “civil religion,” transferring those emotions commonly reserved for organized religion into political activity. They founded a cult into which the heroes of the Revolution were canonized into civil sainthood. (Kimmel 1984, 256)

Between 1830 and 1848, a popular Christianity replaced the secular religion of the Jacobins and the sansculottes. “Populist” religion was strongly embraced by the utopian socialists and Radical Republicans of the mid-nineteenth century (Berenson 1984, 38; see also Rancière 1989). The early socialists of the 1830s and 1840s embraced a religious socialism (Vincent 1984, 47). Saint-Simonians sought to create a new “civil religion,” and at the heart of Cabet’s utopian communism was a primitive Christianity that understood communism to be “Christianity in its

⁹ Touraine argues that populism “has often drawn strength from religious aspirations, particularly in France, where Christianity has ceased to be incorporated with the Christianity governed by the rules of the Church” (Touraine 1981, 20).

original purity” (Vincent, 1984, 45; see also Johnson 1974, 233, and Abenour 1981). The popular religiosity of these early socialists drew its inspiration from the Gospels (Berenson 1984; Vincent 1984, 46). And Sewell observes that the Revolution of 1848, like its predecessor, “was a religious as much as a political phenomenon” (Sewell 1980, 269). Louis Blanc, along with Alexandre-Auguste Ledru-Rollin, Armand Barbès, and Victor Hugo, became the “saints” of this Revolution (Berenson 1984, 216). Although he gradually became disenchanted with Christianity, the early Proudhon saw religious belief as necessary for republican virtue. Even after adopting an antitheistic position, Proudhon continued to espouse a moral position close in spirit to Christianity.

Berenson argues that the populist religion espoused by the Montagnard party after 1848 provided a basis for the creation of a rural left-wing tradition in South and Central France (Berenson 1984, 227). A shared Christian morality held radicalism and socialism together (Berenson 1984, 227–8). The Christian character of radicalism and socialism became increasingly secularized during the Second Empire. But as this secularization occurred, republicanism “became a religion itself” (Berenson 1984, 229). Hutton sees the populist discourse of the Blanquists of the early Third Republic as displacing or replacing their tradition of “salvationist” religiosity: “In reformulating Hébertism as populism, the Blanquists desacralized the radical atheism which had contributed so powerfully to their faith in revolution in the 1860s” (Hutton 1981, 139).¹⁰

Religion, Revolution, and State Building

On the eve of the Revolution, French Catholicism was (at least institutionally) an all-encompassing world. Under the *ancien régime*, Catholicism provided the spiritual justification for monarchical authority (Desan 1990). The king, writes Lynn Hunt, “was the sacred center, and the cultural frame of his authority was firmly fixed in long-standing notions of a Catholic, hierarchical order” (Hunt 1984, 87). With moral and political life no longer fused in a single center, where would sovereignty be located? Attempts to place moral sovereignty in smaller communities within the state implied negative claims about the sovereignty of the state. Just as the Protestant Reformation initiated an ongoing debate about where religious sovereignty would reside, the French

10 Populist movements in general tend to adopt a religious framing of protest. On American populism, see Kazin (1995, 32) and Rys and Alexander (1994). On religion as a frame for labor protest, see Hanagan (1994). On “social Catholicism” as a framework for cross-class coalitions in Dutch working-class mobilization, see Kalb (1997).

Revolution spawned an inconclusive debate about the location of political sovereignty.¹¹

The Revolution consequently took on many of the sectarian features of the Reformation that had preceded it. Walzer draws the parallel between Puritans, Jacobins, and Bolsheviks:

[G]iven similar historical circumstances, Frenchmen and Russians would predictably make similar choices. Englishmen became Puritans and then godly magistrates, elders and fathers in much the same way and for many of the same reasons as eighteenth-century Frenchmen became Jacobins and active citizens, and twentieth-century Russians Bolsheviks and professional revolutionaries . . . The Calvinist saints were the first of these bands of revolutionary magistrates who sought above all control and self-control. (Walzer 1965, 231)

The Protestant vision of virtue as contained in a direct, unmediated (transcendent) relationship with God is visible in the French Revolution as is the populist conception of virtue – and therefore sovereignty – as inhering directly in the people.¹²

As Van Kley notes in his study of the transition from confessionality to political ideology in France: “Although it was an attempt to destroy Christianity rather than to reform it, revolutionary dechristianization bore an uncanny resemblance to the Calvinist iconoclasm of the French reformation more than two centuries earlier” (Van Kley 1996). With the failure of the Reformation in France, what was distinctive about the French Revolution, and about the nineteenth-century Republican movement that followed from it, was that it took the form of a religious reformation – though in distinctly antireligious guise. Eugen Weber points out that “[t]he Revolution redefined the struggles between Protestants and Catholics; Right and Left would carry on their feuds” (Weber 1976, 257). Of course, in drawing a parallel between the Reformation and the Revolution, we should not ignore the differences.¹³

11 On the unresolved and thorny questions raised by the French Revolution concerning where sovereignty resided, see Holmes (1982).

12 Pombeni draws the parallel between the Reformation and populism very generally: “the dynamic of populism is no different from that which presides in religious reforms: when a religion becomes mundane, leaving its character as a church too transparent (that is, as a mechanical institution for the management of religious space), a demand for purification, for a return to the *ecclesia*, is born . . . Religious history shows us how this dynamic can also lead both to internal reforms of the church . . . and schisms aiming to delegitimize the existing church and to the creation of new forms of *ecclesia*” (Pombeni 1997, 54).

13 Edgar Quinet’s classic work *La Révolution* (1987) draws the parallel between the Revolution and the Reformation, but it also emphasizes the differences between them. For Quinet, the Revolution failed because it was not as bold as the Reformation.

The Protestant Reformation occurred when religion was the holistic framework of political and social life. Thus, it was largely a religious rebellion aimed primarily against the Catholic Church. The political revolt from the state was secondary to this religious revolution. The French Revolution, in contrast, was largely a political rebellion aimed primarily at the monarchy. But the alliance of church and state turned it quickly into a religious revolution. Republicans responded to the power of the Church with a campaign of dechristianization and, as Durkheim noted, a movement to relegitimate the state with an alternative civil religion (Durkheim 1965, 245).

The Jacobin project of creating an organic nation sought to supplant control of Catholicism over the state, but not to replace the idea of the state as the unifying moral force of society.¹⁴ This project represented an attempt to create a new ecclesiastical body in the form of the state. In Michelet's words: "The Revolution continues Christianity, and it contradicts it. It is, at the same time, its heir and its adversary" (Michelet 1967, 22). The Revolution, and later the nineteenth-century Republican and labor movements, fused religious and political revolt into a single reform movement. As Van Kley, who has traced the religious origins of the Revolution to the "Protestant-like" Jansenist movement of the eighteenth century, observed: "[I]f . . . French republicanism put religion behind it, it did not do so without retaining the ideological stigmata of religion" (Van Kley 1996, 375).

This religiosity was expressed through a heightened ritualism. Brinton (1961, Ch. 4) and Soboul (1980, 138) have described the heightened sense of ritual of the Jacobins and sansculottes. This sense of ritual was cultivated and preserved by the segmentary nature of groups (associations, corporations, clubs, circles, etc.) whose fraternalism was highly ritualized (Clawson 1989; Truant 1994).¹⁵ Hobsbawm writes: "Throughout the period of the three French Revolutions the secret revolutionary brotherhood was by far the most important form of organization for changing society in Western Europe, and it was often ritualized to the point of resembling an Italian opera rather than a revolutionary body" (Hobsbawm 1959, 162). And Robert Bezucha notes the "exaggerated concern for ritual" in the secret workingmen's associations

¹⁴ On the religiosity of the Revolution, see Ozouf (1988) and Desan (1990).

¹⁵ A common denominator of populist religiosity was its argument that morality inhered in small "corps" rather than in large institutions. Of a fraternal organization of small shopkeepers in France, Philip Nord notes "the Union preached economic and political decentralization as a means of breathing new life into local bodies (*corps locaux*), the breeding grounds of Christian values and cells of a future Christian revival" (Nord 1984, 179).

of Lyon in the early 1830s (Bezucha 1974, 90). This ritualism lent itself easily to a religiosity that made these segmental groups small churches on the order of Protestant sects. *Compagnonnages*, for instance, had long been intertwined with *confréries* – religious confraternities formally organized around the celebration of a patron saint (Sewell 1980, 34). Fraternal association and religion were indeed closely connected. Bezucha quotes an 1830s newspaper to demonstrate this connection: “Saint Simon, and after him his disciples, professed the indispensability of a religion . . . which binds the interests and hearts of men. Association!” (Bezucha 1974, 117). In 1848, the idea of “association” itself became a form of messianic religion. Sewell quotes socialist Pierre Leroux in 1851:

Soon it will be known all over Europe that it is in ASSOCIATION around the instruments of labor according to the diverse functions of science, of art and of industry that the true human society is found, that which makes all men solidary while rendering them free . . . The profession, thus understood, is a religion. (Sewell 1980, 274)

Yet, like Protestantism, this associational religion could be anti-Catholic. Johnson notes that the culture of the club movement during the Paris Commune “constitutes a mirrorlike inversion of the Catholic Church’s role in the purification of sins.”¹⁶ The clubs preferred to meet in churches where they substituted a revolutionary liturgy for the traditional Catholic liturgy (Johnson 1996, 228–30). A secular version of this link between small groups and religiosity appears in Durkheim’s argument that corporate groups could provide the framework of a moral community for modern society.

The socialist religion of the 1830s and 1840s adopted Protestant-like repertoires in its anticlericalism, its evocation of the Gospels, and its references to the primitive Christian church. The democratic socialists (*démoc-socs*) of mid-century, for example, viewed the Catholic Church as having corrupted Christianity. Berenson quotes a *démoc-soc* propagandist as saying “Our reverence for Christianity . . . is equaled only by our disdain and fear of Catholicism – that self-serving and degrading plague of our society” (Berenson 1984, 100). The parallel can also be seen in the sectarian nature of some of the utopians. Johnson has provided a very detailed analysis of the evolution of Cabet’s Icarians from a “movement” to a “sect” (1974, Ch. 5). In some cases, the connection between Protestantism and a Protestant-style

¹⁶ Anticlericalism was one of the major themes of the Commune (Johnson 1996, 211–14). See Hutton (1981) on the Commune as an “Atheist Drama.”

Socialist movement may have been even more direct. Agulhon, for instance, finds many examples of latent and manifest Protestantism in the Var in the years leading up to 1848. He concludes that “the traces left by the Protestant experiment of the forties already gave some indication of the emotional, fervent, crypto-religious character that this democratic movement was soon to assume” (Agulhon 1982, 111).¹⁷

In countries where there had been a Reformation, certain groups in the labor movement became closely attached to certain Protestant sects. The most famous and well-studied case is that of the English working class and Methodism.¹⁸ What is important to note about this relationship is that, despite the close connections, Methodism as an institution had an existence that was distinct from the labor movement. Consequently, religious movements were increasingly demarcated from labor movements over the course of the nineteenth century. Yet in France and other Catholic countries, mobilization against employers and capitalism was fused with quasi-religious mobilization against the Church, both in its control over the state and its control over national culture. Even today in Catholic countries we can see that mobilization against the market often takes the form of religious protest.¹⁹

The Populist Reformation

Eric Hobsbawm, who has written perhaps the broadest and most influential essay on religion and the nineteenth-century working classes, has stressed the “militant secularism” of labor movements while recognizing the occasional links between sectarian religion and labor mobilization (Hobsbawm 1984, 33–48). As he observes, “Religio-ideological ‘reformation’ or dissidence, in the form mainly of sectarian growth, or specific religio-socialist bodies, can form and mobilize cadres . . . but rarely masses” (Hobsbawm 1984, 46). Thus, Hobsbawm sees the possibilities

17 For Protestant influences on radicalism in the Midi, see Loubère (1974, 56–8, 199–200).

18 On the “labor sects” in Britain, see E. J. Hobsbawm (1959, 126–49). He notes that many labor sects were “ranting sects” with an “incurable tendency” to “split into a mass of independent rival conventicles” (Hobsbawm 1959, 132).

19 See Smith (1996, 8) and Lancaster (1988). Guenter Lewy (1974, 510) draws the parallel between radical Catholicism in Latin America and the Protestant Reformation. Cf. Germany, a Protestant country with a strong Catholic minority (Spohn 1991).

for the religious mobilization of the labor movement as declining with the rise of mass politics (and with a more general secularization). More generally, the decline of religious sectarianism coincides with the transition from “archaic” forms of social protest – with their heavy emphasis on ritual – to more modern forms of mass mobilization. Hobsbawm dates the decline of ritualistic brotherhoods in France, for instance, to between 1830 and 1848 (Hobsbawm 1959, 168–9). In his later work, however, he has revised this view of the decline of ritualism. In his well-known essay on “inventing traditions,” Hobsbawm clearly notes the clustering of new forms of working-class ritual in the period between 1870 and 1914 (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1988). In another essay, he suggests that ritualism in labor movements probably reached its peak only in 1914 (Hobsbawm 1984, 79).

During the Third Republic, the French labor movement was distinctly secular in its orientation. It no longer espoused the Christian socialism of the 1830s and 1840s, which seems to have disappeared by the late 1860s (Magraw 1992a, 258). Yet an undercurrent of religiosity remained in what is often called the “romantic” revolutionary tradition – a more emotive, symbolic, and militant brand of republicanism. After 1848, republicanism was increasingly dominated by a rationalistic and positivist spirit (Pierrard 1984). Science was posed as an alternative to Catholic dogmatism. Yet this rationalism must be kept in perspective. Philip Nord has argued that even in its masonic heartland, republicanism retained a certain element of religiosity: “In the ranks of the Masonic opposition, multiple voices – Kantian, deist, Protestant – joined in the moral debate. All repudiated Catholic doctrine as an affront to the moral sovereignty of the individual, but such a repudiation did not deter them from grounding individual conscience in a transcendent realm, whether metaphysical or religious in nature” (Nord 1991, 222; see also Pierrard 1984, 234).

Berenson points out that although French socialists rarely spoke directly of socialism in Christian terms, they did inherit the religiosity of the *démoc-socs*. He notes the religiosity of socialist leaders like Jules Guesde and Jean Jaurès (Berenson 1984, 231–2). It is worth quoting Berenson’s conclusion about the transmission of this religious tradition:

[T]he religiosity that had spawned the Second Republic’s democratic socialism returned in secular garb after 1880 as the moral and spiritual underpinning of fin-de-siècle socialism. This moralistic spirituality resonated with the lingering religiosity – albeit dechristianized – of France’s workers and peasants, and it helped to anchor many of them to the nondoctrinaire socialism exemplified by Jean Jaurès. This socialist republicanism, then, became a complete and deeply rooted system of belief that, despite the factional conflict at

the national level, undergirded the whole of the French left. So influential was this eclectic and moralistic socialism that it succeeded in virtually excluding Marxism from pre-First World War France. (Berenson 1984, 237)

Though the police are certainly a suspect source, it is still worth noting that they often used religious epithets to describe different groups of workers. In describing an anarchist named Genet, for instance, the Nantes railroad police noted that “he assiduously meets his coreligionnaires.”²⁰ They described the socialist leader Jean Allemane and his friends several years later as “the determined apostles of the General Strike.”²¹ Another Nantes police report about the local *bourse du travail* stated: “The strike has been a means of action and the leaders of the Bourse have seemed to want the collectivist baptism of all new unions.”²² And the French labor movement itself used the term “sect” to describe various “schools” of socialism.²³ Michelle Perrot has described the messianic belief of socialist groups in the imminence of the Revolution, and Willard describes the Guesdists around 1890 as a “messianic sect” (Perrot 1987, 227–9; Willard 1965, 595; see also Perrot and Kriegel 1966, 25–7).²⁴ Moss describes Guesde’s “evangelism” (Moss 1976, 105).²⁵ The most religious group in a secular sense – the Blanquists – were the most vehemently anticlerical and atheistic. The slogan of the Blanquists, a band of professional Republican revolutionaries, was *Ni Dieu, ni maître* – “Neither God, nor master.” But they adopted an elaborate ritualism around civic funerals that could compete with Catholicism (Hutton 1981).

The quasi-religious quality of the French labor movement must be seen against the backdrop of the broader Republican movement. Anticlericalism was perhaps the central plank of Republican politics. André Siegfried argued that “anticlericalism marks therefore a frontier, a frontier so important that it constitutes without doubt the dominant line of division of all our politics” (Siegfried 1930, 62). This anticlericalism was a very tangible issue for the French – including many workers

20 Archives Départementales (hereafter AD) Loire-Atlantique, 1M 475, 22 janvier 1891. Till the eve of the anarchist schism, Malon noted, Guesde was still a “*coreligionnaire*” in the eyes of the anarchists (Malon 1886b, 997n).

21 AD Loire-Atlantique, 1M 1175, undated report on the congress of Nantes (1894).

22 AD Loire-Atlantique, 1M 2387, St. Nazaire “notes” (undated, but with an attached letter from Lebrun, secretary general of the *bourse*, dated 25 juillet 1893).

23 A group of London exiles of the Commune that included Radicals of the “extreme left” and socialists like Charles Longuet wrote an appeal that was read at the 1879 congress of Marseille warning the new party not to adopt “the Creed, the exclusive catechism of any sect” (Zévaès 1911, 78).

24 On the revolutionary messianism of 1869, see Dalotel and Friermuth (1988).

25 Baker (1974) reviews some of the literature on Third Republic socialism as a “secular religion.”

– who had been educated in Catholic schools. Heywood has noted that anticlericalism in the labor movement was fueled by religious education (Heywood 1989, 526). This anticlericalism was the “real cement” that united the labor movement with the Republican movement as a whole (Mayeur and Reberieux 1984, 84; Magraw 1992b, 53). With the consolidation of the Third Republic, the work of Republican state building was closely intertwined with a project of laicization, most notably with a project to create secular public schools.

The rapid organization of the French working class during the early Third Republic took place against the backdrop of a strong wave of anticlerical sentiment (Mayeur and Reberieux 1984, 84). In the 1860s, civil burials multiplied, including the burials of major figures like Proudhon in 1865, and this trend continued after the Commune (Pierrard, 1984, 225, 471–3). Yet to say “anticlerical” is not quite the same thing as saying “nonreligious.” For Republicans, anticlericalism was a sort of secular religion around which they became internally politicized.

As long as republicanism was a “counterreligion,” its relationship to working-class mobilization was not particularly problematic. Yet with the consolidation of the Republican state during the Third Republic, an apparent fusion of state and (secular) religion again occurred. Thus, in a parallel to the counterreligious mobilization of Republicans against the ancien régime, the working-class movement asserted its own religion. Elements of a secular religion can be seen not only in the labor movement’s break from radical republicanism in 1879 but also in the creation of socialist sects by the schisms of 1881 and 1882. Each of these movements sought to create a secular religion of class mobilization that inverted republicanism.

Differentiation within the Republican camp was similar to that of the Reformation in the sense that the division was “segmental” – it presumed that internal groups were different but were also alike. The Republicans could still be united around anticlericalism; they could also be divided by it. Guesde, following Marx, emphasized an atheistic, materialist conception of history that differed from anticlericalism. Anticlericalism could unite many who believed in God, including deists and Protestants, with those who did not. But atheism, like pure class conflict, sought to divide the working class from the larger Republican milieu. The Guesdists, for instance, criticized the “bourgeois anticlericalism” of Jaurès, because they sought to sever the link between the working class and the broader Republican alliance (Pierrard 1984, 428–9).²⁶ Thus, just as republicanism sought to supplant Catholicism with its own secular

²⁶ Pierrard suggests a correlation between the virulent atheism of Guesdism and the Catholicism of the large factory owners (Pierrard 1984, 432).

ideology, the Guesdists sought to replace Republican with socialist religion.

Republicans and socialists often adopted secularized versions of Catholic repertoires. The catechism is a good example. Republican schools adopted their own “catechism” for socialization (Heywood 1989, 527; see also Ozouf 1963). The schools were the secular equivalent of parish churches and the teachers the equivalent of parish priests (Hobsbawm 1988, 271). In the labor movement too we see the use of the catechism style – exemplified by Fernand Pelloutier’s pamphlet *What Is the General Strike?*²⁷ Yet revolt against Catholicism also took on a “Protestant” tone.²⁸ Georges Sorel, for instance, equated Catholic reformers with socialist reformists (Sorel 1961, 269). Sorel’s close collaborator, Edouard Berth, embraced the idea that socialism was a new religion, but qualified himself by saying, “But it is a religion which, to borrow Marx’s words, will no longer be an illusory sun moving around man, but a religion that will make man a real sun” (cited by Pierrard 1984, 338). Like radical Protestantism, French anarchism developed a “cult of the individual” that made each person a saint (Pierrard 1984, 450–1). Emile Pataud and Emile Pouget, in their fictional account of a syndicalist revolution, written in 1909, wrote that “whilst detesting superstitions and whilst pulling down the churches, the Revolutionists respected the faith of each individual” (Pataud and Pouget 1990 [1909], 220).

Paul Brousse, a leader of the “Possibilist” faction of the post-Commune socialist movement, equated his rivals, the Guesdists, with Catholicism while drawing the homology between the Possibilist-Guesdist split and the broader Republican rejection of clericalism:

They are the *ultramontains* of socialism . . . The *ultramontains* cannot obey the law of their own country because their leader is in Rome. The Marxists cannot obey the decisions of the party and its congresses because their real leader is in London.

You cannot reconcile the Parti ouvrier with the Marxist fanaticism any more than in the bourgeois world you can reconcile clericalism with the state.²⁹

And other groups criticized Jules Guesde’s popish ways (*façons de pape*).³⁰ As Guesde himself wrote in 1896: “We are today the true, the

27 On other “socialist” catechisms, see Pierrard (1984, 341, 437); on the importance of catechisms in French religious life, see Coffey (1997).

28 Some Catholics saw the Third Republic as a Protestant conspiracy. It is interesting to note that the French Protestants themselves underwent a split in 1879 and began to reconcile their differences only in 1906 – an organizational history paralleling that of French socialists (McWilliam 1995).

29 A statement by Paul Brousse at the 1882 party congress; cited by Moss (1976, 118).

30 Willard (1965, 87).

only catholicism . . . We are the only universal party.” (cited by Pierrard 1984, 338)

Syndicalism was a “Protestant” rejection of Guesdist “Catholicism” and also a rejection of the Republican substitution of the Republican state for the Catholic Church (see Jennings 1990, 1991b). This is most explicitly developed in the work of Georges Sorel and that of Edouard Berth, though they both retained a certain ambivalence about Catholicism and Protestantism. Sorel maintains that the goal of the Reformation was to universalize the asceticism of the medieval monasteries, a project at which it failed (Sorel 1961, 254–5).³¹ The problem with Reformation Protestantism, according to Sorel, was that it separated monastic life from economic life. He argues that the Protestantism of the Puritans was inherited by Rousseau, who made the mistake inherent in the Reformation of assuming an ahistorical individual cut off from economic, familial, or political ties. He argues for the value of Catholic monasticism as an organizational means for the proletariat to fight against the “anti-Church” (republicanism). Catholicism, he argues, has always known how to utilize the “zeal” of monastic orders for the purposes of the larger movement. Sorel, by extension, sees his own project as one that can avoid the mistakes of the Reformation. But Sorel also celebrates the same fighting spirit in Protestant sects that he finds in Catholic monasticism: “In Catholic countries the monks carry on the struggle against the prince of evil who triumphs in this world, and would subdue them to his will; in Protestant countries small fanatical sects take the place of these monasteries” (Sorel 1961, 209). Sorel is on the Protestant side when he celebrates the value of “multiplicity” of fighting groups over “unity” as a means of mobilizing participation.³²

As Republican state building sought (or was seen to seek) a type of hierarchical integration of society through a secular religion of science and rationalism, the labor movement wing of French republicanism moved toward an “inverted hierarchy.” The labor movement feared “incorporation” into the state.³³ According to Hobsbawm and Ranger:

31 Kolakowski observes that Sorel’s “unfilled ambition was to be the Luther of the Marxist movement” (Kolakowski 1978, 149). As Jennings puts it, “In his rereading of Marx, Sorel sought to make a return to the ‘spirit’ of the original texts” (Jennings 1990, 57). This fundamentalism was closely related to Sorel’s concept of syndicalist “myth,” which he compared favorably with the myths of primitive Christianity and the Protestant Reformation (Sorel 1961, 125).

32 Weber saw French syndicalism as “the only remaining variant of socialism in western Europe equivalent to a religious faith” (Weber 1978, 515).

33 Julliard (1988) has stressed the importance of “autonomy” for the French labor movement. See Collier and Collier (1991) on the range of forms of state incorporation of Latin American labor movements. For a general discussion of the relationships between states and working-class ideologies, see Birnbaum (1988).

“The Socialist Labour movement resisted its co-option by the bourgeois Republic to some extent; hence the establishment of the annual commemoration of the Paris Commune at the *Mur des Fédérés* (1880) against the institutionalization of the Republic” (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1988, 270). The instability of the relationship between republicanism and the working class has been described by Aminzade as the failure of the bourgeois Republicans to establish hegemony over the working class and, at the same time, the failure of the working-class bid to create a counter-hegemony through an alliance with peasants and the petite bourgeoisie (Aminzade 1981, Ch. 9).

Thus we see a tension between the labor movement as a secular religion of class mobilization and the movement as the working-class expression of the larger secular religion of republicanism. This is why the return of the Communards and the legacy of the Commune, the Boulangist movement, the Dreyfus affair, antimilitarism, and World War I were major issues around which the labor movement defined its role – forcing the movement to delineate where it stood vis-à-vis the secular religion of republicanism. The schisms of the labor movement after it broke from radical republicanism were similar to the continued schisms of Protestant churches in the Reformation. Republican anticlericalism could shade off easily into the anti-statism of anarchists and revolutionary syndicalists, especially as Republicans gained control of the state.

The populist religiosity of the labor movement bore a strong family resemblance to Protestant forms of mobilization. In a dominantly Catholic nation, the labor movement took on many of the trappings of a Protestant Reformation.³⁴ Populism was the secular form of this Protestant mobilization in France. At the heart of the revolutionary syndicalist and anarchist impulse in France (and elsewhere, especially in Catholic countries) was the insistence on a direct, unmediated expression of popular sovereignty that paralleled the Protestant insistence on a direct, unmediated relationship between the faithful and their transcendent God. Thus, the organizational and ideological evolution of the

34 We can introduce here some broader comparative evidence for this argument. Lipset and Rokkan’s classic statement on the evolution of political party systems in Europe argues that the different settlements of the Reformation were critical in shaping the types of cultural cleavages around which mass parties eventually formed (Lipset and Rokkan 1967). Rokkan (1970) later extended this explanation directly to Socialist and labor parties. He argued that an explanation for radical and divided labor movements (i.e., strong Communist parties and a division between Socialist and Communist wings) could be traced back to the divergent outcomes of the Reformation. He noted that countries that had successfully resisted a Protestant Reformation – namely, the Catholic countries of Spain, Italy, and France – had developed strong splits between Socialist and Communist wings after World War I (Rokkan 1970, Ch. 3; see also Ebbinghaus 1995, 51–89, and Ragin 1987, 126–32).

Third Republic labor movement can be understood as a “Populist Reformation.”

The Populist Cycle

Much as Tarrow (1994) has described “social movement cycles,” populist mobilization in France came in waves. Major events in the organizational evolution of the French labor movement were closely connected with these waves of rising and declining protest; organization building was not a smooth linear process, but a process of “punctuated” change. This is true not only of the Third Republic labor movement but also of the Republican movement reaching back to the Revolution. This final section describes these waves as having three phases: an initial phase of dispersed organization; a second, expansionary phase in which dispersed organizations become linked together; and a third, contracting phase in which attempts are made to consolidate organizational gains. This last phase typically leads to the fragmentation of populist movements in ways that coincide with the model of communal closure described in the previous chapter.

In the first phase of populist mobilization, small, seemingly independent “segmental” groups bubble up. These groups lack formal links to one another and act without overt coordination. Each group tends to be distinctive in its form and operating procedures, and the movement as a whole is diverse (although there is often an important element of “modeling” in which the most visible groups become organizational models). Communication is intimate and localized. Face-to-face relationships dominate, and the moral voluntarism of individual participation is strongly stressed. Populist movements tend to begin as fellowships – small communal groups growing out of subcultures or submerged networks in which people have face-to-face knowledge of each other. They are often social in orientation and directed toward leisure activities, recreation, or common interests. In France, this segmentary mobilization often took the form of clubs, circles, or similar types of association – the Jacobin clubs of 1789–91, the *sociétés populaires* in 1793, the producer cooperatives and worker associations in 1830, the *cercles* and *chambrées* in the years prior to 1848, the club movement of 1848, the public meeting movement and clubs of 1868–71, the *cercles* of the 1870s and 1880s (Kennedy 1979, 1984; Cobb 1987; Amann 1975; Faure 1988; Gould 1995; Sewell 1980; Agulhon 1982; Johnson 1996). This argument could easily be projected beyond the Third Republic to describe the socialist club

movement of the 1960s or the student groups of 1968 (Wilson 1971; Touraine 1971).

In the second phase of populist mobilization, these groups come to recognize themselves as part of a broader social movement, and a preliminary integration of the movement takes shape. A type of effervescence tends to develop as diverse groups begin to recognize a common project. People feel the excitement of discovering commonalities across segmental divisions. New outposts of the movement are quickly formed, and increasingly, linkages between the independent segments of the movement are formed. The massive street demonstration of March 17, 1848, for instance, led clubs to search for “living and permanent links” (Amann 1975, 110). The most impressive attempt to assemble a coordinated movement of progressive Republican segments was the creation of the Montagnard party, which successfully grafted itself onto the many dispersed and diverse attempts to organize: the *chambrées* of southern France, the Paris clubs, and informal centers of sociability (*cercles*, *cafés*). Aminzade describes the party as “composed of diverse forms rooted in a rich organizational heritage that included the Jacobin clubs of the French revolution, the secret conspiratorial societies of the Restoration and informal centers of sociability like *cercles* and *cafés*” (Aminzade 1993, 32). Such linkages are often initially created through festive rituals that celebrate this newfound commonality, which are then only gradually institutionalized as concrete organizational networks.

The third phase of populist mobilization is marked by decline.³⁵ Whether in response to repression, movement success or failure, or simple flagging of interest, participation ultimately tapers off. When it does, organization is often substituted for participation. Some groups radicalize and seek to preserve the identity of the movement through various forms of ideological and organizational closure. Organizational adaptation to this declining phase typically leads to the fragmentation of the movement.³⁶ From about August or September 1792, for instance, participation in the Jacobin clubs dropped significantly (Kennedy 1984, 656–7). This decline was followed by the schism between the Girondists and the Montagnards. After June 1849, declining participation, prompted in part by political repression, led to a proliferation of secret societies associated with the Montagnards as well as to increasing divi-

35 For interesting theoretical discussions of the rise and decline of populist movements in the American context, see McNall (1988) and Schwartz (1976).

36 As Tarrow writes: “A key element in the decline of movements are disputes over tactics, as some militants insist on radicalizing their strategy while others try to consolidate their organizations and deliver concrete benefits to supporters” (Tarrow 1994, 157). Tarrow describes the 1848 European revolutions as the first modern social movement cycle.

siveness within the broader Republican coalition (Aminzade 1993). During the Commune, the decline of the Delegation of the Twenty Arrondissements produced a schism in the revolutionary socialist coalition that controlled the city council (Johnson 1996, 192–3).

During the period of this study (1872–1922), at least four waves of populist protest were critically important phases in the organizational evolution of the French labor movement. These waves of populist mobilization had a number of common characteristics. First, each episode corresponded with major steps or crises in the consolidation of Republican control over the state – and with attempts to rally the working class in support of this Republican state-building project. Second, each episode was associated with a wave of strikes (see Figure 1.1).³⁷ Third, each wave mobilized strong grassroots support – that is, the direct participation of local constituencies. Finally, each wave intertwined this grassroots protest with a fundamental questioning of the nature of citizenship, the role of the state, the legitimacy of the regime, and issues of economic well-being. The distinctiveness of this intertwining was that economic issues of a rather immediate but local bearing (e.g., the cost of living) tended to become entwined with diffuse and global critiques of society and politics. Symbolic politics was pronounced.

The first wave of protest after the Commune paralleled the consolidation of the Third Republic and the first post-Commune strike wave. The central issue for the organized social protest was a movement to grant amnesty to the Communards, many of whom had been sent to New Caledonia to serve terms of hard labor. Within the broader Republican movement, the debate was over whether a partial or a full amnesty should be granted to the Communards. As Joughin points out, one key outcome of the conflict over amnesty was the establishment by 1880 of a “Republican amnesty” and a “Socialist amnesty” (Joughin 1955, 497). The conflict over the Commune represented a symbolic contest over who was the legitimate source of the Republican tradition. As Joughin notes, the “continued denial of full amnesty, even by the ‘Republican Republic’ was used to equate the Commune with the ‘people’ and the Republic with the reaction” (Joughin 1955, 498).

The centerpiece of the second populist wave was the popular General Boulanger’s campaign to “revise” the Republican Constitution, Winock describes Boulangism as a classical populist movement that “portrays

37 See Shorter and Tilly (1974, Ch. 5) and Friedman (1998) for a discussion of the link between strike waves and political mobilization. For a comparative analysis of the importance of strike waves in the development of labor movements, see Haimson and Tilly (1989).

itself as the true democracy against the oligarchic and corrupted democracy” (Winock 1997, 79). Hutton draws the parallels between Boulanger and Blanqui: “In each case, an urban protest movement campaigned under the banner of an aggrieved hero to promote a larger issue” (Hutton 1981, 145). The Boulangist movement was preceded by a popular groundswell against unemployment. Groups like the anarchists, Blanquists, and Guesdists competed and cooperated to mobilize broad-based social protest, and their efforts coincided with a strike wave and the rise of May Day as a celebration of labor.

The third wave coincided with the infamous Dreyfus affair, which Republicans saw as posing a threat to the Republic. On one level, the Dreyfus affair brought Republicans together in defense of the Republic. This defense initiated a major push toward Republican state building, culminating in the 1905 Combes law that definitively separated church and state in France. It was really in reaction to this Republican unity that the “populist” response of the working-class movement could be seen. To create a solid Republican bloc, a leading socialist, Alexandre Millerand, was invited to join the government. Many socialists interpreted this move as a corruption of the labor movement, especially because Millerand was to serve with General Gallifet, known in working-class circles as the “Butcher of the Commune.” The Dreyfus affair also coincided with mounting strike activity that culminated in the massive strike wave of 1906.

The final wave of populist mobilization was an outgrowth of the massive strikes of 1919–20 and with a variety of protests related to postwar food and housing shortages, rapid price inflation, and industrial reconversion. These strikes and protests involved recriminations over the military policies of the French state (like decommissioning) and an antiwar movement that had started during the war. In the postwar years, this antiwar movement expressed support for the Russian Revolution and opposition to Allied actions against Russia.

These four waves of populist protest were critically linked to the shifting patterns of schism and solidarity in the French labor movement. The first wave of protest coincided with the initial attempt to construct a post-Empire socialist party and to the subsequent schism of the movement into competing political sects. The second “Boulangist” wave coincided with the first steps toward a realignment of the labor movement that would lead to unification. This unification was consolidated during the third “Dreyfus/1906” wave. Finally, the postwar populist wave precipitated the schism that produced rival Communist and Socialist blocs in the labor movement.

Summary

Populist movements claim sovereignty for a virtuous “people” who labor productively. As both a protest repertoire and a political discourse, populism suspects organizations and states of alienating sovereignty from the people; it therefore pursues forms of direct democracy through local associations. In France, a populist tradition grew out of the Republican opposition to a Catholic and monarchical state during the French Revolution – an opposition that fused religious and political protest. Like populist movements elsewhere, French populism framed its actions in quasi-religious, notably Protestant, terms. Populist claims for direct, unmediated political representation paralleled the Protestant insistence on a direct, unmediated relationship to God. By inheriting this populist tradition, the Third Republic labor movement also inherited the sectarian tendencies of this “Protestant” republicanism.

4

Esprit de Corps

Chapter 1 argued that the analogy to the structuring principles of lineage and residence in Lévi-Strauss's theory of social integration was to be found in the French labor movement in the structuring principles associated with craft communities (lineage) and territorial communities (residence). In this chapter, I introduce the "elementary" forms of these structuring principles that will then be discussed in the rest of the book. I also examine some of the historical and structural factors that explain why French workers came to shape their relations with one another in particular ways. These factors include the social organization of craft communities, the control over the reproduction of skills, the organization of production, the character of embeddedness of firms in communities, the geography of markets, and ultimately the effect of all of these factors on labor markets.

Perhaps the overriding factor shaping organizational relationships among French workers was their strong tendency to mobilize at the workplace level, which trumped the labor market or neighborhood as a focus of mobilization. This workplace focus had very important consequences. It created the possibility for cross-craft and cross-skill alliances based on workplace solidarities, and this workplace solidarity often spilled over into community-based political mobilization. This form of community mobilization was often at odds with the neighborhood mobilization championed by political parties. The result was a communal unionism that frequently competed with, on the one hand, national trade federations and, on the other hand, political parties.

Workplace conflicts, of course, could be quite parochial. Indeed, most industrial conflicts in France, as elsewhere, were narrowly based. But two features of the industrial structure of France encouraged workplace conflicts to spill out into the broader industrial community – decentralization and agglomeration. French firms were relatively small in scale and tended to agglomerate by industrial speciality. This industrial structure created relatively "impacted" labor markets in which pools of skilled labor became permanently attached to particular cities or city districts

(Ansell and Joseph 1998). The instability of employment in these districts encouraged frequent job changes, leading to the importance of extraworkshop social networks for finding access to new jobs. As a result, conflicts often diffused quickly from workplace to workplace.

A distinctive trait underlying French unionism was the continuing importance of craft in the production process, even as “craft communities” (or “corporations” in the lexicon of the French working class) had lost collective control over their skills. This paradox can be partly explained by the production process inherent in the industrial structure just described. In broad terms, French firms relied more heavily on skill specialization than on the substitution of technology for craft. Significant skill dilution did occur, which accentuated the conflict within craft communities between senior and junior workers and led to fragmentation of crafts into multiple subspecialties. At the same time, the reliance on specialized labor continued to give skilled labor some control over the production process.

The continuing importance of craft labor in the production process – in the context of the weakness of collective control over the reproduction of skills and the fragmentation of skills – created conflicting imperatives for union organization and strategy. On the one hand, workers who were either more senior or more skilled within craft communities kept attempting to assert and strengthen craft controls over the production process and to shore up collective control over the reproduction of skills. This strategy favored relatively narrowly based “sectoral” control over critically positioned segments of craft labor markets. On the other hand, as Hanagan (1980) has shown, the declining collective control over skill, the fragmentation of skill, and the impacted nature of labor markets could lead skilled workers to mobilize across the boundaries of craft and skill.

These conflicting imperatives led to different union institutions. The sectoral orientation was institutionalized in national trade federations, which organized in France between 1880 and 1900. The more solidaristic orientation led to the creation of quasi-industrial (amalgamated crafts) or industrial unionism. However, to this dichotomy we must add the tension of local versus national. Workshop-based mobilization encouraged localism in both sectoral and solidaristic orientations, creating an impetus toward a decentralized territorially based unionism. At the same time, trends favoring the national integration of labor and product markets pushed toward national-level controls over local union affiliates. These conflicts between sectoral versus solidaristic strategies, craft versus industrial unionism, and local versus national institutional control created the fault lines around which unions tended to fragment.

The Breakdown of Skill Hierarchies

As Joan Scott suggests in her study of French glassworkers, the introduction of machines, and the division of labor that developed thereafter, tended to break down skill hierarchies (Scott 1974, 105). Faced with an onslaught of new machines, a craft could hope to institutionalize such a skill hierarchy only if it were in a position to exert near-monopoly control over its labor market, if it could maintain control over training new entrants to the craft, and if it could resist the introduction of workshop practices, like piece rates, that undercut the authority of senior craftsmen. The Paris molders approached the first condition: by 1891, 606 out of 778 molders were unionized (APO 1899, tome III, 406). They also appear to have successfully safeguarded control over apprenticeship, reporting 88 apprentices in 1899 (APO 1899, tome III, 406). Their major area of defense appears to have been a struggle to prevent the introduction of piece rates, which created divisions between younger and older workers. The third article of the molders' constitution pronounced, "The Society must strive for the absolute suppression of piece rates, source of the grossest abuses" (APO 1899, tome III, 405, 432).

A strong conflict between hierarchical and egalitarian organization was still present in the working-class organizations of the *fin de siècle*. Often this conflict was based on a hierarchy of age and skill in the craft, which governed the allocation of jobs and wages. Younger workers, therefore, were most at risk of unemployment and were the more likely to adopt aggressive and egalitarian forms of allocation. These allocational issues were at the root of many of the internecine squabbles that splintered the organizational efforts of French workers.

In strategic terms, the workers at the top of these hierarchies sought to avoid contestation with employers. Their own position in the trade was secured through cooperation with employers. To cope with problems facing the trade, these elite workers adopted two basic strategies: mutualism and cooperation. Both strategies pooled working-class resources as a means of self-betterment of the trade: mutual funds were created as insurance against accidents, sickness, and retirement; production cooperatives were created to take up the slack in unemployment.

The egalitarian counterstrategy was the strike. Proponents of the strike rejected the cooperators' insistence on labor peace and self-help. In comparison with mutualism and cooperation, the strike was a horizontal strategy: it required joint and simultaneous participation. During the late 1870s and then again in the late 1880s, the strike slowly gained ground, finally surpassing mutualism and cooperation to become the predomi-

nant strategy of the French labor movement. As already pointed out in Chapter 3, these strikes tended to come in waves that increased in size over time. During such waves, strikes emerged as the predominant strategy of labor organizations; following the waves, workers retreated to mutualism or cooperation. Unionization, which was closely tied to these strike waves, gradually institutionalized the strike as the most important strategy of the labor movement, alongside the ballot box (Friedman 1998).

Consider the bronze workers, who formed a union in 1872 (APO 1899, tome III, 109–25). This union was a descendent of a mutual fund organization radicalized around strikes at the end of the Second Empire. The new institution was a compromise between proponents of mutualism and supporters of strikes. An early manifesto decreed that

the transformation of the mutual credit society into a union, by giving the commission more initiative and authority to regulate the differences between workers and employers, can therefore reduce the occurrence of strikes, that are often the result of a misunderstanding. (APO 1899, tome III, 110)

While cautiously supporting several limited strikes, the union also created a “union workshop” (production cooperative) and then a fund to provide pensions and aid in case of infirmity to elderly workers. This compromise gradually broke down. In 1876, the cooperators complained that “the spirit that seems to dominate the majority of our colleagues does not permit us to hope for anything other than to amass money for resistance [strikes]” (APO 1899, tome III, 119). Many other members increasingly rejected the idea of production cooperatives, and the union workshop was closed in 1879. Management of the fund was also a source of tension. Older workers had the greatest stake in the fund, and to resolve internal conflict the union raised the maximum age at which workers could join the fund. This concession was to no avail. In 1880, the fund broke away from the union altogether. These partisans of the fund revealed an increasing hostility toward strikes. The other wing of the union blamed them for the failure of an important strike in 1882.

Strikes, however, also had distributive consequences. Even when they were successful, strikes that had been solely for higher wages often left some workers with higher pay and others without jobs, the same pie just being divided up differently. As deskilling occurred, the spillover of workers left unemployed by these strikes affected not just one trade but other related trades. The workers who were lower in skill or age hierarchies were the most at risk of unemployment. Strikes that attempted to limit the hours of work were more egalitarian than those that sought higher wages. The reduction of the hours of work was a mechanism for

job sharing that simultaneously tightened the labor market. Because of the greater substitutability of workers at the bottom of skill and age hierarchies, these strikes, to succeed, often had to export their tactics to other related professions or industries. Such strikes, therefore, tended to gain momentum across trades, escalating into strike waves. As these strikes became more general, strikers tended to adopt claims for radical social and political change. As both Cohn (1993) and Friedman (1998, 1988b) have demonstrated, this militant strike strategy often had notable successes in the French context.

In contrast, those workers who could be less concerned about losing their jobs saw strikes as a way of increasing or maintaining their wages. Because strikes were costly, wage-oriented workers were very cautious about launching strikes. They planned carefully timed and orchestrated strikes that were well-financed. Rarely did such strikes extend across trade lines.

Industrial Districts and Labor Markets

France has often been described as having a decentralized economy (during this period) and an economy oriented toward the production of luxury goods requiring skilled labor. Yet it is important to avoid a caricatured version of this argument that sees happy artisans working congenially in small workshops. The reality was, as usual, considerably more complex. The economic history literature has revised its view of French economic development, showing that France was no laggard in industrial development (Roehl 1976; Crafts 1984). Yet if we compare French and American production (the United States being the leader in modern mass production), we do find real differences. Between 1890 and 1900, the decisive decade in the development of labor movements in both nations, steam engine utilization grew significantly faster in the United States than it did in France (Statistique Générale de la France 1932, 77; U.S. Bureau of the Census 1914, 568–714). Also in the United States, the end of the century witnessed a trend toward the creation of giant firms – fifteen hundred American firms had five hundred or more employees (Nelson 1974, 4). French industrial structure remained more decentralized, with fewer than five hundred firms exceeding five hundred employees.¹

1 A total of 471 French firms across all sectors had more than 500 employees in 1896 (Kindleberger 1969, 166). Seventy-nine percent of French firms had 100 or fewer employees in 1896 (Price 1981, 233).

Many scholars have pointed to the small size of French firms as an important influence in shaping the character of the labor movement (Lorwin 1954, 36; cf. Levine 1914, 208–9; Friedman 1998). However, large rationalized firms often stood right alongside the small shops. Contrary to the cliché about the peculiarity of French industrial structure being its archaic economy of small workshops, the French economy's real distinctiveness was this concentration and interdependence of small-scale handicraft production and large, modern firms.²

The size of the firm may be less important than the reliance on skill. Although characterizing French industry as “artisanal” in the 1890s is certainly an overstatement, it is valid to recognize that French industry adopted a strategy that relied more heavily on skilled workers than did American industry (Hanagan 1980). As Sabel and Zeitlin (1985) have argued, by relying more heavily on skilled labor in conjunction with limited, less integrated production technologies, small firms can successfully adapt to competition. Such strategies are often particularly successful where some customization is desired, because mass production technology is less adaptable to rapid customization.

This form of production often occurs within geographically concentrated complexes of firms producing related products. Following the British economist Alfred Marshall, who pointed out the existence of these concentrated regions of economic production in 1900, Sabel and Zeitlin refer to these complexes as “industrial districts.” They describe the silk district of Lyon as a paradigmatic case (Sabel and Zeitlin 1985). Cottareau has described the industrial district, known in France as a *fabrique collective*, as a paradigmatic form of industrial organization in France more generally (in Katznelson and Zolberg 1986).

For comparison, we can investigate the consequences of deskilling in ideal-typical versions of mass production and flexible specialization. Mass production seeks to fully decompose products into a set of standardized parts, which in turn allows the decomposition of production “motions” into simple machine operations. Prior to automation and integrated mass production technologies, decomposition of products and

2 François Cruzet argues that what was distinctive (though not exceptional) about France was the dualistic character of the economy: “both *grande* and *petite* industry, both capital-intensive and labour-intensive forms of production, both centralized and domestic/workshop manufacturing developed, side by side” (in Teich and Porter 1996, 54). This was true, at least, for the metal industry in Paris and in the region of Lyon. In Paris, for instance, a concentrated sector of large-scale metalworks was established in the industrial suburb of St. Denis. More than a third of its population worked in the metal industry. Two other suburbs (Ivry and St. Ouen) had approximately 30% of their population engaged in metal work, but in small-scale manufacturing (Brunet 1980, 28).

production led to a deskilling of individual workers based upon a segmentation of tasks. Many workers became machine tenders, and the ideal of one person – one machine replaced team organization of tasks with individualized production.

Industrial districts have had a very different effect on deskilling. The partial customization of products provided little incentive to break up the production process around standardized products. Technology was introduced not to decompose crafts, but to make craft labor more productive. The result was less segmentation of the productive process and greater emphasis on team coordination. Here, productivity gains often came through craft specialization. Rather than becoming machine tenders, skilled workers in industrial districts became “specialists” in certain types of craft production. Such jobs certainly required less skill than did craft production, but they did not undercut the workers’ association with particular skill groups. Moreover, skill specialization within industrial districts promoted the proliferation of semiskilled specialties characteristic of the respective districts.

Skill specialization both contributed to and was a consequence of the fact that skilled workers in France had lost control over the ability to reproduce their own skills. An article entitled *Union nécessaire* (Unity needed) in the metalworkers’ journal complained about the divisions among the tinworkers in Paris:

There exists in Paris four unions having a different name, but all four are composed of workers from the same corporation: I am speaking of the tinsmiths [*ferblantiers*], sheetmetal workers [*tôliers*], lanternmakers [*lanterniers*] and the tin can makers [*boîtiers*].

Some attempts to group these four unions were made some years ago by the tinsmiths: the result was that each wanted to guard its title, its “specialty,” and mistakenly, because today, with the machinery that all firms possess, a worker of any “specialty” whatsoever can, by making the sacrifice of a few weeks, go to work anywhere at all.³

Although apprenticeship systems controlled by skilled workers certainly existed at the end of the nineteenth century, the system of apprenticeship had been eroding since the ancien régime (Charlot and Figeat 1985). Moreover, it was not firmly established that apprenticeship was something to be controlled by workers or unions. Employers – in the heritage of being “master” craftsmen – easily had an equal claim to being the source of apprenticeships. A questionnaire asking Paris unions whether they had either a school or professional courses found only two of

3 Signed “Galantus” in the *Bulletin Officiel de la Fédération Nationale des Ouvriers Métallurgistes de France*, numéro 74, novembre 1897.

twenty-one responded in the affirmative.⁴ At the end of the nineteenth century, institutions like the *bourse du travail* made a bid to increase working-class control over the reproduction of labor. However, the fragmentation of skills that was associated with skill specialization prevented skill groups from collectively gaining control over apprenticeship (which is typically an important prerequisite for enforcing a closed shop).

The labor markets of industrial districts are inward looking. They do not operate on the same premises upon which mass production labor markets operate – relatively atomized unskilled workers whose competition bids down the price of labor. Nor do they operate on the principles of a self-contained world of artisanal workers whose professional solidarities depend on the total overlap of work and family spheres. Industrial districts are a world of “weak ties” – cross-cutting and partially overlapping networks rather than multiplex ties. Competition and solidarity coexisted in the French industrial districts. Workers found jobs through an eclectic combination of relationships – family, region of origin, skill, café acquaintance – rather than any specific network. A passage from an article in the metalworkers’ bulletin in 1895 summed up this attitude perfectly: “In Paris, in the majority of workshops, one is hired by acquaintance [*connaissance*] or by comrades.”⁵ For this reason, when workers switched jobs, they did not go in search of the highest wages. They looked around the *quartier* first, took odd jobs, maybe even changed professions. Their investment was in a community or region – a diffuse social network – rather than in a career or firm.

On one level, economic rationalization appears to have contributed to the “impactedness” of these labor markets. Deskilling, layoffs, and employer repression could lead to greater “turnover” without creating smoothly operating labor markets (Noiriél 1986, 101–2, 109–10). As Boulé, a Paris stonecutter and an organizer of the ditchdiggers’ strike of 1888, declared to an enquiry in 1884, even the typically migratory unmarried building workers would not leave Paris: “They prefer to suffer than to leave.” He suggested that 70 percent of the workers had become sedentary as opposed to only 30 percent twenty years previously (Perrot 1974, tome I, 152).⁶ Perrot concludes: “[T]his entrenchment is one of the characteristics of the French labor market, above all compared to the

4 *Annuaire de la Bourse du Travail, 1890–1891* (1892, 49–50). Archives de la Préfecture de Police, sous-serie Ba 1608.

5 “Études sérieusement,” signed “Décidé” in *Bulletin Officiel de la Fédération Nationale des Ouvriers Métallurgistes de France*, numéro 43, 15 février 1895.

6 Joan Scott has shown how economic rationalization of the Carmaux glassworks led the glassworkers, a very mobile artisanal group, to settle down. Between 1890 and 1900, four times more glassworkers bought land in Carmaux than had done so in the previous decade (Scott 1974, 83–7).

American market” (Perrot 1974, tome I, 152 n). This lack of mobility was also a key to understanding a characteristic of the organizational dynamic of French unions. When skill specialists adopted their exclusive mode, unions became narrowly based clubs of specialists guarding selective access to jobs; when skill specialists kicked into their inclusive mode, unions became the nuclei of rapid mobilizations.

That these industrial districts were labor magnets exacerbated entrenchment. The migratory pattern of the mechanic Baulud, noted by Yves Lequin, is revealing; Baulud found work in and around the metalworking region of Lyon-St. Étienne until 1899; when he sought work outside this region, he went to the other notable industrial district of skilled metalwork: Paris. The year 1899 witnessed Baulud’s going back and forth between Lyon and Paris three times. Meanwhile, the large paternalistic firms in isolated towns and regions were constantly troubled by the difficulty of recruiting an adequate workforce. Decazeville, a one-company mining and metalworking town in southern France, suffered an annual labor turnover of 65 percent (Noiriel 1986, 109; Reid 1981, 256).

Despite the breakdown of autarky in the countryside, the predominance of smallholdings limited the extent to which residual agricultural labor joined national labor markets. Instead, this labor accumulated in regional pockets such as the industrial region around St. Étienne or Lyon (Accampo 1989, 98–9; Hanagan 1986, 60–83; Hanagan and Stephenson 1989; Lequin 1977b). Even where large landholdings and productive commercial production combined to drive this excess labor into the cities once and for all, as it did in the Nord, workers remained rooted to particular communities.⁷ The labor market, as William Reddy has forcefully argued, did not efficiently allocate labor supply, even where we might have most expected it (Reddy 1987). For example, in a classic modern “factory” town like Bezons, with its predominantly unskilled workers and its large-scale manufacturing, workers were much less mobile than we would expect for a modern labor market (Berlanstein 1981, 167).

We can draw together here a portrait of French workers. They remained, because of the size of firms and the nature of production, focused on the workplace. Skills continued to be important, but the trade as a whole did not have control over the reproduction of skills. Skill specialization flourished, and the trade became fragmented.

7 On the breakdown of autarky, see Weber (1976) and Price (1983). On the different patterns of landholding in France and their implications for agricultural and industrial labor supply, see Brustein (1988). On urban-rural interpenetration in France, see Hanagan (1989), Hanagan and Stephenson (1986), Moch (1983), Judt (1979), Lequin (1977b), and Trempé (1971).

Sectoral and Solidaristic Unionism

In outlining different strategies adopted by workers, I utilize two broad distinctions. The first discriminates between basic organizing principles of unionism – the commonly drawn distinction between craft and industrial unionism. Ordinarily, “craft” refers to discrete and recognized bundles of skills and “industry” to a set of firms producing the same product or related product lines. Hence a single craft may produce many different products and be used in several industries, whereas industries utilize multiple crafts to produce their products or product lines. Accordingly, when crafts are the fundamental principle of organizational aggregation, we get “craft unions”; when aggregation occurs on the basis of industry, we speak of “industrial unions.”

The second distinction discriminates between a sectoral and a solidaristic orientation. For a sectoral orientation, the focus of coordination and concerted activity is predominantly intracraft or intra-industry. Although a sectoral orientation can be accompanied by limited intercraft or interindustry cooperation, such cooperation will be subordinated to achieving the goal of intrasectoral regulation or to achieving limited goals common to each sector. In contrast, a solidaristic orientation emphasizes intersectoral coordination as a goal in its own right. The goals of intersectoral coordination are not simply derivative of, nor subordinated to, the goals of intrasectoral coordination. A solidaristic orientation is typically given organizational form through federative structures, often on a territorial basis. Such structures are “quasi-industrial” when they federate trades related by industry.

These two sets of distinctions yield four basic types of union strategy – craft sectoral, industrial sectoral, craft solidarity, and industrial solidarity. Examples of all four types are identifiable in the labor history of France. Actual strategies often demonstrate a hybrid character, either because of temporal shifts in strategy or because factions within unions line up behind conflicting strategies. In the illustrations that follow, I characterize what I regard as the dominant tendencies of these organizational strategies:

1. Craft sectoral strategies are defined by their emphasis on strong boundaries between crafts. French hatmakers (*chapeliers*), printers (*typographes*), and glassmakers (*verriers*) vigorously organized around this craft sectoral strategy.⁸

8 Scott (1974) has given us an in-depth portrait of the glassmakers.

2. Craft solidarity strategies are defined by their emphasis on cooperation between crafts. In France, during the 1890s, the building, metal, and leather crafts each organized quasi-industrial forms of craft solidarity that survived to become the dominant form of unionism within their respective industries.⁹ Territorial forms of craft solidarity thrived in France as *bourses du travail*, which federated all the labor organizations of a city.¹⁰
3. Industrial sectoral strategies are defined by their emphasis on organizing within the boundaries of industrial sectors. In France, unions in the mining and textile industries utilized an industrial sectoral strategy, as did unions representing railroad (after 1898), postal, and tobacco workers.¹¹ Industrial unions following this strategy engaged in limited cooperation with other unions, while focusing their energies on regulating the labor market within their sector.
4. The industrial solidarity strategy is defined by its reliance on organizing across industrial sectors. Railroad workers before 1898 used this interindustrial strategy, after which they shifted to an industrial sectoral strategy. As the quasi-industrial metal and building federations evolved toward more integrated organization at the industry-wide level after 1900, they became the major champions of interindustrial solidarity in France.¹² After 1910, however, all industrial unions were increasingly internally divided between an industrial solidarity strategy and an industrial sectoral strategy, culminating in the schism of the Confédération Générale du Travail (CGT) in 1921. Thereafter, the Communist-affiliated Confédération Générale du Travail Unitaire (CGTU) represented the industrial solidarity strategy, and the CGT represented the industrial sectoral strategy.

It is useful to view these four types of union strategy as representing the end points of a range of possible forms rather than as mutually exclusive strategies. For example, a middle ground can be observed between sectoral and solidaristic orientations. At the sectoral extreme, union sectors go it on their own. They will insist on both the distinctiveness and the absolute priority of their sectoral interests. French miners sometimes exhibited this tendency by remaining aloof from the major union

9 On the building trades, see McMechan (1975). On the metal trades, see APO tome III; on leather workers, see APO, tome II.

10 On the *bourses du travail*, see Schötter (1982), Baker (1973), Butler (1960), Julliard (1971), and Pelloutier (1971).

11 On French miners, see Trempé (1968, 1971); on railroad workers, see Ceclair (1973) and Fruit (1976).

12 On building workers, McMechan (1975, pt. 2); on metalworkers, see Papayanis (1985) and Gras (1971).

confederations. A move toward a more solidaristic orientation means downplaying the distinctiveness of sectoral interests and favoring interests common to several sectors. As described earlier, a quasi-industrial strategy narrowly extends solidarity to those sectors employed in the same industry. At the solidaristic extreme, a common interest may transcend all sectoral interests; in America, in symbolic terms at least, the International Workers of the World's "one big union" slogan provides one such example.

Between 1872 and roughly 1900, a strategy of craft sectoralism came into increasing conflict with a strategy of quasi-industrial craft solidarism (e.g., in the building and metal trades). Each of these strategies responded to a different locus of organizational mobilization. Although craft sectoral strategies are often built upon craft control over critical stages of the production process, they typically focus on gaining organizational control over the entire labor market for a craft. This strategy requires both control over the reproduction of critical skills and a strong extra-workplace organization that can regulate well-defined segments of national labor markets. If achieved, this national labor market control enables craft sectors to further consolidate their hold over production and to raise wages without strikes.

In contrast, crafts oriented toward solidaristic strategies typically lack both this solid workplace control over critical stages of production and control over the reproduction of skills. Individually, at least, the crafts cannot translate these assets into organizational control over national labor markets. Instead, they seek alliances with other crafts to develop local point-of-production control over the entire production process. Such a strategy typically demands a strike strategy that is more militant and aggressive and often extends to nearby firms. Where industries are geographically agglomerated, these strikes can build movements to control regional labor markets. However, strikes rather than control over the reproduction of labor provide the critical mechanism for asserting labor market control. To draw out the contrast, the craft sectoral strategy is extralocal in geographical scope but narrow in the constituency it organizes; the craft solidaristic strategy is local in geographic scope but broad based in its organizational constituency.¹³

We can relate this process to the characteristics of industrial production and the labor market that were described in the last section. French industry tended to adopt a labor-intensive strategy of production rather

13 In thinking about the differences between sectoral and solidaristic strategies, I have found work by Conell (1988), Friedman (1998), Hanagan (1980, 1988), Haydu (1988), Jackson (1984), Joseph (1993), Marks (1989), Montgomery (1979), Voss (1993), and Ulman (1966) particularly helpful.

than a capital-intensive one. This strategy accentuated the importance of skilled labor in France and led highly skilled workers to adopt a strategy of organizing national labor markets. However, a related set of conditions encouraged a more workplace-based focus. Productivity increases in French industry tended to come from skill specialization rather than from the introduction of capital-intensive mass production technology. Skill specialization led to the fragmentation of trades, which made it more difficult to systematically organize well-defined segments of the labor market. Labor market organization was further discouraged by the fact that craft workers did not have control over the reproduction of their own skills. Finally, the agglomeration of industry into local or regional industrial districts accentuated the relative importance of local over national labor markets. All these factors increased the tendency of French workers to adopt a strategy of workshop-based rather than labor market-based mobilization.

Throughout the period of this study, French workers seemed to cycle back and forth between these two strategies. The solidaristic strategy was expressed in the snowballing strike movements of 1879–82, 1889–93, 1899–1906, and 1917–20. Between these strike waves, workers and unions shifted back toward narrower sectoral strategies.

The molders, for example, were an elite among the metal trades; they were among the very first crafts (along with the printers and hatters) to organize a national craft federation, beginning in the early 1880s (Perrot 1974, tome I, 386; Gras 1965). Their first national craft federation, however, established in 1883, failed in 1886 (APO 1899, tome III, 426–9). The Parisian molders, at least, then joined the Union Fédérale des Ouvriers Métallurgistes de France – an industrial union for the metal-related trades – established in 1890. But reflecting their turn toward a more sectoral strategy, they withdrew from this industrial union in 1894 to become founding members of a new national federation of molders (APO 1899, tome III, 410).

The conflict over whether workers should organize along craft sectoral or quasi-industrial craft solidaristic lines was especially pronounced in the 1890s and around the turn of the century. For example, the creation of a shoemakers' (*coupeurs, cambreurs et brocheurs*) federation in 1892, cobblers' (*cordonniers*) federation in 1893, and tanners' (*mégissiers*) federation in 1893 led to the aloofness or withdrawal of their affiliated unions from the industrial federation of leather and skins, created in 1892 (APO 1899, tome II, 61–3, 86, 88–90, 158). In the metal industry, the coppersmiths began the trend, in 1893, toward the formation of distinct metal-trade federations (APO 1899, tome III, 163–5). They were followed, in 1894, by the creation of the Federation of Metal

Molders of France. Tinsmiths specializing in the fabrication of boxes followed suit in 1896 and mechanics in 1899 (APO 1899, tome III, 240-3, 323-32).

The institutional history of the building workers following the strike of 1899 is the most dramatic evidence of the adoption by craft groups of a sectoralist strategy. Following the strike, the building workers' national federation, organized along industrial lines, fractured into a number of national federations, organized by craft. Thus, in March 1900, the masons and stonemasons broke away to create a national trade federation, followed in October by painters. In 1901, the carpenters and the joiners each created their own federation. A second and more inclusive federation of masons and related trades was created alongside the first in 1902. The industrial federation, in turn, collapsed at the end of 1901. It was reorganized on a smaller scale in 1902 (APO 1899, tome IV, 461-4).

This trend appears to have favored the emergence of national trade federations at the expense of the quasi-industrial amalgamation of crafts. The massive strikes of 1906, however, placed the French labor movement back on the route toward industrial unionism (McMechan 1975, pt. 2).

Workshop versus Community-based Mobilization

If there was a divergence between point-of-production and interfirm labor markets as the privileged loci of mobilization, a second dimension of conflict concerned whether the initiative for mobilization should come from the unions or from a political party. Whereas workshop-based protest could be narrowly focused toward the parochial world of the workshop, I have suggested that the tendency to mobilize horizontally, across the boundaries of skill level and trade, encouraged workplace actions to spill over into a broader community-based mobilization. One important consequence of this broad-based communitarianism was a heightened interest in politics and political parties among the solidaristic unions, especially in contrast to the more narrowly focused sectoral unions. This orientation could lead to a high degree of politicization of the solidaristic unions as they became internally divided around competing political strategies. Alternately, it could lead to tension between unions and parties as to which would be the lead agency in the political mobilization of the working class. This conflict occupied a central place in the development of the French labor movement – from the struggles between the union-based Possibilists and the party-based Guesdists in the early 1880s to the conflict between revolutionary syndicalists and Communists in the early 1920s.

We can get some sense of the trade-off between union and party mobilization by examining the types of communities in which the Guesdist party became firmly established – notably, the textile communities of northern France. In contrast to the highly diversified industrial structure of Paris and the region of Lyon, for instance, two great industries – textiles and mining – dominated the northern departments of the Nord and Pas-de-Calais.¹⁴ Thus, Lille, the burgeoning center of the northern textile industry, could be classified as monoindustrial – that is, as having more than 50 percent of its workforce in one industry and less than 15 percent of its workforce in any other industry (Shorter and Tilly 1975, 292–3). Outside of Lille, textile production was concentrated in towns and small cities in the region. Although unionization could be quite strong in these towns, it was the political party that tended to take the lead in organizing workers. The textile industry of the Nord was the stronghold of the Guesdist party (Willard 1965, 223, 233–4).

The reasons that textile workers organized primarily around party rather than union are both negative and positive. On the negative side, the work structure of the textile industry made it difficult to organize unions. The weavers (*tisseurs*) were the key craft in the textile industry, and they retained some artisanal spirit. Although the modern craft was not devoid of skill, machines had largely supplanted significant control over the weaver's *métier*. The type of skill that did count could be learned only through long practice. William Reddy notes that "loom tending was easy to learn but difficult to perfect" (Reddy 1984, 311). Subtle variations in skill encouraged the development of a paternalistic management style of informal workplace regulation that rewarded experienced weavers (Reddy 1984, 295, 310–11). This informal regulation discouraged strong formal union representation on the shopfloor.

On the positive side, a number of factors encouraged workers to organize by community rather than skill. First, as Reddy emphasizes, textile workers were firmly rooted in their communities – "captives" of their communities rather than modern rootless proletarians (Reddy 1984, 294). Their rootedness meant they could create kinship networks both across and within firms. Reddy found that 50 percent of all textile workers in 1906 lived with a close relative who worked in the same mill (Reddy 1984, 310). This encouraged a family economy that extended across the textile community.¹⁵ Furthermore, mill owners rewarded expe-

14 The textile industry predominates in Lyon itself (51% of the workforce), but the region is highly diversified (Shorter and Tilly 1974, 293).

15 Accampo finds a similar pattern in the town of St. Chamond in the Loire. She suggests that "textile workers exhibited much stronger family bonds, while metal workers developed social relations with coworkers" (Accampo 1989, 109). On the family economies of weavers in the town of Cholet in western France, see Liu (1994).

rienced workers by allowing them to hire their own relatives as assistants. A massive strike was set off in 1903, for instance, when mill owners in the town of Armentières, pressured by competition, tried to fire these assistants, violating the informal regulation of the workplace and undermining the family economy. The prevalence of family networks in the textile industry encouraged a strong link between work and neighborhood. And in these monoindustrial towns, textile families were likely to live in neighborhoods with other textile families.

The general conclusion that I draw from this discussion of textile towns is that unions will be the preferred channel of mobilization when and where critical social networks are defined around skill communities or workplace relations but not particularly around family or neighborhood. This will be particularly true when it is possible or attractive for workers to organize at the point of production. In contrast, when trade or industry strongly overlap with neighborhood or family, the political party may take the lead in mobilization. This will be particularly true when and where the conditions for mobilization at the point of production are not fortuitous.

Summary

French unions, like unions everywhere, historically organized in different ways, according to structural principles often in tension or outright conflict with one another: craft unionism battled industrial unionism, sectoral strategies vied for dominance with solidaristic strategies; and local unions contested control by national federations. This chapter has sought to identify the social and economic conditions in France that favored industrial over craft unionism, solidaristic over sectoral strategies, and local over national control. These conditions include the geographical agglomeration of industry into industrial districts, the locally “impacted” character of labor markets, the reliance of French industry on skill specialization, and the lack of collective control over skill reproduction. Together, these factors encouraged French workers to mobilize cross-skill solidarity at the “point of production” and in local communities. The importance of this pattern of mobilization for the organizational and ideological evolution of the French labor movement is explored in the following chapters.

Organizing the Fourth Estate

With ironic optimism, Benoît Malon, an early prophet of socialist unity on the basis of doctrinal eclecticism, observed in 1882 that “Without a doubt, the *Parti Ouvrier* is still not over its crisis of formation that has caused three successive schisms; but the most difficult path has been crossed and the definitive organization is on the right road.”¹ Not only would Malon himself be estranged from the party by 1884, but the pattern of *morcellement* – fragmentation – of French socialism had been clearly established by the defection of the Marxist followers of Jules Guesde from the party’s congress of 1882. The departure of the Guesdists to form a competing socialist party, the *Parti Ouvrier Français*, was merely the climax to a number of internal disputes that had previously led to the defection of nonrevolutionary trade unionists in 1879 and then the anarchists in 1880. Hopes of socialist unity had been dashed on the rocks of internal dissension. Socialist unity would not be achieved until 1905.

Prior chapters have adduced some of the general conditions that promoted the schismatic tendencies of the French labor movement. Chapter 2 argued that open communal groups (fellowships) will attempt to maintain organizational commitment through a process of communal closure that entails a sharpened dualism of us versus them, hierarchicalization, strong classification, condensed symbolism, ideological closure, and depersonalization. Countermobilization against attempts at communal closure will produce schism. Chapter 3 argued that the French working class was embedded in a quasi-religious populist tradition that was suspicious of the state and other institutions that might alienate the political sovereignty of producers. This populism mobilized in waves whose momentum built toward broad-based solidarity in the ascending phase but tended to fragment in the descending phase. Chapter 4 described

1 Malon (1882, 4); Malon was the Jean Jaurès of the 1880s in that he sought to achieve a doctrinal synthesis of competing socialist paradigms. He called his conception of doctrinal unity, “integral socialism” (Vincent 1992).

the tensions within French craft communities between different modes of structuring union organization and between union and party as agents of community political mobilization.

The present chapter draws on these ideas to analyze the series of schisms that occurred in the French labor movement from 1879 to 1884. To begin, it is useful to examine the continuities and tensions in the populist tradition that provided the context for the first wave of post-Commune labor organizing.

The Populist Republic Redux

The French labor movement began its rebirth after the Commune under the influence of Radical Republicans, who were the inheritors of the populist traditions of the Montagnards of the Second Republic. As part of this tradition, they promoted the creation of cooperatives and other self-help strategies that came to be associated with the working-class ideology known as “mutualism.” The self-help strategy of the mutualists was a key component of a larger strategy to forge a populist producers’ alliance that would link the urban working-class to the broader Republican tradition. This “producers’ alliance” would include owners of small property and wage earners (peasants, artisans, small proprietors, and workers).² For instance, the Lyon police described the local Radical group, Alliance Républicaine, as composed of artists and clerks “who reside in the milieu between the bourgeois and the worker.”³ Self-help through cooperatives was a strategy that could appeal to this broader group. Radical Republicans also sought cooperation between workers and employers. Again, uniting workers and employers around producer interests was essential to keeping this Radical Republican alliance together. Mutualists and Radicals thought that worker interests should be only narrowly politicized. More intensive politicization would likely unravel the producers’ alliance. Thus Radicals sought to rationalize social conflict and create parity between workers and employers in order to unite them around a common producers’ platform.

2 The membership of Republican clubs tended to cut across class, while drawing heavily from working-class occupations. For instance, the Dijon section of the Alliance Républicaine (which renamed itself the Parti Radical in 1875) included among its membership: 1 wholesaler (*negociant*), 1 lawyer (*avocat*), 4 metalworkers (*métallurgiste*), 6 clerks (*employés*), 1 journalist (*journaliste*), 3 printers (*typographe*), 1 painter (*peintre*), 2 mechanics (*mécanicien*), 1 tailor (*tailleur*), and 1 winegrower (*vigneron*) (AD Côtes-d’Or, 20 M 1046).

3 AD Rhône, 4 M 246, 2 octobre 1875.

The most prominent attempt of Radical Republicans to organize the labor movement in the post-Commune years was associated with a Radical journalist, Joseph Barberet. Barberet's attempt to encourage the formation of unions and, at the same time, to "depoliticize" them was an attempt to mobilize the working class in defense of the Republic without raising the specter of disorder. Barberet promoted unions and cooperatives as vehicles of social peace and self-help; thus neither strikes nor political action would be required to improve the lot of the worker (Lefranc 1967, 23-4; Levine 1914, 45-6). The goal of Republicans was to secure the support of workers without inciting their demands (Elwitt 1975, 268-9).

In the early years after the Commune, Barberet's efforts to reconstitute the unions knew a real if limited success. As early as the summer of 1872, twenty-three professional groups under Barberet's guidance had sought to create a Parisian federation (Cercle de l'Union Syndicale Ouvrière) (Lefranc 1963, 27). A suspicious government immediately dissolved this federation. Barberet's success and failure in organizing unions were linked to the same political conjuncture. The conservative coalition behind Thiers and the "Government of Moral Order" tolerated only the most expressly moderate efforts to organize, such as Barberet's; they were little inclined to permit the organization of groups that might escalate working-class action. As Bernard Moss notes, "Prudence and moderation were requisite for survival" (Moss 1976, 63).⁴ This dictum held for the provinces as well as for Paris.⁵ In fact, despite its setbacks, the Parisian labor movement appears to have been in the vanguard of union organization in the early post-Commune years.⁶

One of the internal tensions in the Radical Republican alliance was that the Radicals were increasingly engaged in a state-building project to consolidate Republican institutions. This project brought them into conflict with the oppositional character of the revolutionary tradition in France and thus into an ambiguous relationship with the emerging labor movement. The Radicals sought to make republicanism, like populism in general, a political project – a project for constructing a state and

4 The repressive weight of the state also fell on strike activity during the immediate post-Commune period. Perrot demonstrates that the number of convictions per the number of strikers (for offenses related to the strikes) reached a tremendous peak in three consecutive years – 1872, 1873, and 1874 (Perrot 1974, 182-3).

5 On the government's dissolution of worker associations in southeastern France, see Lequin (1977a, 219), Accampo (1989, 182), and Pierre (1972, 350).

6 On Paris, see Moutet (1967, 10); on Lyon, see Lequin (1977a, 217, 242); on Bordeaux, see Brana, Cavignac, and Cuq (1971, 19). The revival of unions occurred somewhat later in a number of other cities: on Toulouse, see Amanieu (1971, 63); on Limoges, see Merriman (1985); on the region of Belfort, see Vasseur (1967, 25).

a citizenry. But as their state-building project gained dominance, the Radicals downplayed the role of the working class as a communal group with political status, envisioning instead a more universalistic citizenship.

Two broad developments led to the splintering of the Republican movement and the separation of the labor movement from radical republicanism. The first factor was the political consolidation of the Third Republic. This process began when the Radical leader Gambetta joined with the conservative republican Orleanists to form a constitutional republic in May 1874 (Mayeur and Rebérioux 1984, 22). Perceiving this alliance as a movement of the Radicals toward the right, working-class activists responded by running distinct “worker” candidates in the 1876 elections (Moss 1976, 65). In addition, the consolidation of the Republic (marked by the survival of the regime through the crisis of *Seize Mai* in 1877) allowed working-class leaders like Chabert more tactical freedom in both economic and political spheres. No longer did workers have to rally to the Republican banner to prevent the restoration of the monarchy. The running of worker candidates was encouraged by the electoral system. The two-ballot procedure encouraged workers to run their own candidates in the first ballot and then to withdraw in the second round should the election favor a conservative candidate. This two-ballot system was introduced in 1873 and survived until 1919 (Campbell 1958, 70).

A second factor encouraging the separation of the labor movement from radical republicanism was the dramatic increase in strike activity beginning in 1875–6 (Perrot 1974, 80). This strike activity may have been influenced in part by the regime transition: the Republic, as conservative as it still was, was not as prone to repress strikes and working-class organization. But the strikes appear to have been more closely related to economic conditions. The years 1875–6 were a period of economic recovery; these years were both preceded, in 1873–4, and followed, in 1877, by periods of poor economic performance (Perrot 1974, 84–8). The unions themselves adopted quite varied attitudes toward strikes: some unions actively organized strikes whereas others refused to be involved (Moutet 1967, 37). The strike movements of 1875–6 and 1878–80, and the corresponding formation of unions, heightened the tensions within the labor movement.

During these years, the unions, as well as other forms of working-class organization, were undergoing internal differentiation. The old forms of organization – the *compagnonnage* and mixed unions of employers and employees – had typically sought to adjudicate disputes in the interest of the corporation as a whole – that is, to find a consensual solution. The

early post-Commune unions, calling themselves *chambre syndicales*, were not much more aggressive. They resisted strikes and sought instead to create production cooperatives to take up the slack in unemployment. But between 1875 and 1882, these older forms of action were giving way to new forms (Perrot 1987, 29–31). The younger members of an established union or mutual association often would break away to establish a more aggressive union or, against the wishes of the parent organization, would establish a strike committee or strike fund (Perrot 1987, 43–4). Perrot identifies the years 1878–80 as the turning point in union attitudes toward strikes (Perrot 1987, 44). She notes that the degree of union involvement in strikes rose dramatically in 1877. Yet the average size of unions also declined between 1876 and 1880 (Perrot 1987, 32–5).

The interpenetration of union and political forms of action motivated a parallel differentiation in the political arena.⁷ The strikes themselves became politicized. As Barberet canted against the “collectivists” who make their first appearance at the congress of Lyon in 1878, “They concern themselves little . . . about hurting the employers; it’s their way of castigating the government. They strike to protest against politics that don’t please them” (Barberet 1886, 51). And strikes became a political issue as well. A candidate to the *conseil des prud’hommes* was asked in 1874: “Do you accept strikes as a means of emancipation?” “Yes,” he answered. The interpolator then responded, “In that case, your principles are not ours and we will not vote for you” (Perrot 1987, 42). Radical tutelage had discouraged both strikes and the independent political voice of the working class. Because of the intertwining of political and economic action, the newer, more aggressive unionism was motivating a move to the left in the political arena. The workers, students, and intellectuals who gathered around Jules Guesde in Paris, for instance, organized a strike committee to attract working-class support (Moss 1976, 90).

Jules Guesde had returned to Paris in 1876 after an exile in Italy and Switzerland following the Commune.⁸ He attracted a working-class and student following as a journalist for *Les Droits de l’Homme* and soon became the leader of a group that met at the Café Soufflet in the Latin Quarter. In late 1877, this group printed the first “collectivist” newspaper, *L’Égalité*, which was to be “not only republican in politics, atheist in religion; it would be above all socialist” (Zévaès 1939, 54). The new newspaper explicitly supported strikes and organized contributions for

7 As Perrot writes, “the same militants were to be found urging on both the *chambres syndicales*, the social study circles and the socialist groups” (Perrot 1987, 36).

8 On the activities of Guesde and Lafargue during this period, see Derfler (1991).

striking workers (Zévaès 1911, 55; Perrot 1959, 9 n, 13, 13 n). Contrary to the Radicals, *L'Égalité* argued that “the strike prudently and cautiously engaged will be the only barrier with which to oppose capitalist exploitation, the only method with which to check it.”⁹ The paper attacked Barberet and his idea of emancipation through the formation of cooperatives (Bernstein 1965, 123). Finally, it called for the formation of a working-class political party, although not because universal suffrage per se would lead to salvation. Rather, voting was a way of grouping workers by class (Bernstein 1965, 122). This move to isolate the working class from the Radicals in the political arena thus paralleled the move to form new and more aggressive unions.

At the end of the 1870s, the wave of strikes brought with it a new impetus for populist mobilization. As described earlier, this started with the proliferation of new organizations, a movement that gradually gained momentum. This movement held national meetings in 1876 and 1878 that culminated in the creation of France’s first Socialist party in 1879 – really only a loose collection of unions and study circles without intermediate association linking the new party to its base. As it turns out, this was both the peak of populist mobilization and the beginning of a set of schisms that would lead to the fragmentation of the first post-Commune populist alliance.

The first split arose out of the creation of a “collectivist” alliance that defined itself in opposition to the Radicals and mutualists. Although this alliance shared many features of populism, it tended toward a “class-based populism.” Collectivism insisted on the principle of the collectivization of the means of production. Thus, in this first major episode of labor movement mobilization after the Commune, we already see the populist unity of the Montagnards being split between nation and class. Whereas the Radicals were increasingly oriented toward a state-building process that sought to rationalize industrial relations (partly in an effort to hold this coalition together), the collectivists sought to break with this rationalizing and cooperative strategy.

The three national union congresses held in the 1870s suggest a progression toward a break with Barberet and Radical tutelage. The first congress, held in Paris in 1876, had been initiated at the suggestion of the Radical journal *La Tribune* (Zévaès 1911, 44). Yet signs of an emerging split were present from the start. The organizing committee for the congress, which objected to Radical patronage, sought to “avoid at all costs the politicians”; only “workers” would be permitted to speak at the congress – an indication not only of the populist suspicion of the

9 As cited in Perrot (1959, 13).

political, but also of incipient moves toward communal closure (Zévaès 1911, 45–6; Moutet 1967, 19; Seilhac 1899, 15). The first divisions in the unions – indicating the fear of cooptation – arose over whether to accept subsidies from the Radicals to send a delegation to the Philadelphia Exposition (Moutet 1967, 19; Malon 1886, 880). And Chabert, the erstwhile ally of Barberet, called for independent representation of workers in Parliament: “When labor candidates are presented,” he told his audience, “we are told ‘you are reviving class antagonism.’ No, it is unnecessary to revive the classes, for we well know that they exist and deplore it” (Bernstein 1965, 84). In the end, however, this congress supported working-class emancipation through the formation of cooperatives, as promoted by Barberet, rather than through class struggle. The second congress, held in Lyon in 1878, concluded on the same moderate tone, yet the “cooperative” doctrine so strongly espoused in 1876 was more contested; the “collectivist” program, however, offered as an alternative was overwhelmingly rejected. But as a sign of the times, Chabert announced his conversion to collectivism (Kelso 1936, 186).

The third congress, held in Marseille in 1879, registered a sea change. Whereas the “collectivist” resolution had been overwhelmingly rejected at the Lyon congress (1878), in 1879 the majority swung the other way. The congress adopted as its goal “the collective ownership of the soil, the subsoil, instruments of labor, primary materials, given to all and rendered inalienable by the society” by a vote of 73 to 27 (Seilhac 1899, 47). This resolution represented a serious step toward organizational closure in that it sought to define an exclusive ideological boundary. This increasingly rigid classificatory system created a sharp boundary between us (the “collectivists”) and them (the “Radicals” and “cooperativists”). The actual organizational schism did not occur until the congress of Le Havre in 1880, where a dispute at the outset of the congress led to the holding of two separate congresses. Supported by government money channeled through Barberet, the “cooperativists” then went on to organize their own union federation, the Union des Chambres Syndicales (Moss 1976, 95–6).¹⁰ The “collectivists,” in contrast, inherited the political party voted at Marseille, the Parti Ouvrier (Workers’ Party).

This collectivist split had first emerged through a “bring back the exiled Communards” campaign, and between 1875 and 1879, the Commune became an increasingly condensed symbolic representation of working-class populism. The Commune was a highly evocative

¹⁰ This organization remained aligned with Republican candidates in the elections of 1881 and with the Gambetta government thereafter (Moss 1976, 96).

symbol, because it posed the challenge of who had inherited the tradition of the Revolution. The debate over the Commune was a debate over who represented the “true” Republican spirit. Like collectivism, the symbol of the Commune drove a wedge in the Republican movement: it did so because the Commune was a republic that had been crushed by Republicans. The Commune was also a symbol of communal autonomy from the larger nation-state and thus represented an inversion of the Jacobin state.¹¹ Republicanism was itself, broadly speaking, a civil religion, and the memory of the Commune became the object of its own civil religion as well. This quasi-religious quality was most evident in the ritual processions to the *Mur des Fédérés* (where retreating Communards had been cornered and shot) and in the ceremonial burials to celebrate the martyrs of the Commune (Hutton 1981).

The combination of the Commune claim to represent an alternative revolutionary tradition and the collectivist support for the “strike weapon” foreshadowed, in very crude form, the later emergence of revolutionary syndicalism and its equation of the general strike as the revolutionary technique par excellence. The Radical program of rationalizing industrial conflict required that labor issues be depoliticized. Thus, to support the strike was also to support the politicization of labor conflicts. A key consequence of this was that strikes were heavily politicized, and support for aggressive strikes became associated with revolutionary political zeal.

If the collectivist principle of socializing the means of production contained the seeds of a more pure class-based mobilization, the symbolic importance of the Commune maintained strong elements of the populist tradition. Populism links claims about economic status groups to Republican citizenship through a critique of the state. Radicalism was seeking to depoliticize class conflict by stressing common political citizenship. Embracing the Commune was, in essence, rejecting the political citizenship proffered by the Radicals without rejecting the centrality of Republican citizenship. Taken together, the symbol of the Commune and the platform of collectivism insisted that the status of worker was the essence of Republican citizenship. The collectivist coalition was simultaneously an affront to the state-building strategy of the Radicals and to the cooperative strategy of the mutualists.

One way in which this populist citizenship was revealed was in the idea of a “Fourth Estate,” which expressed the idea of workers as a

11 Hazareesingh (1998) examines the anti-Bonapartist and anti-Jacobin signification of communal autonomy from the Second Republic through the Second Empire.

political status group within the nation.¹² During the Revolution, of course, the people had represented the “Third Estate.” But as an appeal to workers in the St. Étienne region read:

Since therefore the Third Estate has failed in its mission; since in the place of realizing, as its most eminent thinkers had wanted, the enfranchisement of the people . . . it is necessary that the Fourth Estate shelter proudly the flag of universal emancipation. Proletarians, the Fourth Estate, That’s us!¹³

And the Lyon branch of the new Socialist party stated as its major goal: “to combat usefully the bourgeoisie who alone has profited up till now from the advantages obtained by the great revolution of ’89.” To do so, it was necessary to “make the revolution which must be the complement of that of ’89. It is necessary . . . that the worker form the fourth estate.”¹⁴ Article 7 of its constitution stated that “this party must arrive at the formation of the 4th estate.” Marx’s son-in-law, Paul Lafargue, even admonished Jules Guesde for adopting this language: “For God’s sake, don’t speak of the fourth estate . . . but of the Proletariat.”¹⁵

The internal fracturing of the labor movement (because this split with the Radicals was an “internal” split) reflected the movement’s character. Essentially, the labor movement was composed of myriad small, local, autonomous groups. These groups were of two kinds. First, there were the unions, or *chambres syndicales*. The term *chambre* was itself borrowed from employer organizations (*chambre patronale*) of the late Second Empire (Moss 1976, 53). However, it is easy to imagine that the term also had resonances with the *chambrées* – the popular social and mutual aid clubs that sprouted up after the First Empire and replaced the earlier religious *confréries*.¹⁶ The other archetypical group was the *cercle d’études sociales* (social study circle). Sometimes these small groups also took the name of *groupe* modified with the name of a place, person, or historical reference.

12 For other references to the “le quatrième état,” see Stafford (1971, 157) and Perrot (1987, 228). A journal called *Quatrième État* existed in Toulouse in the early 1880s, and a journal named *Quatrième État* also existed in Montpellier in 1892 (Sagnes 1980, 64).

13 Appeal to the Stephanois workers by the Executive Commission of the Worker’s Congress, 1880. AD Rhône, 4 M 246, pp. 8–9.

14 Meeting of the Parti Ouvrier Socialiste Lyonnais, held 29 fevrier 1880 (AD Rhône, 4 M 247). See also AD Rhône, 4 M 246, 22 juin 1881.

15 Paul Lafargue to Jules Guesde, July 12, 1881, in Willard and Bottigelli (1981, 136).

16 Agulhon gives the following description: “Essentially, the *chambrée* was neither a camouflaged gambling den nor a decentralised club devised to evade the law, nor yet a consumers’ cooperative. The best description is still that it was a *cercle*, a group of friends who like to spend their leisure time in one another’s company” (Agulhon 1982, 136).

If we look at the membership of the regional Socialist party seated in Lyon in 1880, we find its federal committee composed of five *chambres syndicales*, one *cercle d'études sociales*, and eight *groupes* identified by names like *Groupe Egalitaire*, *Groupe Louise Michel*, and *Groupe de la Croix Rousse* (a Lyon neighborhood). These groups were quite small, the largest being the *chambre syndicale* of *dévideuses* (a specialized silk-weaving trade), with sixty members. But most groups reported between ten and twenty members. Not only were these groups small and relatively autonomous from the larger party, but they were themselves internally undifferentiated. And finally, the broader federal structure lacked any intermediate structure between the center and periphery (what Tarrow calls “mobilizing structure”). The movement was clearly segmented (*chambre syndicale*, *cercle d'études sociales*, and *groupes*), and the larger “party” still lacked internal structure.¹⁷

As argued in Chapter 2, communal groups attempting to adapt to the ebb and flow of participation will have a propensity towards schism because their strategies of closure will rely on sharpening external group boundaries. In 1880, participation in many labor organizations was declining. A comparison of participation at the July and October 1880 meetings of the Fédération du Parti Ouvrier Socialiste de la Région de l'Est shows the number of groups represented in October seriously reduced.¹⁸ A police report noted that the federal committee of the Parti Ouvrier Socialiste de l'Est had not made any serious gains (partly because a condition of membership was to break all electoral relations with “bourgeois” political parties, leading unions in particular to distance themselves).¹⁹ At this later meeting, there was an intense discussion about who could join the party (indicating a move toward organizational closure). Article 3 says only “salaried workers from both sexes” (*travailleurs salarié des deux sexes*). Groups of workers from the Alliance Republicaine (Radicals) could be admitted “on the condition of making a purification [*épuration*].”

In Marseille, a similar progression occurred. In late 1879, unions met to discuss the creation of “circles” as a means to mobilize workers who were not yet unionized. Conflict between Radical circles and circles

17 A police report observed that those connected with the International, who had been shaken by the Commune and disturbed by the schism between Marxists and Bakuninists, “no longer wanted a uniform society, constituted on a regular hierarchical base and accepting higher direction from a congress.” Rather, they wanted autonomous groups, administering themselves and linked only through correspondence (AD Rhône 4M 246, 2 octobre 1875).

18 AD Rhône, 4 M 246, list of delegates for founding meeting, July 1880; October meeting, 11 octobre 1880.

19 AD Rhône 4 M 246, 6 novembre 1880.

oriented toward the unions was already visible. In early January 1880, police described a meeting of union delegates in the process of creating a socialist federation. A major issue was whether “Radical circles” would be allowed to participate. A strong argument was made that only those workers belonging to unions should be admitted. In early February, a vote was taken to exclude the “bourgeois Radical circles.” And in March 1880, the party decided that the electoral committee would be composed of two delegates from each union.²⁰

After the split with the Radicals, two further schisms would develop.

Fragmentation of the Collectivists: The Emergence of Anarchism

The collectivists themselves would not remain long intact. Although the collectivist banner united a coalition against the Radicals, it still hung over an internally heterogeneous group. Ambiguous as a reference, the label of collectivism was equally suitable to anarchists and Marxists.²¹ Reading history backward, there has been the tendency to give the components of this collectivist coalition more ideological rigor than perhaps existed at the outset; in fact, political allegiances became clear only in the course of conflicts over party organization. Guesde, who was to symbolize Marxism in France, had himself passed through an “anarchist” phase and returned to France in 1876 after exile in Switzerland and Italy with a “hybrid” socialism (Willard 1965, 13).²² The members of the Café Soufflet group, where Guesde was educated in the works of Marx, would later join different party sects (Bernstein 1965, 113). At least in its early editions, their journal, *L’Egalité*, referred to Blanqui as much as it did to Marx (Perrot 1959, 16). Although tendencies certainly existed in the collectivist group from the start, it appears that the hardening of ideological boundaries began after the formation of the party in 1879 (i.e., coincident with the ebbing of the populist wave).

20 AD Bouches-du-Rhône, 1 M 1417, 10 and 13 décembre 1879; 8, 11, 19, 29 janvier, 5 février, and 27 mars 1880; 1 M 1450, 18 novembre 1879.

21 Vincent writes, “The essential point is that the term ‘collectivism’ had many resonances in 1879; it belonged to the vocabulary of divergent groups – anarchists, reformist socialists, Colinsists, Marxists. All agreed that militant action was necessary to collectivize wealth. But what this jointly embraced program meant as a positive ideal, beyond an attack on the regime of absolute private property, is elusive in the extreme” (Vincent 1992, 77). See also Willard (1965, 16–17) and Lefranc (1967, 32–3).

22 Jean Grave admitted that in this same period his anarchist ideas were still “very ill-defined” (Grave 1930, 5).

The first political opposition to crystallize was the anarchists. After disputes at a regional congress of the party, held in Paris in 1881, the anarchists withdrew and organized an alternative conference.²³ At subsequent regional party congresses, the anarchists of the provinces followed the lead of the Parisian anarchists (Maitron 1975, 111–12). Although anarchism already had a rich history in France, the anarchist movement of the post-Commune period appears to have been reinvigorated beginning in 1879. In 1878, Kropotkin could still complain that there were not twenty anarchists in Paris “to carry on the movement” (Kropotkin 1930, 406). Internationally, the anarchist movement appeared on the decline (Stafford 1971, 115). In France, however, the rebirth of the anarchist movement appeared to follow the same strike wave that had radicalized the labor movement in general. Organizationally, the movement sprang from the creation of the *cercles d'études sociales* – “this fine invention of the Anarchists,” as one of the Guesdists would ironically write in 1880.²⁴ In Marseille, in the summer of 1880, a police group noted that “an anarchist group is in the process of being formed; it is destined to replace the *Groupe d'études sociales*.”²⁵

In 1879, the future anarchist theorist, Jean Grave, helped to form a circle in the Fifth and Eighth Arrondissements of Paris. The groups, he later recalled, were “above all frequented by tanners, *mégissiers*, and curriers, industries of the *quartier*” (Grave 1930, 5). This description suggests the character of these groups: these professions were all related to the leather industry. This handicraft industry, par excellence, not only was finely divided into specialties but, at the same time, also exhibited a propensity toward solidaristic, industrywide action.²⁶ The circles would also show a propensity to extend working-class action to unskilled

23 Woodcock writes that “1881 can thus be taken as the year in which a separate and avowedly anarchist movement began its independent career in France” (Woodcock 1962, 295).

24 Letter of José Mesa to Paul Lafargue, November 20, 1880, in Willard and Bottigelli (1981, 92); anarchist groups also appeared to grow out of the formation of the *cercles d'études sociales* in the provinces. See, for instance, Masse (1969, 36) and the Institut de l'Études Politiques de Toulouse (1971, 63–4); for a list of the French groups represented at the international anarchist congress held in London in 1881, see Maitron (1975, 113–14, n. 11); the anarchist journal *L'Avant-Garde* was started in Switzerland by Paul Brousse, who wrote in its July 28, 1877, edition: “The professional corps that we would like is therefore ‘a cercle d'études sociales’. The professional corps that we would like is therefore also ‘a group for propaganda and revolutionary action.’” (Maitron 1975, 96–7 n).

25 AD Bouches-du-Rhône, 1 M 1450, 8 août, 1880.

26 An industrywide union representing 13 leather *métiers* was organized in 1868 but floundered after the war. See APO (1899, tome II, 132).

workers.²⁷ Grave noted too that he had helped to set up strike committees, so as to collect funds for future strikes (Grave 1930, 5). Riding the crest of the strike wave, these *cercles d'études sociales*, once formed, could serve as points of coordination for the expansion of intertrade relations. They rejected strikes that made narrow reformist demands and insisted, instead, on strikes that would be pushed to the extreme, toward a revolutionary élan (Maitron 1975, 153).²⁸ These groups were the avant-garde after 1880, just as splinter unions had been for the strike-averse unions after 1875.

These *cercles d'études sociales*, however, were also put to another purpose: they served as local electoral committees. In the town of Cuers in the Var, for instance, a socialist circle that had been formed in October 1879 put up a "collectivist" candidate in the 1881 elections (Judt 1979, 69). After 1879, circles began to proliferate throughout France, often being created following the visit of a socialist leader like Guesde or Blanqui.²⁹ It was the dual role of these circles that was the source of conflict and differentiation in the political arena. The emerging "anarchists" sought to mobilize circles for grassroots direct action, usually encouraging cross-trade and cross-skill strikes. The emerging Guesdist factions, however, intended to use circles as a basis for electoral mobilization. "Closure" meant clearly prioritizing one of these forms of action over the other.³⁰

The anarchist resurgence began with the formation of the Parti Ouvrier in 1879. After the congress of Marseille, Jean Grave continued to work on Guesde's recently resurrected journal, *L'Égalité*, which as he

27 For instance, a Parisian Anarchist group created the *Chambre Syndicale des Hommes de Peine* (Union of men of pain) for unskilled workers (Maitron 1975, 125–6). Hanagan notes that the neighborhood café and its culture, the source of many of the early *cercles*, was a natural unit to informally coordinate collective action when neighborhood industry was artisanal. As industry mechanized, the clientele of the café had less ground for common collective action. As this happened, the *cercles* became more formalized (Hanagan 1980, 138–9). I would add only that in transitional or mixed neighborhoods, which shared both artisanal and factory industry, the *cercle* might be a forum for extending artisanal action to the less skilled as well as for radicalizing the artisans.

28 Perrot notes the "contagious character of strikes, at the same time in the midst of the same profession, and in a region between several professions: in Rouen, in Reims, in the Nord, etc. building and metallurgy follow the way of the weavers." She adds that "Everywhere, some young men, with a much more combative attitude lead the movement. These men are often the same who organized the first *cercles d'études sociales*" (Perrot 1974, 90).

29 See, for instance: Lequin (1977a, 226); Merriman (1985, 176); Judt (1979, 68).

30 As Maitron notes, the "marxists and anarchists attempt to make their own points of view prevail in the midst of the already constituted section, or by creating some groups where their influence would be predominant" (Maitron 1975, 104).

noted had not yet “pronounced itself on the vote” (Grave 1930, 14).³¹ Following the Marseille congress, however, a campaign was begun to appropriate the circles for electoral uses. Guesde traveled to London in the spring of 1880 to meet with Marx to formulate a minimum electoral program, which was then unveiled at the July congress of the Paris region’s federation.³² The “anarchists” reacted sharply. Jean Grave held that voting was counterrevolutionary and that it would be more worthwhile to spend money on dynamite than on electoral activity (Patsouras 1978, 15). Voted over the anarchists’ objections, the minimum program was understood by its opponents as a centralization of party control (i.e., hierarchicalization), a move toward increasingly rigid dogma (i.e., ideological closure), and a standardization of strategy and party units (i.e., strong classification and depersonalization).

In response, the anarchists moved toward “inverted hierarchy.” The “anarchist” countermobilization began with the embrace of electoral abstentionism. In the Lyon Socialist party, the first reference that I found to an *abstentionniste* group comes at the beginning of 1880 (“abstentionist” seems to have preceded the use of “anarchist”). The police noted that one such group had existed in the *quartier* of Croix Rousse for “some time.”³³ The conflict in the party that gave rise to this abstentionist current was directly linked to disputes over electoral strategy, but these disputes were linked more broadly to the issue of strikes and unionism. As the strike wave declined, union participation dropped. Police noted that the unions were in bad shape, “lacking resources and authority.” Union meetings were poorly attended.³⁴ One response was to rationalize the unions by federating them; another was to shift the strategic emphasis toward electoral mobilization and away from strikes. In March 1880, a long and controversial meeting was held to discuss the statutes of a provisional committee to form a federation of unions.³⁵ At a regional congress in June 1881, the following four resolutions (as quoted in police reports) were voted:

1. “The socialist party must organize itself in anticipation of the upcoming elections. It must take part in the electoral struggle”;

31 See also Perrot 1959, 16–17.

32 Stafford provides the full text of the minimum program (1971, App. 7). On the politics of drafting the minimum program and the reactions from various quarters of the labor movement, see Stafford (1971, 158–72), Derfler (1991, 184–96), and Vincent (1992, 78–86).

33 AD Rhône 4 M 246, 6 janvier 1880; a note of 10 février 1881 states that the “abstentionists” met to organize an “abstentionist party.”

34 AD Rhône, 4 M 246, 4 février 1880. 35 AD Rhône, 4 M 246, 12 mars 1880.

2. "The unions must federate themselves in order to increase their capacity for resistance and their means of action";
3. "All groups who initiate strikes outside of the conditions posed by the federal committee will be considered as acting on their own risk and peril"; and
4. "Before beginning a strike, all groups attached to the federal committee must warn it of their intentions and report on the viability of the strike. The federal committee will pronounce itself on this viability and on the resources it agrees to allocate to the strikers."³⁶

The anarchists, such as they were, had a different view of strikes and social transformation. Foreshadowing the revolutionary syndicalists' endorsement of the general strike, a leader of the "abstentionists" (Bernard) declared that "strikes and meetings are necessary to maintain agitation and make revolutionaries." Challenged to explain how strikes could lead to social change, he responded that "he had directed the strike of locksmiths and that he had made 100 to 150 revolutionaries with that strike."³⁷ The anarchists rejected both the move to routinize unions and strikes and the move to retraditionalize political activity in the form of a disciplined electoral party.

The anarchist revolt against the Guesdists' minimum program quickly became a national revolt. A meeting of the Lyon "abstentionists," for instance, read letters sent from abstentionists in other cities (Paris, Marseille, Cette, Beziers, Bordeaux, Vienne).³⁸ The invective among national leaders grew venomous.³⁹ The secession of anarchists from the party in 1881 must be understood in terms of the emerging myth of the Commune.

Mythmaking and Role-playing: Exhuming the Commune

The resurgence of the labor movement in France in the 1870s must be seen in relation to a populist movement that coincided with the rise of strikes in the second half of the decade. On the political side of this populist mobilization was a campaign to run Blanqui for legislative office in the 1879 elections (a campaign that would foreshadow in a number

36 AD Rhône, 4 M 246, 18 juin 1881. The same report notes the presence of three factions at the congress: "Anarchiste abstentionistes," "Collectivistes révolutionnaire," and "Radicaux socialistes" (the last being few in number).

37 AD Rhône, 4 M 246, 9 mai 1881.

38 AD Rhône, 4 M 246, 23 janvier 1881.

39 To name only one example, Paul Lafargue, an intimate of Guesde's, complained in a letter to Paul Brousse of the "calumnies of the anarchists"; at the same time, he admitted his own attacks against them (Willard and Bottigelli 1981, 96).

of respects the populist campaign of General Boulanger ten years later). Blanqui, in jail for his role in the Commune, had become a symbol of the larger cause of amnesty. Both the amnesty campaign and the Blanqui campaign had the potential to unify a broad populist coalition. Hutton notes that the Bordeaux campaign to elect Blanqui “mobilized a coalition of radical, socialist, and revolutionary groups” (Hutton 1981, 113). And a similar coalition developed in the Lyon campaign (Joughin 1955, 416–17). Blanqui’s platform during his electoral campaigns of 1879 and 1880 was little different from that of the most advanced Radicals (Howorth 1982, 74–5).

At this stage, the Commune was a condensed symbol of an inverted Republican regime, but one that still allowed the diversity of interpretations that helped to bring together a broad populist coalition. Yet shortly, this populist movement would begin to fragment around the different interpretations of the Commune. The Blanqui campaign would itself become an instrument for dividing the “collectivists” from the populist coalition with the Radicals. Hutton notes the irony of the Guesdists’ sponsoring the Blanquist campaign even though “Guesde’s intellectual elitism and Blanqui’s instinctual populism epitomized contrasting styles of revolutionary practice” (Hutton 1981, 113). Guesdist support for the Blanqui campaign, however, should be seen as a bid to capture the populist style of mobilization for the budding socialist movement. The Guesdists sought to reproduce the popular front style of populist mobilization using a narrower “class” base through a “myth of the Commune.”⁴⁰

A political campaign to grant amnesty to the Communards was closely intertwined with the origins of the Parti Ouvrier (Zévaès 1911, 25–38; Joughin 1973). Amnesty had been a central part of the platforms of worker candidacies since 1876. But the issue of amnesty became an acrimonious one within the labor movement. In 1878, the “cooperativist” congress of Lyon had refused to allow a resolution in favor of amnesty to come to a vote. The “collectivists” responded by vigorously embracing the cause. The Collectivists began to commemorate the Commune, positioning themselves within the French revolutionary tradition. For instance, to commemorate the anniversary of the Commune, the journal *L’Egalité* was printed in red ink; it included portraits of famous Communards and lists of those who died defending the Commune. In May 1880, the journal wrote that “we estimate that workers, by honoring their dead, honor the principles which have guided them in their

40 Haupt (1972) has described the Commune as a “symbol” with diverse interpretations in the French and international labor movements.

social claims and must guide the socialist workers' party in the future" (Girault 1972, 422–3).

Yet, as described earlier, the decline in union participation led the Guesdists to adopt a strategy that was more electorally oriented, as epitomized by their support for a minimum program. We have already seen that this strategy led to the secession of an anarchist movement that rejected electoralism. In symbolic terms, this conflict was a replay of the earlier schismatic dispute between Marx and Bakunin in the First International.⁴¹ In their address read at the congress of Marseille, a group of London exiles – Proudhonians by background – harkened back to the divisions within the Commune: "Although there is scarcely still among us some chiefs of school [i.e., faction leaders], the spirit of sect is still widespread" (Zévaès 1911, 78). This warning refers to the Committee on Public Safety, which had tried to squelch democratic processes during the Commune. In the conflict over the powers of this committee, the Proudhonians had found themselves the *minoritaires* against its Blanquist and Jacobin supporters. Similarly, this group of Communards, who formed the basis of the Alliance Socialiste Républicaine, interpreted the minimum program, drafted by Guesde and Marx, as an attempt by a sect to impose its will on the majority. Thus, they cited as justification for their aloofness "the state of division which currently reduces to impotence the entire socialist party." In contrast, they opened their group to "all socialistes, without distinction of school," an early statement of the ecumenical spirit that would become the basis for party unification two decades later (Orry 1911, 4–5).

The return of the Communards accentuated the process of ideological differentiation. First, there was the simple fact that the success of the campaign for amnesty had rendered obsolete the common platform shared by the collectivists (Joughin 1955, 482, 502–4). The attempt to utilize the Blanquist campaign as a populist instrument to construct a unified socialist movement had failed. This populist ritualism would live on, however, in the Blanquists' extravagant ritual celebrations for the fallen saints of revolution (Hutton 1981, 121–5).⁴² When the abstentionist faction emerged in the Lyon Socialist party, Deloche, a Blanquist,

41 Marx appears to have initiated the correspondence with Guesde, though his first letter is not preserved. As early as March or April 1879, Guesde responded to Marx. In this letter he explicitly repudiates the "Proudhonians of the Parisian federation" of the International (Willard and Bottigelli 1981, 45). In early 1880, Guesde celebrated that the congress of Marseille had broken "with the conservative and cooperative tradition, not only of the congress of Paris and Lyon of 1876–77, but of the French International of 1866–70" (Willard and Bottigelli 1981, 64 n).

42 The post-Commune Blanquist organization in France began as a network of committees set up to raise funds for a memorial statue to Blanqui (Hutton 1981, 122–42).

tentatively supported abstentionism but insisted that if a *candidature illegale* came along – like that of Blanqui’s – the revolutionary party should support it.⁴³ When this argument was rebuffed, Deloche (who later became a supporter of General Boulanger) resigned.

Party of Labor or Labor Party?

The most important schism in the fragmentation of the Parti Ouvrier was the split that divided the “Possibilists” from the “Guesdists” in 1882. Five factors encouraged this split:

(1) The movement remained decentralized with little intermediate mobilizing structure between center and periphery. Regional federations had been created and were linked to a central committee, but intermediate-level linkages were very weak. However, the Guesdists sought to establish more centralized control and discipline in the party.

The problems between the Guesdists and the future Possibilists began with the formation of the Parti Ouvrier in 1879. As early as the spring of 1879, Guesde had written Marx indicating his agreement on the need for an “independent and militant” political party: “Like you, I am persuaded that before dreaming of action, it is necessary to constitute a party, a conscious army” (Willard and Bottigelli 1981, 44). But the actual constitution of the party in 1879 embodied an extreme federalism, a fact often taken to reflect a compromise between the Guesdists, anarchists, and future Possibilists (Lefranc 1963, 41).

(2) The movement remained highly segmented in that the action was in small, autonomous local bodies, of which there were two primary types – *cercles d’études sociales* (study circles) and *chambres syndicales* (unions). Horizontal linkages between these groups were quite weak. For example, in February 1880, police noted that among the Lyon unions: “there is neither community of ideas, nor cohesion, nor entente and everything suggests that they will conserve for a long time still their own autonomy of which the majority, moreover, would not like to lose.” A federal committee made up of delegates from the unions had been formed, but it was “embryonic” and did not meet regularly.⁴⁴

(3) The schism occurred in the context of a receding wave of strikes and a decline in union participation (a point already noted for the anarchist schism). The year 1880 was marked by a strike wave, both in the number and in the size of the strikes. Moreover, this was an offensive strike wave at its peak. The number of strikes declined in 1881, followed

43 AD Rhône, 4 M 246, 31 mai 1881. 44 AD Rhône, 4 M 246, 4 février 1880.

in 1882 by a dramatic increase in the number but not in the size of strikes. This was the beginning of a very large increase in defensive strikes that had slowly begun in 1881 (Perrot 1974, 81). The declining efficacy of strikes led unions either to adopt a more conservative attitude toward strikes or to substitute political action for economic action. These responses were, in part, contradictory, and the union movement began to fragment around competing organizational strategies as union participation declined. One strategy was to regroup the trade around a narrower craft sectoralism that would emphasize both the importance of professional development and the cautious building up of strike or insurance funds, accompanied by the raising of dues – a strategy of routinization that aimed to maintain the mobilization of the more skilled and more senior workers.⁴⁵ Those who embraced this approach strongly rejected political unionism. For example, Article 19 of the charter of the Parisian *Chambre Syndicale des Ouvriers Fondateurs en Cuivre* (copper foundry workers' union), which was created in 1882, specified: "All political discussion must be rigorously prohibited" (APO 1899, tome III, 355). Other unionists adopted precisely the opposite conclusion: they sought to substitute more political action in place of economic action. The powerful Paris mechanics' unions, for instance, became very active in the party, taking a strong "revolutionary collectivist" stance that led to the creation of a dissident union and to many individual resignations (APO 1899, tome III, 273).

Not all unions, however, sought to preserve the conception of the working class as the agent of fundamental change. Many unions focused strategy on pushing for concrete municipal reforms. Jules Joffrin was one of the major figures in defining the reform-oriented electoral strategy that the Possibilists would adopt after 1882. A member of the Paris city council, Joffrin proposed a number of municipal reforms. He suggested local public works projects to be administered jointly by the city and the federation of Parisian unions. He called for the municipalization of the gas company and the opening of municipal bakeries. He proposed the opening of national workshops and called for the city to delegate to the unions the construction of working-class housing. The Possibilists moved more and more toward a reformist municipal politics (Stafford 1971, 202–7). This narrower focus on tangible political gains was the political equivalent of the union strategy of emphasizing professional development and rationalizing strike activity – a strategy of routiniza-

45 One strategy was to return to the idea of mutualism. A number of trades created producers' cooperatives during this period as a means of creating work for unemployed craftsmen.

tion aimed at maintaining participation. The congress of Le Havre in November 1880 had appended to Guesde's minimum program just such a demand for municipalities to make funds available for public work projects (Stafford 1971, 171). Like the revolutionary Paris mechanics, however, Guesde and his followers sought to preserve a much more integrative conception of working-class action. They viewed these municipal demands as watering down the minimum program, making the party indistinguishable from the Radicals. Although they hoped to win votes, they were less interested in maintaining the unions than they were in building a disciplined mass party. Increasingly, the Guesdists saw the unions in more limited instrumental terms as a way of organizing workers for the party.⁴⁶ Unions were important but should be subordinate to the party. As a Guesdist militant, José Mesa, wrote to Lafargue at the beginning of 1882: "The organization of the unions and other worker groups of resistance is a terrain where we are sure to battle the new Anarchists [viz., the Possibilists]."⁴⁷

The conflict with the anarchists had been a dispute over the proper use of the *cercles d'études sociales*. The conflict between the Possibilists and the Guesdists was more an outgrowth of the tensions between these study circles and the unions. While many unions adopted a reform-oriented posture, many of the *cercles d'études sociales* sought electoral discipline to clearly distinguish themselves from Radicals. Guesde wrote to Marx in 1879 that "[l]ike you I am persuaded that before dreaming of action it is necessary to have constructed a party, a conscious army." He then goes on to explain to Marx: "But for this party to be at the same time 'independent' and 'militant,' it is necessary at all costs that the French proletariat be torn from the duperie of bourgeois Radicalism" (Bottigelli and Willard 1981, 44). From the point of view of the Guesdists, the use of party organization to separate workers from the Radicals would come to naught if local alliances with the Radicals were made. If the short-term objective of winning elections prevailed, local electoral committees would gradually fall back into the hands of the Radicals.⁴⁸ Before the party could even begin to be effective (i.e., to win elections), it had to sharply distinguish itself from its competitors. In con-

46 For example, the weavers' union of Roubaix was described as "almost exclusively, a political group" in APO 1899, tome II, 388.

47 Letter of José Mesa to Paul Lafargue, January 6, 1882 (Willard and Bottigelli 1981, 179).

48 Paul Lafargue wrote to Paul Brousse in June 1881 that "as much as I am for alliance in the second round, I just as much condemn alliances in the first round, like those made by the Marseille unions ... If we do that, we will see the workers throw themselves in the arms of the radicals" (Willard and Bottigelli 1981, 125-6).

trast, for unions who had adopted a more reformist political strategy, electoral alliance with the Radicals promised to provide access to municipal resources. As the Paris municipal councilor Joffrin stated in 1890: “We will vote, we Possibilists, rather often with ministers who will have a moderate appearance, if they bring the least improvement to the situation of workers” (Stafford 1971, 202).

(4) When the movement split, it did so between different types of segments – unions and circles. If the Guesdists and the anarchists disputed whether the *cercle d'études sociales* should be primarily a vehicle for direct action or a vehicle for electoral mobilization, the Possibilists disputed with the Guesdists about whether the party was in the service of the unions or vice versa. Possibilists saw themselves as representatives of their unions. For them, the party should be a federation of unions – that is, the fundamental unit of political action should be the union. The attendance at the 1884 meetings of the two parties reveals the disparities in membership: although roughly the same number of *cercles d'études sociales* (and similar organizations) attended both meetings (46 attended the Guesdist congress, 54 attended the Possibilist congress), the unions overwhelmingly followed the Possibilists. That is, 64 unions joined the Possibilists and only 10 attended the Guesdist congress (Fédération des Travailleurs Socialistes de France 1885; Parti Ouvrier 1884).

(5) The poor showing in the national elections of August 1881 created increasing dissension in the party ranks, which began to galvanize around two different organizational solutions: the Guesdists began to insist on greater centralization of the party and standardization of party sections around the minimum program, whereas the Broussists insisted on a federalist organization constituted around a union base (Stafford 1971, 172–3).⁴⁹

The elections of 1881 appear to have been the immediate factor in the growing rift between the two groups. In the spring of 1880, Guesde had gone to London to draft a minimum program for the party with the help of Marx. Benoît Malon, who had been in correspondence with Guesde about the drafting of a program for the party, had recently been urging a program that would specify concrete reforms and thus attract the support of the unions (Stafford 1971, 163). Herein lay the seeds of dissension: Guesde, with Marx, saw the minimum program as a way of

49 The journal *L'Egalité* was resurrected to promote the policy of party centralization, whereas “federalism” was promoted by the Broussists from the pages of *Le Prolétaire* (Stafford 1971, 174–7).

uniting the party; Malon, along with Brousse, saw the political program as a way of realizing concrete reforms. In the summer of 1880, Brousse could still write amiably to Paul Lafargue, Guesde's lieutenant in London, and even send his regards to Marx and Engels.⁵⁰ By April 1881, however, their correspondence had turned irritable and argumentative, and by mid-autumn, they appear to no longer be corresponding.⁵¹ The minimum program had been adopted at the party's central region congress in June 1880 and then at the national congress at Le Havre in November. Though the passage of the minimum program engendered controversy, it did not precipitate schism. Stafford suggests that the minimum program did not cause more controversy because what it actually committed the party to was not clear (Stafford 1971, 169).⁵² Neither Brousse nor Malon intended to allow the adoption of the minimum program to prevent the articulation of a more concrete set of reforms. Both men gravitated toward a reform-oriented program aimed at gaining political power at the municipal level.⁵³

Both Broussists and Guesdists moved toward symbolic closure. Just as the Guesdists and anarchists had come to articulate their positions with respect to the myth of the Commune, so too now did the Broussists. Brousse's first step in this direction was to seize the parallel between La Commune and *la commune* – that is, between the Revolution and the city. In May 1881, Brousse wrote to Lafargue that the political movement in France assumes two forms: “[I]t is communard in its revolutionary form and communalist in its legal form.”⁵⁴ The adoption of the “municipality” as the focus of Broussist efforts echoed the structural conflict between a federalist and a centralized party.⁵⁵ Calling for federalism at the level of the party, the Broussists could interpret the Commune as the realization of the possibility of communal autonomy – and thus, an

50 Letter of Paul Brousse to Paul Lafargue, July 14, 1880, in Willard and Bottigelli 1981, 82–3.

51 See, for example, the letter of Paul Brousse to Paul Lafargue, April 24, 1881, and Lafargue's response at the end of April (Willard and Bottigelli 1981, 111–19). For a discussion of this correspondence between Brousse and Lafargue, see Derfler (1991, Ch. 17).

52 Note, however, that Brousse did oppose the minimum program from the beginning (Stafford 1971, 169).

53 Brousse discussed a “municipal program” as an alternative to the “minimum program” offered by Guesde at a Paris meeting in October of 1880. Malon wrote an article in November 1880 that called for the “Conquest of the Municipalities” (Stafford 1971, 169–70). See also Vincent (1992, 78–80).

54 May 27, 1881; Willard and Bottigelli (1981, 121).

55 Epstein (1991) might note here the “prefigurative” character of the Broussist position, drawing the parallel between the structure of the party and the structure of the postrevolutionary state.

inverted Republic. And the Guesdists responded in kind, with Guesde writing that “from the day the smoke of the locomotive appeared on the horizon, the commune was dead as an autonomous human group.”⁵⁶ Brousse had now assumed the role of Bakunin and Guesde of Marx, with one critical twist: Brousse did not object to using elections for reformist ends, promoting what he called the “politics of the possible” (Stafford 1971, 176).⁵⁷

Both the Guesdist and the Broussist strategies could be seen as strategies of closure. Both sought to extract the workers from the tutelage of the Radicals. However, the Guesdists tried to extract workers politically, by sharply demarcating class boundaries (through the minimum program) and creating closure in the constituent units of the party (the circles); unions were then seen as subordinate to the party – as instruments to mobilize electoral support. The Guesdists branded their opponents within the party as “reformists” (the label “possibilists” was a term of derision bestowed upon their “reformist” opponents). Closer to the anarchists in spirit, the Possibilists moved to “invert” the centralizing designs of the Guesdists. They favored a federal structure of the party with base units that had the autonomy to decide about electoral strategy. In a move that foreshadowed the future strategy of revolutionary syndicalism, the Possibilists inverted the Guesdist concept of party by making unions the base unit of the party rather than its appendage. “The Commune and the Corporation [i.e., the union],” wrote Brousse, “are the only means that the people will have, one day, to make its will prevail.”⁵⁸ Though they sought to prevent party centralization, the Broussists effectively centralized organizational control to edge the Guesdists out of the party. From a position of strength in the Union Fédérative du Centre – the Parisian party federation – Paul Brousse succeeded in excluding the Guesdists by placing his own friends on the federation’s federal committee. Next, he was able to create a national committee, composed of representatives from each of the regional federations, to govern the party as a whole (Stafford 1971, 172–5).

At the 1882 congress of the party, held in St. Étienne, the Guesdists made the split official; they withdrew their band, now a distinct minority, and set up their own party, the Parti Ouvrier Français, in the nearby textile town of Roanne. But the result was not a happy one for either group. As Engels wrote to Marx of this divisiveness: “Our friends of Paris have now harvested what they have sown . . . Their impatience

56 Cited in Stafford (1971, 176).

57 On Lafargue’s self-conscious linking of Brousse to the politics of the Jura anarchists (Marx’s opponents in the International), see Stafford (1971, 179).

58 Cited in Lefranc 1963, 22.

has lost them an enviable position.”⁵⁹ Unity for the parties or the unions, much less the Fourth Estate or the proletariat, would have to wait.

Summary

After the Commune, the revival of the labor movement took place under the aegis of the Radical Republicans, a political grouping that preserved the populist tradition of mobilizing a broad-based cross-class alliance of producers. Yet as the Third Republic was being consolidated, a wave of strikes in the late 1870s led to an inversion of radicalism. A “collectivist” alliance was formed that embraced the political radicalism of the populist tradition but rejected the cross-class alliance pursued by the Radicals. This emerging “class populism” constructed itself around the myth of the Commune, an event that had come to symbolize a breach in the Republican movement and the symbolic inversion of the Jacobin state. This move toward autonomy broadly reflected the tendency of the workers to see themselves as a status group within the state – a Fourth Estate.

As the strike wave receded and participation in unions declined, the fledgling movement began to move toward communal closure. At the base level, the small segmental groups (unions and study circles) began to restrict membership to workers or unionists. Radical unions and circles were excluded from city or regional federations unless they had been purged of “bourgeois” elements. A first schism between Radicals and Collectivists was the result. But attempts at communal closure did not end there. The decline of strikes had shifted attention to the electoral arena. A faction emerged, behind Jules Guesde, that favored the creation of a disciplined class-based political party that would transform local study circles into party sections. In reaction, an “abstentionist” faction developed that resisted this shift from the direct action of strikes to electoral campaigning. This abstentionist faction inverted the Guesdist position on disciplined organization and embraced anarchism.

In attempting to create a disciplined class party, the Guesdists adopted a minimum electoral program that prevented local parties from forging local electoral alliances with the Radicals. They also came to view unions as institutions properly subordinated to the party. An emerging “Possibilist” faction, however, challenged the Guesdists on both points.

59 Letter of Friedrich Engels to Karl Marx, January 13, 1882 (Willard and Bottigelli 1981, 185).

Embracing the myth of the Commune with its inversion of the Jacobin state, the Possibilists rejected the national uniformity of the minimum program and adopted a strategy of municipal reform socialism favorable toward electoral alliance. This municipal reformism can be interpreted as a move toward instrumental rationality. At the same time, the Possibilists moved to invert the Guesdist's subordination of unions to a disciplined unitary party by making unions the fundamental unit of a federal party. A schism ensued. As the next chapter will demonstrate, the Possibilists' linking of communalism and unionism was to have important implications for the future development of the French labor movement.

6

The New Covenant

At the end of the 1880s, a second wave of populist mobilization roiled the political and social terrain of France. As described in Chapter 3, populist mobilization often exhibits a pattern of rapid mobilization that peaks and then splits, fragments, or collapses as participation falls off. In the early 1890s, these splits did occur. But the outcome of this second wave of populist mobilization ultimately pointed toward a fundamental realignment and unification of the French labor movement. Eventually, the unions withdrew their allegiances to competing party sects and forged the outlines of a unified union movement. The full consolidation of this second alignment would take over a decade and would require a reinforcing structural alignment on both the union and the party side. The details of the final consolidation of the union movement and the parallel unification of the party movement will be told in the next two chapters. This chapter will focus on those developments between 1884 and 1894 that first revealed the outlines of this new alignment.

The argument of this chapter is that the common schismatic pattern of populism was redirected by a structural innovation that both coincided with and resulted from the populist mobilization of the late 1880s and early 1890s. This innovation was the creation of an institution known as the *bourse du travail*, or “labor exchange.” The simplest description of the *bourses du travail* is that they were municipal job-placement centers. However, the critical aspect of this innovation was that these job-placement centers would be administered by the unions themselves. A major consequence of the creation of these institutions was that they strengthened the linkages among unions citywide. From the perspective of segmentary lineage theory, these institutions were the structural equivalent of ritual cults or marriage-exchange relations that cross-cut the boundaries of rival clans. They fostered “generalized exchange” among local unions of different crafts and came to serve as the union equivalent of a church “congregation.”

From Boulangism to May 1st 1890

As suggested in Chapter 2, broad-based solidarity depends on a delicate cross-cutting balance of institutional allegiances. The role of the *bourse du travail* in precipitating a realignment of the labor movement can be understood only in the context of the interplay among many different and often contradictory organizational strategies. We can begin that narrative by describing what did not happen. By the beginning of the 1890s, the Guesdists appeared poised to unify the French labor movement around a model much like that championed by the German Social Democratic party: they had begun to construct a serious party organization around a Marxist ideology; they had coopted an emerging national federation of unions; and they were the major sponsors of a powerful new working-class ritual (Labor Day). Yet it was precisely in the face of the Guesdists' bid for party closure that the *bourses'* role as agencies of cross-cutting balance would become clear.

An understanding of this organizational tableau must begin with the Boulangist movement of the late 1880s. The Boulangist movement was a sort of "classical" populist movement, and it contained, in excess, the types of internal contradictions and ambiguities for which populism is famous. On the one hand, it was a movement to revise the Constitution to make it more democratic and popular. As a "Republican" minister of war (originally supported by Radicals like Clemenceau), Boulanger symbolized the traditional Republican concern to have the military reflect the popular will. The movement expressed great distrust of political elites, and particularly, of parliamentarians. It sought more direct forms of representation like the popular referendum. As Winock notes: "Boulangism represented itself as the true democracy against the oligarchic and corrupted democracy" (Winock 1997, 79). On the other hand, the Boulangist movement was an attempt to restore moral order. Catholics, royalists, and Bonapartists saw Boulanger as having the makings of a strong executive who would rise above the political turmoil and petty corruption of Republican politics (Irvine 1989; Burns 1984; Sternhell 1978). Emerging anti-Semites and right-wing nationalists supported the general as an authentic French patriot. The Boulangist movement cut across the defining cleavage of French nineteenth-century politics – the division between Republicans on the left and monarchists and Catholics on the right.

The Boulangist movement had contradictory effects on the French labor movement: it divided the existing party sects internally, but it also provided them with a mass base that promoted significant organization

building. Let us first place this Boulangist movement and the socialist movement in perspective. The rise of Boulangism coincided with a period of severe unemployment in France, and the movement proved to be a major attraction for many urban workers.¹ The Boulangist movement can be said to have started in early 1886, when Boulanger became minister of war, and to have continued through the end of 1889. Even before Boulangism, it is possible to see the outlines of a strategy to reorganize the labor movement. While the Possibilists were complaining that the workers no longer supported the unions, the Guesdists, Blanquists, and anarchists focused their attention during the 1880s on organizing the unemployed (Néré 1959, tome II, 61).

The effort to mobilize the unemployed appeared to bring the party sects together (Néré 1959, tome II, 66). Lyon was the center of this strategy. In 1885–86 there was an attempt at reconciling the party sects by creating the Union Electorale des Travailleurs Socialistes.² In 1886, the Fédération Lyonnaise des Syndicats (the citywide federation of unions) sponsored a national union federation, the Fédération Nationale des Syndicats (FNS; National Federation of Unions). This initiative, taken by a city-based union federation, prefigured the future role of the *bourses*. But, as it turned out, the national congress held in Lyon in 1886 to create the federation was a replay of the 1879 congress in Marseille that pitted the “cooperators” against the “collectivists” (alliance of Guesdists, anarchists, and Possibilists). Just as a diverse group had rallied behind the collectivist banner in 1879 to defeat the cooperators, so now too did the Possibilists, Blanquists, anarchists, Guesdists, and assorted other socialists rally against the moderate unionists who supported conciliation with capital.³ Finally, just as the 1879 congress had voted for collectivization of the instruments of labor as a rejection of cooperatist doctrine, the coalition at the 1886 congress voted in support of the socialization of the means of production (Seilhac 1899, 47; APO 1899, tome I, 255).

When the congress ended, the executive council was established in Lyon. Despite the small number of their representatives at the congress,

1 An estimated 200,000 to 300,000 were out of work in Paris between 1884 and 1887 (Stafford 1971, 203). The classic study of the relationship between the economic crisis and Boulangism is Néré (1959).

2 AD Rhône, 4 M 248, 15 janvier 1885; 11 février 1885; 8 décembre 1886; 4 avril 1886; 3 juin 1887.

3 Archives Nationales (hereafter AN) F7 12491: A report from the prefect of the Rhône to the minister of the interior, 20 octobre 1886, lists the political affiliations of the delegates to the congress as well as the 29 unions voting against the 1884 law. Forty-three delegates were described as revolutionaries of one variety or another; 18 of these were described as Guesdists.

the Guesdists were a much more prominent force in this locally organized council, particularly after moderate unions withdrew their support for the FNS (Lequin 1977a, 248). The second and third meetings of the FNS were held in the Guesdist strongholds of Montluçon (1887) and Bordeaux (1888). These congresses locked in Guesdist control of the FNS and precipitated the defection of the Possibilists (Willard 1965, 35 n; Moss 1976, 138).

The Boulangist movement accentuated the divisions both within and among the party sects.⁴ Judith Stone has described the attraction Boulanger had for a sizeable fraction of Radicals and the deep divisions spawned among them.⁵ Local organizations of the Guesdist party, as well as national leaders such as Lafargue, were strongly attracted to the mass-mobilizing potential of Boulangism (Hutton 1971). Thus, stalwart Guesdist militants like Raymond Lavigne defected temporarily from the party to join the local campaign for General Boulanger, which took the form of a mass movement uniting the far Right and far Left (Hutton 1976a, 1976b; Willard 1965, 88–9). It has also been argued that Boulangism was the cause of the Possibilist party schism that would occur in 1890 (Winock 1971; Stafford 1971, 232–4). Hutton suggests that Blanquist support for the Boulangists came from shared “populist affinities” (Hutton 1981, 145; see also Sternhell 1978, 47–52). Ultimately, however, the Blanquists were also split between an anti-Boulangist wing behind Eduard Vaillant and a pro-Boulangist wing behind Ernest Granger (Hutton 1981, 149). Even anarchists were strongly attracted to and divided by the Boulangist movement (Sonn 1989, 36–7). Finally, Boulanger both attracted and repulsed the unions (Néré, 1959, tome II, 523; Hutton 1981, 242). A Lyon police report observed that “Boulangism has created disorganization not only in the Blanquist party, but also in the midst of the National Federation of Unions, and for the same reason.”⁶

In 1889, the Guesdists had remained outside the Republican block, much as they would during the Dreyfus affair ten years later. Guesde’s slogan was *ni Ferry, ni Boulanger* (Neither Ferry [Opportunism] nor

4 In Lyon, for example, these divisions were easily visible (AD Rhône, 4 M 249, 6 juin 1888). An “anti-Boulangist rally” in Lyon with prominent Parisian labor leaders was interrupted by a “tumult” (3 mai 1888). Police noted that the Socialist Independents in arrondissements 3 and 6 split off from an earlier “Comite de l’Alliance” in these two districts (27 avril 1888; 12 décembre 1890).

5 Stone (1996, 129–44). Loubère reports that “only seven out of twenty-four southern Radicals signed the March 1888 manifesto of the extreme left condemning him as a menace to the Republic” (Loubère 1974, 156).

6 AD Rhône, 4 M 250, 31 octobre 1889. “Désorganisation dans le Parti blanquist et la Fédération nationale.”

Boulanger). Guesde used his intransigent class appeal precisely to place a barrier between the working class and their cooptation by the amorphous Radicals as well as by the broader Republican block to the right. In early 1889, for instance, the Guesdists devoted much of their energy to organizing an international socialist conference to be held in Paris that summer in conjunction with the Exposition (Néré 1959, tome II, 520). Following Boulanger's success in the legislative election of January 1889, the idea was to give "class" a concrete internationalist expression. This effort came at a time when the Boulangist threat of a "nationalist" counterorganization of workers had penetrated right to the heart of the Guesdist organization.

The Boulangist movement also prompted organizational transformations among socialist sects and among the unions. Since the early 1880s, attempts to build solid party and union organizations had failed. In the fall of 1888, Delory discussed the "decadence" of the Guesdists in the Nord (in fact, the minutes of party meetings stop in fall 1883 and do not pick up again until 1888).⁷ At the same time, the refusal of the Guesdists to support the Republican camp made them a beneficiary of the collapse of Boulangism.⁸ The local organizational networks that were the legacy of the Boulangist mass mobilization were appropriated or inherited by the Guesdists.⁹ Despite their opposition to Boulangism, the Guesdists ended up absorbing part of the populist groundswell. Between 1889 and 1890, membership in the party jumped from 2,000 to 6,000 (Willard 1965, 88–9, 91). At their national party congress in 1890, the first they were holding since 1884, the Guesdists began a serious organization-building effort (Willard 1965, 76–7). However, the party was still organized federally, and it was not until 1894 that a uniform local party organization was ratified (Willard 1965, 25, 39, 77, 95–6).

In the wake of the Boulangist movement, the Guesdist strategy of organization building seemed to combine elements of routinization and of neotraditionalism. The Guesdists began to shift their attention away from organizing the unemployed in favor of building more formal

7 Archives de la Fédération du Nord du Parti Socialiste, Procès-Verbaux des réunions du Comité Fédéral par Gustave Delory, du 6 août 1882 au 29 novembre 1902, réunion extraordinaire du septembre 4, 1888.

8 On the transfer of working-class votes from Boulangists to Blanquists, see Brunet (1980, 41–2); the same phenomenon apparently occurred in the Nord (Willard 1965, 223–4).

9 This is clear in Hutton's analysis of the Bordeaux organization (Hutton 1971, 242–3). He suggests that this piggybacking on the Boulangist networks was also true of other cities in southern France (Hutton 1976, 100). Robert Baker suggests that the Guesdists benefited from the collapse of Boulangism in the Nord, but he attributes it to divisions among the Radicals (Baker 1967, 50).

organizational links to the trade union movement.¹⁰ As Baker's study of the Nord and Hutton's study of Bordeaux suggest, the Guesdists were rationalizing their organization from the bottom up as well as from the top down (Baker 1967, 56–67; Hutton 1971). As party membership grew, the Guesdists evolved from a loose alliance of "study circles" into a better articulated and routinely functioning organization, though the links between levels of organization remained "loose" (Willard 1965, 77). Rather than engage in a strategy of closure, the Guesdists shifted toward a more broadly appealing electoralist stance and attempted to attract small farmers (Willard 1965, 84–9). They developed specific agrarian and municipal policies (McQuillen 1973, 75).¹¹ Municipal power became necessary to protect and expand the synergy that Guesdists were establishing locally between party, union, and cooperative networks. The agrarian program was a search for peasant allies toward this same end.¹² These adaptations may be seen as broadly conforming to a strategy of organizational routinization. But neo-traditional elements were also visible in the party's successful fostering of a set of community-building rituals – "fêtes, street parades, singing and group recreation" (Baker 1967, 51–67). In fact, it was the Guesdist Federation of the Nord that first popularized the "Internationale" (Simler 1972, 43). Willard sees this period as representing a transition from "a sect to a party" (Willard 1965, Ch. 4).

The populist wave was also having an important impact on the Possibilist party, though it took a somewhat different form. Whereas in 1882 the Possibilists came away with the lion's share of support among the unions, by the late 1880s their support among the unions had been reduced to their stronghold of Paris plus a few provincial outposts (e.g., the Ardennes; Winock 1971, 44 n; Moss 1976, 138). Local electoral success in Paris had rendered party leaders unconcerned about building the party's trade union base, a charge that a faction within the party, the Allemanists, would later bear directly against these elected officials (AN

10 In the city of Lille, for instance, the Guesdists were very active at the end of the 1880s in supporting the formation of textile unions (Baker 1967, 56); Sagnes has similarly suggested that the struggle against Boulangism led Guesdists to create unions in the southern cities of Cette, Béziers, and Montpellier (Sagnes 1980, 54); Willard describes the strong linkage of the Guesdists to the unions in the Guesdist strongholds of Montluçon and Roanne (Willard 1965, 268–9, 280).

11 This shift has been seen as the beginning of socialist revisionism, but it can also be seen as an attempt to consolidate some of the gains of Boulangist mobilization and to mobilize, in traditional populist fashion, across the urban-rural divide (Landauer 1961, 1967).

12 Willard interprets the Guesdists' appeal to peasants as reflecting their confidence in the party's solid implantation with the working class (Willard 1965, 363).

F7 12492; Stafford 1971, 232; Winock 1971, 35). In 1890, this conflict would lead to a schism in the party.

The Possibilists had been a party of labor unions. As the unions grew more conservative during the mid-1880s, the Possibilists did not seek a mass mobilization of the unemployed or a radicalization of voters. What they sought instead were municipal subsidies that could help stabilize precarious economic circumstances. The Possibilists called for the municipalization of public services like gas and public transportation, the construction of local public works projects, and the creation of local consumer shops to eliminate price speculation and middlemen (Humbert 1911, 23). The goal of establishing *bourses du travail* in France grew out of this expectation of providing municipal subsidies to the unions. The idea for a Paris *bourse*, promoted by Possibilist municipal councilors like Joffrin and Chabert, was first placed on the Possibilist agenda in 1884 (Stafford 1971, 330).

The Paris municipal elections of 1887, which placed nine Possibilists on the municipal council, revealed tension within the party over the issue of political representation (a hallmark of populism). Fearing centralization of power, the Parisian party federation resolved that elected representatives from the party could no longer serve in party offices (Stafford 1971, 233). Ultimately, in 1890, a schism between the elected officials who followed Paul Brousse and the unions that followed Jean Alleman rent the party. Among other restrictions on elected representatives, the Allemanists insisted that they submit sealed resignations to the party, to be invoked should the officials not strictly carry out the party's mandates (Noland 1956, 23). The divisions in the Possibilist party were connected to electoral alliances between party leaders and moderate Radicals (Stafford 1971, 210–13; Winock 1971). But this issue was also intertwined with the divisions generated by Boulangism, because a partial justification for these alliances was the need for Republican unity against Boulanger.

The union base of the Possibilist party had a more ambivalent relationship to Boulangism. Hutton has argued that, as with the Guesdists, populist enthusiasm was transferred to the union movement as Boulangism per se dissipated (Hutton 1976, 97). This was nowhere more true than at the Paris *bourse du travail*.¹³ At the same time, this institution had grown out of the pragmatic reformist politics of the Possibilists, who were in political control of the *bourse*. The *bourse* was managed

13 And probably also true of provincial *bourses*. In Nantes, for instance, the police noted that a municipal councilor from the 4th canton “who was the most dangerous agent of Boulangisme in Nantes, remains one of the inspirations behind the *bourse*” (AD Loire-Atlantique, 1M 475, 12 avril 1894).

by a federation of Parisian unions, many of whom were affiliated with the Possibilist party. In fact, most of what was left of the Possibilists' union base was represented at the Paris *bourse*.

Thus, this institution, controlled by the anti-Boulangist Possibilists, would become a key battleground in the Boulangist struggle. Part of the conflict between Possibilists and other groups around 1890 was related to the municipal council's attempt to monitor the books of unions suspected of having Boulangist connections. The group that posed the "greatest opposition" to the Possibilists was "composed of the building unions . . . These are blanquists of whom Boulé is the representative at the *Bourse*."¹⁴ Boulé was relieved of his duties because he had been a Boulangist candidate.¹⁵ As Butler notes, conflict over the proper response to the Boulangism was so disruptive that "the Bourse du Travail was threatened with total extinction" (Butler 1960, 88). A campaign to depoliticize the *bourse* began around this affair. Boulé spoke of the importance of the "independent" unions in "escaping the influence of the possibilists." His slogan was "neither politics nor politicians at the Bourse du Travail."¹⁶

This "corporate" turn (i.e., the renewed emphasis on union autonomy) represented an attempt to overcome the divisions between the Boulangists and the anti-Boulangists – much as the Guesdists sought to overcome the attraction to Boulangism in their own ranks by appealing to the international class solidarity of workers. As Néré observes:

We perceive now the real bearing, in the circumstances of the epoch, of the formulas of the general strike and of the formal demands [presented May 1st]. It is a matter, for all those socialists who do not want to adopt the Possibilist position, of exiting from the political dilemma, so embarrassing for them: Boulangism or antiboulangism; – to exit from it by remaining on the economic terrain, and by autonomous working class action. (Néré 1959, tome II, 422)

This ambiguity was well expressed in the Allemanist split, whose fate would be so closely intertwined with that of the *bourses*, and especially the Paris *bourse*. Jean Allemane himself had been an early and consistent opponent of Boulanger, but he increasingly moved toward

14 Archives de la Préfecture de Police (hereinafter APP), Ba 1611, 21 mars 1889.

15 AD Rhône, 4 M 250, 31 octobre 1889. "Désorganisation dans le Parti blanquist et la Fédération nationale."

16 17 mars 1888; APP, Ba 1611, meeting of the Chambre Syndicale de Tailleurs de Pierre; also notes of 25 mars 1888 meeting of the "independent" unions at the *bourse du travail*. The context of these meetings was the violent opposition to the private bureau of placement that the unions see the municipal council as failing to suppress. Anarchists are very prominent in these meetings. APP, Ba 1611 (see notes on 29 mars, 2 and 5 avril, 1888).

a position that avoided polarization. As Winock suggests, “Allemane, while remaining loyal to his anti-boulangist position, multiplied articles on the social struggle” – like the Guesdists’ emphasizing class conflict (Hutton 1981, 56). In response to the incipient militarism of the Boulangist movement, the Allemanists made “antimilitarism” one of their principles.¹⁷ They also rejected the “cult of personalities.” Their antiparlamentarism, however, was in line with that of the Boulangists.

One of the subterranean themes in the internal conflict that now raged between the Allemanist unions and the Possibilist elected party officials was that the Possibilist party was losing the initiative to the Guesdists, particularly among unions in the provinces (Stafford 1971, 232; Winock 1971, 35). At the regional congress of the Possibilist party in October 1890, the elected representatives of the party were reproached for the fact that the “[p]ropaganda efforts in the provinces were abandoned, in spite of the stubborn efforts of the ‘true militants.’” In August 1889, Jean Allemane declared it time to “again affirm our revolutionary faith” (Winock 1971, 57).

Thus, the Boulangist movement initiated within the labor movement a push toward organization building. Among the Guesdists, this primarily took the form of party building, with unions and cooperatives as secondary projects. Among the Allemanists, it took the form of union building, with party building as the secondary project. In addition, the Boulangist movement encouraged a split between unions and “politicians” that reflected the larger Boulangist antiparlamentarism (a sort of secular anticlericalism). Both the Guesdists and the *bourses* inherited and absorbed populist elements of the Boulangist movement, even as they sought to avoid the extremes of the pro- or anti-Boulangier camps. Yet as the Boulangist movement itself declined and tended to split into left and right wings, the labor movement too began to split between a political and a direct action wing.¹⁸

We can see the outlines of this split already emerging in the mid-1880s as political groups sought to mobilize the unemployed. Jean Maitron has stated well the fundamental difference in tactics between the Guesdists and the anarchists in their respective attempts to mobilize the unemployed: “The Guesdists and the Anarchists do their best to lead the game – the first advising the unemployed to form a delegation to the public powers, thus acting in the framework of legality, the second advising

17 This antimilitarism was probably also encouraged by the use of the military against strikers, especially the shootings that occurred in 1891 in the town of Fourmies in northern France.

18 It is interesting that in the final phases of the 1848 Revolution, there was also an emergent conflict between “politicals” and “direct actionists” (Amann 1975, 331).

them to proceed illegally, without waiting for elected officials” (Maitron 1975, tome I, 178; see also Willard 1965, 34). The Blanquists also endorsed mass actions, but as Hutton suggests, they “rejected riot in favor of festival” (Hutton 1981, 128). The difference in tactics stems from the fact that the Guesdists envisioned their efforts to organize the unemployed as an electoral campaign, whereas the anarchists and Blanquists saw it as a form of direct action (Néré 1959, tome II, 64–5).

However, we can see this more generally in the meaning and control of working-class ritual. The ritual mobilization of the working class was a key leverage point in the evolution of the movement as a whole. Hutton has described the way that the schism of the Blanquist party into pro- and anti-Boulangist wings coincided with different views of the centrality of ritual for mobilization. Hutton describes this split as furthering the demythologization of socialist politics and a turn toward more practical politics. The Vaillant wing thereafter became disillusioned by the “demonstrative tactics” of ritual celebration. Hutton suggests that in the Blanquist movement, Boulangism led Vaillant to turn away from the demonstrative “rituals of remembrance” toward a more pragmatic orientation (Hutton 1981, 151). Possibilists like Joffrin and Brousse rejected the May 1st petition for an eight-hour day as unproductive and dangerous for the Republic, whereas the Allemanist faction at the Paris *bourse* criticized these Possibilist officials for their “scorn” toward the May 1st initiative (Seilhac 1899, 171; Maitron 1972–7, 114; Winock 1971, 60).

The May 1st “Labor Day” demonstration of 1890 became the battleground for control over the character of the labor movement. In conjunction with their organization-building efforts, the Guesdists were moving to introduce a new ritual basis for the party. The Guesdists’ active sponsorship of the First International May Day in 1890 was an attempt to ritualize class solidarity around a symbolic *fête du travail* – a festival of labor (see Dommanget 1972, 129–30). Hobsbawm writes that from its inception, May 1st “attracted and absorbed ritual and symbolic elements, notably the quasi-religious or numinous celebration” (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1988, 284).¹⁹ A letter from Engels to Laura Lafargue, Marx’s daughter, suggests the fine line that the Guesdists walked as the first May 1st approached: “I hope that May 1st will not disappoint the hopes of our French friends [the Guesdists]. If it is a success, this will be a serious blow for the Possibilists and will begin

19 On the messianic character of the May 1st movement in the coal basin of the Gard and on the movement’s link to the Protestant traditions of the Cévennes, see Gaillard (1976). Magraw suggests that May 1st was an alternative to Christian fêtes (Magraw 1992b, 59). For an overview, see Perrot (1984).

perhaps to detour the people from Boulangism” (Brécy 1969, 31). The Guesdists’ approach toward May 1st in 1890 was the equivalent of their effort ten years earlier to mobilize a socialist movement around the candidacy of Blanqui. May 1st was an attempt to channel the populist ritualism of the Boulangist movement into an alternative “class” ritual. Dommanget describes Raymond Lavigne, one of the Guesdists who was most attracted to Boulangism, as among the “fathers of May 1st” (Dommanget 1972, 93).

On the verge of the 1890s, the French labor movement appeared poised to follow the German path toward social democracy: the Possibilists’ labor party was deteriorating, while the Guesdists – the French equivalent of the German Social Democrats – were consolidating their hold over the only national union organization. A police report noted that leaders of the Possibilist party were defecting to the Guesdist camp.²⁰ The development of the Guesdist party between 1889 and 1893 was a beginning in the task of building a solid, disciplined organization (Willard 1965, Pt. I, Chs. 4 and 5). Now the Guesdists were the major sponsors of a ritual celebration – May 1st – that sought to bridge the divisions of the socialist movement. If the Guesdists had managed to combine these elements – control over the union confederation, solid party organization, and control over the dominant rituals – it is likely that the French labor movement would have moved toward the German model.²¹

The Guesdists failed in their bid to consolidate the labor movement around this model. Three developments thwarted their bid for preeminence. First, although May 1st was a great success, supported by many different groups, Guesde was disappointed in his desire to claim this ritual as “his thing” (Willard 1965, 87). Second, the Possibilist leadership’s rejection of May 1st became linked with the conflict at the Paris *bourse* about union autonomy from “politicians.”²² Third, because the ritual became associated with the strike wave simultaneously in progress, the success of May 1st became associated with the possibility of a

20 AN F7 12492. A police report (August 11, 1887) on the 8th congress of the Union Fédérative du Centre, held in August 1887, observed that a leader named Deynaud had “abandoned the Possibilists in order to rally to the Guesdists” and was “at the head of a coterie which Chabert, Joffrin, and Lavy [the major Possibilist leaders] combat.”

21 Steenson has argued that the Guesdists were much less “Marxist” in ideology and party organization than their German and Austrian counterparts (Steenson 1991).

22 Before the 1890 FNS congress, the police report noted: “What’s curious to observe is that, although the congress in question may be notoriously Marxist [i.e., Guesdist], its organizers protest against this appellation, and declare that it is a question purely and simply of a corporative congress of unions” (AN F7 12491, September 20, 1890).

revolutionary general strike.²³ As a result of these developments, the trade unions behind the leadership of the *bourses* inherited the ritualism associated with the romantic revolutionary tradition and the populism of the Boulangist movement. The competition between Allemanists and Guesdists in the early 1890s looked much like the split between the Possibilists and the Guesdists in the early 1880s. The major difference in the 1890s was the presence of the *bourses du travail*, institutions that linked unions together across their partisan differences.

Jacks-of-all-trades: The *Bourses du travail*

The immediate impetus behind creating *bourses du travail* was to respond to the problem of unemployment in the 1880s. One of the traditional concerns of the working class was the problem of job placement. Employers often utilized private placement bureaus to fill their labor needs. These placement services charged workers a hefty fee, a burden particularly onerous for workers in crafts in which job changes were frequent (Berlanstein 1984, 108). Collusion with the placement bureaus also gave employers great leverage over workers, allowing them to effectively blacklist rebellious workers. In 1886, Parisian workers formed the League for the Suppression of the Bureaus of Placement, which culminated in the formation of the Paris *bourse* (Schöttler 1985, 71).

The creation of *bourses du travail* in French cities in the late 1880s and early 1890s would have a major impact on the realignment of the French labor movement, but in the earlier stages at least the *bourses* were not created with the intention of bringing this about. In fact, early opinion with regard to the *bourses* often ran counter to later alignments. Police reports note that there was a lively discussion within the Paris Chambre des Syndicats Ouvriers, in individual unions, and among party sects at the end of 1883 and the beginning of 1884 about the desirability of creating a *bourse*. Guesde himself, a later opponent of the *bourses*, stated then that in his opinion if the capitalists had their *bourse*, the workers should have theirs.²⁴ Among the unions, in contrast, early opinion was quite cool, seeing in the project a strategy of party leaders to gain control over the unions.²⁵

23 In some cities, the May 1st demonstration took on the air of a general strike. See Dommanget (1972, 137). On the festive character of strikes of this period, see Perrot (1987, 145-9).

24 APP, Ba 1611, 19 janvier 1884.

25 APP, Ba 1611, 15 décembre 1883; 29 décembre 1884.

No less than Edouard Vaillant, a major Blanquist leader and future architect of both union and party unity, cajoled the Paris municipal council in 1886 to vote funds for the establishment of the first *bourse*. "Voting for the *bourse*," he told the other councilors, "would be an eminent service to the working class, because it would make them recognize the need . . . to group themselves, to organize themselves, to defend themselves" (Schöttler 1985, 74). Yet not even Vaillant, who dreamt of the day when not just Paris but "all the working-class centers would be provided with a *bourse du travail*," foresaw the rapid imitation of the Paris *bourse* (Schöttler 1985, 74; Butler 1960, 72). The city of Nîmes organized a *bourse* in 1887, followed by Marseilles in 1888, and then by six more cities in 1889. By 1894, forty *bourses* were in operation.

Nor did Vaillant imagine the day when the *bourses* would be, as a police report intoned in 1894, "little revolutionary citadels."²⁶ His vision, though certainly political, was more prosaic: the *bourse*, by providing a real service to the unions, would strengthen the capacity of workers to organize, both economically and politically. The other socialists on the municipal council, of various stripes, agreed, seeing in the *bourse* a means of increasing their grip over the unions (Schöttler 1985, 72-3). Little did they know that the opposite would result.

The most important impact of the *bourses* was that they created a network that cross-cut existing partisan differences within and among trade unions. The *bourses* linked unions together in myriad small ways. In purely practical terms, they were jacks-of-all-trades. The *bourses* provided housing for traveling workers as well as a travel subsidy if a job was not available; to improve workers' technical skills, they instituted professional courses and set up libraries; and they created strike funds and consumer cooperatives. In perhaps their most characteristic function, they served as public job placement bureaus where workers, regardless of whether they were union members or not, could go to find jobs. More importantly, the *bourses* provided a headquarters for all of the unions in a city. In practice, the administration of the *bourse* became synonymous with the administration of a Union des Chambres Syndicales – a local federation of unions.²⁷

²⁶ AN F7 12491.

²⁷ Sometimes these federations existed prior to and were even responsible for the organization of the *bourse*; at other times, these federations were organized to administer the *bourses*. In Marseille, this local federation had been created in 1884 and was followed by the creation of the *bourse* in 1888. Thereafter, these two organizations were administered by the same council. By 1889, 48 unions representing 5,911 union members were affiliated (Pellissier-Guys et al. 1923, 203-7).

Beyond these somewhat prosaic functions, the *bourses* had a quite unintended effect on local union strategies in some cities: the new institutions facilitated the coordination of strikes. As the prefect of Loire-Inférieure would write to the minister of the interior after the union congress of 1894, “The *bourses* claim the specialty of strikes” (AN F7 12491). More dramatically, the *bourses* occasionally encouraged a territorial coordination of unions that united workers in broad multitrade strikes. The prefect of the Loire-Inférieure, for instance, also wrote to the minister of the interior in 1894 that the “*bourse du travail* of Nantes has provoked not less than 40 partial strikes, including the strike of April–May 1893, which extended to 33 worker corporations” (AN F7 13606). Shorter and Tilly have argued that strikes mobilized by city (and presumably by the city *bourse*) were at least as important in France as those organized by occupation (Shorter and Tilly 1974, 164).

Yet, in a sense, none of these functions was critical. Placement services were important primarily to workers in certain occupations that required them to change jobs frequently and who confronted strong private placement bureaus (like bakers). The most vigorous *bourses* did create technical courses and libraries, but only a few trades, trying to gain control over the transmission of skills, tended to take advantage of them. The *bourse* did reinforce the existing city federation of unions and provide critical meeting sites for unions. But these federations and union meetings would have soldiered along without the *bourse*. Even the important role of *bourses* in coordinating strikes occurred only in select cities.

To understand their powerful effect, then, we must understand the particular historical context in which the *bourses* arose, the particular way in which they linked unions together, and the meanings that they invoked within the unions. The critical historical context has already been described. The labor movement was divided by sectarian loyalties that divided the unions. The Boulangist movement came along and created deep divisions within each of the party sects and within unions, which led to a search for ways to overcome the polarization between Boulangist and anti-Boulangist forces. What we must add to this portrait is that the period from 1888 to 1893 was a strike wave (see Figure 1.1). Beyond the value of its ostensible services, the real significance of the *bourses* was that they created an institutional framework that responded to each of these challenges.

One way in which the *bourses* encouraged union unity was by providing an incentive for unions to overcome interunion schisms. They did so by refusing to admit multiple groups representing the same craft. The regulations of the *bourse du travail* of Aix stated, for instance, that “since the goal of the Union [Union des Chambres Syndicales Ouvrières] is to

prevent all schism among the workers, it will receive in its association only one union per corporation.”²⁸ The *bourses* partially reconciled these tensions between the corporate unity of a craft and the tendency to mobilize solidarity across crafts in a more encompassing federative framework. They promoted intracorporate unity, but they also promoted cross-craft solidarity.

As an institution that connected unions to one another across partisan differences and across intracraft and intercraft divisions, the *bourses* and the services they provided take on a new meaning. These services represent a strategy of linking together unions in an institutional framework of “generalized exchange” – an exchange based on long-term relationships constructed around norms of mutual support and reciprocity. As Lévi-Strauss suggests, “generalized exchange” has a circular quality – creating social integration through a circular flow of value. Peter Ekeh has described a form of generalized exchange (“individual-focused net generalized exchange”) that fits the *bourse du travail* well: “The group as a whole benefits each member consecutively until all members have each received the same amount of benefits” (Ekeh 1974, 53). From this perspective, the multiplicity of services provided by the *bourses* was an advantage. The *bourses* could provide individual unions with services tied directly to their needs while linking the unions together in a broader institutional framework. In his description of an ideal *bourse*, a leading theorist wrote: “What’s striking . . . is the diversity of services and the multiplicity of attitudes that they demand” (Pelloutier 1971, 140). In sum, the *bourses* provided services that knit together a communally based network of generalized exchange.

We see the results of this framework of generalized exchange most dramatically perhaps in strikes. Sometimes the *bourses* facilitated strikes by acting as an intermediary between unions, channeling resources from nonstriking trades to those on strike. Of the *bourse* at Tours, the prefect of Indre-et-Loire observed: “At the end of November 1892, at the time of the cabinetmakers’ strike . . . the *bourse du travail* has played an active role by making an appeal to the diverse unions to support the strikers” (AN F7 13603). And the *bourses* wove a network of mutual support not only among unions within a community but also between cities. Symbolizing this intercity network is the inauguration of the *bourse du travail* of Nantes, which was attended by delegates from the *bourses* of St. Étienne, Toulouse, Boulogne-sur-Mer, Tours, Lyon, Angers, Nîmes,

28 Règlements de l’Union des Chambres Syndicales Ouvrières de la Bourse du Travail d’Aix et du Sou des Vieux. Aix: Imprimerie S. Bourelly. 1901, Article 14, pp. 12–13 (AD Bouches-du-Rhône, 1 M 1420).

Cholet, and Paris.²⁹ An open letter (1891) announcing the Paris *bourse's* creation of a strike fund immodestly suggested:

The *bourse du travail* of Paris, whose influence and spirit of solidarity are spread everywhere there are organized workers, receives daily demands for aid addressed to it by corporations on strike, not only in Paris, but from all the localities of France and from foreign countries. (*Annuaire de la Bourse du Travail* 1892, 331)

In this sense, the *bourse* as an institution embodied the mutualist ideals that Moss argued were central to what he called “trade socialism” (Moss 1976). In fact, Pelloutier described the services of job placement and the unemployment fund as *service de la mutualité* (Pelloutier 1971, 144). But, he noted “[T]he *Bourses* have, in effect, repudiated the humiliating and ineffective mutualism of 1875, in order to adopt proudhonien mutualism: the unemployment fund is considered as the payment of a debt of solidarity contracted by one unionist towards another” (Pelloutier 1971, 148).

The *bourses* unintentionally blended the diverse ideological tendencies and cultural repertoires of the French labor movement. Radical Republicanism was one of these influences. Republicans were split into two broad ideological camps, the Opportunists and the Radicals. The Opportunists, favoring a more laissez-faire approach to the economy and a less confrontational stance toward the church, controlled government throughout the 1880s. The Radicals, who had adopted a more aggressive stance toward both the economy and the church, became the opposition. Trade union organization was one of the “social questions” upon which the Radicals challenged the hegemony of the Opportunists. It was in this light that the Radicals became fervent supporters of the project of forming a *bourse* in Paris (Loubere 1962). From Paris, the *bourses* spread to other cities where Radicals, allied with socialists, voted funds to organize these new institutions (Schöttler 1985, 95). At the same time, the *bourses* also reflected the ambiguous relationship of the labor movement with the larger Republican movement – much as had the Paris Commune previously. The *bourses* were municipal rather than national institutions. They received municipal subsidies from Radical-controlled city councils (in many cases), but they were administered by the unions rather than by the city (or state). Thus, they symbolized that the “true” republic lay with communal autonomy and with worker self-management. As Pelloutier put it, the *bourse du travail* “aspires, consciously or not, to create a State in a State, intending to monopolize all services relative to the improvement of the lot of the working class” (Pelloutier 1971, 146).

29 AD Loire-Atlantique, 1 M 2387, 6 août 1893.

As Peter Schöttler has shown, the *bourses* combined the Enlightenment concerns of Republican theory with the traditional corporatism of the French working class. The liberal economist Gustave de Molinari, who had developed a project for a *bourse du travail* as early as 1843, saw the placement services of the *bourses* as a way of improving the efficiency of the labor market (Schöttler 1985, 37–8). Radicals, although critical of classical liberalism, sought social peace through the Republican concept of solidarism: the creation of moral solidarity through interdependence and mutual cooperation (Stone 1985, 27). At the same time, the *bourse* invoked corporatist traditions. The idea of the *bourse* as a place where workers could find both a job and a professional community was akin to the *compagnonnages*, the fraternal orders of journeymen that arose to assist the workers on their *tour de France*. When journeymen entered a new city they immediately sought out their *mère* (mother) – the boardinghouse where they lived and participated in the rituals of their trade (Sewell 1980, 48; APO 1899, tome I). It was at the *mère* that journeymen were placed in a job.

Already archaic by the end of the nineteenth century, the *compagnonnage* was by the 1890s predominantly a preserve of the most elite trades (Zdatny 1990). Conservative politically, these trades were also typically antagonistic toward strikes. Moreover, the *bourses* competed with traditional *compagnonnages*. The Nantes police, for instance, noted that the local leaders of the *sociétés compagnonniques* were complaining of the “ascendence” of the *bourse* over the younger workers. Nevertheless, the police also observed that Nantes, whose *bourse* spearheaded the realignment, “remains one of the cities of France where the *sociétés compagnonniques* remain the most numerous and conserve best what remains of the old corporations.”³⁰ In Nantes and in other cities where *compagnonnages* had strong roots, corporatist traditions inspired and permeated the *bourses*.³¹

30 AD Loire-Atlantique, 1 M 475, 12 avril 1894; in his memoirs of his own *tour de France* (which he began in 1824), Agricol Perdiguier wrote, “The *compagnonnage* had many members and was very active in Nantes. Battles among *compagnons* were also frequent” (Traugott 1993, 155). Nantes was one of the four traditional regional capitals of *compagnonnage*, along with Bordeaux, Paris, and Lyon (APO 1899, tome I, 98). In 1897 more *compagnons* from Nantes belonged to the Union Compagnonnique than from any other city (202 members from 21 professions) (APO 1899, tome I, 186).

31 Trempé suggests that the *bourses* did well in cities with “old corporations that had been organized for a long time” (Willard 1993, 308). Mitchell notes the direct link between the moral codes of the *compagnonnages* and the *bourses* and suggests that “many ‘companions’ became union members during the early stages of anarchosyndicalism” (Mitchell 1987, 75).

The *bourses* were in many ways like the local church congregations that Max Weber described as overcoming the in-group/out-group dynamic of local clans.³² The *bourses* conceived of themselves as the center of unionism in a particular city. Besides promoting solidarity among the unions, they saw their role as one of advancing the moral and professional development of the worker and providing workers with technical courses and libraries. In this role, the *bourses'* immediate reference was the Republican school. The Republican school saw itself as providing an alternative to moral socialization by the Catholic Church. Likewise, the *bourses* sought to provide an alternative to moral socialization by the Republican state. The *bourse* was a "church" in the sense that it sought to cultivate the trade union version of the integral moral person. In assuming this role, the *bourse* was very much attempting to act as the agency of moral socialization that Durkheim had hoped corporate organizations might be.

We will return in a moment to the way in which the *bourses* were entwined with the ritualism of working-class life and particularly with the messianism associated with the general strike. Yet it is first important to note that in assuming the role of local church congregations, the *bourses* were placing themselves on terrain typically occupied by socialist parties. The Guesdists, in particular, were intent upon establishing a monopoly over the communal life of the working class and sought to promote unionism and cooperatives. They sought to be a center of propaganda and socialist education. We can see here, in structural terms, the potential conflict between *bourses* and political parties. The *bourses* created linkages between unions with rival partisan affiliations, and they also potentially substituted for political parties as centers of working-class life. Thus, the *bourses* created the structural possibility for a fundamental realignment of the working class.

We can now return to the context of the Paris *bourse* in the midst of the Boulangist crisis of the late 1880s. With the party sects divided or dividing and with unions pulled between Boulangism and Republican solidarity, unions in the Paris *bourse* turned toward a "corporatist" reading of their identities – an interpretation encouraged by their being linked together across their partisan differences within the *bourse*.³³ The

32 In the United States, city union federations promoted the creation of "labor temples" (Clemens 1997, 110).

33 The *compagnonnages* themselves were historically ambivalent about political action, capable, alternately, of impressive political mobilization or of a tendency to repress political discussion altogether. Article 2 of the statutes of the Union Compagnonnique states the intention of this society to remain apolitical (AD Côte-d'Or, 20 M 24, Statutes de l'Union Compagnonnique).

General Committee of the *bourse* voted in favor of the following agenda item on June 30, 1891:

Considering that the crisis through which the Bourse du Travail passes at this moment is the result of the existing antagonism between the diverse schools composing the General Committee, in which one has established itself as predominant to the detriment of the others; in order to avoid the recurrence of these occurrences in the future, the General Committee declares that, beginning now, the Bourse du Travail places itself uniquely on a corporate and economic terrain.³⁴

This was a move toward organizational closure, and it came into direct conflict with the Guesdist strategy of integrating the labor movement communally around a political party. The differences between the two strategies were critical: whereas the Guesdists sought to create a unitary and hierarchically ordered national party that would maintain tutelage over unions, the *bourses* sought to invert this hierarchy and make unions the fundamental unit of labor mobilization; and whereas the Guesdists sought closure by establishing the preeminence of their own sectarian ideology and strategy, the *bourses* sought to bridge across sectarian divisions.

Organizational closure of the *bourses*, however, was not easy to accomplish. In the fall of 1892, the political divisions on the General Committee reappeared.³⁵ The *bourses* potentially united constituencies across different political and trade sectors, but by doing so they also internalized the conflicts of the larger labor movement. In 1893, for instance, the prefect of Rhône reported that the administrative council of the *bourse du travail* of Lyon “is composed of municipal militants of all the schools [i.e., party sects].”³⁶ To understand how this realignment was generalized to the labor movement as a whole, we must return to the struggle to control the ritualism and symbolism of the labor movement that arose in conjunction with the *bourses*.

The General Strike as Covenant

Although the concept of the general strike had known a long history, by the mid-1880s it had ceased to be a topic of political debate.³⁷ During

34 *Annuaire de la Bourse du Travail* (1890–1, 231–5). A police report of 9 décembre 1890 noted that the General Committee of the *Bourses* had 30 members, all Possibilists (APP, Ba 1611).

35 APP, Ba 1608. 36 AN F7 13612.

37 Notably, the idea had been advocated by the anarchists of the First International (Maitron 1975, 280). For a broad history of the general strike, see Goodstein (1984); for the history of the general strike in France, see Brécy (1969).

the early and mid-1880s the general strike met “hardly an echo” when proposed (Perrot 1987, 90). And when the Paris *bourse* was established in 1887, the general strike was still only an occasionally utilized local strategy. But from 1888 onward, the general strike “ceased to be a tactic, a technique, and became instead a priority” (Perrot 1987, 92). Its initial impetus came with the formation of the Paris *bourse*, which from its inception became the setting for conflict between the party sects.³⁸ Although Possibilists maintained control over the *bourse* through their strong presence on the Paris municipal council, the Paris *bourse* became the focal point for a faction within the Possibilist party that rejected this political control (Butler 1960, 99–100).

The strike of the Paris ditchdiggers in the summer of 1888 – a strike orchestrated by the Paris *bourse* – reinvigorated the concept of the general strike (Néré 1959, tome I, Ch. 10; Perrot 1987, 92; Schöttler 1985, 79, 205 n). The Possibilist councilors were opposed to this strike and tried to discourage the intervention of the *bourse* (Schöttler 1985, 79). Brousse denounced the “Boulangist strikes” in 1888 (Winock 1971, 35). During a strike meeting at the *bourse*, Tortelier, a leader of the Paris carpenters’ union, is quoted as saying: “It is only by the universal strike that the worker will create a new society” (Maitron 1972–7, vol. 15, 241).³⁹ This was one of the first invocations of the general strike as an instrument of fundamental social transformation as opposed to its being simply a local strike strategy. In this practical dispute over local strike control, the general strike became a symbol of opposition to Possibilist political control over the Paris *bourse*.

The Guesdists were making a bid to unify the working class around the May 1st movement. They hoped to marshal the success of the 1890 demonstration into a movement to “reconsolidate the theoretical links which unite the diverse factions of the parti ouvrier [Workers’ party].”⁴⁰ Yet, already control over this ritual celebration of labor had slipped from their hands. In the battle between two communal churches – the *bourses* and the Guesdist party – seeking to establish themselves as the center of working-class life, the *bourses* were coming out on top. A key element in this success was a reinterpretation of May 1st from a legal petitioning for the eight-hour day to a symbolic revolutionary general strike.

38 The idea of the general strike emerged on the international scene in 1886 with the holding of May 1st demonstrations. The demonstration in Chicago led to the Haymarket riots, which brought international publicity to the general strike (Brécy 1969, 19–20; see also Dommanget 1972, 45–9).

39 Perrot reports that Tortelier also argued in favor of an international general strike at a November 1888 London congress (Perrot 1984, 145).

40 Interview in *L’Echo du Lyon*, 4 octobre 1890.

At the Paris *bourse*, the Boulangist union leader Boulé supported the idea of a demonstration to present a petition in favor of the eight-hour day, because, as he said, it would show workers that only a general strike could really produce results (Dommanget 1972, 74–5; Néré 1959, tome II, 509, 514 n). In Lyon, at a mass meeting at the *bourse du travail*, the following manifesto was proposed by Gabriel Farjat: “The Lyonnais workers gathered May 1st 1890 at the *bourse du travail* protest with energy against the acts of the public powers, who have refused to receive the desiderata elaborated at the international congress of 1889. From this fact we retake our freedom of action in view of the organization of the general strike.”⁴¹ The proposal was unanimously adopted.

Support for the general strike was discussed and interpreted against the backdrop of actual strikes.⁴² In 1888, a general strike of the miners around St. Étienne occurred that was much discussed. In Lyon, the police describe the beginning of strike agitation in August 1888, noting an August 14 meeting of glassworkers in which a general strike was encouraged. In 1889, there were only four strikes in Lyon, all in different corporations and all “partial.” But the police note that these strikes stimulated a lot of political discussion in which the “revolutionaries” among unions expressed support for a general strike. The idea of a general strike became entwined with the May 1st demonstration in complex ways. In July 1891, at a strike meeting of Nantes metalworkers to discuss a molders’ strike, a turner suggested a general strike of all metal trades. He argued for the potential efficacy of the tactic by saying that “May 1st made governments tremble.” The Guesdist leadership began to recognize that the interpretation of May 1st as a symbolic general strike was undercutting their own bid to rally the labor movement around a mass political party. At their party congress in Calais in October 1890 and the FNS congress that followed shortly afterward in the same city, the Guesdists staked out a clear position against the general strike (Willard 1965, 195; Brécy 1969, 34).

A consequence of the conflict at the Paris *bourse* was the schism of the Possibilists at their 1890 congress, with the *bourse* faction following Jean Allemane to form the Parti Ouvrier Socialiste Révolutionnaire. The Allemanists, as they came to be called, inscribed the general strike as one of their cardinal party principles. Soon, the Paris Allemanists were spearheading a campaign for neutrality in the Paris *bourse* vis-à-vis the rival party sects. The result brought Allemanist, anarchist, and Blanquist

41 AD Rhône, 10 Mp C I 33.

42 AD Rhône, 4 M 251. A report on strikes in Lyon in 1890 indicated that “the agenda in certain socialist sects is to prepare the general strike by multiplying partial strikes.”

unionists together with moderate unaligned unionists into a grand coalition against the Possibilists (Butler 1960, 98; Schöttler 1985, 78). By 1891, this coalition, cross-cutting party cleavages, defeated Possibilists by gaining control of the Executive Commission of the *bourse* (Moss 1974, 284). Prior to this election, the police reported the general strike having been spoken of as the platform around which all groups regardless of party affiliation, could unite against Possibilist control. The general strike was a symbol, in part, in seeking to invert the hierarchy of party over union, but it was also an ecumenical activity in reaching out across partisan boundaries.⁴³ The potentially unifying character of the general strike was visible right from the start, and it was claimed that “all the groups without distinction of school should rally to it.”⁴⁴ On July 20, 1891, just after the Executive Committee election of the *bourse*, police noted that “there is a pow-wow between several anarchists and independent revolutionaries . . . They spoke of strikes and took a firm resolution to support all of them . . . in order to arrive at the general strike.”⁴⁵ Fernand Pelloutier, who would soon become the leader of the National Federation of Bourses, wrote in late 1892 that the general strike appeared “destined to become the basis of unity [*trait d’union*] that will fuse all the socialist sects [*les écoles socialistes*] into a single party, that of the proletariat.”⁴⁶ The general strike was the new covenant – a morally binding pact among autonomous groups around joint action or common obligations.

The general strike was also an increasingly condensed symbol, though one that could still be favorably interpreted by multiple audiences. This multivocal appeal allowed the symbol of the general strike to diffuse outward from Paris to other provincial centers where *bourses* had been organized. In 1890, the anti-Possibilists at the Paris *bourse* sent a manifesto to provincial *bourses* and unions calling upon them to support the idea of a revolutionary general strike.⁴⁷ Representatives of the dissidents at the Paris *bourse* also went to other cities to promote the idea.⁴⁸ The

43 APP, Ba 1608, 22 janvier 1891 and 26 juin 1891.

44 APP, Ba 1611, 22 janvier 1891. 45 APP, Ba 1611.

46 An editorial by Pelloutier titled “The General Strike” in his newspaper, *Démocratie de l’Ouest*, September 25, 1892 (AD Loire-Atlantique, 1 M 620).

47 APP, Ba 1608, 28 janvier 1890. This manifesto was received in the major industrial centers of Lyon and Marseille (AD Rhône, 10 Mp C5; AD Bouches-du-Rhône, 1 M 1481).

48 For instance, while passing through Nantes in late 1890, Brunet, affiliated with the Paris *bourse*, is reported to have met with several union presidents to promote the idea of the general strike (AD Loire-Atlantique, 1 M 619, 5 novembre 1890). At approximately the same time, Tortelier, an anarchist connected with the Paris *bourse*, was assisting at an anarchist congress in the region of Lyon whose agenda included a

initial reception of the idea was not necessarily enthusiastic. After listening to a representative of the Paris *bourse* promote the general strike, union presidents in Nantes “contested” its utility and “refused to promote the idea in the various ateliers.”⁴⁹ In the context of the battles for control of local labor movements, however, unions in provincial *bourses* also began to embrace the idea of the general strike.

As in Paris, support for the general strike was linked to a struggle for ritual control over the local labor movement often centered in the *bourses*. In Marseille, for instance, the police noted divisions at the *bourse* over plans for the May 1st 1890 demonstration.⁵⁰ A dissident wing of the Guesdist party, led by Desgrès, objected to Guesdist leader Jean Coulet’s control over the *bourse*, his strategy of alliance with local Radicals, and his control over the May 1st demonstration. Just as conflict within the Paris *bourse* arose over Possibilist control, in Marseille the *bourse* was controlled by the Guesdists. According to police, Coulet dominated the unions of the *bourse*. By 1893 (if not earlier), he also formally headed the May 1st commission. In line with the Guesdists nationally, Coulet conceived of May 1st as a legal one-day demonstration in favor of the eight-hour day. By the fall of 1893, police noted that among the Marseille unions, previously rather ambivalent about the idea of a general strike, “a divergence of views began to manifest itself.”⁵¹ The Guesdist dissidents became supporters of the general strike and sought to ally themselves with other political dissidents at the *bourse* against Coulet and his faction of the Guesdist party.⁵²

As support for the general strike gathered momentum in different cities, the strike’s meaning became both more abstract and more precise. The general strike gradually became a more abstract symbol of the autonomy of the unions from political parties; it also evolved from a symbol vaguely representing the potential of labor unification to

discussion of the general strike (*L’Echo du Lyon*, September 4, 1890, in AD Rhône, 4 M 251). A year later, Tortelier organized a conference on the general strike in Dijon (AD Côtes-d’Or, 20 M 1205, 13 décembre 1891).

49 AD Loire-Atlantique, 1 M 619, 5 novembre 1890. As late as October 1893, police noted that with the exception of certain “personalities” there were few supporters of the general strike among Marseille workers (AD Bouches-du-Rhône, 1 M 1511, 5 octobre 1893).

50 AD Bouches-du-Rhône 1 M 1481, 18 mars 1890; 23 avril 1893.

51 AD Bouches-du-Rhône, 1 M 1511, 29 septembre 1893.

52 At a meeting of the Marseille *bourse* in July 1893, Desgrès, one of the leaders of the dissident wing of the Guesdist party, articulates his rejection of the general strike (AD Bouches-du-Rhône, 1 M 1482, 10 juillet 1893). By December 1893, however, as leader of an alliance of different party groups closely connected with the dissidents at the Marseille *bourse*, Desgrès “shows himself a resolute partisan of the general strike” (1 M 1418, 14 décembre 1893).

a symbol of union opposition to party dominance. In the fall of 1892, Aristide Briand, representing the St. Nazaire *bourse*, placed the general strike on the agenda of a national union congress associated with the Guesdist party, whose leaders had expressed their opposition to the idea. To the surprise of everyone, the union congress voted in favor of the general strike, an embarrassing defeat for the Guesdist party leadership. In a speech upon returning to St. Nazaire, Briand is reported by police as having told his audience:

it has been noted that a partial strike has some benefit, that a local strike was better, a regional strike even better, a national strike still superior. An international and general strike will have uncontestable results . . . [On the contrary,] universal suffrage has given nothing to the worker; it is exploited to the profit of the bourgeoisie.⁵³

The speech drew on the connection between the more common experience of unionists (partial or local strikes) and a grander vision of the strike as a political weapon that substituted for voting.

At the end of the 1880s, the Guesdists appeared poised to integrate the French labor movement around a single unified national political party with a Marxist ideology. They had created the framework for an affiliated (but subordinate) union base and initiated a powerful ritual (May 1st) that could potentially unify the labor movement. But by 1894, the *bourses* had galvanized a movement that inverted the Guesdists' designs. The *bourses* had created links among unions that counterbalanced their sectarian affiliations. In the *bourses*, the unions rallied around the principle of the general strike. Moreover, the unions gained some control over the May 1st ritual, and subverted the meaning that the Guesdists had tried to give it. Like the ritual cults that unified the segmentary Ndembu, the *bourses* became ritual centers that celebrated the unity of the union movement.

The *bourses* and the general strike could themselves become sectarian and would increasingly become so after strike participation declined in 1894. In this more sectarian mode, the *bourses* became less of an inclusive local congregation and more of an alternative center that would replace political parties altogether. Similarly, the general strike became less a covenant unifying the entire labor movement, or even a symbol of union autonomy from political tutelage, and, instead, became a claim about the preeminence of the revolutionary general strike over all other methods. However, even this sectarianism was potentially transformative because the *bourses* represented "inverted hierarchies," and the general strike galvanized unity that cross-cut prior divisions.

Analysis of the 1894 Vote

In September 1894, 18 *bourses*, 172 unions, and 17 miscellaneous labor organizations assembled in the port city of Nantes for their largest and most inclusive national congress to that date. To the chagrin of much of the national leadership of the Guesdist party, the Nantes *bourse* had organized the congress as a joint meeting of unions aligned with the Guesdist party and the National Federation of Bourses. On the third day of the congress, the “principle” of the general strike was passed to a vote (Congrès National des Syndicats de France 1894, 42–51). Proponents of the general strike decisively carried the vote (65 votes against 37). The Guesdists then withdrew from the congress, producing a new schism in the labor movement. But their half-hearted attempts to preserve the identity of a separate Guesdist-aligned union federation were unsuccessful. On the basis of the agreement in Nantes about the general strike, the unions met again in 1895 to set up the Confédération Générale du Travail (CGT). Although reorganization of the labor movement was still far from complete in 1895, this quasi-constitutional agreement on the general strike was a major step toward fundamental realignment.

An analysis of the 1894 vote at the Nantes congress permits a more aggregated evaluation of some of the preceding arguments. I have argued that a key causal shift that brings about the realignment of the unions is the creation of a cross-cutting structure that bridges extant divisions among party sects. Thus, we expect that unions will be more likely to support the symbol of the general strike if a *bourse* has been formed in their city. Given that support for or opposition to the general strike is to be understood here as a symbolic reordering of the relationship between unions and party sects, we should also expect party activists to stake out positions vis-à-vis the general strike. At least two parties had staked out well-defined positions prior to the congress: the Guesdists sought to maintain the privileged position of party over union and were vigorous opponents of the general strike; the Allemanists, who were closely affiliated with the Paris *bourse*, were vigorous proponents of the general strike. Other party sects did not have such clear positions.

Table 6.1 presents the results of a logistic regression analysis of support for the general strike at the Nantes congress (see Table 6.2 for a description of variables and data sources). Model 1 shows that the existence of a *bourse du travail* in a city significantly increases the tendency of unions from that city to vote in favor of the general strike. The coefficient is statistically significant at the .01 level and highly substantively significant

Table 6.1. *Logistic regression models of support for the general strike*

	Model 1			Model 2				
	Estimate (s.e.)	Odds ratio	95% upper bound	95% lower bound	Estimate (s.e.)	Odds ratio	95% upper bound	95% lower bound
<i>Bourse du travail</i>	2.376** (.735)	10.757	45.437	2.547				
<i>Compagnonnage</i>					1.335*	3.798	14.144	1.020
Guesdists	-.325*** (.081)	.722	.847	.616	-.321*** (.075)	.726	.841	.626
Allemanists	.118** (.041)	1.125	1.218	1.039	.147*** (.039)	1.158	1.251	1.073
Union Congress × Independent Socialists	.012** (.004)	1.012	1.020	1.004	.007* (.003)	1.007	1.014	1.001
Establishments struck	-.334*** (.086)	.716	.847	.605	-2.12** (.066)	.809	.921	.711
Constant	2.519*** (.658)				2.486*** (.740)			
-2 log likelihood (chi-sq <i>p</i> -value)	85.659***				77.898***			
% correctly predicted	85.058				84.204			
N	203				203			

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 6.2. *Description of variables in Table 6.1*

Variable	Description
Vote	1 = support for the general strike; 0 = opposition to the general strike (Congrès National des Syndicats 1894, 7–10, 51–2; <i>source</i> : Institut Français d’Histoire Sociale).
<i>Bourse du travail</i>	1 = city has a <i>bourse du travail</i> ; 0 = no <i>bourse</i> . <i>Bourses</i> participating in the Troisième Congrès de la Fédération Nationale des Bourses du Travail, Lyon, 25 au 27 juin, 1894 (<i>source</i> : AN F7 12493) or identified by the Ministère du Commerce, de l’Industrie, des Postes et des Telegraphes (1892–4, 397).
<i>Compagnonnage</i>	1 = city has a tradition of <i>compagnonnage</i> ; 0 = no tradition. A city is coded as having a tradition of <i>compagnonnage</i> if it was either represented in the contemporary Union Compagnonnique (<i>source</i> : Statutes de l’Union Compagnonnique, 1894 AD, Côte-d’Or, 20 m 22) or identified by Moissonnier as being a city on the traditional <i>compagnonnage</i> route or welcoming <i>compagnons</i> in the first third of the nineteenth century (Willard 1993, 81).
Guesdists	Number of groups from the city participating in the 1894 national congress of the Parti Ouvrier (Parti Ouvrier 1894; <i>source</i> : Institut Français d’Histoire Sociale).
Allemanists	Number of groups from the city participating in the 1894 national congress of the Parti Ouvrier Socialiste Révolutionnaire (Douzième Congrès National du Parti Ouvrier Socialiste Révolutionnaire, Dijon, 14 au 22 Juillet 1894; <i>source</i> : Institut Français d’Histoire Sociale).
Union congress	Number of unions from the city attending the congress of the Fédération Nationale des Syndicats in 1892 (Fédération Nationale des Syndicats 1892; <i>source</i> : Institut Français d’Histoire Sociale).
Independent Socialists	Number of groups from the city representing either the Fédération Socialiste Révolutionnaire or the Fédération Socialiste Independante at the 1899 socialist unity congress (Congrès Général des Organisations Socialistes Françaises, 1899; <i>source</i> : Institut Français d’Histoire Sociale).
Establishments struck	Mean number of establishments struck per strike in the department between 1890 and 1894 (<i>data source</i> : Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research #8421: <i>Strikes and Labor Activity in France</i> , principal investigators: Charles Tilly and David Jordan, May 1988).

as well.⁵⁴ The odds ratio is nearly 11, which means that a union in a city with a *bourse* is nearly 11 times more likely to support the general strike than in one without a *bourse*. Guesdist and Allemanist representation in a city also proved highly statistically significant (.001 and .01 respectively), though their substantive significance is less clear.⁵⁵ In both cases, the coefficients were in the expected direction.

We do not find any clear relationship between the representation of Blanquists and Independent Socialists in a city and support for the general strike. This may be, in part, a consequence of only being able to systematically gauge the representation of these two party sects five years after the general strike vote in 1899. We do find, however, that interaction between attendance at an 1892 national union congress and representation, by city, of Independent Socialists (in 1899) does yield positive support for the general strike. A central goal of the Independent Socialists, as indicated by their name, was to transcend sectarian divisions. This group sought to stake out a position midway between republicanism and socialism, and they rejected the Guesdist emphasis on a disciplined, centralized party organization and sharp class boundaries. Recall also that the 1892 union congress evidenced the desire on the part of unions to escape from Guesdist control of the national union federation. The statistical interaction suggests that the desire of unions to escape from the political tutelage of the Guesdists was interacting with the desire of political activists to escape from their electoral discipline.

These statistical findings support and reinforce the qualitative interpretation of the general strike presented in previous sections. The final variable in Model 1 is the mean number of establishments struck between 1890 and 1894.⁵⁶ This variable, which arguably provides the best measure of the inclination of a region to engage in broad strike actions, proves quite statistically significant. However, the sign is in the opposite direction than expected: apparently, the more expansive the strikes (the larger the number of establishments involved), the less support there was for the general strike. Although the precise interpretation of this finding

54 For an introduction to logistic regression models, see Aldrich and Nelson (1984). Following DeMaris, I report the odds ratio, which he argues is “analogous to the partial slope in multiple linear regression” in that it “summarizes the net impacts of predictors by indicating the multiplicative impact on the odds for a unit increase in a given predictor, net of all other covariates in the model” (DeMaris 1993, 1063). The odds ratio is defined as the ratio of the probability that an event will occur to the probability that it will not.

55 The substantive significance is in question because the odds ratios are not significantly higher than 1.

56 Note that the variables for strikes were aggregated at the departmental rather than at the city level.

is not clear, it reinforces the claim that support for the general strike is a symbolic commitment rather than a direct expression of strike militancy.

Turning to Model 2, the chapter suggested that the *bourses* represented a tradition linked to *compagnonnage*. Although seemingly anachronistic and seen by most contemporary unionists as too conservative, *compagnonnage* was still a powerful latent tradition. By their very structure and by the functions they discharged, the *bourses* evoked a set of tacit assumptions about the character of the trades as a status group complete with its own internal norms and style of life. A glance at a map of cities with *bourses* and cities with a tradition of *compagnonnage* suggested a strong correlation (Moissonier 1993, 81).⁵⁷ When coded as a variable, the tradition of *compagnonnage* strongly competes with the *bourses*. Their effects cancel each other out when they are included in the same equation. Therefore, in Model 2, *compagnonnage* is substituted for the *bourses* as a variable. This model shows that *compagnonnage* is also a quite powerful variable in explaining the outcome, although not quite as powerful as the *bourses*. Given that *compagnonnage* as an institution had been sidelined by modern trade unionism, this finding supports the idea that the *bourses* were evoking and manifesting these traditions.

Summary

At the end of the 1880s, a new wave of populist mobilization rolled over France. The Boulangist movement had somewhat contradictory effects on the different political party sects associated with the labor movement. On the one hand, Boulangism created growth in the various party sects as they inherited the participatory enthusiasm generated by this movement; on the other hand, Boulangism created deep internal tensions within the different political party sects. It was in this context that the *bourse du travail* became a critical institution that initiated a union realignment. These union-managed municipal “labor exchanges” reflected the Possibilist marriage of communalism and unionism described in the last chapter. However, over the course of the 1880s, the Possibilist party had become increasingly dominated by its municipal councilors. The strikes associated with the populism of the late 1880s led to a reinversion of the Possibilist party around its union base. The result was a schism that produced a new revolutionary trade union party.

57 For an example of a *compagnon* making the *tour de France*, see the memoir of Agricol Perdiquier in Traugott (1993, 116–82).

The Allemanists, as this new party was informally known, established alliances with unions linked to other party sects to overthrow Possibilist control of the Paris *bourse*. The internal conflicts induced by Boulangism within each of the party sects helped to propel this emerging union alliance toward a nonpartisan or antiparty stance.

The *bourses* spread quickly to other cities and helped to produce similar local realignments throughout France. The significance of these institutions was that they created cross-cutting linkages between unions that were often affiliated with different party sects. Their ability to solidify relationships across partisan divides was based on the *bourses*' role of cultivating a sense of local community by fostering "generalized exchange" among local unions. In addition, they invoked a corporatist tradition associated with *compagnonnage* that united journeymen fraternally across trades. In the late 1880s and the early 1890s, the Guesdist party had emerged as a major force in the labor movement. With major growth in their party organization and with significant influence over union organizations, the Guesdists sought to clinch their predominance through control over an emerging labor movement ritual – May 1st (Labor Day). The association of May 1st with strike activity, however, produced a symbolic inversion: the May 1st movement came to symbolize a revolutionary general strike. As a result, the *bourses* rather than the Guesdist party became the unofficial center of this unifying ritual. As the strike wave declined in 1893, both the Guesdist party and the *bourse* movement moved toward communal closure. As they did, they produced a new schism, but one that cross-cut the prevailing lines of cleavage. Closure produced a coalition of unions who rallied around the platform of the general strike and rejected party tutelage over unions.

By becoming the center of local union communities as well as a center of ritual life for the local working class, the *bourses du travail* were becoming the equivalent of local community churches. As an inversion of the hierarchical Guesdist church, they thereby represented a congregational church structure with the general strike as the covenantal pact that linked the congregations together. The next chapter further investigates the role of the *bourse du travail* in paving the way toward the unification of the union movement.

“Above All We Are Syndicalists”

Chapter 6 described the development of the *bourses du travail* as decentralized labor “congregations” and the general strike as the equivalent of a covenant. That story drew to a close in 1895 when the unions first formed the CGT after having voted in favor of the principle of a general strike at the 1894 congress of Nantes. Yet, as the years between 1895 and 1902 would reveal, the realignment of the unions was not yet consolidated. As the unions shifted away from strikes between 1893 and 1898, the union movement became increasingly divided internally. The realignment of 1894 had been based on the *bourses*’ role in linking unions together across partisan boundaries. But the decline of strikes between 1893 and 1898 led unions in two directions that undermined this cross-cutting role. First, as strikes declined, some unions substituted political action for economic action, which repoliticized the *bourses* (and violated the implicit covenant of union autonomy from partisan politics). Second, other unions moved toward a narrower craft sectoralism that saw its major institutional expression in the national trade federations rather than the *bourses*. These two factors turned the *bourses* into an internally divided faction of the union movement rather than its big tent.

With the return to strike activity after 1898, a renewed populism appeared among the unions. In the mounting strike wave, unions turned away from political action in favor of strike mobilization. In the face of the politically divisive Dreyfus and Millerand affairs (with which the strikes coincided), the *bourses* again were an attractive alternative to political sectarianism. The connection between strikes and May 1st rituals also reinvigorated the *bourses*’ role as the “congregational” church of local labor movements. As a consequence of the growth of unionism during this period, the *bourses* also assumed a new and critical “balancing” role. Whereas, the relationship at the end of the 1890s, between the *bourses* and the national trade federations had become increasingly polarized as *alternative* structuring principles (sectoral vs. intersectoral), after the turn of the century the *bourses* helped resolve a set of structural problems within and between the national federations

(local autonomy vs. national control; craft vs. industrial unionism). In particular, the *bourses* provided an element of local, quasi-industrial coordination that could be balanced against the narrower, more segmental organization of the national trade federations (as in Figure 2.1, panel B). This balance was institutionalized in 1902, in a refounded CGT, by establishing a structure of dual representation: unions would maintain membership in both their respective national trade or industry federation and in their local *bourse*.

The *Bourses* versus National Trade Federations

The profile of strikes from 1888 to 1906 suggests that the period 1893–8 represented a conjunctural stagnation of strike activity in the midst of a longer-term secular increase in strikes. This stagnation was the reflection of an unpropitious environment for strikes. The number of strike failures gradually climbed from 1893 to a peak in 1896; thereafter, failures appear to have declined in inverse proportion to the increase in compromise settlements – a sign, as we shall see, that unions were shifting strategies. Meanwhile, the number of successful strikes remained the same or, as in 1894 and 1898, dropped. This stagnation had immediate organizational consequences. In contrast to the long-term secular increase in the number of unions and in union membership, the period 1894–8 stands out as a plateau. As in the period after 1880, unions and parties adopted two strategies of organizational routinization: a return to a more cautious and sectoral “professional” unionism, and a renewed interest in securing tangible resources through political means.¹

The CGT was established in 1895 with the idea that it would serve as the institutional umbrella for all French unions and their related federations. But by what institutional formula? The turn toward a narrower sectoralism in the unions was apparent even at the CGT’s inception: the commission responsible for spelling out this formula proposed that the National Council of the CGT be composed of three delegates from *each* national trade federation and three delegates from the Federation of Bourses (Butler 1960, 235). In other words, *all* the *bourses* combined were to have the same representation as a *single* trade federation. The floor debate concerning the proposed plan of representation in the CGT was polarized between proponents of the trade federations and those of

1. On the economic conjuncture, see Perrot (1966, 41–2). For a more in-depth discussion of this strike profile, see Ansell (1993).

the *bourses* (Butler 1960, 237–9; Lefranc 1967, 67–8). Ultimately, the trade federations’ proponents carried the day, and the CGT was established. Thereafter, until 1902, the Federation of Bourses remained aloof from the CGT despite several additional attempts to renegotiate the terms of integration.

This institutional formula for the CGT indicates the strength of the underlying sectoralism. According to a special commissioner’s report in May 1896, “In the unions, there are currently more in favor of a *Fédération syndicale* [i.e., federation based on trade] than a Federation of Bourses.”² The leadership of the Federation of Bourses championed, in turn, the solidarist position. In resisting the calls to integrate the Federation of Bourses into the CGT, the secretary of the Federation of Bourses, Fernand Pelloutier called attention to the “corporate egotism” of the trade federations (Butler 1960, 286).³ In contrast to the trade federations, he challenged, the *bourses* “rest on the principle of social solidarity” (Butler 1960, 293). With their focus on narrower constituencies and narrower goals, the trade federations reflected a strategy of differentiation, whereas the communal *bourses* sought a more integrative strategy (like the communal Guesdists).

The constitutive congress of the CGT in 1895 had voted almost unanimously that the CGT must “hold itself outside of all political schools” (Brécy 1963, 37). A similar principle was voted at the Tours congress in 1896 (Butler 1960, 288). Nevertheless, the CGT, as an organization, also moved toward closer cooperation with the political parties, particularly with the convergence of those parties in the Chamber of Deputies (Butler 1960, 244–5, 281–5). The emerging standard appears to have been to permit political activity as long as it was not partial toward any particular party sect.

Chapter 5 described how an anarchist movement emerged at the beginning of the 1880s that rejected both the strategy of union and strike rationalization and the strategy of creating a disciplined electoral party. Chapter 6 analyzed how the *bourses* became an institutional vehicle for the mobilization of unions against both the Possibilist and Guesdist parties. The innovation of the mid-1890s was to combine these two “inverted hierarchies” into one. A new anarchist current now appeared in the *bourses* and in the party most closely associated with the *bourses* – the Allemanists. Butler marks Fernand Pelloutier’s movement from Allemanism toward anarchism beginning in the summer of 1895, at roughly the same time that Pelloutier assumed the position

2 AN F7 12493, 23 mai 1896.

3 “Corporate egotism” is Butler’s expression.

of secretary of the Federation of Bourses (Butler 1960, 206–25).⁴ In the fall of 1895, Pelloutier wrote several articles encouraging the anarchists to join the unions (Butler 1960, 221), and at the Federation of Bourses' 1897 congress, he was accused of trying to stack the *comité fédéral* with anarchists (Butler 1960, 290).⁵

Pelloutier also tried to consolidate the anarchist position in the provincial *bourses*.⁶ The same informant observed that Pelloutier had declared, “[T]he Nantes Federation of Unions is one of those on which one counts the most. All goes well there: libertarian ideas make great progress everywhere in this region.” This shift toward the anarchist model is related to the decline of Allemanism (which will also be discussed in the next chapter). As membership slumped (particularly among the young, the less skilled, or the more poorly paid) so did the strategy of solidarity that had united workers across wage, skill, and age hierarchies. In place of industrial unionism, elite workers retreated toward a more narrowly based sectoral professionalism. Those workers who persisted in a solidaristic strategy and were deserted by their troops now pursued, at least in theory, a more individualistic approach – sabotage and other forms of “direct action.” The strategy of abstentionism, along with the concept of “direct action” were the basis of an emerging anarchist current in the Allemanist party during this period (i.e., 1895–8). Whereas one wing of the Allemanist party was once again becoming “possibilist,” the other wing was becoming “anarchist.” From the more ecumenical position of the *bourses* in 1894, this move toward a more pure anarchist position represented an increasingly sectarian “inverted hierarchy” strategy.

The anarchist current in the Allemanist party established itself on the institutional terrain of the *bourses*. In late 1895, the socialist leader from Nantes, Charles Brunellière, could write to his friend, the anarchist Augustin Hamon, “It is a war without mercy kindled between Anarchists and Allemanists, who are nevertheless first cousins.”⁷ One police report to the minister of the interior concerning conflicts in the Allemanist party notes that:

4 See also Julliard (1971, 115), Baker (1974, 158), and Maitron (1964, 22).

5 An informant reported that Pelloutier had (in a private conversation) declared, “What is certain, is that in all the *bourses*, there are a certain number of unions that now count Anarchists among their ranks” (AN F7 13933, 3 juin 1896, no. 1422).

6 The *commissaire spéciale* of Angers, for instance, issued the following report in May 1897: “One knows, in effect, that Brisset, former anarchist, has entered into the socialist milieu only in order to try to play there an important role and to place the *Bourse du travail* on a revolutionary path. In close correspondence with the *Bourse du travail* of Paris, whose inspiration he follows, and seconded by Brocherie, former anarchist like himself, he does not delay in putting himself at the head of a little group, which will soon effectively direct the *bourse*” (AN F7 13608, 29 mai 1897).

7 Letter of October 7, 1895 (Willard 1968, 102).

Already a rather large number of militant socialists have been hindered in their politics by the union to which they are currently affiliated and many among them have ceased all relations with their union. One can imagine the anarchy that reigns in the socialist [Allemanist] ranks, where everyone appears to have his own personal politics.⁸

Yet another police report observes that “one sees the constant preoccupation of an enterprising active minority which ceaselessly tries to push the unions towards the *milieu libertaire* [i.e., anarchism].”⁹ The trade union, fundamental unit of the Allemanist party, was being tugged apart. And thus, so was the party.

In 1896, a split occurred between the political and direct action wings of the party. The *bourses* were a locus for this dispute. In another letter to his friend Hamon, Brunellière, no friend of anarchism, wrote: “We have excellent reasons in Nantes, above all in the *Bourse du travail*, to not like the anarchists, because they have introduced disorder into the unions and attempted to bring down the *Bourse*.”¹⁰ During this period, Pelloutier and others began to discuss techniques of “direct action,” the most obvious examples of which were sabotage and boycotts (Julliard 1971, 214–18). During an unfavorable strike conjuncture, these were methods that workers could utilize at the point of production *in place of* political action.¹¹ A more subtle articulation of the notion of “direct action” was also beginning to take shape (Julliard 1971, 214–27). It was a blending of the centrality of the trade union in Allemanist thought with the anarchist emphasis on empowering individuals to emancipate themselves. The general strike, of course, symbolized just this blending, but the collapse of the Allemanist party and the integration of anarchists into the unions inspired some new thinking.

The emerging vision of direct action sought to maintain the empowerment of individuals. The future society was to be, as Pelloutier suggested, “a voluntary and free association of producers” organized around the *bourses* (Baker 1974, 197, his translation; see also Julliard 1971, 235–7; Pelloutier 1971, 250–5).¹² And only through education – self-education – could workers hope to accomplish this plan for

8 AN F7 12866, 6 mars 1895.

9 AN F7 12493, *commissaire spéciale*, Toulouse, 20–25 septembre 1897.

10 July 15, 1896 (Willard 1968, 127).

11 The idea of boycotts and sabotage was first raised at a union or party congress in France by the anarchist Paul Delesalle, a colleague of Pelloutier in the Federation of Bourses (Maitron 1952, 88–9; Brécy 1963, 45–6).

12 At the 1896 congress of the Federation of Bourses in Tours, for instance, the two delegates from the *bourse* of Nîmes read a report entitled “*Bourses du travail* in the Future Society” (Fédération des Bourses du Travail 1896, 104–8).

decentralized production (Baker 1974, 198–9, 209–14; Julliard 1971, 243–56; Mitchell 1983, 126–38). The emphasis on the role of worker as “producer” was a more or less explicit challenge to the socialists’ implicit construction of the worker as a “citizen” (Jennings 1991, 74). The precepts of direct action embraced a dual stratagem: first, to incite workers to actively resist this categorization as “citizen” by empowering them to act alternatively in their role as “producers”; second, to make workers see their “producer” role as a natural, taken-for-granted category and, reciprocally, their “citizen” role as artificial and abstract. Taken together, this was an inversion of Jacobin republicanism.

The intermingling of anarchism and the *bourses* should not be over-emphasized. In a circular to all prefects in 1896, the minister of the interior observed, “My attention has been called to the progress made by propaganda for anarchist ideas in all the *bourses du travail*” (Maitron 1975, 294n–295n). But outside of Paris – where the prefect’s report found the anarchist influence “predominant” – few of the prefects reported a strong anarchist presence in the *bourses*.¹³ The prefect of Haute-Garonne, for example, noted that “anarchist ideas have recently made [in the Toulouse *bourse*] some progress here.”¹⁴ The prefect of Haute-Marne reported that the leaders of the *bourse* of Chaumont were anarchists, though he doubted whether their ideas had much effect on the affiliated unions.¹⁵ And the *commissaire spéciale* of Dijon wrote that although “the anarchist spirit, in the proper sense, does not reign in the worker unions,” the distance separating the socialists from the anarchists had decreased. The leaders of the Dijon *bourse*, however, were “absolutely Allemanists.”¹⁶

The situation at the Dijon *bourse* suggests why the minister of the interior’s fear of anarchism in the *bourses* was overblown: if some former Allemanists were moving toward anarchism, the parallel movement toward the old reformist possibilism was itself gaining a stronger hold in many *bourses*.¹⁷ In St. Nazaire, where we know there to have been

13 Maitron (1975, 295 n). Sagnes notes the entry of anarchists into the Montpellier *bourse* in mid-1900 (Sagnes 1980, 60).

14 The prefect noted that the well-known anarchist Sebastien Faure had made a visit in June 1895 and that “certain members” of diverse unions affiliated with the *bourse* had met with him. These leaders were then active in trying to introduce anarchist ideas to the *bourse* (AN F7 13602 1 août 1896).

15 AN F7 13607, 11 septembre 1896. 16 AN F7 13607, 4 septembre 1896, no. 323.

17 The prefects’ survey of anarchist activity in the *bourses* makes clear, as Peter Schöttler has argued, that the *bourses* were not controlled by anarchists during this period. However, his argument that, on the contrary, reformism in the *bourses* was growing as a consequence of the intervention of the state (which threatened to revoke their grants) overlooks the consequences of the strike conjuncture. The reformism of the *bourses* during this period represented not state intervention, but the consolidation of a sectoralist strategy in the unions. Anarchism reflected the other side of this coin – the

anarchist influence among the metal unions, a police report observed, “The *Bourse du travail* of St. Nazaire preserves its revolutionary etiquette; it proclaims itself simply socialist and it follows in effect socialist doctrines; but its socialism is very pale, somewhere between radicalism and possibilism.”¹⁸ In Besançon, Charles reports that the internecine conflicts in the Allemanist camp in 1896 seem to have accentuated the reformism of the Allemanists in control of the *bourse*.¹⁹ The prefect’s report on the Besançon *bourse* observed that the Allemanists in control of the *bourse* “energetically repudiate all alliance, all affinity, and all compromise with the Anarchists.”²⁰

The split between the trade federations and the Federation of Bourses and the rupture within the *bourses* between political and direct action strategies reflected a return to sectarianism within the union movement.²¹ Under these conditions, the *bourses* could hardly be effective in their role in counterbalancing the sectarian politicization of the unions. Rather than operating as a “congregational” churches tolerant of differences in individual faith, the *bourses* had themselves become sectarian battlegrounds. It would take a new wave of union populism from below and political divisiveness from above to consolidate the union realignment begun in 1894.

Putting the Union House in Order

A new strike wave began in 1898, climbing in see-saw fashion to reach unprecedented heights in 1906 (generally, spiking in the even years,

breakdown of the solidarist strategy. See Schöttler’s review of the prefects’ reports on anarchism in the *bourses* (Shöttler 1985, 244, n. 78). I believe that he overstates the absence of anarchist influence, but he is essentially correct in concluding that anarchism was almost nowhere a dominant influence. See Baker’s assessment of the survey results (Baker 1973, 171–3).

18 AN F7 13606, 10 juin 1896, m/454. Another report by the subprefect of Loire-Inférieure to the prefect stated: “This propaganda of revolutionary ideas [viz. anarchism] has above all made noticeable progress among the 1100 metal workers who compose 8 of the 13 unions affiliated to the *Bourse du travail*” (AN F7 13606, 8 septembre 1896).

19 A split in the Allemanist party section led to the formation of L’Union Socialiste, which then affiliated with the Blanquists (Charles 1962, 34). The influence of Besançon on nearby Montbéliard seems to have produced a similar split during this period (Vasseur 1967, 61–2).

20 AN F7 13601, 4 septembre 1896.

21 Control over the *bourses* could also flip-flop back and forth between groups. Brunet describes the leadership of the St. Denis *bourse* as continually shifting: “In 1891, it was Touroude, relatively moderate in his behavior; in 1893, Pradinaud, whose temperament, on the contrary, was very violent; a little later Despoisse, founder of the cooperative “*L’Avenir social*” [viz. a moderate], sheltered for a time the *bourse*; then, the anarchist Grandidier (Brunet 1980, 105).

dipping in the odd years). This strike wave coincided with the Dreyfus affair and the subsequent entry of the socialist Alexandre Millerand into the Waldeck-Rousseau government. As the new minister of commerce, Millerand made it his mission to rationalize industrial conflict, a mission welcomed by some unionists and viewed by others as a strategy of state cooptation (and, consequently, as a betrayal). This economic and political context again caused a shift in union strategies. In contrast to prior years, this strike wave reflected a turning away from “politics” and a move back to “economic” action, and away from narrow craft sectoralism and back toward broader intersectoral solidarity. Both changes brought new support to the *bourses*.

The 1901 CGT congress – the last before the CGT’s merger with the Federation of Bourses – showed the schizophrenia of the unions vis-à-vis Millerand’s actions as minister of commerce. One of Millerand’s early administrative actions was to reorganize the Conseil Supérieur du Travail (Higher Council of Labor) to give greater parity to labor in this forum for dialogue between management and labor. The unions voted 260 to 200 in favor of the principle of this council. Millerand also proposed the creation of regional labor councils to create a framework for the obligatory adjudication of strikes. Here, the unions voted 274 to 175 *against* the principle of the regional councils.

A breakdown of the vote on the Higher Council of Labor for the different metal trades indicates a division roughly corresponding to that between partisans of sectoral trade federations and partisans of more solidaristic industrial federations (Table 7.1). The two key metal trades to break off in the 1890s to form national trade federations – the molders and the mechanics – largely vote in favor of this institution of state corporatism. In contrast, the large majority of metalworkers – the backbone of the metal industrial federation – vote against it. Tinsmiths and coppersmiths, trades rather finely divided by specialties, appear more divided.

Conflict over the efficacy of craft versus industrial federation had already risen to the fore at the 1900 congress of the CGT. Two propositions concerning this conflict had been raised at this congress for a vote: the first proposed that unions be allowed complete freedom to choose whether to federate by trade or industry; the second proposed that trade federations not be organized where industrywide federations already existed. The first proposition received 133 votes, the second 87.²² Nor had the conflict between federations and *bourses*

22 AN F7 12492, police reports m1063 and m1058 on the September 1900 CGT congress.

Table 7.1. *Metal trades voting: 1901 CGT congress*

Trade	Higher council		Local federations	
	Pro	Con	Pro	Con
Blacksmiths (<i>maréchaux-ferrant</i>)	1	0	1	0
Bronze workers (<i>bronziers</i>)	0	2	2	0
Coopersmiths (<i>chaudronniers, ouvriers en cuivre, chaudronniers en fer</i>)	5	8	7	4
Forge and foundry workers (<i>forgerons, forgeron-limeurs, fonderie de cuivre, fondeurs en fer, founders-mouleurs</i>)	2	2	2	2
Ironsmiths (<i>serruriers, ajusteurs-serruriers</i>)	1	1	1	1
Mechanics (<i>mécanciens</i>)	16	0	12	4
Metal polishers (<i>polisseurs sur métaux</i>)	1	0	1	0
Metalworkers (<i>métallurgistes</i>)	6	24	15	15
Molders (<i>mouleurs, mouleurs en cuivre, mouleurs en fer</i>)	26	9	27	8
Plumbers (<i>plombiers, plombiers-zingueurs, robinettiers, tourneurs-robinettiers</i>)	0	1	2	1
Tinsmiths (<i>ferblantiers, ferblantiers-plombiers, ferblantiers-lampistes, ferblantiers-ornementalistes, ferblantiers-zingueurs</i>)	2	4	5	0

Source: Confédération Générale du Travail 1901, 235-9, 243-7.

been resolved. The CGT and the Federation of Bourses remained at odds in 1901, despite the pressures within both to integrate the two institutions. In 1897, the two organizations, at their separate congresses, had agreed to create a minimal affiliation through a joint and coequal inter-federal committee. But by 1898, even this minimal cooperation had broken down (Butler 1960, 289–305). The Federation of Bourses reaffirmed its autonomy from the CGT at its 1900 meeting (Brécy 1963, 51–2). Thus, three reinforcing cleavages divided the unions: first, a political conflict between ministerialists and antiministerialists; second, a conflict between trade and industrial federations; and third, a conflict between the sectorally oriented CGT and the geographically based Federation of Bourses.²³

Nevertheless, change was afoot. At the 1901 meetings of both the Federation of Bourses and the CGT, there was a strong push to integrate the two organizations (Brécy 1963, 56–7). In fact, the proposal to admit local intertrade federations had passed by 246 to 191 at the 1901 CGT congress. As already mentioned, at their 1900 meeting the *bourses* had unanimously and vigorously rejected affiliation with a political party. On the CGT side, the 1900 congress had suddenly taken a much greater interest in the general strike (Brécy 1963, 53); the general strike committee was dusted off and became active again, staffed predominantly by Allemanists and anarchists.²⁴ Parallel coalitions in both the CGT and the Federation of Bourses were poised to reorganize and integrate these organizations.²⁵

The 1902 meeting of the CGT held in Montpellier achieved this realignment. Unfortunately, it is impossible to analyze the basis for this

23 As analysis of the metal trades' voting at the 1901 CGT congress suggests, these conflicts were mutually reinforcing in 1901 (Table 4). A vote was taken at this congress concerning whether to admit local or regional intertrade federations on the same basis as sectoral federations. This was equivalent to asking whether an integration of the Federation of Bourses and the CGT should be based on parity between the two organizations. A comparison of the results of this vote with the results of the vote on Millerand's Higher Council indicates a parallel breakdown of voting. Thus, in a sample check on the metallurgists, the trade with the largest divergence between the two votes: those who voted in favor of Millerand also voted against the admission of regional councils. As already pointed out, the trades voting in favor of the Higher Council were those organized around national trade federations (e.g., mechanics, molders).

24 A police file on the Comité de la Grève Générale lists all the delegates, the organizations they represent, and their political tendencies as of February 14, 1901 (AN F7 13933): 16 Allemanists; 9 Anarchists; 6 Independents; 2 Socialists, 1 Revolutionary Socialist, 1 Blanquist, and 2 unspecified.

25 Two future revolutionary syndicalist leaders, Victor Griffuelhes and Emile Pouget, were elected secretary and adjunct secretary of the CGT respectively. Another anarcho-syndicalist, Georges Yvetot, would succeed Pelloutier, when the leader of the Federation of Bourses died in 1901 (of lupus); Paul Delesalle, also an anarcho-syndicalist, would remain the adjunct secretary (Brécy 1963, 52, 57).

change – the vote in favor of uniting the two organizations was nearly unanimous! By 445 to 1, the unions reestablished the CGT as an organization with two coequal sections, the *bourses* and the trade or industry federations (Confédération Générale du Travail 1902, 282–6). Affiliated unions were assigned a “triple obligation”: to join their local *bourse* or city federation; to join their respective trade or industry federations; and to subscribe to the CGT journal, *La Voix du Peuple* (Brécy 1963, 60–1). Thus, the integration had been achieved and on the basis of the formula adopted by Pelloutier in 1895 – parity between the *bourses* and the national federations.

Besides the sheer growth of the two organizations, their integration can be understood in terms of the way in which the *bourses* resolved the problems posed by the national federations.²⁶ In the first place, many unions fit rather uneasily into the scheme of federation by trade or industry. Either the specialty represented by the union was unique (e.g., Parisian union of money and medals) or the union straddled more than one industrial category. If representation were by industry, was plumbing a metal or a building trade?

The two ways to resolve this dilemma were either to embrace the interstitial character of representation (the *bourse* solution) or to institute a segmental strategy (the trade federation solution). Thus, industrial federations such as the metal federation had an incentive to support the *bourses* to avoid splits such as the one that had led to formation of the mechanics’ and molders’ trade federations. The evenly split vote of the metalworkers – backbone of the metal federation – in the 1901 vote on the representation of local intertrade unions in the CGT shows that this was not an easy decision (Table 7.1). Nevertheless, they were the major supporters among the metal trades for equal representation of local intertrade federations.

In a February 1900 article on the merits of trade versus industrial organization in the metal federation’s newspaper, J. Braun, a proponent of industrial organization, wrote: “Concerning the regional federations or *Bourses du travail* we cannot enough encourage the unions to organize themselves in this way because the *Bourse du travail* are necessary,

²⁶ The representation of organizations had increased markedly for both the Federation of Bourses and the CGT between 1900 and 1902. Thirty-four *bourses* attended the 1900 meeting of the Federation of Bourses; 51 attended in 1901, and 65 in 1902 – almost a doubling in two years. On the CGT side, a total of 350 organizations (including federations, *bourses*, and individual unions) participated at the 1900 meeting; in 1901, 20 national federations, 8 regional federations, 26 *bourses*, and 496 individual unions attended the congress. By 1902, 29 national federations, 56 *bourses* or local intertrade federations, and 373 individual unions were represented at the CGT congress (Brécy 1963, 51–9).

truly indispensable, from the regional point of view.”²⁷ For the unions remaining aloof from the federations, the integration of the *bourses* and federations appears to have encouraged them to affiliate to a federation. Note that the number of independent unions declined between 1901 and 1902, despite the increasing numbers of unions represented; at the next congress in 1904, only fourteen unions represented themselves as independents (Confédération Générale du Travail 1904).²⁸

The *bourses* also helped resolve a conflict within the trade federations. Although attempting to institutionalize a national sectoralist strategy based on regulation of interfirm labor markets, these trade federations could not completely ignore the movements toward intertrade solidarity that mobilized around the workshop. One prong of this sectoralist strategy was the central regulation of strikes to maintain the balance in the labor market. Favorable strike conjunctures, however, encouraged their constituents to revolt against this central direction. As a 1905 survey of *bourse* activity suggests, the *bourses* became the alternative pole for the direction of strikes.²⁹

The key vote against proportional representation was held at the 1904 Bourges congress and helped to cement a complementary relationship between trade federations and *bourses*.³⁰ This conflict sounds rather mechanical, but it was actually a linchpin of the internal organization of the CGT. The existing mode of representation granted each union one vote regardless of its size. Thus, a union with ten members had the same representation as a union with two thousand. “Reformists” wanted proportional representation because it gave an advantage to unions that concentrated on building membership through sectoral monopolies over the labor market. The two leading examples were the railway and the printers’ unions. One union, one vote gave an advantage to the myriad small unions that organized craft specialties, often in a complex division

27 *Bulletin Officiel de la Fédération Nationale des Ouvriers Métallurgistes de France*, numéro 98, février 1900.

28 Of course, after 1902 the unions had been mandated to do so.

29 The 1905 police survey notes that the following *bourses* tended to support strike action: Rochefort-sur-Mer, Bourges, Valence, Brest, Nîmes, Toulouse, Béziers, Montpellier, Tours, Laval, Nevers, Perpignan, Lyon, Chalon-sur-Saône, Amiens, Saint Raphael, and Limoges. *Bourses* in Commeny, La Rochelle, Romans, Agen, and Cherbourg were noted for having mediated disputes between unions and employers and thus prevented strikes. Details of the survey are provided by Ansell (1993, App. 3).

30 At the 1904 Bourges congress, interpreted as a battle between “reformists” and “revolutionaries,” the leading national proponent of the “reformist” cause, Auguste Keufer of the printers’ federation, argued that the hostility against the “reformist” strategy was “slowly prepared in the *Bourses du travail*” (“Le Congrès syndical de Bourges,” *Le Mouvement Socialiste*, novembre-décembre 1904, 94). This 1904 congress appears to mark the beginning of the use of the term “revolutionary syndicalism.”

of labor with other craft specialties. These small speciality unions saw the *bourses* as more congenial than the sectoral federations because the *bourses* offered them both the local autonomy to act according to the dictates of their speciality and a quasi-industrial strategy that could unite them with other local related specialties. By accentuating the power of these smaller unions, the one union – one vote principle strengthened the role of the *bourses* within the CGT.

The vote on proportional representation suggests how the strike conjuncture was shifting unions away from a narrow sectoralist position. Whereas the tinsmiths showed themselves to be sectoralists in 1901, all voting against the representation of local intertrade federations (Table 7.1), they voted 12 to 1 in 1904 with the “revolutionary” camp. Similarly, the molders, who had largely voted in favor of Millerand’s Higher Council and against the representation of local intertrade federations, voted 44 to 3 against proportional representation (i.e., with the revolutionaries). Moreover, the secretary of the national molders’ federation was a spokesman for the “revolutionary” position (*Le Mouvement Socialiste* 1904, 85–6). Of the metal trades, only the mechanics held firmly to their sectoralist orientation, voting 29 to 8 in favor of proportional representation (Confédération Générale du Travail 1904, 278–89).³¹

Using the recorded vote on proportional representation, the quasi-industrial strategy of the *bourses* can be evaluated statistically, though indirectly. Each individual union’s vote is recorded in the congress proceedings next to the name of the union; therefore, we know each union’s self-description of the scope and nature of their coverage of skill categories. These self-descriptions may indicate general skill categories, skill specialties, and coverage of skill levels. By collating all the distinct appellations for a given federation, we can judge the internal diversity of each federation. The number of appellations per federation is recorded in Table 7.2 (the appellations reported in Ansell 1993, 706–9).

The greater the internal diversity of a federation – that is, the more it reflects a complex specialization of skilled labor – the more we should expect it to gravitate toward organizing around the *bourses* and, therefore, as the argument goes, to favor one union, one vote. By creating an internal diversity index for each federation (the number of distinct appellations per federation/the total number of unions per federation \times 100), this argument can be compared to the percentage of unions in a federation voting for or against proportional representation (Table 7.2).

31 The independent coppersmith trade federation merged with the metal federation in 1905; the molders continued to insist on independent trade representation, but they broke off relations with the other metal trade federation, the mechanics, whom they saw as too narrowly sectoralist (Gras 1971, 65–6).

Table 7.2. *CGT vote on proportional representation, 1904*

Federations	Pro	Con	No. appellations	Diversity index
Agriculture	0	30	1	.033
Artists-musicians	2	3	2	.400
Autos	2	21	4	.174
Blacksmithing	5	0	1	.200
Brush making	0	5	4	.800
Building	6	39	16	.356
Carpenters	2	6	1	.125
Cask making	3	4	1	.143
Ceramics	7	16	18	.783
Clog making	3	5	2	.250
Clothing	1	9	7	.700
Coiffeurs	2	19	1	.048
Cooking	0	7	4	.571
Dyeing	1	2	1	.333
Employees	23	15	4	.105
Food	7	50	15	.263
Furniture	3	21	10	.417
Furs	1	3	4	1.000
Glassmaking	1	9	5	.500
Hatmaking	1	7	2	.250
Leather and skins	1	47	17	.354
Lithography	20	2	3	.136
Jewelry	0	8	8	1.000
Joiners	3	16	3	.158
Marine	2	9	6	.545
Masonry	5	56	15	.246
Matchmaking	0	6	1	.167
Mechanics	29	8	6	.162
Metallurgy	4	156	48	.300
Military equipment	0	3	2	.667
Military personnel	13	2	1	.067
Military storehouses	1	9	1	.100
Mining	0	7	1	.143
Molders	3	44	7	.200
Municipal workers	0	3	3	1.000
Painting	5	19	2	.083
Paper	2	1	3	1.000
Pattern making	1	4	1	.200
Ports and docks	1	10	10	.909
Post and telegraph	2	2	1	.250
Printing	121	2	8	.065
Proofreading	0	1	1	1.000

Table 7.2. (Continued)

Federations	Pro	Con	No. appellations	Diversity index
Public transport	10	14	9	.375
Quarries	0	3	2	.667
Railroads	38	7	1	.022
Saddlery	0	2	2	1.000
Shoe (cutters)	1	1	1	.500
Slate quarries	0	5	1	.200
Textiles	13	26	20	.513
Tobacco	18	0	1	.056
Transport and storage	0	15	11	.733
Woodcutting	3	36	1	.026

Source: Confédération Générale du Travail 1904, 265–300.

With all the federations included in the regression of this index on the percentage of unions voting against proportional representation, the effect is in the expected direction and significant at the .01 level. The model is as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} &\text{percentage voting against proportional representation} \\ &= 59.877 + .345[\text{diversity index}] \\ &\quad (6.468) \quad (.129) \end{aligned}$$

$$N = 52; \text{two-tailed } P = .01; R^2 = .124$$

When four federations (agriculture, mining, textiles, and woodcutting) were removed from the data set, the result was improved, as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} &\text{percentage voting against proportional representation} \\ &= 54.709 + .423[\text{diversity index}] \\ &\quad (6.817) \quad (.132) \end{aligned}$$

$$N = 48; \text{two-tailed } P = .003; R^2 = .182^{32}$$

32. For the index ($N = 48$), the minimum value was 2.22; the maximum value was 100.00. The mean value of the index was 40.79, and the standard deviation 31.77. The justification for taking the agriculture, mining, textile, and woodcutting federations out of the analysis is as follows. For the agriculture and woodcutting federations, diversity is extremely low (essentially one uniform category for each). Nevertheless, regional studies show that these federations were organized by the *bourses* (Gratton 1971; Sagnes 1980; Pennetier 1982). The importance of the *bourses* to these industries, however, is not due to their internal diversity, but to their geographical dispersion. They are both rural industries. We could thus say that they are exceptions that prove the rule (e.g., that the *bourses* are the critical institutional factor underlying this vote). The miners also had very low internal diversity, but they voted overwhelmingly with

The diversity index is scaled from 0 to 100, with 0 representing no diversity and 100 equaling perfect diversity (each union representing a unique appellation). Thus, the model predicts that for each increase of 2 units in the diversity index, the percentage voting against proportional representation will increase by 1 point.

Taken together, the parity representation of the *bourses* and the national federations in the new CGT, the dual membership of unions in both their respective national federation and their local *bourse*, and the rule of one union, one vote helped to institutionalize a “balanced dualism” in the union movement. Parity established two equal branches of the movement with cross-cutting memberships. Dual membership gave individual unions greater freedom to mobilize along both sectoral (trade-based) and intersectoral (industrial-based) lines. The one union – one vote voting rule increased the visibility of small speciality unions that operated interstitially between trade or industrial sectors. These institutional features balanced the *bourses* against the national federations, sectoral against cross-sectoral mobilization, and the autonomy of individual unions against federated groups (the trade federations or the *bourses*). Overall, this cross-cutting balance discouraged the reciprocal closure of national federations and *bourses* that had divided the union movement between 1895 and 1900.

Syndicalism as a Closed Inverted Hierarchy

The massive strike wave of 1906 peaked in May and then rapidly declined. As it had in 1894, flagging participation initiated a new move toward closure of the union movement. Seeking to preserve the interunion unity encouraged by the strike wave and wishing to avoid the partisan conflict between ministerialists and antimministerialists, the CGT now moved back toward the position of union autonomy from political parties. This principle of union autonomy from political parties – or *syndicalism* – became central to the covenant that united the union movement, and the symbolism of “direct action” became the basis for

the revolutionaries. However, the group of miners affiliated with the CGT was a small Radical faction purposely organized by the CGT leadership; in fact, the miners as a whole were very reformist and remained aloof from the CGT (Trempe 1968; Michel 1974; Vandervort 1996). The miners were not organized by *bourses*, but their wildcat strikes shared with agricultural and woodcutting strikes a strong component of dispersed geographical mobilization (which the CGT rather than the *bourses* tried to spark). Finally, the textile federation contained a high degree of internal diversity. But as described in previous sections, the key agent in their mobilization was the Guesdist party rather than *bourses*.

constructing this syndicalism as an inverted hierarchy. “Revolutionary syndicalism” became the more sectarian form of this syndicalist doctrine, going further toward closure by arguing that “*Le syndicat suffit à tout*” (the union is sufficient for everything).

Shortly before the unified Socialist party (Section Française de l’Internationale Ouvrière; SFIO) voted for union autonomy in 1906, the CGT had set the example at their famous congress at Amiens. By an overwhelming 830 against 8, the CGT voted in favor of Victor Griffuelhes’s motion – later celebrated as the “Charter of Amiens” – which resolved that “the CGT brings together, outside of all political parties [*école politique*], all workers conscious of leading the struggle for the disappearance of wage labor and capital [*du salariat et du patronat*]” (Dubief 1969, 95; Confédération Générale du Travail 1907, 295–304). Together with the SFIO votes for union autonomy at the 1906 and 1907 congresses (to be discussed in the next chapter), the Charter of Amiens consolidated the boundary between the CGT and the SFIO.

Jean Latapie, a secretary of the metal federation and delegate at Amiens, best summed up the move toward closure represented by the doctrine of syndicalism: “We have spoken too much here as if we were socialists and anarchists. We have forgotten that above all we are syndicalists. Syndicalism is a new social theory” (cited by Julliard 1971, 127). What this new social theory insisted on was that workers remain strictly in their role of unionist when they were in the unions. In essence, syndicalism was an answer to the query of the delegate to the SFIO congress of 1906:

It is on the practical conduct of socialist militants that I ask the advice of the Party. When I go to the section of the *Bourses* to represent Bordeaux and Lille, I find myself among syndicalists. I continue to be a socialist; must I bring my socialist propaganda to this milieu? Must I remain mute in the unions or go there as a socialist?³³

The moderate, reformist unions – supporters of Millerand and the counterparts of Jaurès on the union side – were the key swing group in consolidating the boundary between union and party. They were the “reformists” at the 1904 Bourges congress and the supporters of the Higher Council of Labor at the 1901 Lyon congress. The landslide vote for the Charter of Amiens indicates that by 1906, however, they had swung their support behind the “syndicalist” position.

As “political” as they were, the moderate, reformist unions envisioned only a clientelist or voluntarist relationship between union and party. Moreover, they supported a broad democratic coalition, not a

33 Delegate Roland, representing the department of Lozère (SFIO 1906, 93).

class-based party. Thus, the catalyst for their conversion to syndicalism was the attempt by Renard, the Guesdist leader of the textile federation, to propose a more organic link between the CGT and the SFIO. His resolution, voted prior to the vote for the charter, was defeated by 736 against 34 (Confédération Générale du Travail 1907, 286–94). Thus, Coupat, the leader of the reformist mechanics' federation and a *millerandiste*, responded to Victor Renard's proposal:

I say to the socialists of the Textile [federation], that . . . it is impossible for me to vote for their proposition . . . The workers grouped around the union [*sur le terrain syndical*] are often obliged to count on a parliamentary majority which is not socialist. (Dubief 1969, 91)

The internal contradictions of syndicalism are evident. The “revolutionaries” in the CGT fundamentally opposed the collaborationist strategies of the Independent Socialists; they feared the cooptation of the unions by the state and by moderate Republicans. The “syndicalists” opposed drawing a class boundary between the working class and the broader Republican coalition. “Revolutionary syndicalism” united the unions against any intrusion of political parties into the unions. As L. Niel, the leader of the Montpellier *bourse* and one of the key proponents of this new “syndicalism,” wrote after Amiens: “*Vive la proposition du textile*” (Long live the Textile resolution). Renard's resolution, Niel wrote, “will force us to create a true syndicalist doctrine, enveloped up till now in thick political clouds of all colors” (*Humanité*, 10 mai 1906).

Chapter 6 argued that the general strike was the central symbol in the “pan-syndicalist” doctrine. The Charter of Amiens confirmed its centrality, claiming that “[syndicalism] prepares the integral emancipation, which can only be realized by capitalist expropriation; it advocates the general strike as a means of action” (Dubief 1969, 98). Reflecting, in part, the “direct action” ideas developed between 1895 and 1900, the syndicalist philosophy of strikes had shifted, especially after 1902, to embrace all strikes as useful preparation for the one big strike. Griffuelhes, the secretary of the CGT, gave the most memorable expression to this idea in claiming that strikes were “revolutionary gymnastics” – that is, practice for the revolution (Julliard 1968, 59; Laubier 1979, 54–7). Moreover, in justifying these gymnastics, Griffuelhes elevated the instinct for revolt to a great virtue. According to Griffuelhes, compared to the German worker “the French worker resists and protests; he critiques and revolts. He moves to action immediately. He does not ask before acting if the law permits him to act or not” (Griffuelhes 1908, 57).

“Direct action,” observes Jacques Julliard, means action unmediated through the institutions of party or state (Julliard 1968, 62). The parallel to the Protestant notion of a direct, unmediated relationship to God is expressed by Emile Pouget, the revolutionary syndicalist editor of the CGT’s *La Voix du Peuple*: “Direct action, it is the workers proclaiming that they want to count only on themselves, and not on an external Messiah, to ameliorate their conditions and to march towards complete liberation” (*Le Mouvement Socialiste* 1904, 68). In broader terms, the idea of direct action expressed a common populist sentiment that helped to hold together the “revolutionary” and “syndicalist” wings of revolutionary syndicalism. Populism, we have seen, rejects indirect organizational intermediation in favor of direct, unmediated participation.

This influence can be seen in the important role that the group most closely associated with populism, the Blanquists, had in the unification of the labor movement.³⁴ The Blanquist Griffuelhes, insisted that reform versus revolution was a false debate (Julliard 1968, 65).³⁵ The real distinction was between “direct” and “indirect” action. As A. Luquet, secretary of the federation of *coiffeurs*, wrote in the first number of *L’Action Directe*, a journal started in 1903: “Isn’t it to constant action, action for which parliamentarism is not a brake, the direct action of the workers . . . that is due the few reforms dignified of the name” (*L’Action Directe*, no. 1, July 1903). The syndicalists thereby replaced an old duality (reform vs. revolution) with a new one (direct vs. indirect action) that cross-cut it. The debate over proportional representation was used to further defend and support this idea of direct action. Supporters of the one union – one vote system, accused by its opponents of being undemocratic, argued that syndicalism was not democratic. The “active minorities” in the unions would not be cowed by passive majorities.

The *bourses* cultivated this populist spirit by mobilizing workers across the rural–urban divide. The *bourse* of Bourges, for example, organized woodcutters – rural workers who had supported Boulanger ten years earlier – into unions (Gratton 1971, 64, 83). Early discussions in the *bourses* about rural organizing had been prompted by “Guesdist populism” – an attempt by the Guesdists in the early 1890s to fashion

34 A number of authors have argued that Blanquists were critical in promoting union unity. Vandervort, however, has recently noted the tension between the Blanquists behind Griffuelhes and Pelloutier as head of the Federation of Bourses (Vandervort 1996). This tension did indeed exist. Yet it should not obscure the “class populist” consensus in the midst of the unions that brought anarcho-syndicalists and Blanquists together.

35 Mitchell has argued that revolutionary syndicalism was an attempt to overcome the duality of revolution vs. reform, arguing that direct action was a technique meant to attract support across the political spectrum (Mitchell 1987, Ch. 2, esp. 49–52).

an agrarian program to attract the peasantry. The *bourses*, according to Barbara Mitchell, imitated the Guesdists' agrarian program (Mitchell 1987, 177). They sought to take the lead in organizing agricultural unions throughout France and with a special intensity after 1900.³⁶ Yet this geographically based organizing can be seen as compatible with sectoral mobilization on a regional or national level. The creation of agricultural unions in the Aude ultimately led to the formation of a regional federation that was affiliated with the CGT (Frader 1991, 126). The *bourse* of Bourges, for example, was ultimately responsible for the creation of a national association of woodcutters in 1901 (Pennefier 1982, 50). And cooperation between the CGT and the *bourse* of Paris was instrumental in the establishment of a Fédération Nationale Horticole in 1905 (Gratton 1971, 229–38).³⁷

In this new populist alignment, we see the *bourses* once more emerge as the center of communal life and working-class ritualism. As Merriman describes the *bourse* of Limoges, for example, it was the place where different unions held dances, banquets, and other forms of *fête populaire*.³⁸ As they had a decade earlier, after the Boulangist movement, the *bourses* also again became the centers of a reinvigorated May 1st movement.³⁹ For example, in April 1901 the Lyon *bourse* and the local union federation invited the different political groups to join their May 1st demonstration.⁴⁰ And on May 1st, both the local Guesdists and the local anarchists participated.⁴¹ Also paralleling the late 1880s, May 1st became directly associated with the symbol of the general strike. In keeping with the emerging theory of direct action, however, the general strike now had to be shown to be practical for reforms. Thus, the 1904 congress voted to launch a movement for the eight-hour day on May 1, 1906 (Brécy 1961, 75). As Laubier argues, the movement for the eight-hour day was a way of “crystallizing” the concrete meaning of the general strike. Thus, Raoul Lenoir, secretary of the molders' federation, could declare that “the project to achieve the 8 hour day . . . demonstrates that reforms have not been repudiated” (*Le Mouvement Socialiste*

36 In the department of the Aude in southern France, the *bourses* of Carcassonne and Narbonne organized vineyard workers in surrounding villages beginning around 1903. See Frader (1991, esp. Ch. 6), Sagnes (1980, 76, 78, 85), Gratton (1971, 50–3), and Jonas (1994, 158).

37 Teachers also affiliated with the *bourses* at this time (Ferré 1955, 87). Wishnia argues that state civil servants – including teachers and postal employees – who were oriented toward syndicalism often came from poor rural backgrounds (Wishnia 1990, 89–100).

38 Merriman 1985, 211.

39 Dommanget 1972, 207–8, 234–6.

40 AD Rhône, 4 M 256, 10 avril 1901.

41 AD Rhône, 4 M 256, 1 mai 1901.

1904, 85). And for the “revolutionaries,” this movement still held out the possibility that it could become a “trampoline” for the revolutionary general strike (Laubier 1979, 135–41).⁴²

The general strike was also hitched to a new star: antimilitarism. Through the general strike the unions could respond to the outbreak of a European war. This antimilitarism was a response to the virulent nationalism raised by the Dreyfus affair – a syndicalist response. The Dreyfus affair had created strong pressure for a united Republican coalition against the conservative threat to the Republic. The new nationalists hoped to channel working-class unrest and protest in a nationalist direction. A vigorous antimilitarism allowed revolutionary syndicalism to close the unions off from both groups; the general strike allowed revolutionary syndicalists to posit a uniquely syndicalist weapon against war. Revolutionary “socialists” could not argue that the CGT must submit to the initiatives of the party on this vital issue.

Antimilitarist propaganda also reveals the *bourses*’ pursuit of a communal and integrative mission. Spearheaded by the *bourses*, antimilitarist propaganda moralized the unions; it made them, like the ancien régime corporations, moral and moralizing communities. It gave unions a higher ethical purpose and showed them to be more than just organizations for achieving limited material gains. Moreover, antimilitarism was a continuation of the educative mission that Pelloutier had seen for the *bourses*. The 1900 Federation of Bourses congress in Paris was the first union congress to take up the issue of antimilitarism (Julliard 1971, 200). At that congress, the *bourses* created a “*Sou du Soldat*” (Penny for the Soldier), a program to aid and keep in touch with young workers called up for military duty (Baker 1973, 273). This program was modeled on a program to aid workers sponsored by the Catholic Church. Finally, Georges Yvetot, secretary of the *bourse* section of the CGT, proposed an antimilitarist resolution at the Amiens congress in 1906. The resolution was adopted 484 to 300 (Confédération Générale du Travail 1907, 304–14).⁴³

Finally, syndicalists continued to argue that none of this was “ideological.” Although doctrines of syndicalism and direct action did represent an increasingly more closed ideology, it was an ideology that rejected the claims of priests, intellectuals, or politicians to mediate between

42 In 1906, when the May 1st celebrations directed by the *bourses* came close to a revolutionary general strike, the police were forced to occupy several provincial *bourses* (Dommanget 1972, 236). In Le Havre, the local union federation was expelled from its city offices because of the militance of May Day 1900 (Barzman 1987, 53).

43 For a discussion of antimilitarism in the CGT between 1900 and 1914, see Julliard (1988, 94–111).

individuals and their salvation.⁴⁴ For Griffuelhes, the doctrine of revolutionary syndicalism could not be traced back to either socialist or anarchist sources; it was “the result of a long practice, created more by events than by this or that person” (Lefranc 1967, 89). Furthermore, action was opposed to thought. “In the unions,” wrote Emile Pouget, “we philosophize little. We do more: we act” (*Le Mouvement Socialiste* 1904, 43).

The revolutionary syndicalist celebration of spontaneous action by “active minorities,” of direct action unmediated by organizational hierarchies or formalities of ideological dogma, and of an ethic of conviction (antimilitarism) all suggest a parallel with radical Protestantism. Like congregational religion, syndicalism was more “spiritual” than “institutional.” The *bourse* symbolized both this inversion of “Catholic” order and the concrete institutional location where it was cultivated. At its 1902 congress in Montpellier, the CGT voted that, in the future syndicalist society, “the *Bourse du travail* will be the center of activity and of human life” (Lefranc 1967, 103). In the present society, the *bourses* were the centers of syndicalist propaganda. The minister of the interior’s survey in 1907 summarizes the orientations of the *bourses* using one of two categories: “syndicalist” or “revolutionary and antimilitarist” (see Ansell 1993, App. II). Although life at the *bourses* was much more nuanced than these categories suggest, this stark representation indicates just how central the *bourses* were to syndicalist and revolutionary syndicalist doctrine.

Summary

Between 1895 and 1900, the *bourses* acted much like sects. Two factors contributed to this behavior. The first factor was that despite increasing union autonomy, as strikes declined many unions were embracing political action; the party sects themselves gradually turned toward more reformist activity during this period (reflecting the same movement toward instrumental rationality that I associated with the rise of the Possibilists in the early 1880s). In response, a faction within the *bourses* moved toward an anarchist position and a philosophy of direct action. The second factor was the move toward organizational routinization of strikes and union activity that occurred as union participation declined. The vehicle for this routinization was the national trade federation. In contrast to the cross-sectoral and multipurpose *bourses*,

44 For discussions of the anti-ideological character of syndicalism, see Eliot (1928), Ridley (1970), Mitchell (1987), and Jennings (1990).

these institutions were by nature more limited in scope and jurisdiction. They employed strike funds cautiously and selectively and generally sought to husband union resources. For a time, these two forms of union federation came sharply into conflict, and the *bourses* remained aloof from the fledgling union confederation, the CGT.

The return of strikes restored the *bourses* to their role of promoting unity in the labor movement. The broad-based nature of this renewed strike activity produced union growth and brought into relief a conflict between craft and industrial unionism. Many craft specialties fell outside or between the sectoral jurisdictions of the national trade federations. In addition, these strike surges tended to produce a more localistic orientation among unions. In this light, the *bourses* were perceived as a useful counterbalance against the national trade federations. They mobilized those who fell through the cracks of sectoral unionism. This role ultimately led to a refounding of the CGT in 1902 on a basis of equality between the national federations and the *bourses*. The voting rule of one union, one vote encouraged this balance by empowering small unions that fell between the cracks or straddled the boundaries between sectoral federations.

Much as had the Boulangist movement, the Dreyfus affair and the subsequent debate over Millerand’s participation in government generated controversy within the unions and party groups. One result was that the unions renewed their own nonpartisanship. They also redoubled their faith in May 1st and the general strike. The doctrine of “direct action” – advocated by the anarchist faction in the *bourses* between 1895 and 1900 – now became a central tenet of a more fully developed doctrine of revolutionary syndicalism.

The unity of the unions now being relatively assured, we can turn to the related movement toward unification of the party sects.

From Congregation to Reformed Church

[I]t is the distinctive characteristic of every sect . . . that it is based on a restricted association of individual local congregations. From this principle, which is represented in Protestantism by the Baptists and Independents, and later by the Congregationalists, a gradual transition leads to the typical organization of the Reformed Church

Max Weber

Institutional interpenetration of trade unions and partisan politics was a key obstacle to unification of both wings of the labor movement. Because unions and parties organized strongly overlapping constituencies, conflicts that arose in one institutional arena were easily transmitted to the other. Moreover, the issue continually arose as to whether political parties or unions were the leading agency of the labor movement. The dilemma of a full-scale realignment from sectarian to solidaristic can therefore be seen as three-sided: the problem of interunion unity, the problem of interparty sect unity, and the tension in the relationship between union and party. Their interdependence meant that one of these institutional problems could not be definitively settled in isolation from a compatible settlement of the other two. As Chapter 2 argued, the stability of balanced dualism depends on its being generalized to the broader system of interdependent relationships. As suggested by Mauss's model of gift exchange, Lévi-Strauss's model of generalized exchange, and Weber's discussion of the early Christian congregations, this occurs through a continuous "exogenizing" of solidarity such that broader and broader groups are incorporated under the principles of balanced dualism. In essence, local "ecumenical" solidarity demands global "ecumenical" solidarity.

In the French labor movement, this "exogenizing" of solidarity worked by extending the principle of balanced dualism from local unions to local party sects and from local parties to national parties. Ultimately, this process would come full circle when the SFIO agreed to respect union autonomy. This chapter argues that the critical step in this cycle was the

extension of the congregational principle represented by the *bourses* to local party sects via the development of political party structures called *autonomous departmental federations*. Whereas the *bourses* federated the unions on a citywide basis, the autonomous departmental federations federated “party sects” on a departmental basis. As with the *bourses*, these party federations tolerated and even encouraged differences among the constituent parts of the organization; the autonomy of the constituent groups was to be guaranteed. Also like the *bourses*, these local federations were similar to congregational churches in that they insisted on local autonomy even as they remained actively engaged in national party affairs. The covenant that bound them together was a syncretic ideology developed by Jean Jaurès that sought to transcend the differences between Marxist, Proudhonian, and revolutionary Republican traditions.

The link between the *bourses* and the autonomous departmental federations was both direct and indirect. They were directly linked because the same unionists who spearheaded realignment around the *bourses* also sponsored the creation of the party federations; they were indirectly linked because the *bourses*’ strategy of separating the unions from politics mitigated some of the sectarian disputes that had divided the party in the first place. Like the *bourses*, the autonomous departmental federations were inspired by a grassroots populism that regarded the party’s parliamentary leadership with some suspicion and parliamentarism with some scorn. A critical triggering condition for the emergence of the autonomous departmental federations was a new wave of populist mobilization and strike agitation at the turn of the century. The Dreyfus affair of the late 1890s created conditions very similar to those that accompanied the Boulangist movement of the late 1880s – heightened populist mobilization around political issues associated with the fate of the Republic (Birnbaum 1998). At the same time, the affair created deep rifts within the left-wing party sects over the position the Left should take toward the innocence of Dreyfus and the calls by the Radicals to rally to the Republic.

The insistence of Guesde on “class discipline” represented a first step toward a schism of the labor movement, as it had twenty years earlier, after the creation of the first French Socialist party. As argued in Chapter 3, populist mobilization tends to peak and then undergo successive schisms. An organizational schism of sorts did in fact occur after an attempt to unify the movement in 1898–9 (“of sorts” because the socialists achieved “unity” only in the narrowest sense). But this time, the schismatic tendency was stemmed by the countervailing institutional framework of the *bourses* and the autonomous departmental federations.

Some Preliminaries

The creation of local party “congregations” was facilitated by a number of structural changes that occurred during the middle of the 1890s: (1) the growth of a contingent of “independent socialists” outside of existing party divisions; (2) the growth of an independent-style populism within each of the party sects; (3) the decentralization of the Guesdist party; (4) the broadening of the social base of the Guesdist party; and (5) the collapse of a “party” centered around union populism. In the face of the divisive political events that would soon occur, these structural conditions encouraged the creation of decentralized party federations that paralleled the *bourses du travail* in structural form.

To understand these structural changes in the party movement, it is necessary to understand the character of unionism during this period. We have seen that the period 1893–8 represented a stagnation of strike activity. The weakness of strikes during this period led workers to substitute political for economic action. Workers, unionized and otherwise, turned to the political parties for support. The municipal elections of 1896 were a great success for the socialists. They obtained almost twice as many votes as they had in the legislative elections of 1893, which had themselves been a marked success (Noland 1956, 48). They also expanded the number of municipal councils in which they had majorities to 150, with minority representation on a great many more (Lefranc 1963, 99; McQuillen 1973, 110; Orry 1911, 23–4).

Three ironies. The first is that the big winners in the 1893 legislative elections were the Independent Socialists, whose moderate reformism yielded success just as the unions were hardening their revolutionary stance. The second and third ironies follow from the first: neither the Guesdists, with the most extensive party organization of the period, nor the Allemanists, whose fortunes were so closely tied to the unions, were as successful as the Independent Socialists. Of the thirty-seven socialist candidates elected to the Chamber of Deputies in 1893, twenty were Independents, six Guesdists, five Allemanists, four Blanquists, and two Possibilists (Noland 1956, 32).¹

A major feature of the growth of all the Socialist party sects between 1893 and 1898 was the prominence of independent candidates – or as the French called them, *Les personnalités* (e.g. Willard 1965, 115; Sagnes 1980, 56). The Independent Socialists were less oriented toward drawing strict boundaries between the working class and other groups. Although

1 The Guesdists had done particularly well in the municipal elections of 1892, electing 400 municipal councilors in 82 communes (Noland 1956, 27).

they acted like working-class notables, these independents had inherited a populist style from Radicals.² This populist style was developed in each of the party groups, causing the Guesdists and the Blanquists to become more internally polarized and precipitating a devastating schism in 1896 in the Allemanist party – the independent wing of the party broke off to form the Alliance Communiste Révolutionnaire.

The Allemanists were a party sect strongly rooted in the trade unions. Chapter 6 described the way in which they had adopted a complex legacy from the Boulangist mobilization. The Allemanist party was born out of the conflicts over Boulangism that divided the Possibilist party, individual unions, and the Paris *bourse*. Allemanism was an attempt to avoid these divisive effects. But the party had also adopted a grassroots populist style that defined an emerging union populism. The split in the Allemanist party reaffirmed elements of this populism. At the 1893 elections, the Allemanists had refused to join a socialist bloc in Parliament.³ The abstention of the Allemanist deputies from this group – an abstention enforced by the party secretariat – created a great deal of tension between the party and its elected representatives during 1894 and 1895 (Noland 1956, 40–1, 41 n). To a police informant reporting on a particular dispute over the participation of the *élus* (parliamentary representatives) in a vote for president of the Republic, this conflict was causing the party to lose its “consistency” as well as its “preponderance.”⁴ The party responded by trying to tighten up control over the *élus* through the *mandat impératif* and by insisting that all party members also be members of their union.⁵

The schism of the Allemanists ended any serious attempt to create a political party around a base of union populism. As explored in the last chapter, this union populism was thereafter steered away from party

2 Barzman describes the “Radical-Socialists” as distinguished from the Radicals by the use of a more “populist egalitarian rhetoric” (Barzman 1987, 80).

3 The Allemanists did, however, join the Blanquists’ federation of municipal councilors. Thus, they adopted a pattern of participation with other socialist sects that was precisely the opposite of that of the Guesdists. Each participated where they felt confident of their organizational control and withdrew where they felt weak. The Guesdists worried about losing control over autonomous regions and localities; the Allemanists, organized locally around unions, feared losing control over their representatives in national political institutions.

4 AN F7 12866, 8 février 1895, no. 7.

5 These forms of control are described in a police report (untitled, no. 7) dated May 7, 1895, in AN F7 12492. The *mandat impératif* was a mechanism for turning elected representatives into delegates controlled by the party. It usually entailed presubmission of the representative’s resignation to be held by the secretariat and clear instruction about what the representative could or could not vote for in the legislature or municipal councils. The resignation would be invoked if the representative failed to vote as instructed.

mobilization and came to express itself more directly in the form of revolutionary syndicalism.

The Guesdist party grew significantly between 1893 and 1897, but this growth came from the development of “independent-style” politics within the party.⁶ Baker’s study of the Guesdist party in the department of the Nord shows this growth of independent candidates quite clearly. In 1894–5, the Guesdists of the Nord invited Radical Socialists and Independent Socialists to join the party (Baker 1967, 71–99).⁷ These independent “notables” – like Edoard Delesalle, a Lille merchant and the political editor of the Radical Socialist daily, *Réveil du Nord* – assumed key party positions during this period (Baker 1967, 89). In Willard’s occupational profile of the Guesdist party in the Nord, he found 26.9 percent of the party candidates came from the small-business sector in 1890–3, whereas 32.9 percent fell into this category between 1894 and 1899 (Willard 1965, 240–1).⁸ This trend was even more accentuated in other areas. In the Loire, for instance, the category of small business jumped from 15.6 percent to 29 percent between the periods 1890–3 and 1894–9 (Willard 1965, 278).⁹ The Radical Socialists and the Independent Socialists were the inheritors of the populism of the Radicals, though their populism was now more narrowly based than that of the Radicals.

Among the first consequences of independent-style politics was an increasing receptiveness to socialist unity.¹⁰ This interest appears to have peaked just after the very successful 1896 municipal elections. A banquet celebrating the socialists’ election successes was the occasion to set forth a minimum plank for future socialist unification. This plank, proposed by the then-leading Independent Socialist, Alexandre Millerand, defined a resolutely legal and reformist socialism as a minimal platform for inclusion in the socialist family. The Guesdist’s warm reception of this platform suggests how far they had moved from their earlier revolutionary sectarianism (Noland 1956, 48–51).

6 After 1895, there was a sharp jump in the number of delegates in attendance and in the number of organizations and cities represented at the annual Guesdist party congresses (Willard 1965, 114). Between 1895 and 1897, the number of departmental federations in the Guesdist party more than doubled, from 6 to 14 (Willard 1965, 108 and 108 n).

7 The Radical Socialists were the leftward fringe of the Radical party. They saw themselves as slightly to the right of the Independent Socialists.

8 Small business, in this case, includes “commerçants” and “cabaretiers.”

9 The percentage also increased in Aube, Seine, Bouches-du-Rhône, and the Gironde; the percentage dropped slightly in Allier, where peasants rather than small business made a dramatic increase. Only in the Rhône did this percentage drop significantly (Willard 1965, 248, 253, 266, 277, 301, 311).

10 For an example, see Sagnes (1980, 56).

A second indication of this rapprochement at the national level, and of the increasing importance of elected over party leaders, was the creation of a socialist bloc in Parliament. After the legislative elections of 1893, the Blanquists suggested that the newly elected socialist deputies establish a unified socialist parliamentary group. The resulting group assembled all the socialist groups except the Allemanists (Noland 1956, 39–43). The entrance of deputies into the Guesdist administrative apparatus also indicates their increasing influence. Two deputies sat on the National Council of the party between 1891 and 1893; three were elected to that body in 1894 and 1895, five deputies in 1896, four in 1897, and then ten in 1898 (Willard 1965, 118).¹¹

The increasing municipalization of the party, along with the greater role of notables in party life, weakened the center–periphery linkages of the party organization. The National Council, according to Willard, progressively became little more than a committee of correspondence during this period, 1893–8 (Willard 1965, 120). One response to this loosening of center–periphery ties was to organize more “horizontal” regional federations. An attempt to federate the department of Isère, for example, sought to compensate for the deficiencies of weak central control (Pierre 1973, 78). Even during their phase of greatest strategic flexibility, the Guesdists continued to show themselves prickly on some subjects, such as a federation of municipal councilors. Along with prompting the formation of a parliamentary bloc in 1896, the Blanquists were also instrumental in sponsoring an organization of socialist municipal councilors. A first congress was held in late 1892. Despite their support for the parliamentary bloc, the Guesdists did not bring their active support to this project (McQuillen 1973, 96). By July 1896, however, after the creation in 1895 of a national municipal federation, the Guesdist leadership became more overtly hostile to this municipal movement (McQuillen 1973, 97–8). This hostility was a first indication of an eventual shift back to a hard-line policy.¹²

Another indication of the tensions that would appear at the turn of the century came with the increasing number of run-ins between the center and the regional federations after 1896. At the 1897 party congress, Guesde agreed to recognize the regional federations that had

11 On the importance of the 1892 municipal and 1893 legislative elections in reorienting the Guesdists toward a more reformist politics, see Perrot and Kriegel (1966, 50–5).

12 Another indication came with a circular from the National Council to regional federations at the time of the 1896 elections reminding them that the party should not make electoral alliances with the Radicals in the first round of the election. This circular was ignored by those federations most inclined toward independent-style politics, such as those in the Midi (Willard 1965, 188).

formed spontaneously (i.e., not under the aegis of the National Council) but rejected the idea of a national secretariat to link them together. The Parisian federation had proposed the division of the party into six regions – a move to decentralize the administration of the party. Guesde threatened to resign if this plan were voted, and his will prevailed.¹³ As Willard suggests, Guesde's attitude revealed a definite ambivalence toward these regional federations (Willard 1965, 108).

Categorical Imperatives: Class or Nation?

The Dreyfus affair was the opening salvo in a war that climaxed with the internecine battle over participation by the Independent Socialist Alexandre Millerand in the Waldeck-Rousseau cabinet of Republican concentration. The Dreyfus affair contained many of the same elements as the Boulanger affair ten years earlier: the emergence of a nationalist movement of the Right, the specter of a conservative coup d'état, a rallying of Republican forces to the defense of the Republic, and a confusion among the socialists about how to respond. Remember that in France, nationalism was a Republican legacy. The formation of a Republican bloc necessarily subordinated intra-Republican class divisions to the Republican project for the nation. Thus, the socialist dilemma: class before nation?¹⁴

As with prior populist mobilizations, the impetus was toward broad-based unity in its early phases followed by moves toward organizational closure in its later phase. In October 1898, the various socialist sects, prompted this time by the Guesdists, formed a vigilance committee to combat the anti-Republican movement.¹⁵ By December 1898, this com-

13 July 16, 1897, police report on a meeting of the POF's 1897 annual party congress (AN F7 12866). See Willard (1965, 108, n. 4) for discussion of a similar police report on the same meeting.

14 The initial socialist response, formulated in a manifesto by the socialist deputies (of all sects) in January 1898, asserted the priority of class over nation. The manifesto insisted that the affair was a dispute between rival factions of the bourgeoisie; workers should remain on neutral terrain (Noland 1956, 63–5). The divisive experience of Boulangism had not been lost on the socialists. Nevertheless, in the spring of 1898, Jaurès, convinced of the innocence of Dreyfus, joined the campaign to clear him. The working class, argued Jaurès, could not afford to remain neutral in a dispute that so fundamentally challenged republican institutions (Noland 1956, 70–2). The Independent Socialists, as well as two other socialist sects – Possibilists and Allemanists – followed him in this analysis. The Guesdists and Blanquists remained committed to their class position.

15 The two largest groups were now the Guesdists and the Independent Socialists, and the distance between their positions would hereafter represent the probability of socialist unification. On the Dreyfus affair, they initially adopted quite opposing positions: the Guesdists adopted the class position, arguing that this was a dispute among the

mittee took on the broader function – as indicated by its new name, the “Permanent Committee for Socialist Reconciliation” – of preparing for the eventual unification of socialist forces in a single party.

Hopes of unification ran high in the first half of 1899. The entrance of Millerand into the Waldeck-Rousseau ministry in June 1899, however, led to still another change in tactical direction for the Guesdists and Blanquists. The Independent Socialists, Possibilists, and to a lesser extent the Allemanists supported Millerand’s decision to join the Waldeck-Rousseau government. They viewed a government representing a united Republican coalition as necessary for safeguarding the Republic. But the Guesdists and the Blanquists, returning to the pure class position they had adopted at the outset of the Dreyfus affair, argued that it was a travesty for a socialist to enter a bourgeois ministry. This time their resolve held.

In a final quest to recuperate the failing project for socialist unity, the parties called a general congress to smooth over the Millerand dispute and to create a formula for unity (Noland 1965, 99–101). Held in December 1899, this congress became in effect a national referendum on the fundamental commitment of French socialists. With 630 delegates in attendance, representing all the different socialist party groups of France, the congress voted on the proposition, submitted by Jules Guesde himself, that elevated the categorical imperative of the Dreyfus affair to its starkest representation: “Does the class struggle permit the participation of a socialist in a bourgeois ministry?” By 818 mandates against 634, the delegates voted that it did not (Willard 1965, 436). Instead of unification, the congress ultimately resulted in the schism of the socialist movement into two political parties built around these dualistic roles: the Parti Socialiste de France (Socialist party of France) were the “anti-ministerialists” and the Parti Socialiste Français (French Socialist party) were the “ministerialists.”¹⁶

bourgeoisie; the Independent Socialists, behind Jean Jaurès, adopted the position that the attack on Dreyfus represented a threat to the Republic. Facing the defection of local independent leaders to support Dreyfus, the Guesdists and the Blanquists changed course again in the fall of 1898. Henceforth they would support the Republican campaign in defense of the Republic, if not the personal innocence of Dreyfus (Willard 1965, 415–17). Whereas Guesdist and Blanquist intransigence had halted the movement toward Socialist unity begun at St. Mandé, this *volte-face* reinvigorated it.

¹⁶ Thereafter, the congress went through the formal motions of creating machinery to proceed with unification, but the game was lost. The division had been too clearly drawn. The vote, in essence, defined the future formation of two socialist blocs: the Guesdists, Blanquists, and small Communist Alliance on one side; the Independent Socialists, Possibilists, and most of the recently formed autonomous departmental federations on the other. The Guesdists defected from the September 1900 congress on a pretext; the Blanquists and Communist Alliance followed them at the May 1901

As the largest contingent at the 1899 congress, the Guesdists found their strategy of ideological closure to be a costly one.¹⁷ The national schism produced a countermobilization that sought to forge or maintain cross-sectarian alliances at the local level in much the same way as the *bourses* had for the unions in the early 1890s. These defections from the national strategy were galvanized by a new model of socialist organization: the autonomous departmental federation.¹⁸ In the department of the Marne, for instance, the journal *La Petite République* published the following announcement:

The "Socialist Union" group of the Marne joins the Revolutionary Socialist Federation, which since the last congress has actively campaigned for the creation of a unitary federation assembling all the groups of the department without distinction of school [i.e., sects] . . . Almost all of them sent delegates, particularly the POF [Guesdists].¹⁹

These local party federations were congregational in the sense that they welcomed socialists regardless of creed and declared themselves "autonomous" of any national party sect. The earlier decentralization of the Guesdist party and its increasing incorporation of "independent-style" mobilization encouraged this new style of organization.

From seven federations at the 1898 congress, the number of autonomous departmental federations increased to eighteen by August 1899 (Willard 1965, 443–4). The formation of these new institutions represented a rejection of the duality of pro- and antiministerialism. As an editorial in *Le Quotidien* entitled "The Autonomous Federations and the Congress of Lyon" argued: "The Millerand case irritates us, because it does not interest us *from the point of view of our principles.*"

congress. Together, they formed the Parti Socialiste de France (Socialist party of France) at an "antiministerial" congress in November 1901. The "ministerialists," retaining the party framework set up at the 1899 congress, assumed the title Parti Socialiste Français (French Socialist party). The Allemanists struck out on their own. For all the tactical twists and turns culminating in the formal organization of these two blocs, see Chapters 5 and 6 of Noland (1956).

17 A comparison of the geographical distribution of Guesdist party groups at their 1899 congress and at their 1901 congress in Roubaix reveals a distinct withdrawal of their bases of implantation. Only three new departments were represented in 1901, and twenty departments represented in 1899 were no longer present. In contrast, the number of groups in many of the core areas of Guesdist organization had increased by 1901. The number of groups in the Guesdist strongholds of the Nord and Pas-de-Calais, for instance, increased notably. Willard's comparison of the voting returns for 1898 and 1902 shows this same retreat of the Guesdists to their base (Willard 1965, 476–523).

18 On the defection of Guesdists in the Drôme and the subsequent creation of an autonomous federation, see Pierre (1973, 116). On the creation of an autonomous federation in the Hérault, see Sagnes (1980, 63).

19 *La Petite République*, 4 janvier 1901.

There had always been a sentiment in the provinces that local groups did not need to accept the schisms that occurred in national congresses. Lequin notes that local socialist groups often remained indifferent to the sectarian divisions at the national level and chose instead to preserve their autonomy (Lequin 1977a, 238). After the schism between the Guesdists and the Possibilists in 1882, for example, the *cercle l'Égalité* of Lille claimed that it would remain neutral in the conflict and retain close relationships with both “fractions” of the party while “guarding its complete independence.” But after a vote, this neutrality was rejected.²⁰

Just as a decade earlier the divisive Boulangist movement had encouraged the realignment of unions around the *bourses*, the divisiveness of the Dreyfus and Millerand affairs now led the party sects to reorganize themselves around the autonomous departmental federations. Whereas the *bourses* had adopted a type of union populism encouraged by Boulangism, these party federations were encouraged by a more populist version of republicanism. It is important to note the distinctiveness of this emerging local populism. It rejected making any sharp distinction between Republican and class strategies, a rejection partly reflecting the new prominence of “independent” socialism at the local level. Yet on the national level, the Independent Socialists were clearly in the “ministerialist” camp. At the same time this local populism rejected the increasing influence of parliamentarians in the party, insisting that party sovereignty must reside instead closer to the people – in the local party federations. In a move similar to the adoption of the philosophy of direct action by the unions, the autonomous federations sought to supersede the ministerialist/antiministerialist duality with opposition to all political elites:

Strange thing! It is aspiring ministers – of the period of the *impersonal* dictatorship of the “proletariat” [i.e., a reference to the Marxist Guesdists] who reproach us, the autonomous federations, of a *ministerialism* that we combat with all our forces in principle. *Fundamentally*, we see all the ministers in the same way: but, without contradicting ourselves, we prefer liberal to reactionary ministers.²¹

This ambiguous position paralleled the relationship of Allemanism to Boulangism noted earlier. Recall that Allemane himself had been a staunch Republican opponent of the Boulangist movement, but he had supported strikes his opponents thought were Boulangist conspiracies and had adopted a class-conflict rhetoric at least as virulent as that of

20 Archives de la Fédération du Nord du Parti Socialiste, *Procès-Verbaux des réunions du Comité Fédéral* par Gustave Delory du 6 août 1882 au 29 novembre 1902.

21 *Le Quotidien*, 27 mai 1901.

his Guesdist opponents. The same ambiguity arose for the Allemanists during the Dreyfus affair. They were staunch Republican defenders on the side of Dreyfus. Yet they had split in 1896 because of their antagonism toward the growing autonomy of the *élus*. Common to both the Allemanists and the newly emerging autonomous departmental federations was a *class populism*. The autonomous departmental federations insisted on direct democracy and expressed suspicion of representative democracy as symbolized by parliamentary leaders. Although remaining Republicans, they adopted a much sharper class-conflict rhetoric than did Radicals or Independent Socialists. Indeed, it is likely that in a number of regions Allemanism directly influenced the populist style of the autonomous federations.²²

The populism of the French labor movement was divided between a number of tendencies. The Blanquists, the anarchists, the Allemanists, the Independent Socialists, and even the Guesdists represented different versions of – or at least contained aspects of – the populist tradition in France. The “populist” aspect of each group could be unified around a defense of direct democracy against representative democracy. We see here the emerging outline of a position that could unify the labor movement: the class populism of the *bourses* and the autonomous departmental federations in tandem.

Bourse and Departmental Federation

The creation of autonomous departmental federations was encouraged and made possible by the realignment of unions brought about by the *bourses du travail*. Often, it was the same leaders who were prominent in the *bourses* that took the lead in creating the autonomous federations, as the following announcement suggests:

The second congress of the Federation of Socialist Organizations of Loir-et-Cher was held . . . under the direction [*la présidence*] of citizen Pottier, secretary of the *Bourse du travail* of Blois . . . The congress acclaims socialist unification by the autonomous federation and desires to see the disappearance of the animosities which exist between the diverse factions of the Party.²³

The first outlines of autonomous federations actually dated back to before the Millerand affair to the period between 1892 and 1894 when

22 For instance, Barzman notes the influence of the Allemanists in party unification in Le Havre (Barzman 1987, 71, 75).

23 *La Petite République*, 22 novembre 1900.

unions began to realign under the aegis of the *bourses*. Liu notes that “many socialist handloom weavers like Guérin and Pierre Chupin, who continued to be active in the *Chambre syndicale* and in the *Bourse du travail* established in 1891, were increasingly described in police documents as ‘independent socialists.’” The socialists at the Cholet *bourse*, in particular, were eager to create a new party “uniting various ‘independent socialists’” (Liu 1994, 151).

In Marseille, for instance, the first attempt to federate the competing sects came in late 1892 – following a national union congress held in Marseille that had surprised everyone by voting in favor of the general strike.²⁴ In early 1893, the city’s federation of unions (which ran the *bourse*) joined this new party federation, called “The Socialist Revolutionary Union (USR).” However, the party federation proved unstable because of the disputes over the proper representational balance between different sects. The Guesdists were the largest group and believed that they were not given representation in proportion to their size. In the face of these disputes, the city union federation withdrew from the USR. Police reported, for instance, that the iron forgers’ union wanted to withdraw in order to remain neutral vis-à-vis these party conflicts. In late 1893, a leader named Desgrès (see Chapter 6) – “a resolved partisan of the General Strike” – made a second attempt to create a pan-socialist federation in Marseille. In doing so, Desgrès broke with the Guesdists with whom he had been affiliated. The *Fédération Socialiste Marseillaise*, as the new federation called itself, declared its mission to be “to centralize all socialist forces without distinction of sect or program, each group conserving its absolute autonomy.” It made the general strike a central plank of its program.²⁵

24 The police note the influence on certain union leaders within the *bourse* of the 1892 Marseille congress general strike vote (AD Bouches-du-Rhône, 1 M 1511, notes of 27 and 30 septembre 1893).

25 AD Bouches-du-Rhône, 1 M 1418, “Parti Socialiste 1892–1894.” See the memo from the Cabinet du Prefet, 30 décembre 1892, on the “première tentative de concentration.” The memo reports that this initial attempt had only limited success because of the continued clash of personal ambitions. On the conflicts over representation within the Union Socialiste Revolutionnaire (USR), see police notes of 19, 20, and 30 janvier 1893. On the adherence of the local union federation to the USR, see police note 19 janvier 1893 and on its withdrawal, see police note 30 janvier 1893; on the withdrawal of the forgers, see police note 6 février 1893. For a list of the membership of the *Fédération Socialiste Marseillaise* (FSM), see police note 18 octobre 1893. For a declaration of their principles, see a flyer dated 13 décembre 1893. On Desgrès, see police notes of 14 and 16 décembre 1893; on support of the FSM for the general strike, see police note of 3 janvier 1894 and 16 juin 1894 (and 1 M 1511, note of 20 juin 1894). On the ultimate failure of the FSM, see police notes 27 juin 1894 and 16 août 1894.

At the heart of this new federation was a small leadership core who called themselves “The Revolutionary Group of the Center.” Composed of only about twenty members – many of whom were affiliated with the city union federation – their goal was to “to make an active campaign in favor of the general strike.” At the end of 1894, however, this project collapsed in the face of disputes over electoral strategy. A new attempt to create a departmental federation was pursued again in 1896 by Montagard, another renegade Guesdist, partisan of the general strike, and major figure in the Marseille *bourse*. This attempt also did not succeed in uniting the socialist movement of Marseille, though police noted that it did succeed in uniting “several factions.”²⁶

This Marseille example suggests how realignment at the *bourses* was linked to attempts to create an autonomous socialist federation. For the *bourses*, autonomous federations were a natural extension of the interparty unity achieved among unions. Even as the unions drew a boundary between themselves and the party sects, their overlapping memberships made that boundary hard to enforce. The realignment of the unions remained quite fragile as long as the party sects were also divided. The solution was to create an *interstitial* party alignment that cross-cut affiliations to different sects, just as the *bourses* had done for the unions. The autonomous federations were thus structurally equivalent to the *bourses*. Together, they represented reinforcing sets of interstitially mobilized union and party groups. However, as the Marseille example also demonstrates, this reinforcing equilibrium of *bourses* and autonomous federations was not easily achieved. Local revolts against the roles imposed by the national party sects were thus a critical step in the eventual consolidation of this equilibrium. As Henri Ponard, the secretary general of the autonomous federation of the Jura wrote optimistically in *Le Quotidien* just prior to the 1901 socialist unification congress: “The factions, from the ‘Guesdists’ to the ‘Independents’ will last as long as they can. But they will certainly not resist, in the long run, the progressive extension of the autonomous federations, who will absorb all their members, one by one.”²⁷ This new alignment, however, would only be fully consolidated through a new round of institutional and ideological disputes.

26 AD Bouches-du-Rhône, 1 M 1418, “Parti Socialiste, 1892–1894.” On the “Revolutionary Group of the Center,” see police note 18 juin 1894. On Montagard and his attempt to reconstitute the FSM, see 1 M 1419, police notes 8 mars 1895, no. 996, and 22, 26, and 30 juin 1896, 5 and 13 juillet 1896.

27 *Le Quotidien* (Lyon), Lundi, 27 mai 1901.

Jaurèsian Synthesis: Totemic Unity

With the creation of the autonomous federations, the infrastructure was in place for defining a more stable institutional relationship between party and union. What was still missing was the covenant that glued the local congregations – the autonomous federations – into a cohesive denomination (party). That covenant – one that synthesized the different traditions of French socialism – was ultimately the work of Jean Jaurès, who resurrected the project initiated in 1880 by Benoît Malon to create an “integral socialism.” The Jaurèsian synthesis sought to overcome the dualisms of socialist thought. Much as Griffuelhes of the CGT believed that syndicalism transcended the dichotomy between revolution and reform, Jaurès saw this debate as “sterile” (Perrot and Kriegel 1966, 69).

In succeeding where Malon failed, Jaurès had the good fortune of sitting atop a movement spearheaded by the autonomous departmental federations. Jaurès began to explore the potential of this new institutional form in 1900.²⁸ The successful institutionalization of this strategy, however, would elude him until after 1904. In the intervening years a critical element of the strategy was still missing: the principle of union autonomy from the party. Union autonomy was to become the central principle in a covenant that would unite the working class. This principle of union autonomy had already been embraced by many autonomous federations. In a letter to a socialist colleague in early 1905, for instance, Charles Brunellière, leader of the autonomous socialist federation of Bretagne, wrote that “With respect to autonomy, I am not only a partisan of it for the socialist party; I also embrace union and masonic autonomy.”²⁹ Brunellière and other local party leaders had learned to adopt a position of union autonomy to preserve the delicate balance between the autonomous federations and the *bourses*.³⁰ Yet the principle eluded national leaders, including Jaurès, who were still engaged in a war of position.

28 Perrot and Kriegel note an emerging affinity between Jaurès and revolutionary syndicalism beginning at the 1899 unity congress (Perrot and Kriegel 1966, 78).

29 Brunellière to Allaire, January 29, 1905 (Willard 1968, 211–12).

30 The teetering nature of this balance, however, is suggested by police observations of Brunellière’s political position as leader of both the party and the *bourse*: “Brunellière, municipal councilor of Nantes, does his best to hold himself in equilibrium between the ‘politicians’ and the anti-parliamentarians. Through the Socialist Federation that he has founded and of which he is the soul . . . Brunellière has one foot in the Guesdist camp; through the *Bourse du travail*, dominated by the anarchists, and of which he presents himself as the protector, he rests his other foot on the terrain of union and economic action” (AD Loire-Atlantique, 1 M 620, 13 août 1896).

By focusing on the intellectual distance that the pivotal party leader Jean Jaurès had to travel before embracing the principle of union autonomy, we can see the remaining challenge to realignment. In the month or so before the Second General Socialist Congress in 1900, Jaurès launched a campaign to persuade the unions to attend the congress *en masse*. In Butler's opinion, this was an attempt to draw extra reinforcements from among the large community of moderate pro-Millerand unions (Butler 1960, 336). Recall that the ministerialists, among whom Jaurès was included, had been defeated by the antiministerialists at the General Congress of 1899. To justify this move, he promoted the benefits of closer collaboration between the party and the unions. He even valorized the general strike, while at the same time insisting that union-party cooperation could make it more effective (Butler 1960, 336). Jaurès also began to promote the autonomous departmental federations as the best framework around which to consolidate the unification of the party (Rebérioux, 1971, 95). But the polarization between ministerialists and antiministerialists proved too deep. For Jaurès to effectively play the autonomous federation card, he would have had to remain neutral between the ministerialist and antiministerialist camps. This he was unable to do.

In fact, the autonomous federation represented a very different institutional locus in the party than the one that strongly supported ministerialism. The Independent Socialists were organized around their cadres of *élus* – their parliamentary representatives, such as Jaurès himself. The key conflict in the tentatively and skeletally unified party between the 1899 and the 1900 general congresses was that between the party's General Committee, dominated by Guesdists, and the socialist parliamentary group, the bulk of whom were Independents. The General Committee sought to press the parliamentarians into the service of the party; the *élus* rebelled against this party discipline.³¹ This conflict over control of the party fueled the dispute over the ministerial participation of Millerand (Noland 1956, 115–23). To not take sides in the dispute between ministerialists and antiministerialists would also have meant remaining neutral in this conflict over the national power structure of the party. In contrast, the autonomous departmental federations tended to take a more grassroots populist view of the role of their elected representatives – much as the Allemanists had before their split. Generally, they saw party sovereignty as located in the local federations rather than in either the corps of parliamentary cadres or the national party bureaucracy.

31 The *élus* met 17 octobre 1899 to create the Fédération Nationale des élus du Parti Ouvrier Français (AD Nord, M 154/84).

In 1904, the meeting of the International in Amsterdam voted in favor of the antiministerialists and also to recognize only a single party from each country. Upon their return from this meeting, the antiministerialists floated a new proposal for unification that the National Council of the ministerialist party, now under the control of departmental federations (as opposed to the parliamentary deputies), accepted.³² But the parliamentary deputies rebelled. They insisted on continuing their collaboration with the Radicals. This time Jaurès broke with the deputies and supported the National Council (Noland 1956, 180; Goldberg 1968, 338–9). It was an indication that his fundamental strategy had shifted. He now decisively supported the federations against the deputies, something he could not bring himself to do in 1900–1. The new party was officially established at a unity congress in Paris in 1905. The party was formally titled the Parti Socialiste, Section française de l'Internationale ouvrière (Socialist party, French section of the Worker's International), or SFIO.³³

The change in Jaurès's position probably reflected a new wave of grassroots populism, associated with the strike wave of 1902–6, that mobilized through the departmental federations.³⁴ The department of the Drôme offers a good example. An autonomous departmental federation had been formed in rebellion against the class position of the Guesdists in 1900. Based in Valence (the rival Guesdists being in Romans), it was a federation that leaned toward collaboration with the Radicals and

32 In August 1904, Jaurès attended the congress of the International in Amsterdam. There, he squared off against Guesde in an attempt to defend the record and method of the ministerial socialists. The congress, however, voted against reformist ("revisionist") methods. Moreover, to nudge the French toward unity, the International passed a resolution stating that only a single unified party should represent the socialist movement per country (Noland 1956, 165–74; Goldberg 1968, 324–8; Perrot and Kriegel 1966, 81–3; Lefranc 1963, 118–21). Upon returning to France, the antiministerialists quickly floated a proposal for unification on the "revolutionary" basis laid down by the International. At first the Parti Socialiste Français, the ministerialists, hedged. The antiministerialists persisted. Finally, in late October 1904, the ministerialists agreed to enter into unification negotiations. The antiministerialists then stated that their basic condition for unification was that ministerialist parliamentary deputies withdraw from their collaboration with the Radicals in Parliament.

33 Notably, the statutes of the SFIO limited the representation of parliamentarians to a tenth of the total number of members on the governing National Council, who were otherwise to be proportionally delegated by their respective federations. Additionally, parliamentarians were not allowed to serve on the 22-person Permanent Administrative Council (SFIO 1905, 24–7).

34 Certainly the dictates of the International had influenced Jaurès in his break with the ministerialists. Nevertheless, the rebellion of the parliamentary deputies shows that unification on these terms was not a foregone conclusion. As Lefranc points out, Russian socialism remained divided between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks (Lefranc 1963, 121).

looked favorably on the ministerial participation of Millerand. It also had a much broader social base than the opposing Guesdist federation. At this time, the *bourse* in Valence was notably moderate, with a strong “mutualist and reformist” orientation. It explicitly adopted a policy of collaboration between the classes. In 1902–4, a wave of strikes led to the creation of a more class-conscious *bourse* in neighboring Romans (a shoemaking town), which then took the lead in organizing a departmental union federation that would organize unions in relatively isolated rural villages. This strike wave also corresponded to a change of heart in the autonomous federation, which in 1903 voted in favor of the exclusion of Millerand from the party. Pierre argues that the unity achieved within the Romans *bourse* in 1904 was then transferred to a coalition of Radicals, Radical Socialists, Guesdists, and the autonomous federation. This new alliance became the basis for socialist unification in the Drôme (Pierre 1973, Chs. 1 and 2).³⁵

Between 1905 and 1906, a new “populist” faction associated with Gustav Hervé developed in the party. They called themselves Hervéists or “insurrectionals.” This faction embraced many of the “direct action” themes of revolutionary syndicalism. Like Hervé himself, who was based in the Yonne federation, the social base of this current was in the autonomous departmental federations.³⁶

Jaurès’s decisive shift of support toward the autonomous federations was reflected in his adoption of a new position on the relationship between the unions and the party. He embraced the analysis whereby the party and unions had a complementary division of labor and that these distinct roles could best be performed through mutual autonomy and independence (Rebérioux 1971, 96). At the 1906 SFIO meeting in Limoges, there was a long discussion on the pros and cons of union autonomy (SFIO 1906, 88–109, 121–44, 157–81, 184–98, 200–3). Jaurès, in the name of the departmental federation of the Tarn, proposed a resolution in favor of union autonomy that read, in part:

The Congress, convinced that the working class will be able to enfranchise itself only by the combined force of political and union action, by syndicalism leading to the general strike, and by the conquest of all political power in view of the general expropriation of capitalism . . .

35 Sagnes argues that the autonomous federation of Herault evolved toward a stronger class orientation in this period as a result of agricultural strikes. This radicalization encouraged a rapprochement with the Guesdist-Blanquists who were organized outside the autonomous federation (Sagnes 1980, 71). In the Herault, local unity preceded national unity.

36 Rebérioux argues that these “socialist-syndicalists” have their origins in “independent socialism” or in formerly Allemanist departments (Rebérioux 1968, 29–30).

... [resolves] that this double action will be all the more effective if the political organization and the economic organization have their full autonomy. (SFIO 1906, 164-5)

As the discussion after this proposal makes clear, Jaurès was moving to embrace some of the central tenets of CGT's own ideological defense of union autonomy from political parties, particularly the importance of the general strike (SFIO 1906, 165-80).³⁷

The Reformed Church Examined

This chapter has argued that the autonomous departmental federations were to the socialist sects what the *bourses du travail* were for the unions: they created an organizing framework that linked party sects together locally across the divisions that polarized them nationally (cross-cutting balance); they were the equivalent of local church congregations that permitted freedom of faith while creating a community of worship (congregationalism); and they were united with other autonomous departmental federations and the *bourses* around a covenant whose central principle was union autonomy (covenantalism). Like the *bourses*, the autonomous departmental federations were motivated by a class populism that insisted on the realization of popular sovereignty and direct democracy through communal, self-governing institutions. The coming together of the party sects around this congregational-covenantal model was strongly encouraged by the prior creation of *bourses*, which had prompted realignments of local labor movements.

The final section of this chapter develops a statistical analysis of this last argument. Although systematic data for providing quantitative support for this argument is quite limited, we do have relatively good information on the geographical variation in the implantation of party sects and *bourses*. To exploit this data, I utilize a technique known as "correspondence analysis" – familiar to many from the work of Pierre Bourdieu – to explore how the distribution of *bourses* and unions affects the "correspondence" or structural equivalence of departments and of party groups. This technique aims to demonstrate two of the key *mechanisms* of realignment. The first mechanism is the emergence of mutualism between the *bourses* and the departmental federations. Does party unity really build upon the structure of the *bourses*? On the basis of

³⁷ In fact, the left wing of the SFIO, under the leadership of Gustave Hervé, embraced this doctrine of revolutionary syndicalism even more fully (Noland 1956, 192-3). Unlike Hervé, however, Jaurès continued to insist that, within strict limits, there was still a place for reformist political action.

certain network theoretic assumptions to be described, correspondence analysis can predict the influence of *bourses* and unions on the alignment of party sects and departments. The second mechanism is the link between this mutualism and the party's adoption of the principle of union autonomy. To examine this link, we can take the results of the correspondence analysis and see how well it predicts the 1907 SFIO vote on union autonomy (SFIO 1907, 524).

Our data on socialist implantation is in the form of two-mode relational data: the rows of this matrix are departments; the columns are party groups. The entries in the matrix are *relations* – the number of groups a particular party “contributed” to a particular department (or vice versa: the number of groups a department contributes to a party). This information comes from the 1899 socialist unification congress, which provided a highly detailed listing of participating groups and their affiliation to national party sects (for the data, see Ansell 1993, 735–8). Anarchists, however, did not attend this congress. Therefore, I have utilized numerical counts of individual anarchists by department established by police surveillance. Data on the implantation of unions and *bourses* were also added as additional column variables. The number of unions in a department in 1905 and the number of unions affiliated to *bourses* in a department in 1905 were used to operationalize the implantation of unions and *bourses* (Institut National de la Statistique et des études économiques 1905, 130–3).

Wasserman, Faust, and Galaskiewicz have described how correspondence analysis – a variant of the more familiar canonical correlation analysis – can be used to analyze two-mode relational data in a fashion similar to more standard network analysis methods (Wasserman, Faust, and Galaskiewicz 1989, 11–64). In particular, they argue that correspondence analysis shares with these traditional network methods the ability to identify patterns of structural equivalence in relational data (Wasserman, Faust, and Galaskiewicz 1989, 32–5; Wasserman and Faust 1994, 334–43). In this case, structural equivalence refers to the condition of having similar patterns of party, *bourse*, and union implantation. For example, two party sects are structurally equivalent if they are implanted in the same department. Or, reciprocally, two departments are structurally equivalent if they have a similar representation of party sects, *bourses*, and unions.

Using this *departments x organizations* data matrix, correspondence analysis works by extracting the dimensionality of the relationships between the rows and the columns of the matrix. It does this by assigning scores to the rows and columns of the matrix such that the row scores are the weighted means of column scores and vice versa. The

mathematical solution to this problem is the eigenvalue for each matrix element; thus, for each eigenvector, there is a set of row and column scores (Wasserman, Faust, and Galaskiewicz 1989, 21–5).³⁸

In the analysis performed here, the column scores are used to graphically display the structural equivalence of the organizational variables (e.g., party groups, unions, *bourses*). The row scores are then used as an independent variable to see whether the structural equivalence of departments explains the 1907 SFIO vote on union autonomy. The correspondence analysis module in the network analysis software UCINET IV was used to generate these row and column scores (Borgatti, Everett, and Freeman 1992).

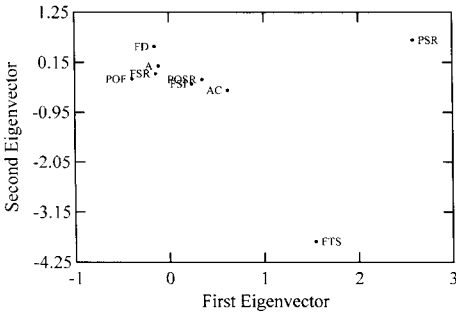
This analysis is carried out in two steps. First, the implantation data is analyzed without including information on the *bourses* and unions. This data represents the status quo ante of party sectarianism. This system was based on intense divisions within departments and alliances across departments. Party sects, for example, will be found to be equivalent if they are implanted in the same departments. Thus, the correspondence analysis will group party sects who *define themselves in opposition to each other in the same departments*. In the second step of the analysis, information about the implantation of unions and *bourses* is added. This chapter has argued that the *bourses* encouraged a party realignment by bringing the party sects together locally in autonomous departmental federations. We expect this new information to provide a different basis for relating party sects to each other – *in terms of their common relationships vis-à-vis the bourse rather than in terms of their mutual opposition*.

Figure 8.1 graphically displays the results of the correspondence analysis for the column variables. The column scores for each organizational variable are plotted in eigenspace (first and second eigenvectors) for four different permutations: party groups alone, party groups plus unions, party groups plus *bourses*, and party groups plus unions and *bourses*.

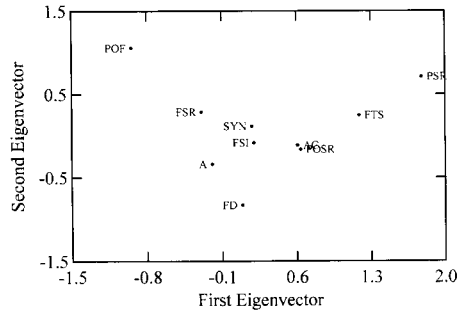
The graph of the column scores for parties alone shows the various parties clumped in the upper-left-hand corner around the Guesdist party (POF). Only the Blanquists (PSR) and the Possibilists (FTS) stand aloof. What this graph suggests is that sectarianism is strongly structured around opposition to the Guesdists, who were the largest and best-organized party sect. The Guesdists, of course, were notable for their attempts to impose centralized “class” discipline on the working class.

38 Because it is close or equal to 1, the first eigenvector is trivial. For ease, I will refer hereafter to the second and third eigenvectors as the first and second eigenvectors.

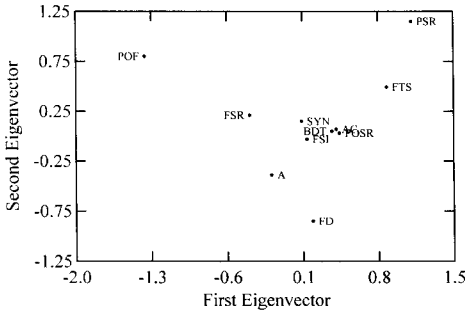
Parties Only



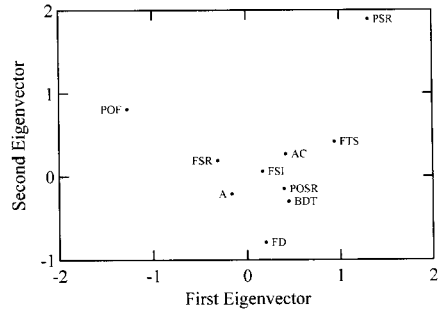
Parties and Unions Only



Parties, Bourses, and Unions



Parties and Bourses Only



POF = Guesdists; PSR = Blanquists; A = Anarchists; POSR = Allemanists; AC = Communist Alliance; FSR and FSI = Independent Socialists; SYN = Unions; BDT = Bourses; FD = Autonomous Departmental Federations; FTS = Possibilists

Figure 8.1. Correspondence analysis: plotted column scores (various permutations).

With unions and *bourse* included in this analysis (e.g., parties, *bourses*, and unions), we see the results of a dramatic realignment. This time, it is the Guesdists that are isolated. The other groups align themselves in a clear linear pattern running from the independent federations (FD) to the Blanquists (PSR). Only the party of Jaurès (FSR), and to a lesser extent the other party of Independent Socialists (FSI), appear divided between the two alignments. Graphically, this suggests the role that Jaurès came to play as broker between the two wings of the party. It also suggests the strong realigning effect of the unions and *bourses*.

The two right-hand graphs try to distinguish the effects of the unions versus the *bourse*. Both appear to independently bring about the realignment of party forces. The effect of the unions alone is more linear, but still rather diffuse. The unions (SYN) appear somewhat attracted by the Guesdists (POF). This is not surprising at all because some of the departments of strong Guesdist implantation (e.g., Nord, Pas-de-Calais) also have strong union contingents. The effect of the *bourse*, in contrast, appears extremely centralizing.

As these graphs suggest, the French party sects appear to be pulled between two poles: the Guesdists on the one hand and the unions and *bourses* on the other. Thus, we can expect that the local defection of Guesdists to support the autonomous departmental federations must have been a key turning point in the overall realignment. An announcement of the Second Congress of the Autonomous Federation of the Department of Oise supports this view:

It has first of all been a question of relations with the Federation of the POF [Guesdists]. The result of a long discussion is that unity will be possible in the Oise only if the POF groups consent to imitate the example of the groups of the PSR [Blanquists], the AC [Communist Alliance], of the FSR [Independent Socialists], of the POSR [Allemanists], by quitting their national organization (*La Petite République*, 5 juillet 1901)

As described earlier, a wave of local Guesdist defections came about as a rejection of the terms of the national debate between ministerialists and antiministerialists.

The principle of union autonomy was the central principle cementing the relationship between *bourses* and autonomous departmental federations. An implication of this argument is that we should expect support for this principle to vary in the degree to which departments have been realigned. Since we know the 1907 SFIO vote by department on the question of union autonomy, we can regress the row scores (by department) on the percentage of the department voting in favor of autonomy. Furthermore, we expect the realignment of a department to bring the party sects together around the principle of union autonomy. Methodologically, the logic used is the same as that for the preceding graphical analysis: by adding information on *bourses*, we expect to find a shift toward positive support for union autonomy in 1907.

The regression analysis found that for the correspondence analysis of party groups alone, neither the row scores on the first or second eigenvectors had any positive correlation with the vote on autonomy. The second eigenvector did, however, have a negative effect on the vote that

was statistically significant.³⁹ Thus, in analyzing party implantation alone, we can isolate only a block of departments that are negative toward union autonomy. This block is obviously the group of Guesdist-dominated departments.

By adding information on *bourses*, the row scores show a positive correlation between the first eigenvector and the vote in favor of autonomy.⁴⁰ In other words, the correspondence analysis identifies the reinforcing alignment between departments based on the implantation of parties and *bourses* that are positively associated with party support for union autonomy. This correlation is statistically significant at the .001 level. Although this statistical analysis would not take us very far by itself, it reinforces the argument presented on the basis of archival materials.

Summary

Unification of the party sects was produced by an institutional innovation similar to that of the *bourses du travail* – the autonomous departmental federation. These institutions were party organizations that “federated” the different party sects locally and insisted on their “autonomy” from the national parties. As such, the autonomous departmental federations were the “congregational” equivalent of the *bourses*. The creation of these cross-cutting institutions was facilitated by a set of structural changes in party politics that occurred between 1893 and 1898, particularly the growth of a local “independent-style” populism within and between the existing party sects. This was true even within the Guesdist party. The growth of independent-style politics produced a decided decentralization of socialist politics (much as “Possibilist” politicians focused on municipal politics in the early 1880s).

These factors prepared the way for local realignments of socialist politics in the face of fresh attempts at communal closure. In the wake

39 Regression coefficient of the second eigenvector on the percent vote in favor of union autonomy = -24.80 (std. error = 6.61 ; $N = 81$; statistically significant at .001 level). It is important to caution the reader that the underlying scale of the row scores is only relative. Therefore, the correlation coefficients do not have a precise meaning; nor can correlation coefficients be compared across regressions, since the underlying scales are different from analysis to analysis. The critical questions are simply whether the row scores have a statistically significant correlation with the dependent variable and whether or not the correlation is in the predicted direction.

40 Regression coefficient of row scores (first eigenvector) representing information on parties and *bourses* on percent vote in favor of union autonomy: 26.31 (std. error = 7.76 ; statistically significant at the .001 level; $N = 81$).

of the Dreyfus affair, the entry of Millerand into a government of Republican concentration created turmoil in the socialist movement. Up to this point, the socialist sects had been taking steps toward unification. But the Guesdists adopted a position of vehement intransigence toward Millerand's participation and made it an issue of party unification. The result was a preemptive schism. However, local party sects resisted this national division and began to unify themselves around a model of local federation. The impetus to create these local federations often came directly from the *bourses*. As cross-sectarian alliances were achieved in the *bourses*, the new allies then sponsored the creation of these parallel party structures.

At the national level, Jean Jaurès articulated the socialist equivalent of a covenant in his syncretic blend of different working-class "traditions." This doctrine was notable for its attempt to overcome the dualities that had traditionally divided the French working class – revolution versus reform, socialism versus republicanism, and individualism versus collectivism.

With the creation of a unified socialist party and a unified union confederation, the French labor movement had now undergone a full realignment. It had attained a delicately balanced equilibrium, and we should not be surprised if that unity should suffer some stressful moments. It is to those stresses that we now turn.

Dealignment

Perhaps it is characteristic of many forms of institutional equilibrium that as soon as they have been formed, they begin to undergo pressures for change. Nearly as soon as the second alignment of the French labor movement had been consolidated, it began to experience strong pressures internally and externally. Although this alignment would largely withstand these pressures until 1920-1, certain institutional developments during this period foreshadowed later schisms. In particular, this period witnessed attempts to create a strong revolutionary party that would be strongly aligned with the revolutionary wing of the unions. These attempts to create a revolutionary party foreshadowed the rise of the French Communist party in the postwar period.

A number of historians have noted the changes that occurred in the period between 1910 and 1914 in the labor movement. However, they have focused mainly on the tendency of the revolutionary syndicalists to become more reformist (also foreshadowing many of the developments in the CGT in the postwar period). However, little attention has been paid to the countervailing tendency to create a revolutionary party. Because these attempts to fashion a revolutionary bloc were unsuccessful, they may seem to deserve little more than historical footnotes. But in one very important sense they provide an insight into the ultimate explanation for the development of the Communist party. The prevailing wisdom is that either the transformative experience of the war, the successful model of the Russian Revolution, or the postwar economic and political conjuncture was the critical factor explaining the postwar schism and the emergence of a powerful Communist party. Notably, this is the argument of Annie Kriegel's (1964a) magisterial analysis of the origins of the French Communist party. Yet my argument is that the failed prewar attempts to realign the labor movement demonstrate that this *structural potential* existed before 1914 or 1917 or 1919.¹ A proto-Communist party was in the making before the alienation of the Great

1 See especially Gallie (1983), Robert (1980), and Robert (1995, esp. Ch. 5).

War, before the Russian Revolution, and before the postwar economic and political conjuncture. This is not to argue that these events were not important, even critical. The failure of this prewar realignment also demonstrates the limits to change and the (relative) robustness of the institutional equilibrium.

Chapters 6–8 have described the creation of a unified labor movement structured around a delicate institutional balance between the *bourses* and the national trade federations on the one hand, and the *bourses* and autonomous departmental federations on the other. The syndicalist principle of union autonomy from political parties was the covenant around which this ecumenical order was constructed. Organizational changes after 1908 “unbalanced” the roles of the *bourses* and the departmental federations, leading them to move toward a more sectarian stance (much as the *bourses* had between 1895 and 1900). Factions within the SFIO departmental federations (the successors to the autonomous departmental federations) then sought to create a revolutionary party that would close itself off from the reformist elements in the CGT and the SFIO.

The war exacerbated these organizational tensions and some institutional changes during the war also prefigured the radical realignment of the postwar. First, wartime corporatism encouraged tighter links between the SFIO and the CGT, undermining the principle of union autonomy. Second, a parallel opposition to the wartime collaboration of the CGT and the SFIO developed in both organizations. The institutional embodiment of this group in the form of the Committee for the Resumption of International Relations (CRRI) was to loosely link revolutionary syndicalists with their counterparts in the Socialist party, though not without serious conflicts. Finally, the issue of strikes in a wartime economy created a rift in the revolutionary syndicalist coalition around which the syndicalists would later become polarized.

The war, without shattering the syndicalist configuration, encouraged stronger links across the union–party boundaries at the same time as it increased strains within the unions and within the party. The following discussion describes the course of these changes and the specific institutional developments that were the harbingers of the future realignment.

Old Fault Lines, New Pressures, 1907–1914

At least since the origins of the Third Republic, French union strategies had experienced a cycle of shifts between the prominence of solidaristic, intertrade strategies and sectoral, trade-based strategies. Thus, in 1878–80, 1888–92, and 1898–1906 mass strike actions that united

workers across the narrow categories of trade and specialty erupted in France. These solidaristic actions, uniting skilled and unskilled workers, focused on halting work at the point of production – the factory or workshop. But as these actions became more expansive, the goals of strikers often became more diffuse and political. In the intervening periods, strikes became less frequent, more cautious, and less inclusive. Workers adopted professionally oriented strategies based on specialty, trade, or increasingly, industry. Rather than snowballing actions to halt the production process, these sectoral strategies focused on controlling or adapting to the labor market. They focused on wage demands and were more carefully timed and coordinated to achieve maximum effect within a labor market sector.

Syndicalism reflected a compromise between these two strategies. The essence of this compromise was that sectoral control was decentralized so that it would not contradict local workplace control. The year 1906, however, marked the peak of mass solidaristic strikes in the first decade of the twentieth century. The bloody repression of a construction workers' strike at Villeneuve-St.-Georges (an industrial suburb of Paris) in 1908 represented a new employer offensive against labor control. Until 1917, sectoral strategies again became the predominant labor strategy. In this context, there was a new organizational push to routinize industrial relations through centralized, national control over trade and industrial labor markets. This organizational routinization threatened the syndicalist accommodation. As had occurred in the early 1880s and in the period between 1895 and 1900, there was an anarchist counter-mobilization against this organizational routinization. To defend the solidarist conception of unionism, the "anarcho-syndicalists" sought to adapt the *bourses* to these new conditions by creating departmental federations of *bourses*. Pulled between these two strategies, revolutionary syndicalism underwent a crisis that revealed the outlines, if not the full scope, of the postwar realignment.

Consolidation of a sectoral industrial unionism was the major strategy of organizational routinization during this period. The goal of favoring industrial unionism over craft unionism had been official CGT policy since the congress of Amiens (1906). However, no precise plan or timetable for implementation of this policy was envisioned. For example, the metal federation, under the leadership of Alphonse Merrheim, sought to bring about a merger with the molders' federation, who were sympathetic to such an alliance. But negotiations broke down in 1907 over the issue of whether the molders would form an autonomous section in the metal federation. Whereas copperworkers had previously formed such an autonomous section, the new trend was to subordinate trade

differences by organizing local “metal” sections that encompassed all local trades.

In practice, sectoral industrial unionism meant a consolidation of related crafts and their subordination to centralized leadership. The concentration of the industry, said Merrheim, required a unified metal section in each locality. The metal federation voted to make this its principle policy in 1907 (Papayanis 1985, 48–9). In contrast, revolutionary syndicalism had conceived of industrial unionism as a federation of related crafts, each retaining a large measure of autonomy. Victor Griffuelhes, secretary of the CGT until 1909, defended the traditional syndicalist notion of decentralization against Merrheim. Federalism, argued Griffuelhes, meant the “coordination of action guided by autonomous groups and not the concentration of these groups” (Papayanis 1985, 56, his translation). In other words, Merrheim’s goal of centralized and consolidated industrial unionism violated the principle of “duality of person and group” (i.e., with individual trades as the person and the industrial federation as the group) around which the syndicalist alignment was constructed.²

The move toward greater consolidation in industrial federations was also taking place on the local level. A police report noted that the general secretary of the CGT departmental federation of Isère was working “ardently” in Grenoble and the Isère to create local industrial federations in the leather, metal, and building industries. Unions affiliated to the *bourse* of Grenoble but not yet affiliated to any national trade federation were encouraged to join.³ A police report from Toulouse noted the conflict between the mechanics’ union and the *bourse* over the mechanics’ refusal to merge with the industrial metal federation. For their refusal, the mechanics were barred from the *bourse*.⁴ Under the aegis of revolutionary syndicalism, of course, the *bourse* was precisely the institution that had brought about a *modus vivendi* between sectoralism and solidarism. The shift toward industrial sectoralism was creating tension in this brokerage role.

As in 1895–1900, the sectoralist strategy was regaining dominance in a number of *bourses*. The election of the baker Henri Cros as general secretary of the Montpellier *bourse* was noted by the prefect as a “victory of the syndicalists over the anarchists.” Cros was reported to belong to

2 The move toward industrial sectoralism in the metal federation led to fundamental organizational changes designed to wrest control of the federation from the more stalwart revolutionary syndicalists, particularly those of Paris (Gras 1971, 101–4).

3 AN F7 13604, File: Union des Syndicats, Isère, rapport “Action syndicale,” 14 février 1909.

4 *Commissaire spéciale* de police à contrôleur général des service de police administrative à Paris, no. 862, precise date not specified, but the year is 1913.

a “reformist” group.⁵ Mazet, the revolutionary syndicalist leader of the *bourse* of Alais, found himself preoccupied in 1913 with, above all, the creation of evening courses at the *bourse* to address the “Crisis of Apprenticeship.”⁶ In late 1909, the general secretary of the *bourse* of Rochefort gave a talk on the history of the *bourses* and the harm that the struggle between reformists and revolutionaries within the *bourses* had done to the institution. But by the beginning of 1910, the police could report the “triumph” of the reformists over the revolutionaries at the *bourse*.⁷

Centralization had unbalanced the role of the *bourses*. The *bourses* suffered, a local militant complained, because of the increasing dues extracted by the national federations. He insisted that the CGT had to take a stand on this at the 1912 congress: either support the *bourses* or centralize control in the hands of the federations.⁸ In a debate on union tactics at the 1912 CGT congress, Broutchoux, of the miners’ federation, argued that “centralization is in my opinion useful to coordinate working class action, but it is necessary to give to it the federalist counterweight of the *bourses du travail*.”⁹ As the next section will show, the progressive centralization of industrial unions was sending shock waves through both the CGT and the SFIO.

The Fragile Alignment

Industrial sectoralism encouraged, if not quite a break, at least a distinct evolution from the revolutionary syndicalist stance. The syndicalist argument that strikes were “revolutionary gymnastics” did not sit well with a new emphasis on organization building and labor market control. Strikes should be carefully planned and cautiously orchestrated. Merrheim, who before 1910 was a key spokesman for the revolutionary syndicalist position in the CGT, led the way toward reinterpreting revolutionary syndicalism in a manner more compatible with a centralized industrial sectoralism.¹⁰

5 Prefect of Hérault to the minister of the interior, 2 avril 1909, AN F7 13603, File: Hérault; Subfile: *Bourse du Travail*, Montpellier.

6 Report of the *commissaire spéciale*, Alais, to the minister of the interior, AN F7 13602, 15 juillet 1913, no. 330.

7 AN F7 13600, 20 décembre 1909, no. 530; 29 janvier 1910, no. 65.

8 La Pierre, secretary of the UD of Seine-et-Oise, at a meeting of the CGT’s *bourse* section, May 10, 1912, AN F7 13570, 11 mai 1912, M/6333.

9 “Un Grand Débat sur la tactique du syndicalisme,” *La Bataille Syndicaliste*, 19 septembre 1912.

10 Notably, Merrheim buttressed his argument for centralization with statistical monographs that emphasized the corresponding centralization of the metal industry and the

The trend toward industrial sectoralism was not limited to the metal federation. The building workers' federation, the other bastion of revolutionary and anarcho-syndicalism within the CGT, was also moving in the same direction (McMechan 1975, Pt. 2; Delucia 1971, 88–9). But most dramatically, the shifting emphasis led to a change in the leadership of the CGT itself. Griffuelhes, a leading ideologue of revolutionary syndicalism, was deposed as the general secretary of the CGT (Vandervort 1996). The attack on Griffuelhes came directly from moderates (though not Merrheim) in the metal federation (Julliard 1965, 134). The new leader, Léon Jouhaux, stood somewhere between revolutionary syndicalism and openly reformist federations like those of the printers, railworkers, or mechanics.

This gray area was just the course that Merrheim was trying to steer ideologically. He sought to move the CGT and the metal federation toward a more pragmatic conception of union activity and organization (close to the “positivist” wing of unionism represented by the secretary of the printers, Auguste Keufer). He did not fundamentally break with the notion of union autonomy professed by revolutionary syndicalism: “It is, people say, reformism. Perhaps. I am a reformist each day, but only up to the minister’s door. In reality, today as yesterday, our syndicalism will remain revolutionary; not only in words, but in action” (Gras 1971, 101). In 1913, Merrheim continued to insist that he was “anti-militarist, antiparlamentarian, antipatriotic, antistatist,” but that this “anti-everything” must be subordinated to a more rational practice (Delucia 1975, 93).

The weakness of strikes and dwindling union memberships between 1910 and 1914 were accompanied, as the turn to sectoralism had been between 1894 and 1898, with a substitution of political for economic action. In 1912, for instance, the police noted that the *bourse* of St Quentin (Aisne) “traversed a crisis” that had manifested itself in the last electoral campaign between the “partisans of political action” and the “adepts of autonomous syndicalism and antiparlamentary action.”¹¹ A 1914 police report on the *bourse* of La Rochelle, observed a “profound discouragement” among the union leaders who were experiencing the

introduction of new techniques of industrial rationalization, like Taylorism (Delucia 1971, 81–2; Gras 1971, 92–3; Papayanis 1985). Merrheim used these statistics not only analytically but also rhetorically. He employed them to break with the mystique of revolutionary syndicalism, which celebrated the spontaneity and emotional element of strikes. A common theme of Merrheim’s was that workers had to face the “facts” (Delucia 1971, 85). On the introduction of Taylorism in France, see Fridenson (1987), Moutet (1975), and Tucker (1996).

11 AN F7 13598, Folder: Bourse de St. Quentin, 17 octobre 1912, no. 195.

fear of the workers “to engage in any conflict with employers.” As a result, the unions leaders were setting aside “professional questions” in favor of politics.¹² Like the consolidation of sectoral industrial unionism, political action was a strategy of organizational routinization. It focused on mobilizing the working class around concrete political reforms.

This political turn created a certain turmoil in the SFIO similar to that caused by the Millerand affair in 1899. Beginning about 1908, the Guesdists – now a faction in the midst of the SFIO – began an offensive against the Jaurèsist faction for more authority in the party. The apparent cause of this conflict was the move of the Jaurèsists toward a more openly reformist orientation and, consequently, toward the increasing autonomy of parliamentary deputies in the party. The increasing political reformism of the unions was upsetting the fragile balance achieved by the SFIO’s departmental federations in limiting the power of these deputies. This power was a source of concern for Guesdists whose strength lay in their organizations rather than in their political representation. A parallel dispute emerged in the unions in which the revolutionary syndicalist leadership began to fight off a challenge from an ultra-Left that was close to Gustav Hervé’s “insurrectionist” wing of the SFIO (Mazgaj 1979, 86–95; Vandervort 1996, 150–5, 169–78). This dispute represented the same tension that we saw in the Allemanist party in the mid-1890s between a political and an anarchist or direct actionist wing.

Late October 1911 appears to mark the climax of this Guesdist offensive against the Jaurèsists. A police report noted that the Guesdists had been defeated by a coalition of Jaurèsists and Hervéists (i.e., followers of Gustave Hervé, the “revolutionary syndicalist” wing of the SFIO) at the Seine federation’s October party congress.¹³ At the end of October, Jaurès called for a unification of the party and was seconded by the Guesdist Paul Lafargue and the Blanquist Vaillant. By January, the police could report that the majority of Guesdists had dropped any plans to split the party.¹⁴ Thereafter, the Guesdists themselves seem to have moved toward a more reformist position. Henri Ghesquière, a Guesdist parliamentary deputy from the department of the Nord, gave a speech in front of the Chamber of Deputies denigrating the revolutionary syndicalist notion of “direct action” and extolling instead a reformist syndicalism that “without phrases or epithets” produced results.¹⁵

12 AN F7 13600, 6 février 1914, no. 45.

13 AN F7 13070, M2897U, 24 octobre 1911.

14 AN F7 13070, M2925U, 31 octobre 1911; M2928U, 3 novembre 1911; M3142U, 30 janvier 1912.

15 Ghesquière continued his critique of revolutionary syndicalism in an article, “Les Ténèbres se dissipent,” in the journal *Le Travailleur*, 16 décembre 1911.

Ghesquière's speech in the chamber incited the traditional distrust of the independence of the parliamentarians. Pierre Monatte took note of the resolution by a group from Niort to "entirely disclaim the elected [élus]" who used their influence to "discredit" the working class.¹⁶ The editorial staff of *La Bataille Syndicale* (a revolutionary syndicalist journal) reacted by calling up the old fear that the Socialist party wanted to model French syndicalism on English or German unionism.¹⁷ A meeting was held in Paris in early January by some "socialist syndicalists" to discuss the possibility of resigning from the party because Ghesquière was not sanctioned for his speech. But it was probably a sign of the times that of the 250 or so who attended this meeting scarcely a dozen actually decided to resign.¹⁸

Even Gustave Hervé, whose "insurrectionalism" had, since 1904–5, mirrored the revolutionary syndicalist position within the SFIO, and who had helped to reinforce the boundary between the two organizations, now called for a "disarmament of the hatreds" between the SFIO and the CGT.¹⁹ By September 1912, he had dropped his vitriolic anti-patriotism, claiming that it was really only *la patrie bourgeoise* that he detested.²⁰ And by early 1914, he was calling for a strong electoral alliance with the Radicals. The growth of reformism in the CGT was equally experienced in the SFIO as a convergence on a reformist position.

These changes in the party were paralleled by a renewed interest in tightening the organizational links between the SFIO and the CGT. The Guesdist offensive against the Jaurèsists that began in 1908 corresponded to a renewed Guesdist challenge to the resolution of the congress of Nancy – that is, to the 1907 resolution to respect the autonomy of the CGT. Dubreuilh, secretary general of the party, and a Jaurèsist, countered, "We are those who think that rapprochement with the CGT can only come about naturally, by supporting above all the character of this great revolutionary organization."²¹ After the convergence of

16 Pierre Monatte, "Flétrissures et Félicitations," *La Bataille Syndicaliste*, 12 décembre 1911.

17 *La Bataille Syndicaliste*, 4 décembre 1911. Although they accused both the Jaurèsist and the Guesdist wings of the party of having this goal, Jaurès attempted to reaffirm his position on the independent and social (as opposed to strictly corporative) character of syndicalism. See his article "Syndicalisme et Socialisme" in *Humanité*, 10 avril 1912.

18 AN F7 13571, M/6595, 20 mars 1912.

19 Gustave Hervé, "Le Congrès de Lyon," *La Guerre Sociale*, 28 février 1912.

20 AN F7 13571. Hervé's remarks at a meeting of September 25, 1919, as noted by the police, in report M7006, 26 septembre 1912. Hervé typically had signed his editorial columns in his journal *La Guerre Sociale* "Sans Patrie" – Without Country.

21 AN F7 13070, file on the Guesdists, rapport M/247, Paris, 10 janvier 1908.

the Guesdists, Jaurèsists, and Hervéists on a more reformist position, however, the goal of closer relations appears to have been common to all the factions. Just as he had at the 1906 CGT congress, the Guesdist secretary of the Textile Federation once again called for a more organic relationship with the SFIO. Despite the greater political activity of the unions, the proposal had as little luck as it did at Amiens (Brécy 1963, 77).

More subtle attempts to reverse the CGT's distrust of the party were afoot. The police reported in August 1912 that two prominent SFIO leaders, Renaudel and Landrieu, sought to "place the unions under the absolute dependence of the P.S.U. [SFIO]." Renaudel and Landrieu hoped to encourage this dependence by reorganizing the party journal, *Humanité*, to place prominent syndicalists on its editorial board.²² After the 1912 CGT congress in Le Havre, party leaders believed that the gap between the CGT and the SFIO was narrowing, which encouraged them in their "policy of envelopment" of the unions.²³ By the beginning of 1914, Jaurès could note the support of syndicalists in the upcoming elections.²⁴

The policy of envelopment was not confined to the highest levels of the party. The prefect of Hérault, for example, reported in 1911 that the *bourse* of Béziers had relations with the SFIO, but not openly. The general secretary of the *bourse*, however, was noted to be an active socialist who was quietly trying to place other socialists at the heads of unions affiliated to the *bourse* with the eventual goal of unifying the party and the *bourse*.²⁵

The police noted that Griffuelhes and Jouhaux were searching, with difficulty, for a formula "to clearly separate syndicalism and socialism." They had embarked upon this search with particular fervor after Hervé had changed his position to favor reconciling the CGT and the SFIO.²⁶ Although the revolutionary syndicalists had not always seen eye-to-eye with Hervé's "insurrectionalism," his faction had been essential to the SFIO's respect of CGT autonomy. As the next section describes, before moving in a reformist direction himself, Hervé had sought to create a new party that would deter either the SFIO or the CGT from evolving toward reformism.

22 AN F7 13571, M3614U, Paris, 20 août 1912.

23 AN F7 13571, M3669U, Paris, 24 septembre 1912.

24 AN F7 13571, M559U, 26 janvier 1914.

25 Prefectural response to questionnaire on the *bourse du travail* of Béziers, AN F7 13603, september 1911.

26 AN F7 13571, Préfecture de Police, 10 septembre 1912.

Revolutionary Populism Revisited

The parallel moves toward reformism in the CGT and the SFIO were not without detractors in each organization. The response was much like the anarcho-syndicalism organized by Pelloutier between 1894 and 1898: it tried to attack the twin manifestations of this organizational routinization – sectoralism in the unions, electoralism in the party – by developing “revolutionary” alternatives to strikes in the unions and by mounting an antiparliamentary campaign in the party. The centralization of the industrial federations and increasing independence and prominence of socialist deputies called, this time, for a more centralized anarcho-syndicalist response.

As already described, many *bourses* were themselves moving toward a sectoralist orientation in 1910–14. As in 1894–8, however, the *bourses* were the last line of defense for those professing a solidarist rather than a sectoralist strike strategy. In St. Étienne, for instance, the police noted that a Groupe d’Action Syndicaliste Révolutionnaire had been organized in early 1911 to take control of the *bourse* and thereby give it a revolutionary orientation.²⁷ After a 1911 building strike in St. Quentin (Aisne), the *bourse*, “up till then reformist became a *foyer* of revolution, of antimilitarism, and of sabotage” whose new secretary was a “true anarchist.”²⁸ Where they could, these anarcho-syndicalists and revolutionary syndicalists continued to organize strikes. The *bourse* of Nîmes, described in 1911 as a “center of antimilitarist and revolutionary agitation” was reported to have “used all its influence with the employees of the PLM [railroad] . . . to lead them toward the cessation of work at the time of the railwayworkers strike of October, 1910.”²⁹

Not much enthusiasm, however, could be mobilized for strikes between 1910 and 1914. In their place, anarcho-syndicalists sought to use the *bourse* as a forum for raising “social” issues that cut across narrow sectoral concerns. The primary issue that the anarcho-syndicalists seized on was antimilitarism. The anarcho-syndicalist Yvetot argued that a campaign against legislation favoring a three-year military service could lead to a “revival of our intense syndicalism of 1906” (Krumeich 1984, 65, his translation). For example, a police observer in Alais, a mining town in the Gard, noted that whereas the *bourse* had prompted multiple strikes in 1911, it had dropped this strategy beginning

27 AN F7 13605, 19 février 1911; 20 février 1911.

28 AN F7 13598, File: Bourse de St. Quentin, 1 septembre 1911, no. 5965.

29 AN F7 13602, questionnaire on the Bourse du Travail, Nîmes, 1911.

in 1912. The unions affiliated to the *bourse* had become “skeletal.” The result was that the *bourse* organized antimilitarist meetings in the place of strikes.³⁰ A police memo noted that 1911 was a year marked particularly by antimilitarist propaganda at the Bordeaux *bourse*.³¹

The aggressive antimilitarism of the syndicalists had multiple connotations: it was a concern that dramatized the social, as opposed to strictly economic, role of the unions; it helped to resist the strong attraction of nationalism that undermined the class appeal of syndicalism; and it was a useful vehicle to foil party influence in the unions. The SFIO had hoped to use their own parliamentary campaign against three-year military duty to “conciliate the *Bourses du travail*.” The revolutionary syndicalists responded by organizing in the provinces “numerous antimilitarist demonstrations” thinking that the socialists “would not dare adopt the antimilitarist and antipatriotic conceptions of the CGT.”³² As with May 1st in the early 1890s and the early 1900s, this was a battle over who controlled working-class rituals.

A survey conducted by the minister of the interior in 1911 concerning “revolutionary and antimilitarist” activity in the *bourses* revealed that a significant majority of the *bourses* were engaged in such activity.³³ One geographical concentration of such departments clustered to the southwest of Paris; these departments were traditionally in the sphere of influence of the Paris *bourse*. Another geographical concentration occurred along the Mediterranean. The *bourses* of Marseille, Nîmes, Toulon, Béziers, and Montpellier had always had active revolutionary syndicalist elements. In the region around Lyon, the Lyon, St. Étienne (Loire), and Grenoble (Isère) *bourses* also represented a solid regional core of either revolutionary syndicalism or anarcho-syndicalism.³⁴

The need to compensate institutionally for the centralization of the industrial federations, had not escaped the anarcho-syndicalists. Georges Yvetot, secretary of the CGT *bourse* section and a committed anarcho-

30 AN F7 13602, 1 janvier 1913.

31 AN F7 13602, File: Gironde; Subfile: Bourse du travail, Bordeaux; memo not otherwise identified.

32 AN F7 13571, M7684, 14 avril 1913.

33 See Ansell (1993, App.) for details and summary information on this survey.

34 Although an analysis of the actual prefectural responses reveals that this categorization disguises a whole range of activity – from vigorous and sometimes violent campaigns to minimal engagements like putting up posters sent by the CGT or attending a debate on antimilitarism. Nevertheless, the survey suggests that the *bourses* were often the last defense for the revolutionary syndicalists or anarcho-syndicalists. At the same time, the antimilitarist campaign was not particularly successful in reenergizing the base, and the central leadership of the CGT provided little support in this grass-roots campaign. Instead, as Krumeich argues, the CGT’s campaign against the Three Year law became subordinated to the SFIO’s (Krumeich 1984, 62).

syndicalist, insisted that whatever the national trade or industrial federations might say, federation by city, department, or region was an “organic necessity” of the French working class.³⁵ In response, the *bourses* were federated at the departmental level, creating Unions Départementales (UDs) that were the regional equivalents of the local *bourses*. As Yvetot noted: “Our departmental unions . . . will advantageously compensate for the effects of corporative centralism which our national federations can no longer escape in the face of a powerful adversary: organized management.”³⁶ The UD represented a concern for maintaining the balance that had been achieved between the *bourses* and the sectoral federations.

The efficacy of the new UD appears to have been a bit shaky at first. The UD of the Gironde, emanating from Bordeaux, was created in 1909 but was not said to “act with authority” until 1911–12.³⁷ On the eve of the war, the UD Cher had not produced “satisfying results” and had not been able to resolve the “crisis of syndicalism” in the department.³⁸ As the UD did become better established institutionally, however, they began to overshadow the individual *bourses*. The police reported that once the UD Charente-Inférieure had been created, the role of the *bourse* of Rochefort had become “purely administrative.” The *bourse’s* very existence had become precarious.³⁹ According to a police report, the *bourse* of Nice, since 1911, had played only a limited role, having been replaced by “an organization more active from the revolutionary point of view” – the Union des Syndicats des Alpes-Maritimes (UD Alpes-Maritimes).⁴⁰

In part, these UD were created to answer real needs of regional coordination. Of the attempt to create a regional federation linking the departments of Doubs, Ain, and Jura, Klemczynski, a Jura union leader wrote: “The centralizers of the CGT . . . will perhaps see in this decision only a preoccupation for autonomy . . . [But] the delegates have above all seen in this new organization, the possibility for . . . more effective practical action.”⁴¹ However, they were also certainly created with an eye to politically countering the new sectoralism in the CGT. The police agent in the department of Finistère noted that

35 Georges Yvetot, “Fédéralisme syndicale,” *La Bataille Syndicaliste*, 16 août 1912.

36 Georges Yvetot, “L’Avenir est à notre fédéralisme nationale,” *La Bataille Syndicaliste*, 10 juillet 1913.

37 AN F7 13602, File: Gironde; Subfile: UD Gironde.

38 AN F7 13600, *commissaire spéciale*, rapport no. 2040, 9 janvier 1914; *commissaire spéciale*, rapport à préfet, no. 2226, 29 juin 1914.

39 AN F7 13600, 5 mars 1914, no. 108.

40 AN F7 13598, M/9583, 11 janvier 1915.

41 E. Klemczynski, *Jura Socialiste*, 20 août 1910.

the unions who met in mid-February 1910 to organize the departmental federation intended to give the organization a “revolutionary character.”⁴² And the goal of the UD, according to a report from the UD of the Rhône, was to “make disappear the narrow corporative spirit that too often sows hatreds and raises barriers between the workers.”⁴³

During 1910–12, the UDs sought to maintain a populist spirit by mobilizing protests against the cost of living (*vie chère*). In 1910, a poster blaming speculators for price increases was sent to all the *bourses* and UDs, and in 1911, housewives began to protest price increases. Revolutionary syndicalists in the CGT sought to organize these protests through the agency of the *bourses du travail*, which held a conference on the cost of living in October 1911. Flonneau argues that “the popular myth of monopolizing is adopted and developed by unionism; the economic revolt assumes a moral aspect. These syndicalists of almost puritan spirit see in the proletariat a dispenser of justice.”⁴⁴ It is doubtful, however, that the creation of the UDs was really meeting the challenge posed by the centralization of industrial federations.⁴⁵ And beginning sometime in 1912, there was a move “to disengage from the *mentalité populaire* and from revolutionary spontaneity” (Flonneau 1970, 78).

This attempt to maintain popular mobilization during 1910–12 corresponded with attempts to organize a revolutionary party. Hervé’s project for creating such a party represented a countermobilization against sectoralism in the CGT and against electoralism in the SFIO:

42 AN F7 13602, Subfile: Congrès Départemental des Syndicats du Finistère, 17 février 1910.

43 AN F7 13570, File: #3 Unions Départementales, 1912–1919, rapport de L’Union du Rhône sur Les Unions Départementales, juillet 1913.

44 Flonneau (1970, 70); Hanson describes this movement as very similar to the traditional food riot (Hanson 1988, 463–81).

45 Proponents of industrial sectoralism sought to control the competition from geographically based federations by limiting them to the scale of the department. In a discussion at the 1910 congress on the real viability of the department, a delegate asked whether departments actually corresponded to economic realities. The response suggests the interest in giving the trade and industrial federations the upper hand: “Say there are three unions of basketworkers situated in each of the departments of the Rhône, the Ain, and Saône-et-Loire. They will indisputably join their *Union Départementale* [UD] and the Federation of Basketworkers will be there for the necessary liaisons” (Confédération Générale du Travail 1910, 14–16). At its 1912 congress, the CGT voted that the regional federation created by the unions of the departments of Doubs, Jura, and Ain had to be broken up into three distinct departmental federations. See *La Bataille Syndicaliste*, 28 novembre 1913 and *La Voix du Peuple*, 16 au 23 novembre 1913.

The role of the Socialist Party is to organize, with all the revolutionary elements of the country, an energetic minority that, by its example, will prevent the CGT from becoming too tame as it enlarges its membership and from sliding into reformism.⁴⁶

He made clear in an article entitled "The Lesson of a Strike" that his project was a response to the failed rail strike of 1910, in which a radical minority of railworkers unsuccessfully tried to launch a general rail strike against the wishes of the central union leadership: "The urgent, imperative, task," wrote Hervé, "is to consolidate and extend revolutionary organization."⁴⁷

This new development reflected the evolution of revolutionary syndicalism in the unions. In the CGT, the leading spokesman for revolutionary syndicalism, Victor Griffuelhes, was personally attacked for corruption and eventually resigned. This personal attack, however, was linked to tensions in the revolutionary syndicalist coalition. Griffuelhes had developed close ties to the "socialist-syndicalists" in the SFIO and had begun to attack Hervé's revolutionary romanticism. As Vandervort argues, this relationship created tension with the "regionalist," or "localist," group who believed that the CGT was becoming overcentralized and political and thereby was undercutting local strike success. He notes that this group "opposed the CGT leaders' push to create industrial unions, apparently fearing these national organizations would have more power in the trade-union movement than regional labor federations or local *Bourses du travail*."⁴⁸

Hervé was also responding to the increasing reformism in the party, which, as already described, was connected to the new sectoral orientation among the unions. The unions' increasing interest in politics beginning around 1908 led the Jaurèsists in the SFIO to move rapidly in a more reformist direction. Jaurès's reformist motion on electoral tactics at the party's 1908 congress appears to have struck a particular chord. On February 26, 1909, the "antiparliamentary" socialists of the Seine federation held a meeting that called for the creation of a revolutionary coalition against the reformist electoral tactics adopted in 1908. Moreover, because reformist electoral tactics gave greater power to the elected representatives of the party, the response of the Hervéists was directed particularly at them. After the 1910 SFIO congress in Nîmes,

46 Gustave Hervé, *La Guerre Sociale*, no. 19, 21-27 avril 1909.

47 Gustave Hervé, *La Guerre Sociale*, no. 45, 19-25 octobre 1910. Also see two other articles outlining his conclusions on the need for a revolutionary party in the aftermath of the strike: "Après la Bataille," no. 46, 26 octobre-1 novembre 1910; "Après la Grève," no. 54, 21-27 décembre 1910. On the rail strike, see Ceplair 1973.

48 Vandervort 1996, 168-70.

which revealed the party's trend toward reformism, Hervé "multiplied" his efforts to create a revolutionary party.

Whereas syndicalism had sought to overcome the duality between revolution and reform, Hervé's attack now reinforced it. Already by January 1909, the SFIO's National Council had to insist that Hervé stop publishing articles in *La Guerre Social* encouraging the organization of groups in opposition to the party. Hervé responded that *La Guerre Social* was not a "socialist" journal, but a journal of the "revolutionary coalition," which included antiparliamentary socialists, communist anarchists, and revolutionary syndicalists. As the police noted, Hervéism was a sort of updated Blanquism that sought to create a secret revolutionary society of the type that the Blanquists had created at the beginning of the reign of Louis-Phillippe.⁴⁹ And Hervé himself paid tribute to Blanqui as a continuing source of inspiration.⁵⁰ This was indeed very close, organizationally, to bolshevism, which Charles Rappoport once called, "blanquisme à la sauce tartare" (Rappoport 1991, 352). Yet it is significant that Vandervort has described Griffuelhes's link to the socialist-syndicalists as a reflection of his "Blanquism."⁵¹ The split between Griffuelhes and Hervé is reminiscent of the Blanquist schism between Boulangist and anti-Boulangist wings in the late 1880s, the split between the CGT (with its Blanquist orientation) and the Federation of Bourses (with its anarchist/Allemanist orientation), and the 1896 schism of the Allemanist party into "anarcho-syndicalists" linked to the *bourses* and "politicians" of the Alliance Communiste who had formed an alliance with the Vaillant's Blanquist group.

Hervé's goal was to create a disciplined, exclusively revolutionary (closed) party. In August 1910, a writer in *La Guerre Social*, citing encouraging reports on the progress toward the creation of several provincial federations along the lines proposed by Hervé, claimed that the "revolutionary communist party" would be established within three months.⁵² Hervé himself noted the progress of the "insurrectional" current in the SFIO: 31 mandates at the 1906 congress, 41 mandates in 1907, and 51 mandates in 1909.⁵³ The police assembled a list of groups "affiliated" to the Parti Révolutionnaire in October 1910 and found 28 groups organized in Paris alone and 50 groups in 33 provincial departments.⁵⁴

49 AN F7 13071, File: "L'Action Révolutionnaire en France," report dated May 1911.

50 Gustave Hervé, "Propos de Nouvel An," *La Guerre Sociale*, no. 1, 4-10 janvier 1911.

51 Vandervort 1996, 169.

52 AN F7 13071, File: Parti Révolutionnaire: Tentatives d'Organisation," Préfecture de Police, Paris, 25 août 1910.

53 Gustave Hervé, *La Guerre Social*, no. 19, 21-27 avril 1909.

54 AN F7 13071, File: "Parti Révolutionnaire: Tentatives d'Organisation," list of groups is dated October 1910.

Hervé's ultimate failure to create a revolutionary party along the same lines as Lenin's Bolsheviks is informative. The police report suggested that the anarchists were not interested because such a disciplined, military-like organization would violate their libertarian principles and "dignity";⁵⁵ the revolutionary syndicalists were still suspicious of the socialists and claimed that the CGT was a revolutionary "party" unto itself; and even most of the socialists sympathetic to Hervé did not want to break with the SFIO.⁵⁶ In fact, for all the strains that it was undergoing, the syndicalist alignment created in 1906-7 still held.

Consolidation of War Corporatism

The prewar antimilitarism of the organized working class promptly collapsed in the face of a wave of national sentiment that surged with the outbreak of World War I. In September 1914, union and party leaders joined the government, removed to Bordeaux, and formed a joint action committee (Comité d'Action). For the CGT, the greatest symbolic and ideological departure of the new war corporatism was represented by a speech made by Jouhaux to the Fédération des Industriels et Commerçants (roughly a combination of America's Association of Manufacturers and Chambers of Commerce) at which he spoke about the "Economic Reorganization of Tomorrow." Jouhaux used this speech not only to justify the cooperation of the CGT in the war effort but also to reframe revolutionary syndicalism in a more corporatist light. In doing this, he embraced but also went beyond Merrheim's prewar reworking of revolutionary syndicalism (Horne 1991, 127-30; Delucia 1971, 106-19). Cleverly, he used the experience of wartime corporatism to shape the future position of labor in the French economy and state; he thereby helped to justify the CGT's cooperation during the war.

In his speech, Jouhaux made two key departures that would help to justify both centralized organizational control over unions and a focus on labor market rather than workshop control in the postwar era. The first departure was a suggestion for new forms of management-labor cooperation via high-level planning commissions. The second departure was the suggestion that this cooperation be devoted to creating a high-wage, highly productive economy; the French economy needed massive,

55 Police reported that relations between Hervé and the anarchists were severed by March 8, 1910.

56 AN F7 13701, File: "L'Action Révolutionnaire en France," report dated May 1911; Préfecture de Police, Paris, 8 mars 1910; M1640U, Paris, 18 mars 1910, "Hervé et le Parti Révolutionnaire."

directed investment if it was to modernize its industrial base. If the first suggestion clearly broke with the class-conflict perspective of revolutionary syndicalism, the second suggestion was really the more extreme. The idea of steering investment for rapid technological change implied that labor would no longer attempt to maintain its wages by attempting to control the pace of technological change. It would trade workplace control over skills for high wages.⁵⁷ The very limited opposition to Jouhaux's speech indicated the way in which the war, at least temporarily, rallied support for a corporatist approach to labor relations.

The relation between the CGT and the SFIO was also being transformed in the face of the dictates of wartime cooperation. Of their joint planning body, the Comité d'Action, Dumas, of the garment workers' federation, asked, "This collaboration of two, then three [i.e., the Federation of Cooperatives later joined], central organizations, is it desirable for the future?" Yes, he answered, in principle. But what was lacking, he insisted, was the proper institutional formula. The meetings discussed interesting issues but resolved nothing because of the "fear of taking a decision that would be in contradiction of the decisions of a contracting party."⁵⁸ The low rate of participation of the parliamentary deputies on the Comité was particularly criticized by the unionists. The proper institutional formula would indeed prove difficult to find, but the search for such a formula was itself novel (Horne 1991).

A Return to Populism

So far, the war appears to have reinforced the routinization of labor organizations begun before 1914. However, mounting unrest in wartime factories prompted a new wave of populist protest. The pivotal year for unrest in the war-production factories was 1917 (Gallo 1966, 20-1; Amdur 1986, 70; Becker 1985, 195-6).⁵⁹ Unions that had collapsed with the military mobilization, such as the metalworkers' unions of

57 Merrheim had at first rejected Taylorism. Just before the war, he adopted a slightly more favorable view of it (Papayanis 1985, 68-9).

58 AN F7 13571, File: Le Comité d'Action, réunion du 13 mai 1916.

59 Fridenson notes that the wage differential between unskilled, semiskilled, and skilled workers was eroded during the war, "especially from 1917 onward" (Fridenson 1981, 240). Beside the rationing of meat and sugar, the purchasing power of workers was dropping (Kriegel 1964a, 157-8; Amdur 1986, 304; Becker 1985, 208; Horne 1991, 385). As Kriegel writes, "full employment, combined with reduced purchasing power, these are the optimal conditions for the multiplication of industrial conflict: more numerous strikes, longer strikes, more general strikes, at the level of establishments and corporations, mark the social crisis of which the beginnings appear in January 1917" (Kriegel 1964a, 159).

Decazeville or St. Étienne, were refounded at the end of 1916 or the beginning of 1917 (Amdur 1986, 68; Reid 1984, 174). As Magraw puts it, “The price inflation of spring 1917 provided a catalyst to bring accumulated shop-floor grievances to a head” (Magraw 1992, 164). Robert has characterized these strikes as follows: “they are generally short . . . they are offensive and generally victorious, or at least lead to a favorable compromise . . . localism and the absence of coordination also characterize these strikes” (1993, 431).

The war appeared to accentuate the regionalization of union activity, which would ultimately lead to a renewal of the importance of the *bourses* and UDs. The Loire, for instance, was the heart of an expanding region in southeastern France in which strikes and antiwar activity were synergistic. Union delegates from Loire toured the industrial centers of the neighboring departments of Isère, Rhône, Puy-du-Dôme, Cher, Côte-d’Or; they even went as far south as Marseille (Amdur 1986, 84). The interdependence of this region was suggested as early as 1916. At the CGTs Confederal Committee meeting of June 8, 1916, Jouhaux read a letter from the *bourse* of Valence announcing that the UDs of the Southeast intended to convene a regional congress for southeastern France.

Jouhaux’s response to the request from the *bourse* of Valence foreshadowed the future conflicts between the industrial and geographical federations. He supported the holding of a regional congress, he said, but was concerned that it not lead to the creation of a regional federation. If they did intend to create a regional organization, Jouhaux said, the CGT would have to “intervene” as it had already done with an earlier attempt to create a southeastern federation in Lyon and a southwestern federation in Bordeaux.⁶⁰

The established union leaders adjusted slowly to the implication of this strike activity. In contrast to what happened in the Loire, where the antimilitarist issue appears to have preceded the strike wave, in Le Havre “political” issues – that is, Revolution and antimilitarism – seem to have been introduced precisely to prevent the more moderate union leadership from trying to limit the scope of strikes by getting employers to agree quickly to limited monetary concessions. More radical leaders counterposed broader “political” concerns to these more focused strike goals. As Ceplair notes, the CGT was working diligently by the end of the war to keep strike actions enclosed within narrow sectoral limits (Ceplair 1981, 253). In fact, the national leadership of the CGT and the

60 Confédération Générale du Travail, Comité Confédéral, réunion de 8 juin 1916 (Institut Français de l’Histoire Sociale).

industrial federations were very unhappy about these escalating local strike actions. They were not against strikes per se, but wanted to control them by channeling them into peaceful arbitration (as did the moderate leaders of the Le Havre metal union) (Horne 1991, 178–9).

The “politicization” of strikes that occurred in Le Havre had a parallel in the case of the CGT national leadership. As the national organization lost control of local strikes, its national leadership sought increasingly to define strikes in narrow economic terms; more radical leaders and unions responded by accentuating the politicization of strikes. Brunet argues that in St. Denis, as well as in the Paris region in general, the strikes of 1917, although widespread, remained economic in orientation. They did not, he contends, “at any moment take a political or pacifist coloration” (Brunet 1980, 178). At the end of 1917, union discussions were becoming more and more spiced with antiwar discourse (Horne 1991, 182; Gallo 1966, 24; cf. Becker 1985, 217–48).⁶¹

The escalation of militant local strikes reinforced the strategy of the CGT’s leadership to organizationally routinize strikes. To defuse the shop floor focus of this militant action, Jouhaux proposed a system of workshop delegates (*délégués d’atelier*) that would be brought under the control of the union hierarchy. This system was partially implemented but backfired: these delegates became an additional source of radicalism and opposition to the union hierarchy (Horne 1991, 193–5). As Horne notes, the moderation of the majority leadership of the traditionally revolutionary syndicalist metal and building workers’ federations was bringing them much closer to the prewar reformist federations, notably the printers and railroad workers, whom they had earlier opposed (Horne 1991, 207–8).

In seeking to coordinate and expand the still isolated strikes and antimilitarist demonstrations of 1917 and 1918, a “dual power” emerged in the CGT – Comité de Défense Syndicaliste (Committee for Syndicalist Defense; CDS). Headed by the anarcho-syndicalist building worker Péricat, the CDS was attempting to act as an alternative center to the CGT leadership. Part of its strategy for doing this was to elevate the demands of all local actions to the level of national and international political discourse; this prevented local actions from being satisfied by locally negotiated solutions. The May 1918 strike polarized the leadership of the CGT into two blocs, referred to simply as the *majoritaires* (the moderate majority) and the *minoritaires* (the radical minority).

61 The antimilitarism may have been accentuated by the Mourier law, established in August 1917, which directed workers in the war production factories to return to the front. The law was often applied to union activists (Gallo 1966, 10; Horne 1991, 184–5).

The activism of the CDS, by placing itself in the role of an alternative center, had raised the fears of a schism in the CGT. It was this undermining of the authority of the industrial federations that encouraged the formation of a "centrist" tendency, led by Merrheim, that would prevent a polarization between the CGT leadership and the CDS (Amdur 1986, 89). In early 1918, Merrheim received a letter from Le Duff, a leader of the metalworkers in Brest, insisting: "I say that Jouhaux is no longer qualified to make such a gesture [against the war]. He must leave or we must remove him, or at the least we must separate ourselves by founding a distinctly revolutionary CGT."⁶² But precisely the fear of such a schism moved a number of the moderate opponents of the CGT's position, like Georges Dumoulin, to defect from the minority camp, as Merrheim had done after the 1917 strikes (Amdur 1986, 100; Arum 1974, 43-4). This new center sought to create a balance between the polarized *majoritaires* and *minoritaires*.

Underlying the positions of the two camps were different models of organizational control. The *majoritaires* responded to the local wildcat strikes with increasingly centralized controls, to be exercised vertically through industrial federation channels (Amdur 1986, 141). Local strike militants organized around the *bourses* and the UD's sought to broaden their strike actions geographically and extend them to multiple trades; they sought greater decentralization of strike control. A circular from the UD of Bouches-du-Rhône, for instance, to the delegates of the CGT congress of July 1918 called for a reorganization of the CGT to give the UD's greater representation. The circular complained that the UD's were represented in Paris by the delegates of the industrial federations, permanently stationed in Paris, who did not adequately know what was going on at the departmental level.⁶³

The Confederal Committee met in August 1918 to discuss a project for the reorganization of the representation of the UD's within the CGT. Jouhaux's idea was to expand the Confederal Committee into a national committee with the direct representation of the UD's. The body was to meet once every three months. This aspect of the reorganization appears to have been intended to give greater representation to the provinces in order to undermine the influence of the Parisian *minoritaires* in the authority structure of the CGT (as the metal federation had in the prewar). The protest of the *minoritaires* on the committee carried just such a recrimination. At the same time, a smaller, executive committee

62 AN F7 13602, File: Bourse du travail, Brest; Subfile: Congrès Départemental des Syndicats du Finistère, 3 février 1918.

63 AN F7 13570, File: no. 3, Union Départementales, 1912-1919.

was to be created to actually run the CGT between meetings of the National Committee. This committee would be filled by a delegate from each industrial federation and the secretaries of the UDs of the Seine, Seine-et-Oise, and Seine-et-Marne (the last two included industrial suburbs of Paris).⁶⁴ From the *majoritaires*' point of view, this reorganization both centralized control in the hands of industrial federations and undermined the control of the Paris *minoritaires*, exercised through their representation of UDs on the Confederal Committee – all in the name of giving a greater voice to the UDs! Nevertheless, the proposed change to give more “direct” representation to the UDs was voted unanimously, both within the Confederal Committee and by the National Congress in July 1918. Apparently, both the *minoritaires* and the *majoritaires* saw the change as an advantage. The first meeting of the National Committee, however, held in December 1918, bore out the best hopes of the *majoritaires*: only one *minoritaire* – Tommassi of the autoworkers – was elected to serve on the Executive Committee.⁶⁵ Thus, the developments of the war had facilitated the consolidation of an institutional leadership that favored a model of unionism that was cautious in its strike policy, industry based, sectoral, and centralized. But the war had also spawned a militant grassroots unionism that was aggressive in its strike strategy, solidaristic across industry boundaries, and decentralized. The stage was set for confrontation.

Summary

After the major strike of 1906, strikers faced greater resistance from employers and the state. In response, unions moved toward greater routinization of strikes and organization by adopting a more judicious and selective strike policy, by moving to consolidate industrial unionism, and by establishing more centralized control over strikes. As we have seen in previous strike downturns, workers and unions began to pay increased attention to politics. A reform wing that favored greater collaboration with the Socialist party grew within the CGT. Just as the *bourses* had moved toward an anarchist position when the labor movement had moved toward political reformism in 1895–1900, so now a number of *bourses* moved aggressively toward a “revolutionary and antimilitarist” position. They also attempted to compensate for routinization of the national union federations by expanding the geographic scope of their

64 AN F7 13576, File: “1918,” report P4009, 3 août 1918; P/4563, Paris, 5 octobre 1918.

65 AN F7 13571, File: “1918,” P/5113; P/5129, Paris, 17 décembre 1918; 18 décembre 1918.

own activity from the city to the departmental level (UDs). Several attempts to organize a “revolutionary” party were also made around 1910–14 that foreshadowed the creation of the Communist party after the war.

The onset of the war encouraged further routinization of the national union federations and further cooperation among the CGT and the SFIO. War mobilization had left local unions and party sections nearly empty, and strikes were rare through 1916. This situation changed in 1917 as industrial conflicts began to intensify, especially in the metallurgical factories. The national leadership of the CGT sought to limit the scope of these local conflicts and prevent them from being politicized. But the strikes of 1917 were only the beginning of a major strike wave that the moderate leadership of the CGT could neither forestall nor prevent from becoming linked to antiwar sentiment. As Chapter 10 will now relate, this strike wave and its aftermath would definitively repolarize the labor movement.

The Party the Syndicalists Built

“I do not know two types of socialism, in which one is reformist and the other is revolutionary,” argued Léon Blum, centrist spokesman for the French Socialist party at the congress of Tours in December 1920. “I know only one socialism,” he insisted, “revolutionary socialism” (Kriegel 1964b, 118). But this Jaurèsian syncretism, of which Blum was the inheritor, now fell on deaf ears. It was, in fact, “The Hour of Choice,” as the right-wing Pierre Renaudel had titled an article in *Humanité*: “Between Lenin . . . and Jaurès,” he wrote, “it is necessary to choose.”¹ By 3,208 votes against 1,022, the party chose Lenin. The Parti Communiste Français (PCF) was born.

The schism of the French labor movement that occurred in 1920–1 can be described in terms of two interdependent dynamics. The first was the breakdown of the balanced dualism that had previously supported broad-based solidarity in the labor movement. Chapter 9 has already shown that the institutional balance provided by the *bourses du travail* was being undermined by the attempts to routinize union organization. This routinization had encouraged a consolidation of sectoral industrial unionism and a centralization of strike control in the hands of these national unions. Political mobilization also became a more attractive option for these industrial federations, reopening the thorny question of the relative autonomy of party and union. Both developments tended to marginalize the *bourses* as institutions that could provide an effective cross-cutting balance against sectoral union federations or against partisan conflict.

The second dynamic was the schismatic pattern that tended to follow waves of populist mobilization. After the war, the renewed strike militancy that had begun in 1917 exploded in two consecutive massive strikes. The 1919 metal strike and the 1920 rail strike were by far the largest in the nation’s history and dwarfed the earlier 1906 general strike. During these strikes, a battle was waged between a strategy of organi-

1 Cited in Lefranc 1963, 229. From *Humanité*, 28 juillet 1920.

zational routinization of strikes and a strategy that favored grassroots spontaneity and conflict escalation. In the ebbing phase of this strike wave, communal closure of the grassroots movement produced the decisive polarizations that ultimately led to parallel schisms in the CGT and the SFIO.

The structural balance created by the *bourses* was built around a congregational form of unity – semi-autonomous local congregations (city *bourses*) bound together nationally by covenantal unity (around the central symbol of the general strike). Yet in the move toward communal closure, the interlocal ties that had been created between grassroots strike movements in different locales became the basis for the emerging Communist movement. These interlocal ties, around which communal closure took place, transgressed the congregational principles associated with the *bourses*. In terms of Figure 2.1 (page 31), the countermobilization against routinization had moved from panel B to panel C – from a countermobilization that balanced the national sectoral federations to a countermobilization that itself underwent communal closure. With the conditions for a cross-cutting balance no longer effective, the movement toward communal closure continued until it reached the logical conclusion of schism.

This chapter first focuses on the tensions that emerged during the strike wave of 1919 and 1920 between a strategy of organizational routinization of strikes and a grassroots strategy of strike escalation and extension. The particulars of this strike wave are important because it is the specific links between metalworkers and railworkers (and especially the latter) that create the interlocal network that becomes the informal infrastructure of the emerging French Communist party. The chapter then examines party and union voting to establish the link between this interlocal network and schism. A final section of the chapter briefly examines the “Bolshevization” of the new Communist party after 1921, a process equivalent to the creation of a hierocratic “church.”

“What Is to Be Done?”

On November 11, 1918, the news of the armistice reached Paris, and for two days the people emptied onto the streets to celebrate the end of the “War to end all Wars.” It must have been a fête of mixed emotion with over a million French soldiers dead or missing in action. Indeed, in the labor movement, the “war of position” had just begun. The strike militancy and its associated antimilitarism that had begun in 1917 would not peak until 1920.

The terrain upon which this postwar battle was to be fought was changing rapidly after the armistice. The gigantic task of demobilization would prove nearly as disruptive as the mobilization. The industrial infrastructure created for war production had to be retooled for civilian production. The major business groups, like the Comté des Forges, that had enjoyed unprecedented influence during the war could no longer count on the same cozy, privileged relationship with the state. Regions devastated by the war had to be rebuilt.

The political terrain was changing too. The Bolsheviks were now in power in Russia, and the Allies were mobilizing against them. The first international Communist congress was held March 2, 1919, and the Third International was officially founded. By April 17, the antiwar wing of the SFIO, the Lorient-Saumoneau group, had decided to enter the Internationale Communiste (IC). And in early May, Péricat's Committee for Syndicalist Defense (CDS) would call for the creation of a French Communist party. By the summer of 1919, soviets were being created in Paris suburbs. For the French labor movement, the armistice would bring realignment rather than reconversion.

This section further develops the argument made earlier about wartime strikes: the revolutionary élan of the immediate postwar period reflected the snowballing mobilization of workers concerned about local workplace issues.² The mobilizing role of revolutionary and antiwar themes, however, did subtly change in the postwar context. During the war, antiwar opposition helped to justify the legitimacy of strikes, because as a strike leader in Bourges said in 1918: "It is not necessary that our comrades in the trenches believe that we labor [viz, strike] only to obtain big bucks. It is necessary that they know that if we act, it is so that they can leave the trenches" (Gallo 1966, 24). After the war, strikes did not need such a justification. In the postwar period, revolutionary antimilitarism was related to the battle over the "meaning" of strikes – the *majoritaires* (i.e., the moderate majority faction) insisted that the strikes were strictly about economic issues and favored their centralized arbitration and control; the *minoritaires* (i.e., the radical minority faction) insisted the strikes were "political" or "social" and favored spontaneous, snowballing solidaristic strike action. These competing discourses were criti-

2 Annie Kriegel argues that it was the "revolutionary élan" of the postwar period that is responsible for the leftward movement of the SFIO. Although accepting the importance of the strikes of 1919 and 1920 in creating this élan, she argues that it is the result of opposition to the war rather than to the massive strikes per se. At the same time, she notes the irony of the metallurgists and railway workers leading the call to revolution, because their industries suffered least the fate of the trenches (Kriegel 1964a, 350-3).

cal in framing how workers perceived the process and conclusion of a strike.

Kriegel rejects the idea that the postwar “revolutionary impulse” was “primordially of an economic order.” She is right to reject the explanation of the economic conjuncture *per se*. In fact, the same general “conjuncture” occurred all over Europe with differing consequences. Labor insurgency and “intense class consciousness” were prevalent throughout Europe during 1917–20. For most Western countries, with the exception of Denmark, Canada, and the United Kingdom, strike rates reached all-time highs during this period. These factors created an explosion in militancy and class consciousness everywhere (Cronin 1988, 145). The decisive variable was not the fact of the explosion itself, but how it was channeled. As I will argue, the dual structure of the CGT – geographical and industrial – led not simply to a groundswell of resentment against leaders (as it did everywhere) but to a polarization of the movement around these two structures. The division of the SFIO and the creation of the Communist party mirrored this polarization.

The Two Methods of Syndicalism

The key to understanding the realigning impact of this conjuncture is to understand the populist and segmental character of grassroots protest. The mounting strike protests that began in 1917 and peaked in 1920 were really part of a broader populist pattern of protest. If strikes were the centerpiece of this protest, it is necessary to see them in the broader perspective of a populist style of protest that – as foreshadowed in 1911 – included protests against the spiraling cost of living. Between 1914 and the first quarter of 1918, prices for food approximately doubled in Paris; between the first quarter of 1918 and the fourth quarter of 1920, they almost doubled again (Horne 1991, 395).³ This inflation undermined the value of wage agreements almost as soon as they were achieved.

As Barzman has shown in his study of labor protest in the port city of Le Havre between 1917 and 1923, working-class unrest also revolved around consumer issues.⁴ He argues that a distinctive characteristic of the mobilization between 1917 and 1920 was a “new awareness” of the need to link workplace-based and neighborhood-based collective action (Barzman 1987, 2). “The rank-and-file movement,” he writes, “based itself on shopfloor actions, election of workshop delegates and mass

3 For the long-term cost-of-living index series for all of France, see Mitchell 1980, 773–4.

4 In Paris and elsewhere, workers created tenants’ leagues to respond to the increasing scarcity and cost of housing (Magraw 1992b, 183–4).

meetings (general assemblies) of all the workers of a plant, or of several plants involved in a movement,” creating a “League for the Defense of Consumers” in February 1919 that would identify profiteers and create cooperatives (Barzman 1987, 213). During July and August 1919, this struggle against the cost of living increasingly polarized both the union and party wings of the labor movement. The railroad, construction, and metal workers were part of the left wing in these consumer disputes as they were in strike actions (Barzman 1987, 263–72).

The Seine-Maritime departmental union (UD) and the local Le Havre union federation took the lead in organizing these marketplace actions. In July 1919, the UD became the organizational base for protests against rising prices. In August, the UD organized a conference on high prices, where it agreed to try to generalize its techniques to other regions of France (Barzman 1987, 268). Even regional actions, however, tended to be ineffective, because merchants responded to protests over price increases by shifting their goods elsewhere. National coordination of these protests was necessary, but neither the CGT nor the SFIO was willing to provide this leadership.

These populist protests were directed as much against the state as they were against employers or capitalism, which may have influenced the framing of strikes. The sense of betrayal by the union leadership for entering into impure relations with the state was a common theme, as voiced by one anarchist: “Comrades, the functionaries of your central organizations are really conning you. At the moment where all people demand liberation from the capitalist yoke, your CGT discusses with that sinister old man Clemenceau” (cited in Robert 1995, 321). Quotes in which the people are equated with the working class, and the state (symbolized by the “evil” Clemenceau) is associated with capitalism, could easily be multiplied.

The radical protests of 1917–20 also encouraged a new type of segmentalism in the labor movement. These protests often spilled across organizational jurisdictions and defied the sectoral logic of industrial federations. But they were also strongly localized by their focus on the shop floor and their rootedness in local communities. These factors encouraged small clusters of localized activity that were difficult to coordinate horizontally. In addition, new organizations – unions, cooperatives, and other forms of association – proliferated during this period. Although segmental themselves, these new local associations often did not respect the existing party and union jurisdictions. This local grassroots protest *inverted* the organizational logic of the national industrial federations.

We can begin by describing changes in the structure of unionism that occurred during this period. As described earlier, there was a strong trend

beginning around 1910 to consolidate crafts into industrial unions. As Kriegel describes in her detailed study of union organization during this period, many industrial unions continued to draw internal distinctions between crafts. For example, the building federation still distinguished between forty-seven different crafts (Kriegel 1966, 28). By 1918, however, sixteen industrial federations were organized without regard for craft distinctions, and this represented the trend: two federations in 1919, three in 1920 (including building), and three in 1921 were reorganized along purely industrial lines. Colson notes the conflict at the local level in the metal union of St. Étienne:

Should the union be content to coordinate on the basis of crafts, baptized discreetly “technical sections,” but retaining great autonomy and charged to defend the particular interests of its members? Or, on the contrary, should it break with the crafts, fundamentally reorganize the profession around enterprise sections, contribute to the organization of the nonunionized, and position itself as the unique interlocutor with all the enterprises? (Colson 1986, 74)

Colson argues that this debate was at the heart of the organizational disputes of 1917–18.

In prewar syndicalism, the localist and quasi-industrial strategy associated with the *bourses* mediated the conflict between a strategy of craft and a strategy of industrial unionism. Colson’s study of metal unionism in St. Étienne shows how this conflict was being reshaped. One possible organizing strategy for industrial unionism was to create a strong national organization, a strategy linked to the more reformist orientation of revolutionary syndicalism that appeared even before the war. However, another strategy – one that would be closely associated with the wave of metal strikes from 1917 to 1919 – was to create a localist model of industrial solidarity. In 1918, it appeared that the industrial model had won, although the pressures toward craft unionism reappeared in 1919 in the wake of the strike failures of 1918 (Colson 1986, 75). But the type of industrial unionism in St. Étienne was much more localist, seeking to organize solidarity at the workplace and then to extend this action horizontally to other workplaces and other industries without regard for sectoral jurisdictions. Thus, from a conflict pitting craft and industrial unionism being resolved, in part, through localism, we see the emergence of a conflict between a hierarchical industrial sectoralism and a localist industrial solidarism.

Robert argues that part of the originality of the 1919 Paris metal strike was its decentralization and its tendency to cut across local geographical boundaries. This localism and fragmentation had a number of important consequences for unions. Robert stresses that the war produced

a growing divergence between *delegates d'atelier* (workshop delegates), who were well positioned to lead these local strike actions, and the unions (Robert 1995, 235–7, 274–6, 298, 337). The strike movements in Paris from 1917 to 1919 were not easily contained within the scope of any organization (Robert 1995, esp. 237). At the same time, Robert stresses the segmentation that occurs between the workers of Paris and those of its suburbs. He notes that in the strikes of 1919 workers often demonstrated in meetings in their neighborhoods rather than at their workplaces (Robert 1995, 337–8).⁵ He suggests that the most sustained “revolutionary” mobilization occurred where neighborhood and workplace came together.

From his divergence between local and national, we see two contradictory organizational strategies for how to handle the metal strikes of 1919. Whereas the national leadership of the metal federation sought to exercise its vertical control by framing issues in concrete, economic terms, many local metal unions sought to link their actions horizontally to other trades and regions by finding abstract demands that cut across sectoral concerns. Thus, strike strategies became increasingly polarized between those framed in economic terms (specific wage or hour agreements) and those framed in political terms. The economic framing of strikes sought to achieve more narrowly based agreements between specific groups (a trade or a local industry). The political framing helped to mobilize protest with broader and broader publics (both regionally and by trade and industry). These strategies undermined each other: broad actions tended to weaken the viability of sectoral agreements; sectoral agreements led specific groups to withdraw from the broader struggle.

The cross-purposes of the two groups was evident in the unfolding of events. Negotiations between the national metal federation and the employers had led on May 24, 1919, to the signing of two national collective contracts. Negotiations continued, however, between the Paris metal unions and employer unions. On May 29, the mechanics of the Seine criticized the national agreement. By June 1, nearly all the Parisian metalworkers went out on strike. As Brunet argues in his study of the metalworking suburb of St. Denis, Parisian metalworkers saw their dilemma in the spring of 1919 as how to extend their strike, first, to other corporations in the Paris region, and second, to metalworkers in the provinces (Brunet 1980, 219). Similar conflicts in the metal industry

5 It is interesting to note the similarity of this argument to Gould's (1995) argument about the structural changes that encouraged the neighborhood mobilization associated with the Paris Commune. Cronin (1980) has suggested that this suburbanization of the working class may have been responsible for the more general pattern of European protest between 1917 and 1921.

were occurring on a smaller scale in many other parts of the country at this time. During April, for instance, wildcat strikes broke out in Le Havre metal plants even after agreements had been reached. In March and April of 1919, metal unions of Normandy met in Caen and Rouen to try to achieve regional unification of wage levels. But wildcat strikes began again in Rouen in late May (Barzman 1987, 257).

Both sides were bitter about the strike. Merrheim insisted that the 1919 metal strike was directed against the Federation of Metal.⁶ Local groups, in turn, felt betrayed by the national leadership for not having helped to extend the strike (Brunet 1980, 224; Papayanis 1985, 134-6; Amdur 1986, 126). As Brunet notes, the *minoritaires* organized around the journal *La Vie Ouvrière* (e.g., Monatte) drew from this spring 1919 strike the lesson that "it was indispensable to group the working class in some solid union structures, to discipline it like an army" (Brunet 1980, 229). These were early signs of a move toward organizational closure that would become much more prominent after the 1920 rail strike.

The bourses no longer appeared as effective in horizontal strike coordination as they once had. Robert notes that the Paris *bourse* was still the center of strike mobilization in 1917, but that its role in 1919 was undermined to some extent by the fragmentation of the strike and by the shift in activity toward the suburbs (Robert 1995, 138). Amdur notes that in St. Étienne the coordinating problems of the *bourse* had already become apparent during the metal strikes of 1917 (Amdur 1986, 76). Meanwhile, in the early postwar period, many if not most of the UD's were controlled by the more cautious *majoritaires*. The Le Havre union federation, for instance, was "radical," whereas the Seine-Maritime UD was "reformist" (Barzman 1987, 270-1). Despite these limitations, the *bourses* and the UD's provided the most ready institutional base for strikers attempting to mobilize and extend strikes horizontally during the period 1917-20. They were more readily converted into institutional bases for grassroots mobilization than were the national industrial federations. For grassroots activists blocked from influence within their industrial federations, the *bourses* and UD's offered an alternative institutional channel for mobilization.

Impacts on the SFIO

Besides the growing polarization of workers between two methods of syndicalism, the fallout from the strikes of 1919 created a parallel

6 AN F7 13576, minutes of CGT Executive Committee meeting, July 2, 1919.

polarization in the SFIO. The influence of the strikes was transmitted in several ways. First, union militants on both sides began to reassess their traditional relationship to the party. Whereas they had once insisted on respect for the boundary between union and party, revolutionary syndicalists and anarcho-syndicalists began taking a more activist approach toward political organization.

At the local level, the emerging left wing of the SFIO in Seine-Inférieure, in the summer of 1919, was composed of anarchists and syndicalists attracted to the party in 1918 and 1919. Le Havre, for example, was a local “stronghold” of the national minority among metalworkers, who now rejected the moderate leadership of Merrheim (Barzman 1987, 274–6). An anarchist tendency also emerged in the unions and party, just as it had following the flagging of strike mobilizations in the late 1870s, the early 1890s, and 1908–10.

A second conduit for the fallout from the strike appears to have been the abstention of a large number of workers disturbed by the party’s moderate position on the political issues raised by the strikes. Whereas the national average for abstentions was 22.8 percent in 1914, it rose to 28.9 percent in 1919 (Pennetier 1982, 206). The party leadership took notice. As the head of the party in the department of Cher observed, the election was characterized by “a rather high number of abstentions due to those sickened by the war and to the indifferent young” (Pennetier 1982, 206). As occurred following previous strike demobilizations, a sharp polarization also developed between pursuing tractable political reforms and maintaining a revolutionary commitment. And as in the past, a central point in this conflict was whether electoral alliances would be made with the Radicals.⁷

Party leaders drew sharply different lessons from the 1919 elections. For those on the right of the party, the lesson was that the left of the party had deserted them, and only greater collaboration with the Radicals could lead to success in future elections. But the high number of abstentions also sent the message that there was a constituency looking for the party to take a more radical stance. At the (pre-strike)

7 In addition, a new electoral law encouraged polarization of the party around just such issues. The new law allocated deputies in favor of the departmental majority. Thus, it favored broad coalitions and, specifically, was a strong incentive for an alliance of Radicals and Socialists. As Barzman notes, this incentive made the right wing of the SFIO in Le Havre much less willing to forego electoral alliances in the 1919 elections (Barzman, 1987, 280–1, 286, 344). At its September 1919 congress, the party had decided to abstain from electoral alliances in the upcoming elections (Wohl 1966, 149). Most of the party followed this policy during the elections, despite the losses it suffered (Wohl 1966, 149–51). But many local groups broke with this policy. The moderate socialists of Le Havre, for instance, cooperated with the Radicals in the second round of the election.

April 1919 congress of the SFIO, Lorient's motion to immediately join the Communist International had received only 270 mandates out of more than 2,000. Even this low level of support had represented, however, an "important step in the radicalization of the party and the movement toward the Third International" (Wohl 1966, 131). At the February 1920 congress at Strasbourg, the motion to join the Communist International received 1,621 votes. The massive strikes of May and June 1919 had been felt in the SFIO. But the decisive realignment would result from the rail strikes in the spring of 1920.

Emerging Alignments: The 1920 Rail Strike

Membership in the national rail federation climbed rapidly at the end of the war. At the time of the merger of the old rail federation and several white-collar rail unions in 1917, membership stood at 65,000.⁸ A year later it had more than doubled in size. By the beginning of 1919, membership had almost tripled to 221,176, and then more than quadrupled by the beginning of 1920 (351,992 members) (Kriegel 1964a, 375).

This membership increase reflected a distinctive set of postwar social and economic conditions. The pressures under which the rail system was placed during the war did not abate in the immediate postwar years. The intervention of the state in production continued in the postwar period in the rail industry because of the industry's strategic importance in the economic reconversion. The use of the rails themselves had to be completely reoriented because of different demands of demobilization and reconversion. Moreover, the rail system had suffered from overuse during the war: tracks needed to be replaced, and trains needed overhauling. A labor shortage existed, particularly among the skilled engineer drivers (*mécaniciens*) and firemen (*chauffeurs*). The rail industry introduced Taylorism to reduce the time it took to repair trains (Kriegel 1964a, 365-9).

These conditions heightened the militancy of the traditionally disciplined and strike-wary railworkers. This militancy culminated in two massive rail strikes that broke out in the first half of 1920 – one in February and one in May – against the wishes of the national

8 At the end of 1915, the national rail union began to discuss plans for a merger with several white-collar railroad unions. The merger congress, however, was not held until January 1917. This merger process further aroused the antagonism of the Paris locals toward the center. The resulting organization, the Fédération Nationale des Travailleurs des Chemins de Fer de France (FNCF) was, if anything, more centralized than its precursor.

federation. Just as strikes had polarized the metalworkers, these strikes polarized the railworkers behind two alternative strike strategies. The first spark leading to the February 1920 strike flared in January at the train workshops of the town of Périgueux, part of the Paris-Orleans (PO) network. These workshops were a traditional source of militancy in the rail unions. The workers at these shops were neither as dependent nor as important as engine drivers and firemen (Ceclair 1981, 26–7). In addition, the repair yards incorporated workers from many other trades, particularly building and metal. Rail unionists, therefore, had substantial contact with workers having different skills found in other unions (Kriegel 1964a, 379; Chevandier 1993). The militancy of metal and building workers was, in fact, a critical spark plug for the militancy of the railworkers, particularly in shops like Périgueux (Jones 1982, 515).

A police report noted that in Périgueux, the socialist group, the local section of the rail federation, and the leaders of the *bourse du travail* were “approximately constituted of the same elements.” A fitter in the railyards, Adrien Delsol, was secretary general of the Périgueux *bourse* and a very active member of the local rail section, as well as a leader of the Périgueux socialist group. The police observed that he “professed revolutionary theories (Bolshevist).” In May 1919, the police noted that “a great solidarity reigns between all the unions of the city thanks to the efforts of the committee of the *Bourse du travail*, composed principally of railway workers.” And Delsol was reported encouraging the metalworkers of Périgueux to “unite themselves with the ateliers of the PO [i.e., the rail network]” to achieve their mutual demands.⁹

In the immediate postwar period, these repair yards were under great pressure to speed up their repair of rail cars. To increase productivity, the rail companies were attempting to reorganize the workshops along more rational lines (Kriegel 1964a, 379). The incident that initially sparked the strike in the Périgueux workshop was minor, but it touched off a larger struggle with management for authority in the workshop that began January 10, 1920. The union organization at the network level (PO network) failed in its attempts to mediate the dispute. This failure led to the spread of the strike to other cities on the line: Vierzon, Angers, Montauban, Brive, Aurillac, Capdenac, and Châteauroux. But the leadership for the network hesitated to generalize the strike to the whole network. The government, however, fearing a massive strike, stepped in to settle the dispute (Kriegel 1964a, 381–4).

9 AN F7 13601, 18 janvier 1919; 21 janvier 1919; 21 mai 1919 no. 486/487; 13 avril 1919, nos. 345–346.

The strike polarized the network. According to Kriegel, distrust arose “which poses the larger question of autonomy (and of its limits) of union sections in relations to the interior discipline that the cohesion of the general movement demands” (Kriegel 1964a, 384). Much as Merrheim responded to regional wildcat strikes of Loire and Paris, the leadership of the PO network was not happy with Périgueux for starting the strike without consulting them. Périgueux claimed that it was within its jurisdiction to initiate the strike and complained that the network leadership had been too hesitant in its response (Kriegel 1964a, 384–5).

Jones has noted that the minority railworkers’ leadership had a peculiar relationship to its constituency. Whereas workers were attracted to the strike demands of the *minoritaires*, they remained loyal to the orders of the national federation. Moreover, the *minoritaires* were uncertain about how much support they did, in fact, have in the ranks. They also faced a situation in which a geographically localized strike in Paris, no matter how complete, would be defeated by lack of support from the provinces. Because of this situation, the railroad *minoritaires* proceeded cautiously, concerned that they not either start a premature strike or alienate workers by too aggressively challenging the authority of the national federation (Jones 1982, 520–2).

Strikes broke out again at the end of February. The repair ateliers were again the critical centers of strike momentum. They were the “central brigades of the revolution.”¹⁰ These workshops, requiring many different professions, “established the liaison with the working class milieu in its totality” (Kriegel 1964a, 450). For these trouble spots, the companies instituted a policy of lockouts and also of subcontracting work. Nevertheless, the workshops were not the primary units in determining the success of the strike. In addition to the critically positioned engine drivers and firemen, the key factor in shutting down the entire rail system was the availability of coal. The network of the Nord, main line of coal transport, was thus the linchpin (Kriegel 1964a, 435, 449–50, 482).

Much of the familiar discourse attributing narrowly economic or revolutionary motivations to the strikers took place in this rail conflict. In principle, both the *minoritaires* and the *majoritaires* agreed on the goal of revolution. But the *minoritaires* argued that it was a near-term proposition and that an economic strike could give rise to it. They interpreted the February strike as having revolutionary potential. The *majoritaires* saw instead the revolution as something in the distant future; for them, the February strike was strictly economic. Jouhaux’s demand

10 Kriegel 1964a, 449, quoting a parliamentary deputy, Engerand.

for nationalization was, in fact, an attempt to place himself as a broker between the minority and the majority (Kriegel 1964a, 399–400).

On March 1, an accord was again signed after arbitration by the government. The *majoritaires* considered the strike a success. The companies, however, proceeded to sanction a number of strikers – an action that many unionists regarded as an infringement of the accord. In Périgueux, where thirty union activists were suspended, the strike continued. Local sections in Quimper, Tours, Orléans, Angers, Bergerac, Limoges, and Brive, in communication with Périgueux, also continued the strike. Their refusal to return to work “reinforced the struggle of tendencies” (Kriegel 1964a, 404; Jones 1982, 533).

Following this strike, the *minoritaires* won majorities at the congresses held by individual networks. These congresses were resoundingly marked by criticism of majoritarian moderation. Again, much as with the 1919 metal strike, the premature settlement of the strike was particularly condemned. Jones argues that this criticism “built a new conception of syndicalism” that rejected class collaboration but “did not shun political issues like its anarcho-syndicalist forbearers” (Jones 1982, 536). The congress of the national railroad federation in late April revealed the industry to be polarized at a national level as well. The *majoritaires*’ statement of principle (*rapport moral*) was voted down, and the motion by the leader of the *minoritaires*, Monmousseau, was voted by a solid, if not overwhelming, margin: 171,337 to 147,282. The *minoritaires* took control of the federal council by 28 seats versus 22 (Kriegel 1964a, 403–19).

Finally in command of the national organization, the now former *minoritaires* moved quickly – too quickly – to implement their general strike (voted at the April congress). They hastily sought some ambiguous informal guarantees of support from the CGT, itself still controlled by *majoritaires*, before issuing a circular on April 27 calling for the strike to begin on April 30 at midnight. The circular was sent out before the CGT had formally met to decide on whether to support the strike. When the CGT finally met, they regarded the hasty action of the railroad federation as an attempt to drag the CGT into a strike against its will. They also saw the railworkers’ action as a usurpation of the authority of the CGT to call a general strike (Kriegel 1964a, 426–9).¹¹

By the end of May, however, the strike had utterly failed, and a massive number of railworkers were fired. The collapse of the strike effort led to

11 The CGT’s response to the strike was to put pressure on the government by bringing out successive waves of strikers (to flex the “necessary and sufficient” muscle; Kriegel 1964a, 463). This approach reflected the predominantly sectoralist approach of the CGT.

a dramatic slump in union participation. The network congresses of July and August were poorly attended by the unions. The number of local rail unions also dropped dramatically. Whereas 434 rail locals were reported to be affiliated to the CGT in 1919, only 222 were reported affiliated in 1920. The strike's failure led to a resurgence in the influence of the *majoritaires*, on the one hand, and increasing bitterness between the *minoritaires* and *majoritaires*, on the other (Kriegel 1964a, 211, 524-5).

The 1920 strikes and their failure consolidated the linkages between the minorities of the rail federation and that of the traditional proponents, like the metalworkers, of geographically based solidarities. On May 5, the *minoritaire* Paris metalworkers' union had called for its members to join the rail strike the next day. But the administrative council of the CGT disavowed this strike order. In response, the metalworkers insisted that this was not a strike about wages, but a strike for socialism – and to take over the factories (Kriegel 1964a, 484-5). Although the national metal federation eventually gave the order to join the strike, the metal *minoritaires* had pressed and hoped for far more aggressive action (Amdur 1986, 144-5). In the wake of their failure to extend their own strike of 1919, they saw the rail strike as a vehicle for linking together otherwise isolated local actions.

The lesson of the 1920 strikes was that metalworkers and railworkers would have to more tightly piggyback their organizations. Whereas metalworkers were traditionally federalist, the railworkers were accustomed to unitary organization. The strike's failure showed that the rail minority could not afford federalism; it had to be as centralized and organizationally disciplined as its *majoritaire* opponents. The militance of railworkers was extremely fragile. The horizontally solidaristic strategy could be institutionalized only if it compensated for the strong vertical forces of bureaucratic control in which railworkers were embedded.

As had many metalworkers after the 1919 metal strike, the radical railworkers now sought a more centralized and disciplined organization of their own. The 1920 strike failure reinforced this lesson for the traditionally federalist metal minority as well. In Le Havre, for instance, where the rail union local was one of the most militant in France, the local metal union underwent a basic change of orientation (Barzman 1987, 214-16, 320-2). Louis Le Grain, the anarcho-syndicalist leader of the metalworkers' union was replaced in April 1920 by a younger militant, Henri Quesnel. Quesnel, although also an "anarcho-syndicalist," symbolized the shift toward a more centralized orientation.

Le Grain had supported a group of anarcho-syndicalists in the CGT known as the "pact," who had signed a secret pact to gain control of the

CGT along traditional revolutionary syndicalist lines. In other words, they supported absolute local union autonomy (and thus federalism) as well as opposing any linkage between the unions and political parties. Quesnel, in contrast, supported the “united front approach” of Monatte and Monmousseau; the “united front” group, though anarcho-syndicalist in background, now saw the strategic importance of more centralized and better disciplined control (Barzman 1987, 321–6, 325 n). For both the metalworkers and the railworkers, this strategy represented this shift toward centralized and disciplined organization. The revolutionary syndicalist and anarcho-syndicalist strategies had always been built around “inverted hierarchies.” Although these groups had often been sectarian, communal closure had always entailed a reinforcing of localism. In the face of declining participation, communal closure now pushed in the direction of creating what Weber called a “hierocratic” organization.

Whereas the consequences of the 1919 strike were transmitted into the party primarily through the 1919 elections, the 1920 strike was felt more directly through the activism of the railworkers in the party. Railworkers were one of the largest union groups represented in the SFIO, and the divisions among them were quickly transmitted to the party. The polarizing consequences of this activism are made clear by Amdur in her description of the situation in the previously moderate town of Limoges.¹² A key element in the local polarization was the evolving structural position of the minority railworker leader Louis Bert. As leader of his local rail union and a prominent member of the local SFIO section, Bert identified himself as a Communist and a supporter of the Third International. In the thick of the May strike, when moderate unions of Limoges refused to join the strike without orders from the CGT, the more militant Limoges unions placed Louis Bert at the head of the Limoges *bourse*. After the strike, Bert continued the struggle for control of the *bourse* with the ousted *bourse* secretary, the moderate shoemaker Jean Rougerie, who advocated and practiced close relations between the unions and the SFIO. The implication of this struggle for the parallel fracturing of both union and party are clear (Amdur 1986, 143–8).

Denouement: The Schisms of 1920 and 1921

The last congress of the CGT as a unified organization was held in Lille in July 1921. Shortly thereafter, it split into two organizations. The dual-

¹² Limoges belonged to the department federation of Haute-Vienne, which reported handing out almost double the number of membership cards (*cartes*) and membership stamps (*timbres*) by September 30, 1920, as it had in all of 1919 (SFIO 1920a, xiii).

istic structure of discourse in this final hour was very similar to that at the SFIO's Tours congress. The *minoritaires* claimed that the *majoritaires* were not revolutionaries; the *majoritaires* insisted that they were. The *majoritaires* insisted that the *minoritaires* were breaking with French syndicalist traditions, as defined by the Charter of Amiens in 1906; the *minoritaires* insisted that *they* were the true inheritors of that tradition. Both factions claimed that it was the other side whose actions and behavior was undermining the unity of the CGT – the minority by organizing “cells” (the *Comités Syndicalistes Révolutionnaires*) within the CGT, the majority by trying to exclude these groups (Lefranc 1967, 256–8; Labi 1964, 199–204). Each side was moving toward closure vis-à-vis the other.

In contrast to the dispute in the SFIO, where the precipitating factor in the schism was whether to accept Moscow's conditions for joining the Communist International, the trigger in the CGT was the legitimacy of the *Comités Syndicalistes Révolutionnaires* (CSR) within the CGT (Lefranc 1967, 258–60; Labi 1964, 204–18).¹³ These organizations – first conceived after the 1919 congress of Lyon but formed primarily in late 1920 – established a dual hierarchy of committee “cells” that represented a move toward closure of the radical faction within the CGT (Amdur 1986, 164–8; Labi 1964, 169–74). They were, in fact, much like the *chantiers* of the French Knights of Labor, created in the early 1890s to unite union leaders around the goals of revolution and union autonomy.¹⁴ Their creation was intended to solidly organize the minority in the midst of the CGT. In a notable divergence from the organization of the CGT, however, the CSRs were federated by region as well as by department. The strikes of 1919 and 1920 had shown the need to expand geographical coordination to fill in for the leadership of the CGT majority.

The controversy over the CSRs ultimately precipitated the schism of the CGT. In their attempt to build an alternative hierarchy to that of the CGT, the CSRs reflected the lessons drawn after the 1919 and 1920 strikes concerning the discipline of union organizations. To the majority leadership, they were a totally unacceptable affront to their authority in

13 There is also a parallel to the choice between a reconstructed and a Third International in the option to join either the Amsterdam-based International Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU) or the Moscow-based International Syndicale Rouge (ISR). As Merrheim said, “Amsterdam or Moscow? It would be more logical to affirm that it is syndicalism that is at stake, its independence and above all its doctrine and that, if we succumb, it is the end, not only of syndicalism, but of the CGT” (Labi 1964, 191).

14 On the French Knights of Labor, see Dommangeat (1967). For a discussion of the links between the Knights and the *bourses*, see Ansell (1993). In contrast to the Knights, the CSR were not fraternal, but they were secretive.

the CGT. They grew even more so by conducting their own independent foreign policy within the CGT, affiliating themselves to the International Syndicale Rouge.

Although these unions now saw the need for more centralized organizational discipline, they were still squeamish about the idea of subordination to an external group.¹⁵ Whereas Blanquist and Guesdist traditions could be rather more easily reconciled with Bolshevism, Allemanist and anarchist traditions counseled union self-emancipation. Thus, unions had to find a model that bridged Bolshevik and revolutionary syndicalist traditions. Unions found that model in the CSRs. Like the Third International for the socialists, the unions could assign multiple meanings to the CSRs – depending on the eye of the beholder, the CSRs could assume either Communist, revolutionary syndicalist, or anarchist characteristics.¹⁶ In other words, even while the radical unions were moving toward a model of greater hierarchy and discipline – of communal closure – the movement retained much of its multivocal character. In this sense, it is reminiscent of the “collectivist” coalition that temporarily united the more radical unions at the end of the 1870s.

Although still relevant in the mobilization of local union communities, the *bourses* no longer acted as a check on the schismatic tendencies of the unions. The trend toward centralized sectoral control over the industrial federations now clashed with the trend toward more centralized and disciplined control over cross-sectoral unionism. Figure 10.1 suggests a basic characteristic of the realignment – a fracture line that essentially ran within rather than between industrial federations. Before the war, the federations of building workers and metalworkers had been more or less united in their opposition to the federations of printers and railworkers. Between 1908 and 1918, building and metal federations had become dominated by “reformist” leadership. This reformism reflected the organizational centralization of the industrial federations. The postwar economic conjuncture reinvigorated grassroots, direct action unionism, not only for the metal and building unions but also for the rail federation. It was the realignment of this last federation that was really decisive in the broader realignment of the CGT. The rail networks linked together otherwise regionally decentralized oppositions in federations like those for the metal and building trades.

15 The second congress of the Communist International in 1920 had exposed its view that unions affiliated with the ISR must become a subordinate “section” of the national and international party (Labi 1964, 165–7).

16 Defending the CSR’s commitment to French syndicalist traditions at the 1921 CGT congress, Monatte said, “In the Charter of Amiens, that which is essential to us . . . eternally lasting, is this conception of syndicalism: great artisan of the Revolution, capable of achieving it all alone if possible” (Lefranc 1967, 256).

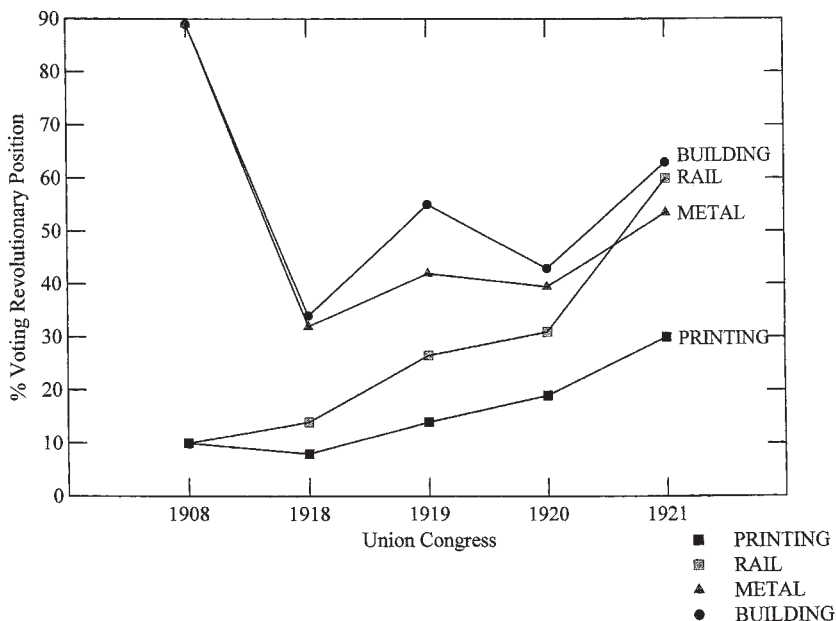


Figure 10.1. Support for revolutionary position in four union federations, 1908–1921. Sources: Confédération Générale du Travail, 1909, 1919a, 1919b, 1920, 1921.

With respect to at least one rail line, the Paris-Lyon-Marseille (PLM) network, this argument is borne out using an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). ANOVA determines the statistical significance of the difference between the means of two samples, as defined by a categorical variable (Iversen and Norpoth 1987). In this case, ANOVA was used to evaluate whether those departments in the jurisdiction of the PLM line gave significantly higher support to the revolutionary cause at the 1921 CGT congress.¹⁷ The difference proved strongly significant:

F-ratio: 14.174 Probability: 0.000

$N = 90; R^2 = .139$

An *F*-ratio of 1.000 would mean that the means of the two samples were essentially the same; the greater the *F*-ratio, the more different the two samples (a positive *F*-ratio indicates that the PLM jurisdiction was more revolutionary). The probability of 0.000 means that this difference is statistically significant at the .001 level. The corridor between Paris, Lyon,

¹⁷ The ANOVA was done for all the rail networks, but only the PLM proved significant.

and Marseille was traditionally radical; the innovation of the postwar period, however, was to spread this radicalism to the whole PLM jurisdiction via the rail network.

Before the war, the metal and rail federations were solidly opposed to each other; after the war, the militant minority and the moderate majority of the metal federation were brought into alignment with their counterparts in the rail federation. This new alliance was the essence of the CGT realignment. The argument that this realignment came about through an interaction of metal and rail minorities implies that this alignment should hold *within the geographical setting of the department*. The Pearson Correlation Coefficients for the voting of individual metal and rail unions at the 1918, 1919, 1920, and 1921 CGT congresses, aggregated by department, show such an evolution (Confédération Générale du Travail 1919a, 1919b, 1920, 1921). At the 1918 congress, the fairly high correlation between the voting of metal and rail unions in the departments (.368; $N = 43$) reflects the fact that the great majority of unions in both federations vote moderately (see Figure 10.1). That the correlation is not even higher indicates that in the departments where metalworkers voted with the minority (in 1918, the metalworkers were the avant-garde), the railworkers remained moderate. In 1919, the correlation drops to .222 ($N = 60$). This drop indicates that metal and rail unions were becoming more polarized at the department level (due to the radicalization of the metal unions in 1919). The correlation then reaches its highest point in 1920 (.440; $N = 59$), reflecting the realignment caused by the rail strike of 1920. The drop in the correlation in 1921 (.352; $N = 68$) probably indicates the resurgence of the moderates after the failure of the 1920 strike.

An analysis of this realignment can be further developed using the method of correspondence analysis (Wasserman, Faust, and Galaskiewicz 1989). This method has already been described in Chapter 8; briefly, it identifies patterns of structural equivalence in two-mode data matrices in which the matrix entries are understood as the relational “contributions” of one mode to another. In this case, the two modes are department and ideological orientation of the industrial federation; the matrix is thus organized as a *department x orientation* matrix. In theory, there are ninety row variables representing departments (actually fewer because of missing data). There are four column variables: Rail/Revolutionary, Rail/Reformist, Metal/Revolutionary, Metal/Reformist. The matrix entries are the number of rail or metal unions in each department voting in favor of the *minoritaire* (revolutionary) and *majoritaire* (reformist) positions respectively. Thus, these entries are the “contributions” of each department to the overall voting pattern within each industry.

Table 10.1. *Determinants of the 1921 CGT realignment*

Variables	Pearson correlation coefficients		
	1921 vote	% rail	% metal
<i>1919 Vote</i>			
% RailMin	.262		
% MetalMin	.388	.222	
RailMetal1	-.419	-.716	-.778
RailMetal2	-.011	-.375	.600
RailMetal3	.044	-.144	.511
$\% \text{ CGT Minority} = 42.477 - 13.620[\text{RailMetal1}]$ (1921 Vote) (2.348) (3.552)			
$N = 85; R^2 = .150; P = .000$			
<i>1920 Vote</i>			
% RailMin	.337		
% MetalMin	.461	.440	
RailMetal1	.482	.803	.863
RailMetal2	-.040	.506	-.363
RailMetal3	-.112	-.300	.025
$\% \text{ CGT Minority} = 42.635 + 16.114[\text{RailMetal1}]$ (1921 Vote) (2.172) (2.923)			
$N = 78; R^2 = .286; p = .000$			

The correspondence analysis assigns each department a “row score” by identifying its position with respect to other departments after accounting for the variations across all departments. Because all of the variation cannot be accounted for with one set of scores, the correspondence analysis assigns a new set of scores to additional dimensions of variation. The first score reflects the dimension that explains the most variation; the second score reflects the largest amount of “remaining” variation, and so on.

The results are reported in Table 10.1. First, a correspondence analysis of the 1919 congress was performed. Three sets of scores were assigned (RailMetal1, RailMetal2, RailMetal3). The Pearson Correlation Coefficients between these scores and the percentage of metal and rail unions voting in favor of the *minoritaire* position (% RailMin,

% MetalMin) are shown to illustrate the dimensions that these scores reflect. The correlation of these scores with the 1921 CGT vote on the legitimacy of the CSRs is also shown.

The first set of scores (RailMetal1) assigned by the correspondence analysis for 1919 is highly negatively correlated to the 1921 vote (-.419). Moreover, these scores are also highly negatively correlated to the percentage of rail and metal voting in favor of the *minoritaires*. In other words, the correspondence analysis identifies an equivalent group of departments that are cohesively *majoritaire*. The second set of scores (RailMetal2) identifies the group of departments where metalworkers are radical but railworkers still moderate; this set of scores shows almost no correlation to the eventual schism. The conclusion is that in 1919, the minority that will precipitate the schism in the CGT is still not cohesive.

A regression analysis of the first set of row scores (RailMetal1) on the 1921 CGT vote shows that these scores strongly decrease the vote in favor of the revolutionary position in 1921. These scores are statistically significant at the .001 level. The conclusion: the group of departments with solidly *majoritaire* leadership in 1919 remained cohesive until the schism of 1921.

The same analysis was performed for the 1920 voting of the rail and metal federations. This time, the correspondence analysis identifies the polarization of departments between solidly *majoritaire* and solidly *minoritaire* departments. RailMetal1 is highly correlated to % RailMin and % MetalMin (the percentage of rail and metal voting for the *minoritaires* in 1920 respectively). In stark contrast to 1919, then, the *minoritaires* have also become highly cohesive.

The scores isolating noncohesive relations between rail and metal voting are weakly correlated to the 1921 vote. This suggests that where rail and metal *minoritaires* were not aligned, the department could flip either way in 1921.

This newfound cohesion is further shown by the positive relationship between the first set of row scores (RailMetal1) and the 1921 CGT vote. This regression is statistically significant at the .001 level. The second conclusion: the realignment in the CGT was produced in 1920 by the joining up of rail and metal minorities. The occurrence of this realignment in 1920 is critical because the October 1920 CGT congress came *before* the December 1920 SFIO congress. Thus, it cannot be argued that it was *fundamentally* contagion from the December 1920 party schism that precipitated the 1921 CGT schism. Contagion may have solidified the position among unions other than rail or metal. These two industries, however, were polarized before the SFIO schism.

Finally, this analysis suggests an explanation for the renewed importance of the departmental federation. Before the war, the *bourses* had helped resolve tensions between trade and industrial federations. However, the consolidation and centralization of the industrial federations had undermined this role. Until 1920, the departmental federations had failed to really make up for the weakening of the *bourses*. The industrial federations had extended their control over a majority of the departmental federations. But the realignment of the rail federation in 1920 created new opportunities for minority control over the departmental federations. The departments were no longer just the arena in which the *minoritaires* contested the centralization of the industrial federation; now the departmental federations were the institution by which the *minoritaires* exercised their muscle against the *majoritaires* as well.

At the November 1920 congress of the UD Seine, the revolutionary unions, led by Tommassi, proposed that if a conflict were to arise between a union and its federation, its UD should intervene to resolve the dispute. The proposition, opposed by the *majoritaires* at the congress, was adopted nonetheless after a long discussion.¹⁸ And at the national level, Georges Dumoulin, a leading *majoritaire*, went so far as to call, in 1920, for the abolition of the UDs (Amdur 1986, 141). The UDs' new assertiveness certainly propelled the CGT forward toward polarization between the two methods of syndicalism.

The only remaining uncertainty was how to find the precise institutional relationship between unions and party. In July 1921, Trotsky had written to Monatte (leader of the CSR), Cachin, and Frossard (leaders of the PCF) that the party must assert control over the unions, centralize party organization, assert greater control over the party press, and tighten relations with Moscow (Wohl 1966, 230). The working out of this mandate would cause a great deal of anguish – with many unconverted anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists leaving the Communist party and its new counterpart, the Confédération Générale du Travail Unitaire (CGTU; the CSR wing of the old CGT). However, the relationship of the CGTU to the PCF proved to be more “organic” than “subordinate.” As Wohl pointed out, “[T]he Communists had no foothold in the unions and no hope of getting one without the help of the syndicalists themselves” (Wohl 1966, 240).

The French syndicalist minority had sent a delegation to the constituent congress of the Internationale Syndicale Rouge, held at the same time as the Third World Congress of the Third International (July 3–19,

18 AN F7 13618, File: Union des Syndicats, Seine, 1920, report: “Congrès de l’Union des Syndicats de la Seine,” Paris, 15 novembre 1920.

1921). There, the issue of the subordination of the unions to the party was directly confronted. The French delegation divided over the Russian demand for an “organic” liaison between the two internationals (Tommasi, Godonnèche, and Rosmer rallied to the Russian proposal; the others, led by Henri Sirolle, called for complete autonomy between the two organizations). Both Tommasi and Rosmer had been revolutionary syndicalists. Monmousseau, himself a former anarcho-syndicalist rail leader who would become one of the central leaders of the PCF, in speaking to the UD Seine, November 27, 1921, summed up the new attitude of many former revolutionary syndicalists: “*le syndicalisme ne suffit pas à tout* [syndicalism does not suffice for everything]” (Wohl 1966, 244).

We can now examine the relationship between the polarization in unions, divided by two opposing strategies, and the schism in the SFIO, divided into Socialist and Communist blocs. My argument is that although the SFIO split occurred before the CGT schism (encouraging us to see the causal arrow flowing from party politicization to union politicization), it was actually the polarization of the unions that came first.

Table 10.2 summarizes the findings of a regression analysis of the vote at the 1920 Tours congress in favor of the SFIO’s joining the (Communist) Third International. Model 1 is a bivariate analysis that examines the relationship between the outlines of a prewar realignment and the postwar vote in favor of the Third International. In Chapter 9, I described two major changes that occurred in 1910–12. First, in reaction to the centralization of national trade and industry federations and the trend toward a more consolidated industrial unionism, *bourses* began to federate into more expansive UDs. Parallel with this structural change, we saw that many UDs sought to preserve a role in the labor movement by becoming the center of consumer protest and antimilitaristic activity. Second, Gustav Hervé sought to create a revolutionary party that prefigured the postwar PCF, creating many branches in the provincial departments. Thanks to the efficiency of the French police, we can treat the geographical implantation of “antimilitarist” and “revolutionary” *bourses* in 1911 and Hervé’s revolutionary party in 1910 as variables indicating the prewar tendency to support a Communist-style party as a consequence of the realignment of the syndicalist coalition. Neither variable by itself has a statistically significant correlation with the postwar realignment. However, the interaction term of these two variables does produce a substantively and statistically significant impact on the vote in favor of joining the Third International. This suggests that it was the “lining up” of the revolutionary UDs and the revolutionary groups in the SFIO that foreshadowed the basic outlines of the emerging Communist party.

Table 10.2. Analysis of SFIO vote to join the Third International (vote, 1920)

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Constant	20.055* (9.270)	-.228 (3.383)	-4.055* (1.932)	-3.982* (1.906)
Prewar revolutionary	28.560** (8.589)			
SFIO members 1913		.022*** (.003)		
Union members 1913		.004*** (.001)		
SFIO members 1920			.013*** (.001)	.018*** (.001)
Union members 1920			.002*** (.000)	
Union dues 1919				.001*** (.000)
Num unions 1919				-.292*** (.053)
Num mayors 1920				-.638*** (.122)
PLM Railroad				9.082*** (2.051)
<i>Compagnonnage</i>				5.937*** (1.420)
UD 1911		17.557** (6.000)		
UD 1912				4.920** (1.782)
Squared multiple R	.118	.896	.957	.991
Durbin Watson	1.895	1.872	2.027	2.289
Std. error of estimate	73.392	25.130	15.873	7.752
N	85	88	89	80

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$. (standard error in parentheses)

This variable, however, is not robust when included in multivariate analyses. Two variables can explain a large fraction of the variation across departments in the support for the Third International – the number of members of the departmental SFIO federation and the number of members of the departmental CGT federation. Quite simply, the larger the size of the party and union organizations, the greater the support for

Table 10.3. *Description of variables in Table 10.2*

Variable	Description
Vote 1920	The number of mandates cast, by department, for the “Motion Cachin-Frossard” for the SFIO to join the Third International (SFIO 1920b, xix–xx).
Prewar revolutionary	This variable is a cross product of two variables (Bourses1911 × RevParty1912). Bourses1911 codes the number of <i>bourses</i> in a department identified by a prefectural survey of 1911 as engaged in “antimilitarist and revolutionary propaganda” (<i>source</i> : AN F7 13567, File: “Bourses du travail: La Propagande Antimilitariste et Révolutionnaire”). RevParty1911 codes the number of groups in a department affiliated to the Parti Révolutionnaire in 1910 (<i>source</i> : AN F7 13071, File: “Parti Révolutionnaire: Tentatives d’Organisation,” dated October 1910.)
SFIO members 1913, 1920	The number of SFIO members per department in 1913 and 1920. For 1913, the source is Charles, Girault, Robert, Tartakowsky, and Willard (1980, 689–801). SFIO members 1920 reports the number of <i>cartes</i> (membership cards) as of December 31, 1920 (SFIO 1920b, xv–xvii).
Union members 1913, 1920	The number of dues-paying union members per department in the CGT in 1913 and 1920 as reported in Labi (1964, Statistical App.). Union members 1920 utilizes the Lille rather than the Orléans data series.
Union dues 1919	Number of <i>timbres</i> (“stamps” or dues) per department in 1919 divided by 10 (Robert 1980, 206–7).
Num unions 1919	Number of unions per department affiliated with the CGT in 1919 (Robert 1980, 192–3).
Num mayors 1920	The number of communes per department with mayors affiliated to the SFIO between the elections of November 30/December 21, 1919, and the Tours congress (December 1920). The source is Charles et al. (1980, 689–801).
PLM Railroad	Departments in the jurisdiction of the Paris-Lyon-Marseille rail line (Ceclair 1973). 1 = PLM department; 0 = non-PLM department.
<i>Compagnonnage</i>	The number of cities in a department that were traditional stops on the <i>tour de France</i> , including cities on the “grandes routes de compagnonnage” and cities not on the route that welcomed <i>compagnons</i> . I code the cities on the map provided by Maurice Moissonnier in Willard (1993, tome I, 81).
UD 1911 and 1912	Departments with a Union Departmental (UD) in 1911 or 1912. For each year, a department is coded 1 if a UD exists and 0 otherwise (<i>source</i> : AN F7 13570, File no. 3, “Unions Départementales, 1912–1919.” I used a list dated 1914, which provided a relatively complete list of dates for UD formation in each department).

the Third International. This is to be expected. A giant SFIO federation like the Nord gave 359 mandates in favor of joining, whereas tiny Manche gave only 9. In percentage terms, however, Manche gave 100 percent of its mandates, and the Nord offered a more cautious 63.3 percent.¹⁹ In this sense, this variable controls for large variations in membership size across the regions. As Model 2 demonstrates, even the prewar (1913) membership figures explain most of the variation across departments.²⁰ When these 1913 membership variables are included, the variable for prewar “revolutionary” departments loses significance. However, a dummy variable coding those departments that had created UDs by 1911 – in other words, those quickest to respond to the declining influence of the *bourses* – was both substantively and statistically significant in explaining support for the Bolshevik position in the SFIO in late 1920. In other words, in those departments with the strongest traditions of local and regional union mobilization, the UDs became the center for an emergent postwar radicalism.

Model 3 demonstrates that the 1920 size variables for party and union membership explain even more of the variation in the 1920 vote than do the 1913 variables. However, Model 4 provides a more complete specification suggesting the significance of several other variables beyond those of membership size. A variable for the number of unions affiliated to a departmental federation in 1919 (min. = 3; max. = 202) indicates that the greater the number of unions the weaker the support for the Third International. This variable is actually positively correlated with support for the Third International ($r = .741$). However, when included with the size of union membership, its sign becomes negative. Plausibly, this negative relationship captures the shift toward industrial unionism already described. Where unions are more consolidated into industrial unions, they are more likely to give support to the Third International.

19 I conducted a separate analysis using the percentage of total votes cast as the dependent variable. These “size” variables do not remain significant, though most other variables drop out of the analysis as well. The UDs created by 1912 (coded as a dummy variable) is one of the only variables to retain even modest significance.

20 I also used the vote at the February 1920 Strasbourg congress in favor of joining the Third International as a dependent variable. This vote was, if anything, more revealing than the Tours vote because (I suspect) a strong bandwagon effect occurred between February and December. I suspect that this bandwagon effect helps to explain why the size variables are of such importance at the Tours congress. Size appears to have been far less important in the February vote. However, because an examination of the residuals for this analysis suggested strong heteroscedasticity, the parameter estimates may not be reliable. I should also report that my findings for the Tours congress remained essentially the same after I removed two exceedingly large federations (Seine and Nord) from the data set (suspecting that they might have been skewing the results toward the size variables).

As described, however, workers were divided over what type of industrial unionism should prevail – a centralized sectoral unionism resistant to grassroots strike action or a more geographically based and horizontally solidaristic industrial unionism.

The next variable indicates that where the party was well ensconced in local governments – where communes in the department had Socialist mayors – it was less likely to support the Third International. The number of Socialist communes varies from a minimum of zero to a maximum of 100 (Nord). A similar analysis of representation at the legislative level turned up no relationship. The importance of specifically local representation is suggestive of the type of municipal socialism traditionally associated with the “Possibilists.”

The next variable extends the finding about the importance of the PLM rail network to the SFIO. Both the CGT and the SFIO departments in the jurisdiction of the PLM gave greater support to the Third International. However, I should note that the findings of the correspondence analysis of metal and rail federations presented earlier did not extend to the SFIO.

The final two variables in Model 4 indicate the importance of the *bourses* and the tradition of communal unionism. Model 4 includes a variable for the number of UD^s created in 1912, which proved a better fit than the variable for UD^s created by 1911 (see Model 2). In 1912, the *bourses* were in the midst of creating UD^s (essentially, federations of *bourses*). Many UD^s would not be formed until 1913 or even later. I have reasoned that those that took up the task earlier were more concerned about preserving the tradition of horizontal geographical coordination associated with *bourses*. But by 1912, the movement had extended beyond the avant-garde organized before 1911.

It is worth noting the parallel to my analysis of the 1894 vote for the general strike at Nantes. There I found that the *bourses* supported a movement to unify the unions around the general strike. Here, the UD^s are the equivalent of the *bourses*. But they provided support for a movement that came to divide the union and party movement. This does not mean that all the UD^s were radical. In fact, both in 1894 and in 1920, a good number of geographically based union federations were quite moderate in their views and aims. Where strong grassroots mobilization prevailed, however, the UD^s were likely to act as institutional bases of mobilization.

The last variable in the model is also reminiscent of the analysis conducted in Chapter 6. Again, we find that the corporatist tradition of *compagnonnage* was an important influence in shaping support for the emerging Communist party. It is, of course, not *compagnonnage* itself

that supported communism. Where this tradition still existed in organized form, it was a conservative one. However, I have suggested that the tradition of *compagnonnage* provides some of the cultural underpinnings of the communal unionism associated with the *bourses* and the UD. To operationalize this variable, I coded those cities that were on the traditional *tour de France* – that voyage of *compagnonnage* apprenticeship that circled France (including cities not on the main route that otherwise welcomed the *compagnons*).

Although the findings of this statistical analysis are not clear-cut (because of the overweening effects of the size variables), Model 4 supports the argument just advanced that the schism of the SFIO arose through the polarization of the unions around two competing strategies. The positive association between early-forming UD, the PLM rail network, and the vote to adhere to the Third International suggest the continuing importance of a geographically based network of horizontal solidarity first associated with the *bourses*. The significance of the variable for *compagnonnage* further suggests the importance of a communal unionism associated with the *bourses*.

Although I reach my conclusion by different means, my findings support Jean-Louis Robert's conclusions in his study of the schism of the CGT: "The impression prevails that there is not a single union tradition, but a double heritage, that of the *Bourses du travail* more favorable to the 'minoritaire' implantation, and that of the federations more favorable to the 'majoritaires'" (Robert 1980, 175).

Bolshevization and the CGTSR

In 1923, the organization and leadership of the PCF was not yet "bolshevized" – a process of organizational closure transforming a "sect" into a "church" (i.e., a hierarchical clan).²¹ The key elements of this transformation have been described by Kriegel, Mortimer, Tiersky, and Wohl, which they date as beginning in earnest in 1923–4 (Kriegel 1972, esp. Ch. 8; Mortimer 1984, Ch. 3; Tiersky 1972, Ch. 2; and Wohl 1966, Ch. 12). A first step was the reorganization of the basic units of the party. Like the SFIO, the PCF was initially organized around the commune. Bolshevization converted these communal subunits into (preferably) workplace-based cells. The new structure intentionally did not corre-

21 The ambiguity of the Weberian terminology reveals itself here. Many historians describe the PCF during this period as becoming a "sect." Wohl, for instance, writes that "[t]he party tended more and more to become a sect and lose all influence on the masses" (Wohl 1966, 349).

spond with the administrative units of the French state (i.e., commune, department).²²

A second step was the elimination of the autonomy of local subunits, creating centralized discipline. As Kriegel points out: “Spontaneity, initiative, power, authority – the entire decisionmaking process – were to be mobilized by the center, which formed the highest level of the hierarchy” (Kriegel 1972, 194).

The third step was to create what has been called a “sacerdotal corps” – the equivalent of a priestly corps to administer the party. As Kriegel states: “To put it briefly, the apparatus is to militant communists what the clergy are to the Christian people” (Kriegel 1972, 187; see also 131, 197). These militants were to be a self-conscious “elect.”

We then see the articulation of what Tiersky calls a “specifically Marxist-Leninist goal structure” marked by strong classification, condensed symbolism, and a rigorous class-based dualism of us versus them. A party school was created to systematically educate party cadres in Marxist-Leninist doctrine. Tiersky argues that this “Leninist style” was created through antimilitarist and anticolonialist campaigns that strongly distinguished the PCF from the SFIO and highlighted the PCF’s internationalism. Tiersky argues that “[t]he refusal to accept ‘bourgeois’ legality in the name of revolutionary bolshevism synthesized a mentality of increasingly radical militancy which had been progressively imposed in the French Communist Party leadership” (Tiersky 1972, 45). The party adopted a strict “class against class” strategy that vilified social democracy. Leaders considered too moderate, too radical, or too opportunistic were purged.

Finally, it is important to note that bolshevization took place in the CGTU as well as in the PCF. In addition to a parallel organizational centralization in the unions, however, bolshevization also meant the subordination of the unions to the party, which was anathema to anarchists and syndicalists. Chapter 2 suggested that the transformation from sect to church is likely to be countered by resistance that may precipitate a schism. In 1881, the centralizing strategy of the Guesdists had been met by the schism of the anarchists. After 1921, the centralizing strategy of bolshevization in the unions was met by the resistance of revolutionary syndicalists and anarcho-syndicalists within the Communist CGTU.²³ In 1924, when bolshevization began in earnest, a number of unions left the

22 Mortimer suggests that the new structure of the party was intended to bring the rural departments into contact with the industrial ones (Mortimer 1984, 111). For a discussion of the PCF’s rural base, see Boswell (1998).

23 The syndicalist and anarchist tendencies in the CGTU congress votes of 1922 and 1923 are analyzed by Robert (1980).

CGTU to become “autonomous,” and a second schism occurred that led to the creation of a third union confederation – the Confédération Générale du Travail Syndicaliste Révolutionnaire (CGTSR).²⁴ In its broad structural outlines, the French labor movement of the mid-1920s now looked much the same as it had in the mid-1880s – divided into rival organizations.

Summary

The massive strikes of 1919 and 1920 created the conditions for a realignment of the French labor movement in 1920–1 and the subsequent schism of the movement into two ideologically polarized blocs. During the strikes, two antagonistic approaches to strike mobilization came into conflict. The first method sought to routinize industrial conflicts by adopting a cautious strategy of selective strike mobilization and a centralized and sectoral industrial unionism. The second method “inverted” the first method and sought to escalate local wildcat actions and to extend them geographically and cross-sectorally. My analysis suggests that when the traditional local radicalism and corporatism of the *bourses* was hitched to interlocal networks of newly radicalized railworkers (mostly of the PLM line), the result was a mass revolt of national proportions. As the failures of these two strikes brought a precipitous drop in union participation, a move toward communal closure around this interlocal network led to the creation of a cell-based counterorganization within the CGT (a “dual power” in Trotsky’s terms). The failure of the strikes also shifted radical workers from economic to political action, thereby provoking a parallel polarization within the SFIO (especially through the influence of the railworkers). The radical factions in both the CGT and the SFIO embraced the Bolshevik cause and turned adhesion to the Third International into the vehicle of factional closure. After the schisms of 1920–1, the French Communist party underwent further “bolshevization” that completed the process of communal closure.

24 Amdur (1986) provides the best account of these events.

Conclusion

“I want unity with rage, with passion,” pleaded the grandson of Karl Marx, Jean Longuet, at the 1920 Socialist party congress (Kriegel 1964b, 232). Yet the balance of passion that day rested with the wings of the party rather than its center. Schism prevailed. A major goal of this book has been to develop an analytical framework for understanding the processes of schism and solidarity in organizations and social movements. Why do some organizations and groups have a tendency toward schism? Why do schismatic organizations sometimes set aside their grievances in the name of unity? During the fifty years of organizational history examined in this book, the labor movement went through several phases of schism and solidarity. Toward the end of the 1870s, it attempted to unite. But a series of schisms in the early 1880s left the movement extremely fragmented. It remained that way through the 1880s and early 1890s. But then a reorganization began. By 1906 the labor movement was finally united. Then, in 1920–1, it broke up again into rival ideological blocs. Thus, a phase of schism, followed by a period of solidarity, culminating in a return to schism.

The book has argued that certain types of groups are prone to schism: groups held together by a sense of common identity, especially those who feel themselves to be part of the same community or the same status group. In France, for example, workers often felt themselves to be a status group with a distinctive style of life. But you could say the same thing about many groups (e.g., nuclear families, Cuban-Americans, gays, Germans, antinuclear activists, Catholics). These groups certainly attempt to profit by their solidarity, but a collective identity is what holds them together in the first place. This common identity is held to be sacred, and group members will be extremely sensitive toward behavior that appears to reflect poorly on the honor of the group. Conflicts over the fundamental meaning or sanctity of collective identity are likely to prompt schisms.

Not all communal or status groups are alike. Schisms are more likely where individuals participate actively and invest a lot of their personal

identities in the group. A challenge to the honor or sanctity of the collective identity is then experienced as a challenge to personal identity. Schism will also be more likely if the group feels itself to be in some tension with its surrounding culture, especially where groups try to distinguish themselves as subcultures or countercultures. Distinguishing oneself from the dominant culture is always difficult, and conflict tends to arise over how far one should go. Often this is expressed by a rhetoric of purity. Actions that appear to transgress the autonomy or purity of the group will be seen as challenges to the honor and sanctity of its collective identity.

Schism is not inevitable in such groups. The same factors may also, under different circumstances, promote unity. After all, a sense of difference from the dominant culture is a basis for solidarity. These groups are often united by a sense of being threatened by a common enemy. To understand the precise circumstances in which schisms are likely to occur – and how they are likely to occur – it helps to look at the issue more dynamically. Participation in such identity groups is often highly variable and perhaps cyclical. Much of the time people go around attending to their personal business and their private concerns. But occasionally they become deeply and intensely engaged in more public pursuits (Hirschman 1982). Often, such participation occurs in waves – episodic outpourings of energy and enthusiasm for a cause. In the French labor movement, these waves were contagious, snowballing strikes that spread rapidly to many different trades and industries.

As these waves of participation mount, people develop a deep sense of emotional engagement and an exhilarating sense of identity with others. Everything seems possible during these “moments of madness.” Inevitably, though, enthusiasm begins to flag and people turn back toward more personal or private concerns. Schisms will tend to occur in this declining phase. Imagine yourself a leader of or a major activist in one of these waves of participation. People start losing interest, they withdraw into their private worlds, and they become hard to motivate. What do you do? Schisms occur because groups and organizations develop different strategies for adapting to this declining interest and flagging enthusiasm. One thing groups do is substitute organization for enthusiasm. The group is set up in such a way that it can be independent of the fickleness of participation. This often means finding a way to sustain the organization – through membership dues or sustained fund-raising. It means hiring professionals who are committed to working on a routine basis. And it typically leads to a moderation of goals. The organization and its activists become more pragmatic. This is called *routinization*. Typically, however, other groups will see the

problem in different terms. They will seek to maintain the deep sense of emotional commitment experienced during the upswing of the movement – emotional commitment that made the group feel empowered. This group is likely to pursue a different tactic of organizing. Rather than create an organization that can continue to pragmatically pursue the movement's ultimate goals, this group adopts organizing strategies that attempt to maintain the sense of commitment, empowerment, and emotional engagement. Chapter 2 labeled this process *communal closure* because the tendency is to become more exclusive and to define situations in terms of us versus them. Obviously, these two strategies of routinization and communal closure are likely to conflict, because one is moving in the direction of moderation and pragmatism, whereas the other aims to maintain a sense of shared identity by sharpening the image of its enemy. Schisms are thus likely.

Communal closure represents an attempt to organize commitment. The group or organization seeks to encapsulate the individual (a fusion of person and group), and the world comes to be cast in sharply dualistic terms – good versus evil, sacred versus profane, and most importantly, us (the in-group) versus them (the out-group). An internal hierarchy is erected to exert discipline and control within the group and over affiliated groups. However, this move toward communal closure is itself likely to met by resistance. Group members may reject the move to organize, discipline, and depersonalize intense commitment and emotional engagement. They may vehemently object to the shift from personal engagement and responsibility to collective discipline. Affiliated groups may resist subordination to external control in the same terms. Thus, cleavages are likely to appear both within and across organizations. In resisting closure, individuals will celebrate the very aspects of social engagement that communal closure seeks to sublimate: spontaneity, intuition, and authenticity. Individual initiative will be opposed to hierarchy and formalism. Ironically, this countermobilization against communal closure often leads to its own type of dogmatic and exclusive dualism. Whereas communal closure seeks to maintain commitment by organizing it hierarchically, countermobilization vehemently rejects external organization that is not absolutely egalitarian. Instead, it places the weight of action entirely on individual will. Chapter 2 called this outcome *inverted hierarchy* because it represents an inversion (a mirror image) of hierarchical collectivist organization. In the French labor movement, this position was exemplified by the anarchists and the anarcho-syndicalists.

To briefly summarize, schisms will occur as groups attempt to adapt to declining participation and waning social enthusiasm. The fault lines

will divide strategies of routinization, communal closure, and inverted hierarchy.

Yet the theory goes beyond explaining schism. The analytical framework developed in the book also explains the conditions that deflect schisms or that allow schismatic groups to overcome the bitter harvest of the past. The general principle is what I call *balanced dualism*. In the preceding discussion, a sharp dualism of us versus them is the source of schism. At the same time, communal closure leads to a fusion of the person into the group – the corporatizing of individual personality. Inverted hierarchy reverses this priority and strictly subordinates the group to the individual. Balanced dualism implies a “balancing” of us against them (taking the form of saying we are different and yet we are the same) rather than a polarization of us versus them (we are completely different). It also implies maintaining a dualism between person and group – a dualism that balances individual autonomy against collective unity (I am distinctive but also similar to others in the group). These two principles work together. Maintaining a balanced dualism between individual autonomy and collective unity discourages a sharp dualism of us versus them and vice versa.

Balanced dualism may be the outcome of much the same process as schism. As groups countermobilize against rationalization or communal closure they may utilize relationships that they have with outside groups or create new relationships. *If these external networks link together parallel factions of the in-group (us) and the out-group (them), then communal closure may be offset by a countervailing mobilization that straddles these boundaries.* The point is most easily expressed graphically, as illustrated in Figure 2.1, panel B (page 31). Thus, the existence of such cross-cutting networks can prevent schism or channel schismatic groups toward more broad-based solidarity. Such relationships may be created simply as defensive alliances, but they are likely to be more effective if they are not just the product of momentary political advantage. To withstand the pressures of polarization, it helps if these relationships have a social basis that precedes or transcends the conflict.

If these cross-cutting networks link together groups or individuals moving toward inverted hierarchy, they will have a particular character. Countermobilization against communal closure leads groups to stress spontaneity, intuition, authenticity, and personal responsibility against hierarchy and formalism. When pursued to the extreme, this leads to vehement and dogmatic rejection of organization in the name of personal freedom. Yet cross-cutting networks can also become the basis for a balance between this celebration of personal freedom and organizational integration – a balanced dualism between the individual and the group.

Because inverted hierarchy is a rejection of hierarchical integration, it tends to lead toward localized oppositions. Consequently, cross-cutting mobilization that binds together inversionary movements may often congeal into local communities that resist both schism and hierarchical integration. I call this *congregationalism*, after a form of religious organization that insists on the local autonomy of community churches and a form of religious practice that balances parishioner spirituality against institutional structure. Paradoxically, perhaps, this localism tends to be allied with calls for global unity. Yet this is inherent in the nature of these congregations as cross-cutting mobilizations. These local congregations are likely to band together with similar congregations in other locales to celebrate the transcendent unity of all congregations, and perhaps all humanity. Thus, congregationalism is a sort of felicitous combination of parochialism and universalism. The unity of such congregations takes the form of a covenant – a pact that celebrates the transcendent unity of congregations while acknowledging multiple sovereignties.

When combined, cross-cutting balance, congregationalism, and covenantalism provide the basis for a distinctive type of broad-based organizational solidarity. As might be expected, however, a form of organizational solidarity that rests on striking a balance may be easily susceptible to losing its balance. We can then reason in reverse: the loss of balance may be a result of changes that erode cross-cutting networks or undercut the autonomy of local congregations. Should balance be lost, the system as a whole is likely to shift back toward schism. Herein, we can see the tendency of schismatic systems to cycle between movements of schism and movements of broad-based solidarity. As large encompassing groups split into smaller fractions, they increase the possibility for the development of linkages among inversionary movements across in-group/out-group boundaries. Broad-based solidarity may ultimately result. However, further moves toward rationalization or communal closure may upset the systemic balance and produce a return to schism.

How has this theoretical framework been applied to the subject at hand – the organizational development of the French labor movement between 1872 and 1922? The first point to demonstrate is that the workers that made up the French labor movement understood themselves to be a group with a distinctive status or communal identity within the French nation. But this cannot be completely true. Peter Stearns, for example, has argued that French workers, like workers everywhere, were concerned with basic “bread and butter” issues like wages and job security (Stearns 1971). This would suggest that their organizing strategies should be much more instrumental (i.e., associative) and oriented toward achieving concrete gains. This may have been true much of the time. But

a number of factors accentuated the communal status identity of French workers, particularly when it came to organization building. Whatever the pragmatism of French workers, they lived in a society historically structured around estates and corporate orders – that is, status groups. An indication of the continuing influence of this status consciousness is the way labor groups in the early Third Republic sought to rhetorically construct themselves as “The Fourth Estate.” Paul Lafargue even had to correct the Marxist leader Jules Guesde: “For God’s sake, don’t speak of the fourth estate . . . but of the Proletariat” (Willard and Bottigelli 1981, 136). In addition, as Sewell has shown, nineteenth-century working-class organizations were strongly rooted in a corporatist heritage, and particularly in a journeymen’s institution known as *compagnonnage*. Although this corporatist heritage was certainly weakened at the close of the nineteenth century, it continued to have many subtle influences on working-class mobilization. Even when a trade was highly fragmented, trade unions continued to invoke the “corporation” as the object of industrial organization. The tradition of *compagnonnage* was itself a communal tradition. It invoked the sense that workers shared not only their bread and their residence (i.e., commensalism) but also a common “style of life.”

Political conditions in Third Republic France reinforced the communal and status identity of French workers. The Republic itself was viewed as only shakily consolidated throughout the period of this study. The consolidation of the Republic was understood to represent a transition from an order based on ascribed and hierarchical statuses to one based on egalitarian and civic citizenship. Yet the very shakiness of the Republic meant that the meaning of this citizenship was deeply contested; thus, position in the old status order and the promise of egalitarian citizenship constantly interrogated one another. As the Republic was consolidated, the labor movement interpreted the faults of the new Republic as representing the imposition of a new status order. Since the Revolution, sovereignty had been claimed in the name of the “people.” In the populism of the sansculottes and the *démoc-socs*, the “people” were especially associated with the humble producer. As Republicans became engaged in a project of state building, the labor movement inherited this sense of being the “people” from whom sovereignty was being alienated. This communal sense of identity was reinforced by historical events. During the Commune, a deep split occurred in the Republican movement that pit communal autonomy against the Jacobin state.¹ In the early

1 Julliard (1988) has argued that the desire for “social autonomy” was a distinctive characteristic of the French working class.

Third Republic, the working-class movement embraced this notion of communalism as defining its own position vis-à-vis the Republican state. As the socialist leader Paul Brousse wrote to Paul Lafargue in 1881: “For those who have eyes, this movement, in France has two forms: It is *communard* in its revolutionary form and *communaliste* in its legal form” (Bottigelli and Willard 1981, 121). The labor movement inherited the romantic revolutionary tradition from the larger Republican movement, a tradition that was itself invested with a quasi-religious mission.

All this might have been so much rhetorical froth upon the deeper waters of narrowly instrumental action. Yet the real mistake would be to see this sense of communal and status identity as a fixed and unchanging characteristic of the French working class. The thrust of the argument has been that the intense sense of being part of a particular status group was a recurrent but episodic situation. Just as Greeks or African-Americans or Mothers Against Drunk Driving experience their identities with particular intensity during certain epochs or critical conjunctures, French workers experienced their sense of commonality more acutely at certain moments. There were two types of triggering events for these experiences. The first type of trigger was the political events associated with the consolidation of the Republic. Communard amnesty, Boulangism, the Dreyfus affair, or the end of World War I were such events. The second type of trigger was the massive waves of strikes that coincided with these political events. The precise relationship between these political events and the huge strikes often associated with them is unclear. But it is not necessary to understand the precise causal relationship to see that these strike waves broke with the routine of daily life. These strikes were contagious outpourings of energy and emotion and solidarity. Although Stearns is probably right about the essential moderation and pragmatism of French workers during the intervening periods between strike waves, workers during the waves experienced an intense and extraordinary sense of solidarity and shared identity with other workers. During these “moments of madness,” workers came to sense that they could fundamentally change the world. At the same time, these expectations also set the working class up for a sense of betrayal and disappointment as participation fell off.

The critical developments and transformations of organization building in the French labor movement occurred during the waxing and waning of these strike waves (Figure 1.1). However they behaved at other times, workers acted much like a communal status group during these waves of mobilization. And as this participation trailed off, the types of conflicts among different strategies of organizational adaptation described earlier came to the fore. Let us begin by looking at the first

such episode of organization building and schism. As the Third Republic was being consolidated in the late 1870s, the first post-Commune strike wave began. In the upswing of this movement, we see a series of organizing initiatives oriented toward broad-based solidarity in the labor movement. In 1879, this movement culminated in the creation of the first French workers' party. Yet even in this inclusive phase, the new party embodied the spirit of an inversionary movement. As noted, the Paris Commune had represented a deep rift within the broader Republican movement, and the new workers' party developed partly out of an effort to secure amnesty for the Communards, many of whom were still serving hard labor in New Caledonia. As a symbol of direct democracy and municipal self-government, the Commune was a symbolic inversion of the Jacobin Republic. In addition, the founding convention of the new party voted in favor of the principles of collectivism – that is, the collective ownership of the means of production. This platform represented a direct affront to a broader Republican movement that intended to unite workers with small merchants and even large capitalists in a progressive movement against the forces of reaction.

As has been argued, communal status movements that see themselves in tension with the surrounding culture (in this case, republicanism) are more likely to move toward closure as member participation declines. This was what happened following the creation of the first French workers' party. After 1879, for instance, we begin to see local party groups moving to adopt more rigorous standards of membership. They begin to insist that only workers, or only union members, or only those accepting the principles of collectivism can belong to the prototypes of party sections, the local socialist circles. At the national level, the first schism occurs in 1880 as workers closest to the Republican movement, who object to the collectivist creed, withdraw their support from the workers' party. At the same time, a group behind Jules Guesde, informally known as the Guesdists, become the agents of communal closure. To preserve the sense of enthusiasm and empowerment created during the strike wave, the Guesdists sought to replace elections for strikes. In collaboration with Marx and Engels, they articulated a "minimum program" to which all party sections must uniformly adhere in local elections. These minimum standards were aimed at discouraging local electoral alliances with the Radical Republicans. They also reflected the Guesdists' goal of creating a disciplined party organization. In response, a countermobilization against the Guesdists' strategy of communal closure began moving toward inverted hierarchy. In the first place, this group rejected the shift from the spontaneous direct action associated with strikes to the more controlled mobilization of the electoral

campaign. This “abstentionist” faction quickly adopted the full anarchist position vis-à-vis party organization. They became the second group to break with the workers’ party.

The major split, however, had yet to come. In this schism, the Guesdists themselves split from the party. Their rivals, who retained hold of the original workers’ party, were dubbed the “Possibilists.” This group represented something of a hybrid arrangement because it combined a tendency toward routinization with a tendency toward inverted hierarchy. (The tension in this arrangement would be clearly revealed a decade later when this group split along precisely these lines.) The tendency toward routinization was symbolized by the very name of this faction, the “Possibilists” (given to them by their opponents, the Guesdists). The Possibilists aimed toward achieving a set of “possible” municipal reforms and programs that would provide unionized workers with concrete benefits. The Possibilists rejected the Guesdists’ “minimum program” as an infringement on their flexibility to forge electoral alliances that would help them deliver these benefits. Beyond this move toward a more instrumental orientation, however, the Possibilists also represented an inversion of the Guesdists’ goal of creating a hierarchical, unitary, national party organization built upon party sections. In contrast, the Possibilists emphasized the importance of local communal mobilization, the autonomy of local groups, a federal national party, and unions rather than party sections as the base unit of the party. The Possibilists’ leader Paul Brousse, summed it up well: “The Commune and the Corporation [i.e., unions] are the only means that the people will have, one day, to make its will prevail.”² Where the Guesdists favored the subordination of unions to the party, the Possibilists supported the subordination of the party to the unions.

These schisms produced a pattern of fragmentation that was difficult for the labor movement to overcome as the movement grew during the 1890s. Several unsuccessful attempts at unification were in fact made over the two decades following the schism of the early 1880s. Yet the institutional framework for eventual unification was, in part, created by the schisms themselves. The Possibilist “inversion” of the Guesdist party model represented a crude prototype of the institutional form that would become the basis for the future unification of the labor movement. Like the original schisms, this movement toward unification would be propelled forward by strike waves and political events. In fact, the full unification of the labor movement straddled two distinctive participation waves – one in the late 1880s and early 1890s and the second in the late

2 Cited in Lefranc 1963, 22.

1890s and early 1900s. The critical institutional development of the late 1880s was the creation of the *bourses du travail*. These institutions were created in response to the unemployment crisis of the 1880s. The novelty of these municipally subsidized job placement centers was that they were managed by city union federations. The first and most important of these “labor exchanges,” the Paris *bourse*, was under the political control of the Possibilist municipal councilors who had sponsored it with the support of Radical Republicans. In the face of the populist wave of the late 1880s and 1890s, however, the Possibilist unions sought to throw off the yoke of the “politicians” and to reestablish the party around a union base.

To take control of the Paris *bourse*, the Possibilist unions formed an alliance with unions affiliated to other party sects. In the context of the *bourse*, the tendency toward schismatic “inversion” had produced an alliance of unions that cross-cut the labor movement’s sectarian divisions. This pattern of local realignment soon spread to provincial *bourses* and ultimately became the basis for a national realignment of the unions around a model of nonpartisanship. This general demand for union autonomy from party politics represented a move toward communal closure around the *bourses*. Indeed, a conflict between the unions and the party (i.e., a vertical schism) replaced the divisions within the union and party camps (i.e., horizontal schisms). Yet, because this move toward closure cross-cut prevailing divisions (which had not gone away), the *bourses* introduced a measure of countervailing balance against sectarianism.

Later, the *bourses* encouraged another type of cross-cutting balance. At the turn of the century, conflicts between craft and industrial unionism and between local union autonomy and national control sharpened. In this context, the *bourses* represented a local, quasi-industrial unionism that balanced the dominance of the national trade federations. Eventually, this cross-cutting balance was institutionalized in the unified labor confederation, the CGT, which formally treated the national trade and industry federations and the local *bourses* as equal sections of the organization; unions were expected to establish dual memberships in both their respective trade or industry federation and their local *bourse*.

The schismatic implications of the move toward communal closure around the *bourses* were mitigated in another way. The *bourses* were local institutions, and they prompted local realignments. In this context, communal closure created a series of parallel units that implicitly or explicitly counterposed local unity to national division. In other words, the move toward communal closure around the *bourses* created a congregational structure – making the local parish church the basis for social

integration rather than the national church hierarchy. The *bourses* were the equivalent, in many ways, of church congregations. They conceived of themselves as the moral and ritual center of local working life. By providing a range of services as well as strike coordination, they sought to encourage a sense of local community among unions. And the provision of some services to individuals as well as to unions helped to balance the strictly corporatist nature of the institution. Just as church congregations see themselves as part of encompassing religious denominations, the *bourses* extended this sense of community to *bourses* in other cities and, ultimately, to the entire working class. These labor congregations were held together by a type of covenant symbolized by the idea of the general strike. This symbol of imminent salvation through a revolutionary strike inspired a sense of the efficacy of spontaneous, direct action that was the equivalent of parishioner spirituality in the congregational model. The general strike would begin spontaneously from below and spread like wildfire, aided but not controlled, by coordinating institutions. This argument remained theoretical, but the sense of spontaneous direct action could be kept alive through local control over strikes – something the revolutionary syndicalist leader of the CGT, Victor Griffuelhes, captured in his concept of garden-variety strikes as “revolutionary gymnastics” (exercises leading to the general strike). The doctrine of revolutionary syndicalism was, in general, the equivalent of congregational religion in that it balanced the anarchist model of direct, spontaneous action with a more corporatist emphasis on organization.

This model of solidarity was further systematized to the broader labor movement by the creation of political party institutions that paralleled the *bourses* in form. These institutions were known as “autonomous departmental federations.” Because their independence was transitional (they were soon absorbed into the unified Socialist party), historians have scarcely recognized their importance in paving the way to party unification or their isomorphism with the *bourses du travail*.³ Like the *bourses*, they were cross-cutting institutions, creating order by federating different party sects on a local basis and by insisting on toleration for different political views. In fact, these local institutions were often sponsored by the very same groups that had brought about realignment at the local *bourses*. Consequently, they typically adopted a norm of respect for union autonomy and even embraced the idea of the general strike. Consolidation around this institutional form was ultimately triggered by

3 However, scholars have clearly recognized the heritage of these institutions. See Panebianco (1988) for a discussion of the importance of local control in the SFIO and Sadoun (1993) for some very thoughtful essays that stress the tradition of autonomy and decentralization in French socialism.

local opposition to the schismatic dynamics of national party leaders. In the wake of the Dreyfus affair, the Guesdists again moved toward communal closure – this time by rejecting socialist participation in bourgeois government in strongly dualistic terms. In reaction, local party sects banded together around the model of autonomous federations, which meant that they insisted on their local independence vis-à-vis these national debates. Although these realignments were local in nature, similar patterns of realignment occurred all over France, especially where *bourses* existed.

The congregationalism of these institutions is most visible in the populist stance they adopted toward party leadership. They vigorously rejected a model of internal party organization that would lodge power either with the party's representatives in Parliament or with a central party bureaucracy. They did not insist on pure local autonomy, and they recognized themselves as part of a larger national community. But they insisted on the ability of local party federations to make critical decisions about electoral alliances that reflected local conditions and local sentiment. In doing so, they were adopting a plebiscitarian model of a party that would remain half social movement, half political party.⁴ For these party congregations, the covenantal equivalent to revolutionary syndicalism was articulated by Jean Jaurès, who developed a syncretic ideology balancing the dualities of revolution versus reform, republicanism versus socialism, and individualism versus collectivism. Like the spiritualism of the congregational model, his version of socialism emphasized the importance of the daily cultivation of a “socialist state of grace” (Sadoun 1993, 224). Reflecting the sentiment of the autonomous departmental federations, this Jaurèsian syncretism embraced not only the idea of the general strike but also the norm of respecting union autonomy.

Thus, the *bourses du travail* and the autonomous departmental federations became the critical institutions in a major realignment that shifted the French labor movement from schism to broad-based solidarity. They combined principles of cross-cutting balance, congregationalism, and covenantalism into a distinctive model of balanced dualism. After World War I, the French labor movement moved back toward schism with the division of the movement into a socialist and communist bloc. This fateful split must be understood in two ways: first, as the erosion of the principles of balanced dualism; second, as an example of the tendencies toward schism that attended waves of participation.

4 Aminzade has argued that mid-nineteenth-century French republicanism was similarly half social movement, half political party and that localism was the critical variable that preserved this mix (Aminzade 1995).

Whereas the first – the erosion of balanced dualism – developed over approximately a decade, the second – the participation wave – was conjunctural.

Pressure to move the unions toward a rationalization of strikes and, consequently, a rationalization of union organization, was the major factor leading to an erosion of balanced dualism. Beginning as early as 1908, the CGT began to confront better organized and more intransigent opposition to strikes. Employers were becoming increasingly organized, the size of firms was growing, and the French state was intervening more vigorously to prevent disorder. In response, national union federations began pushing for greater organizational rationalization. One trend was toward the amalgamation of craft federations and the consolidation of industrial unionism. A second trend was toward greater centralized (i.e., national) control over strikes. Both trends entailed an increasing emphasis on sectoral control over union activities. This routinization more or less inadvertently undercut the conflict-balancing and congregational role of the *bourses*. This role had been built in part on the *bourses*' ability to provide a form of local cross-sectoral cooperation that balanced national sectoral mobilization. Consolidation of more centralized industrial unionism weakened this local cross-sectoral role. The *bourses* sought to adapt to these changes by expanding their own scale of operations, creating regional (departmental) federations of *bourses*. They also sought to take the lead in a set of campaigns (e.g., an antimilitarist campaign and a consumer movement against cost inflation) that would accentuate their claim to being the *moral* center of working-class life as well as an agency for *direct action*. None of these adaptations achieved great success as responses to organizational routinization.

The rationalization of strikes led to a renewed interest among the national industrial federations in *political action* as an alternative to strikes. Although actual union-party cooperation did not have great depth, national union executives and national party leaders increasingly talked of pragmatically rethinking the rule about mutual union and party autonomy. In response, the most populist elements in the *bourses* and the autonomous departmental federations began to advocate for the creation of a new party organization that would ally the “revolutionary” forces in both the party and the union against the “reformist” tendency. Attempts to create such a party in the prewar era (i.e., prior to either the Russian Revolution, World War I, or the postwar political or economic conjuncture) foreshadowed the postwar schism and the creation of the French Communist party. Though these attempts to create a revolutionary bloc failed, they indicate the tendency of balanced dualism to become unbalanced.

In a number of ways, the war furthered the erosion of the role of the *bourses*. The war mobilization drained the unions and party sections of active participants and brought strikes to a halt. In the initial years of the war, both the CGT and the SFIO were reduced to skeleton operations. If anything, this reduced activity favored further rationalization. The war also led to greater corporatist cooperation among the national leaderships of the CGT, the SFIO, and the French state. Yet the war also eventually encouraged an explosive new wave of strikes and political protest – a populist wave that would make the massive strike of 1906 appear puny in comparison. The linking of accelerated war production, especially in the metallurgical factories, to growing antiwar protest produced a wave of wildcat strikes and grassroots political protest that began in 1917 and culminated in the 1920 rail strike.

This new wave of grassroots protest tended to be highly localized and segmented in character, though horizontally broad and cross-sectoral. This grassroots protest revived activity in the *bourses* (and the departmental federations of *bourses*) and in local party sections and federations. These local institutions became hotbeds of militant activity and created a spirit of insurgency against more cautious national union and party bureaucracies. As the strikes contagiously expanded, they were increasingly construed to be revolutionary strikes. Yet despite this contagion, horizontal coordination proved very difficult, and local strikers believed their efforts to have been stymied by the vertical and sectoral controls of the national industrial federations. Despite their massive size, neither the 1919 metal strike nor the 1920 rail strike was particularly successful. And in the aftermath of these strikes, union participation dropped precipitously. This waning participation triggered a grassroots movement toward communal closure. Yet, this time the structure around which this communal closure took shape was different. The grassroots strike movement had far overrun the local scope of the *bourses* or even the expanded departmental federations. The strikes had encouraged an emphasis on interlocal networks for which the railroads themselves were the model. Thus, the balancing and congregational roles of the *bourses* had been eroded not only vertically by the rationalization of industrial federations, but now horizontally through communal closure around interlocal networks of grassroots activists.

As communal closure took shape around this interlocal network, it affected both the union and the party. In fact, as occurred in the declining phase of previous strike waves, the focus shifted from the unions to the party sections. This was especially true in 1921 because of the centrality of the railworkers. The railworkers were the most closely aligned of all workers with the Socialist party, and they often made up

a sizeable fraction of the membership of local party federations. In prewar years, the rail unions had been among those least committed to the principle of union autonomy. Therefore, through the influence of the railworkers, the movement toward communal closure developed parallel schisms in the SFIO and the CGT. Initially, most French Socialists cheered the Russian Revolution, but the movement toward communal closure increasingly made unconditional support for the Revolution and for the Bolsheviks a litmus test of revolutionary zeal. At the 1920 congress, where the party split in two, the centrist Léon Blum polemically but insightfully described the transition from a party built around principles of balance to one built upon communal closure:

Unity in the party . . . was until now a synthetic unity, a harmonic unity; it was a sort of resultant of all the forces and all the tendencies combined in order to fix and determine the axis of common action.

You, it is no longer unity in this sense that you pursue; it is uniformity, absolute homogeneity. You want in your party not only men disposed to act together, but those who undertake to think together: your doctrine is fixed once and for all. *Ne varietur!* Those who don't accept it cannot enter in your party; those who no longer accept it must leave. (in Kriegel 1964b, 113)

In fact, the new Communist party had hardly begun the process of “bolshevization” that would transform the party after 1921 into what in Chapter 2 I called a hierarchical clan and what Annie Kriegel has more colorfully dubbed “the eldest daughter of the orthodox Bolshevik church” (Kriegel 1972, ix).

This book has sought to explain the organizational evolution of the French labor movement during a critical formative period – the fifty years between the Paris Commune and the creation of the French Communist party. Its focus on the politics of organization building has harvested some new insights into the historical processes of French working-class formation – notably, into the role of the *bourses du travail* and the autonomous departmental federations in bringing about unification, into the development and role of the symbol of the general strike and the ideology of revolutionary syndicalism, and finally, into the long-term dynamics leading to the creation of a powerful Communist party. These insights have ultimately been in the service of elaborating a more generic model of organizational schism and solidarity. Organizational schism, of course, can no more be argued to be unequivocally bad than can divorce. It may be a source of liberation and self-development. Sorel certainly saw sectarianism as essential for maintaining a fighting spirit. Yet, for those who like Jean Longuet want unity with rage and passion, schism is

a tragic affair. At its mildest, schism may produce inefficiencies of coordination; at its most nefarious, the antagonisms unleashed by schism may produce violence and bloodshed. For these reasons, the most important contribution of this book – and the one I found most intellectually satisfying to explore – has been its analysis of a particular type of solidarity that may arise under schismatic conditions. As the project was not undertaken with this in mind, coming to understand this form of solidarity was the real surprise of the book. Insights into what this book has called *balanced dualism* can be found scattered through many different literatures and disciplines: structural anthropology, the sociology of religion, organization theory, social movement theory, and democratic theory. Although this form of solidarity may be quite fragile, it is worth serious consideration and further analysis. The elaboration of such a model of solidarity and the demonstration of its operation in a concrete case will hopefully contribute to further discussion of alternatives to Hobbesian solutions to the problem of order.

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